

# The Irish Catholic

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## Avoid politics of division to renew the Church, synod urged

Michael Kelly in Rome

As representatives of the global Church in the Synod in Rome enter an intensive phase of debate on contentious issues such as women priests and same-sex blessings, participants have heard pleas to avoid taking divisive stances.

As delegates commenced work on their hotly-anticipated final document meeting due this weekend, Dominican theologian Fr Timothy Radcliffe OP said the synod cannot fall into the bitter divisions of the wider society.

Some 450 delegates – including Bishop of Limerick Brendan Leahy and Bishop of Raphoe Alan McGuckian SJ – have been meeting under the leadership of Pope Francis to try to wrestle with challenges facing the Church.

Fr Radcliffe, who has been acting as a spiritual guide for the unprecedented gathering of clergy and laypeople, said that as synod delegates prepare to go home, they will be asked, "Whose side are you on?" about some of the synod's contentious issues.

"We shall need to be profoundly prayerful to resist the temptation to succumb to this party-political way of thinking.

"That would be to fall back into the sterile, barren language of much of our society. It is not the synodal way," Englishman Fr Radcliffe said.

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### Linking up for life



Pro-life demonstrators attend a 'Life Chain' event at Belfast City Hall on October 21, organised by Precious Life, to mark the fourth anniversary of the imposition of abortion on the North of Ireland. See page 4

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# Avoid politics of division to renew the Church, synod urged

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"The synodal process is organic and ecological rather than competitive," he said. "It is more like planting a tree than winning a battle, and as such will be hard for many to understand, sometimes including ourselves," he said.

"But if we keep our minds and hearts open to the people whom we have met here, vulnerable to their hopes and fears, their words will germinate in our lives, and ours in theirs. There will be an abundant harvest, a fuller truth," he continued. "Then the Church will be renewed."

Some synod delegates have expressed scepticism over issues like women priests and same-sex blessings being on the agenda saying that the Church has

already pronounced on such matters. However, others have welcomed the debate insisting such issues cannot be closed.

As *The Irish Catholic* went to press this week, participants were meeting in small groups throughout this week for discussions about the assembly's final document, which is set to be voted on on Saturday.

In coming days, the synod delegates are also expected to vote on the publication of a separate, brief 'Letter to the People of God'. Both documents are expected to provide a framework for further areas of reflection and engagement with the local levels of the Church, ahead of the second session of the synod in October 2024.

# Synodality requires patience

The general consensus here at the Synod of Bishops in Rome is that it's good to talk. Some people are even learning that it can also be good to listen.

The beauty of the papacy as we now understand it in the Church is the ability to transform ecclesiastical culture and even ecclesiastical speak, and the rapidity with which people – most people – come on board a papal agenda.

In the late 1950s, after the election of John XXIII prelates soon embraced the language of 'opening windows' to let in 'fresh air'. This, of course, culminated in Vatican II which has given us two distinct traditions: those who actually read the documents of that great council and those – evidently unperturbed by the need to read – who instead rely on something called the 'spirit' of the council.

Pope Paul VI began to travel and gave us the great missionary impulse with *Evangelii nuntiandi* described by Pope Francis as "the greatest pastoral document written to date". Suddenly the global Church was, first and foremost, missionary.

John Paul I – who died after only 33 days in office – wasn't around long enough to have a leitmotif, but after the pained final years of Paul VI people liked that he smiled.

Then came the Polish Pope, the man from a far country, and bishops and cardinals soon embraced the language of the new evangelisation, 'be not afraid' and John Paul II's theology of the body.

## Momentous

After one of the most momentous papacies in the modern era, along came Joseph Ratzinger as Pope Benedict XVI and we were routinely treated to homilies in parishes all across Europe about how, following the new Pope's model, the Church was to become a "creative minority" (he was right about the minority part).

Under Pope Francis, talk quickly moved towards synodality and reform of the Vatican. The latter evidently stalled and even some members of his reform team died before a document on that reform could be issued – nine years after the committee began meeting.

But synodality has emerged as the lasting impression of this Francis papacy. The Pontiff has been determined to put flesh on the bones of the idea of co-responsibility within the Church, and

appeals to apostolic tradition and how things were done in the early Church have resonated with people. Of course, Church historians who point out the blood shed amongst Christians over doctrinal debates in the early centuries of the Church seem churlish.

There is an air of intoxication in Rome at the moment around synodality. One of the dangers I discern in the synod process as I observe it is the danger of being self-referential and being caught up in a bubble.

**“The challenge is to overcome bureaucracy and polarisation and agree that if we're followers of Jesus Christ, our primary mission is to help people come to know and love Jesus Christ”**

Bishops, even cardinals, gush openly about how impressive it is to sit at a round table rather than at a desk... while thousands of people are being killed in the Holy Land.

Others talk about how liberating it is to speak freely (as if they were infants waiting on nanny to leave the nursery for a moment). One wonders, why these men commissioned to preach the Gospel, felt so inactivated to this point and the paralysis it caused the Church.

Even people who were not remotely interested in synodality just a few years ago, are converted and use terms like "being Church" with a straight face.

Synod insiders revel in a feigned mysteriousness about the whole process, despite the fact that even casual observers know that a meeting involving 450 people must have moments of extreme tedium.

The ultimate task for a more synodal Church will be to avoid the risk of getting bogged down in meetings and process. This is also true of the Church when it comes to getting our parishes and communities fit for mission. The challenge is to overcome bureaucracy and polarisation and agree that if we're followers of Jesus Christ, our primary mission is to help people come to know and love Jesus Christ. The Church exists for no other

## Editor's Comment

### Michael Kelly



reason.

Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, the synod on synodality's general rapporteur, gave a brief address recently highlighting what he described as "some temptations on this road".

## Politicisation

One temptation, he said, was that "of 'politicisation' in and of the Church, that is, living and thinking the Church with the logic of politics.

"Some have an agenda for the reform of the Church; they know very well what needs to be done and they want to use the synod for that purpose: this is instrumentalising the synod. This is politicising," he said. "On the opposite side are...the 'indietrists' who do not understand that a true Catholic tradition evolves while remaining a tradition in its time. They too would like to put the brakes on the synod process."

Synodality inevitably requires a lot of patience and it requires a commitment to discernment – which means truly listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit in the Church rather than trying to impose one's own narrow ideological or political position on the Church.

The Pope's recent interview with *America* magazine where he – again – ruled out the idea of female priests was met with anger and dismay by some of the groups who present themselves as reform-minded and amongst the most enthusiastic about the synodal process.

But, the reaction proves that if our enthusiasm wanes when our pre-determined solution is rejected, then our enthusiasm is for our own vision rather than what God is asking of the Church in the 21st Century.

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# Vatican-Ireland relations 'warm' despite past issues

Michael Kelly in Rome

Ireland-Vatican relations are now better than they've been in a long time, senior Vatican diplomats believe.

It comes after the latest audience in which Pope Francis hosted President Michael D. Higgins at the Vatican last Thursday.

The meeting was the fourth such engagement between President Higgins and Pope Francis, following previous meetings in the Vatican in 2017 and 2021 and at Áras an Uachtaráin in 2018.

President Higgins also met with Pope Francis at the Pontiff's inauguration in 2013 (pictured right).

Senior Vatican diplomats told *The Irish Catholic* that it is a sign of the warm bond between both men, but also the strength of Holy See-Ireland relations just 12 years after Mr Higgins' Labour Party colleague Eamon Gilmore closed Ireland's Vatican

embassy. At the time, Mr Gilmore cited financial woes, but many people interpreted it as a snub to the Vatican after tensions over the handling of clerical sexual abuse.

The appointment of Archbishop Charles Brown as papal nuncio to Ireland months later was seen as a key bridge between the Vatican and Ireland paving the way for the re-opening of the embassy in 2014 under Ambassador Emma Madigan.

Officials at the Vatican credit Ambassador Madigan with smoothing relations leading to the visit of Pope Francis to Ireland in 2018.

At the Vatican last week, the president also met with Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, accompanied by Archbishop Paul Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States. According to a Vatican communique, "during the cordial discussions in the Secretariat

Photo: Vatican Media



of State, satisfaction was expressed at the good relations between Ireland and the Holy See, and mention was made of some issues of common interest.

"Attention then turned to some matters of a global nature, such as food security in developing countries and commitment to the elimination of poverty,

the protection of the environment in the light of the publication of the apostolic exhortation *Laudate Deum*, the phenomenon of migration in the delicate current

world geopolitical situation, and the development of a multilateralism that might respond adequately to the current international conjuncture".

## A long time to come back from damaging floods – Midleton priest

Ruadhán Jones

It will take "a long time" to come back from floods that devastated businesses and homes in towns in East Cork and West Waterford, a priest in the badly affected town of Midleton has said.

Businesses and homes in the East Cork town are facing millions of euros worth of damages from the floods that affected Midleton's main street, with the Government announcing an emergency fund to tackle the crisis.

Flood waters rose two feet in the space of 30 minutes in some parts of the south of country on Wednesday and Thursday, parish priest Msgr Jim Killeen told *The Irish Catholic*, fol-

lowed by further flooding on Monday.

"There's physical damage, there's financial damage, but there's a lot of emotional damage to people, seeing their houses and their businesses seriously damaged," he said.

The "feeling of insecurity" has left people anxious, he added.

"The town has flooded before, but never as severely as this, and never in this way... Midleton is a strong town and we'll come back, but it will take a long time."

Meanwhile, following further rain on Monday, a Catholic primary school in Kilkenny, St Colmcille's, had to be evacuated by the local fire brigade when the school buildings were hit by flooding.

## Trócaire mourns death of aid partner and family in Gaza

Jason Osborne

Irish Church charity Trócaire has described itself as "devastated" following the death in Gaza of an aid worker with their partner agency, Caritas Jerusalem.

Viola (26) was killed alongside her husband and daughter in a strike on the St Porphyrios Church in Gaza.

Viola's sister and her two children were also killed.

Trócaire CEO, Caoimhe de Barra said that "hundreds of Gazans have been forced to flee their homes and seek shelter in UN facilities, schools, places of worship or with friends and family," but that "nowhere is safe from the bombing".

"If Israel initiates a full-scale ground assault of Gaza it will inevitably lead to the death of more innocent women, men and children."

"We are continuing to

support our partners at this crucial time as they try to provide humanitarian support to those who are affected by the conflict. They have told us that the situation in Gaza is a humanitarian crisis of almost unimaginable proportions. Our partners in Gaza and their families are facing the same threats as the rest of the population. We pray that they remain safe over the coming days," Ms de Barra said.

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# Catholic trustees will engage with Govt to safeguard future of ethos

**Ruadhán Jones**

The trustees and patrons of Catholic schools are to engage with the Government to safeguard the future of Catholic education, a secondary schools body has announced.

The move comes at a time when the Government is coming under increasing pressure from opposition TDs and activists to rush through divestment.

The Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools (APTCS) announced on Wednesday plans to engage with Government to secure a “sustainable funding strategy” to safeguard the delivery of Catholic education.

APTCS CEO Dr Eilis Humphreys told *The Irish Catholic* there are “hopeful signs”

that the present education regime is “more open to partnership”.

The Secretary General of the Department of Education Bernie McNally launched APTCS new strategy statement for 2023-25 and has been “showing support to all patrons”, Dr Humphreys said.

The new strategy will push for a real commitment to pluralism from Government, she added, saying: “We want to ensure Catholic schools remain vibrant, remain relevant and the evidence is there that parents do want them.”

Dr Humphreys stressed that, as Ireland becomes more diverse, politicians must recognise that Catholic schools are “to the fore” in encouraging a proper welcome and integration into Irish life for diverse peoples and cultures.

“At ground level, schools are doing well,

Catholic schools are good at welcoming and integrating,” she said, adding that “when the Ukrainians came in force, it was very much so.”

“Catholic schools, by virtue of their ethos” are inclusive and “we expect Catholic schools to be at the fore in making all students welcome, particularly students from diverse backgrounds”, she said.

Many of the ‘New Irish’, who are people of faith themselves, already come to Catholic schools because “religion is respected in the schools”.

“There’s an understanding of what it means to be a person of faith in Catholic schools,” Dr Humphreys said.

“That should permeate whether it’s the Catholic faith or the Muslim or the Jewish faiths – different religions are respected... It can lead to a very rich dialogue.”

## Canon Hayes’ contribution to rural Ireland celebrated in Tipperary

**Jason Osborne**

The founder of the community development organisation Muintir na Tíre, Canon John Hayes and his role in the development of rural Ireland were celebrated Saturday at the Church of the Annunciation in Bansha.

Canon Hayes, who ministered in the parish of Bansha/Kilmoyler, led many rural com-

munity initiatives, foremost among them being rural electrification.

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic* newspaper, local historian and journalist Martin Quinn said that “rural Ireland still needs figures like Canon Hayes to address issues of concern to them”.

“I think that Canon Hayes’ legacy is hugely important to rural Ireland today,” Mr Quinn said.

“I think he was a man way before his time and the initiatives that subsequently Muintir na Tíre rolled out after Canon Hayes death, all of those initiatives have played a very clear role in rural Ireland.”

Mr Quinn organised a Mass to be celebrated for Canon Hayes and the deceased members of Muintir na Tíre at the Church of the Annunciation, Bansha, which was followed by a seminar titled ‘The Priest, the

People and the Light’.

“It’s a very significant event because of the fact that it was titled, ‘The Priest, the People and the Light’. The ‘priest’, of course, being Canon Hayes himself, the ‘people’ being the people of the land and of Muintir na Tíre and the ‘light’ being rural electrification, which Canon Hayes played such a role in,” Mr Quinn said.

## A jubilee in the King’s court...



Ms Mary Kennelly, Principal of St Joseph’s School, Kingscourt, Co. Cavan, joins students and staff to celebrate the platinum jubilee of the school at a Mass of Thanksgiving at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Kingscourt.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Mourning in Limerick following popular priest’s death

The death of Manister-priest Fr Tim O’Connor has seen an outpouring of commiseration, with Fr David Gibson, moderator of the pastoral unit of which Fr O’Connor was a part, telling *Limerick Live* that Fr O’Connor was “an utter gentleman”.

“What says everything about him is that he was entitled to be retired, he had no obligation whatsoever to offer himself but he did constantly,” Fr Gibson said.

“Having someone to work with number one and, secondly, having someone to work with as nice as he was. He was very obliging,” said Fr Gibson, who described Fr O’Connor as “a holy man and very, very spiritual”.

### Belfast parish to sell closed church

Holy Family Parish in Belfast is set to sell the closed Church of the Resurrection, including the parish hall and house, the parish has announced.

The Church, which hasn’t been in used for several years, was slated for demolition, parish financial statements for 2021 and 2022 showed.

However, the costs of demolition “escalated significantly” and the parish was forced to consider other options, parishioners learned in a letter circulated on October 22.

“An offer has been received for the permanently closed church, hall and house on Cavehill Road,” the letter said.

Down and Connor diocese is assisting the assessment of the offer, which the letter reported as “fair financially”.

### Irish professor elected VP of Euro theology society

Dr Fáinche Ryan of the Loyola Institute, Trinity College Dublin, has been elected Vice President of the prestigious European Society of Catholic Theology.

Dr Ryan, an Associate Professor in Systematic Theology, will serve as Vice President for two years and then as president for a further two years.

The European Society for Catholic Theology (ESCT) is the preeminent organisation in Europe promoting the academic discipline of Catholic theology and is composed of members from 22 countries.

Dr Michael Kirwan, Director of the Loyola Institute said they are “delighted” that Dr Ryan has been elected, calling it “a great honour for her, for Loyola Institute, and for Trinity College Dublin”.

### Irish missionary awarded presidential medal

Irish missionary Fr Gabriel Dolan has been awarded a presidential award for his service to peace, reconciliation and development in Kenya.

Fr Dolan was among the list of recipients for the Presidential Distinguished Service Award for the Irish Abroad announced by Tánaiste Micheál Martin on October 20.

The Awards will be presented by President Michael D. Higgins at a ceremony in Áras an Uachtaráin in the coming months.

Fr Dolan, a member of St Patrick’s Society for the Foreign Missions (Kiltegan) is credited as a tireless defender of human rights in Kenya.

In his memoir, *Undaunted*, Fr Dolan said his calling was “not to be a liberator of the oppressed, but to make a commitment to fight alongside them”.

# NI abortions double after termination law change

**Staff reporter**

The rate of abortions in the North almost doubled in the three years since the abortion law was changed, new statistics reveal.

As of May 23, 5,648 abortions

have taken place in the North, figures released by the Department of Health to Both Lives Matter showed.

Since Westminster’s controversial intervention in 2020 to forcefully legalise abortion in the

North, the annual abortion rates for NI have nearly doubled, said Dawn McAvoy of Both Lives Matter in a statement.

“Before Westminster’s intervention, 2,000 lives were being saved from abortion every

year,” said Ms McAvoy.

Ms McAvoy expressed concern that there is “no legal framework in place to ensure full and accurate reporting on all terminations of pregnancies carried out in Northern Ireland”.

“There is no legal requirement to record why women are having abortions, in order to understand and respond to those needs at a policy level and offer alternatives. This structural failure is failing women and must be addressed.”

# Truth is we're in a complete muddle about drugs

Perhaps the strongest argument for legalising – or at least decriminalising – cannabis (and other recreational drugs) is that this measure takes it out of the hands of criminal drug-dealers.

If people are going to smoke weed anyway, let it be through a legal route – just as cigarettes remain legal, even if unhealthy. And where users feel the need to tackle an addiction, let them do so through health agencies facilitated by the state.

## Theory

That's the theory: and sometimes theories work well in the beginning. It takes a few years – perhaps a couple of decades – to test it fully.

At first, Portugal's decriminalisation of its drug laws in 2001 seemed to bring a positive outcome: crime fell,



**Mary Kenny**

there was a decrease in overdoses, and of HIV transmission via syringes.

**“33% of Canadian marijuana is still traded by illegal dealers”**

But two decades on, commentators have been asking if the policy is now ‘unravelling’: drug use rose from 7.8% in 2001 to 12.8% in 2022; crime rose 14% even between 2021 and 2022, and according to Gregory Shea at Pennsylvania's Wharton Center, sewage analyses showed a high general level of cocaine and ketamine. Moreover, global drug gangs are still using Lisbon

for trafficking purposes.

In Canada, it was hoped that legal routes for cannabis would prevent illegal and criminal sources from thriving.

But after a five-year experiment, 33% of Canadian marijuana is still traded by illegal dealers. That's because the illegal dealers – who don't pay tax – can profitably undercut the legal traders.

## Warnings

These experiments, as well as the warnings of mental health harm articulated by the Irish College of Psychiatrists, possibly had some bearing on the Citizens' Assembly complex, even Byzantine, conclusions about drug policy in



A woman walks in an area called 'Crackland', an abandoned site that has become a drug haven for addicts in Sao Paulo. Photo: CNS /Nacho Doce, Reuters)

**“Drug use rose from 7.8% in 2001 to 12.8% in 2022; crime rose 14% even between 2021 and 2022, and according to Gregory Shea at Pennsylvania's Wharton Center, sewage analyses showed a high general level of cocaine and ketamine”**

## A sobering glance at alcohol

Camille Gottlieb is cutting an impressive figure in France – and Monaco – as an influencer. Her themes are not fashion or beauty accessories, but an anti-drink-driving campaign with the catchy title of 'Be Safe'.

Camille's full name is 'Camilla Marie Kelly Gottlieb', and she is the 25-year-old grand-daughter of the late Princess Grace, née Kelly.

Camille is a firm teetotaler and she launched her anti-drink-driving campaign after one of her young friends died on his scooter “after an accident provoked by an excessive consumption of alcohol”.

This greatly distressed her, and with friends, she thus founded 'Be Safe'. Her royal connections helped to win financial backing and publicity, and to raise awareness among “roisters” (*fêtards*) to understand the consequences of drinking and driving in any vehicle.

This warning, says Camille, is especially important to emphasise at Halloween.

Her campaign has the support of her family (notably her brother and sister, Louis and Pauline Ducruet, her mother Stephanie, and her father, Jean Raymond Gottlieb).

Stephanie was of course

present in the fatal crash that killed Princess Grace in 1982: no alcohol was involved, but there must be a collective family memory that road accidents can be tragic.

Camille also volunteers for animal charities, and for the Red Cross on promoting intergenerational links – taking lonely old people out on various treats.

If the Grimaldis have had something of a reputation for partying in the past, Camille Marie Kelly seems to have developed a more serious reputation for good works and sobriety.

Ireland.

Their 36 recommendations recognise the “harmful impact of drugs” and urge the Government spends more funds pursuing a “health and recovery” approach, but stopped short of legalisation.

I suspect the real reason for such confus-

ing conclusions is that we are in a muddle about intoxicants and opiates. We don't know whether to condone or restrain, to prohibit or to regulate.

## Shakespeare

“O God,” wrote Shakespeare, in *Othello*, “that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal

away their brains.” The drug was alcohol, but it surely applies to even more brain-stealing, mind-altering substances.

Learning now, that cannabis can attack the brain even decades after its use, I'm grateful that this was one failing to which I didn't succumb in my mis-spent youth.

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● *Birthgap – Childless Worlds* is a three-part film documentary produced by Stephen J. Shaw which explores why, in 24 nations studied, there is a dramatic fall in the number of births.

The 'gap' is the ever larger proportion of people over 50, and the ever fewer number of infants being born.

Shaw's conclusion, after wide research, is that only a very small percentage of the population chooses to be childless. Some 80% of people without children are childless through circumstances.

The most frequent reason is that fertility is left too late. People don't find the right co-parent in time. And younger people haven't been made aware of the time-limits on fertility. That slogan 'the right to choose' implies that the option is there forever, which it isn't.

He concludes that fertility should be more positively taught – if we want our societies to survive. No nation in history has ever emerged successfully from long-term low birth rates.

# Ukrainian chaplaincy welcomes estranged Catholics home

Jason Osborne

Ukrainians who had little to do with the Church in Ukraine are re-engaging with the Church in Ireland according to Ukrainian Catholic chaplain, Fr Vasyl Kornitsky, as the Ukrainian Catholic community adjusts its pastoral approach to a more long term view in Ireland.

Recently begun 'Ask a priest' evenings have been very well received, according to Fr Kornitsky, who began the initiative when he realised how

much catechesis was required among his new and growing flock in Ireland.

"The idea came a few months ago when people were coming up to me with different kinds of questions, because what people experienced in Ukraine - they're dealing with a lot of issues, they have a lot of questions. Some of these questions are theological, some questions are philosophical, so people were constantly coming up to me and asking me the same questions," Fr Kornitsky told *The Irish Catholic*.

"Last time, we couldn't accomo-

date all of the people in that room, so we needed a bigger room...we learn about the Faith, about God and our understanding of God and we learn from one another.

"I'm learning a lot from the people, and I learn where they are in their understanding of God, where they are in their understanding of the teaching of the Church," Fr Kornitsky said.

"People see war with their own eyes and their priorities in life change", Fr Kornitsky said, adding that that's why he's seeing so many marriages among Ukrainian Catholics in

Ireland.

"People who never practiced their faith back home in Ukraine but they do practice it here. They are very new to the Church, to Church life. I have countless numbers of people who are going to Confession for the first time in their life. They need to learn how to go to Confession - they want to go. That's why my last conversation was about sin and what it does to our lives."

The Catholic chaplaincy to Ukrainians in Ireland is adjusting to take a more long-term view of its minis-

try, as a vacant church in Waterford was recently consecrated for use by Ukrainian Catholics.

On October 15, Bishop Kenneth Novakovsky (Apostolic Visitor for Ukrainian Greek-Catholics in Ireland and the UK) together with Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan of Waterford and Lismore and Bishop Gregory Komar, Assistant Bishop of the Sambirsk-Drohobytsky Diocese consecrated a temple for Ukrainian Greek-Catholics.

After the divine liturgy, the Faithful were able to enjoy a parish concert and social.



Fr Vasyl Kornitsky leads an 'Ask a priest' evening for Ukrainian Catholics in Ireland. Photo: Ukrainian Catholic Church in Ireland Facebook

## Govt gives £270k to Irish Chaplaincy in Britain

Ruadhán Jones

The Government has given £270k to the Irish Chaplaincy in Britain to support its work supporting the faith of the Irish diaspora.

The grant came as part of a £6.23 million package from the Department for Foreign Affairs to support the Irish community in Great Britain.

A number of other Christian and Catholic organisations received financial support, including a charity dedicated to caring for rough sleepers and a number of St Patrick's Day Parade's for cities across Great Britain.

The Irish Chaplaincy in Britain, based in London, received £271,350; Acton Homeless Concern Emmaus House and The Damien Centre received £15,200; Bell Farm Christian

Centre, £9,000; Derby St Patrick's Day Celebration Committee, £2,600; Huddersfield St Patrick's Day Parade Association, £4,950; Leeds St Patrick's Day Parade, £10,000; Nottingham St Patricks Day Festival, £6,500; and the Benevolent Society of St Patrick, £5,500.

The Minister of State for International Development and Diaspora, Seán Fleming TD, announced the grant while meeting with the Irish community in Britain at the annual Emigrant Support Programme reception in the Irish Embassy in London.

"It a chance for me to see first-hand... the extraordinary work being done in Britain, often with limited resources, to support what is still the largest Irish-born community outside of Ireland," Minister Fleming said in a statement.

## Waterford and Lismore gains 20 faith reps for outreach efforts

Staff reporter

As part of Waterford and Lismore's Ascend Strategic Plan for Youth and Young Adult Ministry, 20 'faith representatives' representing 11 parishes were commissioned for the diocese on September 29 in the Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity, Waterford.

The 20 representatives, "with a heart for young people," are expected to carry out a variety of roles as they reach out to the youth in their parishes.

Youth and Young Adult Ministry Officer, Nodlaig Lillis commended the faith reps for their service, adding that: "Ascend Youth and Young Adult Ministry

is inspired by the motto of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati - one of the patrons and inspirations for the diocesan vision for youth ministry: "*Verso l'alto!*" (To the Heights). We believe in meeting young people where they are at but leading them onwards and upwards towards an encounter with Christ, a sacramental encounter with Jesus."



Faith representatives in the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore are pictured with Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan and members of the Strategic Task Force for Youth and Young Adult Ministry at the commissioning ceremony in the Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity Waterford on Friday, September 29.

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# Moving to health-led drug approach requires 'huge change', bishop warns

Chai Brady

The recommendation by the Citizens' Assembly on drugs to end the prosecution of those found with illegal drugs for personal use has been welcomed by the Irish Bishops' Drugs Initiative (IBDI), with the vice-chair saying a 'health-led' approach demands a "huge change in funding".

Auxiliary Bishop of Armagh Michael Router told *The Irish Catholic* the recommendation aligns with the IBDI's submission, which criticised the status quo but strongly opposed legalisation and regulation of any illegal drugs.

The bishop underlined the hierarchy's opposition to illegal drug use, but said: "The present situation is not working, people with a small amount of drugs were being criminalised. That was bringing them further into drug-use because there was very little chance for them to get out of that situation once they were criminalised for using drugs."

"There was a lot of time spent in the courts, with the gardaí chasing people who were using a small amount of drugs themselves... we feel that it would be a more useful response to treat those people for the health issue around drug use and to give them the treatment that they need to step away from drugs altogether; the education they may need to do so in some cases."

Bishop Router said while legalisation would be "disastrous", decriminalisation moves the focus to drug dealers and those who cultivate drugs, which is the "real prob-

lem". He said these crimes should remain "a serious criminal offence that is pursued with the full attention and rigour of the law".

The majority – 85% – of the 87 members of the Citizens' Assembly voted to end the current criminal approach to the possession of illegal drugs for personal use. Regarding legalisation of cannabis, which has been strongly campaigned for in Ireland, a health-led strategy was preferred to legalisation. On the final ballot the vote was very close: 39 to 38. It is believed the Irish College of General Practitioners' warning that legalisation would have "profound and lasting adverse effects" may have swayed the vote.

Describing a 'health led' approach, the Citizens' Assembly stated: "Under a 'Comprehensive health-led' approach, the State would respond to drug use and misuse primarily as a public health issue rather than as a criminal justice issue. While possession of controlled drugs would remain illegal, people found in possession of illicit drugs for personal use would be afforded, first and foremost, extensive opportunities to engage voluntarily with health-led services."

Bishop Router said those who are found with a small quantity of illegal drugs should not face court but a panel who would decide the sanction, whether that be treatment, education or a fine – meaning they would not receive a criminal record.

The assembly, in their recommendations on repeat offenders, asked the Oireachtas to consider several ques-

tions including what limit, if any, should be placed on the number of times a person is diverted to health and what dissuasive sanctions should be introduced.

Regarding any future legislation, Bishop Router said there is no point in making a change unless resources are committed to make it function properly, and that "ensuring a 'health-led' approach demands huge change in funding for the treatment of drug addiction and in education, and for groups that are working on the ground with families and with drug addicts."

"I'm involved with the Family Addiction Support Network...we do a lot of work with families, and they are given a pittance of funding. All of that would need to change in order for this to work, it's OK saying it but actually making it work is another issue completely."

The bishop added that while he welcomes the recommendations of the Citizen's Assembly, he is opposed to the model of informing legislation, saying: "Just gathering 100 people together and bombarding them with information and then expecting them to make a decision based on that – I'm not confident in that approach to making law."

"It's easy to manipulate that number of people... it's easy to manipulate the information that is given to them to look for a predetermined outcome. And then it is easy to say 'Well this is what the citizens' assembly said so obviously this is what the people think', but you can't make that judgement from just 100 people, it's dangerous."



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## Art for vocations...



Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan, chair of the bishops' council for vocations, chats with iconographer Christine Twomey at the 'Art for Vocations' exhibition, which took place in Portlaoise Parish Centre to promote vocations to the diocesan priesthood. Photo: John McElroy.

## Nuala O'Loan

### The View



# Do not forget how quickly world war can come

**W**hat are we doing to stop a third world war? What can we do? I never thought I would write these words, but increasingly the possibility of renewed global conflict is being raised by many distinguished individuals. Is this what it was like in the 1930s, as the world watched the rise of Hitler and of anti-semitism in Germany?

The attack by Hamas on Israel on October 7 was unspeakably savage – at least 1,400 people ranging from little babies to very old, sick people were murdered and more than 200 are reported to have been taken hostage. They include tiny babies, children, adults, old people. A further 4,600 are reported to have been injured.

The terror that day must have been overwhelming, as people crouched in what were supposed to be safe places, often trying to keep the doors closed against the ruthless terrorists who were determined to murder them. What those people suffered is unimaginable.

### Condemnation

Rightly it provoked almost universal condemnation by world leaders, but still the attacks on Israel continue. This was no random series of attacks by a group of terrorists, rather it was carefully planned to provoke an immediate and terrible response by Israel. Israel declared war on Hamas and stated that “no electricity, food or fuel” would be delivered to Gaza until Hamas releases the hostages. Only two hostages have been released.

Two weeks ago, Israel asked 1.1 million people to move from Gaza city and northern Gaza to the south, before it commenced its bombing in Gaza.

The situation is horrendously complicated. Many people do not have the transport to flee and there is evidence of Hamas stopping people moving out of Gaza city, so as to retain a human shield against the Israeli attacks. Israel has repeatedly announced safe corridors through which fleeing Palestinians can leave the area, which is Hamas's stronghold.



As in Northern Ireland there are no signs that the terrorists have any reservations about placing their own people at great risk. Hamas has stationed its rocket launchers beside a kindergarten, schools and a mosque. So long as there are civilians in northern Gaza it will be more difficult for Israel to achieve its aim of eradicating Hamas, who control Gaza ruthlessly.

**“The UN Secretary General and others have described the region as on the edge of ‘the abyss’”**

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency, which exists to care for Palestinian refugees said that 400,000 Palestinians have taken refuge in UNRWA facilities, “much exceeding our capacity to assist in any meaningful way, including with space in our shelters, food, water or psychological support”. Emergency aid was allowed into Gaza last weekend. Notwithstanding that, the situation is critical.

Now there are very genuine fears that the conflict may spread to involve more Middle Eastern countries. The UN Secretary General and others have described the region as on the edge of “the abyss”. The conflict could spread outside the Middle East.

### Media

The conflict in Ukraine is no longer the primary focus of the media, yet it continues – there has been fierce fighting in many areas. The media outlet *Al Jazeera* reports daily at length the Russian war on Ukraine, on day 606 it told of Russian missile strikes and bombs, and of Ukrainian defensive actions taking out Russian drones and one cruise missile. It also reported on deaths and injuries.

Malta announced on Friday it would host further peace talks on the Russia-Ukraine war on October

28-29, after similar meetings in Jeddah and Copenhagen earlier this year.

There is no sign of an end to the conflict which continues to be deadly.

**“Russia is currently passing legislation to end its support for the nuclear test ban treaty”**

Many countries are involved in supporting Israel and Ukraine against the attacks on them. The UK, Europe, the US are standing behind Israel and Ukraine, and China, Iran, North Korea and others are supportive of those who have attacked Israel and in support of Russia. Just last Friday Sergei Lavrov of Russia and

Kim Jong Un of North Korea, which has supported Russia in the attack on Ukraine, met to discuss how to boost their military ties. Russia is currently passing legislation to end its support for the nuclear test ban treaty. It will be debated on Wednesday in the Russian Upper House, having been passed in the Duma by 415 votes to zero. It will then go to President Putin for signing. China is reported to possess approximately 410 nuclear weapons, which it can launch from missiles, submarines, and aircraft. It is also reported that in 2022, China spent an estimated \$11.7 billion (€11 billion) to build and maintain its nuclear forces.

### Power

Russia continues to seek power over Ukraine. Israel has mobilised its army reserves. 360,000 soldiers have gathered on its border with Gaza. In addition to this, the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights is currently monitoring more than 110 armed conflicts, some of which started recently, others have lasted more than 50 years.

As a consequence of each of these conflicts people will know terror, suffer terrible deaths and be left with life changing injuries. Millions will have to live their lives without access to security, food, water and proper homes. This is the reality of war wherever it is being fought.

**“People have the right to express their views, but they do not have the right to exacerbate existing tension”**

Nobody thought there would be a Second World War. The First World War in 1914-1918 was supposed to be the war which ended all wars. Some 21 years later in 1939 the world was suddenly at war again. Most people alive today have no memory of those wars. We must not forget just how quickly war can come.

As we contemplate the terribly fragile state of the world, as we watch to see whether the conflict in the Middle East will spread, bringing war not only to Middle Eastern countries but also other countries across the world such as the US, China, Russia and even Europe, the need for effective diplomacy to bring these conflicts to an end has never been more obvious. Such diplomacy is conducted in secrecy, and often in difficult and dangerous situations. It requires courage, strength, creativity, persistence, determination and compassion.

Recent demonstrations across the world following the events of October 7 have involved gross antisemitism and calls for Jihad – war. People have the right to express their views, but they do not have the right to exacerbate existing tensions, nor do they have the right by their actions to place people at greater risk.

Every life matters. Every life is sacred. It is profoundly important that we remember what happened during the Holocaust and work and pray to ensure that our wonderful world finds a way to peace.



# Discerning where God is leading the Church



The issue of understanding tradition is a major theme at the synod, writes Michael Kelly from Rome

The Church must understand Catholic teaching as a “living tradition” rather than legalism, a theological adviser has told the global synod meeting in Rome.

Australian Fr Ormond Rush – one of the world’s leading scholars on Vatican II – encouraged the synod’s more than 450 members to be attentive to the “traps” of “being drawn into ways of thinking that are not ‘of God’”.

The major summit on the future of the Church has been meeting at the Vatican for most of October with laypeople, priests and bishops struggling with how to make the Church more inclusive while retaining the unchanging teaching.

Fr Rush, a theologian at the Catholic University of Australia, said that Vatican II was the key to understanding and living synodality in the Church.

“Maybe Vatican II has some lessons for this synod, as you now bring to synthesis your discernment regarding the future of the Church,” he said.

Recalling the history of the council, Fr Rush quoted then Fr Joseph Ratzinger, later Pope Benedict XVI, that the “real question” at Vatican II “could be put this way: Was the intellectual position of ‘anti-Modernism’ – the old policy of exclusiveness, condemnation and defence leading to an almost neurotic denial of all that was new – to be continued? Or would the Church, after it had taken all the necessary precautions to protect the Faith, turn over a new leaf and move on into a new and positive encounter with its own origins, with its [fellow human beings] and with the world of today?”

“That doesn’t mean there can be some new revelation of who God is”

Quoting from the Vatican II dogmatic constitution on divine revelation, Fr Rush insisted that “In *Dei Verbum* – and this is important for understanding synodality and the very purpose of this synod – this divine revelation is presented as an ongoing encounter in the present, and not just something

that happened in the past. The event of God’s self-revealing (always in Christ, through the Holy Spirit) and God’s offer of relationship, continues to be a living reality here and now.

### Enlightenment

“That doesn’t mean there can be some new revelation of who God is. But, the

same God, in the same Jesus Christ, through the enlightenment and empowerment of the same Holy Spirit, is forever engaging with, and dialoguing with, human beings in the ever-new here and now of history that relentlessly moves humanity into new perceptions, new questions and new insights, in diverse cultures and places, as the world-

church courses through time into an unknown future until the eschaton,” he said.

### “They and the Holy Spirit together had to come to a new adaptation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ”

Fr Rush insisted: “this synod is a dialogue with God. That has been the privilege and challenge of your ‘conversations in the Spirit’. God is waiting for your reply. At the end of this week of synthesis, you might well want to begin that synthesis by saying, as did that first Council of Jerusalem, described in Acts 15: ‘It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...’ In their time, their letter to the churches then went on to address an issue on which Jesus himself had left no specific directions. They and the Holy Spirit together had to come to a new adaptation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ regarding that new question, which had not been envisaged before”.

### Discernment

He said: “discernment of the signs of the times in the present seeks to determine what God is urging us to see – with the eyes of Jesus – in new times; but also urging us to be attentive to the traps – where we could be being drawn into ways of thinking that are not ‘of God’.

“These traps could lie in being anchored exclusively in the past, or exclusively in the present, or not being open to the future fullness of divine truth to which the Spirit of Truth is leading the Church,” he said.

Tensions have emerged at the Synod about contentious issues like women priests, same-sex relationships and co-responsibility within the Church.

As *The Irish Catholic* went to press this week, delegates – including Bishop Alan McCuckian SJ or Raphoe and Bishop Brendan Leahy of Limerick – were meeting in small groups for discussion about the final document which is set to be voted on in the evening of October 28.



Participants at the assembly of the Synod of Bishops gather for prayer and discussion in the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican. Photo: CNS

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# Ireland's 'progress' in last 50 years ambiguous



Have we really changed for the better since we joined the EU, writes **David Quinn**

Some 50 years ago, Ireland joined what was then called the European Economic Community and in the time since then, the country has changed almost beyond recognition both materially and socially.

To mark the anniversary, the Central Statistics Office has produced a report called 'Ireland and the EU at 50' that charts the changes.

It looks at births, marriages, the names we give our children, the size of the population then and now, the cost of living, average wages and even the types of cars we drove back then compared with today.

I was a child in 1973 but I remember it very well. We were probably a fairly typical household of the time in that my parents had four children and my mother worked at home.

We had one car and one TV. Holidays were almost always to somewhere down the country. It was very rare to ever get on a plane.

The food was also quite plain in that the Irish had not yet been properly exposed to all the different cuisines of the world.

My parents very rarely went out to dinner. Sometimes they would entertain cousins and might have friends over for a card game.

Today, families are smaller. Mothers and fathers both typically go out to work. Food comes in a bewildering variety of choices.

There is usually more than one TV in the house

plus numerous other devices like smart phones and computers to keep us distracted.

It is now commonplace to dine out, or maybe pop down to a local coffee shop. Overseas holidays have become very much the norm.

So, have we become more prosperous? Absolutely. This story is confirmed by the fact that we spend a much smaller percentage of our household income on food than we used to (30% in 1975 compared with 10% in 2016), because we have more money overall.

Mind you, I'm curious to know why the CSO used 2016 as the cut-off point for this comparison given that food prices have shot up recently, as have fuel costs.

I daresay the average household today is spending a lot more on food and fuel than in 2016 and are having to economise elsewhere, for example, by cutting down on eating out.

The decline of the Catholic Church is not directly measured, but we can see it happening in various ways anyway, for example, in the near disappearance of names like 'Mary' for girls.

**“A particularly big drop has been seen in the number of marriage ceremonies that are Catholic”**

In 1973, Mary was easily the most popular name for newborn baby girls, which over 1,500 being given the name. ('John' was even more popular for baby boys with over 2,400 being given that name).

Last year, 'Mary' had dropped to 87th in the rankings and 'John' to 36th. The most popular names for girls and boys respectively are now 'Emily' and 'Jack', not namely traditionally associated with Catholicism.

A particularly big drop has been seen in the number of marriage ceremonies that are Catholic.

In 1973, they accounted for 96% of all ceremonies, but by last year this had dropped to just 40.5%.

This is partly the result of secularisation, partly the result of a lot of marriages now taking place after



Last 50 years marked by declining marriage rates, less children and higher housing prices.

divorce meaning they can't take place in a Catholic Church, but also partly because hotels have now become venues both for the ceremony and the reception, which is very convenient and a lot of wedding venues are very beautiful.

It won't surprise anyone to find out that our population has soared in the last 50 years from 2.9 million to 5.1 million.

But despite the big increase in population, we are having fewer babies. In 1973, Ireland saw 68,713 births and last year 57,540. The reason for the decline is that we are having smaller families.

At one level, this is strange. If we are better off, why aren't we having more children? Well, one reason we are often given is the cost of housing, and this is partly true.

## Necessity

We might have earned far less in 1973 on average than today. But in 1973, the average house cost 4.55 times the average annual wage, whereas today it costs 7.4 times the average wage.

It now generally takes two

salaries, not one, to be able to afford a home. Mothers are forced by economic necessity to work outside the home. Progress? It is if this is what couples want. It's not if they would rather make a different choice. It is certainly not unambiguous progress.

The number of marriages taking place in the State has barely changed since 1973. Back then, 22,816 couples tied the knot and last year it was 23,173.

**“And by the way, a declining marriage rate is linked to religion, because religious people are more likely to marry, stay married and have children, which is very good for society”**

Given the huge population increase in the meantime, this seems curious. But it is explained by the fact that a smaller percentage of us get married

than was once the case, and we also commonly delay getting married until we are in our 30s. In 1973, the average groom was 27 and the average bride was just under 25.

## Decline

Is the decline in the marriage rate and the rising age of brides and grooms progress? Not necessarily. For example, do more people want to marry than are actually marrying?

And what does a declining marriage rate do for society? If fewer of us are marrying, staying married and having children, then this is bad for society overall. It leads to societal decline.

And by the way, a declining marriage rate is linked to religion, because religious people are more likely to marry, stay married and have children, which is very good for society.

Back in 1973, the main thing dragging down our population was emigration, but larger families meant Irish society didn't terminally decline.

Imagine what our population size would have been if people of my parent's

generation had two children on average and not four?

The main driver of population growth now is immigration, not births, but despite high immigration our population is ageing rapidly. Is this progress? I'm not so sure.

Compared with 1973, can we unambiguously and categorically say we are a much better country today than we were then?

In many respects we are. We are materially far better off, but against this, housing is less affordable and two wages are normally needed to pay a mortgage.

Socially, we have a lot more personal freedoms, as liberals keep insisting. But this same freedom often means fewer marriages, more divorces, fewer children, an ageing population and of course, a lot more abortions, just to mention a few things, none of which are good for society as a whole.

Is this really nothing but 'progress'? An objective observer would have to say, perhaps not.

# St Colmcille's parish welcomes the world

Ruadhán Jones

St Colmcille's parish in Belfast celebrated the many diverse cultures within its parish family on Mission Sunday, October 22.

Every continent was represented at the Mass celebrated by Fr Conor McGrath, which was followed by a colourful reception.

"It was another amazing opportunity for building and strengthening community," a spokesperson for the parish said.

"What a joy it was to celebrate the rich and diverse cultures we have within our parish."



Fr Conor McGrath is joined by children of St Colmcille's parish during Mass for Mission Sunday on October 22 as they celebrated the parish's cultural diversity.



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# Bishop Nulty praises Carlow parish for ‘preferential option for youth ministry’

Ruadhán Jones

Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty praised the parish of Graiguecullen-Killeshin, Co. Carlow, for promoting a “preferential option for youth ministry” at the parish’s youth Mass.

“The parish of Graiguecullen-Killeshin does youth ministry well,” Bishop Nulty said in his homily in St Clare’s Church, Graiguecullen.

“I realise this is very much stating the obvious! Graiguecullen-Killeshin certainly stands shoulder high not only in our diocese but also in the country in this regard.”

Bishop Nulty commended parish priest Fr John Dunphy and the youth ministry team for making a “preferential option for youth ministry” possible.

“As we synodally reflect on faith structures in the future that will stand the test of time, those that have youth as a focus will certainly flourish,” the bishop said.

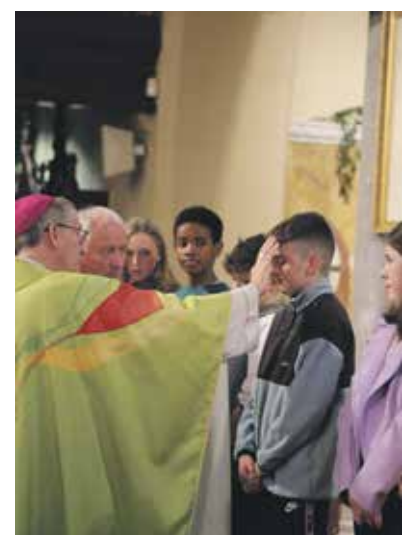
As the diocese of Kildare and Leighlin initiates a new structure, in which parishes will be grouped in clusters, he suggested “one parish in every cluster might specialise in it [youth ministry], and invite the other local clergy to be part of its outreach”.



A group of young people received a special blessing with chrisom oil acknowledging their commitment to their Confirmation promises in becoming involved in parish ministry groups. Pictured are AJ Bolger, Callum Berry, Ciara Dunne, Clodagh Ryan, Cormac Kehoe, Craig Bolger, Ella McCartney, Hannah Dagg, Hanora O’Driscoll, Lexi du Plessis, Matthew Onikoyi, Nicole Mullins, Poppy Hayden and Ricky Matthews.



Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty joins Fr John Dunphy and Graiguecullen-Killeshin’s young people after celebrating Mass in St Clare’s Church.





# THE SYNODAL TIMES

NOVEMBER  
2023 ISSUE

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# Euthanasia turns doctors into ‘agents of death’



Euthanasia undermines foundational principles of Irish life, Bishop Kevin Doran tells  
**Ruadhán Jones**

**I**reland’s political powers are considering legislating to legalise assisted suicide, a move that would have far reaching consequences for Irish life. This comes despite palliative carers and most recently the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland coming out against the practice in a submission to an Oireachtas committee.

With debate ongoing regarding the ‘Dying with Dignity Bill’, Bishop Kevin Doran has called on legislators to see that assisted suicide adds nothing to the common good.

The chair of the Irish bishops’ council for life warns that, if legalised, it would “undermine some of the most important principles on which our civilisation is founded”.

“Assisted suicide, like abortion, places doctors and nurses in a position of being asked to become agents of death rather than advocates for life.

“It undermines the relationship



A demonstrator against assisted suicide joins a protest outside parliament in London in 2015. Photo: CNS/Stefan Wermuth, Reuters

of trust between the medical profession and those who are sick,” he says.

The Joint Oireachtas Committee on Assisted Dying is currently considering the ‘Dying with Dignity Bill’ proposed by TD Gino Kenny.

Mr Kenny’s bill seeks to legalise assisted suicide, whereby it would “be lawful for a medical practitioner to provide assistance to a qualifying person to end his or her own life”.

## Compassion

While the bill has been couched in language of compassion, Bishop Doran tells *The Irish Catholic* that legislating assisted suicide would

be “a refusal to act, to accompany people”.

“It’s presented as compassionate but what we’re actually saying to people is maybe it’s better for you to move along because you’re taking up a lot of our time, a lot of our energy, a lot of economic resources,” the bishop says.

Dr Doran adds that this is not necessarily what is going through the minds of family members. But the legislation would send a message at a societal level that “our solution to people being chronically ill is to take their life”.

“Part of the problem is that accompanying people requires more time, more energy, more compassion and more resources than providing people with assisted suicide,” says Bishop Doran.

Priests and bishops know what it is like to accompany a person who is terminally ill, doing so on a regular basis in their pastoral ministry.

“Anyone who is involved in the care of people who are terminally ill on a regular basis will know that the final days and weeks of a person’s life, while they can be very challenging for the person themselves and for their families, can also be times of significant growth and healing,”

Bishop Doran says.

“The time between when someone realises their illness is terminal and when they actually die can be a time of movement to greater inner peace for themselves,” bishop explains.

“And my own experience both in my family as well as in my pastoral ministry would say that the time spent with someone who died can be an enormously privileged time for a family member, even if not necessarily an easy time.”

However, if assisted suicide “is actually implemented, it cuts off all possibility of growth and healing immediately – that’s the end”.

## Society

While everybody’s suffering is personal, as a society we seem to be unable to accept any level of pain or inconvenience, Bishop Doran continues.

Things like terminal or chronic illness “disturb us”, he says: “I don’t mean the person who’s sick, but often it’s the people around them who understandably are disturbed.

“But what society is saying now is, you don’t have to be disturbed, we have a solution to that.”

The difficulty of dealing with

intolerable pain is often raised as an argument in favour of assisted dying. However, palliative care workers have repeatedly stressed the efficacy of their work and modern medicines in easing a person’s pain.

Despite this, palliative care is “still an area that is probably undeveloped” says Bishop Doran. “It doesn’t get the same level of investment that certain other things do.”

However, drawing on his own pastoral experience and that of other priests, he notes that “often the struggle is not so much with physical pain only, its emotional pain”.

**“It becomes society’s way of dealing with people who find life difficult instead of reaching out to try and help them”**

“It’s the sadness of separation from loved ones, the sadness of feeling that life is coming to an end and things are unfinished,” he continues.

An integral part of dealing with that is not so much with medicines, but “through creating a living faith” where there’s somebody “who will spend time with them and listen and they know that they’re being heard. There’s a huge amount of healing in that as well”.

And yet, we seem not to be able to cope with the idea that maybe sometimes we have to make sacrifices to walk with or accompany others “through the valley of darkness”, he says.

He pointed to how, in other jurisdictions, assisted suicide is quickly extended to include not only the chronically ill, but also the depressed, people who are autistic or have some other form of intellectual disability.

“It becomes society’s way of dealing with people who find life difficult instead of reaching out to try and help them,” he says.

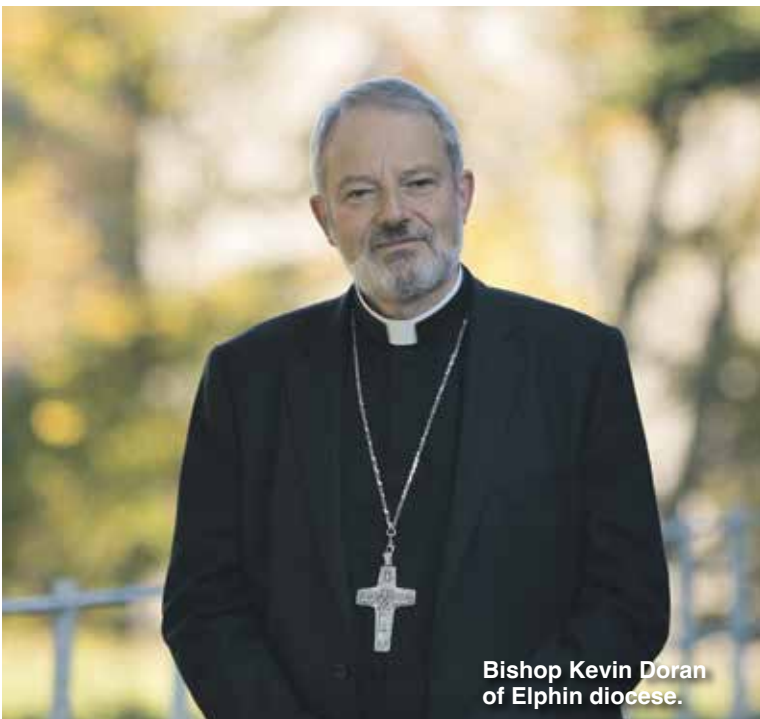
From the perspective both of faith, legalising assisted suicide must be opposed, according to the Dr Doran.

“From the perspective of faith, the Church would say human life is a gift given to us in trust and it’s not ours to do with absolutely as we wish,” he explained.

However, with many people of different faiths and no faith at all involved in the debate, the bishop appeals to the common good to defend opposition to assisted suicide.

“I would hope that our legislators would see that this proposal to allow to assisted suicide adds nothing to the common good and undermines some of the most important principles on which our civilisation is founded,” Bishop Doran finishes.

**“It’s presented as compassionate but what we’re actually saying to people is maybe it’s better for you to move along because you’re taking up a lot of our time, a lot of our energy, a lot of economic resources”**



Bishop Kevin Doran of Elphin diocese.

# Out&About

## Northern lights



**DONEGAL:** Faith and Light Communities in the Northern Region, Carrickmacross, Tydavnet, Clones, Lisnaskea/Newtownbutler and Enniskillen gather in Lough Derg for their one-day Regional Pilgrimage on Sunday, September 10. Fr Brendan Gallagher celebrated the Mass accompanied by Fr La Flynn.



**KERRY:** Fr Gregory Carroll OP celebrates Mass for Fr Thaddeus Moriarty OP (1603-1653) at 'Poll an Aifrinn' Mass rock, with Deacon Eamon Salmon, Wexford, and Fr David McGovern OP, Tralee. Photo: John Cleary.



**DOWN:** Pictured are the 28 lay women and men who were commissioned as lay funeral ministers by Fr Eugene O'Hagan Vicar General and Chancellor of the diocese.

### IN SHORT

#### Second Oireachtas essay competition launched

An essay competition aimed at getting young people reflecting on and discussing politics was launched by the Ceann Comhairle on Tuesday, October 17.

Seán Ó Fearghaíl TD launched the all-island Oireachtas competition in Leinster House, on the theme 'Parliamentary Politics Matters for Peace'.

Students North and South are invited to compete for €6,000 in prizemoney.

"This year's Oireachtas Essay Competition invites students to think about on how members of parliament should be, and can be, agents of peace, and how the work of parliament can contribute to peacebuilding," said Mr Ó Fearghaíl in a statement.

"The latest outbreak of violence in the Middle East, the invasion of Ukraine and the conflict in these and other places present what appear to many people as intractable problems that defy hope.

"Yet peace must come, and it must be worked for. No matter how difficult progress may seem, people of goodwill must work for peace. Cultural, religious, community and political leaders all have a vital role."

The essay competition was started last year by Independent NUI Senator Ronan Mullen.

The competition is bilingual and aims to get young people reflecting on and discussing politics and the democratic process.

Students across the island of Ireland in 5th or 6th year for the Leaving Cert or in AS/A Level are eligible to enter.

#### Chef launches Catholic school's Home Ec room

St Mary's Secondary School Baldoyle welcomed celebratory chef, food writer and television presenter Donal Skehan to launch their new Home Economics Kitchen.

Mr Skehan was met by Dr Edel Greene, Principal, Mr John Moore, Deputy Principal and Home Economics Teacher Ms Rachel Flynn.

To celebrate the occasion, St Mary's held a 'Creative Tasty Cupcake Bake-Off Challenge'.

Mr Skehan met the contestants and discussed ingredients, presentation and cooking tips with each of them.

"Following fanfare and drumroll, Mr Skehan cut the ribbon to launch the new kitchen," a spokesperson for the school said. "We are delighted with the new kitchen."

#### New photo exhibition tells story of Irish nuns

'Daring to Hope', a photo exhibition telling the story of Irish religious sisters, was launched in Iveagh House recently.

A voluntary group has developed a photographic exhibition to share the multifaceted story of Irish Religious Sisters between 1923-2023, coinciding with the centenary of the Irish State.

Caoimhe de Barra, CEO of Trócaire, spoke of the multiple 'glass ceilings' that these sisters broke and continue to do in their ministry.

Minister of State, Sean Fleming TD also welcomed people to Iveagh House and took time to speak with many religious sisters in attendance.



**CAVAN:** Pictured are Paul Sheridan, Sarah Oates, Mary Winters and Sally Roddy of Viatores Christi, at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Kingscourt where they were guest speakers at Masses in the parish.



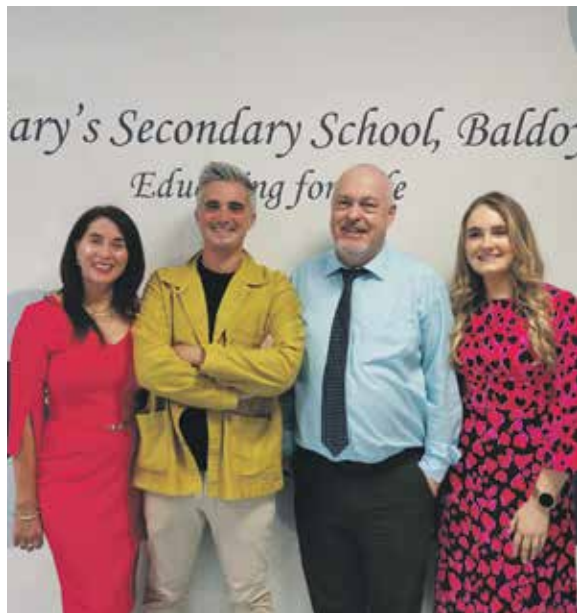
**ROSCOMMON:** Bishop of Elphin Kevin Doran presents a Benemerenti Medal to Kathleen Conlon, sacristan of St Joseph's Church, Geevagh, for 40 years, who is joined by her sister Mary and parish priest Fr Laurence Cullen.



**DUBLIN:** Parliamentary Politics Matters for Peace is the theme of the second Annual Oireachtas Essay Competition which was launched today by Ceann Comhairle Seán Ó Feargháil TD in Leinster House on October 17. Ceann Comhairle Ó Feargháil is pictured with students Fia Scally, Senator Ronan Mullen, Ava North and Coco Evans from Newpark Comprehensive Blackrock Co. Dublin at the launch in Leinster House. Photo: John McElroy.



**MAYO:** Ukrainian Catholics in Ireland gather in Knock for Mass celebrated by Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski, responsible for the Ukrainian Catholic community in Britain and Ireland, as the community continues to pray for peace.



**DUBLIN:** Celebrity chef Donal Skehan visits St Mary's Secondary School Baldoye. He is pictured with Principal Dr Edel Greene, Deputy Principal John Moore and Home Economics teacher Rachel Flynn.



**DUBLIN:** Maria Naughton and Sophia Deykun are pictured with Donal Skehan.



**DUBLIN:** Students Amy McMenemy, Emma Mulvey, Amy Tighe, Nicole Font and Grace Mclaughlin enjoy a cooking tutorial from chef Donal Skehan.



Edited by Ruadhán Jones  
Ruadhan@irishcatholic.ie



Events deadline is a week in advance of publication



**CORK:** The Malankara Catholic Community celebrate their 93rd Annual Reunion with Mass celebrated by Bishop of Cork and Ross Fintan Gavin in North Cathedral on Sunday, October 8.



**ARMAGH:** Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin joins Ulster school communities as they mark 100 years of the MacRory Cup.



**CORK:** The Great Britain National President of the Catenian Association, Mark Conroy, pays a courtesy visit to Cork City Hall on Saturday, October 14, to meet the Lord Mayor of Cork, Kieran McCarthy and to sign the City's Visitors Book.

**ANTRIM**

Antrim parish rosary and night prayer takes place every Tuesday at 8pm in St Joesph's Church.

**ARMAGH**

Matt Talbot Mass to take place Monday, November 6, at 6.30pm in St Malachy's Church, organised by the Matt Talbot Prayer society.

**CAVAN**

Cavan Town Mens Shed meet at rear of Cana House, Farnham St, Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10am-1pm. New members always welcome.

**CARLOW**

A mass will be celebrated in honour of 'The Little Flower', St Therese of Lisieux, in St Joseph's Church, Ballyadams, on Friday, October 27 at 7.30pm. There will be individual blessings with the Little Flower's Relic after Mass.

**CORK**

A Medjugorje prayer meeting takes place every Wednesday at 8pm in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the Third Order chapel, Holy Trinity Church, Fr Matthew Quay.

**DONEGAL**

Mass for parish ministers of the word and Eucharist, as well as choirs and musicians, with Bishop Alan McGuckian taking place November 12 at 2.30pm in the Church of the Irish Martyrs, Letterkenney, followed by a meal and conversation.

**DOWN**

Lectio Divina in Newry Cathedral takes place in the Parish Centre on Thursday after 10.30am Mass, usually getting underway by 11.15am.

**DUBLIN**

St John Henry Newman conference takes place on the theme 'Frustration and Failure' in Newman University Church on Thursday, October 26, from 5.30pm. Guest speaker Dr Paul Shrimpton.

**FERMANAGH**

A novena Mass to St Peregrine, patron of those who have cancer, is celebrated every Tuesday at 7pm in Holy Cross Church in Lisnaskea. It is also live streamed at Churchservices.tv/lisnaskea.

**GALWAY**

October rosary procession takes place in Galway Cathedral at 8pm each Sunday during October

**KERRY**

Youth 2000 Prayer Group (18-35) meets on Thursdays at 8pm in St John's Church side chapel, Tralee.

**KILDARE**

Triduum of prayer in Sallins parish for Vocations to the diocesan priesthood takes place Thursday October 26 to Saturday, October 28, at 7pm. Guest speakers Bishop Denis Nulty, Sr Brenda Dolphin and seminarian Sean Murphy.

**KILKENNY**

St John's Parish Scripture group meets in the presbytery at 7.30pm each Thursday to reflect on Scripture texts for the following Sunday's Mass.

**LAOIS**

Portlaoise parish annual bereavement Mass takes place Thursday, November 2, at 7.30pm in the Church of Ss Peter and Paul.

**LEITRIM**

Daily rosary at 6pm in St Joseph's Church, Leitrim Village.

**LONGFORD**

Beginning on November 4 and the first Saturday of every month, 10am Mass in St Mel's Cathedral will be a Mass of Healing, with the celebration of the Sacrament of the Sick.

**LOUTH**

'Does God exist? Are you happy?' Talks on faith for young and adults by the Neocatechumenal Way take place in Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Drogheda; Mondays and Thursdays at 7.30pm, come and listen!

**MAYO**

The next Latin Mass will take place at 6pm in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, Knock Shrine, on Sunday, November 12.

**MEATH**

Fr John Byrne to continue his introduction to the Bible on Mondays at 12 noon via the Kells webcam, accessible on www.kellsparish.ie. This year he will introduce the St. John's Gospel and each

session will last 25 minutes. For queries, you may contact Fr. John on email: jplowebyrne@gmail.com

**MONAGHAN**

During the month of October the rosary will be recited at Our Lady's Shrine, Kednaminsha, Inniskeen, each Sunday at 8pm. The rosaries will be offered to ask Our Lady to increase vocations to the diocesan priesthood and to ask God's blessings on those serving as priests and religious.

**OFFALY**

Tullamore parish host Youth 2000 prayer meeting on Thursdays, beginning with Holy Hour at 7pm and a happy hour at 8pm.

**ROSCOMMON**

Eucharistic adoration takes place the first Friday of each month in Drumboylan Church (Ardcarne Parish) from 9am-10pm.

**SLIGO**

A monthly Mass led by young people and celebrated by Bishop Kevin Doran will take place the third Saturday of every month at 6.30pm in St Anne's Church.

**TIPPERARY**

All Saints family party takes place on Monday, October 30 in Holy Family Mission, Glecomeragh, from 11am-2pm. Prayer, talk, Mass, music, fun and games for all the family. Booking essential, contact info@holyfamilymission.ie

A holy hour for vocations takes place every third Thursday in Glencomeragh House, Kilsheelan, from 7.30-8.30pm, including adoration, rosary, music and reflections. Live streamed on www.holyfamilymission.ie

**WATERFORD**

The Cistercian Community at St Mary's Abbey, Glencairn invite single women, aged 19-40, to their upcoming monastic vocations weekend on October 27-29. Contact Sr Sarah at vocations@glencairnabbey.org to register.

**WESTMEATH**

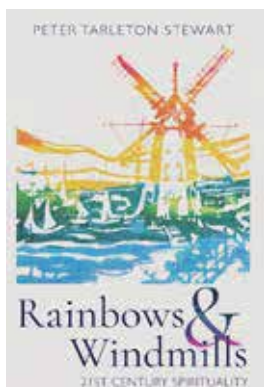
Cana couples event takes place Saturday November 4 at 5pm in the Ceili community House, Harbour Road, Kilbeggan, N91NY28. A chance to meet other couples for discussion and food. Contact: canaireland@gmail.com

# Christmas

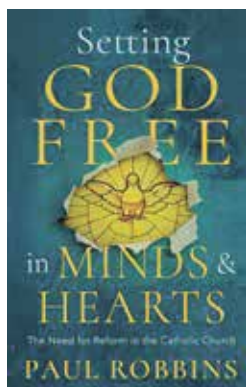
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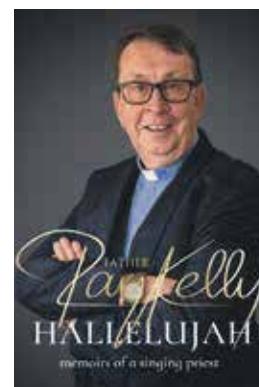
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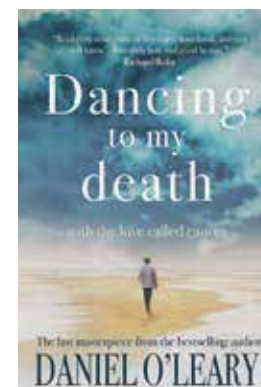
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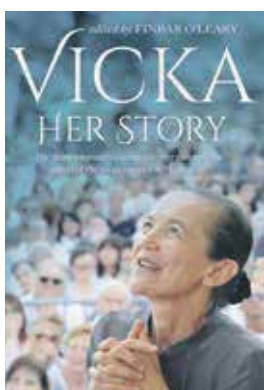
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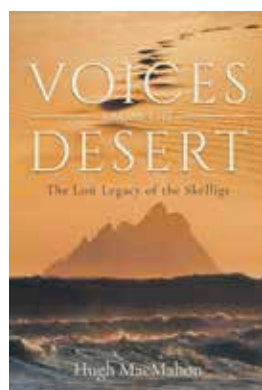
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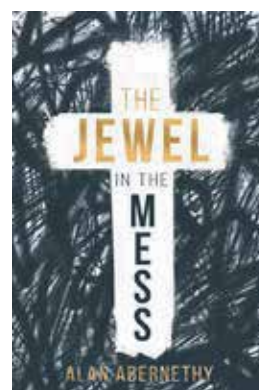
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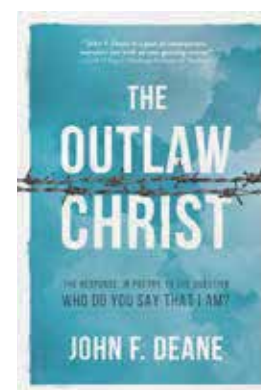
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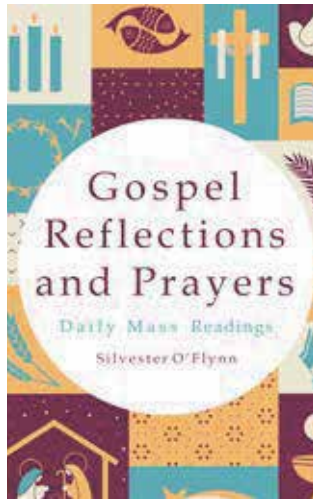
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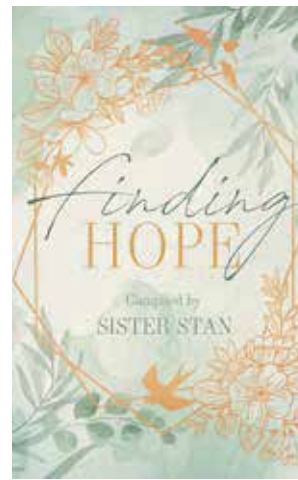
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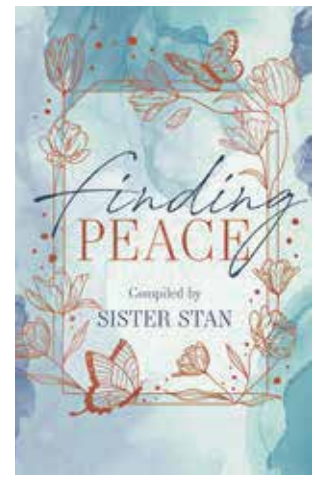
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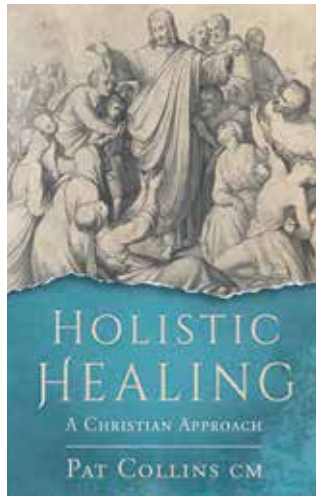
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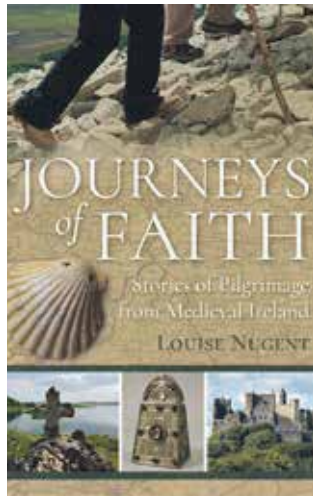
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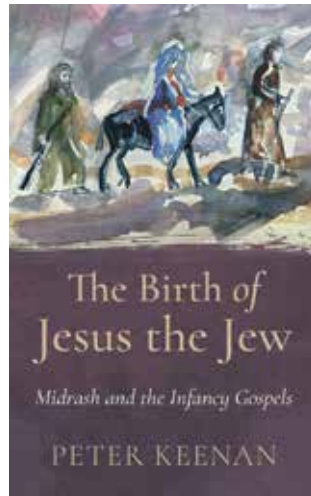
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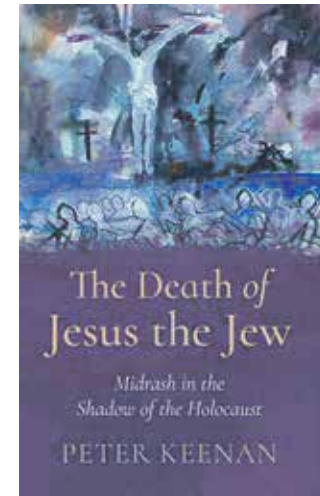
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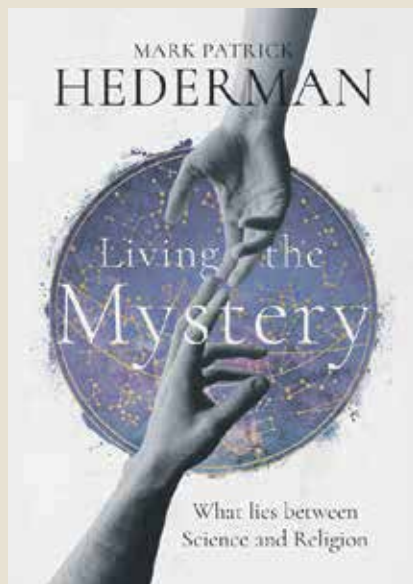
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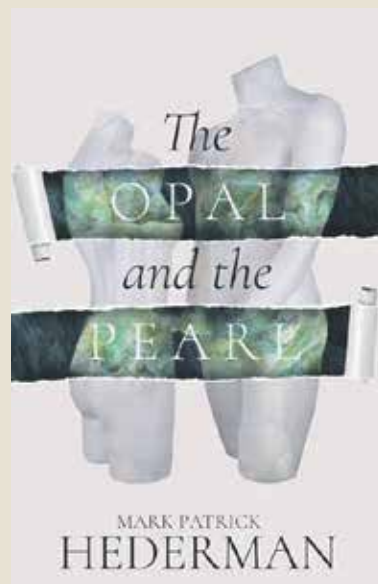
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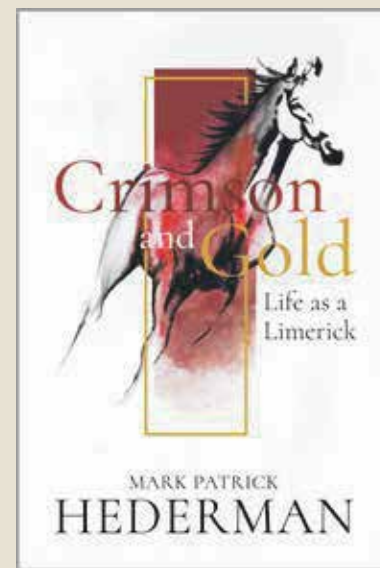
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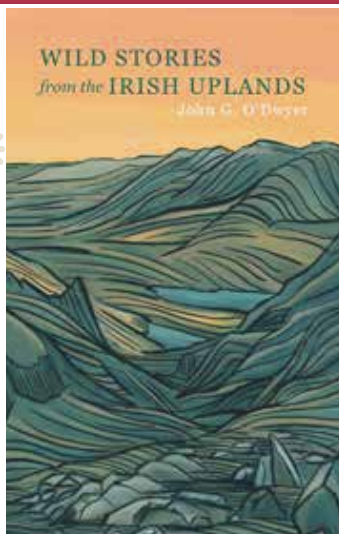
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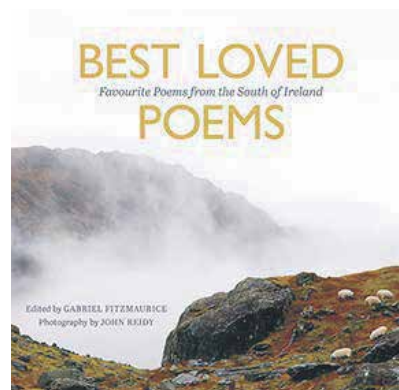
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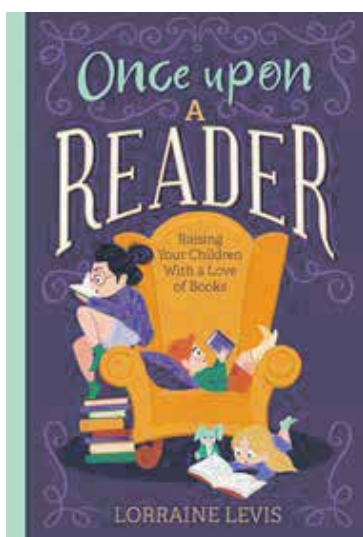
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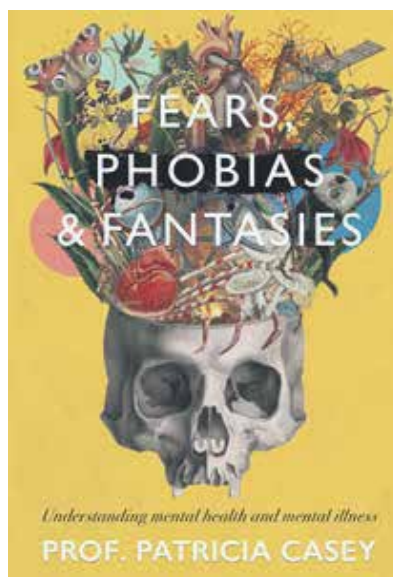
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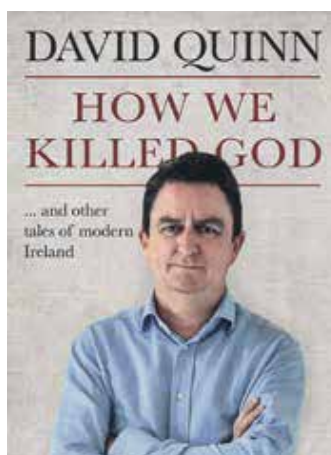
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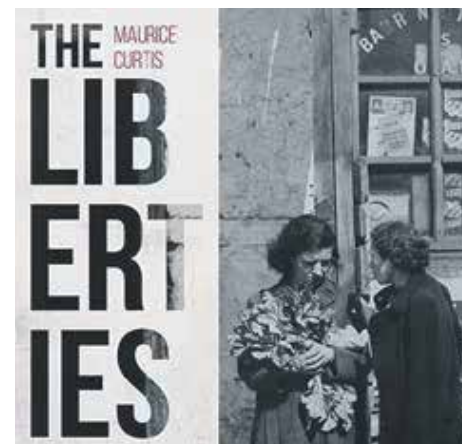
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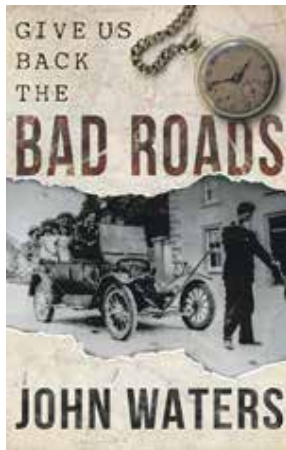
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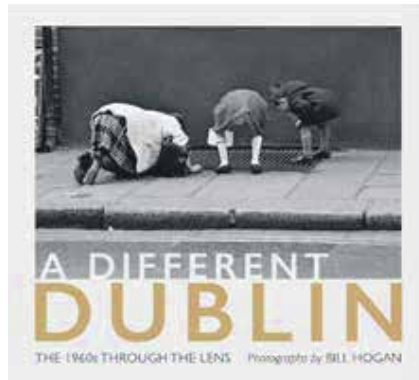
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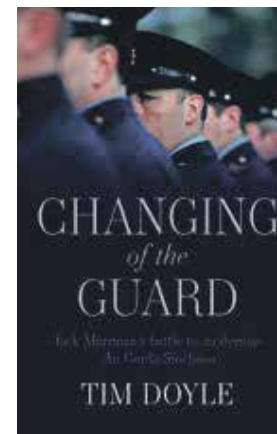
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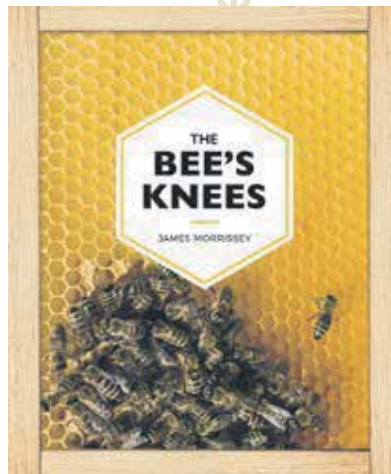
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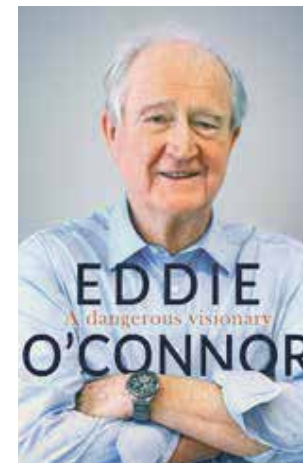
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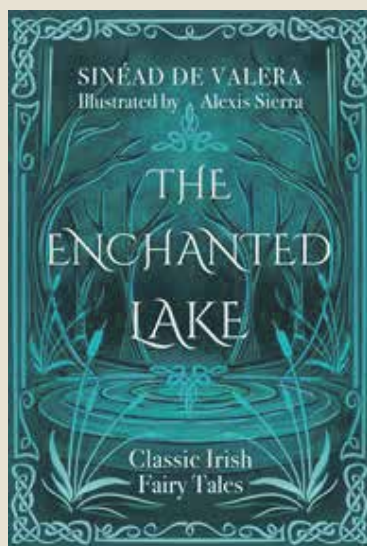
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# World Report

## IN BRIEF

### Mexican priest escapes gunman attack

● Fr José Filiberto Velázquez Florencio, a priest of the Diocese of Chilpancingo-Chilapa in the Mexican state of Guerrero, reported that he was attacked around midnight October 18. The “motive”, he said, was his work in defence of human rights in the area.

Fr Velázquez is director of the ‘Minerva Bello’ Centre for the Rights of Victims of Violence, an organisation that provides support to the victims or relatives of those who have been attacked, disappeared, forced to move, or killed and is based in Chilpancingo.

In an interview with ACI Prensa, the priest said the attack occurred when he was returning home after providing advice to students from the state of Chiapas attending the Rural Teachers College of Ayotzinapa, a town in the state of Guerrero.

### US Catholic nurses sue state to continue abortion-reversal ministry

● A mother-daughter duo of Catholic nurses and founders of a nonprofit health organisation are suing the state of Colorado to be allowed to continue their ministry helping women reverse unwanted chemical abortions.

Dede Chism and Abby Sinnett, who run the Denver-area Bella Health and Wellness, are arguing that a new Colorado law banning abortion pill reversal impedes the First Amendment rights of their clients and their medical practice.

Ms Chism and Ms Sinnett,

represented by the religious liberty law firm Becket, asked federal district judge Daniel Domenico for a renewed temporary hold on the law while their case works its way through the court.

Their legal complaint posits that Bella and its providers “sincerely believe that they are religiously obligated to assist any woman facing a threat of miscarriage who requests their help, whether that risk arises biologically, due to physical trauma, or because she willingly or unwillingly took the first abortion pill”.

### Latvian bishop: Church can't condone living in sin

● In response to a question about blessing same-sex unions, a Latvian archbishop at the Synod on Synodality warned that telling someone living in sin that “everything is all right” places that person in great spiritual danger.

Speaking at a synod press conference on October 18, Archbishop Zbignev Stankevičs of Riga, Latvia, said that the Church teaches that people with same-sex attraction should be accepted with respect, quoting Pope Francis that there is room for everyone in the Church.

“We welcome with love and respect, but true love cannot be separated from truth because if love is separated from truth, it is no longer love,” Archbishop Stankevičs said.

“If there is a person living in sin and we tell this person, ‘Everything is all right with you, it's OK, go ahead,’ we do harm because this person is in danger. When he dies, he will be in great danger,” he added.

### Mexican diocese building new shrine to martyrs of Cristero War

● The Archdiocese of Durango in Mexico has begun the construction of a shrine dedicated to the martyrs who offered their lives during the Cristero War. The new church is expected to be completed by mid-2026.

The Cristero War, an armed conflict in Mexico that lasted from 1926 to 1929, was triggered by anti-clerical legislation enacted by then-president Plutarco Elías Calles, which unleashed bloody religious persecution.

Not only did many who took up arms to defend their faith lose their lives, but the government also killed some who peacefully expressed their faith in public.

## Vatican confirms it will welcome Nicaraguan priests released from prison

The Vatican has confirmed that it has been asked and has agreed to receive 12 priests who had been detained in Nicaragua.

“The Holy See has agreed; they will be received by an official of the Secretariat of State in the afternoon (Oct. 19) and housed in facilities of the Diocese of Rome,” Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office, said in a written statement October 19.

The release of the priests and their expatriation to Rome came following “fruitful talks with the Holy See”, ending in an agreement between the Vatican and the government of President Daniel Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo, according to a government communique dated October 18 and published on social media, October 19.

The Nicaraguan government note said the decision, which “was reached with the intercession of high authorities of the Catholic Church in Nicaragua and in the Vatican, represents the enduring will and commitment to find solutions, in recognition and encouragement of so much faith and hope that always animates the Nicaraguan faithful, who make up the majority” of the population.

The list of 12 priests does not include Bishop Rolando Álvarez Lagos of Matagalpa, who has been in prison the



past 16 months after being sentenced to more than 26 years on charges of treason.

Some of the priests sent to Rome have been accused of supporting the anti-government protests in April 2018, which left more than 300 people dead and thousands more exiled.

Pope Francis said in February he was “pained” by the news coming out of Nicaragua and recalled “with concern” the situation of Bishop Álvarez, who was sentenced February 10 and stripped of his Nicaraguan citizenship.

The Pope prayed for Mary's intercession to open

the hearts of the “responsible politicians and all citizens” to the pursuit of peace, which he said is achieved through the “patient exercise of dialogue”.

Bishop Álvarez played an important role in mediation efforts between the Nicaraguan government and protesters in 2018 following waves of civil unrest which killed more than 360 people. Mr Ortega, who has been in power since 2007, has since accused the bishop and the Church of attempting to overthrow him.

In his comments the Pope also noted the 222 political prisoners deported from

Nicaragua to the United States February 9, a group which included five priests, a deacon, two seminarians and two media professionals employed by the Diocese of Matagalpa. Bishop Álvarez was on the list of deportees to be sent to the United States but refused to leave Nicaragua.

Those who did go to the United States were stripped of their Nicaraguan citizenship and were given a two-year humanitarian visa by the US government. Spain has offered to give them citizenship.

## Relief in Nigeria after abducted religious released

The leadership of the Missionary Daughters of Mater Ecclesiae (MDME) in Nigeria has expressed appreciation to the people of God following the release of three Catholic nuns, a seminarian, and their driver who were abducted from Nigeria's Abakaliki Diocese on October 5.

In a statement shared with *ACI Africa*, MDME Vicar General Sister Gloria Nnabuchi provided details about the release of Sr Rosemary Ejiowokoghre Osiowhemu, Sr Maria Ngozi Okoye of the Risen Lord, Sr Josephine

Mary Chinyekwuo, seminarian Peter Eyakeno Sunday, and Awoke Emmanuel.

“With gratitude to our great God, the superior general and the entire members of the Missionary Daughters of Mater Ecclesiae joyfully announce the safe release of our three kidnapped nuns, a seminarian, and the driver on the night of October 13 and October 14, respectively,” Sr Nnabuchi said in the statement dated October 14.

“We sincerely appreciate the Church and all the people of goodwill for your

kind support throughout this trial moment,” she added. “Thanks and God bless you all”.

In an interview with *ACI Africa*, Sr Nnabuchi said a ransom of “1 million Naira [€1,230]” had been paid for their release.

The five were on their way to a burial in Nigeria's Imo State when they came in contact with their abductors.

The abductors had reached out to MDME leadership in Nigeria and proposed a ransom for the release of the victims.

## Synod assembly to issue ‘Letter to the People of God’ at session's end

Members of the Synod of Bishops will issue a ‘Letter to the People of God’ at the close of the first session of the synod assembly, which ends October 29, the Vatican said.

The letter, the drafting of which was approved by the synod assembly, will

be discussed both during small group working sessions and among the entire assembly October 23 after a Mass for synod participants in St Peter's Basilica, the synod general secretariat announced in a statement October 19.

It added that additional time will be made for synod participants to discuss the methodology and steps for the next phase of the synodal process to take place between the first session's close October 29 and the second session scheduled to take place at the

Vatican in October 2024. The statement said the assembly's synthesis document will not be presented to and discussed by synod participants in two parts – ‘A’ and ‘B’ – as originally indicated on the synod's schedule.





Edited by Jason Osborne  
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## A war-weary world



Israeli soldiers patrol an area near Israel's border with the Gaza Strip in southern Israel. Photo: OSV News/Amir Cohen, Reuters

## More than half a million children pray global rosary for peace in Holy Land

Amid the Israel-Hamas war, more than half a million children across the world prayed the rosary for peace.

On October 18, well over 500,000 kids participated in an annual global rosary campaign sponsored by Aid to the Church in Need.

This year, ACN dedicated the annual rosary to "healing and protection of the suffering in the Holy Land," according to a press release issued by the organisation.

The release noted that the war is currently preventing ACN from aiding the small Christian community in the Holy Land, "but we stand ready to do so," said Edward Clancy, director of outreach for ACN's US office.

Mr Clancy reiterated Pope Francis' call for humanitarian corridors to enable vital aid deliveries to Christians in Gaza and in the West Bank.

The war itself was sparked by Hamas' October 7 ambush – coinciding with a Sabbath and Jewish holiday – on some 22 locations in Israel. Hamas members gunned down civilians and took at least 199 hostages, according to Israel, including infants, the elderly and people with disabilities.

Israel declared war on Hamas October 8, placing Gaza under siege and pounding the region with airstrikes as Hamas has returned fire. To date, some 1,400 in Israel, and at least 3,500 in Gaza have been killed, according

to Palestinian officials. The ensuing humanitarian crisis has left the Middle East "on the verge of the abyss," said United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres.

ACN said that it has maintained contact with Sr Nabila Saleh, a Sister of the Holy Rosary assigned to Gaza's only Catholic parish, the Church of the Holy Family.

Sr Nabila said she and her community are determined to remain in place and not flee toward southern Gaza ahead of an anticipated ground invasion by Israel.

"We will not go," said Sr Nabila. "People have nothing, not the basic things; where should we go? To die on the street? We have old

people, and people with multiple disabilities and elderly people. We need medicine. Many hospitals are destroyed. Where should we go?"

Holy Family pastor Fr Gabriel Romanelli, an Argentine and Incarnate Word priest, echoed that determination in communications to ACN.

"What will (Gaza residents) find in the south of the Gaza strip? They will find hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people who have fled Gaza City," he said. "And there is nothing in the south and the health and humanitarian situation is disastrous, with lack of water and food."

## Church in India celebrates two recent supreme court verdicts

Two Supreme Court cases in India whose verdicts came down within the same 24 hours are being lauded by the Indian Church.

On October 16, the Supreme Court of India rejected the plea of a mother of two children to abort her foetus in the 27th week – upholding the foetus' "right to live".

Under the abortion rules in India, called medical termination of pregnancy, abortion after 24 weeks requires medical proof of danger to the mother or to

the foetus if the pregnancy is allowed to continue.

The following day, October 17, the Supreme Court said "no" to legalising gay marriage.

The split majority verdict (3-2) by the five-member bench headed by the chief justice of India, Dhananjaya Yeshwant Chandrachud, rejected the plea for legalising gay marriage, which was strongly opposed by the federal government.

The legalisation of gay marriage, the judgment noted, "can only be done by

the legislature" and that "any attempt by the court to do so would amount to encroaching upon the field set for the legislature," the Indian Express English daily reported.

Hailing the verdict, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India in a press statement pointed out that the judgment "reaffirms the institution of traditional marriage, rooted in the sacred teachings and values held by the Catholic Church and many other faiths".



## Pope to celebrate memorial Mass for Pope Benedict

● Pope Francis will celebrate a memorial Mass November 3 for Pope Benedict XVI and cardinals and bishops who have died in the past year.

The Mass will take place at the main altar in St Peter's Basilica at 11 am, the Vatican announced.

Pope Benedict died December 31 at the age of 95.

The previous day, the November 2 feast of All Souls, the Pope will celebrate Mass at the Rome War Cemetery, the burial place of members of the military forces of the Commonwealth who died during and immediately after World War II. The 426 men buried there died between November 1942 and February 1947. They came from the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand and South Africa.

While Pope Francis often goes to a cemetery to pray for the faithful departed with their family members on the feast of All Souls, he also marked the feast day at the French Military Cemetery in Rome in 2021 and at the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery in Nettuno, Italy, in 2017.

## Palestine ambassador: Vatican should play role in mediating conflict's end

● The Vatican, especially Pope Francis, must double its efforts and urge the international community to end the massacre of Palestinians killed in Gaza in the Israel-Hamas war, Palestine's ambassador to Denmark said.

Speaking to *OSV News* October 18, Ambassador Manuel Sarkis Hassassian said that while he appreciates Pope Francis' call for humanitarian corridors in Gaza to be guaranteed, the dire situation and the international community's silence about what he described as "war crimes" committed by Israel merits a much stronger statement.

"I mean, it cannot continue with this, with the international community blessing it, not doing anything to stop this,"

Mr Hassassian, who is Catholic, told *OSV News*. He said the Vatican "should plead to the international community, 'Please Europe, America: Stop this carnage because you are the only ones who can stop it'".

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said that at least 1,400 Israelis being killed by Hamas in a country of fewer than 10 million people is the "equivalent to over 50,000 Americans murdered in a single day. That's 20 9/11s".

Mr Hassassian said that "the narrative of the Palestinians being under occupation for the last 56 years" is being ignored, and "the end carnage that is taking place today in Gaza" is a badge of "dishonour" for the international community.

## World Jewish Congress asks Pope to use 'moral authority' to help Israeli hostages

● Pope Francis met with the president of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) amid the ongoing Israel-Hamas war, with the leader imploring the Holy Father to use his "moral authority" to address the hostage crisis in that conflict.

The WJC said in a press release on its website that WJC President Ronald Lauder during the meeting "appealed to the Pope to continue to leverage his moral authority to urge for the safe return of Israeli hostages held in Gaza" following the terrorist organisation Hamas' assault on Israel on October 7.

Pope Francis earlier this month called for the release of the hostages. The Israel Defence Forces said this week that it had notified nearly 200 families about their "abducted loved ones".

In his meeting with the Pope, Mr Lauder urged the Pontiff "to use your power, to use your strength, to get these hostages released"

# Letter from Rome

## In Gaza war, Israel vs Christian leaders may be preview of Israel vs Vatican



John L. Allen Jr

**W**ars, especially in the 21st Century, are fought on multiple levels. Beyond what happens on the battlefield, there's also the 'soft power' contest to claim the high moral ground, and in that sense, one of the emerging fronts in the bloody conflict in Gaza now pits Israel against the Christian leadership of the Holy Land.

In that standoff, the Vatican for the moment appears caught somewhere in the middle, though over time it's likely that its position will shift in the direction of the Christian leadership – in part because one of those leaders is their own man on the ground, new Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem.

The Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, a body that brings together the Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant leadership of the Holy Land, has issued two statements on the conflict so far, both of which have brought swift responses from Israel.

On October 7, the day that Hamas's surprise attack on Israel triggered the present conflict, the Christian leaders issued a statement saying that "our faith, which is founded on the teachings of Jesus Christ, compels us to advocate for the cessation of all violent and military activities that bring harm to both Palestinian and Israeli civilians".

### Ambiguity

That language triggered a quick response from the Israeli embassy to the Holy See, which complained of "linguistic ambiguities and terms that allude to a false symmetry".

"To suggest parallelisms where they don't exist isn't diplomatic pragmatism, it's just wrong," the embassy said.

The tit-for-tat cycle unfolded again in the following days, with another statement from the Christian leaders followed by a series of ten posts on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter, from Raphael Schutz, the Israeli Ambassador to the Holy See.

"We are witnessing a new cycle of violence with an unjustifiable attack against all civilians," the Church leaders said October 13. "Tensions continue to rise and more and more innocent and vulnerable people are paying the ultimate price as the dramatic level of death and destruction in Gaza clearly show."

They asserted that Gaza's population is being deprived of electricity, water, food, fuel and medicine, warning that orders to evacuate the north of Gaza "will only deepen an already disastrous humanitarian catastrophe". They called upon Israel to allow humanitarian supplies to reach Gaza, and asked all parties to work to deescalate the conflict.

Mr Schutz called the statement "unfair, biased and one-sided".

**“The only party the patriarchs single out by name with a specific demand is Israel, the party that was viciously attacked a week ago”**

"What actually happened was that the 'circle of violence' (typical false symmetry expression) started with an unprovoked criminal attack by Hamas + Islamic Jihad (the Patriarchs refrain from mentioning their names) murdering more than 1300 Israelis and from other 35 nationalities," he said in one post.

"They also raped women, burned babies, beheaded people and took hostages. Simultaneously they launched a wide range missiles and rockets attacks against centres of civil population in Israel – cities, towns, villages, kibbutzim," he said.

"The only party the

patriarchs single out by name with a specific demand is Israel, the party that was viciously attacked a week ago," Mr Schutz said. "What a shame, especially when this comes from people of God."

So far, Pope Francis and his top diplomats appear to be striving to remain even-handed.

### Self-defence

The Pontiff has called for the release of Israeli hostages taken by Hamas and acknowledged Israel's right to self-defence, comments welcomed by Mr Schutz in an interview with *Crux*. Italian Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Pope's top diplomat, also made a short-notice visit to the Israeli embassy to the Holy See, expressing what Mr Schutz described as his "deep sentiments of pain and solidarity on the background of the terrible attack against Israel".

At the same time, Cardinal Parolin also gave an interview to Vatican News, the state-sponsored media platform, in which he said that while "it's the right of an attacked party to defend itself," he also stressed that "legitimate defence must respect the parameters of proportionality".

"It's necessary to recover a sense of reason, to abandon the blind logic of hatred and to refuse violence as a solution," he said.

The Vatican then announced that Cardinal Parolin had called Mohammad Shtayyeh, the Prime Minister of Palestine, in part to confirm "that the Holy See continues to recognise only the State of Palestine and its authorities as the representatives of the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people".

To some extent, tensions between Israel and the Christian leaders of the region are inevitable, given that the Christian population is largely Arab and Palestinian, and therefore tends to see Israeli policies in the same way as the broader Palestinian population.

It is also likely inevitable that as the war grinds on, the Vatican's own stance will become increasingly aligned



Women react outside St Porphyrios Greek Orthodox Church in Gaza October 20, after an explosion went off the night before. Several hundred people had been sheltering at the church complex, many of them sleeping, at the time of the explosion. The Hamas Ministry of Interior in Gaza blamed the explosion on an Israeli airstrike but responsibility for it had not yet been independently verified. Photo: OSV News/Mohammed Al-Masri, Reuters

with the patriarchs and Church leaders, and not only because Cardinal Pizzaballa is part of the group and the Vatican's most trusted figure on the ground – a trust reflected in the fact that Francis just made him a cardinal in his September 30 consistory.

Speaking to Pro Terra Sancta social media platforms, Cardinal Pizzaballa said that Christians in Gaza are suffering the same consequences of the war as other residents.

"Many Christian homes were destroyed [by Israeli bombs], not as a primary target, but still as so-called collateral damage," he said.

More deeply, the Vatican simply isn't the United States, where support for Israel is a bipartisan cornerstone of American foreign policy. Historically, the Vatican always has supported a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and, as one of the world's smallest states itself, it has always felt a natural sympathy for the Palestinians.

Moreover, the outlook of Vatican diplomats tends to reflect that of their European counterparts, especially Italy, on many foreign policy questions, and public opinion in Italy never has been uniformly pro-

Israel. While one recent poll shows that 63% of Italians sympathise with Israel after the Hamas attacks, only 25% support an invasion of Gaza, and later pro-Palestinian rallies were staged in several Italian cities, including Milan, Turin, Florence and Bari.

As time wears on, those attitudes likely will weigh on Vatican officials, especially since it's what they'll see and hear on their way to and from work.

**“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends”**

All this has been amplified under Pope Francis, history's first pope from the developing world. On his watch the Vatican increasingly is reluctant to be identified with the Western powers, positioning itself more as a non-aligned party with diplomatic interests more akin to the BRICS nations than with NATO or Washington and Brussels.

As Israel shows no signs of relaxing its siege of Gaza and reportedly is preparing for significant ground operations, it's unlikely the Vatican will be

reflexively supportive. In what may be an anticipation of complaints to come, Mr Schutz posted a quotation from Martin Luther King Jr. to his X account: "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."

### Tensions

The current row between Israel and Church leaders in the Holy Land, therefore, may well be a preview of tensions to come with the Vatican itself.

Israeli-Vatican relations were not exactly untroubled even before the war began, with an economic and tax agreement still unconsummated three decades after the two sides signed a Fundamental Agreement, and an increasingly hostile climate in Jerusalem for Christians fuelled by the growing antagonism of ultra-Orthodox groups, including numerous incidents of spitting directed at Christian faithful and clergy.

Where the relationship will be when the dust settles after the carnage in Gaza is over is anyone's guess ... but the prospect that it, too, may be a casualty of war doesn't seem completely remote.

**John L. Allen Jr. is editor of *Crux*.**

# Pope calls Biden amid escalating conflict between Israel and Hamas



Elise Ann Allen

Pope Francis issued another public appeal for peace in the Holy Land and throughout the world on Sunday, and made a phone call to United States President Joe Biden to discuss options for ensuring access to humanitarian aid and the release of hostages.

Patriarchs and Church leaders in the Holy Land also issued a statement condemning the targeting of civilian infrastructure and calling for a ceasefire.

In an October 22 statement, the Vatican announced that earlier that afternoon, "A phone call took place between Pope Francis and the President of the United States, Joe Biden," with the roughly 20-minute conversation "focused on situations of conflict in the world and the need to identify pathways of peace".

## Barbarous

A statement from the White House said the conversation focused on the latest developments in Israel and Gaza, with Biden condemning "the barbarous attack" by Hamas and insisting on the need to protect civilians in Gaza.

Biden discussed his recent visit to Israel and his efforts to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza, the statement said. Both parties discussed the need to prevent a regional escalation of the conflict and to "work toward a durable peace in the Middle East".

Also on Sunday, Biden spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to discuss the developments in Gaza and the surrounding region.

According to a White House statement, Biden thanked Netanyahu for allowing two convoys of

**"We cannot ignore that this is but the latest instance of innocent civilians being injured or killed as a result of missile strikes against other shelters of last resort"**

humanitarian assistance to enter Gaza and the two agreed that there will be a "continued flow" of critical assistance.

Other points of discussion included Israel's efforts to help free two Americans taken hostage by Hamas, as well as efforts to secure the release of the remaining hostages, including other US citizens, and to secure safe passage for Americans and other civilians who wish to leave Gaza.

Pope Francis in his Sunday Angelus address again appealed for peace in Israel and Palestine, saying he is "pained" by recent developments and is "praying and am close to those who are suffering, to the hostages, the wounded, the victims and their families".

He lamented the "serious humanitarian situation in Gaza" and voiced sadness at the bombing of an Anglican hospital and a Greek Orthodox parish in Gaza this past week.

"I renew my appeal for spaces to be opened up, for humanitarian aid to continue to arrive, and for the hostages be freed," he said, saying, "War, every war there is in the world – I think also of the martyred Ukraine – is a defeat."

**"Palestinian health officials report that 4,600 people have been killed in Gaza and more than a million left homeless since Israel's retaliatory attacks began"**

"War is always a defeat; it is the destruction of human fraternity. Brothers, stop! Stop!" he said, and reminded faithful that Friday, October 27, has been designated as a day of prayer, fasting and penance for peace that will feature a holy hour in St Peter's Basilica at 6pm local time.

For the past two weeks Gaza has been at the heart



Worshippers take part in a special prayer for peace at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City on October 22, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas. Photo: OSV News/Ammar Awad, Reuters

of a war between Israel and Palestinian terrorist group Hamas following a deadly surprise by Hamas militants October 7 that left some 1,400 Israelis dead, including children. Hundreds were taken to Gaza as hostages.

Netanyahu immediately declared war and has since launched an air and ground offensive, calling on portions of Gaza to be evacuated as fighting escalates and concerns rise over the safety of civilians.

So far, Palestinian health officials report that 4,600 people have been killed in Gaza and more than a million left homeless since Israel's retaliatory attacks began, and concerns are rising over the humanitarian situation as inhabitants face shortages of food, water, fuel and medical supplies.

## Outcry

There has been increasing global outcry over the targeting of civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and religious sites.

On Tuesday, October 17, a massive blast shook Gaza City's Ahli Hospital, which had been packed with wounded and other civilians seeking shelter and which sits outside of northern Gaza's evacuation zone, killing nearly 500 people, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry.

However, that number is disputed, as Israel claims

the number was inflated, and US intelligence agencies have said the actual number of casualties is likely between 100 and 300 people. Both Israel and Hamas have exchanged blame for the incident.

Two days later, on October 19, the 12th Century St Porphyrius Greek Orthodox Church in Gaza City, which belongs to the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and dates to the 5th Century, making it one of the most historic in the region, was struck by an Israeli air strike.

In response to the incident, the Israeli military said part of the church was damaged during a targeted attack on a Hamas militant command centre and that it was reviewing the incident.

**"These blasts led to the sudden and catastrophic collapse of two church halls around the scores of refugees, including women and children, sleeping within"**

The church had been sheltering between 500-1,000 Muslim and Christian civilians seeking refuge from Israel's bombing campaign. Palestinian health

officials report that at least 16 people have died as a result of the strike, but the church has yet to provide its own count.

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, head of the worldwide Anglican Communion, arrived in Jerusalem October 19 on a pastoral visit following the bombing of the Anglican Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza.

## Condemnation

In an October 21 statement, the patriarchs and heads of churches in the Holy Land welcomed Archbishop Welby and voiced condemnation of "the Israeli airstrikes that exploded without warning at the Orthodox Church compound of Saint Porphyrios in Gaza".

"These blasts led to the sudden and catastrophic collapse of two church halls around the scores of refugees, including women and children, sleeping within. Dozens found themselves instantly crushed beneath the rubble. Many were injured – some severely," they said, saying so far 18 people have died, half of whom are children.

International charity organisation Caritas Internationalis issued a statement after the blast saying one of the aid workers for their Jerusalem branch, a 26-year-old named Viola, was killed in the strike

along with her husband and their infant daughter.

**"They said, and condemned 'in the strongest terms the arbitrary and deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure'"**

"May they rest in peace," Caritas said, saying Israel "has imposed a total siege on Gaza's more than 2 million citizens," leading to shortages of basic needs while "arbitrary shelling" has intensified.

"Gaza has already been under blockade for 16 years. Half its population are children and almost 2/3 are refugees," they said, and condemned "in the strongest terms the arbitrary and deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure".

They called for a ceasefire, the protection of civilians, and the "safe, unimpeded" access of humanitarian aid and for the upholding of international law.

In their statement, the patriarchs and heads of Churches in Jerusalem condemned the attack on the Greek Orthodox church, saying, "We cannot ignore that this is but the latest instance of innocent civilians being injured or killed as a result of missile strikes against other shelters of last resort".

# Letters

Post to: Letters to the Editor, The Irish Catholic, Unit 3b, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18, D18 K277 or email: letters@irishcatholic.ie

## Letter of the week

# Importance of promoting vocations to dioceses

**Dear Editor,** I write to you today with a heart full of hope and a sense of urgency regarding the critical mission of promoting vocations to the priesthood in Ireland, particularly during this year when our bishops are fervently campaigning to nurture vocations to the diocesan priesthood.

The call to serve as a priest is a sacred and profound one. It is a vocation that demands great dedication, selflessness, and a deep love for God and his people. As the Faithful, we must recognise the importance of supporting and encouraging those among us who may feel this divine calling.

Ireland has a rich history of producing devoted priests who have been pillars of strength in our communities. They have offered spiritual guidance, comfort, and a strong moral compass. However, in recent years, we have seen a decline in the number of men answering the call to become priests.

The current campaign led by Ireland's bishops is not just an attempt to recruit more individuals into the priesthood; it is a call to all of us to foster an environment where vocations can flourish. We must actively engage with our youth, encouraging them to consider the priesthood as a noble and meaningful

path in life.

Promoting vocations to the diocesan priesthood is not just a responsibility for the clergy and bishops; it is a collective mission that all Catholics in Ireland should embrace. Our future as a Faith community depends on our ability to support, nurture, and inspire the next generation of priests.

I encourage all readers to reflect on the importance of vocations to the priesthood. Let us ensure that the divine call to serve God and his people continues to thrive within our beloved nation.

*Yours etc.,  
Deirdre Mahon  
Templeogue, Dublin 6*

## Exclusion zone legislation should not proceed

**Dear Editor,** The introduction of 'safe access zones' around abortion providers undermines democracy. While we must respect the privacy and safety of individuals, it is equally important that citizens have the right to engage in peaceful, respectful dialogue and protest in public spaces.

By restricting such activities around medical facilities we suppress free speech, limiting the ability of individuals to express their deeply held beliefs, and eroding a cornerstone of democratic society. We should be vigilant against legislation that will infringe upon these rights.

The passage of such legislation without enough robust debate or opposition in the Dáil is concerning. It is crucial that our elected

representatives engage in thorough discussions on topics that have far-reaching consequences, like this one. We must hold our politicians accountable.

Helping women in crisis pregnancies is vital and not enough is being done by our Government provide this support.

Engage local politicians, express concern, and ensure that legislation affecting issues of such importance is thoroughly scrutinised. The introduction of exclusion zones should not proceed.

In these times, when our society faces complex and sensitive issues, it is crucial to foster open and respectful dialogue, even when our perspectives differ.

*Yours etc.,  
Anne Kelly  
Wicklow Town, Co.  
Wicklow*

## No enthusiasm in parishes to tackle climate change

**Dear Editor,** Jane Mellett may be right when she states that there are no climate change deniers in Ireland or in the Irish Church [*The Irish Catholic* – October 12]. However, in my experience as a diocesan priest working in a parish, the greatest problem we face in the Church in Ireland is indifference. There may be a general consensus that climate change exists but I do not see any enthusiasm in many parishes for doing anything about it – even small actions like an end to cutting grass or trees on parish property, an end to the use of weed-killers, and a commitment to re-wilding. I do not see many people taking initiatives to protect the environment and to urge the Church ministers at a local level to speak out more clearly. It does not seem to be a priority or a matter of urgency. I am not sure what can be done about this situation.

*Yours etc.,  
Fr Joe McVeigh  
Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh*



## EU vote and the sale of human embryos

**Dear Editor,** On Tuesday September 12, the European Parliament voted to endorse new measures to better protect citizens who donate blood, tissues or cells, or are treated with these substances.

The report, entitled 'Substances of Human Origin' (SoHO) stresses that donations of such substances must always be voluntary and unpaid.

As the Fine Gael delegation in the European Parliament, we were shocked to read David's Quinn's article of September 28 entitled, 'Our MEPs have voted in favour of the sale of embryos'.

Not only was this headline wholly inaccurate, Mr Quinn's article proceeds to document a number of other falsehoods linked to this vote in the European Parliament.

The text which the parliament adopted, and which all five Fine Gael MEPs supported reinforces the impossibility to sell any substances of human origin in Europe as is clearly mentioned in Article 3 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and does not, in any way promote eugenics as claimed by Mr Quinn.

*Yours etc.,  
MEPs Seán Kelly, Frances Fitzgerald, Deirdre Clune,  
Maria Walsh and Colm Markey*

### Reply from David Quinn:

I have taken my interpretation of the regulation in question from COMECE, the office in Brussels of the Catholic bishops of Europe, and from FAFCE, an umbrella group of Catholic pro-family groups from across Europe. COMECE confirm that the regulation extends to use by laboratories etc. of human embryos (which are expressly mentioned in the regulation). This is separate from payments to individual donors. Both COMECE and FAFCE draw attention to where the regulation allows for the selection of healthy embryos over ones that might have an abnormality. As FAFCE says, this is a form of 'eugenics'.

## Preserving and protecting our planet

**Dear Editor,** Pope Francis's recent exhortation, *Laudate Deum*, highlights the critical importance of caring for our environment.

The Pope reminds us of our moral responsibility to be good stewards of the Earth. He eloquently calls for an "integral ecology" that considers the interconnectedness of all life on our planet and recognises the devastating impact of environmental degradation on the most vulnerable in our society.

However, it is disheartening to observe the indifference displayed by some individuals in our parishes towards these warnings and the growing environmental crisis. It is vital that we confront this indifference and promote a deep sense of responsibility for the environment.

Our parishes, as centres of community and faith, have a unique role in fostering environmental consciousness and sustainable practices. It is our collective duty to encourage dialogue on these issues, educate our parishioners on the ethical and moral aspects of environmental protection, and inspire concrete actions

that promote the well-being of our planet.

The care for our common home, as Pope Francis emphasises, is not an isolated concern but a fundamental aspect of our Catholic identity. As Catholics, we must recognise the intrinsic link between our Faith and our responsibility to protect God's creation.

Let us take this moment to reflect on the message of *Laudate Deum* and recommit ourselves to caring for our environment. We should encourage our fellow parishioners to engage with this critical issue, and actively seek ways to reduce our carbon footprint, promote sustainability, and be vigilant in safeguarding the gift of our planet for future generations.

It is my hope that this letter will serve as a catalyst for discussions and actions within our parishes to confront the indifference towards environmental decline. Together, as stewards of creation, we can make a significant impact on preserving and protecting our beautiful planet.

*Yours etc.,  
Lisa Donnelly  
Cork City, Co. Cork*

## 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.

# Your Faith

The two greatest commandments

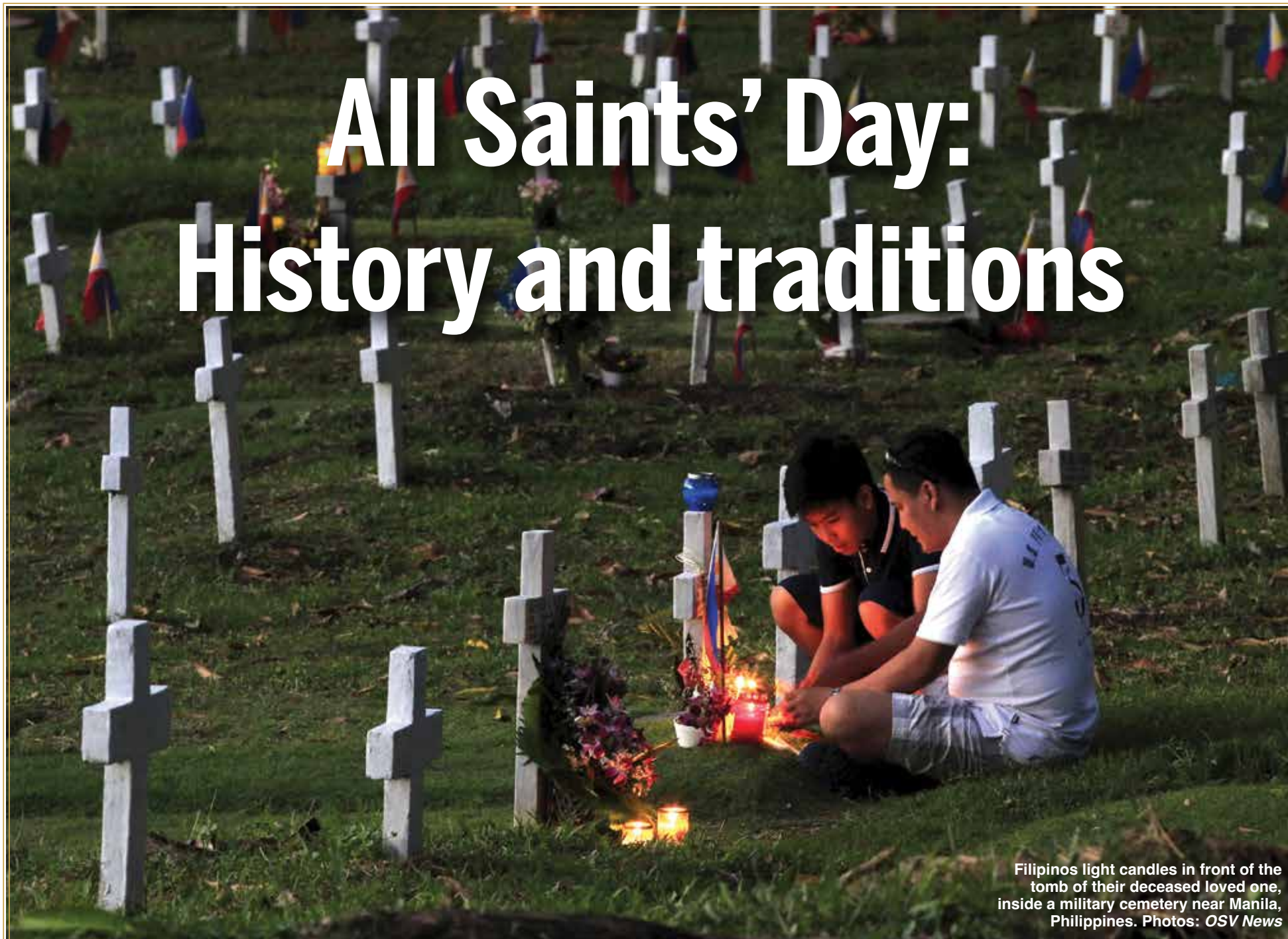
Deacon Greg Kandra

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## All Saints' Day: History and traditions



Filipinos light candles in front of the tomb of their deceased loved one, inside a military cemetery near Manila, Philippines. Photos: OSV News

**T**he author of the Letter to the Hebrews wrote, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith" (12:1-2).

This passage is a beautiful description of the communion of saints, something so fundamental to the Christian faith that all Christians express their belief in it when reciting the Apostles'



**This great feast is one of the Church's most underappreciated, writes Paul Senz**

Creed.

A saint is someone who is in heaven – it is as simple as that. While 'saint' as a title is reserved to those whose lives the Church has thoroughly investigated (typically through whose intercession two miracles can be

demonstrated to have occurred), the term applies to anyone in heaven.

Everyone from your saintly grandmother to the martyrs facing death for Christ: They are all part of the communion of saints. The Church

commemorates all these saints on All Saints' Day.

The history of the feast reveals a great deal about the Church's understanding of the communion of saints. The communion of saints is the Church, both the living and dead.

### Origin of feast

All Saints' Day was not always a solemnity observed by the universal Church, and is not celebrated everywhere on November 1. The feast originated in the earliest centuries of the Church, when

Christians commemorated the many martyrs who died at the hands of their Roman persecutors.

Because there were so many martyrs, they could not each have their own feast day; but they were seen as such important witnesses that the Christians did not want to leave any of them out.

As a result, a single commemoration for "all the martyrs" was observed each spring, which celebrated those who did not have their own unique feast.

This is the earliest observance we know about of something similar to All Saints' Day. Many of the Eastern Catholic Churches still commemorate All Saints' Day in the spring.

**“Now, centuries later, All Saints' Day is a holy day of obligation and recognised as one of the most important feasts on the liturgical calendar”**

After Christianity was legalised throughout the Roman Empire in 313 and the violent and bloody persecutions came to an end, it was common to commemorate the martyrs in various areas around the empire.

We even see this referred to in the writings of the saints, with St Ephrem (d. 373) and St John Chrysostom (d. 407) making reference to a commemoration of all saints.

This practice spread far throughout the Mediterranean and beyond, with commemorations of all saints showing up in Antioch, Rome, England, Salzburg and more.

In the early 7th Century, Pope Boniface IV dedicated the Roman Pantheon – formerly a shrine to all the gods of Roman mythology – as a Christian church of the Blessed Virgin and all the martyrs.

Pope Gregory III consecrated a chapel at St Peter's Basilica to all the saints, as well, with an anniversary date of November 1. Rome adopted November 1 as the date of the feast of All Saints in the 8th Century, and in the 9th Century Pope Gregory IV extended that observance to the whole of the Latin Church.

Now, centuries later, All Saints' Day is a holy day of obligation and recognised as one of the most important feasts on the liturgical calendar. However, the celebration of Halloween typically overshadows the commemoration of All Saints' Day.

### Halloween

Most of us realise that Halloween is in reality the vigil of All Saints' ("Allhallows Eve" or "Hallow E'en"), but All Saints' Day itself has become a bit of an afterthought.

It shouldn't be this way! The saints are our friends, our intercessors, our brothers and sisters in Christ. They care deeply for us, and their lives are recognised by the Church as exemplary, as models to follow.



A young man, dressed as St Maximilian Kolbe, bows his head after receiving Communion during an All Saints' Day Mass.



A man stands in front of the grave of his father during All Saints' Day at Williamsville Cemetery in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

**“If any of your children share the name of a saint, learn about that saint together: Read about the saint and pray together, asking for the saint's intercession”**

So how can we celebrate this wonderful feast of All Saints' Day?

Whether you are commemorating individually or in a group or a family, there are many ways to observe this solemnity. The most obvious is: Go to Mass! It is a holy day of obligation, and there is no more appropriate way to commemorate the saintly lives of those who have gone before us than the eucharistic sacrifice.

### Prayerful

It is also good to do other liturgical or prayerful things to mark the day: Pray the Divine Office for All Saints' Day; read the lives of the saints; watch a movie about a saint; pray the litany of saints; think back to your confirmation saint and study that saint's life.

Similarly, if any of your

children share the name of a saint, learn about that saint together: Read about the saint and pray together, asking for the saint's intercession.

There are also a number of creative and fun games that can be played to help celebrate All Saints' Day. Try putting on a play of the life of a saint (many Halloween costumes can be repurposed to be saints costumes). There are books for all ages, colouring books and even comic books featuring the saints.

All Saints' Day is the perfect time to pray to all these holy men and women, asking for their intercession for the conversion of sinners, so that we might all become saints.

**i** Paul Senz works for Ignatius Press and is a freelance writer.

# Cultural Catholicism: What it can and can't bring to the party, or the battlefield



Jaymie Stuart Wolfe

**W**hen we moved to New Orleans, my husband and I were surprised to see the depth of Catholic influence in the culture here. Southern Louisiana isn't quite a Catholic Disney World, but sometimes it comes close. Local meteorologists provide weather predictions for "All Saints' Day" by name. In March, over 50 Catholic parishes, schools, and other institutions create elaborate "St Joseph Altars" and feed hundreds of visitors a free meal. Families and small groups solemnly walk the streets in a novena of nine historic churches – a traditional Good Friday pilgrimage of penance and prayer. Around every September 14, Catholics are offered an evening for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

And then, of course, there's Mardi Gras.

## Local practices

The Catholic calendar may be particularly full here, but practices like these exist everywhere. In Boston, there are many who visit the seven churches on Holy Thursday, feast on seven fishes each Christmas Eve, or attend one of the summer festivals devoted to a favourite saint. And why not? Not everything we do as a community of faith has to fit into a parish mission or formation initiative. We can love all that local Catholic culture has to offer.

**“Cultural Catholicism can, however, fuel a sense of Catholic community and that might be more important than we think”**

In fact, these lingering remnants of Christendom should encourage us; they're evidence that our faith has deep roots, and that the full flowering of Christian discipleship may be more easily cultivated than we suspect. Faith builds culture around it. But there may be no better way to access the Faith – or introduce it – than the cultural practices that have managed to endure despite the decline in religious practice. That's why we've fully embraced all-things-Catholic here in Louisiana and enthusiastically participate in as much as our schedules allow.



**“While cultural practices can catechise in a limited way, the real growth of Catholic culture lies in building the bonds of community”**

These joyful or solemn celebrations provide us with opportunities to invite others to experience our communities of faith. An acquaintance may be unlikely to accept an invitation to Mass or an explicit spiritual presentation, but might be thrilled to come and see our parish St Joseph Altar, attend a concert, or join us for a parade. We know that what people really need is a personal encounter (and then an ongoing relationship) with Jesus Christ. But often, reminding someone that they have a place to go if they want or need to – or are just curious – has an impact.

## Strange things

And sometimes, the strangest things attract people. After all, who wouldn't be intrigued by a 35-mile Eucharistic procession down the bayou by boat?

While all of these customs are great ways to express and foster faith, it is important for us to remember that cultural Catholicism isn't going to save anyone. Only Jesus can do that.

**“There is a war to be fought and won. It's the war against our own complacency”**

St Joseph altars, Mardi Gras, the seven fishes, and the nine churches – these things can and do support the Faithful in discipleship, but they can never substitute for it. As evangelical tools, they can bring folks to the thresholds of authentic Christian life, but they cannot carry them across them.

Cultural Catholicism can, however, fuel a sense of Catholic

community and that might be more important than we think.

Three hallmarks of religious affiliation are believing, behaving, and belonging. For the past several centuries, Christians have emphasised the first two – faith and morals – at the expense of the very human need to belong to something larger than ourselves. While cultural practices can catechise in a limited way, the real growth of Catholic culture lies in building the bonds of community. And that matters.

## Culture warrior

Often a person who leaves the Church does so because they have made few friendships within the local faith community – so few, that nobody even notices they've left.

There's a better way to be a

culture warrior than to decry the current state of the Church and the world. For some, that will entail baking time-tested Sicilian recipes for breads, cakes and cookies. For others, it will mean gathering a small group together to walk from church to church.

## A war to fight

There is a war to be fought and won. It's the war against our own complacency and the loss of the cultural inheritance that connects us to our faith in Christ and has the power to connect others as well. But small battles may be effectively won, sometimes, by friendly faces and inviting hands.

**i** Jaymie Stuart Wolfe is a freelance writer and editor based in the US.

# Permitting ourselves enemies comes with rules, for God's sake and ours



Elizabeth Scalia

Since October 7, I have been trying to understand something incomprehensible. There is a lot that has happened since that bloody date that is incomprehensible, but I don't mean the planned slaughter of civilians and innocent children – hatred gone mad and become inhumane is not completely incomprehensible, for we see it daily: the sin is “ever before us,” as the psalmist says, though writ small.

## History

History runs on rails of animosity gone murderous and that's usually thanks to politicians or polemicists peddling dubious ideologies or, God forgive us, religious mouthpieces hawking their spittle-laced bromides against whomever they decide is evil and/or profane, “for the sake of the sacred”.

**“It's beyond my ken. Why would a loving and merciful god ever want one created creature to slay another created creature for his sake?”**

All of us are, in our ways, familiar with unbridled hatred; we even understand how it moves and lives and grows.

Without realising it, we have become comfortably numb with observing (and thus living amid) sneering hate, all around. It's usually rendered with just a thin enough coating of civility, or plausible deniability, to pass through our awareness prompting just a twinge in the gut or a frown

on the forehead. We read it in editorial pages, hear it on punditry panels and of course observe it on social media (where any wannabe influencer with a following can feed his or her own dogs of prey a steady diet of barking hate with near-impunity), and we know that the negative ranting is what drives the economics of communications.

The language of love may be consoling or uplifting but it just doesn't get those subscriptions, those ratings or those “like” buttons popping like a dependable hit of hate, offered just when people really need it. A priest leads a Eucharistic procession in New York City? Just run to Twitter and find the nag you know will mock it, if that's how you roll, or click on anyone else whose take you believe will affirm your own feelings for you. Hamas launches a slaughter on Israeli civilians? Well, just turn to the cable news channel that will say whatever you need to hear about that so you can sleep with a clear conscience.

God help you, though, if you're looking for a voice to tell you anything beyond “killing civilians and babies is wrong, full stop”. It's always wrong, no matter the circumstances.

## Justifications

And yet, in our shattered world, someone will always argue that in “this” case or “that” case – always their case – it's justified.

Perhaps this burns me a bit because, up until 2012, I had (to my ever-living shame) managed to write my share of the “them and they” pieces, usually about politics. I'm not proud of it, and I am profoundly grateful for the day I suddenly came to understand that I was participating in a sick game, ruinous to my soul, and for the sake of something as lunatic and illusory as ideology – a most powerful and disorienting Strange God, one that leads people of faith into breaking the first commandment without ever realising it, and encourages them to feel righteous about it, besides.

Theology and ideology rarely

mix well. Often when blended ideology becomes an idolatry as poisonous to the spirit as hemlock, as destructively explosive to society as TNT. We are currently watching and worrying over the potency of this particularly lethal cocktail as it saturates Israel and Palestine and spills over to France and elsewhere.

None of that is incomprehensible, though. We've seen human horror, read human horror, watched and touched and smelled human horror in ways big and small. Human horror has touched each of us, to some degree, all our lives.

What is incomprehensible is watching someone on social media say to someone else (I will paraphrase, here): “for the sake of my god, I will kill you. I will kill all of you, for the sake of my god. Even though my loving and merciful god created all things, including you and including me, I will kill you for his sake.”

It's beyond my ken. Why would a loving and merciful god ever want one created creature to slay another created creature for his sake? Yes, I know the Old Testament lines about killing one's enemies; I'm aware of the psalm verse about smashing the skulls of infants, that ill-phrased, metaphorical call for “justice,” written by broken and imperfect humans – (the psalter remains the perfect reflection of the human condition in its every euphoric or awful excess) – but I'm also aware that such lines are not meant to be isolated but consumed within the whole counsel of Scripture, where they are countered by the greater, weightier and more consistent demand to love an enemy, to pray for the enemy's good.

In a broken world, the Creator God recognises that enemies will come, but that permitting oneself to have them means there are rules. It is good to have such rules; they're there for the sake of the world, and our own souls. Anything else is, yes, incomprehensible.

**Elizabeth Scalia is culture editor for OSV News.**



Israeli soldiers inspect the burned cars of festival-goers near Israel's border with the Gaza Strip, in southern Israel, October 13, at the site of an attack on the Nova Festival by Hamas gunmen from Gaza. Photo: OSV News/Amir Cohen, Reuters

## Questions of Faith?

Jenna Marie Cooper

### What justifies prayers for the dead?

**Q: Praying for the dead: where can this be found in the Bible? I don't want any reference to the Catechism, thanks.**

A: As you allude to in your question, many of the details regarding the Church's teaching on Purgatory (and the utility and appropriateness of praying for the dead) is part of our sacred tradition, much of which is summarised in works like the Catechism of the Catholic Church. I do feel compelled to point out that the truths of our faith being legitimately “handed down” via tradition is itself a scriptural concept. For example, in the New Testament St Paul writes to the Thessalonians: “Therefore, brothers, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught, either by an oral statement or by a letter of ours.” (2 Thessalonians 2:15).

We find a clear scriptural reference on the praiseworthiness of praying for the dead in the Old Testament's second book of Maccabees. For context, the books of 1 and 2 Maccabees provide a historical narrative of the Jewish people's fight to maintain their faith and culture in the face of Greek conquerors, and their eventual military liberation by the Maccabees and their leader, Judas. In chapter 12 of 2 Maccabees, we read that some of the Jewish warriors fell in battle, and it was subsequently discovered that they had been wearing pagan amulets in clear violation of the first commandment.

Upon learning this, Judas the Maccabee “then took up a collection among all his soldiers, amounting to 2,000 silver drachmas, which he sent to Jerusalem to provide for an expiatory sacrifice. In doing this he acted in a very excellent and noble way, inasmuch as he had the resurrection in mind; for if he were not expecting the fallen to rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he did this with a view to the splendid reward that awaits those who had gone to rest in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought” (2 Maccabees 12:43-45).

You might wonder why this passage isn't better known, particularly in Protestant or Evangelical circles that highly value the role of Sacred Scripture. One reason for this is that the books of 1 and 2 Maccabees – along with other books such as Tobit, Sirach, and Wisdom – are part of what scholars call the “Deuterocanonical books,” sometimes also referred to as the “Septuagint”. While the early Fathers of the Church discerned that these books should be included in the canon (i.e., the official ‘table of contents’) of Scripture, in the 16th Century Martin Luther disagreed that these works were the inspired word of God. Because of this, Protestant bibles omit the Deuterocanonical books.

**Q: I was raised as a Catholic and remember always seeing a number after the pope's name. I was taught the number indicated how many Popes had previously used the name. In reading the news stories about the recent synod, I notice that the Pope is simply referred to as Pope Francis. Is that a new change?**

A: No, not at all. You are correct that many popes have numbers after their name to indicate how many of their predecessors have used that name before them. For example, Pope Benedict XVI was the sixteenth pope to use the name “Benedict”.

However, the custom is to start using numbers after the names of popes only when it is necessary in order to keep track and distinguish them from their same-named predecessors. Since Pope Francis is the first (and so far only) Pope to have taken the name “Francis,” there is no need for a numeral after his name. But if we were to ever have a “Pope Francis II” in the future, then we would retroactively refer to our current Pope Francis as “Francis I”.

**Jenna Marie Cooper, who holds a licentiate in canon law, is a consecrated virgin and a canonist whose column appears weekly at OSV News.**



# The battle against ‘bad thoughts’



Someone once quipped that we spend the first half of our lives struggling with the sixth commandment – Thou shalt not commit adultery – and the second half of our lives struggling with the fifth commandment – Thou shalt not kill! There’s a truth here worth examining.

In the Catholicism I was raised there was a heavy emphasis on the sixth commandment. Sex and issues related to sex were singled out as being particularly salient in terms of sinful behaviour. All sex outside of marriage was seen as sinful, but so too was sexual fantasising. If you entertained any sexual fantasies you were required to confess them to a priest in Confession. In the vocabulary of the time, this was termed as “having had bad thoughts”. Given human nature and human hormones, assuredly most everyone had “bad thoughts”.

## Fantasies

As I grow older, I have come to believe that sexual fantasies (which in fact can have a moral element to them) are not the real danger in terms of bad thoughts. As we age, the bad thoughts we most need to confess have more to do with another commandment, thou shalt not kill. The bad thoughts that most separate us from love, community, and the banquet table have to do with who we are angry at, who we



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don’t want to be in a room with, who we don’t want to be at table with, who we want revenge on, who we can’t forgive and people whose energies we cannot bless.

Henri Nouwen once suggested that long before someone is shot by a gun, one is shot by a word, and before one is shot by a word, one is shot by a thought – She is so full of herself! I hate her! I can’t be in a room with her! We kill each other in our thoughts, in our judgments, in our hatreds, in our jealousies and in our avoidance of each other. These are the bad thoughts which we most need to confess.

Moreover, that is only the crasser way we violate the commandment that demands we not kill each other. We have ‘bad

thoughts’ in much subtler ways. We also kill each other whenever we indulge in fantasies of grandiosity, fantasies within which we are the superstar, the one set apart, the one above, the one superior to others, and the one who sees others as lesser than oneself. Like sexual fantasies, these fantasies also come upon us with a power that makes them very difficult to resist. Like sexual fantasies they beset us instinctually with a warmth that is self-gratifying.

But why are they wrong? What’s wrong with indulging in fantasies within which we are the special one, the hero, the one above others?

In short, they are not morally wrong in themselves. It’s

not a sin to think of yourself as special – particularly since you are! God makes everyone unique and special, and it’s not wrong to recognise that inside oneself. Moreover, for a good part of our lives, this can even be healthy. The issue arises later in life, when we reach that time in our lives when we need to begin to scrutinise ourselves more rigorously and courageously vis-a-vis what things inside us are obstacles to our becoming one with everything. Don’t let the Hindu or Buddhist sound of that phrase, become one with everything, put you off; that’s also what we, Christians, believe will constitute our final state in heaven – oneness with everything – God, others, the cosmic world, and our true selves.

Hence while they are not wrong in themselves, fantasies that massage our separateness from others, our standing apart from them, and especially our superiority to them, are, at the end of the day, a blockage to the unity in love to which we are

called and destined. They are also a way in which we kill others, leaving room for only ourselves at the head of the table.

## Judgment

We spend a good part of our lives struggling with the sixth commandment. However, most of us end up with an even bigger struggle with the fifth commandment. The Gospel parable about the Prodigal Son throws light on this. The father (God) has two sons and he is trying to get them both into the house (heaven). The younger, prodigal son leaves the house because he is struggling with the sixth commandment. Eventually though he returns to his father and enters the house again. The older brother, who never leaves home but is just as effectively out of his father’s house, is struggling with something else – anger, bitterness, jealousy, and judgment of others. He is struggling with bad thoughts. He is killing his younger brother with judgment, jealousy and with fantasies of his own moral superiority.

It’s noteworthy how this parable ends. It doesn’t end with the celebration for the younger brother and his rejoining the household. It ends with the father (God) standing outside the house gently and lovingly trying to coax his jealous, bitter, judgmental, older son out of his bad thoughts.

**“We also kill each other whenever we indulge in fantasies of grandiosity, fantasies within which we are the superstar, the one set apart, the one above, the one superior to others, and the one who sees others as lesser than oneself”**

# The two greatest commandments



Ex 22:20-26  
Ps 18:2-3, 3-4, 47, 51  
1 Thes 1:5c-10  
Mt 22:34-40

Anyone who has spent time watching reruns of *Law and Order* knows the first rule of being a good witness in a courtroom: Never answer a question that you haven't been asked. Stay on point. Don't elaborate. Keep it short and simple.

Clearly, Jesus never watched *Law and Order*.

In this Sunday's Gospel, when the Pharisees confront him with what they think will be a confounding question – "Which commandment in the law is the greatest?" – Jesus answers them directly. "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your

## The Sunday Gospel

Deacon  
Greg  
Kandra



mind."

But then he goes a step further. He answers a question he wasn't asked. "The second is like it," he explains. "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

### Encounter

What we glean from this encounter is commonly understood as "The Two Greatest Commandments," and they form the very foundation of Judeo-Christian thought. "The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments," Jesus tells the Pharisees.

But that's just the beginning. Binding these two commandments together, Jesus makes clear the profoundly important point that you can't have one without the other. He is showing the Pharisees (and us) that if you think you can simply worship God and ignore your neighbour, think again. We cannot neglect those around us in need. In fact, we should not just care for them; we need to love them.

More than that, we should love them as much as we love ourselves.

In Luke's account of this episode, the Pharisees are so taken aback by Jesus's talk of loving your neighbour, it leads one of them to ask, "Who is my neighbour?"

The answer, of course, unfolds as one of Christ's greatest parables, The Good Samaritan, serving to

emphasise (if anyone was missing the point) that we are responsible for one another, even those who are different from us and may not believe what we believe. Their culture may be alien to us. But that makes no difference. They are still – in a very human sense – our neighbours.

### Exodus

All of this helps give immediacy to this Sunday's first reading, from Exodus, which cries out to us in our own day and age: "You shall not molest or oppress an alien ... you shall not wrong any widow or orphan."

This undoubtedly struck a nerve thousands of years ago – and it should hit us just as hard today. At a time when there is so much debate about what to do about migrants coming to our shores, these readings stand as defiant, challenging, even

countercultural. They propose a radical way of thinking about those who are "alien" commanding us to treat them with love.

But these readings might also offer us a radical way of considering who is really "alien" to us. Being an "alien" is about more than geography, nationality or whatever country is stamped on your passport.

Aliens are any of those who we might consider "different". It might be because of their skin colour, their language, their heritage or how they dress. It might be because of how they worship or, maybe, even how they vote. At bottom, any group of people that is considered "not like us" could be considered "alien" or even, to some people, strange.

The Gospel makes clear: those differences don't matter. Love them as you love yourself.

Jesus dared to answer a question nobody asked. We need to be courageous enough, and humble enough, to ask ourselves questions we might not want to answer. Questions like: Who are the ones we consider alien? Who are the "neighbours" we ignore or shun or go out of our way to avoid?

Are we capable of loving these people as much as we love ourselves? Finding the answers to those questions can draw us closer to living as Jesus lived and loving as he loved.

Which can only help us fulfil that first commandment – and lead us to loving the Lord, our God, more completely.

**i** Deacon Greg Kandra is an award-winning author and journalist, and creator of the blog, *The Deacon's Bench*.

# TVRadio

Brendan O'Regan



## A well needed injection of faith and positivity

It's always worth taking notice when there's a new religious programme, and the latest nearly flew under my highly sensitive radar!

**Witness** (RTÉ Radio 1, Friday) is a new religious affairs programme presented by Siobhán Garrigan, and is a successor to the long running *Leap of Faith*, though I'm not sure of the logic behind the rebranding.

Last week's first episode certainly started on a topical note, with the current heartbreaking conflict in the Middle-East. The presenter referenced the "horrific situation in Gaza" and "the atrocious attacks on Israelis".

She had an insightful interview with Dr Ed Kessler, world expert on interfaith relations and founder member Woolf institute at Cambridge (formerly the Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations). He took a measured and balanced approach to the religious and humanitarian aspects of the current crisis.

He couldn't see any justification in the Hamas massacres of Israelis, but there was justification to some form of resistance. He spoke of the marginalisation of the Palestinians and the people of Gaza "suffering enormously", but thought those massacres undermined the Palestinian cause.

A Jewish and religious per-



Broadcast news journalists Anna Torv as Helen and Sam Reid as Dale in enjoyable period piece *The Newsreader*.

son himself, he believed a military solution was never going to work. He thought people of faith could bring hope to the situation.

Based on his experiences in the field of inter-faith dialogue he outlined some principles: the first rule was 'active listening' – asking the other what their story was and listening to the answer.

Then people had to meet and encounter one another, preferably in a neutral space. People could start by identifying the failures in their respective religious traditions, cases where religion had been used

and abused for evil and prejudice.

He said he would dialogue with anyone as long as he didn't feel personally threatened. Siobhán Garrigan suggested that extremists can sometimes end up representing the religious group. Dr Kessler agreed that we are sometimes persuaded by those who shout loudest. He thought the interfaith groups needed to be braver.

The need for dialogue, however difficult, was an issue on **Sunday with Miriam** (RTÉ Radio 1), when the special guest was Alan McBride,

whose wife Sharon was killed in the Shankill bombing on October 23 1993.

Despite difficulties in coping with the tragedy over the last 30 years, he was an inspiring man of faith with a commitment to reconciliation. It was a matter of "profound sadness" to him that the North didn't have a functioning government – he thought the DUP and Sinn Féin should hang their heads in shame over that.

Now a director of the Wave Trauma Centre in Belfast, his interview was a tonic, a well needed injection of faith and positivity on a Sunday when the morning news items were pretty grim.

Over in fiction land, there have been more than a few good dramas on live TV recently. I enjoyed **The Newsreader** (RTÉ 2, Wednesday) the Australian drama about the dog-eat-dog media world in the 1980's.

The second series ended last week. Real events, like the dingo baby case, various elections, and the visit of Prince Charles and Lady Diana, mingled with complicated relationships among the newsreaders and their crews.

There were several likeable characters, like Dale the newsreader and Noelene the producer, but others, like rival newsreader Geoff and his wife, were ambitious backstabbers.

It was not a crime drama but built up some very satisfy-

### PICK OF THE WEEK

#### EWTN NEWS PRESENTS: THE SYNOD ON SYNODALITY

**EWTN Saturday October 28, 6.30pm**

Catherine Hadro and Matthew Bunson provide updates and analysis of the day's events at the Synod on Synodality, with Fr Raymond DeSouza providing on-the-ground coverage in Rome.

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

**BBC One Sunday October 29, 10.30am**

Ben Fogle journeys to Islay and Jura, tracing the route of 6th Century Christian monks across wild seaways to discover communities going the extra mile to look out for one another.

#### SYNOD CLOSING MASS

**RTÉ One Sunday October 29, 11am**

Pope Francis celebrates Mass in St Peter's Square to mark the end of this month's Synod on Synodality. Commentary and translation by *The Irish Catholic's* editor Michael Kelly.

ing dramatic tensions. In one recent episode newsreader Helen was facing the revelation of delicate medical details about her past – she is ambitious, tough but vulnerable.

Dale is struggling with his sexuality, is in love with Helen, while drawn to Garry the Irish comedian (why?) who is gay, married and loving it – his wife has been accommodating!

Mostly there's a fairly light touch, I haven't felt browbeaten by any agenda, the script doesn't feel it has been written by an activist. Another episode, while relatively restrained by modern standards, included some drunken scenes in a gay night club.

There were further tensions in relationships as well, especially surrounding the addiction story of the neglected Kay, Geoff's daughter, and some of it put the viewer through an emotional wringer – this often happens when there are characters you can care about.

Many episodes posed serious questions about media intrusiveness, respect for privacy and the ethical dilemmas that ensue. That last episode featured the Australian bi-centennial celebrations as various relationship complications came to a head. I found the ending both satisfying and unnerving – a good combination.

# Film

Aubrey Malone



## Meeting Mr Wrong at the multiplex

I went into *Cat Person* (15) thinking of Paul Schrader's 1982 movie *Cat People* – for no other reason than the title. It has little in common with Schrader's nightmarish curio besides that but you keep expecting it to turn into a horror film. Susanna Fogel directs with a clever use of anti-climaxes, red herrings, and, yes, even a stray cat to frustrate our expectations.

Maybe it should win the 'Most Ill-Advised Relationship of the Year' Award. Robert (Nicholas Braun) is 33 going on 20. Margot (Emilia Jones) is 20 going on 33. He's a frustrated introvert. She's a streetwise sophomore moonlighting at a cinema.

He's obsessed with Harrison Ford movies. She's into

– no, not subtitled documentaries about Rwandan genocide, as he jokes – movies somewhat more upmarket than anything *Indiana Jones* has to offer.

So why does she want to go out with him? That's a question you'll probably be asking yourself many times throughout this strange, beguiling movie. I won't accuse it of being much ado about nothing but it definitely punches above its weight in stretching a thin plotline to labyrinthine proportions.

Margot eventually gets her wish after an incessant exchange of texts. This kind of communication seems to have replaced courtship in films (if not life) these days.

The date is abysmal. Afterwards an already eerie film



A scene from *Cat Person* (2023).

becomes increasingly more eerie.

Is Fogel trying to be David Lynch with her ominousness, her silences, her imaginary set-pieces, her atmospheric musical backdrops? All that's

missing is Roy Orbison trilling *In Dreams* like he did in Lynch's *Blue Velvet* as Dennis Hopper terrorized Isabella Rossellini in a nebulizer.

Rossellini actually turns up *Cat People* but it's a noth-

ing performance.

There's a strong sex scene, hence the 15 cert. For the rest of the time Jones envisages Braun as a latterday Norman Bates (from Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*) as she realises she's bitten off significantly more than she can chew.

Structurally, one gets the sense of an elephant rolling a pea. Fogel has constructed a two-hour feature from a relatively flimsy short story about the dangers of online dating. Using every directorial device at her disposal she manages to make up in style what the material lacks in substance.

But what style. I found myself on the edge of my seat more than once as, like Margot, I created various scenarios about her cinephile beau. Is he

a serial killer? Will his dog savage her? What's in the cellar?

More questions than answers. And even when we get to the end you're left with many of them. It's ultimately a coy undertaking from Fogel, a mischievous toying with apprehensions that result from Margaret Atwood's pre-credit observation: "Men are afraid women will laugh at them. Women are afraid men will kill them."

Such a mutual phobia underpins the central dynamic of a film that, with more meat, could have been the ultimate cautionary fable for women looking for a man who's tall, dark and not problematic.

# BookReviews

Peter Costello



## Our sisters in Faith: the medieval nuns of Ireland

**Brides of Christ: Women and Monasticism in Medieval and Early Modern Ireland**, edited by Martin Browne OSB, Tracy Collins, Bronagh McShane and Colmán Ó Clabaigh OSB (Four Courts Press, €50.00/ £45.00)

Patricia Rumsey

As the number of candidates for religious life apparently dwindles, so the wider interest in religious life – and particularly women’s monastic life – seems to increase. Although female monastic life has changed out of all recognition in its external manifestations from the way it was lived in the Middle Ages, in its fundamental core structures – the Eucharist, the Divine Office and the rest of the liturgical cycle, the vows, manual labour and community life – though expressed and lived out in different ways – it remains largely unchanged.

The various contributors to this volume are all experts in their respective specialist fields of monastic study and this is a work to be savoured by academics, but also to be greatly enjoyed by the interested and well-informed general reader.

### Scholarship

Just to glance at the list of contributors reveals the breadth of scholarship contained within this extremely elegant and handsome volume and Four Courts Press are to be congratulated for a book which is a pleasure to hold and a treasure to explore, whatever one’s degree of expertise in the subject matter here contained.

In this work the authors present medieval Irish nuns under various headings which situate them in their respective contexts. Tracy Collins explores the archaeological evidence and describes at least 51 monasteries in early medieval Ireland ranging from the great and famous houses such as that of Brigid in Kildare to the lesser female religious communities such as that of St Buonia, the supposed sister of St Patrick, at Killabuonia in Co. Kerry. Elva Johnson presents the so far untapped witness of early Irish martyrologies where female saints are com-

memorated on their respective feast days.

Catherine Swift gives us a scholarly introduction to Brigit and Ita, probably the two best known Irish holy women, and puts them in their late antique context.

Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedel, to whom this work is dedicated “in recognition of her outstanding contribution to Irish and European medieval history”, and in particular “medieval Irish-Germanic relations”, shows how ‘peregrinatio’ – that essentially Irish ascetic practice – was lived out by nuns as far away as Germany.

Yvonne Seale compares the Irish nuns of Ballymore-Loughsewdy with the Premonstratensians in France, while Mary Ann Lyons remains nearer home with the familial connections of abbesses and prioresses in Ireland in the Middle Ages.

### Monastic life

Colmán Ó Clabaigh widens the horizon and looks at the lives of “marginal figures – quasi religious women” such as widows, anchoresses, solitaires, tertiaries and others who, because of circumstances or choice did not adopt the full monastic life as lived conventionally in religious houses.

In contrast to Ó Clabaigh’s wider vision, Colm Lennon hones in on the confraternity of sisters of Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin in the late Middle Ages.

Bronagh Ann McShane in the penultimate chapter looks at some of the individual nuns who lived and worked in the 17th Century and assesses the importance of their text translations and vestment embroidery work during a difficult period of persecution and dispersion, concentrating particularly on the Poor Clare sisters of Galway and also the Dominicans and Benedictines.

**“They are our sisters in the Faith and this book brings them alive for us today”**

Bishop Anne Dyer concludes with an epilogue in which she celebrates the importance of these women who lived long ago, emphasising the prayer which lay at the heart of their



Portrait of Abbess Mary Joseph Butler OSB (1641-1732). Reproduced courtesy of the Benedictine Monastery Archive, Kylemore Abbey, Co. Galway.

calling, and which remains at the heart of all those following the Christ in whatever way today: “We may not know what religious women in the past thought, how they understood themselves or their shared vocation, but we do know what they prayed, because those are the same prayers that we say today, day

after day” (p.176).

This is why this is such an important work; it brings before us those Christian women the external circumstances of whose lives were so very different from ours today, and yet who are united to us by the even closer bonds of faith, hope and love of the Risen Christ and who can be

an example and an inspiration to Christians of the 21st Century, even for those not called to the monastic vocation.

They knew the same contours of the land, they prayed and worshipped in many of the same places, they recognised many of the same saints, they used the same formulae of prayers, even if not always

in the same tongue.

They are our sisters in the faith and this book brings them alive for us today.

**Dr Patricia Rumsey**, Mother Abbess of the Poor Clare community in Arkley, Barnet, is honorary Associate Professor of The University of Nottingham.

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.

# Searching for an ethical compass in modern times

**How to be good. What Socrates can teach us about the art of living well,**

by Massimo Pigliucci  
Basic Books, £10.99 /€12.99)

**The Power of Ideas. Words of Faith and Wisdom,**

by Jonathan Sacks  
(Hodder and Stoughton, £20.00 /€20.00)

Frank Litton

**B**oth these books inform our moral compass, helping to sharpen its direction and deepen our understanding. They are needed. For our political elites have dispensed with moral compasses, finding their way by the play of power.

The Consultative Forum on International Security (June 2023) provides the latest example of the nihilism that afflicts our politics and to which these books deliver an antidote.

We should be grateful to Michael Martin and the Department of Foreign Affairs for assembling a diverse group of experts for the public discussion of foreign policy.

We need to consider how to position, and equip ourselves, as the world grows more dangerous and the threats of climate change become clearer. I learnt a lot from my (virtual) attendance.

One lesson stands out: how far we have travelled from what we are instructed were the dark ages of the 1950s, the de Valera era. Then we had a robust sense of ourselves as a sovereign state, convinced that we had a role to play on the world stage.

And we did, to good effect. For instance, our minister for external affairs, Frank Aiken, made substantial contributions at the United Nations, notably his contribution to the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Nothing of this spirit was evident at the forum.

Following the Whitaker path, the national purpose has been narrowed to economic growth. Now we are content with a subaltern role; crafty servants of international capitalism, paying obeisance to the powers-that-be in Brussels.

Present, as the background of all the debates, was the question whether changed circumstances meant that we



Pope Benedict XVI meets Rabbi Jonathan Sacks during a private audience at the Vatican in 2011. Photo: CNS

should change the character of our alliances, or enter new ones: join NATO or extend our involvement in EU defence initiatives.

Our Constitution tells us that "Ireland affirms its devotion to the ideal of peace and friendly cooperation amongst nations founded on international justice and morality" (Article 29.1) Inescapable questions follow.

I suppose there are no circumstances in which the taking of innocent life can be justified. Is joining an alliance armed with nuclear weapons whose raison d'être is the slaughter of innocents compatible with this principle?

Interdependence does bring obligations. We benefit from our membership of the EU. We should be prepared to pay our dues, which include contributions to the defense of the Union.

We have, however, to take the character of the Union into account in assessing our obligations. Consider a continuum: at one pole we have an imperial order dominated by one or two great powers. They find it expedient to incorporate smaller, weaker powers on their periphery who find sufficient benefits to acquiesce in their hegemony.

The calculus is the balance of powers, the matching of needs and alternatives. At the other pole we have an association of nations who find in a shared tradition the resources to act in solidarity. The calculus is the common good. Where does the EU lie on this continuum? What are the implications of its position for our obligations? These central questions were not posed.

Given an even a rudimentary 'moral compass' they would not have been ignored.

## Where might we find a moral compass?

As Prof. Pigliucci, philosopher and biologist, professor of philosophy at New York City College, demonstrates Socrates is a good, perhaps the best, guide for those starting the search for a moral compass.

In his dialogues, reported by Plato, he questions and provokes his interlocutors into awareness of the limitations and deceptions in the drama of everyday life whose roles and routines shape our lives. He opens up a new perspective, the ethical.

The good and the true that we find in this perspective can bring us into conflict with the well-established opinions that rule our societies as the execution of Socrates testifies.

This tension is at its highest in the realm of politics.

What is justice, asks Socrates in Plato's *Republic*. As the dialogue proceeds and Socrates undermines the view that it can be found in a society's conventions and pieties, Thrasymachus, jumps into the conversation. The answer is simple: what we call justice is no more than the advantage of the powerful. Might is right.

Socrates exposes the inco-

herence of this view. Justice is real, the problem is to realise it. The *Republic* explores how this might be achieved. Prof. Pigliucci does a fine job in bringing this problem alive.

The question of what is a good life, confronts us all. It is not just a question of identifying what contributes to human flourishing, it is also a matter of character, developing the dispositions, or virtues that Aristotle analysed, that keep us on track amidst temptations and sufferings.

This was a preoccupation of the Stoics, and Prof. Pigliucci provides a succinct introduction to their thought. Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics play an important role in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Indeed, it was that tradition that carried them into our common European inheritance.

Of course, Jews and Christians encompass them from the perspective of the sacred. Jonathan Sacks (1948-2022) was an English Orthodox Rabbi who served as chief Rabbi of the united Hebrew congregation for 12 years. His deep engagement with the tradition was matched by his mastery of communication.

It was his ability to listen to difficulties, questions, anxieties, that lie beneath the certainties of our secular age, while acknowledging its achievements, that made him so successful an exponent of the sacred and the ethical.

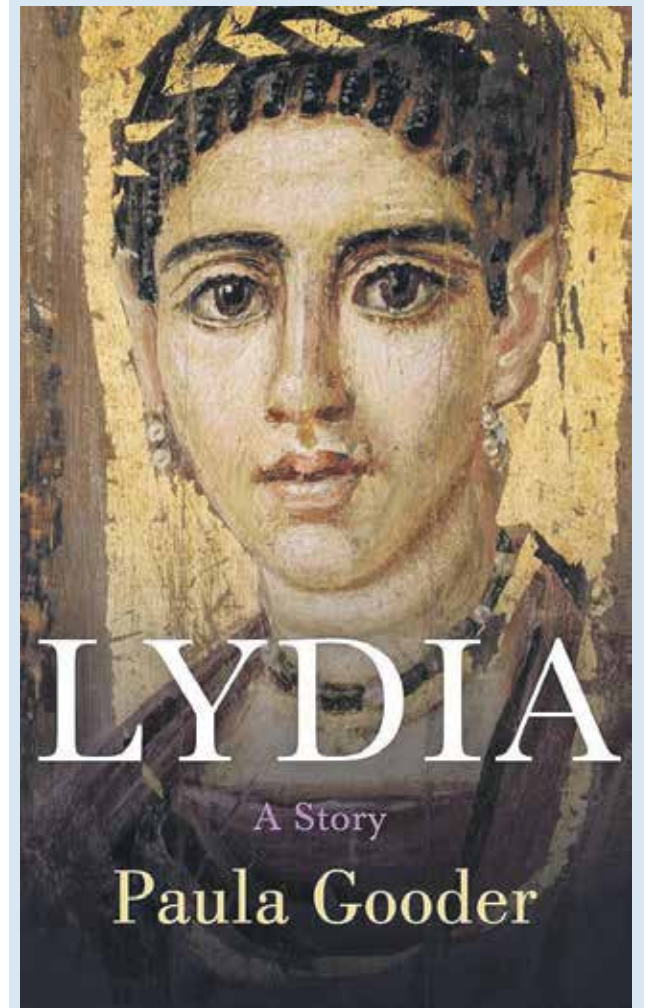
His intelligence and skill is manifest in *The Power of Ideas: Words of Faith and Wisdom*, a collection of his writings that span short reflections ('thoughts of the day') articles, sermons, lectures.

Prof. Pigliucci would make a fine present for a student in the final years of secondary school. Rabbi Sacks is a gift for all those who wish to see the sacred and the ethical brought to life.



Prof. Massimo Pigliucci.

# Europe's first recorded convert



**Lydia: A Story,**  
by Paula Gooder  
(Hodder and Stoughton,  
£9.99 /€11.99)

Peter Costello

**L** Lydia is a person who appears briefly in the account of St Paul's second missionary journey. She was a seller of purple cloth – in the 1st Century a luxury item – an apparently insignificant person in life.

But in a longer perspective she can be seen as the first person in Europe who accepted his 'good news' and adhered to the new Christian faith.

This book is a novel, or perhaps it might be better to say a narrative, elaborated by Paula Gooder as her second foray into the realm of fiction. In this series she is attempting to wrest a very human figure from the pages of the New Testament and to give her a new life in a way that may appeal more to the reading tastes of today.

Dr Gooder is a distinguished scholar and Canon Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral in London. So this is not strictly speaking a novel in the mere entertainment sense. It is an attempt through the narrative to reveal to a wide audience the insights of modern scholarship in a way most people would not bring themselves to read.

It may also help bring a knowledge and experience of the basic New Testament to those who might not in the ordinary way pick that up either.

Dr Gooder's first novel was well received and the paperback edition of this, her second will achieve a similar success. For readers who think they might not enjoy such a thing we can only advise, as St Augustine was in a different situation, to "take up the book and read".

They will find it well worth their while. And the notes and bibliography will perhaps encourage even deeper explorations in due course.

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**trócaire**

## The Gift Of A Lifetime

Be there for others after you're gone.

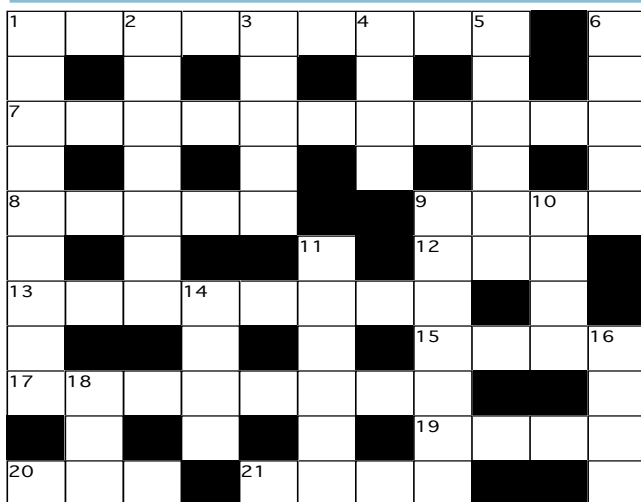
A gift in your will to Irish Hospice Foundation is a meaningful way to help ensure no-one faces death or bereavement without the care and support they need.

Email Anna Sadlier at [anna.sadlier@hospicefoundation.ie](mailto:anna.sadlier@hospicefoundation.ie) or call 01 679 3188

 Irish Hospice Foundation

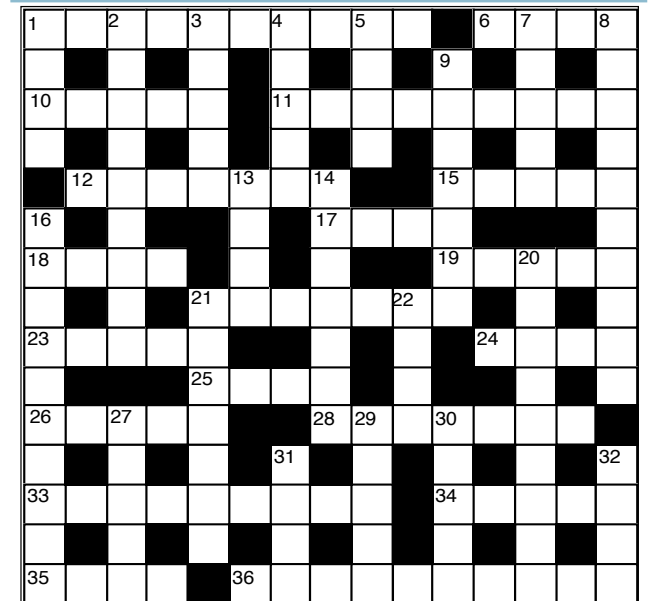
[www.hospicefoundation.ie](http://www.hospicefoundation.ie)

### Crossword Junior Gordius 506



- Across**
- 1 It's made of wax, and you'll find it in a beehive (9)
  - 7 Places to go for a meal out (11)
  - 8 Deserves because of effort or work (5)
  - 9 Insects that live in colonies (4)
  - 12 It has 'teeth' and you use it to cut timber (3)
  - 13 Time of vacation from school (8)
  - 15 St Colmcille lived on this Scottish island (4)
  - 17 Teaches (8)
  - 19 Stumble (4)
  - 20 A bird lays it (3)
  - 21 You'll find these in a pod (4)
- Down**
- 1 A blacksmith makes it (9)
  - 2 Part of the nose (7)
  - 3 Long amounts of time (5)
  - 4 Shrek is this type of monster (4)
  - 5 This fruit has a slippery skin (6)
  - 6 Prophet who was given the Ten Commandments (5)
  - 9 Helps (7)
  - 10 One of two who are born together (4)
  - 11 This building might have a moat and drawbridge (6)
  - 14 One twelfth of a foot (4)
  - 16 Mountain range where France, Switzerland, Italy and other countries meet (4)
  - 18 You might treat this pet to a bone (3)

### Crossword Gordius 634



- Across**
- 1 One's pal from the classroom (10)
  - 6 Angelic instrument (4)
  - 10 Aviator (5)
  - 11 Devout; being disposed to converse with God (9)
  - 12 Commissioned army rank (7)
  - 15 Female fox (5)
  - 17 Skilful, competent (4)
  - 18 Organs of sight (4)
  - 19 More up-to-date (5)
  - 21 Historic garment (7)
  - 23 Former US Vice-President Mike (5)
  - 24 Minuscule particle (4)
  - 25 Thirteen cards you might order from a tailor? (4)
  - 26 Live, have being (5)
  - 28 European country, capital Budapest (7)
  - 33 Surplus to requirements (9)
  - 34 Make amends (5)
  - 35 Fine particles of dirt (4)
  - 36 Resistant to moisture (10)
- Down**
- 1 Takes small drinks (4)
  - 2 The night before All Saints Day (9)
  - 3 Go one better (5)
  - 4 & 32d Symbol on the Canadian flag (5,4)
  - 5 Salver (4)
  - 7 Attach (5)
  - 8 Word spelt the same way backwards and forwards (10)
  - 9 Intensely enthusiastic, ardent (7)
  - 13 Emperor who is said to have fiddled while Rome burned (4)
  - 14 District in London which gives its name to an important decennial conference of the Church of England (7)
  - 16 Showed up again (10)
  - 20 Sport played in a swimming pool (5-4)
  - 21 Fate (7)
  - 22 Smooth, level (4)
  - 27 This river reaches the sea near Karachi (5)
  - 29 Undo a knot (5)
  - 30 Take hold of (5)
  - 31 Royal hill in Meath (4)
  - 32 See 4 down

### SOLUTIONS, OCTOBER 19

- GORDIUS NO. 633**
- Across** - 1 Bap 3 Ferris wheel 8 Useful 9 Building 10 Dread 11 Sylph 13 Cache 15 Bodhrán 16 Cottage 20 Murky 21 Spoil 23 Blind 24 New broom 25 Ignore 26 Tobacconist 27 Yak
- Down** - 1 Blunderbuss 2 Preceded 3 Fluid 4 Rebecca 5 Walks 6 Edible 7 Log 12 Hide and seek 13 Charm 14 Ebony and Ivory 18 Brahmin 19 Cobweb 22 Lyric 23 Bigot 24 Nut
- CHILDREN'S No. 505**
- Across** - 1 Out to lunch 7 Feather 8 Inn 9 Fermanagh 12 Ale 13 Rich 16 Wren 17 Early 18 Lisa 19 Over 20 Err 21 Chased 22 Kind
- Down** - 1 Officer 2 Traffic 3 Other 4 Unreal 5 China 6 One hundred 10 Married 11 New York 14 Irish 15 Heads

### Sudoku Corner 506

**Easy**

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

**Hard**

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

### Last week's Easy 505

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

### Last week's Hard 505

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

Notebook

Fr Vincent Sherlock



# Fresh respect for all God's creatures

**Recently we had** a gathering of the priests of our diocese. On the final morning, we had a presentation, given by Prof. John Feehan, who may well have retired from UCD more than ten years ago but certainly is living life in its fullest understanding to this day. It was a wonderful and powerful presentation born of the love, so visible and present, that he has for creation and its creator.



**Order**

John spoke of creation, creatures, plants and people! Yes, in many ways that was the order. He sought to remind us that humankind is another layer of creation, made in God's own image, but needing to see its place in the full story of creation. His presentation, stirred up in us all I believe, a renewed realisation and, for some of us, fresh respect for all God's creatures. He spoke of the advances that have been made in research and awareness over recent decades and that text books that were slender volumes in his own student days are now replaced by vast volumes, reflecting the studies that have

taken place and the knowledge that has been gained through research.

One of the images he used, that I liked very much, was the "other book" – he spoke with deep respect of the textbooks, the studies and papal writings – especially those of Pope Francis – but reminded us that there is so much to be seen, to be learnt, in the open spaces. Life is constantly revealing itself to us, if only we allow and take time for that revelation to touch the

soul in us. The "other book" is all that is going on around us, above and beneath us. It is the story of nature, seeds finding their roots, birds building their nests and feeding their young, insects – barely visible – who share much of all that makes us human. Life in all its forms, is the ink of this other book and its pages are everywhere to be seen. If only, we take time to look and to read.

**Wandered**

As John spoke to us, my mind

wandered to two of the priests in the group. One had left to prepare for the funeral Mass of an infant in his parish. An infant who had lived for just 21 months in the loving shelter of his family. A phrase, often used, on occasions like that, is "no words". Though there may be truth in that sentiment, no words was not an option for the priest as I am sure he had tried to find words, indeed did find words, but they are hard come by. Then John put up a slide, referring to the Creator's countless acts of creation, even to the most miniscule of insects, amongst whom some just live for a day. From *Laudato Si'*, he reflected this quotation on the large screen: "Even the fleeting lives of the least of beings is the object of his love, and in the few seconds of its existence, God enfolds it with his affection." (*Laudato Si' 77*). I thought of the little child, and the few months of his life and the affection, the love of his people for him – the love of God for him.

**Directions**

In the world of satnav, we still find ourselves stopping on the road to ask directions. I noticed an example of this recently on Facebook. A man said he stopped on the road, rolled down the window and asked a man: "How do you get to Coleraine?" The man replied: "Usually my brother brings me!"

It reminded me of going to a funeral years ago, BSN (before satnav!) and I was running late. I stopped and asked a man if I was on the right road for the named town. "Indeed, you are", he reassured me "you're doing grand, go on there for about five miles and you will come to a statue of Our Lady on the left-hand side of the road. Half a mile this side of it, turn right"... Eircodes rule!



## Please help The Little Way to bring clean water to remote villages

Bishop Barthelémy Yaouda has written to The Little Way Association from Cameroon telling us that the far north of his country is the driest and poorest area: "Women and children have to walk miles each day to collect clean water, sometimes making the journey several times a day." The bishop continues: "This has a bad effect on the children's education and is a severe burden for their mothers. Many villages use unsafe water from ponds and poorly-maintained wells for domestic purposes. These waters are teeming with bacteria, parasites and mosquito larvae which are propagators of several waterborne diseases. A well-constructed borewell will improve the health of the whole population. The village of Konkorong has 1,012 inhabitants and its current water point is used for both human and animal use."

**The Little Way Association receives many requests for help with the cost of digging borewells to bring clean drinking water to remote villages. Any donation you can send us "for clean water projects" will be forwarded without deduction and will help to make one village's dream, of clean water, a reality.**



**PLEASE HELP FEED HUNGRY CHILDREN**

Fr Eamonn Gowing is a Redemptorist priest working in a favela/shanty town in the Brazilian city of Fortaleza. He reports of the great poverty there and how more than 200 children benefit from a feeding programme he has started which provides a nutritious meal each day. For many of the children it is the only regular meal they receive. Fr Eamonn is one of the many missionaries The Little Way Association supports with funds to feed hungry children.

**Can you spare a donation, large or small, to feed a hungry child?**

Every euro you send to our fund for Needy Children will be used, without deduction, to provide food, health-supplies and basic necessities for deprived children.

**MISSIONARIES NEED YOUR MASS OFFERINGS**

In these difficult times missionary priests overseas rely more than ever on Mass stipends for their daily subsistence and in order that they may continue to minister to their poor communities.

**We like to send a minimum stipend of €6.50 or more for each Mass.**

**WALSINGHAM THERESIAN CENTRE**

Praying for the Missions and offering accommodation to pilgrims. For reservations please contact Maggie on 0044 1328 820 222.

Crossed POs and cheques should be sent and made payable to:  
**THE LITTLE WAY ASSOCIATION**

**Sacred Heart House, 119 Cedars Rd, Clapham Common, London SW4 0PR**  
**(Registered Charity No. 235703) Tel 0044 20 76 22 0466**

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

I enclose €..... to be allocated to:

€..... **CLEAN WATER PROJECTS**

€..... **MISSION CHAPELS**

€..... **HUNGRY NEEDY CHILDREN**

€..... **WELLS AND WATER**

€..... **MASSES (please state no. )**  
(We ask for a minimum of €6.50 or more for each Mass)

€..... **LITTLE WAY ADMIN EXPENSES**

Please tick if you would like an acknowledgement

Name (Rev. Mr. Mrs. Miss)

(Block letters please)

Address

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

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