

An Easter People

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When my mother brought home wallpaper and paint, it meant that we were preparing for Easter. We didn't ever prepare for Christmas the way we prepared for Easter. There was always a room to be decorated and curtains to be taken down, hand-washed and pressed. We were regularly reminded of her youth, when the walls of her homeplace were 'whitewashed and the hedges clipped.' One might suggest that Mammy was doing the spring cleaning; however, she very openly attributed any and all of her work to the risen Jesus. As children, Easter was a big event in our lives.

In my own family, there is a similar sense of preparation. Easter and the hope it embodies carries us forward as well as making sense of our past. Once, on the way to Holy Thursday Mass, our daughter was chatting to me about a primary school project entitled 'Saint John Paul II's visit to Ireland.' I told her about how amazing it was to be in the Pope's presence, the emotion I had experienced when the popemobile drove past us in the Phoenix park, and how the Pope's visit had been such a huge national event. Later, during the Mass, she leaned over to me and enquired: 'Did Jesus ever visit Ireland?' 'Yes', I replied, 'He visits all the time, and He is about to arrive on the altar right now; when you hear the bells ringing, you will know He is here.' I must admit tears sprung to my eyes when I saw her wide-eyed with wonder as the bells rang out louder and longer for the Holy Thursday Gloria.

Easter is a blessed and holy time for any family. The brighter evenings and rising temperature herald hope. Lambs and snowdrops announce renewal. For people of faith there is so much more. Jesus broke through the barriers of sin and death. Jesus is present to everyone, not just the people who follow Him and celebrate Him. Easter is a time of rejoicing and jubilation at the unconditional love poured out for all.

The Easter Triduum is an even more intensive time of preparation, and brings Lent to its climax. Pope John Paul II explained: 'By the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the Church was born and

set out upon the pathways of the world, yet a decisive moment in her taking shape was certainly the institution of the Eucharist in the Upper room. Her foundation and wellspring is the whole Triduum ... but this is as it were gathered up, foreshadowed and "concentrated" forever in the gift of the Eucharist.' The last supper shared in the upper room is the 'source and summit' of the Church. The individual liturgies of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil mark not isolated events, but a single blessed event. The Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday does not end with a final blessing; rather, that blessing is given at the conclusion of the Easter Vigil.

The Easter Triduum is what I can only describe as an annual retreat. Our own family have prayed through primary school playground squabbles, adolescent angst and anger, young adulthood decisions and all that goes on in between. Most of all, we have prayed with and for each other. Each part of the Easter Triduum offers the opportunity to be blessed and broken in equal amounts.

With Holy Thursday comes the initiation of the sacrament of the Eucharist, a willing of the soul to 'stay awake' and prepare for what has to come. Good Friday breaks the human heart open with sadness and loss, until the Easter Vigil showers hope with the joy of the Risen Lord.

A cherished memory is of Oisín ringing the bells for the entire and beautifully sung Gloria during an Easter Vigil in Trim. This precious ritual and symbolic action filled my heart with a searing love of the Lord, along with endless gratitude for the faith that was gifted to me. In those moments, I experienced gratitude for our



Photo: Editor

son, my parents, our community, and for the love of God offered through faith. Such powerful liturgy! Such a joy to look forward to!

In 1976, Dr SM Lockridge, a Baptist pastor, was asked to describe Jesus. He replied that Jesus was his 'King'. He was then asked to describe his 'King'. A very famous explanation unfolded that included the following:

'... Well, the Pharisees couldn't stand Him,
but they found out they couldn't stop Him.
Pilate couldn't find any fault in Him...
Herod couldn't kill Him.
Death couldn't handle Him
and the grave couldn't hold Him.
That's my King ...'

Happy Easter!

AWESOME GLORY Resurrection in Scripture, Liturgy and Theology

Jeremy Driscoll OSB

Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2019

144 pp

The most important event of human history, indeed, the most important event that has ever happened anywhere in the created universe, is the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and his being raised from the dead by the one whom he called God and Father.' This is the opening sentence of Abbot Jeremy Driscoll's short book, a book that lives up to its title by showing how the 'Awesome Glory' spills out into the liturgical, homiletic, spiritual and personal aspects of the Easter Triduum, and on into the Easter Season.

This book is an exercise in what the author calls 'liturgical exegesis' – reading the biblical texts in the light of how they are presented in the liturgy. This turns out to be a rich and rewarding approach, and all I can attempt to do here is convey a hint of what it has to offer.

At the heart of this little book are three chapters, dealing with the ceremonies of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil (there is more – Abbot Jeremy surveys the whole Easter Season, through to the Ascension and Pentecost). These chapters really are a string of pearls; let's focus on one or two pearls from each of the three great ceremonies.

On Holy Thursday night, the instructions for the Passover meal, given in the first reading, state: 'You shall eat it hastily.' Applying this to our celebration, the author notes: 'Our sharing in the banquet of Jesus' Body and Blood is not some cheerful sitting down to a party of like-minded friends who have no worries or troubles. No, we receive the Lamb's flesh and are protected by his blood while an enemy pursues us and is close on our heels... Christians live in the world as those in flight.' (p. 39).

I have never found it easy to recruit people for the foot-washing. Full confession: at one point I gave up trying, after issuing too many assurances that I wouldn't be extracting toenails. Our author's wise and witty comments cast light on that pastoral dilemma: 'The priest is down on the floor, and the community feels some shock in seeing him in this position. Those having their feet washed perhaps feel some embarrassment, some hesitation. Perhaps some who are watching from the congregation must struggle to check thoughts in themselves that they are not pleased to see the feet washed of someone known by them to be a not entirely upright person.' (p. 46). The embarrassment has a long pedigree, extending, as it does, back to the first Pope!

I found the comments on the prostration or kneeling with which the Good Friday liturgy opens to be most arresting. The author makes it clear that those postures are not just about respect; they are the response to an epiphany. This, incidentally, is why prostration is more powerful than kneeling: it is an act of

'profound adoration before the epiphany of God that is about to take place in this liturgy... In this liturgy God reveals what and who God is. In the presence of this unfathomable form of revelation, we begin by lying on our faces in silence before the all-holy God.' (p. 54).

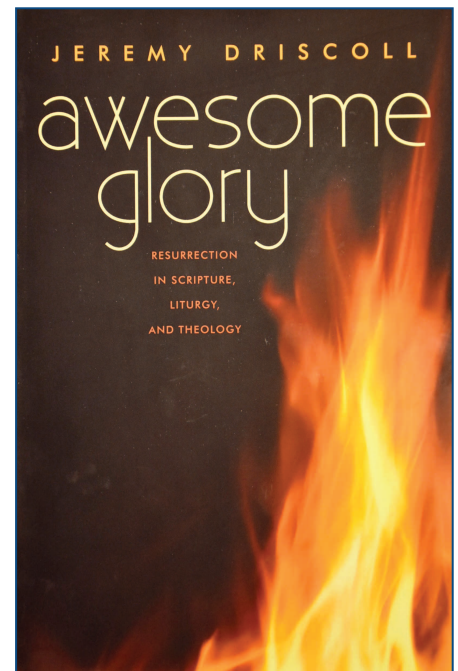
'Those prayers were awful long, Father.' No, not a quotation from the book, but from numerous

parishioners over the years, who found the General Intercessions long to the point of tedium. Our author comments masterfully on 'the dimension of prayer that lasts too long. The death of Jesus also lasted too long. It was stretched out over six physically agonizing hours... Prayer is suffering. Prayer is dying for others.' (p. 69).

Rubrics are for liturgical obsessives – you'd never dream of preaching from them, right? Wrong. With reference to the Easter Vigil, Driscoll shows how the rubrics can 'embody very condensed pieces of theology' (p. 77) – and, one might add, of spirituality. For the paschal fire, the Missal's rubric states: 'A blazing fire is prepared in a suitable place outside the church.' That fire, Abbot Driscoll notes, 'is to stand out – beautiful, dangerous, and impressive – against darkest night.' Why? Because Jesus, the risen Lord, 'is beautiful, dangerous, and impressive.' (p. 79). What a delightful invitation to ponder the significance of the rubrics during this time!

The author's exposition of biblical passages read during the Triduum is superb. Where the readings vary according to the three-year cycle, he comments on each. In this year's Easter Vigil Gospel (from Matthew), we read that the women 'came quickly away from the tomb and ran to tell the disciples.' The comment reads: 'This is how we too will meet Jesus the Crucified as the Risen One: by running away from the tomb of sin and death, by believing the angel's announcement, and in mission to carry this news to others... [Jesus] will come to us as we hurry away from the tomb and run to share the news with others.' (p. 97).

To conclude on that note, I would urge readers to run to this book. It stands only to bless and enrich our celebration of the Easter ceremonies and our personal appropriation of what we celebrate.



Positive Developments in RE in the Junior Cycle

National Association
of Post-Primary
Diocesan Advisors

The recent introduction of the new Specification for Religious Education into the new Junior Cycle Framework provides an exciting opportunity to look with fresh eyes at the place of RE in our post-primary schools.

The NCCA rationale for Religious Education states that RE 'has a critical role to play in the curriculum.' It argues that RE 'encourages respect and understanding of different beliefs, perspectives and ways of living, including both the religious and non-religious response to human experience.' (JCRE Specification, p. 6).

There are three ways of engaging with the new JCRE; it may be taken as an exam subject; students may follow the programme, completing the two CBAs in second and third year, but without taking an examination, or the specification may be followed without completing the CBAs. In each of these cases, students' work can be recognised under Other Areas of Learning on their Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA). (See: *Junior Cycle Religious Education in the Catholic School*. Council for Catechetics of the Irish Episcopal Conference)

It has often been argued that where the state examination is taken, faith formation suffers. However, it is also the case that in many schools, where RE is not an exam subject, the timetable allocation may have been reduced.

Within the Junior Cycle Framework, RE retains its place as a 'subject' separate from 'Wellbeing'. If schools are to take the NCCA rationale seriously, the essential nature of RE provision in any school is clear. How is it then that the subject, which makes such a vital contribution to the holistic education young people, is so often seen to be the one subject area for which time allocation can be eroded? In many schools, a period of RE is often 'shared' with another subject, and, at senior cycle, the SPHE/RSE programme is regularly delivered during those periods timetabled for Religious Education.

In the current situation, where the academic demands of the school year impinge on the faith practice of Catholic schools, and the need to be seen to be 'multi-denominational' entails a



conscious move away from being associated with Catholic practice by state schools, the introduction of the JCRE gives an opportunity to use the curriculum to encourage deeper learning about one's own faith.

The contribution of Christianity to Ireland's culture and heritage is an integral part of the new RE specification for Junior Cycle. We should use that invitation to teach the central beliefs of Christianity; to demonstrate that faith practice is still alive and well in Ireland. Students are expected to explore how the religious teachings of a major world religion address an issue of concern for the world today. What a wonderful way to introduce Catholic Social Teaching to the classroom; to examine *Laudato Si'* and the call of Pope Francis to care for our earth, and so forth.

Ireland is at a crossroads. Many schools mark the religious celebrations of other faiths in their school calendar, facilitating and supporting Muslim students as they fast during Ramadan; marking, for example, the Hindu festivals of Diwali and Holi, which celebrate the victory of good over evil, acknowledging with their Buddhist students the celebration of the Chinese New Year, preparing for the Jewish commemoration of Hanukkah. However, is there the same

enthusiasm in acknowledging our Christian celebrations? Marking Advent, making Lent meaningful, preparing for the celebration of Easter? Even with the celebration of Christmas, the school 'concert' appears to be taking the place of a Carol Service or Nativity play; Christ, it seems, is gradually being removed from Christmas.

At this time, when the sacred is so utterly challenged by the secular, it is more important than ever that schools mark the Liturgical Year. Catholic schools are expected to do so, but the RE specification actually gives other schools encouragement to explore and celebrate the Christian feasts which belong to the faith background of so many of their students.

With the new teaching methodologies encouraging a spiral rather than linear approach to learning, there will no longer be a sense amongst recently confirmed students, beginning their post-primary education, that they already 'know it all' when it comes to Christianity! They will be accustomed to an approach which builds on knowledge from year to year – and will be open to ongoing learning about their own faith, to marking the stages of the Liturgical Year, as well as learning about the faiths of others, and of non-religious worldviews.

Religious Education provides 'a space like no other'; it supports students to ask significant questions, prepares them to make a contribution to their community, engages them in reflection and action, and develops a religious literacy which prepares them for life in a pluralist society.

The format of the NCCA's new JC RE specification offers a challenge which, if undertaken, will enable our young people to deepen their own faith; they will be encouraged to express their beliefs, explore questions and live their values. This is an opportunity not to be missed.

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is Post-Primary
Diocesan Advisor for
Religious Education in the
Diocese of Carlow



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ACROSS

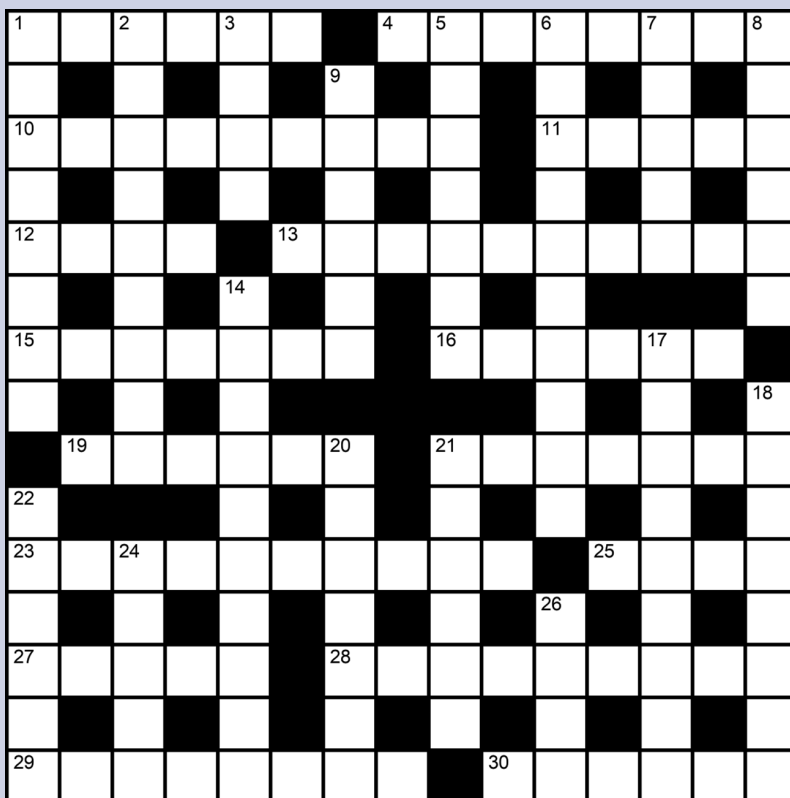
- 1 Terribly teased but calm (6)
- 4 Broadcasts journey from runway (8)
- 10 Craft that could bear forty when renovated (9)
- 11 Not inclined? (5)
- 12 We carry identification and it is broad (4)
- 13 He gives vital liquid assets to be put in circulation (5,5)
- 15 Go back to see about a poem (7)
- 16 Bronzed deputy receives girl (6)
- 19 Leapt around about a pole to see celestial body (6)
- 21 No longer living on main part of Jordan (4,3)
- 23 Friend in Dublin and another capital, I I Ac for instance (10)
- 25 Cleric gets confused in Aden (4)
- 27 Entertain a source of inspiration (5)
- 28 Name ten to undergo reform in expiation (9)
- 29 Uses pens creatively to express tension (8)
- 30 Terribly sad gastric upset (6)

DOWN

- 1 Computer program for waste recycling (8)
- 2 Challenge Satan with one who is recklessly brave (9)
- 3 Trifles with playthings (4)
- 5 I trot in and disrupt the opening hymn (7)
- 6 Aliens fled in disarray from Lenten practice (4-6)
- 7 Bird of prayer in Roscommon! (5)
- 8 Pretty worthless attempt to follow friend (6)
- 9 Cello I play for sheepdog (6)
- 14 Arrangement of generic DNA reveals relative (10)
- 17 Segregate seasonal treat in parts (6,3)
- 18 Attractive wizardry includes trap (8)
- 20 Menaces designed to shatter (7)
- 21 Plum from mother and child (6)
- 22 Uses a mister on flower arrangements (6)
- 24 The hour for boys to take a turn (5)
- 26 Diocese takes on right prophet (4)

MARCH SOLUTION

Across: 1 Marksman, 5 Averts, 9 Goldfish, 10 Woeful, 12 Intervene, 13 Ingot, 14 Shoe, 16 Stipend, 19 Avignon, 21 Ants, 24 Tally, 25 Lip reader, 27 Cannon, 28 Passport, 29 Errand, 30 Stiletto. Down: 1 Magpie, 2 Relate, 3 Safer, 4 Austere, 6 Violinist, 7 Refugees, 8 Solitude, 11 Bees, 15 Honeymoon, 17 Canticle, 18 Milliner, 20 Nile, 21 Asphalt, 22 Adroit, 23 Grotto, 26 Easel.



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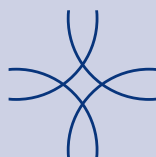
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Intercom Editor, Catholic Communications Office, Columba Centre, Maynooth, Co Kildare.

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As well as focussing on the environment, Francis also explores the importance of 'spiritual inculturation', 'forms of ministry' and 'the strength and gift of women' in consolidating the relationship between the Church and the indigenous people of the Amazon. A rallying cry to all, *Querida Amazonia* is both a sobering condemnation of social and ecological injustice, and a paean to the natural world.

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'I invite everyone to discover the beauty of the prayer of adoration and to exercise it often.' — POPE FRANCIS

JUST PUBLISHED

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD

*Praying Before the Blessed
Sacrament*

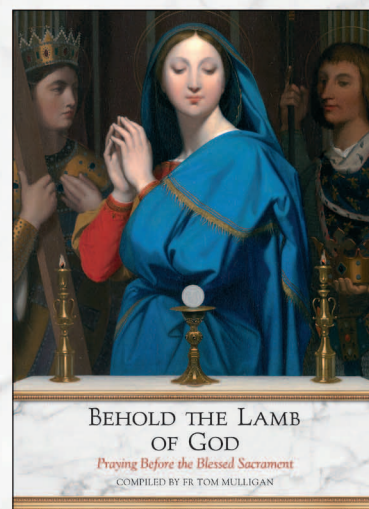
In recent times, there has been a revival of eucharistic devotion in parishes throughout the country. This practice of immersing oneself in silent adoration before the Blessed Sacrament is the secret to knowing the Lord, according to Pope Francis, who wholeheartedly endorses this form of prayer.

The act of exposing the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance enables

the faithful to gaze prayerfully at the host, giving them the opportunity to reflect on what it means to receive the body of Christ into one's heart. This practice also fosters a personal devotion to Jesus and energises the faithful in their faith journey.

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Evangelisation/Catechesis

Leading a Small Group

Emma Sisk
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Franciscan University of
Steubenville, Ohio



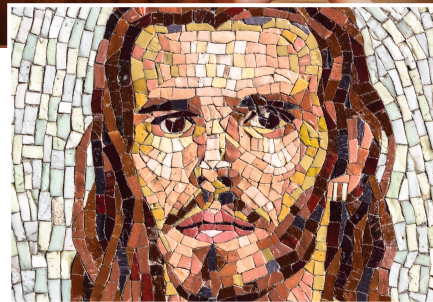
In January, I joined the ChristLife team at a local parish here in Steubenville. ChristLife is a three-step evangelisation series: Discovering Christ, Following Christ and Sharing Christ. It is like Alpha in that it is primarily aimed at those who are ill-disposed, luke-warm or fallen away from the Christian faith. It differs from Alpha in that it is an explicitly Catholic ministry. Each series runs for seven weeks and each week addresses a different teaching of the Church. In our parish, the weekly meetings take place on Thursdays from 6pm to 9pm. We begin by sharing a meal together. This is followed by a 20-minute video presentation, after which we discuss the content of the video in small groups. Participants are assigned to a small group on the first night of the series and remain in the same small group throughout the seven weeks. This helps to cultivate friendship and community among the participants, which is what keeps them coming back each week! We are approaching the final weeks of the Discovering Christ series, and it has been amazing to witness the transformation and growth that has taken place in our group. I've learned some lessons along the way when it comes to facilitating a small group, that I hope you might find helpful for events in your parish or diocese.

Your Role

The key responsibility of the small group facilitator is to lead the discussion and create a welcoming atmosphere so that every member feels free to share what they think and feel about the teaching, and to ask honest questions about the faith. The leader of the small group is a facilitator of learning, not a teacher. It can be tempting to feel the need to answer every question and to present Church teaching at every given opportunity. With those who are ill-



Photos: iStockphoto.com



disposed to the faith, you must always preserve their dignity and avoid making them feel insecure or stupid if they are struggling with a particular topic. The primary purpose of small groups is to give adults a chance to talk about how they feel about each teaching.

Small group leaders should present themselves as interesting and normal! Share with them what your hobbies are, what your week has been like; tell them about upcoming events, about your family. Think of things that would be interesting to them and talk about those things. Never give the impression that you know more than they do. For example, you could say things like 'it took me a long time to figure this out myself,' or 'you are all way ahead of me on this one.' Avoid talking theologically.

Attending to small group dynamics

Adult learning needs to be participative, related to participants' lived experience and needs; it involves learning from one another. It is important to listen to each person with total attentiveness and to encourage others to do the same. Effective listening is more than just hearing what a person says. It involves

using body language to show that one is listening (open body stance, eye contact, leaning forward slightly). Affirm and support participants in what they share and in their efforts to live the faith. If the group is straying from the topic or the questions, ask a question that brings the discussion back to the topic. When appropriate, invite the quieter members of the

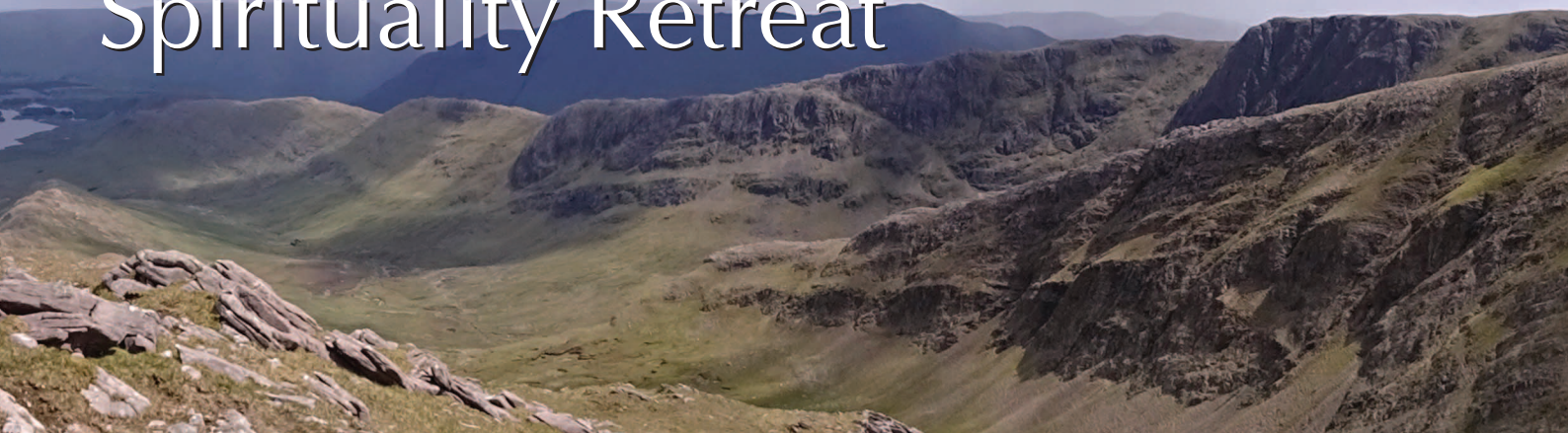
group to share. If one person is talking often, remind the group that each member needs to have the opportunity to share before the group hears from the same person again.

Adult learning

Adults generally want to have their say and will be willing to contribute to the discussion. In fact, expect to run into the problem where one member of the group is oversharing! People do not want to just sit and listen, or they won't keep coming. Adults do not grow in faith by sharing concepts. They grow by relating topics with experience. Small group communities are powerful vehicles for adult faith formation because they provide opportunities for learning, prayer, mutual support and the shared experience of Christian living. Remember that your role is to facilitate, not to teach. Hold the group to the agenda for the evening but avoid preaching to them. If doctrinal questions arise, or if a person disagrees with a teaching of the Church, thank them for their question. Encourage them to speak to their priest, or perhaps the issue will be addressed or become clearer towards the end of the series.

A small group leader should be a Catholic growing in relationship with the Lord, one who is good with people and who understands the importance of being sensitive and non-judgmental towards those who are at varying stages of the journey of faith.

Reflections on a Creation Spirituality Retreat



A couple of years back, I participated in a retreat in Ibricken Lodge, Spanish Point, Co Clare. Outside, the Atlantic's waves tumbled onto the shore, majestic and alluring. Inside, like a group of budding scientists, we peered through microscopes at tiny, delicate wild flowers, which we had picked earlier, on a walk to the sea. It was a retreat with a difference, directed by Dr John Feehan and Fr Hugh O'Donnell SMA. We explored the insights of the recent Papal Encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, as we connected in a 'hands on' way with the environment.

Magnify the Lord... and creation!

I was the youngest participant, but age is no obstacle to wonder and there was wonder a-plenty as we looked through the microscopes to see the humble Daisy, the Tufted Vetch, the Great Hairy Willow Herb and the Scarlet Pimpernel in magnified splendour. Indeed, I was inspired to see how many of the participants, who had retired from decades of ministry and apostolic work, were quickly returned to giddy youthful enthusiasm as they looked at nature through the magnifying lens. *Natura in minima, maxime miranda* (Nature is most to be marvelled at in its smallest examples). This was the insight of the scientists of the early modern age. Having achieved the means to examine the tiniest creatures, *flora* and *fauna*, with magnifying glasses and microscopes, they marvelled at the variety, the diversity and the sheer beauty of the smallest and most unseen creatures. The centuries which have followed have added to our knowledge, tens of thousands of new species have been discovered, many tens of thousands are still unknown. Sadly, the creation is

revealing its treasures and its hidden beauty at the same moment in history when we are doing those same species so much harm.

Former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, speaking at Our Lady's Shrine in Walsingham, explored the meaning of the *Magnificat*. Acknowledging that the term to *magnify* is not one in common use, outside of the celebration of Evening Prayer, Dr Williams wondered what the term could mean. To magnify, in a liturgical context, is to *praise*, and when we praise someone we usually step back to allow them space, space to shine, to be acknowledged and noticed. This is the only way we can speak of magnifying the Lord, for we cannot make God any greater than God is. Mary consciously steps back to make the Lord greater in her soul. In this, she is not diminished, but filled with joy and wonder. This interpretation of the *Magnificat* came to me as I peered through the microscope in Spanish Point. Seeing the tiniest, humblest little flowers magnified into colours and textures, patterns and symmetries should make us step back in wonder, making space for these magnificent creatures which we walk on and walk by each day. Mary's soul magnified the Lord; the perfect human response to grace. My eyes were magnifying the Rag Wort and the Sea Chamomile with the aid of a microscope, and my reaction was one of wonder and humility.

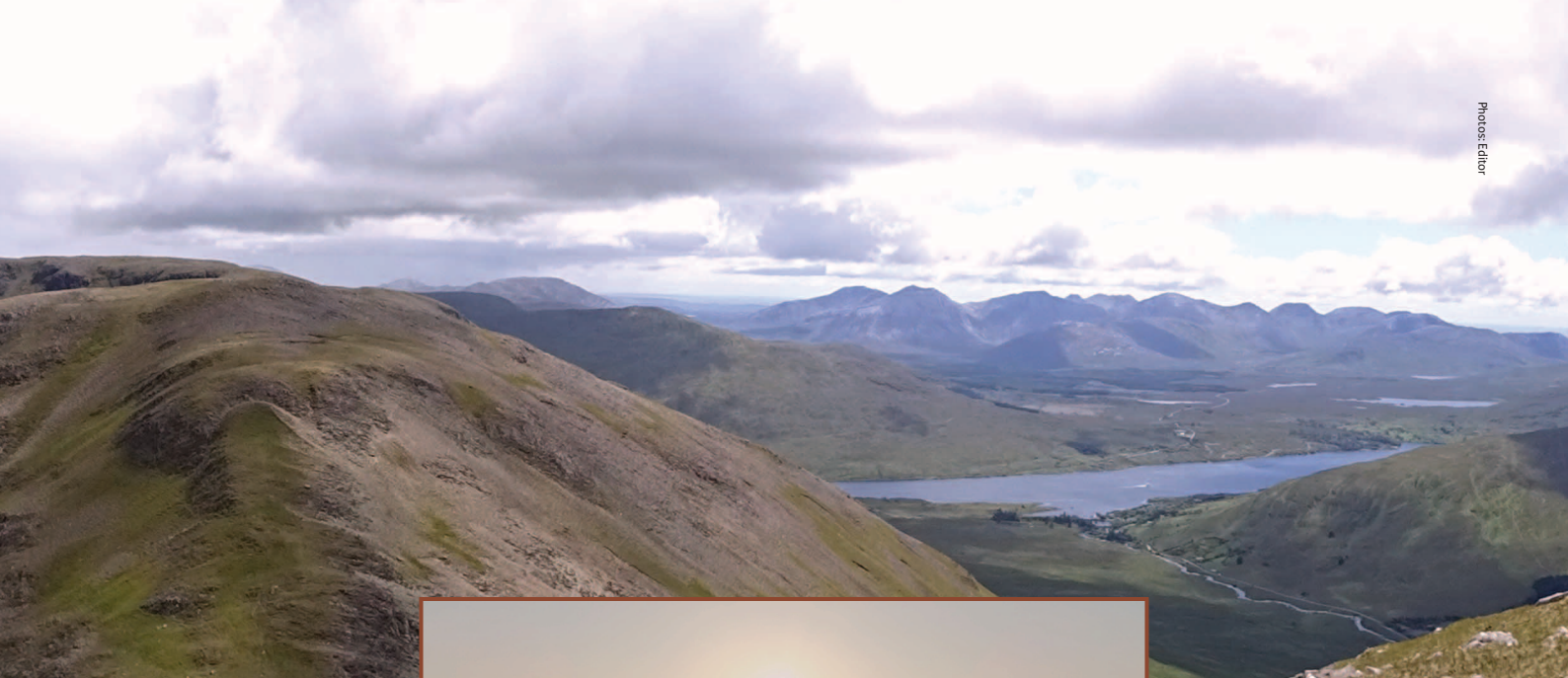
Science helping us to wonder

For believers, that sense of wonder is accompanied with praise and thanksgiving to the Creator. Our Judeo-Christian tradition speaks frequently about the unity within God's creation,

reminding us that we share a common home with all creatures, creatures who, in their simplicity and diversity, have much to teach us: 'Ask the animals and they will teach you, or the birds of the sky and they will tell you. Or speak to the earth and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea declare to you. Which of all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this, in whose hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all the human race?' (Job 12:7-10)

We are the beneficiaries of centuries of laborious, dedicated scientific investigation; distant galaxies are brought into view and microscopic life is exposed to us in startling detail. In a few short days, Dr John Feehan had made eager botanists and amateur geologists out of us all. His encyclopaedic knowledge was helping us to name and appreciate the rich *flora* and *fauna* which was all around us, while furnished with new insights into geology, astronomy and botany, we were compelled to conceive of God as passionately interested in life, a God who delights in a seemingly endless array of species, from the microscopic to the gigantic, a God who delights in diversity, adaptations and peculiarities. A brief reflection on the variety and diversity of nature through the lens of 21st century science may quickly convince you that your idea of God is too small!

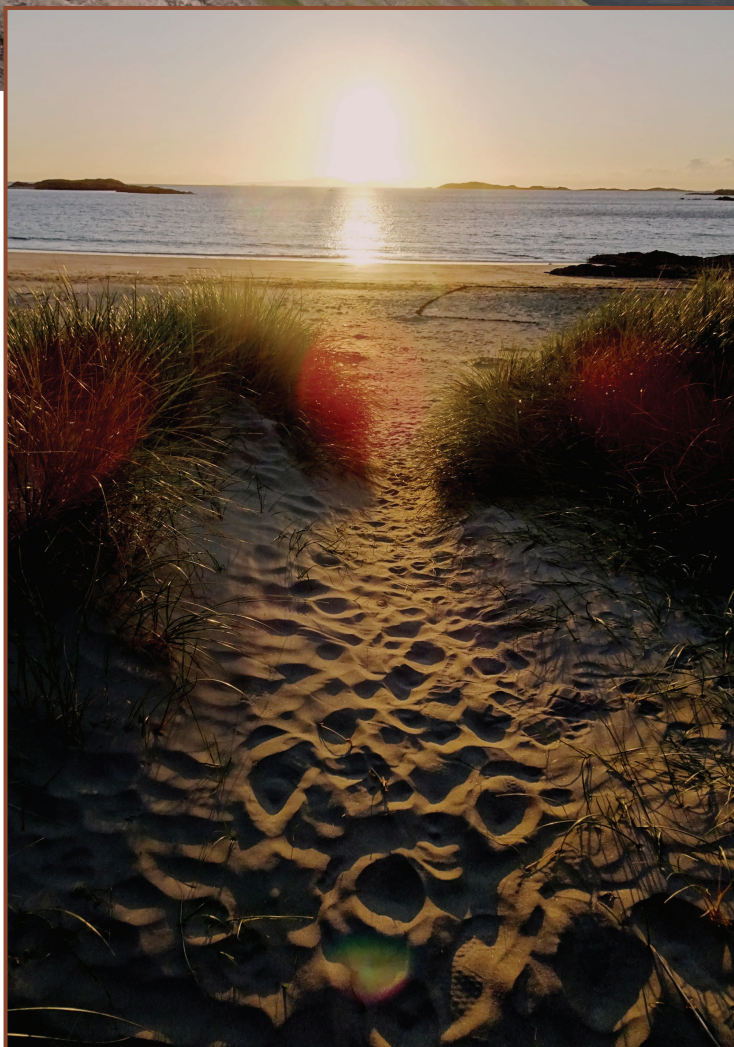
The advance of the natural sciences has given science and scientists an almost cultic character in modern society. The phrase 'science has shown' is enough to end any argument today. But what we call 'science' first stirred in the same environment of wonder and intrigue which gave rise to philosophy and theology. Science began with



observations and puzzles about the world and how it functions. It began with inquisitive people like Eratosthenes of Alexandria, the man who measured the circumference of the world with a stick! Today, the sciences claim that nature is the result not of a single system, but of many systems, e.g. the biosphere and ecosystems. Nature also bears the effects of history, culture, languages, human relations, etc. To resolve current issues concerning nature, we need to ask questions that not only concern the environment in isolation; we cannot afford a piecemeal approach (cf. *Laudato Si'* 160). It is a characteristic of the sciences today that on the one hand they are clearly warning us of the delicate balance in nature, the risks to species and the requirements of sustainability, while on the other hand, science, funded by multinationals, is pushing forward the short term goals of big business and economies. The sciences have the capacity to lead us into wonder and awe. The images from the Hubble telescope are beyond our capacity to describe; they invite wonder and silent reflection, indeed prayer.

Our Place in the Universe

When, back in 13th century Umbria, St Francis of Assisi wrote the Canticle of



Brother Sun, he may have been excused as an incurable romantic. Certainly, the 18th and 19th centuries tended to characterise St Francis as just that – the religious equivalent of the romantic nature poet. But his intuition was far from sentiment or romance; it was deeply theological. By magnifying the Lord of creation, and in turn magnifying his brother and sister creatures, St Francis was capable of stepping back and creating space for creation to be. In allowing creation to be, without desiring to control and manipulate it to my

advantage, I enter into a new relationship with created things. I learn to live simply, overcoming the temptation to possess things, as though they were actually mine and not the gift of God. Most importantly, perhaps, I learn to wonder, notice and enjoy. Science can affirm that, even more than St Francis realised, we are 'brother and sister' to other creatures, sharing genetic relationships, connected in multiple ways to creatures and systems which have evolved in a remarkable manner over millions of years. Earth is our common home and creation is a family. It is important to listen to the voices in science and in faith traditions which help us to magnify, appreciate and care for our cosmic family. In the Hassidic Jewish

tradition, it was taught that when we meet God in the next life God will ask us just one question: 'Did you enjoy my creation?'

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Friary Lane,
Athlone, Co Westmeath



St Valentine's Day – the Irish Connection

'Valentine was a priest who lived in the time of the great persecutor Claudius II. Claudius issued an edict prohibiting the marriage of young people, on the basis that unmarried soldiers fought better than married ones, who might fear for their wives or families if they died in battle...

Valentine secretly married young couples. He was eventually caught, imprisoned and tortured for performing these clandestine marriages. The story is told that he cured the daughter of one of the judges assigned to his case. The young girl was blind. The judge, Asterius, became a believer as a result... the last message Saint Valentine wrote before facing his executioner was a note to this young girl, signed off, 'from your Valentine.' And so, today's commercial business has been born out of that note and out of this man we know as Saint Valentine.

[T]he relic arrived here in Dublin in 1836, because of a Carmelite priest, Father John Spratt... On a visit to Rome, preaching at the famous Jesuit Church, the Gesù, Pope Gregory XVI gifted him with the remains of Saint Valentine and a small vessel tinged with his blood. Since then, couples have been coming here, to Our Lady of Mount Carmel's Church, to pray at his shrine.'

Bishop Denis Nulty, speaking at Whitefriar St Church on St Valentine's Day



Photo: John McElroy

Bishop Denis Nulty blessing an engaged couple, Michelle Connolly and Jonathan Hanley, in Whitefriar Street Church on Valentine's Day

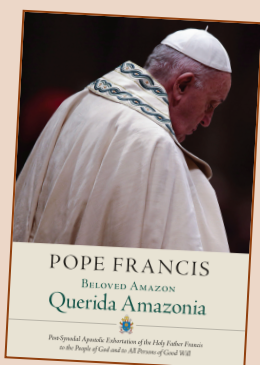
Natural, Human and Social Ecology

Photo: the Editor

In the Amazon region, one better understands the words of Benedict XVI when he said that, 'alongside the ecology of nature, there exists what can be called a "human" ecology which in turn demands a "social" ecology. All this means that humanity... must be increasingly conscious of the links between natural ecology, or respect for nature, and human ecology.' This insistence that 'everything is connected' is particularly true of a territory like the Amazon region. If the care of people and the care of ecosystems are inseparable, this becomes especially important in places where 'the forest is not a resource to be exploited; it is a being, or various beings, with which we have to relate.'

Querida Amazonia 41,42

Querida Amazonia is available from all Veritas stores and on veritas.ie



Welcoming Querida Amazonia



Photo: the Editor

'Despite the challenges we have here in Ireland with finding enough priests and religious to serve our parishes, we should not forget that Ireland has always been a country which has responded to the Church's call to mission. I recently visited mission and development projects in Ecuador, Peru and Nicaragua, and was humbled to see the immense contribution that Irish missionaries, religious and Trócaire workers are making there. It would be wonderful if some Irish priests, religious and lay missionaries today were to consider offering even a five-year period of ministry to the Amazon. In calling us to hear the cry of the earth, and the cry of the Amazon, Pope Francis opens our ears especially to the cry of the poor and the exploited in our world, and in particular their cry for justice and hope that is found in the Good News of Jesus Christ.'

Archbishop Eamonn Martin, welcoming the publication of Pope Francis' Querida Amazonia (Beloved Amazonia), 12 February 2019

Pope Francis appoints Father Paul Dempsey as the new Bishop of Achonry

On 27 January, Pope Francis appointed Father Paul Dempsey, PP of Newbridge in the Diocese of Kildare & Leighlin, as Bishop of the Diocese of Achonry. Father Dempsey was born in Carlow Town on 20 April 1971. He is the youngest in his family, having one brother and two sisters. He was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Kildare & Leighlin in the Cathedral of the Assumption, Carlow, by Bishop Laurence Ryan, on 6 July 1997.

Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh and President of the Irish Bishops' Conference, said, 'I wish to congratulate Bishop-elect Dempsey, whom Pope Francis has appointed as the new Bishop of Achonry. His service to the Church, particularly in the areas of youth ministry, communications and on matters concerning faith and culture, is well known and will provide a great foundation for his pastoral leadership as a diocesan bishop.'

The Episcopal Ordination of the new Bishop of Achonry will take place on Sunday 19 April 2020.



Photo: Brenda Dunne

Fr Paul Dempsey (left), with Fr Dermot Meehan, Administrator of Achonry Diocese

The devastation wrought by our drugs culture

[T]here has to be great anger and even sadness, great fear and pain perhaps, at the thought that we live in a society where certain people took upon themselves to



Photo: iStockphoto.com

'play God' [...] What appalling wickedness and evil. God alone is the Lord of Life – from its beginning to its end. No-one can, under any circumstances, claim for himself, the right to directly destroy another human being!

Our thoughts and prayers go out to all whose hearts are broken. This great gift of life we have received from God our creator is a treasure. It is precious but it is fragile. [...] Drugs have become extremely easy for young people to obtain. Recently someone commented that 'A lot of people are now budgeting for their debts – as well as their clothes and drink – they're also budgeting now for cocaine, and other drugs.' It isn't just communities with deprived socio-economic backgrounds that are worse for illegal drug-taking, it has become 'socially acceptable' across the country among people from all backgrounds [...] People who are taking drugs on a social basis have to realise that what they are doing is fuelling this situation of violence. The problem arises from the 'normalisation' of a drugs culture here in Ireland.

Fr Phil Gaffney, at the funeral of Keane Mulready Woods. Drogheda, 13 February 2020

John Paul II Awards



Photo: John McElroy

The recipients of the St John Paul II awards which were held in St Paul's Church Arran Quay, Dublin in February. The awards are dedicated to the memory of St John Paul II, who showed a great love and confidence in young people. Christian leadership and service in the community are at the heart of what the awards are about.

Crossword winners

The winners of the February 2020 Crossword competition:

1. Mary Kenny, Shantalla, Galway,
2. Sr Josephine Burke, Cluain Árd, Cobh, Co Cork
3. Maria Feeney, Carrington, Northwood, Santry, Dublin 9

The Mission and Work of Every Life Counts



Who We Are

Every Life Counts provides parents who have received a life-limiting diagnosis for their unborn baby with the vital support they need to let love shine through. We were created in 2014, out of a need to help families who find themselves in a situation where their baby may not live for long after birth. We offer families a network where they can feel supported, loved and informed, as they say hello and goodbye to their beautiful baby.

At the darkest point in my life, Every Life Counts enabled me to see the light by helping me come to terms with the life-limiting diagnosis of my daughter Freya, who had anencephaly. Because of that I was able to love and care for her just the way I should have. Freya and I will be forever grateful for the support we have received from Every Life Counts, and more importantly for the forever-friends we have made on our journey together.

ERIN O'HARA, MUM TO FREYA

Because we have walked this journey ourselves, we know how frightening and alone parents can feel. We also learned what parents most need. Our main focus is to provide support - especially in the form of a peer-to-peer support network where families can be talk and meet with other parents who have been given the same diagnosis for their baby. Mums and Dads say this is invaluable and critically important in enabling parents to find the strength to make the most of their time with baby, before and after birth.

Sometimes families need to talk and share, sometimes they need help getting counselling, sometimes Mum is on her own and needs someone to go to hospital to be a support for appointments, or after baby is born. We can give referrals to community resources, where available. We help

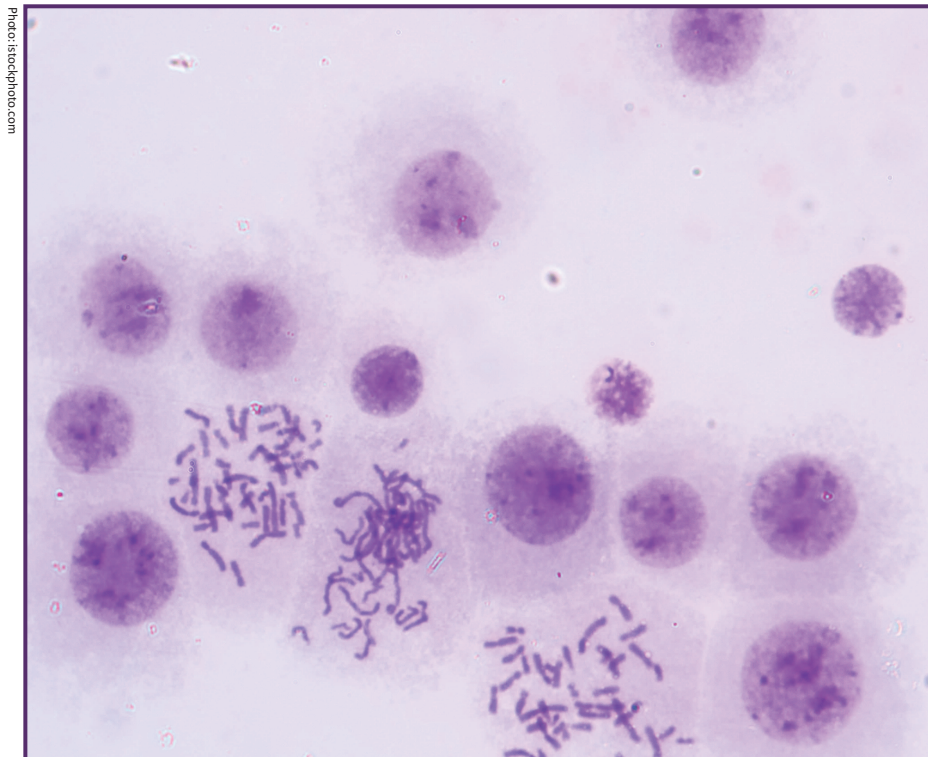


parents create a birth plan, offering suggestions from experience that will help Mum and Dad express their wishes for care for both mother and baby. We also provide anticipatory grief

support, since loss and grief are an inescapable part of this journey.

We send out care packages to Mum before the birth of her baby. Each care package is unique to Mum, and the memory boxes, tiny booties and more, are packed with love for both Mum and baby. Our medically accurate and beautifully presented booklets help to inform and reassure parents who were all too often simply told to 'go home and google' for information after their baby was diagnosed.

Every Life Counts also provides a website forum for parents of children who were diagnosed with a terminal



condition, to share their memories, their joy, their pain, and their love. Parents say that sharing their stories through individual, personalised web pages, means they feel their baby's life was valued and recognised, and they also feel they are helping others who may be in the same position.

If it wasn't for ELC I would have been lost, they were essential to my healing. I am truly grateful for their help and support on this hard and lonely journey.

GEMMA COILEY, MUM TO BRENDAN,
WHO HAD POTTER'S SYNDROME

When I lost my baby boy Troy, back in January 2019, Vicky from ELC reached out to me. She gave me great advice, she comforted me and still to this day contacts me to see how I'm doing. This is what any bereaved parent needs: 'someone to talk to,' and ELC is perfect for this. They have been there for me every step of the way. Thank you.

LAUREN KAY-McDOWELL

Work with Health Services

We work with healthcare providers, acting as a liaison and a conduit between parents and medical and healthcare professionals, to ensure the experiences of parents are shared and co-operation is achieved with the aim of improving services for families.

Every Life Counts has been pleased to work with the Irish national health service to improve bereavement care, and we continue to participate in

consultations to ensure parents and babies are supported and valued. This can be a heart-breaking time for parents, and medics want to know how to best help families. Together, we can make the pain easier to bear, and ensure families have time to love and make memories.

For the first Perinatal Care conference in Dublin in 2016, we hosted some of the world's leading experts in caring for very sick babies and their families, and we are planning a similar event in 2020. Attended by doctors, nurses and midwives, the conference heard from experts in perinatal hospice care, the management and treatment of complex conditions for baby, including surgery for baby in the womb, and best care when dealing with loss. The conference also heard from families who had lost their babies to these conditions, a shared experience that all attendees greatly valued.

We also produce fully-researched, accurate and crucially important information in booklet form, and on our website. We have provided maternity hospitals with these booklets, and the feedback from staff in the hospitals has very positive.

I wish to extend my sincere gratitude for all the wonderful information that you sent. We will be eternally grateful for all your support. The Maternity Bereavement study day was a huge success and very positively received.

END OF LIFE CARE COORDINATOR,
SLIGO HOSPITAL.

Provide Information and Increase Awareness

Every Life Counts works with mainstream and social media to increase awareness about life-limiting conditions, such as anencephaly and Trisomy 18. Our videos sharing the experiences of parents have received millions of views and have helped many families to feel their baby's life was valued and recognised.

ELC have appeared on many national and local TV and radio programmes and our families' stories have been widely published and shared. Our mission in regard to increasing awareness is to ensure that more and more people understand the needs of our families and that they also understand that our babies are precious and loved, and that every life counts.

Hi. I saw your beautiful video on Every Life Counts. I would just like to say thank-you. I am 28 weeks pregnant with a little boy who was diagnosed with Trisomy 18, and this was the best thing I could have seen right now.

SIOFRA

Vicky from ELC rang me after I contacted her after I got my son's anencephaly diagnosis. I couldn't speak with the lump in my throat! But she knew that anyway, so I didn't have to say a word. She made me feel a little more relaxed & after everything happened, I understood. She kept in touch & was there when I needed her... and 9 months on she is still there. I got the most beautiful locket for Rossa's memory – totally unexpected but truly appreciated. ELC does an amazing job for us parents facing the biggest struggle of their lives. I've made a friend who I feel I can talk to about anything (even though we have never met). I don't know where I would be without ELC. True angels do exist on this earth. Thank you, Every Life Counts. If anyone deserves an award for their hard work & emotional presence it's ELC. Just amazing! Xx.

ROSE FOLEY, MUM TO BABY ROSSA

Vicky Wall,
founder of
Every Life Counts
www.everylifecounts.ie



Anticipating the Second Anniversary of the Repeal of the Eighth Amendment



March for Choice 2012 – Dublin, 29 September 2012

The repeal of the eighth amendment in 2018 was, to many of us, a source of deep grief. The margin of defeat, however, was no less than shocking. Talking to pro-life activists across the country, I know that many woke on the Sunday after the referendum in what seemed to them to be a different country. Two thirds of the nation had voted to legalise abortion in Ireland. The vote was remarkably consistent, not just in large towns and cities but in most rural areas also.

There are some tempting narratives which we must reject. One is that we did not in fact lose, but that all arms of state and society colluded to steal the vote. We must completely reject this conspiracy theory: it is a perfect excuse to surrender and to disengage totally from secular society, as there would be no point in playing a rigged game. While not many may believe the full-blown conspiracy theory, a large number of pro-life people are finding it hard to keep fighting in what looks like a deeply hostile Ireland. What they need is encouragement, not reasons to retire.

The fact is that we lost. We lost the argument, but more importantly, we lost the culture. Barely a tenth of voters aged 18 to 24 voted to keep the 8th. Clearly they have been failed, and generations before them likewise. Questions must be asked about this failure if we are to have any chance of success in the future.

In the immediate aftermath of the referendum, we were told loudly and clearly that it was over, that our time had passed, that we were on the wrong side of history. But remember, one third of the electorate voted against repeal. Any political party that managed to get that vote would be the largest in the country. In our system of government, a party which has a handful of TDs elected can find itself in a position of great influence. One third of the electorate is what might be called absolutist on the life issue, and the notion that they are powerless is nonsense. If they choose to compete for power, and seek influence rather than hide under the covers, they can put themselves in a position to drive change.

While the majority of those who voted against repeal were purists or absolutists

on the issue of abortion, it is not the case that each and every one of those who voted to repeal were enthusiasts for radical and extreme abortion laws. There is a wide continuum along which voters find themselves, from 'only in the most restricted of circumstances,' such as threat to life or rape, all the way along to third trimester elective abortions.

Many pro-life people are deeply uncomfortable with supporting legislation that clearly permits abortion, even if creating certain limits or boundaries. They feel that they are becoming in some sense complicit in the legitimisation of abortion, that their support is a tacit approval for limited abortion. Church leaders need to reassure them on this. Being purist on this is not the way to save any lives, and it is precisely (and tragically) the saving of lives that we must now be concerned with.

If we look to the United States, we see that it is by garnering the support of those least enthusiastic voters for repeal that we may become able either to stop expansion and liberalisation of the

regime, or actually begin the push-back process, by introducing more and clearer limits to the law.

There are practical steps that individuals and parishes can take, in conjunction with a continuing public advocacy campaign. There are a number of voluntary organisations that are prolife in ethic and whose charism is to support mothers and fathers when faced with an unplanned or challenging pregnancy. The wonderful work of *Every Life Counts* is described by Vicky Wall in this issue of *Intercom*. Whether by volunteers, expertise, donations, or whatever is needful, every parish can, in some small way, help out these important groups. Also, what they do, who they help and how they can be contacted should be advertised in word and print. Women need to know there is help available when they need it, and not just kind words and good wishes.

One third of the electorate voted against repeal. Any political party that managed to get that vote would be the largest in the country.

The attack on the basic rights of the most vulnerable has paused only briefly to catch breath and gather energy for the next fight. Already in the last Dail, two private members bills were in preparation to allow the introduction of euthanasia into Ireland. This attack on the old and the sick is coming down the line. It will be cloaked in the language of compassion and be feted as modern, decent, mature and respectful of personal choice, both in the media and by many leaders of civil society.

In this article, I am not engaging in a rehearsal of the arguments against euthanasia, but we would do well to look to the experience and evolution of this practice in Canada, Belgium and the Netherlands. Also, I would recommend reading the debate held in Westminster, where a very high standard of analysis was on display, and where, *mirabile dictu*, euthanasia was rejected by a very large majority. We must alert people that this is coming down the line; we must begin this conversation with our people now, before others frame the terms of the discussion.

On the issues of euthanasia and abortion, there are supports available from pro life groups who will come to



Government Buildings (Dáil Éireann) on Kildare Street, Dublin

parishes, give the life arguments, and help pastors and laity in the most effective means of communication their position and responding to the other side. Make use of these people. Bring groups of parishes together if you don't have the numbers. Hold public talks from invited guests to inform your parishioners and others from the wider community. Anything which increases knowledge and sharpens wits is worthwhile doing.

What I am talking about is a kind of reactive, *ad hoc*, further education. Education is absolutely crucial. For the last couple of years before the referendum, we fought against repeal. Inevitably, our thinking had to be short-term and tactical. Now that we have lost, and lost by such a margin, we need to be strategic. Strategic thinking includes enquiring within: how is it that so many Irish men and women can complete all their schooling in Catholic schools, and yet in certain crucial respects seem untouched by the experience?

A question for all Catholics to reflect on is: What is the purpose and nature of an education that calls itself Catholic? Should an exposition of Catholic bioethics and Catholic anthropology not be part of a curriculum designed to intellectually challenge eighteen-year-olds in the way their maths or history syllabus does?

Aside from our schools, it seems that there is little or no thought given to the ongoing education of adult Catholics in the intellectual riches and traditions of their faith. I can easily find night classes in conversational Cantonese, computer programming or double-entry bookkeeping, but where should one go to

learn about Catholic art, literature or philosophy? Some may say that that is pie in the sky, irrelevant to the 'ordinary' people. But right now, Catholic families are sending their children off to university, like shorn lambs into the biting wind, hoping and praying the same child comes home. Yet, if there is to be any hope for the long term, it lies in those same young people. Given the resources and support, both intellectual and spiritual, they can be the influencers of their generation. To effect change, you do not need to be in the majority. Far from it. A few passionate, informed voices in the media, both new and traditional, can be the beginning of change.

We must, as I wrote before in these pages, take ourselves seriously. Long-term change requires long-term thinking. We are dealing in our country with what must be the greatest human rights issues of this or any generation. This demands of us both humility and honesty. Something has failed, and if it is not our ideas then perhaps it is us, what we have done and what we have failed to do.

Anyone interested in organising workshops on communicating the life position, or looking for speakers on the issue, is invited to contact the author of this piece, at michaeljdwyer.5@gmail.com

Michael Dwyer holds a master's degree in philosophy. His particular interests include political philosophy, the history of ideas and bioethics. He is Director of the Edmund Burke Institute, www.edmundburkeinstitute.ie.



Lectio Divina

When God Finally Responds (Job 38:1-4)

Lectio: What the Word says in itself

At first glance, this short passage may appear to have little to offer in terms of reflection and prayer. However, it is far from inconsequential. Firstly, note the speaker: none less than God himself. This is not the first time the Lord speaks in the book of Job. Earlier, two conversations with Satan resulted in the Lord allowing Job to undergo tremendous suffering and the loss of his children, his servants, his livestock, and his health.

As Job and three friends engage in a lengthy discussion about Job's situation and about God, the Lord remains silent. Despite an initial stoic piety – he blesses the Lord – Job is far from polite in what he says of God and to God. His words are highly censorious and critical of God, at times bordering on blasphemy. Over the course of his speeches, the intensity of Job's assault grows, as he increasingly loses faith in God's character, justice, and judgement. Nevertheless, he does not forgo relationship with God but continues to seek it, repeatedly calling on God to answer him. Yet only now, very late in the book, does the Lord respond.

What is the Lord's response? The text relates that the Lord answers Job. In fact, the Lord's opening gambit is to pose a question, make an accusation, and issue a challenge. As the divine speech continues, the Lord will pose rhetorical question after rhetorical question.

Meditatio: What the Word says to me/us

What matters above all in this passage is that the Lord finally responds. As is the case elsewhere in the Bible, this may have greater significance than what he will say. We meet the Lord who has heard Job's pleas and now responds. That the Lord speaks is important. In so doing, he offers a reply to Job who has repeatedly sought as much. We can imagine that the same is true for us, that the Lord does hear and will respond.



The Lord Answering Job out of the Whirlwind. From the Butts set.

Noteworthy, too, is this account of God's appearance, this theophany. Although the Lord approaches him, Job cannot see the Lord; God is hidden, as it were, in and by the whirlwind. The Lord meets Job, not when Job demands it, but in the Lord's own time. Furthermore, the Lord answers in his way, sidestepping Job's questions to focus on creation and the Lord's knowledge and control of its majestic vastness and complexity.

Notwithstanding this, God bridges the gap between them and relates to Job. That God does so appears to satisfy Job, even though no answer to his 'why' is forthcoming. Instead, Job is answered, in some sense, by his encounter with, and experience of, the Lord. Job is led to the Answerer rather than to the answers. One might ask whether explanations would be of help here. I suggest not, that they would be of little benefit to Job. Similarly for ourselves, it is relationship with God, the realisation that God is neither distant nor uncaring, that helps us in difficult times, and to a greater extent than any answers that God might offer to our anguished 'why.'

Oratio: What the Word leads me/us to say

How might one pray with this passage of Scripture? To begin with, we might find encouragement in recognising that the

Lord does answer, that the Lord will respond.

Aware of the manner in which Job has spoken to the Lord, might we allow our prayer to be likewise? Perhaps, like Job, we might address God openly and honestly. Without fear of being rejected by God, we might voice our struggles and our doubts. This, too, is prayer. If, like Job, you were to express your deepest feelings to God, what might you say? What do you need to say to God?

Secondly, we might look to the Lord's words. God, the Creator, the one who 'laid the foundation of the earth,' is the one to whom we turn in

prayer, the one we will encounter. Contemplating God's creation instils a sense of wonder and awe regarding God, that can move us to prayer beyond words.

Contemplatio: Being transformed by the Word

The Lord's words here mark the beginning of an encounter with the Creator that is, for Job, somehow transformative. Like Job, allow yourself to be changed by God's words.

Actio: Putting the Word into Practice

Taken on a virtual tour of the universe, Job sees reality from the Lord's point of view. Look afresh at our world. Permit this to lead you to gratitude both for the world and for the invitation to relationship with the God who made it.

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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



Easter Days

Easter: Many languages call the feast of the Resurrection of the Lord by a title derived from the Latin or Greek *Pascha*; for example, French: *Pâques*, Italian: *Pasqua*, Russian: *Paskha* and our own: *Cáisc*. Some languages call it The Great Night or Great Day, for example, Polish: *Wielkanoc*. The English word 'Easter' is from the Old English, *Eastre* (or *Eostre*), a goddess of spring, celebrated at the vernal equinox. Reference is made to the Venerable Bede, monk of Jarrow, biblical scholar and first English historian, who died 735. He wrote of the celebration of Christ's resurrection at *Eosturmonath*, the month of *Eastre*. It might be added that another explanation takes account of the German, *Ostern*, suggesting that the root lies in a word which means resurrection.

Easter Sunday: 12 April, the Sunday after the full moon on or after 21 March, as decided by the Council of Nicaea in the year 325. 21 March is the ecclesiastical dating of the spring equinox. Eastern Christians, using the Julian Calendar, celebrate Easter a week later.

Octave of Easter: Octave means keeping the feast for eight days. By the 4th century, Easter and Pentecost had octaves and later, by 8th century, also Christmas and Epiphany. But this was followed by what has been called an invasion of octaves, when many feasts, including those of saints, had octaves. In some cases the celebration of each octave day was a repetition of the feast. In a reform of the calendar in 1955, only three feasts were given octaves: Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. The octave following Pentecost was abolished in 1969, so that the feast, ending Easter time, is followed by the continuation of Ordinary Time.

Fifty Days: While Easter is one day and an octave of eight days, it is also a fifty day feast, ending with Pentecost. The season of Easter becomes, in the words of St Augustine, one 'great Sunday.'

Sundays of Easter: In the past we called the Sundays following Easter Sunday Sundays *after* Easter. Now, to underline the unity of the fifty days, the Sundays are Sundays *of* Easter, beginning with Easter Sunday, the first Sunday.

Easter Saturday: The Saturday of Easter week, 18 April this year, the Saturday within the octave of Easter, which is followed by the Second Sunday of Easter. When Easter is seen as a weekend, a holiday weekend period, the Saturday after Good Friday and before Easter Sunday is mistakenly called Easter Saturday. Let us continue to call it by its proper name, Holy Saturday.

Good Friday Reproaches

I am writing this a day after attending the premiere performance of a new setting of the *Reproaches* by Dr Martin O'Leary, Department of Music, Maynooth University. It was commissioned by Maynooth College, celebrating 225 years of sacred music.

The *Reproaches*, or *Improperia*, addressed by the Lord to the people, may be sung at the Adoration of the Cross in Good Friday's celebration of the Passion of the Lord. The first part comes from the ninth century, the text based on Old Testament passages about the exodus and the crucifixion. The three verses include some Greek lines, called the *Trisagion* (thrice-holy), with their English translation. The *Trisagion*, 'Holy is God, Holy and Almighty, Holy and Immortal One, have mercy on us,' may date

back to the early fifth century, and is chanted in all Eastern liturgies before the readings. With the *Kyrie* of Mass, they are the only surviving Greek words in the Roman Rite. The second part dates from the eleventh century; it is also inspired by scripture references recalling in short couplets God's interventions in the story of his people, and having the refrain: 'My people, what have I done to you? Or how have I grieved you? Answer me!'

The Akathistos Hymn

The most celebrated Marian hymn of the Byzantine Church is sung during Lent, in Greek practice at Compline on the first five Fridays of the season, and in the Russian Church on the Saturday of the fifth week at Matins. Called *akathistos* (non-sitting, as all stand while it is recited), the hymn is attributed to St Romanos the Melodist and was composed in the early 6th century. It has twenty-four stanzas, alternately long and short. The long stanzas, called *ikos*, are a series of acclamations, each beginning with 'Hail' or 'Rejoice,' recalling the angel's greeting at the Annunciation and ending with the words, 'Hail, Bride without bridegroom' (or in other translations, 'Bride unwedded,' 'Bride and Maiden ever-pure'). The shorter stanzas (*kontakion*) end with 'Alleluia,' still used during Lent. The first twelve stanzas take up the narrative of the Infancy Gospels from the Annunciation to the Presentation in the Temple, while the last twelve have a more doctrinal character. The final *kontakion* is a prayer to Mary, Mother of God:

'O Mother of all praise, who hast borne the Word, the Holiest of all Holies:
accepting this our offering, deliver from every ill
and from the punishment to come all those who cry to thee;
Alleluia!'

In the Eastern Churches, Lent began this year on 2 March, and Easter Sunday is 19 April.

How many readings at the Vigil?

Let the answer bear in mind the words of the Missal, that the reading of the Word of God is a fundamental part of the Easter Vigil. The readings 'give an account of the outstanding deeds of the history of salvation, which the faithful are helped to meditate calmly upon by the singing of the responsorial psalm, by a silent pause and by the celebrant's prayer ... Thus, the Church, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, explains Christ's paschal mystery. Consequently, where this is possible, all the readings should be read in order that the Easter Vigil, which demands that it be somewhat prolonged, be respected at all costs' (*Paschale Solemnitatis*, On Preparing and Celebrating the Paschal Feasts).

Seven readings from the Old Testament, chosen from the law and the prophets, and two readings from the New Testament (Rm 6:3-11 and the Gospel) are given in the Lectionary. 'Where more serious pastoral circumstances demand it, the number of readings from the Old Testament may be reduced... At least three readings should be read from the Old Testament, both from the law and from the prophets, and their respective responsorial psalms should be sung. Never, moreover, should the reading of chapter 14 of Exodus with its canticle be omitted' (*Missal*).

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

5 April 2020

Readings

The first reading. The striking characteristic of God's faithful servant is that he does not resist evil, but nor is he cowed or diverted by it. He does not meet anger with anger, or hatred with hatred, but remains faithful in the face of opposition.

The second reading. The Lord Jesus, in his passion, followed a U-shaped path: from equality with God, he descended all the way to death on a cross. From that lowest possible point, he returned to glory, a glory that every creature will acclaim.

The Gospel. Matthew's telling of the story of Jesus' passion begins with a betrayal and ends with the sealing of a tomb. These are the moments that bookend God's mighty works in his Son.

General Intercessions

Introduction

God the Father worked powerfully in Jesus' passion. Confident that he is at work in all our circumstances, we now confidently make our prayers.

Intercessions

1. As the Church enters this most solemn week of the year,
we pray that she may draw strength from her contemplation
of what Christ has undergone and done for us.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
2. For those whose sufferings give them a share in Christ's passion,
and for those who seek to help them carry their crosses.
May Christ be present in the helpers and in the helpless.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
3. That this, our parish community,
may be renewed by the celebration of the
Holy Week and Easter liturgies.
May we touch our Lord, hear his word and see his face.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
4. Christ assumed the condition of a slave.
May he intercede for those caught up in contemporary forms of slavery
such as trafficking, forced labour and economic injustice.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
5. On this day on which the Gospel ends not with the empty tomb
but with the sealed tomb,
we pray that all our dead may, by Christ's glorious resurrection,
be freed from the tomb, so as to enjoy eternal life.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Conclusion

Father, whose Son was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, we thank and praise you for the priceless riches of our faith. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Liturgical Music

Eucharistic Prayer Acclamations

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

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 50: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? – Responsorial Psalms for Sundays and Major Feast Days/Cantate/Liturgical Hymns Old & New

Gospel Acclamation

Sing *Lenten Acclamation* together with *verse* of Passion Sunday.

Songs

Hosanna – *Gather/Laudate/Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Celebration Hymnal/In Caelo*
Palm Procession – *Gather/Laudate*
Hail Redeemer – *Veritas Hymnal/Hosanna/Laudate/Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Celebration Hymnal*
My God, My God – *Gather*
All Glory Laud and Honour – *Veritas Hymnal/Hosanna/Laudate/Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Celebration Hymnal*
The Servant King – *Laudate/Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Celebration Hymnal/Feasts & Seasons/In Caelo*

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Editor

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

5 April 2020

Homily Notes • Gospel: Matthew 26:14–27:66

If asked the question, 'What do you associate with Palm Sunday?' I suspect many people would respond with something like: 'It is the day we get palm and we have a long gospel at Mass.' That is a simple but accurate summary of the liturgy on this day.

Palm Sunday is the beginning of Holy Week, and the day we commemorate the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem for the last time. It was a triumphant journey, with 'great crowds' spreading their cloaks on the road and 'cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in his path,' as St Matthew tells us in today's gospel. When we hold the palm today, we too honour and worship Jesus, the Son of God. Today's ceremony reminds us of *the priority of worship*. In every Mass, we worship almighty God and implore his protection and blessings through his son Jesus Christ.

'The long Gospel' is the account of the Passion of Jesus, this year taken from St Matthew. We will also hear St John's account, on Good Friday. Perhaps on Palm Sunday we are given the opportunity to reflect on the Passion in a more relaxed way, without the intensity of the Easter Triduum. Raymond E. Brown says: 'We readers or hearers should participate by asking ourselves how we would have stood in relation to the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. With which character in the narrative would I identify myself? The disciples who fled from danger ... Peter denying Jesus ... even Judas betraying him ... Pilate trying to avoid a decision between good and evil ... or might I have stood among the religious leaders who condemned Jesus?'

Whatever individual or group we might identify with, it is good to remember the teaching of St Thomas Aquinas, that 'Jesus by his passion merited salvation not only for himself, but for all who are his members as well.' The passion of Jesus was an essential part of our salvation; in spite of our weaknesses, he has enabled us, one day, to worship God eternally in Heaven.

Very Rev James Murphy PP, Rosslare, Co Wexford

The Deep End • 'In truth this was a son of God'

What was it that prompted this exclamation from the Roman centurion? In the Passion account we hear today, these words are spoken just after Jesus dies on the cross. Matthew's Gospel tells us that great signs accompanied his death. The veil of the Temple is torn, the earth quakes, and tombs are opened – all signs that point to who Jesus really is.

But when we look at what preceded these signs, the words of the centurion take on new meaning. Jesus has suffered the most horrific and degrading death possible, only a few days but a million miles away from the celebrated figure who entered Jerusalem to the cheers of the crowd. The broken body on the cross does not look like a saviour. The man who quietly submits to mockery and torture does not act like a worldly king. The abandoned man who cries out, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken

me?' does not appear to have any power. In the world's eyes, he is a failure.

Yet, this broken figure is God. When God became human, he allied himself with the weakest and most vulnerable – from his humble beginnings in poverty to his death as a criminal. When we talk in the church about having solidarity with those who are poor or vulnerable or abandoned, we are directly following the example of Jesus. Not only did he extend love and compassion to all those at the margins of society, he became a marginal person himself. And it is at his very lowest point that he is first recognised as 'son of God.'

It is worth asking ourselves: if Jesus were here today, where would we find him?

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For Your Newsletter:

Seeing your Life through the Lens of the Gospel

Matthew 26:14–27:66

The account of the Passion is a vivid story with a variety of characters and much action. To enter into the passage we can read the story slowly and see if we can identify with different characters. Also, any one scene can provide us with much food for reflection and prayer. Keep in mind that one of the aims in reflecting on the passage is to discover the *good news* the story has for us. Here are some pointers for prayer.

1. Jesus is revealed as Messiah and Son of God, not with a display of human power, but as one who was prepared to suffer unto death to show us how our God loves us. How does the Passion story speak to you as a revelation of how God loves you? When has the willingness of another person to go to great lengths on your behalf been an eye-opener regarding their love for you?
2. Jesus gives us an example of patient endurance and faithfulness in suffering. Suffering is something we all encounter. It is not something that anyone likes, but sometimes we cope with it better than others. What have you found helps you to cope better with suffering?
3. As you read through the narrative of the Passion, where do you find yourself resonating with a character in the action? Is there any message there for you that is life-giving?

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Easter Day of the Lord's Resurrection

12 April 2020

Readings (the reflections and prayers which follow relate to the Easter Vigil)

The Third Reading (Exodus 14:15-15:1). The Israelites were saved by passage through water, anticipating the salvation of Christ's disciples through the waters of baptism.

The Epistle (Romans 6:3-11). The death of our Saviour is the heart of Christian living; in baptism we were symbolically drowned, so that we might actually die to all that is not of Christ.

The Gospel. Why was the stone rolled away from a tomb that the Risen Jesus had already left? Not so that he could get out, but so that his followers could get in and see that the tomb was empty, that death had been overcome.

General Intercessions

Introduction

On this Easter night, our spirits are lifted by the joy and hope of the resurrection. Let us now raise our hearts in confident prayer.

Intercessions

1. Just as this vigil began with the lighting of a new Easter flame, let us pray that through the ministry of the Church, God might rekindle the flame of Easter faith in us and in all his people.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
2. Through the prophet Isaiah, God promises to make an everlasting covenant with his people. May God bring healing and hope to a humanity riven and oppressed by concerns of various kinds.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
3. That the spirit of rebellion against God's laws and wisdom may be overcome by God's promise, through the prophet Ezekiel, of a new heart and a new spirit.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
4. Just as the liturgy of the word tonight began with the account of God's good creation, we pray that our concerns for the good of our environment might be rooted in, and directed by, the conviction that God blesses all our efforts to seek what is good.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
5. On this night on which we celebrate our Saviour's victory over death, we confidently entrust our deceased loved ones to his death-defeating grace.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Conclusion

Father, we thank you for your providence, which has brought us to this Easter night, and for our faith, which has enabled us to celebrate it with joy and hope. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Liturgical Music

Eucharistic Prayer Acclamations

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

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 117: This day was made by the Lord; we rejoice and are glad –

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

Gospel Acclamation

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

Songs

Christ Has Died – www.liturgy-ireland.ie

This Is The Day – *Gather/Laudate/*

Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Seinn

Alleluia/Feasts & Seasons

Jesus Christ Is Risen Today – *Veritas*

Hymnal/Hosanna/Laudate/Liturgical

Hymns Old & New/Celebration Hymnal/

In Caelo

Christ is Alive – *Alleluia Amen/Hosanna/*

Laudate/Celebration Hymnal

Holy Gifts For Holy People – *Laudate/*

In Caelo

Surrexit Christus Dominus – Feasts &

Seasons 2

An tAiseiri – *Veritas Hymnal/In Caelo*

Sprinkling Rite – *Seinn Alleluia/Gather/*

Mass of St Mel/www.liturgy-ireland.ie

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Editor

Easter Day of the Lord's Resurrection

12 April 2020

Homily Notes • Gospel: John 20:1-9

Yesterday, we commemorated the death of Jesus. Jesus died on the Cross because he came into conflict with the authorities of his day. They were unable to accept all the good that he was doing. All that Jesus did on earth was the work of his Father. God the Father created us, but we continually disobeyed him. Throughout history, people ignored the prophets he sent to teach us how to live. God gave us a final chance when he sent his Son among us. And when some of us rejected his Son Jesus Christ, God the Father decided that he would prove to us, once and for all, that we could not continue to disobey Him. When Jesus rose from the dead, he proved that the power of God is greater than anything known to humanity. The peoples of the world could no longer ignore God. But above all, by raising His Son from the dead, God the Father was telling all generations that everything that Jesus said and did was right. At the end of his earthly life, Jesus triumphed over sin and death, and so made it possible for us to do the same at the end of our lives.

The Easter Vigil reflects this reality in words and symbols. The readings from the Old Testament talk about God creating the world, and about him saving and looking after his people. The Gospel tonight is an account of the resurrection.

The Easter Candle represents Jesus, the light of the world. The light from the Easter Candle, and from your candles which were lit from it, rid the church of darkness, just as Jesus, through his resurrection, rid the world of the darkness of evil and death.

Water is essential for life. It cleans, it purifies, and it gives life. The blessing of the Easter water reminds us of the greatest source of life: God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. At the beginning of our lives, we were baptized, christened, made Christ-like with water. On this, the most important night in the Church calendar, we use water to renew for ourselves the promises made for us at baptism.

We end our ceremony tonight with the Eucharist, our most tangible way of making contact with the risen Christ here on earth.

Very Rev James Murphy PP, Rosslare, Co Wexford

The Deep End • A hopeful silence

*This isn't
a contest but the doorway
into thanks, and a silence in which
another voice may speak.*

In Mary Oliver's poem 'Praying,' she speaks about the importance of being still, paying attention, and making space for God.

When you entered the church for the Easter Vigil last night, you may have noticed a whole lot of emptiness. The holy water fonts were empty, as was the tabernacle. The lights were out and the church was in darkness, waiting. And into that darkness came the Paschal fire, spreading through the church as the light of Christ was passed from person to person.

Today, we hear the Gospel of the empty tomb. When the disciples witness the empty tomb, it is a sign that Jesus has risen. Into the emptiness and darkness of Good Friday, Jesus brings light. Into our

fears, Jesus brings hope. Into our hatred, he brings love.

We hear a lot of talk nowadays about mental health, about the importance of talking and giving our loved ones time and space to talk. Our families and communities should strive to be places of tolerance, welcome and solace. I heard a lovely phrase recently: 'I'm holding space for you.' It is a gentle way of offering prayer and support. It implies being present for someone in their worry or grief, accepting and not judging.

When we pray, God holds space for us, and we in turn offer him 'a silence in which another voice may speak.' We can also offer that space to others, whether as individuals or as a church, by ensuring we are a place of welcome and hope. After all, we are 'Easter people,' imbued with the gentle presence of the risen Jesus.

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For Your Newsletter:

Seeing your Life through the Lens of the Gospel

John 20:1-9

1. The disciples are in a state of shock and suffering from a traumatic loss. Jesus, the one in whom they had placed so much hope, has been murdered and buried. Then, before they have time to recover, another shock comes – the body of Jesus is missing. Have you had experiences in which one tragedy or crisis follows quickly after another? How did you cope? What, or who, sustained you then?
2. Mary and Peter, and possibly others, came and discovered that the tomb was empty. The part of the story we have in this text gives no explanations of what has happened. They are left in a state of bewilderment, 'for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.' Have you been in that kind of situation, faced with events you cannot explain, possibly events which have dashed your hopes in another person, or in God? What has that been like for you?
3. In spite of the lack of explanation, the beloved disciple 'saw and believed'. Have there been times when others have done something that you could not understand, and which they could not explain at the time, and yet you believed that all was not as it seemed? Times when you decided to trust in spite of the evidence? Have there been times when others have shown this kind of faith in you, when you were not able to offer satisfactory explanations, and all you could say was 'trust me'? Where have you found life in such experiences?

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Second Sunday of Easter

19 April 2020 • Divine Mercy Sunday

Readings

The first reading. It would not be long before the infant Church felt the first cold winds of persecution, but this reading from Acts describes the Church's honeymoon, a time of unity, joy and peace. Both times are caught up in God's providence.

The second reading. If we seek an anthem, a refrain, a truly Christian 'mantra' for this season of Easter, we need look no further than the first line of this reading: 'Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

The Gospel. The first word of the risen Jesus is 'peace.' His first action is show his disciples the wounds through which he has secured that peace. He then appoints the disciples to mission, giving them the power of his Spirit.

General Intercessions

Introduction

On this Easter day, also designated the day of Divine Mercy, let us be confident in making our prayers to the Father of mercies.

Intercessions

1. That the theme of mercy,
insistently proclaimed by our Holy Father, Pope Francis,
may truly shape the Church's mission and action.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
2. That we and all believers may recognise
that the righteous demands of our faith are, themselves,
a manifestation of God's mercy.
May we ever seek, not cheap grace, but the strength to live the gospel.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
3. That the Lord may bless our country,
that the family may be preserved and treasured
as the cornerstone of our society,
and that many wise and courageous people
may be drawn to public office.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
4. May God look kindly on the needs of his children,
especially the vulnerable young and the vulnerable elderly.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
5. For our deceased,
that they may encounter a kindly judge
and come to share in Christ's resurrection.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Conclusion

Father of Mercies, may we see and understand how we have been blessed by the faith we celebrate during this Easter time. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Liturgical Music

Eucharistic Prayer Acclamations

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

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 117: Give thanks to the Lord for his is good, for his love has no end –

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

Gospel Acclamation

Sing **Alleluia** together with the **verse** of the 2nd Sunday of Easter.

Songs

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

Alleluia/Feasts & Seasons

Sing To The Mountains – *Glory & Praise/Gather/Laudate/Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Celebration Hymnal*

An Easter People – *ICMA 2013*

My New Commandment – *ICMA 2013*

Surrexit Christus Dominus – *Feasts & Seasons 2*

Sprinkling Rite – *Seinn Alleluia/Gather/Mass of St Mel/www.liturgy-ireland.ie*

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Editor

Second Sunday of Easter

19 April 2020 • Divine Mercy Sunday

Homily Notes • Gospel: John 20:19-31

Today's Gospel contains further proof of the resurrection. It gives us an account of Jesus giving the apostles the power to forgive sins. And it reminds us of how strong our faith needs to be.

I recall a retreat master saying on one occasion: 'the work of the priest is about setting people free.' When Jesus appeared to the apostles on the evening of Easter Sunday, that is what he did for them – he set them free, and he gave them the power to do the same for others.

One of the greatest deceptions of sin is that it appears to give us greater freedom, yet it does the opposite: it takes away our freedom and it increases our fear and anxiety. When we sin, we compromise ourselves, frequently making ourselves dependant on others, and so we lose much of our independence and freedom.

Jesus wants to release us from the slavery of sin, and that is why he gave the apostles and their successors the power to forgive sins. Today, we receive the forgiveness of Christ through the sacrament of reconciliation. We should see this sacrament as an invitation from Jesus to be free from our sins, and an opportunity to restore our freedom.

In today's Gospel, Jesus also reminded the apostles of the importance of their faith. St Thomas was representing all of us. He was expressing the doubts and voicing the uncertainties which test our faith from time to time. Faith does not always come easily. Sometimes, believing is not a problem, but at times it can be a real challenge.

It is worth remembering that the faith of the apostles was no overnight experience. It was something gradual, which increased as they became more intimate with Jesus. The same is true of our faith. It will grow and deepen, provided we pray and have contact with Jesus.

As we continue to celebrate the season of Easter, let us pray that our faith in Jesus will continue to grow, so that we, too, can say with the conviction of St Thomas: 'My Lord, and my God.'

Very Rev James Murphy PP, Rosslare, Co Wexford

The Deep End • People of light

Watching the news or reading the newspapers can be hugely upsetting these days. Often it seems like there is nothing but bad news. People are suffering all over the world due to unjust economic systems, cruel political regimes, greed, environmental degradation ... the list goes on. In our own country, thousands of people are homeless, and despite much discussion of the problem, the situation does not seem to be improving. Hateful rhetoric is becoming more widespread, and the lines dividing people more pronounced.

Of course it can be easy to lose hope, and for our faith to go through shaky patches. With so much suffering in the world, it is no wonder that we sometimes ask the question: where is God in all of this?

In today's Gospel, we meet a doubter, Thomas. As one of Jesus' disciples, he has been through the mill. Their great friend and teacher, Jesus, the one who promised

them the world, has been brutally killed, his awful suffering is fresh in their minds. Their own lives are in danger, so they are lying low. It is a time of despair, so it is little wonder that he does not dare to believe the other disciples when they say they have seen the Lord. When death and despair are all around, we can be like Thomas. We are all at sea, afraid of what the future will bring.

Jesus greets his disciples with the simple blessing: 'Peace be with you.' In their fear and despair, he comes and stands among them, calming their troubled hearts. The Resurrection of Jesus shows us there is hope. We are called not only to experience the risen Jesus, but to be people of the Resurrection. Where there is darkness, Jesus calls us to be people of light.

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For Your Newsletter:

Seeing your Life through the Lens of the Gospel

John 20:19-31

1. 'Peace be with you' was the greeting of Jesus on meeting his frightened apostles. Who has come to you bringing peace at times when you were frightened? For whom have you been an agent of peace?
2. Thomas, doubting and questioning, is possibly a person with whom we can identify. What part have doubts and questions played on your faith journey? How has your faith been strengthened by such moments?
3. Note the way Jesus dealt with Thomas. He did not give out because Thomas doubted. He took him where he was and led him along to see the truth of his resurrection. Who has been that kind of a teacher for you, gently taking you where you were and leading you on to a deeper knowledge of some truth about life? For whom have you been that kind of teacher?
4. 'Blessed are they who have not seen and yet believed.' That requires great trust. Perhaps you have had the experience of being trusted without having had to prove every step along the way. What was it like to be trusted in that way? Who have you been able to trust in a similar manner?

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Third Sunday of Easter

26 April 2020

Readings

The first reading. 'You had Jesus crucified, but God raised him up.' This powerful statement runs like a refrain through the early preaching of the apostles. Where human wickedness brought death, God has brought life.

The second reading. St Peter insists that we are a diaspora, a people 'living away from home.' As such, we are to be 'scrupulously careful,' and mindful of how our membership of God's kingdom calls us to live.

The Gospel. What was it that led two sad and weary disciples to turn right around, to retrace their steps with joy and enthusiasm? It was the encounter with Christ, in his word and in the breaking of bread.

General Intercessions

Introduction

Let us now raise our minds and hearts in prayer to God, the giver and the lover of life.

Intercessions

1. That the resurrection of Jesus
may always be the cornerstone of the Church's teaching and preaching.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
2. That our Lord's victory over death
may inspire his followers to courage
in the face of opposition and misunderstanding,
and that Christians may not be despondent
in the face of cultural pressure to change or abandon gospel truths.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
3. That Christians may be freed of false optimism,
but instead find authentic hope in and through the Cross of Christ.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
4. For those whose lives have been broken
by the cruelty or disregard of others.
May they find justice and healing,
and may those who with cruelty
be brought to their senses and to justice.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.
5. To the God of mercy and of life, we raise the dead in prayer,
that they may enter into eternal life.
Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Conclusion

Father, may your power, which we have acknowledged in our prayers, be constantly at work in our lives. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Liturgical Music

Eucharistic Prayer Acclamations

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

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 15: Show us, Lord, the path of life –
*Responsorial Psalms for Sundays and
Major Feast Days/Cantate/Liturgical
Hymns Old & New*

Gospel Acclamation

Sing **Alleluia** together with the **verse** of
the 3rd Sunday of Easter.

Songs

Jesus Christ is Risen Today – *Veritas
Hymnal/Hosanna/Laudate/Liturgical
Hymns Old & New/Celebration Hymnal/
In Caelo*
This Is The Day – *Gather/Laudate/
Liturgical Hymns Old & New/Celebration
Hymnal/Feasts & Seasons*
Now The Green Blade Rises – *Veritas
Hymnal/Hosanna/Gather/Laudate/
In Caelo/Liturgical Hymns Old & New/
Celebration Hymnal*
Preserve Me God – *Alleluia Amen/
Hosanna*
An tAiseiri – *Veritas Hymnal/In Caelo*
Christ Has Died – www.liturgy-ireland.ie

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Editor

Third Sunday of Easter

26 April 2020

Homily Notes • Gospel: Luke 24:13-35

Since Easter Sunday, the Gospel readings have been giving us accounts of the appearances of Jesus to his disciples after the resurrection. These accounts tell us that the apostles were frightened, and that they had doubts even when Jesus appeared among them.

This tells us two things: first, that the apostles had failed to understand all that Jesus had told them and explained to them about himself before he died on the cross; second, that the acceptance of the resurrection by the apostles depended as much on their faith, as on the physical appearances of Jesus.

Our own experience is similar to that of the apostles. None of us have seen the risen Christ in person. Yet we are asked to believe in God the Father and his son Jesus Christ who died on the cross and rose from the dead for us. And so we, too, have to rely on faith to believe in the resurrection. We can never take our faith for granted, and we need to continually strengthen it.

Our faith in God will be strong only if we have communication with him through prayer. As with human relationships, if we stop talking to God we will quickly lose contact with him and he will mean very little to us.

In today's Gospel, we see that it was during prayer that the apostles recognised Jesus, even though he had been with them on their seven-mile journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus. St Luke tells us that they recognised him at the breaking of bread. If we have failed to recognise Jesus in the past, we now have the opportunity of meeting him as we break bread in this Eucharist. We can ask him to deepen our faith during this Mass, and to help us to recognise what he wants us to do in life, by getting to know him better through the Scriptures and our celebration of the sacraments. We pray also that others may recognise us as followers of Jesus and be encouraged by our Christian living.

Very Rev James Murphy PP, Rosslare, Co Wexford

The Deep End • In the breaking of bread

Over the past few months, a series of shocking stories have hit the headlines relating to homelessness in our country.

A young homeless woman in her 20s died in emergency accommodation. An elderly woman was found soaking wet after sleeping outside in the rain. A homeless man was injured when his tent was lifted up by machinery as part of a clean-up. And who could forget the heart-breaking image of a five-year-old boy eating dinner on a Dublin street?

Taken together, these snapshots highlight the homelessness crisis facing us. Of course, many charities and volunteers do their best to support people by offering shelter, food, supplies and friendship to homeless people in their communities. Their efforts highlight the kindness at the heart of our society.

Yet, according to one charity, 'even on your best night it's nothing but a plaster or a band-aid on what is just a horrific wound.' Our society seems to be rigged against increasing numbers of people.

How can we talk about economic prosperity when so many are suffering?

Bishop Alan McCuckian recently wrote: 'The dignity which we recognise in every person must be reflected in the reality of life in our society... safe, affordable and appropriate housing is a human right.'

Today's Gospel highlights community. The story hinges around one sentence: 'their eyes were opened and they recognised him.' In sharing a meal, the disciples recognised Jesus, but they had already welcomed this stranger as a friend.

As Christians, we see Jesus in the stranger on the road, in community, and in the breaking of bread. While it is important to offer as much practical help as we can, we must also speak out against injustice and anything that damages the dignity of the most vulnerable in our society.

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For Your Newsletter:

Seeing your Life through the Lens of the Gospel

Luke 24:13-35

1. Jesus joined the despondent disciples and listened to them. 'We had hoped....' When you have been upset or disappointed, who has joined you along the road? To whom have you been able to pour out your heart? Who was a 'Jesus person' to you, listening to you in respectful silence? To whom have you been a Jesus person?
2. Jesus then helps them to see things in another light, by opening the scriptures to them. When did you have the experience of finding your heart 'burning within you' with new hope for the future? Who or what helped you to change after a setback?
3. The disciples invite Jesus to join them at the table; then there follows a recognition of who he is. We meet many people on the road of life. Usually we meet and pass on. Occasionally we meet someone whom we invite into our homes, into our hearts, in a deeper way. In what way, in such relationships, have you experienced the presence of God or of Jesus?
4. After Jesus had gone, the disciples went to bring the good news to others. When have you met others who told you what happened to them along their road? What effect did this sharing have on you? When have you done this with others? When was such a conversation 'good news' for you or others?

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5 Aibreán 2020 Domhnach na Páise agus na Pailme

Réamhrá

Inniu, cuirimid tús leis an tSeachtain Bheannaithe, ceilúradh Páis, Báis agus Aiserí Ar dTiarna. Cuireadh fáilte ríoga roimh losa ag dul isteach i lárúsaileim dó, ach sciúrsáil agus bás a bhí le fulaingt aige i gceann cúpla lá. Tá an scéal go léir léirithe sa liotuige inniu agus i rith na seachtaine romhainn.

Smaoineamh

Le linn ár dTiarna a bheith ar an dtalamh seo, bhí daoine ann ná raibh sásta leis. Chuireadar diamhasla agus scanall ina leith, agus ní raibh doicheall orthu ansin breithiúntas an bháis a thabhairt air. Ina shaol poiblí is minic a thug losa fogha faoi dhreamanna daoine a raibh a meon aigne dúnta, a raibh mór-níos-fiú agus cur l gceill ag gabháil leo, a cheap go raibh an ceart acu féin i gconáil.

Ach inniu táimid ag smaoineamh agus ag ceiliúradh grá De dúinn nuair a chuaigh Ár dTiarna isteach i lárúsaileim chun a bheatha a thabhairt ar ár son. Bhí fhios aige go soileir cad a theastaigh on Athair uaidh. Thóg Sé ár bpeacaí féin agus peacaí uile an tsaoil air féin, mar theastaigh uaidh go mbeimis aonhathaithe leis go deo i mbeatha na Tríonóide. Agus é ar an dtalamh seo mar dhuine, léirigh sé a ghrá duinn, lena thuiscint caoin, trócaireach ar nádúr an duine.

Ach ná cuireadh ár bpeacaí féin eagla ro-mhór nó lag-mhisneach orainn. 'Se a theastaigh on Árd Tiarna go háirithe ná go mbeimis ionraic, firinneach, ina láthair. Níor mhaith leis bréag-chraifeacht na mustracht, Agus sa deireadh, d'fhulaing sé an bás féin as ucht a ghrá dúinn. Deirimis mar sin an tSeachtain Bheannaithe seo a chéiliúradh le glaine ar gcroí, le buíochas agus le deabhóid.

Guí an Phobail

1. Guimís go gceilúraimid fein an tSeachtain Bheannaithe seo lé creideamh agus le deabhóid. Siúlaimis leis mar cháirde. A Thiarna éist linn.
2. Guimís do gach éinne atá baistithe mar lucht leanúna Chríost, go háirithe

daoine atá fuarchúiseach ina gcreideamh. A Thiarna éist linn.

3. Guimís daoibh seo atá faoi ghéarleanuint agus ag fulaingt de bharr a gcreideamh. A Thiarna éist linn.
4. Guimís ar son daoine a bhfuil an saol ag fáill dian orthu de bharr tubaistí, easpa sláinte no i n-aon tslí eile agus go háirithe daoine a bhfuil aithne againn féin orthu. A Thiarna éist linn.
5. Guimís ar son anamacha na marbh, go háirithe ár ngaolta, ár gcomharsain, ár gcairde agus daoine a fuair bás le deanaí. Go dtuga Dia sonas na bhflaitheas doibh. A Thiarna éist linn.

Cuirimis na hachainíocha seo agus aon achainí pearsanta dár gcuid féin i láthair Dé agus sinn ag impí idir-ghuí na Maighdine Muire, 'Se do Bheatha a Mhuire ...' tré Chríost ár dTiarna.

An Phaidir

I Geitseamainí dó, agus allas fola ag sileadh leis, ghuígh losa chun an Athar. Deirimis féin anois guí leis an bpaidir a mhúin Ár Slánaitheoir duinn, 'Ár nAthair ...'

Macnamh

'Ar fhulaingístrí-na a Ríghil ard na gcomhacht, Ní thuigeann im'smaointe a shuíomhná a thrácht i gcoir. 'Le go radh ghoinnimhe do chroí 's do chneá-sa a stóir, Do bhrostaigh na mílte saoi go sámh l gcoróin' – Tadgh Gaelach Ó Suilleabháin

12 Aibreán 2020 Domhnach Cásca

Réamhrá

Tá coinneal na Cásca ag lasadh go caithréimeach inniu, mar shamhail d' árd Tiarna atá aiséirithe ó na mairbh. Tá buaic ár gceiliúradh creidimh go léir i rith na bliana agus i rith na Seachtaine Beannaithe, sa bféile seo, Domhach Cásca. Bíodh áthas agus gáirdeas orainn.

Smaoineamh

Is mó áit ar fuaid na tíre inniu go bhfuil daoine tar éis bheith ag céiliúradh Aifrinne

le breacadh an lae agus tine na Cásca ar lasadh go spleodrach amuigh faoin spéir. 'Tá an saol mór ar fad ag déanamh lúcháire faoi thuilte áthais na Casca' – sin atá luaithe i bPreafaid an Aifrinne seo. Thuig ár sinsear é sin agus shamhlaíodar go mbíodh an ghrian féin ag damhsa le háthas, ag éirí di i mbun na spéire ar an lá seo. Théadh daoine go barr cnoic fiú go moch ar maidin chun an t-iontas a fheiscint.

Bua ár d Tiarna ar a nbpeaca, ar an uile olc agus ar an mbás féin atá á cheiliúradh againn inniu. Bhí an tuama follamh ós comhair na deisceabail úd a chuaigh go dtí an láthair go moch ar maidin, agus bhuail inní mór iad toisc ná raibh an corp ann. Ach mar a dúirt an t-aingeal leo, 'Cén fáth go bhfuil sibh á lorg. Níl sé anseo. Tá sé éirithe'. Is finnéithe iad na h-aspaill agus na deisceabail a bhí leo gur fíor go deimhin go raibh an tuama follamh agus go raibh Críost aiséirithe.

Tá Críost faoi ghlóir anois. 'Sé ár gcreideamh go mbéimid go léir rannpháirteach sa bhua seo le Críost.

Cáisc shona agus bheannaithe chugainn go léir.

Guí an Phobail

1. Guimís do lucht leanúna Chríost i ngach áit. Go rabhadar aontaithe agus iad ag tabhairt fianaise ar Chríost. A Thiarna éist linn.
2. Guimís ar son ceannairí na hEaglaise. Go dtuga Dia misneach an chreidimh dóibh. A Thiarna éist linn.
3. Guimís ar son ár muintire féin sa bhaile agus i gcéin. Go gcumhdaí Dia iad faoi shláinte coirp agus anama. A Thiarna éist linn.
4. Guimís ar son gach duine atá ag lorg na firinne go hionraic, macánta. Go dtreorai Dia iad chun solas an chreidimh. A Thiarna éist linn.
5. Guimís ar son na mairbh, ár ngaolta, ár gcomharsain, ár gcáirde, agus iad san do léir go raibh páirt acu ár gcothú sa chreideamh. A Thiarna éist linn.

Agus idir-ghuí na Maighdine Muire á impí againn. Tré Chríost ár dTiarna.

An Phaidir

Inniu le fonn agus lúcháir breise, abraímis na briathra a d'fhág árSlánaitheoir againn.

Macnamh

‘Mise an t-aiseirí agus an bheatha’, a dúirt Iosa. ‘An té a chreideann ionam sa, ní bhfaighidh sé bás choiche’ (Eoin 11:25) Bíodh an creideamh agus an dóchas san againn.

19 Aibreán 2020

An Dara Domhnach den Cháisc Domhnach na Trocaire Diaga

Reamhrá

Inniu i mBriathar Dé, faighmíd léargas éigin ar shaol na n-aspal tar éis aiseirí ár dTiarna. Ba mhinic iad i gcomhlúadar a chéile. Táimídne leis i gcomhlúadar a chéile chun an tAifreann a cheiliuradh.

Smaoineamh

Is fiú dúinn díriú tamaillín ar an aspal Tomás, go bhfuil tagairt faoi leith do sa tSoiscéal inniu. Tá cúpla gné dá mheon léirithe.

Ní foláir nó gur duine é a bhí neamhspleach agus ag ceistiú. Is cuimhin gur chuir sé ceist ar Íosa roimhe seo, ‘Níl fhios againn cá bhfuil tú ag dul. Conas is féidir linn eolas na slí a bheith againn.’ Tar éis an aiseirí ní raibh sé i láthair nuair a tháinig ar dTiarna i measc na ndeisceabal an chéad uair. Níor ghlac sé le cad a bhí le rá acusan. Chaithfeadh sé féin an fhianaise a fheiscint. Dhéanfaidh Tomás iriseoir no craoltóir maith!

Ach nuair a fuair sé an fhianaise, ghlac sé leis lé creideamh ‘Mo Thiarna agus mo Dhia’ Ní raibh Tomás amhrasach dáiríre. Bíonn a lán daoine ag ceistiú ach ní spéis leo na freagraí. Bhí fírinne agus ionracas ag baint lé Tomás. Ní leathscéal nó cur i gcéill a bhí ina chuid ceiste, ach fonn dáiríre fírinne an eolais a fháil do féin. Agus nuair a fuair sé an freagra, bhí a chreideamh soiléir. ‘Mo Thiarna agus mo Dhia’ – Ba leor san do!

Guí an Phobail

1. Guímís go neartaí Dia ár gcreideamh féin. A Thiarna éist linn.
2. Guímís dóibh siúd a bhfuil amhras creidimh orthu, agus iadsan uile ata ag lorg na fírinne. A Thiarna éist linn.

3. Dóibh siúd ata ag feidhmiú ‘sna meáin cumarsáide. Go rabhadar freagrach, ionraic ina gcúram. A Thiarna éist linn.
4. Dóibh siúd ata ag beartú droch ghníomhartha i n-aghaidh daoine eile. Go dtaga athrú meoin agus croí orthu. A Thiarna éist linn.
5. D’ár muintir atá marbh, agus do gach duine gur mian linn guí ar a son. A Thiarna éist linn.

An Phaidir

Guímís leis na briathra a mhúin Ár Slánaitheoir duinn.

Macnamh

Inniu Lá na Trocaire Diaga – grá Dé dúinn uile. Bhí aithne phearsanta ag an Aspal Tomás ar Iosa agus bhí fhios aige chomh caoin, tuisceanach, trócaireach a bhí Sé le daoine. Go dtuga Dia an tuisceant sin duinne chomh maith.

26 Aibreán 2020

Triú Domhnach den Chaisc

Reamhrá

Is spéis faoi leith dúinn saol na ndeisceabal tar éis bás agus aiseirí Chríost. Tá cur síos ar beirt ar leith sa tsoiscéal inniú, agus mar a d’aithníodar é i mbriseadh an aráin.

Smaoineamh

Ní foláir gur chuir na deisceabail seo agus Ár dTiarna aithne mhaith ar a chéile roimhe seo. Bhí Ár dTiarna aiseiríthe faoi chló ceilte anois nuair a bhí sé ag siúl leo ar an mbóthar. Bhí an scéal cloiste ag an mbeirt faoi Chríost. Bhraithfeá iarracht éigin den amhras orthu. ‘Ná tabhair breith ar an gcéad scéal’ mar a deireann an dán. Is cinnte ná rabhadar gafa ag samhlaíocht nó ag creideamh láidir go n-éireadh Chríost ó mhairbh. Ach sa chomhrá, d’eirigh an scéal níos soiléire dhoibh. Agus ag an mbord d’aithníodar É i mBriseadh an Aráin – ní foláir go bhfacadar a leithéid á dhéanamh ag Iosa roimhe seo.

Bhí iarracht éigin den easpa creidimh ar na deisceabail ar dtús. Bheimís féin

cosúil leo sa tsíl sin b’fhéidir. Ach i ngan fhios doibh féin, bhí Sé a dtreorú ar aghaidh. Agus sinne leis, bíonn ár dTiarna ár dtreorú, ár spreagadh, ár gceartú, agus ag maitheamh dúinn. Is cara pearsanta é duinn. Bímisne mar chara agus mar chompánach Dó-san chomh maith.

Siúlaimís mar sin cosúil leis na deisceabail ar an mbóthar, gan scáth gan eagla ach sinn ag cur aithne Air an t-am go léir, agus ag fás sa chreideamh gurb É ár Slánaitheoir caoin, trócaireach É.

‘A Iosa, Rí dhil, a Athair is a Uain, thug fíor – fhuil do chroí-se dar gceannach go cruaidh, Bí am dhíon-sa, bí am choimhdeacht, bí im aice gach uair, más luí dhom, más suí dhom, más suí dhom, más seasamh, más suan.’ (Ón mBealoideas.)

Guí an Phobail

1. Guímís go neartaí Dia ár gcreideamh féin agus go mbraithmíd gur cara é Críost linn. A Thiarna éist linn.
2. Ar son daoine go bhfuil tromualach orthu, iadsan atá faoi bhrón agus faoi bhuaire. A Thiarna éist linn.
3. Ar son daoine sa tsaol poiblí. Go bhfeidhmí said go freagrach agus go cóir. A Thiarna éist linn.
4. Guímís ar son daoine go bhfuil cúram oideachais agus teagaisc orthu. Go gcothaí siad luachanna fiontacha. A Thiarna éist linn.
5. Ár son ár ngaolta, ár gcáirde, ár gcomharsain atá ar shlí na fírinne, agus daoine a fuair bás i rith na seachtaine. Go dtuga Dia sonas agus sólás na bhflaitheas dóibh. A Thiarna éist linn.

‘Sé do bheatha, a Mhuire... Tré Chríost Ár dTiarna.

An Phaidir

Sé Dia ár nAthair muirneach. Guímís lé dochas. ‘Ar nAthair ...’

Macnamh

‘Gile mo chroí do chroí – se a Shlánaitheoir, Is ciste mo chroí do chroí – se d’fáil im chomhair ós follas gur líon do chroí dem ghrá – sa a stóir I gcochall mo chroí do chroí – sé fág i gcomhad’

Tadhg Gaelach O Suilleabhain



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Check Intercom Magazine out on Facebook for the latest updates. Give your feedback on content as well as what you would like to see included in future features! I look forward to hearing from you.

ARDS RETREAT CENTRE

Holy Thursday guided retreat

Holy Thursday, 9 April 2020

Spend a few hours in reflection and prayer as we prepare to celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus. This retreat begins at 2.30 pm and concludes with the Mass of the Last Supper at 7.30pm. An evening meal will be provided.

Facilitator: Philip McParland

Easter Triduum

Thursday, 9–Sunday, 12 April 2020

Follow Jesus through the momentous events leading up to his death on the Cross and his glorious resurrection. Join with the Capuchin Friars as they prayerfully reflect on the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus in the celebration of the Sacred Easter Triduum.

Praying with the parables, living with the parables

Friday, 8–Sunday, 10 May 2020

In this retreat we explore a number of Jesus' parables as intermediaries for 'the fire itself,' in the conviction that in and through them, we will be warmed by the Spirit's fire. The Christian tradition directs us to 'go within,' in order to find hidden treasure. The fruits of this journey, we are promised, will be self-knowledge – wisdom. The hope of this retreat is to experience how the parables are a resource for this journey for a deeper spiritual consciousness.

Facilitator: Fr Philip Baxter

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.

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

Private Retreats

Self-catering facilities, en-suite rooms with wifi, access to library, facilities of Centre, Chapel and beautiful grounds on an organic farm

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An Tairseach, Organic Farm & Ecology
Centre, Kilmantin Hill, Wicklow A67 YX26
Tel 0404-61833

Email info@antairseach.ie



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
2020

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



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AN TOBAR

SPIRITAN RETREAT CENTRE

Easter Triduum

Holy Thursday, 9–Easter Sunday, 12 April
Journey with the An Tobar Community
through the Easter Triduum.

Led by An Tobar Team

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

Services available

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- Group Facilitation & Accompaniment
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mart

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

Contact: Sr Bernadette Purcell

Tel 01-4042615

Available: Church benches and
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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.



RELIGION AND EDUCATION

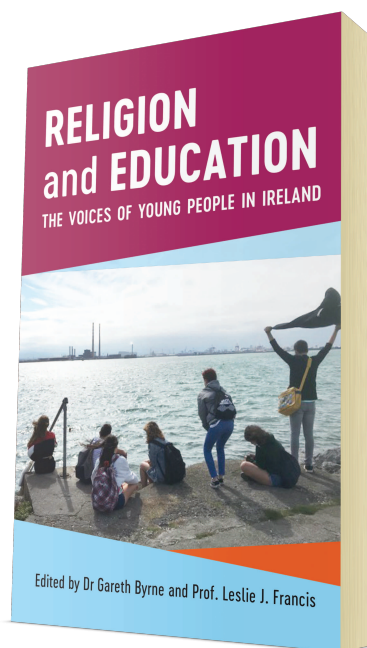
The Voices of Young People in Ireland
Edited by Gareth Byrne and Leslie J. Francis
Veritas Publications, 2019
ISBN 9781847308900
pp. 288 • €24.99

There is a great deal of truth in the old maxim that all change is difficult. When reacting to changing circumstance, the ever-present danger is to do so based on perception and anecdotal evidence. It is essential, therefore, that our understanding of the change happening around us is based on proper research. This volume is particularly welcome in that it gives us a real insight into what young people in Ireland are saying about their experience of and interest in religion and religious education. The findings that emerge are the result of a series of surveys conducted across time, across religions and across the Irish border. One of the editors, Gareth Byrne, notes that the outcome of the research is refreshing and challenging and gives us a great deal to reflect upon.

Much of the material was first presented at an international conference, *The Voice of Young People on Religion and Education*, held at the DCU Institute of Education in June 2018. The research itself draws on the pioneering work in this area of John Greer in Northern Ireland in the early 1970s, and the subsequent work done by DCU and its predecessor in the Mater Dei Institute, in collaboration with the University of Warwick. In this regard, the leadership of Professor Andrew McGrady is to be commended, as it was he who set the tone in promoting a scientific approach to the broad field of religions and education, with an emphasis on religious education.

Part I of the book focuses on the work of John Greer, who, in 1972, published the results of a 1968 survey of 6th form religion within Protestant-funded voluntary schools in Northern Ireland. This survey was replicated in 1978 and 1988, and in 1998 was extended to Catholic schools in Northern Ireland. In 2011, the survey was replicated again and extended to the Republic of Ireland. What might be described as a gradual decline of religious affiliation, belief and practice observed up to 1998 had become, by 2011, a clear drift away from the churches to a more secular future. Interestingly, however, the 2011 survey shows that some significant and consistent differences remain in the profiles of the religious and moral values exhibited in students educated between these two different types of schools.

Part II gives us data gathered from the millennial generation in Catholic schools in the Republic of Ireland. Some interesting findings emerge from research carried out in 2003 into the religiosity of school leavers and parental expectations of



Catholic voluntary schools under Catholic trusteeship. Religiously unaffiliated young men retain some vestige of the religious heritage of Ireland. Those attending weekly Mass also embrace a number of secular values and norms. While studies elsewhere show that young women report higher levels of religious practice and belief, no significant difference was recorded here. The findings indicate that while young women are more likely to engage in prayer that young men, young women feel less positively about the church and are more likely to feel alienated from institutional Catholicism.

Part III looks at data gathered through a survey of religious diversity and young people, administered for thirteen to fifteen year old students, between 2013 and 2015, in the Republic of Ireland. Analysis of the

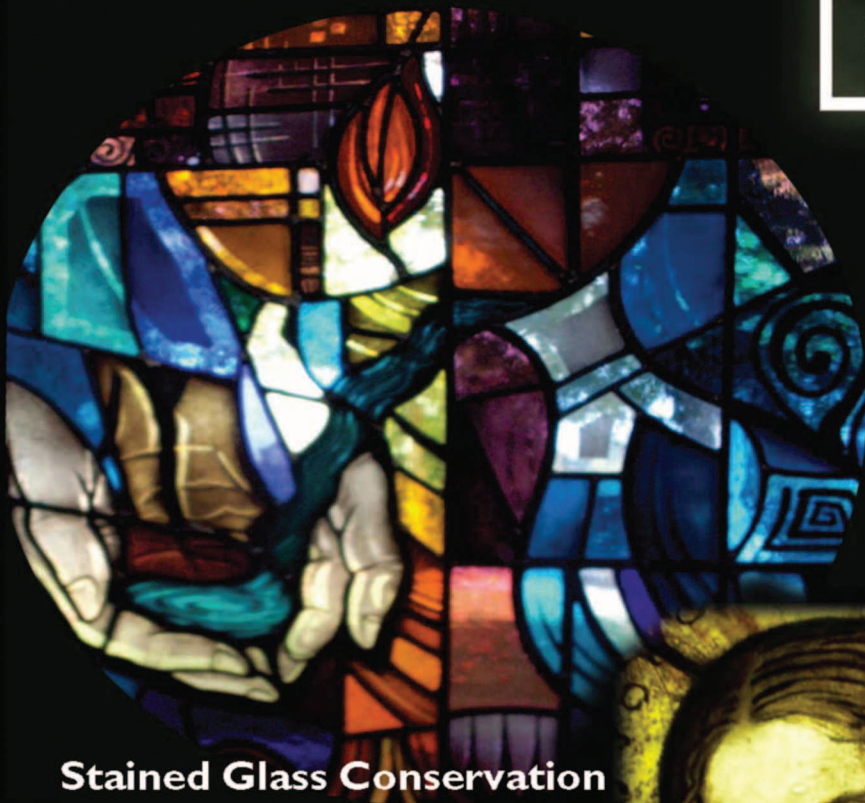
data highlights what these students are saying about religious diversity and religious education. Interestingly, the findings suggest that reducing the commitment to religious education within second level schools would render young people less well equipped to live with religious diversity and consequently lead to an undermining of social cohesion. Chapter 10, in particular, focuses on the young Catholics who say they attend Church regularly. These young people highlight the importance of parental Church-going in encouraging them to attend. This indicates that going forward it is vital that the Catholic Church in Ireland engage with the ongoing religious education and faith development of Catholic parents. Chapter 11 explores the personal, social and spiritual world view of thirteen to fifteen year old male adolescent atheists aged 13 to 15 within the Republic of Ireland. What emerges is a sense of the growing trend of non-religiosity in the Irish population, in terms of non-belonging, non-believing and non-practising.

There are many interesting and sometimes unexpected findings in the contributions in this book. It is not possible to do them all justice in a short review. At times, the material may not be considered light reading, given the depth and complexity of the data provided. Nevertheless, its importance cannot be underestimated. According to Sandra Cullen, for many young people, the religious education classroom may well be the only space where they can engage with the questions of meaning, purpose and value. As she points out, religious education is increasingly an activity that is done with young people in a conversational manner which respects their religious identity and viewpoint.

The editors, authors and researchers are to be commended for this important contribution to the field of Religion and Education.

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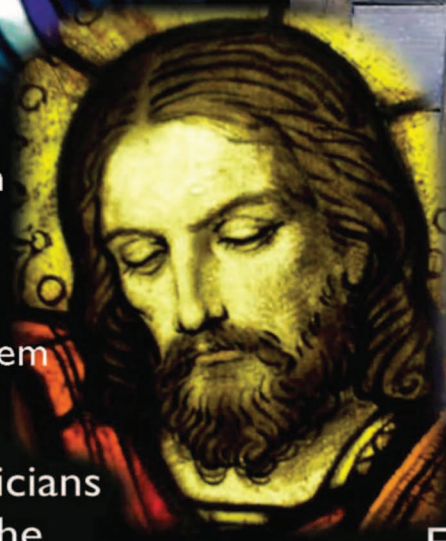
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