

INTERCOM

A Catholic Pastoral and Liturgical Resource • May 2020



The Benemerenti Medal: Recognition of Faithful Service



**In the Time of
Covid-19:
The Urbi et Orbi of
Pope Francis**



**Glimpses of the
Betrothal of Mary
and Joseph**
Paraic Maher



**The Thirtieth
Anniversary of
Cardinal Tomás
Ó'Fiaich**
Fr Michael Murtagh

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INTERCOM

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Editorial

Chains, Webs and Covid-19

Fr Chris Hayden
Editor



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I welcome you to this digital-only issue of *Intercom*; and I offer my sincere apologies for the abrupt development, which has been completely beyond our control. I sincerely hope that most if not all of our readers will be able to access this resource without undue inconvenience. If you are aware of any less digitally able subscribers, you might consider helping them to access their May 2020 issue of *Intercom*.

This magazine, like so much else, is the end result of a chain of collaboration. For a moment, I want to try to enumerate, in some detail, the links in that chain. They include: the Communications Council of the Irish Bishops' Conference, the Editorial Advisory Board, the writers, the editor and his assistant, the designer in Veritas, the staff who handle advertisements and subscriptions and send you – the subscriber – your copy of the magazine, the printing company in Kerry who produce the final product from the pdf's that are emailed to them, the drivers who bring it back to Dublin for packaging and distribution in eco-friendly, bio-degradable, transparent wrapping, the postal service who deliver it to your door.

But wait, we're only getting started. How about the forester – I don't even know in which country – who manages the forest that produces the timber that produces the paper? How about the mechanic who has serviced the van that takes the consignment of magazines to the building that is heated and lit by the power produced by plants engineered and equipped by an entirely different industry? And what about the roads the van drives on? Or the ship the rolls of paper are shipped in?

I could go on, but it would all start to get a bit obvious. On the other hand, it's the obvious things we can be most apt to miss. The fact of the matter, which becomes obvious once we give it some sustained consideration, is that the analogy of a chain is inadequate. Each chain intersects with others, which in turn intersect with others; and so, the chain turns out to be a web. We are not only links in a chain; our involvement with others is deeper than that: we are caught up in an intricate web of dependency.

While it might seem a little curmudgeonly to use the Covid-19 crisis as an occasion for making an ethical or moral point, it would be desperately wilful not to allow this extraordinary time to teach us. And one lesson – perhaps *the* lesson – is that we are interdependent. Radical individualism, whether as a priority or as a philosophy, does not correspond with the facts. Unbridled freedom, understood as doing one's own thing right up to, but just short of, harm to others, does not foster the kind of attitudes we need for survival when the chips are down.

We're used to the idea that freedom is specified by the preposition that follows it: there is freedom *from*, and there is freedom *for*. These days have been teaching us that freedom is also freedom *with*. If we don't work with each other, if we don't co-operate, the common good and its freedoms stand to be compromised.

The first temptation Jesus experienced in the wilderness was the temptation to turn stones into bread. This was about more than getting much-needed food. It was about by-passing the chain, the web, of human involvement, engagement, co-operation. In the time of Jesus as in our own, bread is the end of a chain of activities, from tilling to baking to wrapping to selling. It is both 'fruit of the earth' and 'work of human hands.'

Whether it's a monthly magazine or a daily loaf, the immediately obvious chain is criss-crossed by other, less-obvious chains, and together the chains form a web. We are interdependent. Perhaps that is why, in the Lord's Prayer, the petition for our daily bread is followed by 'forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.' In our sinfulness, we are prone to snap the chain and unravel the web. It is forgiveness that reinserts us, that draws us back into relationships of co-operation.

I am aware that many of our readers are, as I write these few thoughts, cocooning. If you are one of them, the chances are you will still be cocooning when this online issue of *Intercom* is published. May God bless each and every one of you. May he continue to watch over all of us, and those we serve.

If you are a subscriber and wish to gain access to this issue and the *Intercom* digital archive (www.intercommagazine.ie), please email your name, account number and email address to intercomsubscriptions@veritas.ie; and an online account can be set up for you.

Chris Hayden

Prayers and Reflections for May

Marian Prayers and Reflections of Pope Francis

Along our path of welcoming God's word into our hearts, the Mother of the Lord accompanies us. She is the one who was called blessed because she believed in the fulfilment of what the Lord had spoken to her (cf. *Lk 1:45*). Mary's own beatitude is prior to all the beatitudes proclaimed by Jesus about the poor and those who mourn, the meek, the peacemakers and those who are persecuted, for it is the necessary condition for every other kind of beatitude. The poor are not blessed because they are poor; they become blessed if, like Mary, they believe in the fulfilment of God's word.



Photo: thinstock.com

Aperuit Illis 15



Mother, look upon the poor of the Amazon region, for their home is being destroyed by petty interests. How much pain and misery, how much neglect and abuse there is in this blessed land overflowing with life! Touch the hearts of the powerful, for, even though we sense that the hour is late, you call us to save what is still alive. Mother whose heart is pierced, who yourself suffer in your mistreated sons and daughters, and in the wounds inflicted on nature, reign in the Amazon, together with your Son. Reign so that no one else can claim lordship over the handiwork of God. We trust in you, Mother of life. Do not abandon us in this dark hour. Amen.

Querida Amazonia 111



Mary, the Mother who cared for Jesus, now cares with maternal affection and pain for this wounded world. Just as her pierced heart mourned the death of Jesus, so now she grieves for the sufferings of the crucified poor and for the creatures of this world laid waste by human power. Completely transfigured, she now lives with Jesus, and all creatures sing of her fairness. She is the Woman, 'clothed in the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars' (*Rev 12:1*). Carried up into heaven, she is the Mother and Queen of all creation. In her glorified body, together with the Risen Christ, part of creation has reached the fullness of its beauty. She treasures the entire life of Jesus in her heart (cf. *Lk 2:19,51*), and now understands the meaning of all things. Hence, we can ask her to enable us to look at this world with eyes of wisdom.

Laudato Si' 241



Virgin of listening and contemplation, Mother of love, Bride of the eternal wedding feast, pray for the Church, whose pure icon you are, that she may never be closed in on herself or lose her passion for establishing God's kingdom. Star of the new evangelization, help us to bear radiant witness to communion, service, ardent and generous faith, justice and love of the poor, that the joy of the Gospel may reach to the ends of the earth, illuminating even the fringes of our world. Mother of the living Gospel, wellspring of happiness for God's little ones, pray for us. Amen. Alleluia!

Evangelii Gaudium 288



Photo: WMOF2018 - detail from official icon

Mary is the saint among the saints, blessed above all others. She teaches us the way of holiness and she walks ever at our side. She does not let us remain fallen and at times she takes us into her arms without judging us. Our converse with her consoles, frees and sanctifies us. Mary our Mother does not need a flood of words. She does not need us to tell her what is happening in our lives. All we need do is whisper, time and time again: 'Hail Mary...'

Gaudete et Exsultate 176



Mother, help our faith! Open our ears to hear God's word and to recognize his voice and call. Awaken in us a desire to follow in his footsteps, to go forth from our own land and to receive his promise. Help us to be touched by his love, that we may touch him in faith. Help us to entrust ourselves fully to him and to believe in his love, especially at times of trial, beneath the shadow of the cross, when our faith is called to mature. Sow in our faith the joy of the Risen One. Remind us that those who believe are never alone. Teach us to see all things with the eyes of Jesus, that he may be light for our path. And may this light of faith always increase in us, until the dawn of that undying day which is Christ himself, your Son, our Lord!

Lumen Fidei 60



Get Connected

The Digital Parish emerges

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The Digital Parish has emerged these past few weeks as many churches closed and Masses were cancelled as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Almost overnight, our prayer services and celebration of the Eucharist moved into the online spaces.

We have been speaking about the digital parish in this column for a number of years. We have been sharing tips and guidelines on how to do live streams, Facebook, Twitter and various other means of online outreach as parish. I hope that at least some of the advice and tips you read here were of use to you over these past few weeks.

If you are still just starting to put out into the deep of the net as a parish, there are some really useful tips available on 'The Digital Parish' Facebook Page. We have shared a series of ten tips on how parishes should be considering reaching out online during these times, and tips on how to do Facebook Live and live streams in general. For digitally savvy parishioners, we have also shared ten tips on how you can support your parish at this time.

I would encourage you to have a look at these tips, if only to avoid having your Mass viewers looking at a sideways screen or having to watch a series of 'funny filters' show up because you have pressed the special effects button as you live stream. The main piece of advice about live streams is to rehearse the stream, to see what the background looks like and to make sure you are comfortable with everything before you go live with a broadcast of Mass.

Parishioners have been flocking online to the various services being provided: morning prayer, evening prayer, daily Mass, holy hours and the full suite of Holy Week and Easter services. The online statistics have increased to the tune of millions.

Here are just some of the stats from these past couple of weeks:

- Church Services TV told me that since the start of the coronavirus pandemic they have seen an enormous increase in daily online viewing of Mass, with figures ranging from 200,000 to



300,000 per day, rising to half a million for viewing of weekend Masses.

- Michael Byrne¹ said they have noticed a huge increase in online viewing, with a tenfold increase at weekends. They have also had a lot of priests coming to them asking to have the parish put online, including an eighty-two year old priest who is cocooning and unable to say Mass from his parish church. He contacted the company and asked to go live from his own living room.
- MCN Media provide religious streaming in Ireland, Britain, Scotland, Canada and a small number of places in the USA. The vast majority of their streams are from Ireland north and south. They have 350 webcam streams in operation. On an average weekend they have about one million devices connected onto their servers for Mass. Since the coronavirus pandemic, they have had to add ten new servers to cope with the increased demand. Their views started to rise in the first two weekends of the pandemic, when up to six million devices logged on to their servers. On Palm Sunday, they recorded 12.3 million devices watching their streams from 43

different countries. They have also had an increase in new requests from parishes and individual priests for the setting up of live streaming.

All three service-providers have said the increase in online demand has been phenomenal and not something they have ever experienced before.

There is a whole other set of statistics not reflected here either — those are the numbers from Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, where parishes and individual priests have been making prayers and other spiritual content available in both real time and as pre-recorded content.

Online is where it is at the moment, and as I write this in the middle of April 2020, we have no idea how long more these restrictions will be in place keeping our churches closed for Mass and prayer gatherings.

Thank goodness for the work of so many in ensuring that the face of Christ is seen and the voice of Christ is heard at a time when we need the anchor and scaffolding of our faith more than ever.

NOTE

¹Of www.parishwebsites.ie



Betrothed: Glimpses of the Betrothal of Mary and Joseph

This book has its origin in a curious marble panel in a small church in Lyon. The panel shows the figures of Joseph and Mary, facing each other and clasping each other's left hand, while another figure, who looks like a Jewish priest or rabbi, presides over them. Immediately, I was struck by how much like a wedding it looked. My curiosity turned to excitement as I realised this must be the betrothal of Mary and Joseph. That discovery was quickly followed by a question: why does it look so formal, so solemn, so substantial? Thus began my quest in search of the real story of the binding together of Mary and Joseph as each other's betrothed.

In his work on St Joseph, *The Guardian of the Redeemer*, Pope John Paul II wrote that, 'According to Jewish custom, marriage took place in two stages: first, the legal, or true marriage was celebrated, and then, only after a certain period of time, the husband brought the wife into his own house. Thus, before he lived with Mary, Joseph was already her husband.' The Pope added that when God spoke to Joseph through the words of the angel about Mary's mysterious pregnancy, He addressed Joseph as the husband of Mary. The Pope continued: 'What took place in her through the power of the Holy Spirit also confirmed in a special way the marriage bond which already existed between Joseph and Mary. God's messenger was clear in what he said to Joseph: "Do not fear to take Mary your wife into your home." Hence, what had taken place earlier, namely, Joseph's marriage to Mary, happened in accord with God's will and was meant to endure.' The Pope affirms that not only was the betrothal formally a marriage under Jewish law, but it was also one according to the Church's own understanding of marriage, whereby it recognises that the natural bond of marriage comes into



being when the words of consent are exchanged, as in the betrothal, rather than when the relationship is consummated. To not see this is to deny what really happened while also draining the moment of the betrothal of its dramatic, moral tension. This was no mere engagement; it was as sure an exchange of marital vows as any that can be witnessed in our churches today.

This understanding of the betrothal as a marriage is clear as well from The Jerusalem Bible, the translation which is used in the *Lectionary* that is read at Mass on Sundays. In the beginning of his Gospel, Matthew tells us that 'Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit'. Having become aware of her condition, he writes that Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided 'to divorce her informally'. An angel, however, appears to him in a dream and tells him to 'not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife'.

Upon waking, Matthew writes, Joseph did as the angel had told him and 'he took his wife to his home'. He adds that, although Joseph 'had not had intercourse with her, she gave birth to a son', and Joseph named him Jesus.

In Luke, we read in the account of the Annunciation that the Angel Gabriel was sent by God to a virgin 'betrothed to a man named Joseph'. When the angel proposed that she might conceive a child, Mary asked 'how can this come about, since I am a virgin?', for while she did have a husband, their marriage was not consummated. In the chapter that follows, long after the Annunciation, and after Joseph became aware of the pregnancy and had taken Mary into his home as his wife, we read that, 'Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered

together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child'. This shows that Mary's marital status has not changed since the Annunciation. She has not gone from being betrothed to being married, nor from being unmarried to being married. Instead, all that has changed is that she and Joseph are now sharing a home together. This confirms that the significant event of Mary and Joseph's marriage occurred when they were betrothed, not when Joseph took her to his home.

In conclusion, we have here two people brought together in the most extraordinary of circumstances, whose real end is still hidden from them both. They respond with utter faith and trust in God, and by both of them saying 'yes' they laid the groundwork for the next stage of salvation history – the angel coming to the betrothed Mary to ask if she would consent to bearing the messiah, the divine Son of God himself.

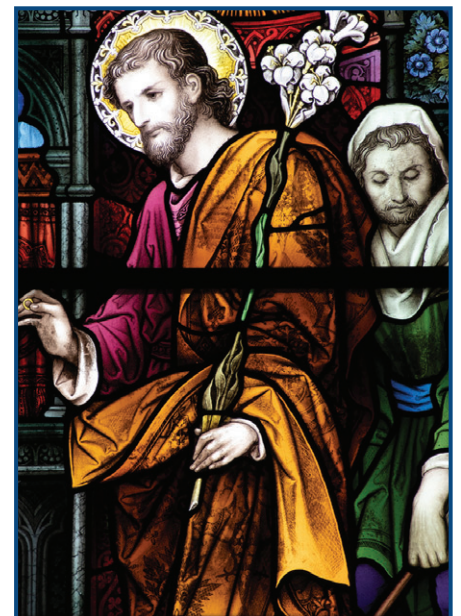


him. St Joseph's left hand indicates an openness to his betrothed as she is, while Our Lady's right hand indicates a chaste acceptance of his protective love. Both she and Joseph are looking straight into each other's eyes, rather than downwards, with the High Priest very much a figure in the background.

Daniel O'Connell Memorial Church of the Holy Cross, Cahersiveen, Co Kerry



This is the only church in Ireland dedicated to a layman, so it is apt that it should have a prominent stained-glass window celebrating a betrothing couple exchanging their marital vows. The architect, George C. Ashlin, aimed for the monumental in building the church and he accomplished his task. Perched on one of the westernmost points of the country, it is a fitting memorial to one of



St Teresa's Carmelite Church, Clarendon Street, Dublin

On a tiny alleyway, mere moments from the hustle and bustle of Grafton Street, lies a hidden gem, St Teresa's Church. Inside it, behind and to the left of the main altar, lies an exquisite window celebrating the betrothal, which is immediately visible to all sitting in the nave of the church.

What is immediately striking about this window is the sheer abundance of rich colours radiating through it. The light seems to burst through the window in a vibrant display of festivity. Yet, there is a regal air to the figures portrayed.

Our Lady, in particular, looks sublime. Her face and hands exhibit a gentle delicacy. The slight bowing of her head hints at a peaceful, trusting, faithful spirit. This is the moment of consent when she accepts Joseph's offering of himself as her spouse, as she in turn offers herself to him as his spouse. Mary, however, is doing more than this: she is consenting to God and His mysterious plan for her future. In a way, her gait of total humility and acceptance is reminiscent of the consent she will give later in life at the Annunciation. There she will utter her *fiat* – her decisive reply to the Angel Gabriel, 'may it be!' – to become the mother of God, the mother of the baby Jesus.

Joseph too seems to reflect this heightened momentousness. The solemnity of his posture hints at something greater even than marriage. Indeed, the miraculous flowered rod in his left hand is an immediate sign of this being a special plan of God for his life.

Yes, he is taking a wife for whom his life will become a living sacrifice.

Church of the Annunciation, Blackpool, Cork



This church was designed by one of Cork's most famous sculptors, Seamus Murphy. The betrothal window itself has many of the traditional elements we would expect: the High Priest; the Temple; the flowering rod; the dove; and the betrothed couple with Joseph deftly placing a ring on Our Lady's left hand. Yet, the style is unique. The figures are all outside the Temple. St Joseph is dark-haired and particularly young. Our Lady appears directly opposite him, as a partner, and yet also complementing

Europe's finest Catholic politicians of the nineteenth century. Likewise, the betrothal window is a fitting celebration of the marriage of Mary and Joseph.

The scene is simple yet overlaid with sumptuous details. Our Lady is wearing a black and gold patterned inner garment over a white tunic, a purple dress that falls to the floor, a mantle of rich shades of blue, adorned with fleur-de-lis and a translucent white veil.

Joseph too is finely dressed for the solemn occasion in regal shades of purple and gold, while his once dry rod is bursting forth with leaves and flowers. He is stretching forward to place a gold ring on Our Lady's finger. The High Priest is gently holding Our Lady's hand and guiding it to receive the ring from Joseph.

reads *'Ite ad Joseph'* that places the betrothal firmly as another instance of divine providence answering a prayer with the command 'Go to Joseph.'

St Columba's Church, Iona Road, Dublin

Among the stained-glass windows of this church is a series representing the seven sacraments. Each one depicts an Irish saint either receiving or conferring a particular sacrament. The one exception is the window dealing with matrimony. There, we are treated

St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh

The magnificent Catholic Cathedral in Armagh is an imposing structure built on a hill surveying the entire town and surrounding countryside. But if the church makes a grand statement, it still does not prepare you for how breathtaking is its betrothal window.

On the left-hand side of the nave as you face the altar, the window depicts two scenes that tell the story of how Joseph became the husband of Mary. [In the central panel] we see Joseph taking the hand of Our Lady as the High Priest [in the panel to the left] extends his hand to bless them. Unusually, we see Our Lady in white robes with just the lightest shade of blue and embroidered with lilies. Joseph is in plain dark robes. Above them, angels unfurl a banner that



to a most beautiful betrothal scene of Mary and Joseph.

The artistry reflects a development from windows of the 1800s. The robes of the betrothing couple are richly patterned and coloured. Their faces express more emotion, with Joseph peering almost in wonder at Our Lady while she looks downward in quiet humility. Their clasped hands are wrapped in a cloth of the High Priest, reminiscent of Catholic priests wrapping their stole around the hands of bride and groom in the old rite of Christian marriage.

The figure behind them is instantly recognisable as the High Priest, given his horned headdress with its Hebrew inscription and his bejewelled breastplate.

Paraic Maher is from Listowel, County Kerry. His graduate work has been in Philosophy, particularly classical virtue ethics. He has taught introductory courses in the history of philosophy in the Catholic University of America, Washington DC.

His book, Betrothed: Glimpses of the Betrothal of Mary and Joseph, can be purchased online at intriguingstories.ie. All text and images in this article are taken from the book.



Thoughts on the Re-Dedication of a Church

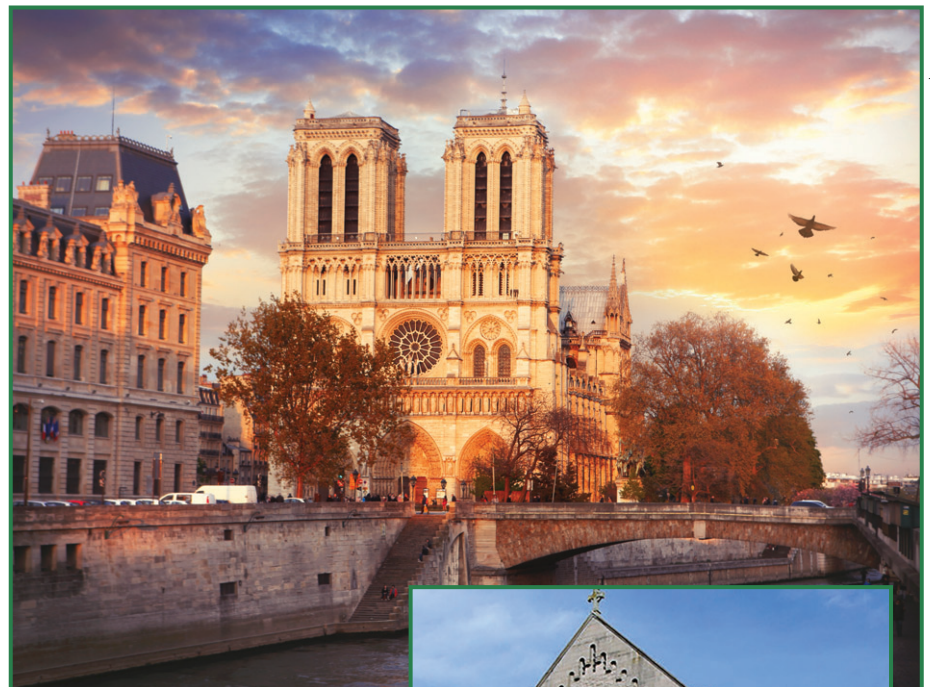
In February, Archbishop Eamon Martin celebrated Mass in St Malachi's Church, Armagh, to mark its reopening after a closure for necessary work. In his homily, he reflected on the near-destruction of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris a year ago.

It's almost a year now since the beautiful Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris was gravely damaged by fire. I can still vividly remember the sight of the people of Paris staring in shock, or kneeling in prayer as the inferno engulfed the historic 850-year-old building. There was an audible gasp and cry from the crowd as the distinctive steeple collapsed in flames. President Macron spoke to the world with tears in his eyes: 'Part of us is burning', he said.

It seems strange in some ways that the destruction of a Catholic Cathedral in such a secular country as France evoked such a pained reaction. But then this was no ordinary Cathedral – millions of people from all over the world have visited Notre Dame. And in many ways, it is one of those sacred spaces that appeals to the spirit within people all over the world. Even non-believers are touched by its beauty and it points everyone to something beyond our senses - the transcendent God who is truth and beauty itself. Thankfully, the ensuing days brought some relief, as pledges of millions of euros were made for the restoration of the Cathedral and it became clear that the rose windows, the gargoyles and belfry were not destroyed and many of the sacred objects were saved - the priest chaplain to the Paris fire brigade spoke of how he had rescued the Blessed Sacrament and the priceless relic of the crown of thorns.

Every time I go inside a majestic church like Notre dame or our own cathedral or indeed this beautiful church of St Malachy, my eyes are drawn up to heaven and I can't help thinking: 'This place was made by God'!

When you visit St Malachy's you are moved to praise God and you are instinctively drawn to prayer. Visiting here is not like entering a museum or art gallery. This is a living place of worship. For decades people have come here to lift their hearts and minds to God in worship, thanksgiving, petition, sorrow and



Above: Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris
Right: St Malachi's Church, Armagh

intercession for others. I think tonight of the baptisms, first communions, weddings, funerals, the millions of prayers offered up here in times of joy, worry, sorrow, happiness, decisions, exams, relationships, hopes, fears, pleading, thanking...

As we celebrate the repainting and reopening of St Malachy's this evening, it is good to take a moment to say thanks to God for the skill and dedication of the craftsmen and women who laboured in its construction in the 1930s when it was decided to replace the old St Malachy's church building in Chapel Lane which was almost two hundred years old at that time. We also give thanks for all those who have laboured in various restorations, re-orderings and enhancements over the years. I think of the many people who have given their time, gifts and talents to hand this Church on to us in the years since Cardinal McRory dedicated it in 1938. This church links us to the many people who have gone before us and will come after us to worship here. Please God St Malachy's will remain a source of spiritual comfort to countless families in the future, in their joys and in their sorrows.



But of course, in saying all this it is worth reminding ourselves that the Church is not primarily a building - it is made up of people, and one day this beautiful building will fall into ruin, or be replaced. What is important is that the faith, hope and worship this sacred space represents will be kept alive in the hearts and families of the people of Armagh and beyond, and be handed on to the next generation. As St Peter wrote: 'Set yourselves close to (Jesus) so that you, too, may be living stones making a spiritual house.' (1 Pet 2:5)

*Archbishop Eamon Martin
Archbishop of Armagh,
Apostolic Administrator
of Dromore and
Primate of All Ireland*



Urbi et Orbi Message of Pope Francis

Friday, 27 March 2020

When evening had come' (Mk 4:35). The Gospel passage we have just heard (Mk 4:35-41) begins like this. For weeks now it has been evening. Thick darkness has gathered over our squares, our streets and our cities; it has taken over our lives, filling everything with a deafening silence and a distressing void, that stops everything as it passes by; we feel it in the air, we notice in people's gestures, their glances give them away. We find ourselves afraid and lost. Like the disciples in the Gospel we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We have realised that we are in the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. On this boat... are all of us. Just like those disciples, who spoke anxiously with one voice, saying 'We are perishing' (v. 38), so we too have realised that we cannot go on thinking of ourselves, but only together can we do this.

It is easy to recognise ourselves in this story. What is harder to understand is Jesus' attitude. While his disciples are quite naturally alarmed and desperate, he is in the stern, in the part of the boat that sinks first. And what does he do? In spite of the tempest, he sleeps soundly, trusting in the Father. This is the only time in the Gospels we see Jesus sleeping. When he wakes up, after calming the wind and the waters, he turns to the disciples in a reproaching voice: 'Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?' (v. 40).

Let us try to understand. In what does the lack of the disciples' faith consist, as contrasted with Jesus' trust? They had not stopped believing in him; in fact, they called on him. But we see how they call on him: 'Teacher, do you not care if we perish?' (v. 38). *Do you not care*: they think that Jesus is not interested in them, does not care about them. One of the things that hurts us and our families most when we hear it said is: 'Do you not care about me?' It is a phrase that wounds and unleashes storms in our hearts. It would have shaken Jesus too. Because he, more than anyone, cares about us. Indeed, once they have called on him, he saves his disciples from their discouragement.



Photo: iStockphoto.com

The storm exposes our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities. It shows us how we have allowed to become dull and feeble the very things that nourish, sustain and strengthen our lives and our communities. The tempest lays bare all our pre-packaged ideas and forgetfulness of what nourishes our people's souls; all those attempts that anaesthetise us with ways of thinking and acting that supposedly 'save' us, but instead prove incapable of putting us in touch with our roots and keeping alive the memory of those who have gone before us. We deprive ourselves of the antibodies we need to confront adversity.

In this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about our image, has fallen away, uncovering once more that (blessed) common belonging, of which we cannot be deprived: our belonging as brothers and sisters.

'Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?' Lord, your word this evening strikes us and regards us, all of us. In this world, that you love more than we do, we



have gone ahead at breakneck speed, feeling powerful and able to do anything. Greedy for profit, we let ourselves get caught up in things, and lured away by haste. We did not stop at your reproach to us, we were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet. We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick. Now that we are in a stormy sea, we implore you: 'Wake up, Lord!'

'Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?' Lord, you are calling to us, calling us to faith, which is not so much believing that you exist, as coming to you and trusting in you. This Lent, your call reverberates urgently: 'Be converted!', 'Return to me with all your heart' (Joel 2:12). You are calling on us to seize this time of trial as a *time of choosing*. It is not the time of your judgement, but of our judgement: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to



Photo: istockphoto.com

separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others.

We can look to so many exemplary companions for the journey, who, even though fearful, have reacted by giving their lives. This is the force of the Spirit poured out and fashioned in courageous and generous self-denial. It is the life in the Spirit that can redeem, value and demonstrate how our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people – often forgotten people – who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines nor on the grand catwalks of the latest show, but who without any doubt are in these very days writing the decisive events of our time: doctors, nurses, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers, providers of transport, law and order forces, volunteers, priests, religious men and women and so very many others who have understood that no one reaches salvation by themselves.

In the face of so much suffering, where the authentic development of our peoples is assessed, we experience the priestly prayer of Jesus: 'That they may all be one' (Jn 17:21). How many people every day are exercising patience and offering hope, taking care to sow not panic but a

shared responsibility. How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday gestures, how to face up to and navigate a crisis by adjusting their routines, lifting their gaze and fostering prayer. How many are praying, offering and interceding for the good of all. Prayer and quiet service: these are our victorious weapons.

'Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?' Faith begins when we realise we are in need of salvation. We are not self-sufficient; by ourselves we flounder: we need the Lord, like ancient navigators needed the stars. Let us invite Jesus into the boats of our lives. Let us hand over our fears to him so that he can conquer them. Like the disciples, we will experience that with him on board there will be no shipwreck. Because this is God's strength: turning to the good everything that happens to us, even the bad things. He brings serenity into our storms, because with God life never dies.

Embracing his cross means finding the courage to embrace all the hardships of the present time, abandoning for a moment our eagerness for power and possessions in order to make room for the creativity that only the Spirit is capable of inspiring. It means finding the courage to create spaces where everyone

can recognize that they are called, and to allow new forms of hospitality, fraternity and solidarity. By his cross we have been saved in order to embrace hope and let it strengthen and sustain all measures and all possible avenues for helping us protect ourselves and others. Embracing the Lord in order to embrace hope: that is the strength of faith, which frees us from fear and gives us hope.

'Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?' Dear brothers and sisters, from this place that tells of Peter's rock-solid faith, I would like this evening to entrust all of you to the Lord, through the intercession of Mary, Health of the People and Star of the stormy Sea. From this colonnade that embraces Rome and the whole world, may God's blessing come down upon you as a consoling embrace.

Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts. You ask us not to be afraid. Yet our faith is weak and we are fearful. But you, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm. Tell us again: 'Do not be afraid' (Mt 28:5). And we, together with Peter, 'cast all our anxieties onto you, for you care about us' (cf. 1 Pet 5:7).

This text has been slightly shortened. The full text is available at: http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20200327_omelia-epidemia.html

Marking the Thirtieth Anniversary of Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich

While wandering through the streets of Lourdes recently, I noticed a photograph on sale in Viron's photographic shop. I thought it had disappeared in recent years but it appeared in the same position on the display board that it has taken up for almost thirty years now. The photograph is one of the late Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich, taken while he was celebrating Mass at the Grotto, just hours before he died on May 8th 1990. That his photograph should still be in demand almost thirty years later says a great deal. I spoke with the lady in the shop about the photograph and she told me that her father 'had a good relationship' with the Cardinal.

I took to thinking why it was that the late Cardinal was considered by many to be an exemplary church-man and leader, and why his image was still in demand. This had been on my mind for many years, as the thorny subject of leadership is analysed and debated as never before. On the tenth anniversary of his death, I had written,

'In this age of tribunals and revelations we have grown accustomed to becoming disappointed by our leaders. The much sought-after spotlight of public notice can be cruel. It searches every crevice of a person's life for hidden flaws, shadows, and secrets. Only the utterly transparent survive the test. The cardinal virtues and demands of leadership now are those associated with integrity. Accountability, transparency and openness are the demands of our time and culture. They are also the hallmarks of the consistent personality or administration. The acceptance of authority is no longer automatic and depends on authenticity. You must live what you proclaim and be what you seem. Those who may accept authority or leadership demand a seamless garment.'

To try to understand what some psychologists call the 'mental glue' that



Photo: IBC



binds leaders and followers together, I took to re-reading what I regard as the best contemporary book on leadership.¹ In some of the opening remarks in the preface of the book, I found what I regard to be the key to understanding, in however limited a fashion, the dynamic of the Cardinal's giftedness or charism in leading his flock. Most leadership books focus on the 'secrets' of the uniquely gifted leader, without reference to social context or changing relationship. As I studied the book and absorbed its insights, I tried to identify the key markers that made the cardinal's reputation rise so high and last so long. Some of the key insights, as written in the preface of the book, concentrate on the importance of the leader being seen as 'one of us.'

'Effective leadership is always about how leaders and followers come to see each other as part of a common team or group, as members of the same in-group. It therefore has little to do with the individuality of the leader and everything to do with whether they are seen as part of the team, as a team player, as able and willing to advance team goals. Leadership, in short, is very much a 'we' thing.'

Winning hearts, and perhaps to a lesser extent, minds, was the gift of the Cardinal. I'm sure that most of what he did was unstudied and unconscious in terms of leadership, but it was none the less successful in terms of public relations. He was not the most efficient of personalities but he was very effective in communicating a message. He did this in a number of ways that I would like to explore. The theorists posit four key rules of effective leadership:

1. Leaders need to be 'in group' prototypes. The more representative an individual is seen to be of a given social identity, the more he or she is clearly 'one of us,' the more influential he or she will be within the group.
2. Leaders need to be 'in group' champions. They must be seen to be working for the group.
3. Leaders need to be entrepreneurs of identity. They work hard to construct identity.
4. Leaders need to be embedders of identity. The sense of who we are and how we believe the world should be organised needs to be translated into social reality.²

Using this paradigm, it is easy to give examples of the four points from the life and the later ministry of the Cardinal. His proto-typicality, his being, 'one of us,' was probably his greatest strength, even if it may have been somewhat contrived on occasion. One of the more common observations is that there was such broad range of people who 'knew the

Cardinal well,' or who claim to have been on friendly terms with him. This identification with him does justice to his success in cultivating the prototypicality principle above. His social identity was as 'one of our own,' in so many ways.

In Co Louth, where they had relatives, the Ó Fiaich family were known by the family nickname, 'Champion.' Tomás was an in-group champion, perceived to be on the side of the people, especially the Nationalist population of Northern Ireland. The context, as always, was important and the backdrop to his ministry as bishop was the dark scenery of violence and the political upheavals of the 1980s. On the tenth anniversary of his death, in a homily, I observed: *'The Cardinal renewed his people in what were some of the darkest days of the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland. He not only gave individuals a name, a place of origin, and an identity. He also gave his people a communal identity. For a people who had been told in subtle ways that they were nobody, it was a source of strength and dignity to know that we were a people, with a language and a literature and a history; a communal memory which had shaped us. He gave his people strength.'*

As a constructor of identity, the Cardinal's strength became his weakness in the eyes of detractors. He was undoubtedly a romantic Nationalist and this was interpreted by some as feeding into the culture of violence or at least identifying with it. Though he made the church's position clear many times, the perception developed among powerful elites that he had constructed an identity that was historically naïve and currently unhelpful. Most of his flock thought otherwise.

As an embedder of identity, he was adept at using symbolism. His use of the Irish language was gentle and inclusive. His liturgies at Mass-rocks and places of historical interest caught the public imagination. His love of Gaelic games was well-known and his ability to connect name and place has become legendary. The particular personality traits that helped him to carry people along included his linguistic skills. He was a skilled linguist but it was as much the cadences in his delivery; the unpolished accent with which he spoke and the depth of knowledge and affection that he expressed, linguistically and non-verbally, that appealed to his audience. He used the 'symbolic reserve' of the past to enrich the present.



Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich and Pope John Paul II in Dublin during the Pope's visit to Ireland in 1979

He was gifted with an approachability in public that bordered of the disinhibited. He moved towards people both symbolically and physically. His rustic gait; his open expression; the warmth of character that he exuded and his ability to bond with strangers were uncontrived. He often expressed himself in a tactile or disarming manner. The non-verbal cues were immediate and positive. People 'warmed to him' because they sensed warmth being exuded. The love of God's people, Pobal Dé, for their deceased cardinal can be explained, I believe, by seeing it as a mirror-image of his own love for them. This love of people was the greatest gift the cardinal possessed. He really only came alive in the presence of others. His charisma was his ability to excite and enthuse people by the exuberance and enthusiasm of his personality. *Cor ad cor loquitur*, as the recently canonised Cardinal Newman's motto expressed it. Heart speaks to heart.

No book on leadership is complete without a list of secrets, or as this work calls them 'principles.' To sum up and to aid our reflection, I finish with the four principles enunciated in the preface to the work cited. However helpful or unhelpful they may be, it is important to note that thirty years after his sudden death in Toulouse Hospital, the ripple-wave of memory for the late Cardinal is still strong, and his example continues to motivate and inspire. That, in itself, is sufficient testimony to his qualities of leadership.

Four principles

1. Leaders must be seen as 'one of us.' They have to be perceived by followers as representing the position that best distinguishes our in-group from other out-groups. In order to be effective, a leader needs to be seen as an in-group prototype.
2. Leaders must be seen to 'do it for us.' Their actions must advance the interests of the in-group.
3. Leaders must craft a sense of us. They should be actively involved in shaping the shared understanding of who we are. Good leaders need to be skilled entrepreneurs of identity.
4. Leaders must make us matter. The point of leadership is not simply to express what a group thinks, but rather to take the ideas and values and priorities of the group and embed them in reality.³

NOTES

¹ *The New Psychology of Leadership. Identity, Influence and Power.* Haslam, Reicher and Platow. Hove, UK: Taylor and Francis, 2010.

² *Op Cit.* p. 75.

³ *Op Cit.* Preface xxii.



Winning the New Continent: The Wisdom of Pope St John Paul II on the 100th anniversary of his Birth (18 May 1920)

‘In the Cross of Christ not only is the Redemption accomplished through suffering, but *also human suffering itself has been redeemed* [...] In bringing about the Redemption through suffering, Christ has also *raised human suffering to the level of the Redemption.*’

Salvifici Doloris (1984), 19

‘The lack of housing, an extremely serious problem in itself, should be seen as a sign and summing-up of a whole series of shortcomings, economic, social, cultural or simply human in nature. Given the extent of the problem, we should need little convincing of how far we are from an authentic development of peoples.’

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (1987), 17

‘Of the essence of motherhood is the fact that it concerns the person. Motherhood always establishes *a unique and unrepeatable relationship* between two people: *between mother and child* and *between child and mother*. Even when the same woman is the mother of many children, her personal relationship with each one of them is of the very essence of motherhood. For each child is generated in a unique and unrepeatable way, and this is true both for the mother and for the child. Each child is surrounded in the same way by that maternal love on which are based the child’s development and coming to maturity as a human being [...] Mary’s motherhood which becomes man’s inheritance is a gift: *a gift which Christ himself makes personally to every individual.*’

Redemptoris Mater (1987), 45



Pope John Paul II in Knock during his visit to Ireland in 1979

‘We often experience the dramatic situation of the first Christian community, which witnessed unbelieving and hostile forces “gathered together against the Lord and his Anointed” (Acts 4:26). Now, as then, we must pray that God will grant us boldness in preaching the Gospel; we must ponder the mysterious ways of the Spirit and allow ourselves to be led by him into all the truth (cf. Jn 16:13) [...] In a world tormented and oppressed by so many problems, a world tempted to pessimism, the one who proclaims the “Good News” must be a person who has found true hope in Christ.’

Redemptoris Missio (1990), 87, 91

‘In effect, to teach and to spread her social doctrine pertains to the Church’s evangelizing mission and is an essential part of the Christian message [...] The “new evangelization,” which the modern world ungently needs and which I have

emphasized many times, must include among its essential elements *a proclamation of the Church’s social doctrine.*’

Centesimus Annus (1991), 5

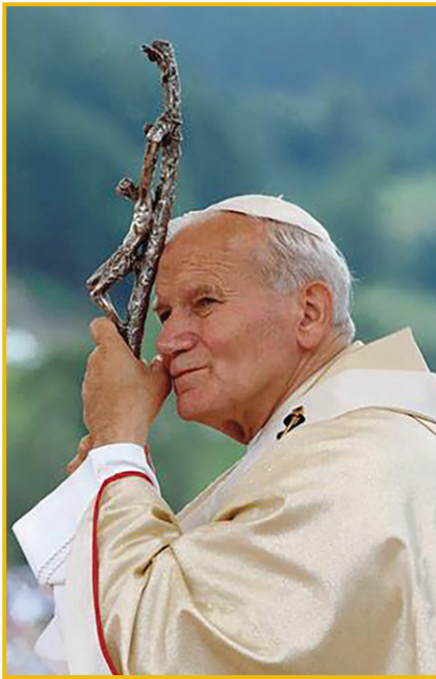
‘The priest is first of all a *minister of the Word of God*. He is consecrated and sent forth to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom to all, calling every person to the obedience of faith and leading believers to an ever-increasing knowledge of and communion in the mystery of God, as revealed and communicated to us in Christ. For this reason, the priest himself ought to develop a great personal familiarity with the world of God.’

Pastores Dabo Vobis (1992), 26

‘Certain currents of modern thought have gone so far as to *exalt freedom to such an extent that it becomes an absolute, which would then be the source of values* [...] But in this way the inescapable claims of truth disappear, yielding their place to a criterion of sincerity, authenticity and “being at peace with oneself”, so much so that some have come to adopt a radically subjectivistic conception of moral judgment [...] there is a tendency to grant to the individual conscience the prerogative of independently determining the criteria of good and evil and then acting accordingly.’

Veritatis Splendor (1993), 32

‘The whole of the Christian life is like a great *pilgrimage to the house of the Father*, whose unconditional love for every human creature, and in particular for the “prodigal son” (cf. Lk 15:11-32), we discover anew each day. This pilgrimage



Pope John Paul II in Luxembourg, 1985

Photo: Dennis Jarvis, Halifax, Canada

‘The crucified Son of God is the historic event upon which every attempt of the mind to construct an adequate explanation of the meaning of existence upon merely human argumentation comes to grief. The true key-point, which challenges every philosophy, is Jesus Christ’s death on the Cross. It is here that every attempt to reduce the Father’s saving plan to purely human logic is doomed to failure.’

Fides et Ratio (1998), 23

‘We shall not be saved by a formula but by a Person, and the assurance which he gives us: *I am with you!* It is not therefore a matter of inventing a “new programme”. The programme already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition it is the same as ever. Ultimately, it has its centre in Christ himself, who is to be known, loved and imitated, so that in him we may live the life of the Trinity, and with him transform history until its fulfilment in the heavenly Jerusalem. This is a programme which does not change with shifts of times and cultures, even though it takes account of time and culture for the sake of true dialogue and effective communication. This programme for all times is our programme for the Third Millennium.’

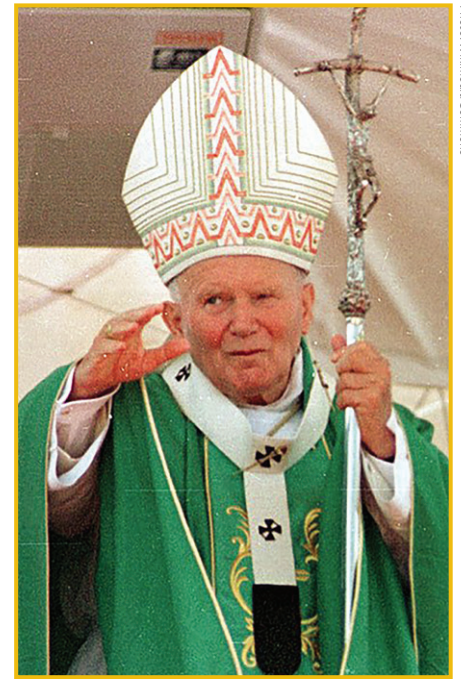
Novo Millennio Ineunte (2001), 29

‘The Rosary is my favourite prayer. A marvellous prayer! Marvellous in its simplicity and its depth. It can be said that the Rosary is, in some sense, a prayer-commentary on the final chapter of the Vatican II Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, a chapter which discusses the wondrous presence of the Mother of God in the mystery of Christ and the Church.’

Rosarium Virginis Mariae (2002), 2

‘I have been able to celebrate Holy Mass in chapels built along mountain paths, on lakeshores and seacoasts; I have celebrated it on altars built in stadiums and in city squares... This varied scenario of celebrations of the Eucharist has given me a powerful experience of its universal and, so to speak, cosmic character. Yes, Cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated *on the altar of the world.*’

Ecclesia de Eucharistia (2003), 8



Pope John Paul II in Brazil 1997

Photo: Wikimedia Commons

‘I encourage the Church in Europe to give greater attention to *the training of young people in the faith.* As we look to the future, we cannot but think of them: we need to make contact with the minds, the hearts and the character of the young in order to provide them with a sound human and Christian formation [...] I urgently invite you, *the Church living in Europe: be a Church that prays, praises God, recognising his absolute primacy, magnifying him with joyful faith. Rediscover the sense of mystery: live it with humble gratitude; testify to it with conviction and contagious joy. Celebrate the salvation which comes from Christ: welcome it as a gift which makes of you its sacrament; make your life a true spiritual worship pleasing to God* (cf. *Rom 12:1*).’

Ecclesia in Europa (2003), 61, 69

‘Today much imagination is needed if we are to learn how to speak about the faith and about life’s most important questions. It requires people who know how to love and how to think, because the imagination lives on love and on thought, as well as nourishing our thinking and enkindling our love.’

Rise, Let us be on our Way (2004) (p. 107 of Jonathan Cape edition)

takes place in the heart of each person, extends to the believing community and then reaches to the whole of humanity.’

Tertio Millennio Adveniente (1994), 49.

‘Along the ecumenical path to unity, pride of place certainly belongs to *common prayer*, the prayerful union of those who gather together around Christ himself. If Christians, despite their divisions, can grow ever more united in common prayer around Christ, they will grow in awareness of how little divides them in comparison to what unites them. If they meet more often and more regularly before Christ in prayer, they will be able to gain the courage to face all the painful human reality of their divisions...’

Ut Unum Sint (1995), 22

‘In this great endeavour to create a new culture of life we are *inspired and sustained by the confidence* that comes from knowing that the *Gospel of life*, like the Kingdom of God itself, is growing and producing abundant fruit (cf. *Mk 4:26-29*). There is certainly an enormous disparity between the powerful resources available to the forces promoting the “culture of death” and the means at the disposal of those working for a “culture of life and love”. But we know that we can rely on the help of God, for whom nothing is impossible (cf. *Mt 19:26*).’

Evangelium Vitae (1995), 100



Extract from the Statement of the Spring 2020 General Meeting

Saint Patrick's Day, Tuesday 17 March 2020

Bishops prayed through the intercession of our national patron, Saint Patrick, for the faith and well-being of Irish people everywhere. In particular bishops prayed for those who are selflessly dedicated to the frontline services of medicine and public health, in the care of our vulnerable, isolated, and ill sisters and brothers.

Lent and preparation for Holy Week and Easter

Bishops reflected on the call to renewal in our Christian life which is a central part of our preparation for Easter. Pope Francis reminds us that, as we journey through the season of Lent, 'God never tires of forgiving us' (*Evangelii Gaudium The Joy of the Gospel*). Bishops ask of the faithful to offer up their fasting, prayer, reading of Scripture and works of mercy during Lent for the grace of healing and renewal.



National Eucharistic Congress/Adoremus 2020 at the Marian Shrine, Knock, and the International Eucharistic Congress in Hungary

Ireland previously hosted International Eucharistic Congresses in 1932 and 2012, and from 13 to 20 September the 52nd International Eucharistic Congress will be held in Budapest, Hungary. The aim of the Eucharist Congress is to promote an awareness of the central place of the Eucharist in the life and mission of the Catholic Church; to help improve our understanding and celebration of the liturgy and to draw attention to the social dimension of the Eucharist. Bookings are now open for the official Irish pilgrimage which will be led by Bishop Kevin Doran of Elphin, the Bishops' Conference delegate for International Eucharistic Congresses. The theme of the Congress is 'All My Springs are in You' from *Psalms 87* which refers to God as the source (or spring) of life for his people. The daily activities of the Congress consist of the celebration of Mass and the delivery of catechesis and testimonies by clergy and well-known lay Catholics from around the world.

To prepare for the IEC2020 in Budapest, a National Eucharistic Congress/Adoremus 2020 is planned to take place at the national Marian shrine in Knock, Co Mayo, on 19 and 20

June. Adoremus 2020 is a joint initiative between the National Apostolate of Eucharistic Adoration and the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. All are welcome.

Trócaire

Trócaire 2020 Lenten Appeal

Bishops thanked everyone for their generous support of Trócaire and asked that they continue this support during the season of Lent to raise vital funds for almost three million of our poorest sisters and brothers around the world.

Safeguarding children in the Catholic Church

Mr John Morgan, chairperson, and Ms Teresa Devlin, chief executive of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland, advised the Bishops' Conference on activities engaging the current work of the Board on strategic matters relating to governance and information sharing. Bishops were briefed on the revised training manual and approach, which seeks to engage Church personnel in a more reflective learning style to build skills and capacity across the Church in child safeguarding ministry. Bishops were advised that the National Board will host its conference in Monaghan on 16 and 17 October on the theme of theology and child safeguarding.

Letter on the sanctity of human life to the Northern Ireland Secretary of State

This week, the Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland wrote to the Secretary of State, Mr Brandon Lewis MP, expressing their concern about the proposed New Legal Framework for Abortion Services, stating that while abortion was a devolved matter, 'the Westminster Government removed protections to the life of the unborn child with chilling alacrity. The imposition of such draconian and unjust legislation ensures that the issue will never cease to be contentious'. Bishops also strongly criticised the Northern Ireland Office's proposal for abortion on demand up to 12 or 14 weeks, including sex-selective abortions, and 'that the New Legal Framework will help to facilitate a significant increase in the number of disabled unborn children who are aborted in our society.'

The bishops' letter emphasised that 'the direct and intentional killing of innocent human beings by means of abortion ignores the right to life of the unborn. For this reason, all Christians and people of goodwill are obliged in conscience not to cooperate formally in abortion services, even if permitted by civil legislation', and this includes all health professional and ancillary staff.

The content of the letter is available at <https://wp.me/p2T1aN-9ur>.

Appointments

Bishops offered their prayers and congratulations to Bishop-elect Paul Dempsey whom Pope Francis appointed as the new Bishop of Achonry on 27 January last.

Bishops expressed their deep gratitude to Monsignor Ciarán O'Carroll of the Archdiocese of Dublin for his generous ministry as Rector of the Pontifical Irish College, Rome, which comes to an end after nine years of service.

Bishops welcomed the appointment of Mr Patrick Logue to the post of National Director for Catechetics and thanked the outgoing National Director, Ms Kate Liffey, for her valuable contribution to this role.

The full text of the Statement from the Irish Bishops' Spring Meeting may be accessed at www.catholicbishops.ie



Photos: Brenda Dunne

Norms

- All non-essential pastoral gatherings and meetings, such as formation gatherings, retreats and seminars, are cancelled.
- All Confirmations are postponed until further notice.
- Every Catholic is entitled to a dignified Christian burial. Attendance at Funeral services and Masses should be limited to close relatives and must not exceed 100 attendees within the church building.
- Similarly, Church weddings and baptisms may be celebrated on condition that the attendance in church does not exceed 100 people.
- In these difficult and uncertain times, people find strength, consolation and hope in prayer. Churches should remain open for prayer each day.
- In the current emergency situation, all are dispensed from the obligation to physically attend Sunday Mass. Parishes should inform parishioners of the local possibilities to participate in Mass via local radio and online. It may be possible for some parishes to facilitate attendance at Mass while still observing the health authority's limit of 100 people.
- This is an occasion for all of us – especially in families – to pray more intensely for each other and especially for those who have succumbed to the illness. We should pray also for those at the frontlines – especially doctors, nurses and medical staff and other carers, including clergy – that the Lord will protect them as they place their own wellbeing at risk in the service of all.



Extract from Saint Patrick's Breastplate

Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.



Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known that anyone who fled to your
protection,
implored your help, or sought your intercession was left
unaided.
Inspired with this confidence,
I fly to you, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother.
To you I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful.
O Mother of the Word Incarnate,
despise not my petitions, but in your mercy, hear and answer.
Amen.

From Press Releases of 11 and 12 March



11 March

As people of faith we are called to face the fears of this moment with a courage not our own and with a generous heart. God is with his people in good times and bad. Like believers in every age we say: 'If I should walk in The Valley of Darkness no evil would I fear for You are there'. In our hour of trial Jesus calls on us, his followers, to serve the common good by taking responsibility for each other and to prioritise the most vulnerable in our community ahead of our own individual wants and aspirations. At this time our first concern has to be for the elderly, the ill and those with underlying medical conditions.

12 March

The motivation for these new restrictive measures is a sense of care for the common good and especially for those most vulnerable. Each Christian community should be acutely aware of the responsibility to care for those who are most at risk. For example, even where it may not be appropriate to visit the elderly, a simple telephone call to enquire about their needs could mean so much to them.

‘Whatever our religious differences, we all share a common humanity’¹

National Association of Primary Diocesan Advisors

Two people spoke recently of the primacy of education as a means to combat the increase in Islamophobia and anti-Semitism in societies. In this magazine, Fr Chris Hayden interviewed Shaykh Umar Al-Qadri, Chair, Irish Muslim Peace and Integration Council, who said, ‘It’s very much about education: people need to know that just because somebody is a Muslim or a Christian or a Jew does not make them different.’²

In a report from ‘The Leap of Faith’ radio programme,³ Professor Michael O’Flaherty reported on a survey conducted with 16,000 Jewish people within 12 EU Member States, representing 98% of Jewish people.⁴ European Jews feel anti-Semitism is on the rise and they are ‘protecting themselves by leaving their *kippah* at home, only discreetly displaying *mezuzot*, avoiding certain areas in their cities or skipping Jewish events.’ Professor O’Flaherty said anti-Semitism needed ‘top attention’ across Europe. He proposed investment in education in remembrance of the Holocaust.

The Vatican II document, *Nostra Aetate*, states, ‘Ever aware of her duty to foster unity and charity among individuals, and even among nations, [the Church] reflects on what people have in common and what tends to promote fellowship among them.’⁵ The Church continues to educate with a strong current emphasis on care for our common home.

About the Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum in Ireland 2015 (CPPRECI)

One guarantee of a Catholic primary school is its inclusive nature. The CPPRECI states, ‘Catholic educators ... must have the greatest respect for those students who are not Catholic. They should be open at all times to authentic dialogue.’ In addition to promoting ‘children’s cultural development, Catholic identity and cultural practices, Catholic Religious Education develops ecumenical and inter-religious awareness and respect for the cultures and religions of others.’⁶ The CPPRECI outlines the time schedule for the study of other faiths.

The CPPRECI also outlines the faith formation goals for pupils in this area.



These goals form part of each theme of the *Grow in Love (GIL)* programme. The goals include:

- Engage with people of other religious faiths and thereby grow in understanding of other faiths and beliefs
- Show respect for people who hold beliefs different to their own
- Develop a deeper sense of their own Catholic identity⁷

The lessons in *GIL* on Judaism and Islam are written in accord with the Christian Faith Strand, under the Strand Unit, ‘Other Religious Traditions’ in Levels 2, 3, and 4 of the CPPRECI. Living in community with others and showing respect for peoples of other faiths are starting points to inter-religious awareness (*GIL* 3/P1). Judaism is taught in *GIL* 5/P3, *GIL* 7/P5, and Islam is taught in *GIL* 4/P2, *GIL* 6/P4, *GIL* 8.

Educating to Intercultural Dialogue

Intercultural dialogue invites each person to engage with another’s faith and culture. One does not abandon one’s own faith and practices, but rediscovers them through encounter with another. Catholic primary schools should facilitate the ‘dialogue of life,’ ‘the dialogue of works’ and ‘the dialogue of religious experience.’ Schools invite

parents who wish their child to have no faith affiliation to the dialogue of life and the dialogue of works.⁸

Inter-Religious Literacy

Through engaging in song, story, Scripture, ritual, chat, drama, art, prayer, encounter, video, and interactive activities in *Grow in Love*, pupils develop the skills of inter-religious literacy. Developing such skills enables pupils ‘to speak the public language of religion ... to develop powers of empathy for and sensitivity towards people of other religions and beliefs, to explore the beliefs and practices of other world religions... to foster awareness of shared values such as justice, peace, the dignity of the human person and openness to the transparent.’⁹

Home Parish/School

The partnership between home, parish and school is of paramount importance in the use of *GIL*. The *Grow in Love* Children’s Book AT HOME page is a means of evangelisation in the home. Families are encouraged at every class level, ‘each week to support the work that the teacher is doing in school.’ The hope is with the support of school/parish, that parents/guardians and grandparents will help their child/children to ‘grow in love’ of God and one another.

NOTES

¹ Martin McGee OSB, *Dialogue of the Heart* (2015), p.15.

² *Intercom*, February 2020, pp. 8-10.

³ [rte.ie/Leap of Faith](http://rte.ie/Leap%20of%20Faith) (6-03-2020).

⁴ European Agency for Fundamental Rights (2018).

⁵ *Nostra Aetate* (1965).

⁶ CPPRECI, pp. 15, 16, 28.

⁷ *Grow in Love* 6/P4

⁸ CSP, *Catholic Primary Schools in a Changing Ireland*, (2015), pp. 20-21, 28-29.

⁹ See CPPRECI, p. 27.

Sr Anne Neylon DC
Primary Diocesan Advisor
Archdiocese of Dublin



INTERCOM CROSSWORD

NO 224 BY GINGER

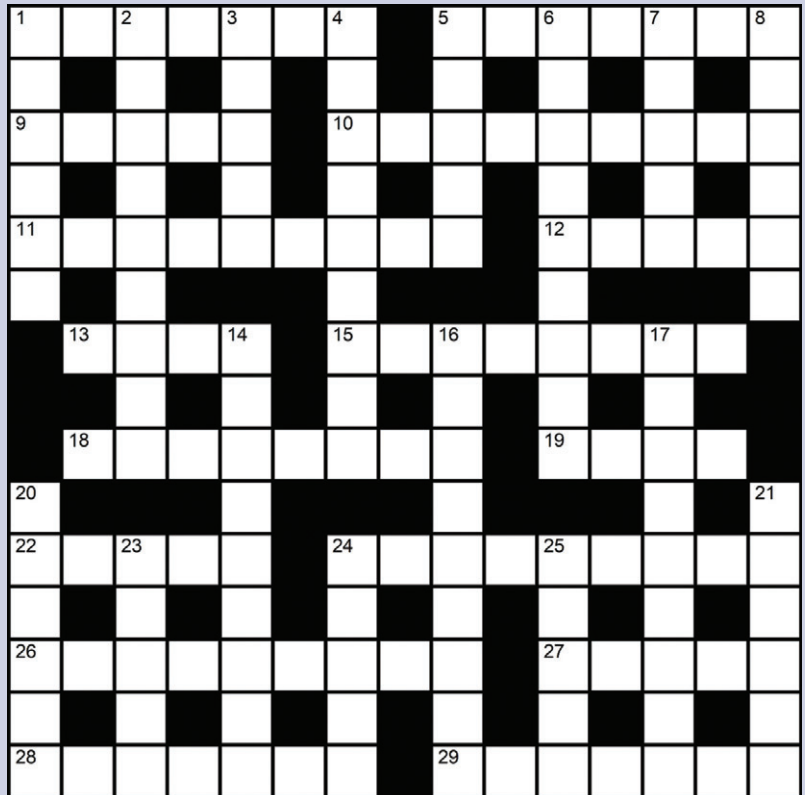
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ACROSS

- 1 Distinguish DVD East of Roscommon (7)
- 5 Feeling guilty, has made amends (7)
- 9 Sham priest takes gold to Dublin (5)
- 10 My amusing accident in the exercise room (9)
- 11 Fifty-one scolded and freed (9)
- 12 Locations with sound views (5)
- 13 And I9Ac; Bulrush proved the end of feline (4)
- 15 Program in phones and tablets to lift judge (8)
- 18 Disciple there and about (8)
- 19 See I3 Ac (4)
- 22 Separated, what 23 Dn hopes to get (5)
- 24 Do windows make various musical instruments? (9)
- 26 Break under tile, that's bad (9)
- 27 With a right one first this his sport would be more dangerous (5)
- 28 Mocked and purged indeed (7)
- 29 Direction given to consumer to find garment (7)

DOWN

- 1 Pollute a narrow valley (6)
- 2 Celeb directors are right at sea (9)
- 3 Shrub we're told we should respect (5)
- 4 Compose right name for scary experience (9)
- 5 Damaged and decapitated with weapons (5)
- 6 Had treats prepared to gain an advantage (4,5)
- 7 Damp and fog, with nothing visible in it (5)
- 8 Enquire after mother making linen (6)
- 14 Protected officer before entering outhouse (9)
- 16 Transpose parts of femle saint, perhaps (9)
- 17 It is scent concocted by Laboratory worker (9)
- 20 Diversified a drive around (6)
- 21 Moneylender certain to be found in Biblical city (6)
- 23 In fact, organ player (5)
- 24 Rolled up and caused an injury (5)
- 25 Refuse to stir a stew (5)



Name

Address

.....

.....

APRIL SOLUTION

Across: 1 Sedate, 4 Airstrip, 10 Ferryboat, 11 Level, 12 Wide, 13 Blood donor, 15 Reverse, 16 Tanned, 19 Planet, 21 Dead Sea, 23 Palindrome, 25 Dean, 27 Amuse, 28 Atonement, 29 Suspense, 30 Tragic. Down: 1 Software, 2 Daredevil, 3 Toys, 5 Introit, 6 Self-denial, 7 Raven, 8 Paltry, 9 Collie, 14 Grandniece, 17 Easter egg, 18 Magnetic, 20 Threats, 21 Damson, 22 Sprays, 24 Lauds, 26 Seer.

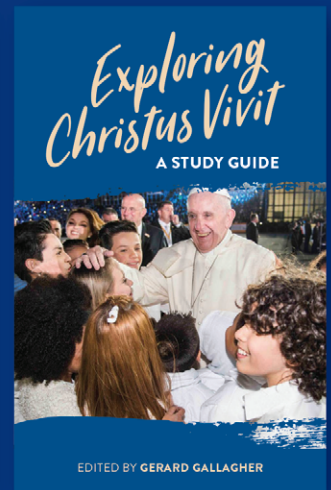
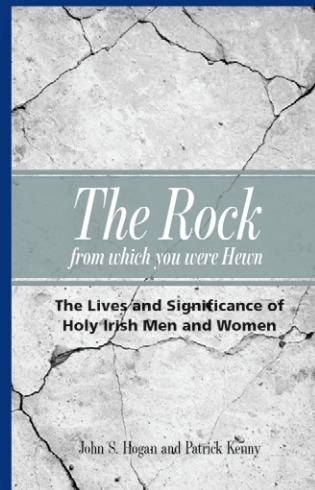
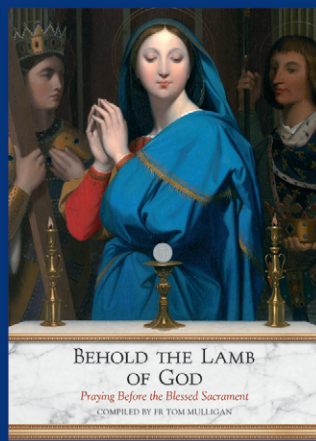
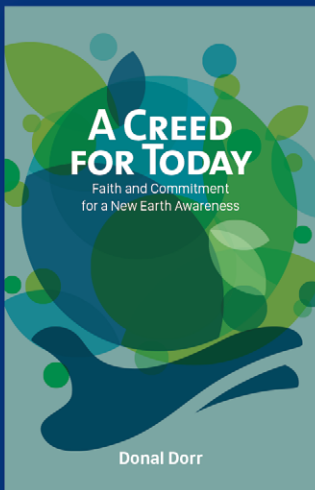
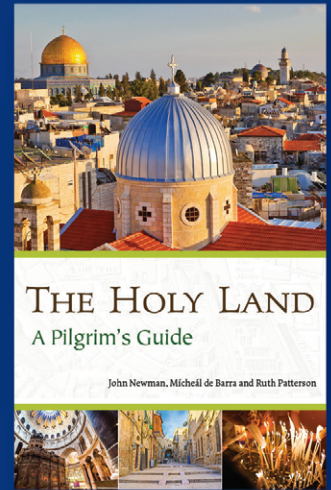
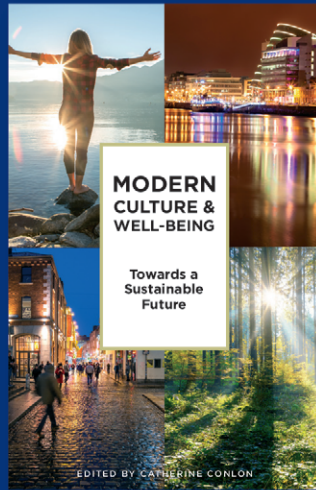
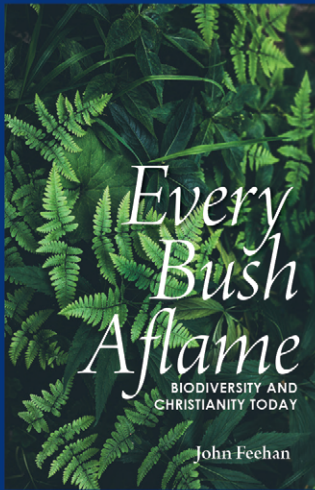
VERITAS GIFT TOKENS
FOR THE FIRST THREE CORRECT ENTRIES DRAWN

Crossword to be returned by 10 May to May 2020 Crossword,
Intercom Editor, Catholic Communications Office, Columba Centre, Maynooth, Co Kildare.
One entry per person. Photocopies acceptable with a satisfactory explanation – at the Editor's discretion.
Airmail subscribers may send by fax to Int + 353-1-6016401. Please give full postal address.
Correct solution in June 2020 Intercom. Winners announced in July/August 2020 edition.



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'That you may tell your children and grandchildren' (Ex 10:2)

From the Message of Pope Francis

for the 54th World Communications Day – 24 May 2020

[...] Human beings are storytellers. From childhood we hunger for stories just as we hunger for food. Stories influence our lives, whether in the form of fairy tales, novels, films, songs, news, even if we do not always realize it. Often we decide what is right or wrong based on characters and stories we have made our own. Stories leave their mark on us; they shape our convictions and our behaviour. They can help us understand and communicate who we are.

We are not just the only beings who need clothing to cover our vulnerability (cf. *Gen 3: 21*); we are also the only ones who need to be 'clothed' with stories to protect our lives. We weave not only clothing, but also stories: indeed, the human capacity to 'weave' (Latin *texere*) gives us not only the word *textile* but also *text*.

[...] 'When you eat of it ... you will be like God' (cf. *Gen 3:4*): the temptation of the serpent introduces into the fabric of history a knot difficult to undo. 'If you possess, you will become, you will achieve...' This is the message whispered by those who even today use storytelling for purposes of exploitation. How many stories serve to lull us, convincing us that to be happy we continually need to gain, possess and consume. We may not even realize how greedy we have become for chatter and gossip, or how much violence and falsehood we are consuming. Often on communication platforms, instead of constructive stories which serve to strengthen social ties and the cultural fabric, we find destructive and provocative stories that wear down and break the fragile threads binding us together as a society. By patching together bits of unverified information, repeating banal and deceptively persuasive arguments, sending strident and hateful messages, we do not help to weave human history, but instead strip others of their dignity.

[...] Sacred Scripture is a *Story of stories*. How many events, peoples and individuals it sets before us! It shows us from the very beginning a God who is



Photo: iStockphoto.com

both creator and narrator. Indeed, God speaks his word and things come into existence (cf. *Gen 1*). As narrator, God calls things into life, culminating in the creation of man and woman as his free dialogue partners, who make history alongside him. In one of the Psalms, the creature tells the creator: 'For you formed my inward parts; you *knitted me together* in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and *wonderfully* made ... My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth' (*139:13-15*). We are not born complete, but need to be constantly 'woven', 'knitted together'. Life is given to us as an invitation to continue to weave the 'wonderful' mystery that we are.

[...] The history of Christ is not a legacy from the past; it is our story, and always timely. It shows us that God was so deeply concerned for mankind, for our flesh and our history, to the point that he became man, flesh and history. It also tells us that no human stories are insignificant or paltry. Since God became story, every human story is, in a certain sense, a divine story. In the history of every person, the Father sees again the story of his Son who came down to earth. Every human story has an irrepressible dignity. Consequently, humanity deserves

stories that are worthy of it, worthy of that dizzying and fascinating height to which Jesus elevated it.

[...] Our own story becomes part of every great story. As we read the Scriptures, the stories of the saints, and also those texts that have shed light on the human heart and its beauty, the Holy Spirit is free to write in our hearts, reviving our memory of what we are in God's eyes. When we remember the love that created and saved us, when we make love a part of our daily stories, when we weave the tapestry of our days with mercy, we are turning another page. We no longer remain tied to regrets and sadness, bound to an unhealthy memory that burdens our hearts; rather, by opening ourselves to others, we open ourselves to the same vision of the great storyteller.

[...] With the gaze of the great storyteller – the only one who has the ultimate point of view – we can then approach the other characters, our brothers and sisters, who are with us as actors in today's story. For no one is an extra on the world stage, and everyone's story is open to possible change. Even when we tell of evil, we can learn to leave room for redemption; in the midst of evil, we can also recognize the working of goodness and give it space.

Lectio Divina

The Annunciation in Luke's Gospel (1:26-38)

Lectio: What the Word says in itself

In Chapter One of Luke's Gospel, two different births are announced: that of John the Baptist and that of Jesus. The birth of John the Baptist is announced to Zechariah in the political capital of Judaea – the city of Jerusalem, and in the spiritual heart of Judaism – the Temple. The birth of Jesus is announced to Mary in the intimacy of her own home. Each birth is announced by the angel Gabriel, the same angel who appeared to Daniel and made reference to the future Messiah, 'the Prince of princes' (Daniel 8:25).

Mary does not live in the important city of Jerusalem, but instead in the obscure town of Nazareth in Galilee. Even the manner of Gabriel's entrance into her life is less dramatic than in the case of Zechariah: the latter saw the angel 'standing at the right side of the altar of incense'. In the case of Mary, we're not even sure if she actually sees Gabriel; all we are sure of is that Mary hears the voice of this angel whose name means 'strength of God.'

When Gabriel greets Mary, he does not use her name. Instead, he calls her 'full of grace'; in Greek these three words form a single word: *kecharitomene*. In the Bible, God often gives a new name to designate a new mission, and this new 'name' indicates that Mary is the one who is favoured by God in a special way. Gabriel adds: 'the Lord is with you,' making clear that God's help is at her side, echoing the words that the unnamed angel of the Lord pronounced to the warrior Gideon in the Book of Judges (Judges 6:12).

Mary is perplexed by the angel's words, and wonders what kind of greeting this might be. Despite her puzzlement, Gabriel senses Mary's underlying faith. Whereas Gabriel reprimanded Zechariah for his lack of faith, Gabriel reassures Mary, and his words unfold the meaning of the new name he has given her – 'full of grace.' Gabriel explains that she 'has found favour with God,' that her son 'will be great,' 'the Son of the Most High,' and 'his kingdom will have no end.' An apparent contradiction still troubles Mary: how can she conceive a child while remaining a virgin? Zechariah, doubting



Photo: istockphoto.com

the angel's words, asked for a sign. Mary, trusting the angel's words, and presumably guessing that the angel's announcement is to take effect in a matter of hours or days, respectfully asks how his words can be fulfilled, given the fact that she is a virgin.

The angel explains that the body of Jesus will be created by God's express power – 'the power of the Most High will overshadow you.' Mary's response is one of total availability: 'Here I am, the servant of the Lord, let it be done unto me according to your word.'

Meditatio: What the Word says to me/us

Unlike Zechariah, most of us don't encounter angels in dramatic settings such as the Temple of Jerusalem. But like Mary, in various low-key ways, we experience 'annunciations' in the midst of our everyday lives. For instance, through the beauty of a sunset that brings us to the threshold of wonder, through the words of Scripture that awaken desires that were long submerged, or through a love that calls us beyond our limited horizons. In these different ways, an angel enters our lives with a divine message.

Oratio: What the Word leads me/us to say

How can we be alert and attentive enough to notice the moments when God speaks to us? One way is through learning to review the past in a spirit of

prayerful thanksgiving: each evening we can look back on the day, asking for light to see those moments when the Lord has visited us.

Contemplatio: Being transformed by the Word

Jesus wasn't born immediately after his conception; Mary carried him for nine months in her womb. In a similar way, the seeds of new life we identify through prayer take time to grow. We can help to nourish them by remembering to place ourselves peacefully in God's presence.

Actio: Putting the Word into practice

Identify one seed planted in you by the Holy Spirit – an encouraging word from a friend, a phrase in Scripture, an act of kindness in a moment of distress that renewed your hope in the goodness of others... Finally, ask God to help you find hearts this week, where you too can plant seeds so that new life may blossom.

Fr Thomas Casey SJ is a Jesuit and the Dean of Philosophy at St Patrick's College, Maynooth.

He is the author of two books on Mary: *Smile of Joy* (2018) and *Mary in Different Traditions* (2019), both published by Messenger Publications.



Evangelisation/Catechesis

Learning from Pope St Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi*

Emma Sisk
is pursuing her MA in Theology
and Christian Ministry,
specialising in catechetics, at
Franciscan University of
Steubenville, Ohio



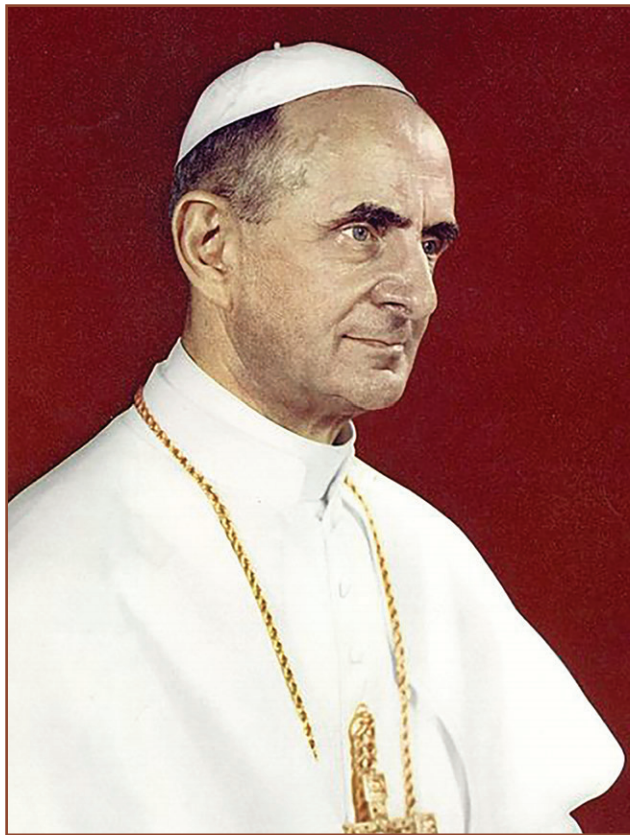
It has been 45 years since the promulgation of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* by Pope St Paul VI. This Apostolic Exhortation was both revolutionary and prophetic. Revolutionary, because it was the first papal document dedicated to evangelisation; prophetic, because it anticipated with searing accuracy the challenges of being a Christian that are as relevant in today's world of rampant secularism, pluralism, materialism and individualism as they were back in 1975.

Three burning questions

At the very beginning of his exhortation, the Holy Father poses three 'burning' questions (*EN* 4). These questions are timeless and remain as relevant for us as a Church today as they were when they were first asked. The Holy Father asks us to consider:

1. In our day, what has happened to that hidden energy of the Good News, which is able to have a powerful effect on man's conscience?
2. To what extent and in what way is that evangelical force capable of really transforming the people of this century?
3. What methods should be followed in order that the power of the Gospel may have its effect?

Pope St Paul VI was not afraid to ask difficult questions! He knew that Christians were being influenced and led astray by secular voices and that the faith was being exposed to trials and threats. In *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, he reminds us that evangelisation is the Church's deepest identity, because the Church 'exists in order to evangelise, that is to say, in order to preach and teach' (*EN* 14). For the Church, evangelising means bringing the Gospel to all of humanity. The Holy Father also reminds us that it is the whole Church that receives the mission to evangelise, and the work of each individual member is important for the



whole. This means that every baptised Catholic is personally charged with the responsibility to evangelise. Pope Paul further points out that lay people exercise 'a very special form of evangelisation' (*EN* 70) given their place in the midst of the world's affairs, which often enables them to shine the light of the Gospel on parts of society than priests and religious are unable to reach.

A clear proclamation of the Gospel is essential

Pope St Paul VI insists on the need for clarity when proclaiming the Gospel. He writes: 'Evangelisation will always contain – as the foundation, centre, and at the same the summit of its dynamism – a clear proclamation that, in Jesus Christ... salvation is offered to all people, as a gift of God's grace and mercy' (*EN* 27). In other words, the Holy Father is telling us to keep things simple. I have discovered that evangelisation is most fruitful and effective when the Gospel is expressed clearly and simply with confidence in the supernatural power of the message we proclaim to change lives.

Our proclamation is intended to invite people to open their lives to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, which consequently brings about a conversion of heart (*EN* 18).

What we are proclaiming to those who do not know Jesus is their need for him. For many already in the Church, evangelisation accompanied by a gentle catechesis will mean a deeper realisation that Jesus is their Saviour. In either case, the encounter with the Gospel is intended to bring about conversion and interior change (*EN* 18). We must always evangelise with that hope of bringing people to encounter Christ anew.

Ultimately, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* challenges Catholics to become missionary disciples – a phrase used often by Pope Francis. This requires a change in our mindset, in how we see

ourselves. We must shift from thinking of ourselves as members of the Church and instead think of ourselves as missionary disciples in the Church. We need to be a missionary people, equipped and ready to evangelise while sitting in a coffee shop with a friend, or around the kitchen table with a family member, or in conversation with anyone who shows some level of curiosity and openness to the faith.

Over 45 years since its publication, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* continues to challenge the Church in our day. Recognising that many in this generation have wandered away from the faith, let us take seriously the responsibility to evangelise with which we have been entrusted; let us start asking ourselves, as individuals, families, parishes and dioceses, what we can do in order to create opportunities for people in Ireland to encounter Christ and develop a personal relationship with him, and how we can help them to better understand and dialogue with the teachings of the Church and integrate these teachings into their everyday lives.

Average television audience of 34,600 for daily Mass from Cathedral in Letterkenny

As the Covid-19 restrictions increased, Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ, Bishop of Raphoe, encouraged viewers to participate in daily Mass broadcast by RTÉ News Now at 10.30 am, Monday to Friday.

Bishop McGuckian said: 'As people throughout Ireland are complying with the restrictions that are required to arrest and reverse the spread of Covid-19, the broadcasting of Mass is even more important at this time. The daily broadcast is facilitating a spiritual communion of worshippers who, while not physically present within the church, are digitally united in faith.'

On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of people who would love to attend daily Mass, but who can't get to Mass these days and who don't have access to the internet, I wish to thank RTÉ News Now for broadcasting Mass. May I ask people to spread the word to those not aware of this special broadcast but who would love to participate at Mass on television. Do tell them that Mass is broadcast at 10.30am Monday to Friday.

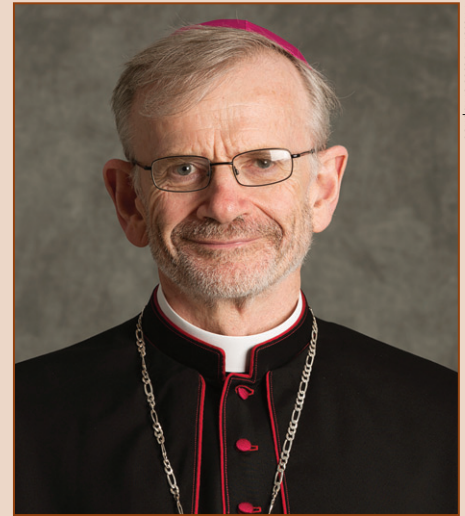


Photo: Diocese of Raphoe

Prayer Resources for time of Covid-19 restrictions, on www.catholicbishops.ie

Among the prayer resources available on the website of the Irish Catholic Bishops is the prayer of Pope Francis to Mary during the coronavirus pandemic:

O Mary,
 you always shine on our path
 as a sign of salvation and of hope.
 We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,
 who at the cross took part in Jesus' pain, keeping your faith firm.
 You, Salvation of the Roman People,
 know what we need,
 and we are sure you will provide
 so that, as in Cana of Galilee,
 we may return to joy and to feasting
 after this time of trial.
 Help us, Mother of Divine Love,
 to conform to the will of the Father
 and to do as we are told by Jesus,
 who has taken upon himself our sufferings
 and carried our sorrows
 to lead us, through the cross,
 to the joy of the resurrection. Amen.

Under your protection, we seek refuge, Holy Mother of God. Do not disdain the entreaties of we who are in trial, but deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.



Photo: iStockphoto.com

Crossword winners

The winners of the March 2020 Crossword competition:

1. Patricia Feeney, Cimín Mór, Cappagh Road, Galway
2. Margaret Twomey, Scartagh Clonakilty, Co Cork
3. Sr Nora Keenan, Mohill, Co. Leitrim

Covid-19: From the St Patrick's Day Press Release of Archbishop Eamon Martin

The coming weeks and months are going to bring challenges and uncertainty for all of us, as we are reminded of the fragility of human life and of our dependence on one another and on God.

This is a time for an outpouring of the works of mercy towards the sick and vulnerable, and for a spirit of generosity and self-sacrifice, compassion and charity in Ireland, and across the world. It's hard for people not to be alarmed, but it's worth remembering that we are never completely isolated or alone.

This is also a time for prayer. Pray for the virtues of patience and perseverance and for the composure to overcome any temptation to despair. Do your best to spread calmness - not panic; serenity - not turbulence; solidarity - not selfishness. Reach out to neighbours and relatives who may feel troubled or alone. Even a simple phone call can make a huge difference. Work to ensure that hope and compassion will prevail.

In turning towards God for protection, as Saint Patrick did, I ask for your prayers in particular for our brave and selfless health workers and for the medical scientists who are searching for a vaccine and better treatments. Pray that government and public health authorities can make wise judgements and decisions about how to limit the impact of the virus, especially on the most vulnerable.

In Ireland we have a strong tradition that God is at our side in time of trouble. It remains important to keep reminding ourselves and others in the coming days that we are never completely isolated: Christ is beside us, before us, behind us, on our right and on our left, beneath us and above us.

Saint Patrick, apostle of Ireland, pray for us.

Dia idir sinn agus an t-olc. 'God between us and all harm'.



Photo: iStockphoto.com

Let Us Remain United

On 2 April, the Presidents of COMECE* and CEC† issued a joint statement in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, in which they stated:

The COVID-19 pandemic and its dire consequences have hit Europe and the entire world with full strength. Putting to the test every person, family and community, the present crisis has exposed the vulnerabilities and apparent certainties of our politics, economics and societies.

Nevertheless, these trying times are also allowing us to re-discover our common humanity as brothers and sisters. We think of the many people who are sowing hope every day by exercising charity and solidarity.

[...]This is the time for all of us to demonstrate our joint commitment to the European project and to common European values of solidarity and unity, instead of capitulating to fear and nationalism.

Concrete expressions of this our shared European responsibility could, for example, be burden-sharing in the care for the sick, a facilitated exchange of medical materials, creative measures alleviating social, economic and financial shocks, as well as reinforced international cooperation and humanitarian assistance to support weaker health systems in needy regions of the world.

*The Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union

†The Conference of European Churches



Photo: iStockphoto.com

Apologetics: Connectedness, Relationship and Interdependence: A Trinitarian Dynamic



Photo: istockphoto.com

From our deepest origins, human beings have felt the need to respond to a sacred call. The landscapes they dwelled in aroused a sense of spirituality, religious emotion, awe and mystery. In early Christianity, the landscape revealed the sacramentality of all creation, providing a lens that peered into a deeper reality. Celtic Christians in particular strongly experienced the presence of God in the natural world.

The Unfolding Universe

In recent decades, this sense of a deep network within creation has been reignited by science, as science shifts from a mechanistic view of the universe to a more holistic, ecological and systematic perspective. Everything is interconnected within the biosphere, from the individual human to social systems and from atoms to ecosystems. The biosphere is a network of relationships that forms an enormous living system.

St Columbanus (543 AD –615 AD) encouraged his brethren to delve into the heart of creation as a first step in coming to know God: 'for those who wish to know the great deep must first review the natural world ... understand the creation if you wish to know the creator' (Sermon 1,4,5). From evolutionary biology, we are beginning to appreciate the creative

unfolding of life from the elements of the universe that came together in a universal ancestor some 3.5 billion years ago, a key moment in cosmological evolution known as abiogenesis. Over time, this ancient ancestor was transformed into a great web of life forming millions of species of increasing complexity and diversity. In the wondrous growth of this 'tree of life,' living species were shaped through interaction with the natural world, thus revealing the branches of this one precious tree. Passionist Priest Fr Thomas Berry described the universe as a 'single gorgeous celebratory event,' and contributed greatly to our understanding of universal communion as a critical part of the story of the universe.

The language of science speaks in terms of respiration, a characteristic of all life that refers to gas exchange between an organism and its environment, but also to the release of metabolic energy. Yet, the 'breath of life' can also be used to describe the communality of living things. 'Every living thing' has 'the breath of life' (cf. Gen 7:21-22). Thus, we can think of all living things as having a soul. Catholic tradition asserts that human souls have a spiritual principle that makes them immortal, because human souls possess the level of consciousness and

freedom required to transcend our own natures. God is the source and summit of this transcendence.

Encountering Mystery

When we truly encounter mystery, we open our minds and hearts to mysticism and a wonder, awe and humility that is often beyond words. The mystical can often be found at the crossroads of science and faith. As Catholics, we know that God is calling us constantly into a deeper experience of his presence, an encounter that transcends all words and concepts. At the centre of this experience is a powerful sense of oneness and unity. Recognising our origin from the 'dust' of the universe and our kinship to all life on earth is a profound spiritual experience made possible by God. This insight of connectedness, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, nurtures within us feelings of humility, belonging and joy, as we journey upon the life-giving pathway that brings us closer to God. This is our journey of faith.

This sense of oneness and belonging, which is the central characteristic of spiritual experience, dovetails harmoniously with the contemporary understanding of reality uncovered by modern science. The awareness of being connected with all of nature is

particularly strong in ecology. Connectedness, relationship and interdependence are key concepts in ecology as well as in spiritual experience. This helps us to better understand the covenant between God and humankind and ‘every living creature,’ a sacred promise between God and the earth (cf. Gen 9:12–13).

In the words of Pope Francis: ‘The human person grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures. In this way, they make their own that trinitarian dynamism which God imprinted in them when they were created. Everything is interconnected, and this invites us to develop a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity’ (*Laudato Si’* 240).

There are diverse approaches to contemplative practice that seek to bring about a personal transformation through connecting with our all-loving, all-knowing and all-present God. Contemplative prayer helps us to love selflessly and thereby become united with God. Some approaches use the senses, particularly in nature, as a tool for contemplation, whereas other approaches emphasise complete stillness and silence. To help us begin our contemplative journey, St Jerome advises us: ‘pray the way you can, not the way you can’t’.

The Holy Trinity

Contemplating the mystery of the unfolding universe provides us with a map and compass with which to navigate reality. Its scope is astronomical yet intimate, for it is nothing less than the epic account of the creation of the universe that has led to you reading this sentence now. Since the beginning of time itself, countless connections have existed and exist at this very moment between you and all creation. Only the grace and grandeur of God could account for such a reality.

According to St Augustine, we experience the Holy Trinity through our hearts: the Father is the lover, the Son is the loved one and the Holy Spirit is the act of loving. As our redeemer, Jesus, promised: ‘If anyone loves Me ... My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him’ (John 14:23). These words reveal to us the mystery of the indwelling of the Trinity in us. This very special presence of God within us was envisioned by St. Catherine of Siena as memory, intellect and will,



Photos: Editor



when she prayed to unite her memory to the Father, her intellect to the Son and her will to the Spirit.

The Trinity is one and indivisible, yet Catholic tradition broadly attributes works of ‘power’ to the Father, works of ‘wisdom’ to the Son and works of ‘love’ to the Holy Spirit. The love, unity and joy in the connectedness, relationship and interdependence of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is beyond our understanding. Yet it is curiously fitting that connectedness, relationship and interdependence are key principles of the unfolding reality of the universe as revealed by science. Through these principles, we exist as neighbours alongside all life, including the living shamrock plant, the leaves of which are often used as a metaphor for God as Trinity.

I-with-God-with-Neighbour

We often hear of the three dimensions of our being as mind, body and spirit. However, at its core, our Catholic identity develops our heads, our hearts and our hands, because it shapes how we think, what’s in our hearts, and what we do with our gifts. God constantly challenges us to grow towards an ‘I-with-God-with-neighbour’ way of life. We live and grow in a relationship of love with God and with the community of the earth in our neighbourhoods and beyond.

When viewed through a trinitarian lens, the revelation of Jesus that he is ‘the Way, the Truth and the Life,’ adopts the creative power (way), embodied wisdom (truth) and life-giving love (life) of the

fullness of God. The deep Trinitarian mystery of the consecration at the centre of the Eucharistic Prayer is brought to mind by the

concluding doxology of the prayer: ‘Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory is yours, for ever and ever.’

Within the radiant glow of the three lamps of the Trinity, we receive through the sanctifying grace of our sacramental way of life the creative power to transform ourselves, the embodied wisdom to overcome our selfishness, and the life-giving love to bring reconciliation and healing to ourselves and the earth community. Each time we bless ourselves in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we draw closer to our triune God. In this way, we find a truer path as the image of God on a journey that encompasses the connectedness, relationship and interdependence of all creation. *Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Dr Sean O’Leary has worked extensively in teacher education. In addition to his scholarly writing, his popular writings may be found on his website, www.thesacredcape.com and on www.thehookoffaith.com.



The Ongoing Task of Vocations Promotion in Ireland



Photos: Courtesy of the Author

Diocesan Vocations Directors Meeting, 2020

Being a priest or religious in Ireland today is both challenging and adventurous. The reality is that there are fewer priests and religious engaged in active ministry than in the past and our Catholic population is changing – the numbers of priests and religious in our country is declining, in our congregations the average age is increasing, our parishes are more diverse, and, with the influence of our secular world, regular church practice is declining. And yet, whatever about stable identity and ministry of priests and religious, the burden of what is expected from them – from both within and outside the Church community – seems to increase as the years go by.

But there is a reality that never fails to encourage me. In the midst of all this change, God is still calling people to priesthood, permanent diaconate and religious life. Most priests and religious today would say they are happy and joyful to give their lives in service of Christ and his people. Whatever the daily demands and pressures, the expectations and worries a priest and religious might experience, it remains an immense privilege to bring the healing presence of Christ to the lives of the sick, the sinner, the lost, the poor, the homeless and the marginalised; there is a powerful drive to build up the Kingdom of God in our communities, our parishes, our families, and in the hearts of individuals. It is a

deep and unspeakable joy – and a responsibility before which every priest and religious trembles - to feel that one is acting in the name of Jesus Christ, preaching his word, celebrating his life, and sharing his love and his sacrifice with the people we are called to serve.

No one is a priest or religious for himself or herself alone: vocation is always about giving oneself, in love and compassion, in the name of Christ, for the good of others. Ireland needs an honest and open conversation about priesthood and religious life. We need to be openly supportive of our priests and religious and encouraging of those who are searching to find their vocation in life.

In the past, the work of diocesan and religious vocations directors has focused on preparing resources for the promotion of vocations to the priesthood and religious life. In recent years the profile of those discerning a vocation has changed significantly and is much more varied than before. While twenty years ago the candidate discerning a vocation was likely to have been just finishing secondary school, today there is no such thing as an 'obvious candidate.' Some still come from secondary school, having heard the Lord's call in their family, school, parish, youth group, ecclesial movement, or as a member of a pilgrimage group. Others enquire because they are searching for a more fulfilling way to live their lives in a world

that desperately needs generosity of life and heroic commitment.

Many have been to university, or have finished apprenticeships, or have worked in a variety of different occupations. Yet none of these experiences have left them with the satisfaction that they thought they would have found. They all want to make a difference with their lives and they feel that God may be calling them to consider serving him and his people as a priest, sister or brother. A survey done recently by the National Vocations office for diocesan priesthood showed that many of those who considered a vocation and followed through on it speak of a seed that was planted, sometimes as early as primary school. Many in formation will say that they found their way, thanks to the personal invitation of a priest or religious, even if that invitation was given ten, twenty or more years ago.

There is a challenge here for all of us to consider new ways in which the priesthood and religious life is presented and encouraged. We are given many statistic and analyses, and much research that there is a crisis in vocations to the priesthood and religious life in Ireland. But I am not convinced that anyone ever became a priest or religious because they were convinced by statistics.

As diocesan priests, religious sisters, brothers, parents, teachers and parish communities, we are called to be models of cooperation through our lives as members of a community. Through our involvement in many different ministries, we give witness to living in the spirit of cooperation that is necessary in every Christian community. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit and our unity in prayer, vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life will indeed flourish!

Fr Willie Purcell,
National Diocesan
Vocations Coordinator





Fr Paddy Jones. Former director of the National Centre for Liturgy. Recently retired as parish priest in Iona Road parish, Dublin to be Team Assistant in same parish. Email patrick.jones@spcm.ie



α Alpha and Ω Omega

In the first chapter of the Book of Revelation, God, who is, who was, and who is to come, says he is the Alpha and Omega, (1:8). In the last chapters, the One sitting on the throne spoke, 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End' (21:6) and echoing Is: 41:4, 44:6, Rev 1:17, 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End' (22:13). The letters have appeared in Christian art from earliest times, sometimes hanging from the cross and sometimes along with two other Greek letters chi rho $\chi\rho$, the first letters of *Christos* (ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ).

While the title can apply to God and Jesus, it is the Risen Lord we declare as the Alpha and the Omega as the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet are cut into the paschal candle, for all time belongs to Christ yesterday and today, the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and the Omega. This same statement is made as the Year of the Lord, the year after the Incarnation, is inscribed on the candle.

The cutting of the Greek letters on the candle is found a few 10th century documents and in the 12th century Roman Pontifical. In the Holy Week reforms of the 1950s, the candle with the cutting of a cross, the Greek letters and the year were revived.

The Church and the Eucharist

In the encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, published 17 April 1993, Pope John Paul II wrote, 'The Second Vatican Council teaches that the celebration of the Eucharist is at the centre of the process of the Church's growth. After stating that 'the Church, as the Kingdom of Christ already present in mystery, grows visibly in the world through the power of God' (*Lumen Gentium*, 3), then, as if in answer to the question: 'How does the Church grow?', the Council adds: 'as often as the sacrifice of the Cross by which 'Christ our pasch is sacrificed' (I Cor 5:7) is celebrated on the altar, the work of our redemption is carried out. At the same time, in the sacrament of the Eucharistic bread, the unity of the faithful, who form one body in Christ (cf I Cor 10:17), is both expressed and brought about' (LG,3).

Henri de Lubac (1896-1991), French Jesuit theologian, is often credited with the formula: The Eucharist makes the Church and the Church makes the Eucharist. The first part may be characteristic of the thinking of the first millennium, while the second millennium looked more at the second. Both parts need to be in any discussion in our time about the relationship of Church and Eucharist.

The Wise Man from the West

The title of Vincent Cronin's biography expresses well the life of Matteo Ricci, the Italian-born Jesuit missionary to China. Ricci volunteered to go to the Far East, firstly to Goa in 1578, then in 1582 to Macao, studying the Chinese language and customs, entering China the following year. He was recognised as an outstanding scholar of mathematics, astronomy, cartography and, above all, of the Chinese language, philosophy and civilisation. Expelled after six years in Zhaoqing, he re-established his mission in other cities and eventually in Beijing in 1598. He became an adviser to the Emperor, becoming the first Westerner to be invited into the Forbidden City. He died 11 May 1610 and, though foreigners had to be buried in Macau, with the special permission of the Emperor, he was buried in Beijing. His grave is in Zhalan cemetery in the campus of the Administrative College of the Communist Party School.

Ricci saw the philosophy of Confucius to be compatible with Christianity. He presented Christian belief in Chinese words. Honouring Confucius and the ancestors, with certain restrictions, was accepted by Ricci and his fellow Jesuit missionaries, though the criticisms of Dominican and Franciscan missionaries held sway with Rome. The Chinese Rites controversy, as it became known, raged for over a hundred years. Indeed it could be said to have ended with Pope Pius XII in 1939, when Chinese Christians were permitted to take part in ancestral rites as social conventions devoid of cultic significance. Commentators often add: the permission came too late.

Turn! Turn! Turn!

One of the most popular readings at funerals is taken from the first eight verses of chapter three of the Book of Ecclesiastes: There is a season for everything, a time for every occupation under heaven. In the late 1950s, Pete Seeger took the biblical words, adding what became its title, *Turn! Turn! Turn!* as a refrain, and to the last line, 'a time for war, a time for peace', six new words, 'I swear it's not too late', ensuring its status as a peace song.

The Byrds made it a hit when they released it in October 1965.

What's the warning bell?

The hand bell at Mass was known as the warning bell when sounded to warn the congregation that they were approaching the consecration. The server was watching for that moment when the priest extended his hands over the offerings, not always easy as he had his back to the server. That moment today is the *epiclesis*, the words of invocation of the Holy Spirit, when we implore the Lord by the Holy Spirit: 'graciously make holy these gifts we have brought to you for consecration, that they may become the Body and Blood of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose command we celebrate these mysteries.'

It was also rung when the priest received the Chalice at Communion, again a signal to the congregation of another sacred moment. Known as the *sanctus* bell, since it was rung at the *Sanctus* and also continuously or three times when the priest elevated the Host and the Chalice. At those moments it was not so much a warning bell as a 'joyful noise to the Lord.'

Standing with the Risen Lord

Just as the Risen Lord stood among his disciples (Lk 24:36; Jn 20:19; 20:26), early Christians stood with the Risen Lord as they gathered during Easter. Standing was also their posture on Sundays, the weekly celebration of the Resurrection. Tertullian, writing around the year 200, said that fasting or kneeling on the Lord's Day was unlawful and the same applied from Easter to Pentecost, through the fifty-day feast of Easter.



At the grave of Matteo Ricci

Photos: the Author

Fourth Sunday of Easter

3 May 2020 • Good Shepherd Sunday • Day of Prayer for Vocations

Readings

The first reading. 'They were cut to the heart.' It was people's *grief* that opened the door to their conversion. Sorrow for our sins and shortcomings can open us to God's loving invitation.

The second reading. To bear patiently, even when life is being unfair, is not simply meritorious: it is Christlike. Christ did not retaliate; he did not threaten. He bore our sins and he bears with us.

The Gospel. What kind of shepherd is Christ? He is the one who has come 'so that we may have life and have it to the full.' Let us leave aside any sense that Christian discipleship is some kind of necessary burden. It is the way to life – fullness of life.

General Intercessions

Introduction

We have heard voice of the Good Shepherd. Let us now raise our voices to him and to the Father, as we confidently make our prayers.

Intercessions

1. For the pastors, the shepherds of our Church.
May they follow after Christ, the Good Shepherd,
imitating his compassion, his courage, his love of the truth,
and his desire to do the Father's will.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
2. Christ the Good Shepherd suffers today in those who are insulted,
threatened and tortured for their faith and their integrity.
May he strengthen and reward those who suffer for what is right.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
3. For those who serve us in public office and in public health.
May God bless their decision-making with his wisdom,
and may they act with prudence and compassion.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
4. May the Lord call many people to serve him in priesthood
and religious life.
May those whom he calls find the support they need,
and may they respond with courage and generosity.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
5. Let us pray, during this Easter season,
that all the faithful departed may come to share in the resurrection.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Conclusion

Father, look kindly upon the flock your Son has gathered. Form us more and more in his likeness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Liturgical Music

Eucharistic Prayer Acclamations

Holy, Holy/Memorial Acclamation/Great Amen from well-known Mass settings.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 22: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want – Responsorial Psalms for Sundays and Major Feast Days/ Cantate/Liturgical Hymns Old & New

Gospel Acclamation

Sing *Alleluia* together with the *verse* of the 4th Sunday of Easter.

Songs

Shepherd Me O God – *Hosanna/Laudate/Gather*

You Are Mine – *Gather/Laudate/In Caelo*
If God Is For Us – *Glory & Praise/Laudate/Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Celebration Hymnal*

Like A Shepherd – *Glory & Praise/Laudate/Liturgical/Celebration Hymnal*
At The Lamb's High Feast We Sing – *Veritas Hymnal/Hosanna/Liturgical Hymns Old & New/ Celebration Hymnal*
Christ Has Died - www.liturgy-ireland.ie

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Editor

Fourth Sunday of Easter

3 May 2020 • Good Shepherd Sunday • Day of Prayer for Vocations

Homily Notes • Gospel: John 10:1-10

Today is Good Shepherd Sunday. Jesus tells us that he is the gate of the sheepfold. If we consider the successors of Saint Peter and the Apostles to be the shepherds, then priests can be seen as the sheepdogs, making sure that no harm comes to the flock. We learn in the story of the Good Shepherd that one – or some – sheep stray away from the flock, get lost in a ditch, break a leg, get stranded on top of a mountain. Some sheep may well think the grass is greener and more tasty on the other side of the fence and break away into someone else's field.

Sheep will go where they can find nourishment. Bishops and priests have a serious obligation to nourish the people of God with the truth – for, as Jesus says, 'The truth will set you free' and Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. In order that the nourishment of the Good News may be spread, bishops need the assistance of their co-workers, the priests. Fewer and fewer men are attracted to the Irish diocesan priesthood compared to the first half of the twentieth century. If people feel that nourishment of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the sacraments is not necessary for salvation, then the ministerial priesthood itself will not be necessary.

Today we support our seminarians, both spiritually and financially. Christ, the gate of the sheepfold, is the answer to all the problems we encounter in life. Let us pray that young men will discover the true nourishment that is to be found in Jesus Christ and will want to share that with the people of God in the ministerial priesthood. Let us also pray that the people of God will encourage their sons, nephews and brothers to follow a calling that is most fulfilling, challenging and necessary in our world today. 'Anyone who enters through me will be safe ... and be sure of finding pasture'.

Fr Oliver Skelly PP, Coole, Co Westmeath

The Deep End • 'I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly'

On this fourth Sunday of Easter we hear the beginning of the Good Shepherd discourse from John's Gospel. Jesus portrays himself as a shepherd. And what is the duty of this shepherd? To protect his flock, to lead the flock, to know the flock. There is a beautiful line in this passage which reads: 'the sheep follow him because they know his voice.' What does it mean, to know the voice of Jesus? It is to be in deep relationship with Him, to know His voice above the 'noise' of the world around us. In order to know someone, we have to spend time with them, being aware of their presence, talking to them, listening, considering them friend and beloved. So, in today's Gospel we are invited into a deep relationship with the Shepherd; invited to listen out for his voice, a voice that brings peace, not discomfort.

As I write this, our country is dealing with the Coronavirus outbreak. With social distancing, schools and colleges

closed, it is a frightening time for many people. As Christ is shepherd to us, we are also called to be shepherds to others. There is a lot of hysteria online but there are also thoughtful suggestions for people, such as: take this time to write a letter to someone you care about; think of three things you love about someone and text it to them; check in on neighbours who might be vulnerable; each church undertake an audit of all the vulnerable people they know and share out the responsibility to phone them each day; practise the Christian discipline of sharing food; offer help and reassurance to others; don't demonise anyone or any group. As followers of the Good Shepherd, may we live these suggestions, not just in times of crisis, but in all times so that all may 'have life and have it abundantly.'

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For Your Newsletter:

Seeing your Life through the Lens of the Gospel

John 10:1-10

1. In the Middle East, it was the task of the shepherd to find water and pasture and to ensure safety. In your life, who have been the people who nourished you and gave you security? For whom have you done this? How has Jesus been a good shepherd for you?
2. Important to the shepherd's ability to give security to the sheep is the fact that he was known and familiar to them. They recognised his voice. Does this resonate in any way with your experience?
3. We are familiar with the image of Jesus as the shepherd. The image of Jesus as the door (or gate) is not so familiar, but is one that merits attention. Jesus presents himself as the door through which we pass and find life. What are the doors through which you have passed and found life: a situation, a place, a book, an experience, a person? For whom have you been a door to a richer life?

*John Byrne OSA
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Fifth Sunday of Easter

10 May 2020

Readings

The first reading. Right from the beginning, the Church had to deal with everyday matters such as the just sharing of resources and the assignment of personnel. Her prudential decisions, however, were made in a spirit of communion and of prayer.

The second reading. The Lord was rejected by men, chosen by God. Those who choose him may themselves be rejected in turn, but even in rejection they are called 'to sing the praises of God.'

The Gospel. 'Do not let your hearts be troubled.' Those consoling words are not just an exhortation; they are a recognition of the fact that we tend to do just that, to let our hearts be troubled. The Lord understands our weakness.

General Intercessions

Introduction

We, God's family, are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation; and so, let us make our prayers with great confidence.

Intercessions

1. May God bless the Church's missionary effort,
so that she may persevere in proclaiming the Good News
to the ends of the earth.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
2. May the Lord also bless our parish community.
May his word and his grace penetrate our lives deeply,
so that we may truly live as his chosen people.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
3. For those suffering from incurable illness,
that they may find strength in their faith
and in the kindness of those who care for them.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
4. For young adults who are seeking to make their way in life.
May God bless them with his wisdom,
may they see through empty promises,
and may they not fear loving, lasting commitment.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
5. For all who have fallen asleep in Christ,
that they may gaze on the splendour of God
and rejoice in the company of the saints.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Conclusion

Father, we make these and the unspoken prayers of our hearts, through Jesus, your Son, the way, the truth and the life. Amen.

Liturgical Music

Eucharistic Prayer Acclamations

Holy, Holy/Memorial Acclamation/Great Amen from well-known Mass settings.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 32: May your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our hope in you –

Responsorial Psalms for Sundays and Major Feast Days/Cantate/Liturgical Hymns Old & New

Gospel Acclamation

Sing **Alleluia** together with the **verse** of the 5th Sunday of Easter.

Songs

This Is The Day – *Gather/Laudate/Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Seinn*

Alleluia/Feasts & Seasons

Out of Darkness – *Gather/Laudate/Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Celebration Hymnal*

A New Hymn of Praise – *Veritas Hymnal/Hosanna/In Caelo*

I Am The Bread of Life – *Hosanna/Gather/Laudate/In Caelo/Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Celebration Hymnal/ICMA 2013*

Christ Has Died – www.liturgy-ireland.ie

Christ Be Our Light – *Laudate/Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Celebration Hymnal/Seinn Alleluia/In Caelo*

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Editor

Fifth Sunday of Easter

10 May 2020

Homily Notes • Gospel: John 14:1-12

Today Jesus tells us, 'Trust in God and trust in me'. Whom do we trust? Politicians? A number of years ago one former prominent politician was challenged about breaking election promises and answered, 'That's what politicians do'. A medical diagnosis? Sometimes mistakes are made and it is hard to rebuild trust. The media? Of all the many voices clamouring for attention on television, radio, blogs, and the newspapers (online and offline), it is difficult to discern truth from propaganda. My spouse? How many wives and husbands discover that their other half is 'playing the field', leading to breakdown in marriage. My friends? Sometimes a personal secret can be posted on Facebook or spread abroad with extraneous detail to make the story morespicy. The Church? Priestly promises are broken as regularly as marriage vows.

'Trust in God still, and trust in me'. We have the ideal of good politicians, medical personnel, journalists, priests, family members, friends. Because of original sin, there is a gap between the ideal and the messy reality. Into this gap comes the spirit opposed to Christ, to cause as much mayhem as possible. Jesus tells us, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled'. If we concentrate on the troubles in the world and in our own lives, we can almost be tempted to despair.

Saint Peter tells us in the Second Reading, 'The Lord is the living stone rejected by men ... the man who rests his trust on it will not be disappointed'. While Christians live in the world, we are not of the world. Because the world has difficulty in accepting Christ's message, we too may find rejection. This Cross is one we help Christ to carry, and in doing so we are helping him to save the world. 'Trust in God and trust in me'. Christ promises to prepare a place for us. Christ has gone before us and sits at God's right hand. Christ does not break his word. Let our hearts not be troubled. Let us trust in him and trust in God.

Fr Oliver Skelly PP, Coole, Co Westmeath

The Deep End • 'You do know him and have seen him'

In today's Gospel, Philip and Thomas are desperate to understand more fully where Jesus is going, how they can get there and what God is like. Big questions! Jesus tries to reassure them, 'do not let your hearts be troubled.' Jesus is urging the disciples to embrace the journey rather than focusing on the destination. It is only in the light of the events that will happen to them (and us) that this period of time will be understood. It is always about the journey. As the saying goes, 'Life can only be understood backwards but must be lived forwards' (Kierkegaard).

In the Old Testament, we read that people experienced God in different ways. For example, Moses experienced God in a burning bush or a cloud; for Elijah it was a whisper; for Solomon, it was in a dream. We each have our personal relationship with God, yet any words we try to put on this relationship

can seem insufficient. Yet in Jesus we can experience what God is like and enter into a personal relationship. Jesus models the way for us, shows us that God is love, compassion, inclusive, embracing of all people. To know Jesus is to know God. This only makes sense in light of John's opening lines of the Gospel, where he says 'The Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us...' (Jn 1:14). Jesus shows us what the presence of God in this world looks like and also what it means to be fully human. Jesus says, 'I am the way, the truth and the life...' This truth lies deep within us and in the world around us. We are each called to discover this truth. Perhaps today is an opportunity to reflect on those personal God-experiences of deep peace and love.

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For Your Newsletter:

Seeing your Life through the Lens of the Gospel

John 14:1-12

1. 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me.' Trust in another person can help us in difficult times. Remember and give thanks for the people you were able to trust in difficult moments. Remember also when your faith in God helped you through anxious moments.
2. Thomas struggled with the desire, which is in all of us, to know the exact destination before we set out. Jesus invites us to make an act of faith and to take one step at a time. Can you recall times when it helped you to take that trusting attitude to life?
3. Jesus proposed himself to Thomas as the way, the truth and the life. In what ways has Jesus been the way, the truth and the life for you on your faith journey?
4. Philip wanted Jesus to give him a glimpse of God and got the surprising answer: 'Whoever has seen me has seen the Father'. Jesus put a human face on the love of God. He gives us a glimpse of the divine. Who are the people whose love has helped you to believe in the love of God? To whom have you given an occasional glimpse of the divine?

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Sixth Sunday of Easter

17 May 2020

Readings

The first reading. The people in a certain Samaritan town welcomed the Good News; yet then we hear that Samaria as a whole had accepted the word of God. The implication is clear: once the word of God is planted in one place, it is a leaven that reaches out to all its surroundings!

The second reading. The task of apologetics finds its clearest biblical mandate in the words of St Peter: 'Always have your answer ready for people who ask you...' But it's not just a matter of winning arguments, and we win hearts when we answer 'with courtesy and respect and with a clear conscience.'

The Gospel. Indirectly, this Gospel reading gives us a definition of the Holy Spirit: He is the one without whom we would be orphans!

General Intercessions

Introduction

By the light of the Spirit of truth our Saviour has given us, we now name our needs and make them known to God our Father.

Intercessions

1. May the Church, in her preaching and catechesis, make clear the connection between keeping the commandments and loving the author of the commandments.
May love, not legalism, be the motivation for Christian conduct.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
2. For those who have been hurt by harshness in their dealings with the Church or her ministers.
May they see beyond their hurt, to the goodness of Christ and his Gospel.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
3. That those who use social media may do so moderately, honestly and compassionately.
May they be wise to the pitfalls of harshness and polarisation.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
4. For local authorities, healthcare professionals, teachers, and those who interpret, apply and enforce our laws.
May they be people of integrity and justice.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
5. May the dead, by God's mercy, know the truth of Jesus' words, 'because I live, you will live.'
May they come to share in eternal life.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Conclusion

Father, may we grow ever stronger in our listening to your word and in our living of it. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Liturgical Music

Eucharistic Prayer Acclamations

Holy, Holy/Memorial Acclamation/Great Amen from well-known Mass settings.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 65: Cry out with joy to God all the earth – Responsorial Psalms for Sundays and Major Feast Days/Cantate/Liturgical Hymns Old & New

Gospel Acclamation

Sing **Alleluia** together with the **verse** of the 6th Sunday of Easter.

Songs

Alleluia, Sing To Jesus – *Laudate/Liturgical Hymns Old & New*
Unless A Grain Of Wheat – *Hosanna/Gather/Laudate/Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Celebration Hymnal/In Caelo*
I Am The Vine – *Gather/In Caelo*
All You Nations Sing Out Your Joy – *Alleluia Amen/Hosanna/Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Celebration Hymnal*
Christ Has Died – www.liturgy-ireland.ie
An Easter People – *ICMA 2013*

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Editor

Sixth Sunday of Easter

17 May 2020

Homily Notes • Gospel: John 14:15-21

'Anybody who receives my commandments and keeps them will be one who loves me; and anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father'. Christ commands us to love God above everything else and to love our neighbour as ourselves. As in any relationship, loving someone begins with getting to know that person. We know God through the universe and the world he created; we know him through the creatures and vegetation which populate our world; we know him through the members of our families and our friends he has given to us, we know him through the Word of God in sacred Scripture and we know him through his Son, Jesus Christ. Love grows through attraction: boy meets girl and girl meets boy; each are attracted to the other by something they cannot define; as they get to know each other better they begin to fall in love and eventually commit themselves to each other in the sacrament of marriage.

Anybody who loves Christ will be loved by the Father. When we have a loving relationship with someone, we feel we know that person intimately. God the Father certainly knows us intimately: he knew us from our mother's womb. We reciprocate his love by giving praise and thanks to him through his Son, Jesus Christ. Christ also commands us to love our neighbour as ourselves. In loving our neighbour, we are also loving God, because our neighbour (and we ourselves) have been made in the image and likeness of God and all are brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ.

The instigator of this love is the Advocate, the Spirit of truth, whose coming we celebrate at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is present when husbands and wives give themselves to each other in the marriage bed; he is present when a father and mother gaze in happiness into the eyes of a newborn child; he is present when we express our love of each other in various ways. He helps us to keep the commandments of Jesus, to love him and our neighbour, and anybody who loves Christ will be loved by the Father in heaven.

Fr Oliver Skelly PP, Coole, Co Westmeath

The Deep End • Live *Laudato Si'*

This week marks the fifth anniversary of the publication of Pope Francis' encyclical on Care for Our Common Home. Catholic communities worldwide have been asked to celebrate *Laudato Si'* Week in some way from 16 to 24 May. *Laudato Si'* is a beautiful document, inspired by the words of St Francis of Assisi, 'Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs.' In this document, Pope Francis asks us to listen to the cry of the earth, to really awaken to what is happening to God's creation. We live in extraordinary times, where vast ecosystems are being destroyed and global warming poses a threat to life, all due to human activity. Young people are calling on us to take action in order to ensure a sustainable future for all.

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis says that this environmental crisis is, in reality, a

spiritual crisis, because we have forgotten who we are and where we come from. We need a conversion of heart where our relationship with nature is concerned. He invites us to re-awaken a child-like sense of awe and wonder and to remember that 'the entire material universe speaks of God's love... soil, water, mountains: everything is a caress of God' (LS 84).

In today's Gospel, Jesus says: 'This is the Spirit of truth... He abides with you and He will be in you.' Let us begin again to see God present within ourselves, in others and in all of creation. We start here, for we will only protect what we love. How will you celebrate *Laudato Si'* week this week in your home and in your parish community? Spend time in nature, plant a tree, read *Laudato Si'*...

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For Your Newsletter:

Seeing your Life through the Lens of the Gospel

John 14:15-21

1. 'If you love me you will keep my commandments,' specifically the commandment to love one another (cf. 13.34). How have you experienced the link between love of God and love of those around you?
2. Jesus is preparing his disciples for his imminent departure and for a future in which he would be with them in a different way. He would not 'leave them orphans' but send an 'Advocate' to 'be with (them) for ever'. How have you experienced the presence of God with you in your life?
3. Perhaps you have also experienced the challenge of preparing another (a child, a friend) for a time when you would no longer be physically together. Recall how you gave the message of your ongoing support.
4. How have you experienced the presence and support of a loved one (parent, spouse, friend) when circumstances have separated you from them?
5. The proof of the ongoing presence of Jesus with his disciples is that 'I live and you will live'. Discipleship is about much more than rules and regulations. It is about being alive. How has discipleship helped you to be more fully alive?

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The Ascension of the Lord

24 May 2020 • World Communications Day

Readings

The first reading. The words of Jesus at the heart of this reading are both a promise and a caution: the disciples will be witnesses to Christ once they have received the Spirit; and by the same token, there is no effective witness or mission without the empowerment of the Spirit.

The second reading. If there is no mission without the Spirit, neither is there understanding. This is why Paul prays that God may enlighten the believers to whom he writes, so that they may grow in their understanding of God. Without God's Spirit, the faith can be neither understood nor propagated.

The Gospel. If the writings of St Luke, which include the Acts of the Apostles, focus on witness, the Gospel of Matthew focuses on 'with-ness.' From the beginning of the Gospel, Jesus is proclaimed as 'God with us.' At its very end, he promises to remain with us.

General Intercessions

Introduction

Let us now make our prayers and petitions to the God who is always with us, in his Son, Jesus.

Intercessions

1. For the Church,
that her proclamation of Christ may be anointed by the Holy Spirit
and made credible by the witness of charity.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
2. For Christians who, like some of the first disciples,
are hesitant in their faith.
May they cast off doubt and scepticism
and give themselves more fully to Christ.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
3. On this World Communications Day,
we pray for those who are involved in media of various kinds.
May they thirst for truth and justice; may they seek the common good.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
4. For those whose use of traditional and social media
makes them anxious or angry.
May they find peace and communicate with gentleness.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
5. For the dead.
May they find in Christ, raised from the dead, a kindly judge,
and may they enter into the inheritance of the saints.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Conclusion

Father, enlighten the eyes of our minds so that we can see what hope your call holds for us. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Liturgical Music

Eucharistic Prayer Acclamations

Holy, Holy/Memorial Acclamation/Great Amen from well-known Mass settings

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 46: God goes up with shouts of joy; the Lord goes up with trumpet blast – Responsorial Psalms for Sundays and Major Feast Days/Cantate/Laudate/Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Celebration Hymnal

Gospel Acclamation

Sing *Alleluia* together with *verse* of the Ascension of the Lord.

Songs

Hail The Day That Sees Him Rise –
Laudate/Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Celebration Hymnal
Let The Earth Rejoice and Sing – *Veritas Hymnal*
Holy Gifts For Holy People – *Laudate/In Caelo*
Now The Green Blade Rises – *Veritas Hymnal/Hosanna/Gather/Laudate/In Caelo/Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Celebration Hymnal*
We Have Been Told – *Hosanna/Gather/Laudate/Celebration Hymnal*
Great and Wonderful Are Your Deeds –
Feasts and Seasons 1/Alleluia Amen Supplement

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Editor

The Ascension of the Lord

24 May 2020 • World Communications Day

Homily Notes • Gospel: Matthew 28:16-20

‘Know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time’. When someone we love dies – a parent, a spouse, a brother, a sister, a good friend – we remember the last time we saw that person and, especially, we remember the last words that person spoke. Before Jesus ascended to return to his Father in heaven his last words were ‘I am with you always’. Christ is with us always. He has been with us since he ascended into heaven and will be with us until time itself comes to an end. These words comfort us, especially if we feel depressed at the way of the world, or at events in Holy Mother Church.

Today is also World Communications Day and this is an opportunity for us to reflect on how we communicate with each other and the wider world. News travels fast, bad news even faster, but it was not always like that. During the Napoleonic Wars, a monkey escaped from a ship in the port of Hartlepool in the north east of England. The people hanged the monkey, thinking it was a Frenchman. The news of Napoleon’s defeat at Waterloo took two days to reach London. Today, twenty-four hour news channels, newspapers, blogs and social media keep us inundated with news, and with opinion which can disguise itself as news. It is hard to differentiate news from propaganda. We need time to reflect on events, but rarely have the opportunity of doing so.

We would be wise to take a leaf from St Paul’s book: to read our daily newspaper, weekly periodical, favourite blog, or to listen to radio or television, with what Paul describes as ‘a spirit of wisdom and perception’. World events may tempt some people to question the existence of God; others no longer listen to radio and television news bulletins or read the daily newspapers because there is so much bad news. Yet amidst all this, may we take note of Christ’s last recorded words in this world, before he ascended into heaven: ‘Know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.’

Fr Oliver Skelly PP, Coole, Co Westmeath

The Deep End • Ascension of the Lord

In the first reading today, we hear the words: ‘Men of Galilee why do you stand looking up towards heaven?’ If we only look skywards for Christ, we lose sight of the reality of His presence around us, in each and every person, in each created thing. This week, Catholic communities have been encouraged to celebrate *Laudato Si’* week to mark the fifth anniversary since the publication of Pope Francis’ document on Care for Our Common Home. Parishes around the world have (hopefully) engaged in this celebration by looking at their relationship with God’s creation, praying for our world and what we can do to protect it. In *Laudato Si’* we read, ‘What [Christians] need is an ‘ecological conversion,’ whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them’ (LS 217). This conversion calls for a number of

attitudes, including gratitude, ‘a recognition that the world is God’s loving gift, and the we are called quietly to imitate his generosity in good works... it entails a loving awareness that we are not disconnected from creatures but joined in a splendid universal communion... each creature reflects something of God.’ (LS 220-221)

As we celebrate Ascension Sunday, we are reminded by Christ that we are carrying on his message of love to the world and that He is with us always. Christ is not one who has abandoned the world but rather one who is in this world, in all of creation. Like the disciples, committed to a cause, we are carriers of this message into the world, and this includes the message to care more deeply for the earth, our home, which we all share.

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For Your Newsletter:

Seeing your Life through the Lens of the Gospel

Matthew 28:16-20

1. Jesus meets the disciples for the last time. His final words give them direction for their future. Perhaps you can recall such parting moments in your own life – leaving home, school, college, or the death of a loved one. Was there an occasion when the words spoken to you gave you direction for the future?
2. Perhaps you can identify with Jesus in the story, when as a parent, teacher, or in some other way, you sent someone on his/her way in life, knowing that you would not be with him or her as in the past. When did the way you parted help the other to make his or her way in life?
3. Despite this extraordinary encounter with Jesus, some of the disciples doubted. Dealing with questions and doubt is part of an adult faith journey. How have your questions and doubts helped to shape the faith you have today?
4. Jesus commissioned this collection of believing and doubting disciples to carry on his work. We inherit that mission today. How do you see yourself as commissioned to continue the mission of Jesus?
5. Jesus told his disciples that although he would not be physically with them, he would be with them in a new way right through life. Have there been times when you were reassured by the love and support of another even though he or she was not physically present with you? What are the things that help you to be aware of the presence of Jesus on life’s journey?

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Pentecost Sunday

31 May 2020

Readings

The first reading. When people tried to ascend to God, by means of the tower of Babel, their languages were confused. Now, as God descends to people, by means of the Holy Spirit, that confusion of languages is overcome.

The second reading. Again, the Spirit is portrayed as the principle of unity. Whether it is in languages, or in the various tasks Christians are called to perform, the unifying force is the Spirit. A lack of unity points to heedlessness of the promptings of the Spirit.

The Gospel. It is no small thing that the Lord's first greeting to his disciples is 'Peace be with you.' It is no small thing that this greeting is given twice. Peace, *shalom*, is the sum of all God's blessings. Only Christ can confer it in its fullness.

General Intercessions

Introduction

Let us now open our hearts and minds to God's Holy Spirit, as we make our prayers.

Intercessions

1. On this day on which the Holy Spirit was given to the infant Church, we pray for a new Pentecost, a fresh outpouring of the Spirit, so that whatever has grown old or stale may be renewed.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
2. Let us ask that, just as the onlookers at the first Pentecost were amazed at what they heard and saw, today's sceptics may be drawn to Christ by the preaching and witness of Christians.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
3. May the Spirit of peace bring an end to war;
may the Spirit of gentleness bring an end to harshness;
may the Spirit of unity bring an end to bitterness.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
4. For this, our parish community.
May our celebration of the Eucharist and our sincere efforts to live as Christ's disciples bless our homes, our neighbourhoods, our places of work and recreation.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
5. The Holy Spirit is the Lord and giver of life.
May the dead be raised to life by his power.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Conclusion

Father, you have given the one Spirit to all your children. May we live, accordingly, as brothers and sisters. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Liturgical Music

Eucharistic Prayer Acclamations

Holy, Holy/Memorial Acclamation/Great Amen from well-known Mass settings.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 103: Send forth your spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth –

Responsorial Psalms for Sundays and Major Feast Days/Cantate/Laudate /Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Celebration Hymnal

Gospel Acclamation

Sing *Alleluia* together with *verse* of Pentecost Sunday.

Songs

Holy Spirit, Lord of Love – *Veritas Hymnal*
Come O Creator – *Veritas Hymnal/*
Hosanna/In Caelo

Send Forth Your Spirit O Lord – *ICMA*
2015

Holy Spirit, Lord of Light – *Laudate/*
Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Celebration
Hymnal

Tar Anuas a Spiorad Naoimh – *Seinn*
Alleluia/In Caelo

Hymn To The Holy Spirit – *Feasts and*
Seasons 2

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Editor

Pentecost Sunday

31 May 2020

Homily Notes • Gospel: John 20:19-23

'Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven, for those whose sins you retain they are retained.' Today we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles, when they stopped being timid, fearful men and received the grace and courage to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ, first in Jerusalem, and then throughout the world. The work continues as Holy Mother Church spreads her mantle of maternal love in people's hearts. Christ breathed on the Apostles, giving them the power to forgive sins by means of the Holy Spirit.

After the atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima in 1945, the late Monsignor Ronald Knox, a convert to Catholicism, opined, 'Now that we have atomised the atmosphere, there is no doubt that society itself will break down into smaller atoms.' In recent times, people in the First World have become more self-sufficient, less dependent on community and society in general. To cope with a growing loneliness, the psychological and psychiatric professions have grown exponentially. Some expose themselves on radio phone-in and television chat shows, admitting they have made mistakes and asking for pardon for having done so.

What many of these tortured souls forget is that the Church has the perfect antidote to loneliness and sinfulness, in the sacrament of reconciliation. When the priest says the words, 'I absolve you from your sins,' he is speaking the words of Christ through the Holy Spirit, the same Christ who breathed on his apostles after his resurrection from the dead. The Holy Spirit reconciles enemies and works to build up the Christian community in all places and throughout time. On this fiftieth day after we celebrated the resurrection of Jesus, may we give glory and thanks to God for his gift of the Holy Spirit – the breath of God which breathes new life into our fallen world.

Fr Oliver Skelly PP, Coole, Co Westmeath

The Deep End • Peace Be With You

The word for peace in the Gospel today, *Shalom*, is more than a wish for a good evening. It is a deeper peace, a peace of mind, body and spirit. A peace that comes from a deep spiritual relationship with Christ. It is a peace that says, no matter what we face, we can remain rooted in something deeper.

Over the past number months our lives have changed dramatically. At the beginning of 2020 one could scarcely imagine the historical events that were about to unfold across the world. A staggering death toll, half of the globe on lock down, airlines grounded, businesses closed, major sporting events cancelled. Many of us in that first week of social isolation were in shock, which turned to anxiety and fear. We experienced a collective grief as a human race as this new reality unfolded.

One can imagine that same fear and disbelief that Jesus' followers endured

during those days in Jerusalem following the crucifixion, their lives utterly changed forever. Yet our faith shows us that the tomb does not have the last word. The Easter story is a message of hope. It shows us that darkness will not always prevail, there will be a turning point, there will be light and renewal. Things will be different, yes. One does not emerge from a crisis unchanged.

We have witnessed so many acts of that light during this crisis from the heroes on the front line, in good neighbours, in friends and family reaching out to one another. These rays of light remind us of Christ at work in this world, offering peace and love when everything seems hopeless. May we experience this deep peace Christ offers us in the Gospel today and may we carry that peace to others.

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For Your Newsletter:

Seeing your Life through the Lens of the Gospel

John 20:19-23

1. Jesus comes into a room full of fear. Sometimes it is fear itself that makes us close the door on others and on God. Occasionally a person comes along with the gift of breaking through our closed doors, a person who comes to be with us in our fears. Do you have memories of people getting through to you and being with you despite your closed doors? Who brought you peace in a time of anxiety?
2. Jesus showed his wounds to his friends. Moments of grace can occur when another shows us their vulnerable side, or when we do that with them. Let your memories speak of such experiences to you.
3. As Jesus was sent by the Father, so he sent out the disciples. This evokes images of receiving and handing on the things that give life: values, meaning, sense of purpose, love. Who are the people who gave you life by what they handed on to you? To whom have you handed on what is life-giving?
4. In our tradition, the final verse reminds us of the Sacrament of reconciliation but its meaning is broader than that. Spirit-filled people are people who forgive. What difference has it made to you and others when you forgive rather than hold sins against others?

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Ceathrú Domhnach na Cásca 3 Bealtaine 2020

Réamhrá

Tá an Soiscéal tugtha dúinn i dtreo is go dtuigfaimid céard atá ann ach níos tabhachtaí sin, ná go léiróimid teachtaireacht an scéil trínár iompar sa saol.

Smaoineamh

Sna léachtaí inniu, cloiseann muid na treoirthe a ba cheart dúinn glacadh leo i dtreo is go mbeidh muid mar aoirí ag stiúradh muid féin agus gach duine a chasann muid orthu, sa treo cheart. Tá trácht in Eoin (10:1-10), ar an duine a roghnaíonn gan dul an doras isteach i gcró na gcaorach, ach a théann a mhalairt de bhealach isteach. Deireann Eoin linn, gur bithiúnach agus robálaí an duine sin. Ach an té a thagann an doras isteach, gur aoire na gcaorach é nó í. Céard is brí leis seo? Tá an geata go soiléir sa chró. Is tríd a ba cheart leis an duine teacht isteach. Scaití seans go mbeidh ar an duine fanacht tamaillín chun teacht isteach, ach is fiú an fanacht. Nuair a théann muid isteach an doras nó geata ceart, bíonn treoir ceart againn agus tagann muid go háit atá curtha ag Dia dúinn. Seo áit sabháil, torrach agus oiriúnach d'ár riachtainaisí. Nuair a dhéanann muid toil Dé, éisteann daoine linn agus bíonn creidiúnachas againn, toisc go bhfuil teachtaireacht Dé go soiléir i ngach dheann muid agus in ár gcaint. Cén caora a ghlacadh le comhartha an aoire da mba rud é nach raibh an aoire sásta a treoracha féin a leanúint? Is é Íosa doras na gcaorach. Is tríd a ba cheart dúinn dul, chun teacht ar thalún na síoraíochta.

Guí an Phobail

1. Don domhain i gcoitinne: Go dtaga biseach ar na galair uilig – iad siúd go háirithe a bhfuil an milleán orainn go bhfuilid ann – cogaidh, dúnmharú, deighilt agus araile. Go leaga tú do lámh orainn i dtreo is go gcasfaimid i dtreo na sláinte. A Thiarna, éist linn.
2. Ar son na hEaglaise: go mbeadh dóibh siúd atá i ról aoire in ann bheith umhal i do láithreach, bheith sásta maithiúnas a lorg agus a thabhairt agus tar éis sin, do ghrást a thaispeáint le grá dóibh siúd nach féidir leo amhlaidh a dhéanamh. A Thiarna, éist linn.
3. Guímid ar son éinne atá i gcruchás ar aon bhealach ar bith. Go mbeidh tú mar aoire dóibh in am a bpian. Go dtuga tú faoiseamh dóibh agus dá mhuintir is go dtuga tú ionspioráid dóibh siúd atá ag iarraidh len iad a mhealladh ar ais ar bhóthar na sláinte spioradálta. A Thiarna, éist linn.
4. A Thiarna, leag do lámh orainn i dtreo is go mbeimid líonta le do ghrást sula bhfágfaidh muid an séipéal seo ionas go

dtógfaimid do theachtairacht linn. A Thiarna, éist linn.

An Phaidir

Mar chaora lán de mhuintir in Íosa mar aoire, guímis briathra an tSlánaitheora...

Focail Scoir

'Mise an doras. Más tríomsa a rachaidh duine isteach, slánófar é. Rachaidh sé isteach is rachaidh sé amach agus gheobhaidh sé féarach.' Líonta le ghrást Dé, imeoidimid ag scaipeadh scéalta faoin gcabhair a thugann Dia dúinn teacht ar ais agus saoil sláintiúil a chaitheamh ar an mbóthar spioradálta.

An Cúigiú Domhnach na Cásca 10 Bealtaine 2020

Réamhrá

An té a choinníonn a fhocalsan go deimhin, tá grá Dé lánfhoirfe ann agus is mar sin a thuigimid go mairimid ann. Ceist macántachta agus dílseachta atá ann.

Smaoineamh

Sna léachtaí inniu, tá go leor cainte ar an tábhacht a bhaineann le geallúint a choinneáil. Sa chéad léacht, cloiseann muid scéal an tseachtar cúntóir. Léann muid faoi comhthéacs an toghcháin. Tuigean muid gur ghlac na deisceabhaíl an chine seo mar thuigeadar gur rud fíor-thabachtach a bhí ann scéal Dé a scaipeadh, in ionad bheith gnóthach le rudaí eile a dhféadfadh le daoine eile a dhéanamh in a n-áit. Cúntóirí a bhí iontu agus garm le status a bhí ann. Is cuma sin. Choinnigh siad lena bhfocail agus d'ímigh siad chun teachtaireacht Dé a scaipeadh agus bhí siad mórtasach as an ghairm bheatha nua seo. Táimid toghtha ag Dia. An bhfuilimid sásta glacadh leis an ról seo? An daoine macánta muid a chlaíonn leis an rud atá geallta againn? Díreach mar a thárla leis na cúntóirí, tá lámh Dé taréis bheith leagtha orainn ón am ár mbaiste. Tugann sé sin an treoir agus an bheannacht dúinn imeacht a bhóthar an fhirinne ag scaipeadh teachtaireacht Dé i ngach áit a chasann muid ar dhaoine nach bhfuil an Soiscéal cloiste acu, nó nach bhfuil sé tuigte a gceart acu, ar fáth amháin nó fáth eile. Is orainn atá an dualgas cine a dhéanamh ar cad iad na rudaí atá tábhachtach dúinn agus nuair atá sé sin socraithe againn, tabhairt faoi iad a thabhairt chun chríoch ar bhealach macánta agus dílis dar gcreideamh.

Guí an Phobail

1. Don domhain i gcoitinne: A Thiarna, dúirt tú go n-éisteann tú leo siúd atá i bpian d'aon chineál. Go mbeidh muidne mar dheisceabail, ag teacht leis an Soiscéal chucu, díreach mar a rinne na

cúntóirí sa sliocht inniu. A Thiarna, éist linn.

2. Ar son na hEaglaise: Go mbeidh na daoine atá tóghtha ag Dia ar bhealach speisealta chun an Soiscéal a scaipeadh, go leaga Tú Do lámh orthu i dtreo is go mothóidís Do ghrást, Do chumhacht agus Do chosaint. A Thiarna, éist linn.
3. Guímid ar son éinne atá uaigneach, tréighthe nó ag fulaingt ar aon bhealach ar bith. Go raibh tú leo in am a bpian, go tuga tú faoiseamh dóibh agus dá mhuintir agus go dtuga tú ionspioráid dóibh siúd a bhfuil á n-iarraidh teacht ar ais chugatsa ar bhóthar na firinne. A Thiarna, éist linn.
4. Go mbeidh muidne dílis dár gcreideamh, sásta seasamh le Íosa, réidh leis na dúshláin a thiofáidh leis seo agus láidir ag cosaint a chéile ó na forsaí diúltacha a dhéanann iarracht teacht idir muid agus Dia. A Thiarna, éist linn.

An Phaidir

Mar chlan lán de dhóchas, guímid...

Focail Scoir

Beannaigh muid. Beannaigh ár gclainne. Beannaigh iad siúd a chasann muid orthu. Ag coinneáil ar bhfocail da chéile, is do Dhia, Go n-aithní muid Grásta De in aghaidheanna a chéile agus go siúlann muid leo ar an mbóthar atá dirithe ag Dia dúinn.

An Séú Domhnach na Cásca 17 Bealtaine 2020

Réamhrá

'Thug na sluaite cluas ghéar dá raibh le rá ag Pilib mar ní hea amháin gur chuala siad a chuid cainte ach chonaic siad chomh maith na míorúiltí a bhí aige á ndéanamh.' (Gníomh 8:6-7) Inniu, go mbéimid sásta éisteacht le Soiscéal Dé agus aitheantas a thabhairt, da bharr, ar gach atá déanta Aige dúinn.

Smaoineamh

Le cúpla seachtain anuas, táimid taréis bheith ag smaoineamh ar an dualgas atá orainn seasamh amach ó na sluaite agus teachtaireacht Dé a scaipeadh go forleathan. Tá sé seo sách deacair scaití. Iarrtar orainn an Soiscéal a thabhairt linn ó cheantair go ceantair, ach chun é sin a dhéanamh, caithimid bheith dílis don chreidimh. Ní chiallaíonn sé seo maidir leis na focail a úsáideann muid amháin, ach maidir leis an iompar a thaispeánann muid freisin. Sin an chaoi a thaispeánann muid míorúiltí Dé leis na daoine a chasann muid orthu. Iarrtar orainn bheith réidh i gcónaí le cosaint a dhéanamh in aghaidh aon duine a iarann orainn bonn a thabhairt leis an dóchas atá ionainn. 'Is é an dúshlán atá againn ná, le

coinsias ghlan, nuair a dhéantar tromáocht orainn, go gcuirtear náire ar an muintir a dhéanann béadán ar ár ndea-iompar i gCríost. Sna laethanta seo, bíonn sé sách deacair ar dhaoine, scaití, gan bheith ag iarraidh bheith cosúil le gach éinne eile, fiú má chiallaíonn sé sin go n-iompraíonn siad a ndroim i gcoinne na bhfirinne. Guímid go mbeidh muid láidir agus dílis don chreidimh agus nach ndéanfimid dearmad ar an geallúint atá tugtha againn mar dheisceabail Dé. Sin atá mar cuspóir againn.

Guí an Phobail

1. Don domhain i gcoitinne: Go mbeidh fáilte i ngach áit do shoiscéal Dé agus dóibh siúd a thógann an teachtaireacht leo ó áit go háit. A Thiarna, éist linn.
2. Go bhfreagraí muintir Dé a ghlaoch chun misean na heaglaise a dhéanamh le gliondar chróí, cinnteacht agus fuinneamh na ndeisceabail. A Thiarna, éist linn.
3. Go dtaga leigheas de shaghas éigint ar ghach duine atá ag fulaingt. Go dtuga Dia misneach, foighne agus tuiscint dóibh siúd agus dá mhuintir. Go dtuige siad uilig go bhfuil aiséirí i ndan dúinn uilig de thoradh ar eachtraí na Cásca agus aiséirí Chríost. A Thiarna, éist linn.
4. Go dtuige muid nach gá go mbeidh saibhreas, mar a thuigeann roinnt duine é, againn, chun toil Dé a dhéanamh. An saibhreas atá againn, sin go bhfuilimid mar bhall de chlann Dé agus leis sin tá beatha síoraí ag fanacht orainn sa bhFlaitheas – rud níos fearr ná aon rud gur féidir le héinne ceannacht ar an domhan seo. A Thiarna, éist linn.

An Phaidir

Le creideamh, cumhacht agus dílseacht do theachtaireacht Dé, guímis...

Focail Scoir

Go gcabhraí Dia linn bheith cosúil leis na deisceabail ag déanamh ár dtoil go humhal, go háirithe i rith na seachtaine seo. Go mbeidh muid mar choinne lasta ag céiliúradh mioruilt na haiséirí i gcónaí. Guímid ort, a Thiarna.

Deascabháil an Tiarna Chríost 24 Bealtaine 2020

Réamhrá

'Imí, dá bhrí sin, déanaigí deisceabail de na náisiúin uile, á mbaisteadh in ainm an Athar agus an Mhic agus an Spioraid Naoimh ag múineadh dóibh gach ní atá ordaithe agam a choinneáil. Agus féach, táim in éineacht libh i gcónaí go dtí deireach an tsaoil.'

Smaoineamh

Tá téama láidir sna léachtaí, an tseachtain seo. Cé go bhfuil dualgas láidir orainn, mar Chríostaíthe, teachtaireacht Dé a scaipeadh go forleathan agus maireachtáil de réir a rialacha, tá saoirse ag baint leis sin. Cén chaoi? Nuair atá cruth leagtha amach dúinn, mar atá déanta ag an Cruthaitheoir, is féidir an imeall a fheiceáil ar gach thaobh

agus is féidir cruth uil-thoiseach a chur le chéile leis. Cé go bhfuil íosa mar bhunchloch, tá sé freisin mar chinn chloch an chreidimh. Tá sé de dualgas orainn bheith láidir sa lár – mar ballaí. Táimid baistithe le uisce beannaíthe agus muid nua-tagtha ar an saol agus cumhacht an Spiorad Naoimh tugtha dúinn agus muid ag tosú ar obair Dé a dhéanamh. Díreach mar a tharlóinn le lúthchleasaí sna Cluichí Oilimpeacha, tá an ola curtha orainn, agus tá caint an Traenálaí (Dia, in ár gcás) in ár gcluasa, agus leis sin, tá an dualgas orainn dul i dtreo an líne. Má éistean muid le Soiscéal Dé, má chreideann muid ann, fiú gan ár méir a chuir i bpoll dtairní íosa, agus má táimid díograsach ag scaipeadh scéal íosa Chríost, is againne a bhéas an chumhacht spioradálta freisin. Ceist creidimhe atá ann, nach ea?

Guí an Phobail

1. Don Eaglais: Go dtuga Dia inspioráid do mhuintir na hEaglaise i dtreo is go mbeidh siad in ann beannachtaí Dé a scaipeadh go forleathan, cosúil le bia spioradúil a thabharfadh beatha buan don té a ghlacadh leis. A Thiarna, éist linn.
2. Dóibh siúd atá tinn: Go bhfaighe siad leigheas an Tiarna trí chumhacht na bpaidreacha, len iad a threorú ar bhóthar na sláinte arís, má tá sé sin in ann dóibh. A Thiarna, éist linn.
3. Dóibh siúd atá cailte, guímid go mbeidh siad ar ais linn arís, fé chúram íosa, ár nAoire. A Thiarna, éist linn.
4. A íosa, go múine tú dóibh siúd atá ag plé le cúrsaí polaitíochta domhanda conas daoine a thabhairt le chéile, le grá, le cineáltacht agus le tuiscint a léiriú, is cuma cé chomh héagsúil óna chéile is atá muid go léir. A Thiarna, éist linn.
5. Dóibh siúd atá imithe ar Shlí na Firinne cheana, go stiúra tú iad go páirc na bhFlaitheas, áit a mbeidh suaimhneas ann i gcónaí. A Thiarna, éist linn.

An Phaidir

Ag taispeáint ár gcreideamh i nDia agus ag iarraidh A bheannacht a bheith tugtha dúinn, Guímid briathra an tSlánaitheora...

Focail Scoir

Go n-éiste muid le focail Dé go géar. Go dtuga muid aire dóibh siúd atá cailte ar a mbealach. Go dtaga cách le chéile mar chlann arís an tseachtain seo chugainn. Sin é ár bpaidir chugat trí Chríost ár dTiarna, Ámen.

Domhnach Cincise 31 Bealtaine 2020

Réamhrá

'Na daoine a maithfidh sibh a bpeacaí dóibh, beidh siad maite dóibh; Na daoine a gcoinneoidh sibh a bpeacaí, beidh a bpeacaí coinneithe.' (Eoin 20:23-24)

Smaoineamh

Lá mór na Spioraíde atá ann inniu. Sna léachtaí, go háirithe i gcás Gníomhartha na nApsal 2, feiceann muid pictiúr drámatúil.

Tá slua bailithe le chéile, agus go tobann, ón spéir, tagann teangacha tine ar gach duine acu agus tosaíonn na daoine go léir ag labhairt i dteangacha éagsúla. Spioraid De atá ann. An rud is spéisiúla ná, go dtuigeann siad a chéile, cé gur teangacha iasachta atá á labhairt acu. An t-ábhar cainte atá i mbéal an tslua ná éachtaí Dé. Ag déanamh trácht ar an Spioraid i gCor 1, mínítear dúinn go ndéanann an Spioraid rudaí éagsúla do dhaoine éagsúla agus go bhfuil oibreacha difriúla ann is é an Dia chéanna a bhíonn á n-oibriú go léir i ngach ceann acu. Taréis d'íosa teacht ós comhair na n-deisceabail, mar a luatar in Eoin 20, tá sé soiléir, ón a gcaint, gur ionann Dia agus an Spiorad agus é féin. Maidir linne, séard 'tá le tuiscint ná go dtagann solas na tuiscine agus na cumarsáide trí chumhacht na Spioraíde. Caitheann muidne bheith oscailte do na beannaithe go léir a dtagann tríd an Spioraid ó Dhia agus réidh chun na bronntanais sin a úsáid. Cuireann sé seo lá a chuamar faoi lámh an Easpaig i gcuimhne dúinn. Tá na buanna go léir taréis bheith bronnta orainn. Anois tá sé in am dúinn iad a úsáid i gceart chun obair agus toil Dé a dhéanamh mar dheisceabail.

Guí an Phobail

1. A íosa, d'éirigh tú ó na mairbh chun teachtaireacht Dé a thabhairt dúinn. Guímid go nglacfaimid an teachtaireacht sin agus go dtabharfaimid é do gach éinne a chasann muid air nó uirthi – ní amháin mar ábhar labhartha ach de bharr ár n-iompair. A Thiarna, éist linn.
2. A Spioraid Naofa, tháinig tú mar theangacha tine ar an slua. Líon muid lán le d'inspioráid, do chumhacht agus do fhuinnimh. Bíodh fonn éisteachta agus cumarsáide ionainn i dtreo is go scaipfidh muid an Soiscéal go forleathan, fiú in áiteanna a bhí iasacht uainn roimhe-seo. A Thiarna, éist linn.
3. A Dhia, tá tú taréis míniú dúinn gur trí phearsa atá san aon Dia, i gcás na Tríonóide. Is féidir leis an Tríonóid gach a dhéanamh, más toil Dé é. Má chreideann muid ann agus má ghlacann muid leis na buanna a thugann an Spioraid dúinn, beimid in ann maithiúnas a fháil dúinn féin agus dóibh siúd a maitheann muidne a bpeacaí dóibh. A Thiarna, éist linn.
4. Nuair a bhí íosa á mbaisteadh in abhann na hlóirdaine, tháinig an Spiorad Naofa mar éan na síochána, sé sin an cholúr. Iarraimid ort, a Thiarna, síochán a ghlacadh agus a scaipeadh go forleathan i ngach ghné d'ár saol. A Thiarna, éist linn.

An Phaidir

Guímís chun an Athair mar aon leis an Spioraid Naofa...

Focail Scoir

A Thiarna, dúisigh muid ó aon chineál codlata spioradálta agus cabhraigh linn armúr an tsolais a chur orainn. Sin i ár bpaidir chugat, trí shaol na saol, Amen.

ARDS RETREAT CENTRE

Focusing

Friday, 17–Sunday, 17 May 2020

The body's sense for grace and God in everyday awareness

This Focusing Retreat introduces you to a learnable inner skill involving mind, body, and heart that helps you begin, and persevere on, your sacred inward journey. As you grow in a confident use of Focusing you will discover the hidden treasure of possibilities inside yourself, just waiting to surprise you.

Facilitators: Fr Philip Baxter & Tom Larkin

Vision

Friday, 29–Sunday, 31 May 2020

Sunday, 7–Friday, 12 June 2020

The Vision programme was born out of love for the eight beatitudes and the difference they could make in the lives of the individuals, families, church communities and society. The programme gives people an understanding of each beatitudes, and also ways of internalising the love that the beatitudes contain.

Facilitator: Fr Flan

Christian Mindfulness

Friday, 5–Sunday, 7 June 2020

Mindfulness in the Christian tradition is a foundational prayer practice since ancient times. First employed by the earliest monastics as a way of stabilising the mind and heart in the awareness of the Divine Presence it invites us into a deep spirit of recollection that allows us to live from the 'Sacrament of the Present Moment'. This retreat will invite you to practice the presence of God in each moment and with every breath, offering teachings and techniques from the great masters of Christian prayer.

Facilitator: Fr Richard

Contact: Ards Friary Retreat Centre, Creeslough, Co Donegal
Tel 074-9138909
Email info@ardsfriary.ie
Web www.ardsfriary.ie
Facebook Ards Friary Retreat Centre



MOUNT ST ANNE'S

SUMMER RETREATS

Living Out of the Hidden Place

21–25 May 2020

Facilitated by Fr Séamus O'Connell

To Walk Freely in Life Living in God's Love

2–8 June 2020

Facilitated by Fr John Finn MSC

Odysseys of Faith

12–18 June 2020

Facilitated by Fr Brendan Comerford

Christ-Like Hospitality

22–28 June 2020

Facilitated by Fr Nick Harnan

Come Healing – The Splinters that we Carry...

12–18 July 2020

Facilitated by Fr Vincent Sherlock

Believe in Me and in the One Who Sent Me

24–30 July 2020

Facilitated by Fr Gerard McCarthy

And God Said...

4–10 August 2020

Facilitated by Rev Dr Ruth Patterson

Meeting with Christ

25–31 August 2020

Facilitated by Fr Charles Cross

Limited places available –
early booking advised
Bookings/Enquiries
to the Secretary
on 057-8626153

Email secretary@mountstannes.com

SABBATICAL PROGRAMMES 2020/2021 –

CONTACT OFFICE FOR DETAILS

Mount St Anne's Retreat and Conference Centre, Killenard, Portarlinton, Co Laois R32 WN59
Tel 057-8626153
Email secretary@mountstannes.com
For full details on these and all our courses, see www.mountstannes.com



DROMANTINE RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTRE

Spirituality of the Heart

2 May 2020 (9.30 am–5.00 pm)

As we explore the Spirituality of the Heart, we will discover that, once we experience the unconditional love of God in Jesus we can learn to accept ourselves and find the courage to forgive others.
Fr Joe McGee MSC

Listening for the Divine Whisper

Friday, 22–Thursday, 28 May 2020

In this retreat Ruth will look at some of those who heard the whisper, responded and became a vital part of the ongoing purpose of God.

Rev Ruth Patterson

Jesus – an Unfinished Portrait

Monday, 8–Saturday, 13 June 2020

Christians are asked to love their founder, Jesus, as he surely loves them. We reflect on the life and teaching of the one we worship as Christ the Redeemer.
Denis McBride CSsR

Growing in years, peace and contentment; A Spirituality of Ageing

Tuesday, 1–Monday, 7 September 2020

This retreat will outline a spiritual approach to assist us as we grow older. It will offer some guidelines to help us to let go of any regrets and to harvest the fruits of our lives, so that the final stages can be lived in peace, fulfilment, and trust.

Fr Des Corrigan SMA

Praying with the Psalms

Friday, 2–Thursday, 8 October 2020

In this retreat we will revisit a number of the Psalms and experience how they can invigorate our relationship with God, self and others.

Fr Gerard McCarthy SVD

6-Day Directed Retreats

Friday, 22–Thursday, 28 May 2020

Fr Frank Downes OP, Fr Des Corrigan SMA

Tuesday, 1–Monday, 7 September 2020

Sr Mary Connellan SSL, Fr Dermot

Mansfield SJ

4-Day Directed Retreats

Friday, 22–Tuesday, 26 May 2020

Fr Frank Downes OP, Fr Des Corrigan SMA

For enquiries or bookings contact:

Retreat & Conference Centre,
Dromantine, Newry, Co Down BT34 1RH
Tel 028-30821964 (From RoI 048)
Email admin@dromantineconference.com
www.dromantineconference.com



AN TAIRSEACH

Sabbatical Programme – Ten Weeks

6 September–13 November 2020 – Autumn
Exploring Spirituality in the context of an evolving universe, an endangered earth, in the Christian tradition.

Retreat: ‘Resting in the Arms of God’

15–20 June 2020

Facilitator: Ms Deirdre Ní Chinnéide

Retreat: ‘In Communion with the Sacred Universe’

29 June–4 July 2020

Facilitators: Niamh Brennan and Sr Colette Kane OP

Teacher’s Summer School: Knowing Our Place, from Stardust to Sand

Department of Education approved for CPD
6–10 July 2020

Providing teachers with the confidence and competence to teach the story of the universe; the effects of global warming and the necessity of environmental awareness and care. It is also aimed at fostering the curiosity of students and developing environmental awareness and care of the environment. The main curriculum areas covered by the course are SESE.

Facilitator: Sr Colette Kane OP

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SEASIDE RETREATS

FFCJ Ibricken Lodge,
Spanish Point, Co Clare

Lay Retreat (3 days)

Friday (evening), 19–Monday (lunchtime,
22 June 2020

Theme: ‘Meeting God in Creation’.

Directors: John Feehan and
Hugh O’Donnell SDB

Directed Retreat (6 Days)

Wednesday, 19–Wednesday, 26 August

Directors: Marion Dooley FCJ and
Fr Joe Coghlin

Dreams Weekend

Friday (evening), 28–Sunday (lunchtime),
30 August 2020

A Pathway to Inner Wholeness

*Dreams, it is said, can provide inspiration
that can be revealed to us in no other way.*

Director: Mary Leahy FCJ

For further information contact:

Geraldine Lennon FCJ, 5 Laurel Hill Court,
Summerville Avenue, Limerick

Tel 086-3423692

Email geraldinefcj@yahoo.ie



AN TOBAR SPIRITAN RETREAT CENTRE

The Wonder of Creation, The Miracle of Life

8–10 May 2020

An invitation to *Walk with God* in self-discovery within the mystery of the unfolding universe.

Led by Nellie McLaughlin

Ashram Experience

26 June–26 July 2020

Residential and non-residential bookings available. Vegetarian meals.

With Koroko Moses SJ

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- Individual & Personal Retreats
- Group Facilitation & Accompaniment
- A variety of retreats residential & non-residential throughout the year. Self-Catering & Catered Retreats
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- A quiet place to pass the day

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Ardbraccan, Navan, Co Meath

Tel 046-90789730

Email antobarnavan@gmail.com

www.antobar.ie



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Available: Large church organ for donation. Can be delivered.

Contact: Sr Bernadette Purcell

Tel 01-4042615

Available: Church benches and white marble altar (4 ft 9 ins square, height 3 ft 5 ins) in N. Wicklow.

Contact: 085-8601794

For sale: Old Church pews for sale. Photo available. Contact: 086-8351732.

Wanted: Two church pews to complete the recently refurbished school oratory in Calasanctius College in Oranmore, Co Galway. Contact: Ger Harkin. Tel 087-2024688.

Available: Church benches (6 @ 11 ft and 6 @ 8 ft) in N. Cavan.

Contact: 086-8755695.

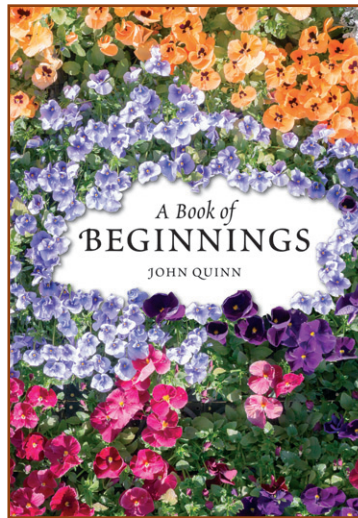
NEW RESOURCES

Fr Sean Maher
Naas, Co Kildare



A BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

John Quinn
Veritas Publications, 2019
ISBN 9781847309129
pp. 256 • €14.99/stg£13.50



This is an interesting compilation of different accounts of ‘beginnings’ – different reflections on the moments when, as the compiler paraphrases the words of John O’Donoghue, new horizons wanted to be seen. The reflections and musings come from different genres – poetry, prose, music and even reports and letters. It is an interesting collection of such reflections. Some will echo with a familiar ring, as some were poems learned in school or come from popular works. Others are more specialist and almost ‘quirky.’ The editor includes some of his own experiences of beginnings in terms of his experiences of boarding school, his meeting his future wife and his need for a brave new start after bereavement. The book is structured thematically and is more of an anthology for reference than a work for programmed study. It is well presented and handsomely bound.



MARY IN DIFFERENT TRADITIONS

Seeing the Mother of Jesus with new Eyes
Thomas G. Casey SJ
Dublin: Messenger Publications, 2019 • pp. 87

This is a sequel to a previous book by Casey, entitled *Smile of Joy: Mary of Nazareth* (2018). The book studies the person and the presentation of Mary in different traditions and how Catholics might learn to see Mary in a new way, as our tradition seems to be losing its sense of wonder at the figure of Mary. Hence, he offers this imaginative exploration of the figure of Mary in Lutheran, Orthodox, Jewish and Islamic thought, in an attempt to allow us to rediscover the figure of Mary.

Casey begins with a study of Mary in Lutheran thought. The writings of three Lutheran scholars (Luther, Kierkegaard and Bonhoeffer) are examined and their insights are offered. In each case the insights are striking. He shows how the figure of Mary in Luther’s thought was far from dismissed but rather how she was presented as a symbol of faith, gratitude and humility. In the case of Kierkegaard, and the problem of anxiety that accompanies the human condition, Mary is seen as a person of courage, where the revelatory power of silence brings one to an

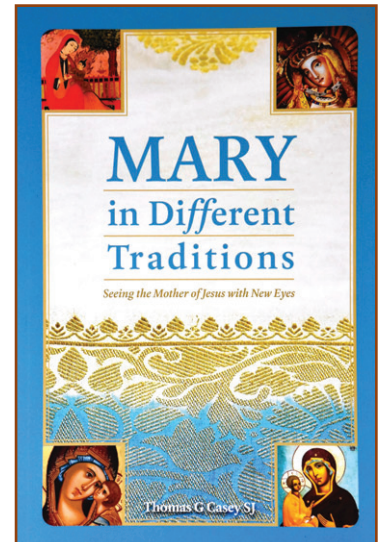
understanding of faith as a passion that transforms. Bonhoeffer is the most historically situated of the three studies, and his Advent sermons on the Magnificat are presented as a hermeneutical key to his own understanding of justice, daring and even wildness.

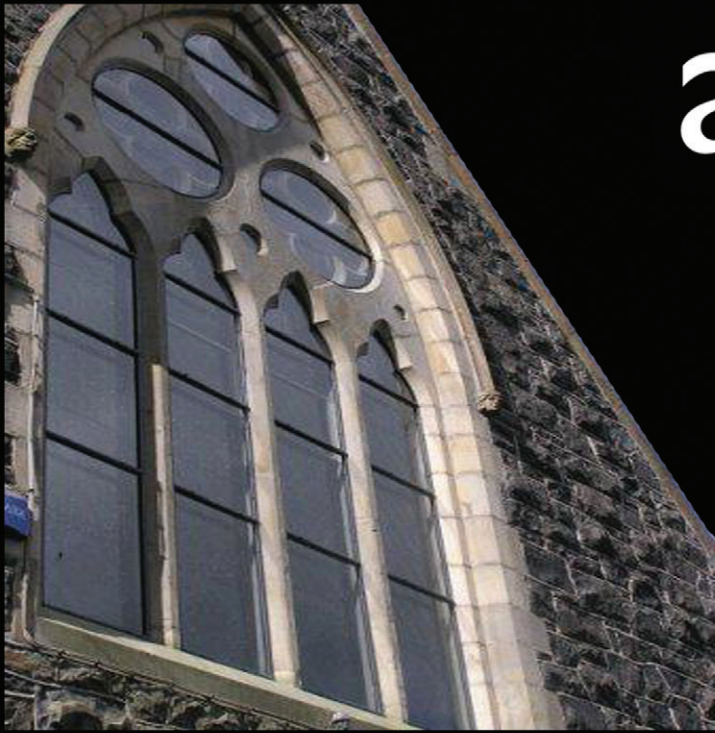
The Orthodox tradition is presented with a wide range of examples of Marian insight and spiritual practices of Marian origin, including the importance of Mount Athos as a place of Marian presence, the example of Saint Seraphim as a sharer in Mary’s sense of the Resurrection, the role of divinization and icons. Casey remarks how the Orthodox tradition is less likely to teach with books and theories but rather to communicate its central beliefs in the beauty of its liturgy and its sanctuaries. In essence, according to Casey, the sense of the enormity of the Incarnation is key to the Orthodox imagination, and Mary is seen as the one who gave God his human nature. In this, Mary is seen as a point of unity between Orthodox and Catholic Traditions and a place where they can meet and come to healing of their history.

The Jewish matrix is the most interesting of the perspectives and Casey rightly demonstrates how this is imperative to any understanding of Mary. He masterfully demonstrates how four Jewish female figures from history can illuminate and enliven our understanding of the figure of Mary in the New Testament. One of the more interesting and beautifully composed paragraphs is his discussion on the dogma of the Assumption and its definition in 1950, shortly after the ravages of the second world war, as an affirmation of the gift of life.

The Islamic tradition and the presentation of Mary in the Qur’an is detailed and informative. The beauty of the figure of Mary, as well as her resilience and trustfulness, seem to be the great imaginative contribution of this tradition. Again Casey proposes that the figure of Mary might become a meeting point for the Christian, Jewish and Islamic traditions.

This is a beautifully written book with a wealth of insight and teaching, presented in an easy-to-read and clear style. There are many fine illustrative and explanatory allusions that add to the engaging style. It serves well its purpose of pushing people beyond narrow boundaries to discover anew the wonder of the faithful, brave and gentle Mother of God.





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The Abbey Stained Glass Studios

PRESENTATION PROVINCIALATE, WARRENMOUNT, DUBLIN 8



ABBNEY STAINED GLASS STUDIOS HAVE BEEN COMMISSIONED TO CONSERVE AND RESTORE THE EARLEY STUDIOS STAINED GLASS WINDOWS IN THE MAIN ENTRANCE OF THE ACORN CENTRE FOR SR MARGARITA RYAN, PROVINCIAL LEADER

**The Abbey
Stained Glass
Studios**

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