

The Sacred Heart

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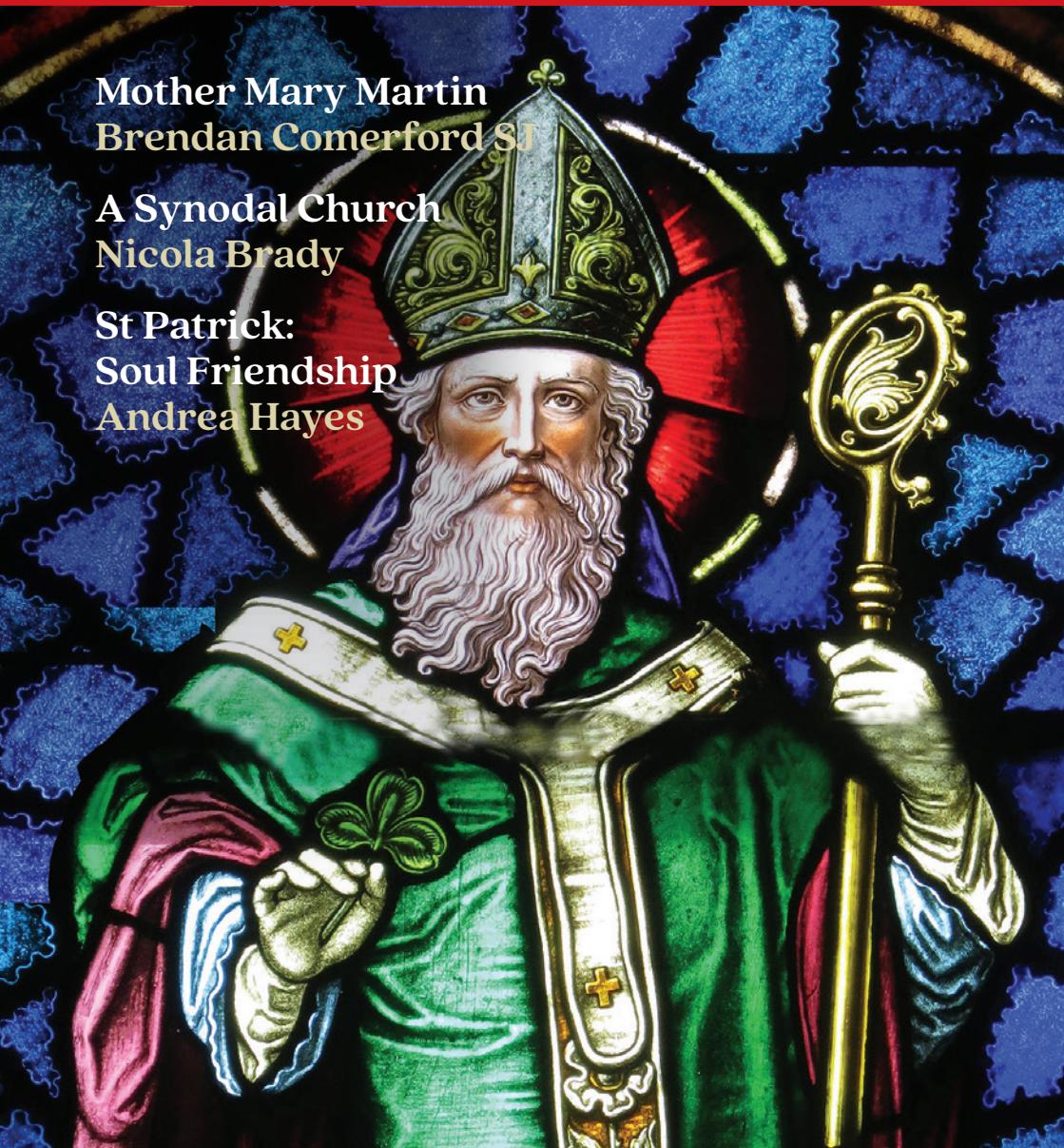
MESSENGER

A modern message in a much-loved tradition

Mother Mary Martin
Brendan Comerford SJ

A Synodal Church
Nicola Brady

St Patrick:
Soul Friendship
Andrea Hayes



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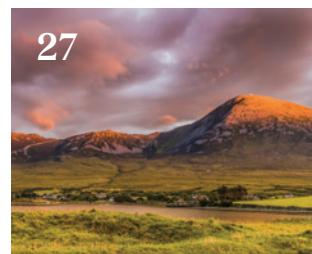
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Cover: Saint Patrick Catholic Church,
Junction City, Ohio. Stained glass detail



Pope's Intention

We pray for those who have suffered harm from members of the Church; may they find within the Church herself a concrete response to their pain and suffering.

Dedication of the Day

Be with me Lord this day.

You are the light of the world to guide my decisions.

You are the way, the truth and the life, with me in all I do.

You are resurrection and life, giving hope always.

Give joy and peace to all I meet this day. I pray especially for the intentions of Pope Francis.

Or

Father, I dedicate this new day to you, as I go about my work.

I ask you to bless those with whom I come in contact, family, friends,

colleagues.

Lord, I pray for all men and women who work to earn their living; give them satisfaction in what they do. Comfort the unemployed and their families; I ask you to help them find work soon.

Let the sick and those who are sad know your care and love.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Evening Prayer

God Our Father, thank you for your love and care today.

Thank you for my family and the friends you give to me.

Thank you that I have done some good today,

and forgive any faults and failings.

Let those who are ill know your care, especially

Guard me in the dark of night, and in the morning send your light. Amen.

The Sacred Heart

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Joy in Lent



Lent can be a long haul! Even in the liturgy: the purple vestments, no 'Alleluia' verse at Mass, the readings often heavy going. Somewhere around the middle of Lent the colours change to pink, if even for just a week. Then there are the feasts, when we get to catch our breath. We used to give up the Lenten fast for Sundays and for St Patrick's Day. The feasts we celebrate are the Annunciation, the feast of St Joseph and, in Ireland, the feast of St Patrick.

The Annunciation brings us back to the source of Lent: the announcement of the Incarnation and Mary saying 'yes' to her part in it. It is the announcement of heaven that God's Son will soon be born on earth. The mystery that comes to a close in Lent now begins. We remember God's loving generosity and Mary's generous response. A few days earlier we had the feast of St Joseph – he was there too from the start, and Mary knew his promise to her when the angel came. The Incarnation is full of people: Mary, Joseph and

Elizabeth, and the two unborn babies in the wombs of their mothers, as we all began.

God's son would not come on earth without human origins. He had a mother like all of us. We are remembering our beginnings.

Maybe Lent can be about people rather than rituals. We can give time to enjoying family life, putting the emphasis on giving to family and community rather than on wondering what we can get. Lent can be a time to share with those who are needy, a time to meet some of the needs of the wider world. During Lent we can volunteer our time and personal gifts to others. Lent can be a time to listen, to God's word and to one another.

To help you, here are some books from Messenger Publications: *Sacred Space for Lent 2023*, my own *Gospel Reflections for Year A* and Martin Hogan's *Your Word Is a Lamp on My Path*. Go to www.messenger.ie/bookshop to order.

Donal Neary SJ

Support for Survivors and Victims of Abuse

Una Allen is the co-ordinator of Towards Peace, the spiritual support service for people who have experienced abuse, be it physical, sexual, emotional or spiritual, by representatives of the Catholic Church in Ireland.



Whether experienced in childhood or as an adult, abuse by Church personnel traumatises not only individuals but whole communities. The shock wave emanates out from victims and survivors to families, friends, and all levels of community – ultimately to society as a whole. We now know that the spiritual injury associated particularly with religious sexual abuse has the capacity to destroy faith in religious institutions and erode belief in God or any higher power. It can also shatter

spirituality and the spirit within, leading to loss of purpose in life. The trauma of betrayal experienced throughout Irish society and indeed throughout the world in the last number of years as a result of clerical and institutional abuse is proof, if such were needed, that the consequences from the outrage of abuse has had repercussions for entire generations, especially our faith communities.

The question naturally arises then, 'Can the soul recover?' The answer: we

Pope's Intention:

We pray for those who have suffered harm from members of the Church; may they find within the Church herself a concrete response to their pain and suffering.

don't know. Only survivors can answer that. But what we do know, because we have heard it from survivors themselves, is that many have expressed a desire to reconnect to the God from whom they felt they were so cruelly severed or never had the chance to know.

Towards Peace, established by the Irish bishops and the leaders of religious congregations in Ireland, is a service offering spiritual support for anyone who has been abused, physically emotionally, sexually, spiritually, in a religious/church environment. It is a pathway, a safe space where people who have been hurt can connect with their own spirituality, their sense of God and the sacred – their own journey towards peace. The service is free and is also available to the families of those who have been affected.

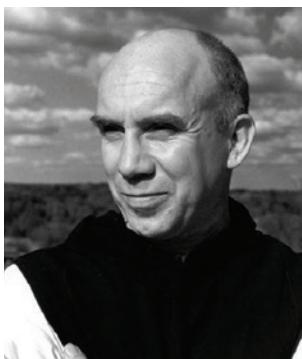
In *Towards Peace* support is provided to survivors through conversations with a spiritual director/companion, an 'anam cara' or soul friend who endeavours to help each person listen to their own conversations with God – whom-

ever or however they perceive that to be – ever respectful that each person's individual spiritual journey is his or her own.

This is a shared experience. There is no sense of the spiritual companion bestowing knowledge or answers, or attempting to bring the survivor back to Church; rather it is a journeying together, unpacking the hurts and the wounds that may have lain dormant for years. There is no pre-determined road map on this journey. Each person travels at their own unique individual pace.

The great Thomas Merton taught that no matter what anyone has done to us in the past, or is doing to us now, or might do to us in the future, there is within every one of us, at our innermost core, a hidden centre of ourselves that remains invincibly established in God as a mysterious Presence, as a life that is at once God's and our own. It is in being awakened to this innermost centre of ourselves with God that we find the courage to continue on in the challenging process

of healing, grounded in a peace that is not dependent on the outcome of our efforts, because it is the peace of God, which depends on nothing and on which everything depends. *Towards Peace* seeks to offer a pathway to unearth that hidden presence within ourselves from whence we can begin to heal because, as Richard Rohr says, if we do not transform our pain, we will almost inevitably transmit it.



Thomas Merton OCSO,
American Trappist monk, writer
and theologian

St Patrick: Soul Friendship

Andrea Hayes, frequent author on environmental issues, links the way of St Patrick with ancient Celtic traditions of soul-friendship.



Even though St Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland, he is celebrated every March in over 190 countries. St Patrick's Day has evolved into a day, sometimes even a week, for celebrating Irish culture with parades, music, dancing and sharing the renowned hospitality of the Irish.

Hospitality is defined as 'the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers', and it is this welcome that we are recognised for around the world. When we think of St Patrick, we might think of the person who banished the snakes from Ireland, but at his core, I think St Patrick was a trusted person

who wouldn't judge but would welcome you with an open heart, as he welcomed the link of the Celtic traditions he found in Ireland with the Gospel of Christ. For me, he represents the true meaning of a soul friend or 'anam cara', a concept which also describes what it is to extend a deep, heart-centred hospitality to others. If we trace back this ancient concept of soul friendship, we go as far as the early Celtic Church, even prior to St Patrick. The word 'anam' is the Irish word for 'soul' and 'cara' means 'friend'. Thus, the literal translated meaning of 'anam cara' is 'soul friend'. The combination of these two words describes perfectly



Celebrating St Patrick's Day is a powerful reminder to expand this notion of hospitality, as it describes the exchange of deep heart-centred friendship. In doing so we can try to bring the essence of being an anam cara to every part of our lives.

the kind of hospitality and friendship we celebrate on St Patricks Day.

As we prepare to honour our patron saint this month, we can take a moment to truly reflect on how we can embody this heart-centred presence in our daily lives. We are invited to enter into this heart presence that awakens the higher part of our being, so we can truly embody a God-centred hospitality to contribute unconditionally and through the lens of love to all of creation.

Celebrating St Patrick's Day is a powerful reminder to expand this notion of hospitality, as it describes the exchange of deep heart-centred friendship. In doing so we can try to bring the essence of being an anam

cara to every part of our lives.

Trying to adopt the anam cara presence in all our relationships requires our absolute acceptance of the other. This shift within both heart and mind is at the core of what it means to be Christian; it's more than simply welcoming people with kindness. It's an offer to truly welcome someone into our heart without judgment, but with love and empathy.

Embracing a hospitality of the heart in essence means to open ourselves to a deep sharing of soul friendship that is rooted in the very heart of Christ. We have to be open to the other, share with the other, express our love for the other. This can be done only if we open the doors of our hearts. If you make a daily intention to open your heart to this presence, it can awaken the higher part of you. Some call it a 'God Gaze', that part of your soul that wishes to be in unison with the Christ-consciousness that connects all living things. When we truly embody our soul's awakening, we experience a joy and wonder for all of God's Creation. When we have a deep knowingness that we are truly loved unconditionally and accepted with compassion, it is one of the greatest soul exchanges we can experience. This is something much deeper than the union of a romantic couple or good friendship, rather this is a deeper soul-friend intimacy. John O'Donohue described it perfectly when he wrote, 'It is precisely in awakening and exploring this rich opaque inner landscape that the anam cara experience illuminates the mystery and the kindness of the divine. Friendship is the true nature of God ... In the embrace of this eternal friendship, we dare to be free.'

The Samaritan Woman at the Well of Samaria

David Breen delves into the deeper elements of the gospel story of the woman of Samaria (John 4:1–30).



Masada and Dead Sea, Israel

We tend to think of the Samaritans as a homogenous group but there were actually three distinct groups.

(1) Descendants of the northern tribes of Israel, who survived the Assyrian invasion. They self-defined as 'Shomrim' ('Keepers' because they kept the ancient Jewish traditions). Their temple on Mt Gerizim was destroyed by the Hasmonean Jews. They viewed their Torah as the original version and the Jewish one as an heretical version edited by Babylonian Jews. They didn't recognise Jerusalem, the prophetic and wisdom writings or a Davidic messi-

ah, and they felt aggrieved that the Jews denied their historical right of belonging to the people of Israel.

(2) A second group were foreign settlers, probably from modern day Iraq, with whom Assyria repopulated the area.
(3) A blend of both (1) and (2) led to a culturally and religiously syncretistic community that formed the third group. Animosity characterised the relationships of all three with the Jews. From the theological content of her discussion with Jesus, we can assume that the Samaritan woman was Shomrim.



'Jesus and Samaritans at well', Padua, Italy by unknown painter

The context of the encounter was Jesus' withdrawal from Judea to avoid a potential conflict with Pharisees. We are told that, 'he had to pass through Samaria' (Jn 4:4–14). This was the shortest route to Galilee, though not the usual one because of the animosity between Jews and Samaritans. The 'necessity' indicates that the encounter with the Samaritan woman was a divine appointment. The mere mention of Jacob, his well, Joseph and Mt Gerizim imports a world of historical meaning into the encounter, not immediately apparent to those unfamiliar with Israel's story. Mt Gerizim and Mt Ebal were where the covenant was re-enacted and renewed when Israel entered the land. It was in this area that Jacob

bought the land he gave to his son Joseph and dug this very well, and on this land Joseph is buried.

The scene at the well recalls several biblical marriage stories. Abraham's servant finding Rebecca for Isaac (Gen 24), Jacob falling in love with Rachel (Gen 29) and Moses defending the daughters of Jethro and subsequently marrying one of them (Ex 2) all happened at wells. The water into wine miracle at Cana alludes to Jesus as the bridegroom. (It was the groom's responsibility to provide the wine). John the Baptist directly refers to Jesus as the bridegroom in the story preceding this encounter.

It isn't necessary to categorise the woman as immoral because of her five

husbands and current partner. The text's interest seems to lie elsewhere. Support for her immorality is usually sought in her appearance at the well alone at noon instead of with the village women in the early morning. But why would her community listen to her and come to Jesus if she were a rejected sinner? (Jn 4:39). Rachel came to the well at the same time of day (Gen 29:6–9) as did Jethro's daughters (Ex 2:16ff. See Josephus) without any sinful connotations. We're not told how the woman came to her current situation. She was widowed or divorced or a combination of both five times. In a context where women could only be divorced but had no right to divorce, she may have been a victim of men and unjust social structures. The reference to Joseph (Jn 4:4) who suffered unjustly but who brought salvation to his people may fit the context better. 'Seven' the number of perfection surfaces several times in John's Gospel. Here it indicates that Jesus, the seventh man and perfect bridegroom, is the one who satisfied the woman's deepest needs with his gift of 'living water' (the Holy Spirit, Jn 7:37–8), symbolised in the story by her leaving her water jar when she returned to her village (Jn 4:28).

In their meeting Jesus crossed the boundaries of socially accepted behaviour by talking to a woman as well as crossing the culturally imposed barrier of enmity arising out of a history of religious dispute, conflict and hatred. The Samaritan woman for her part also crossed the barrier of forbidden associations and engaged in a conversation with Jesus that was 'outside her accepted theological framework and surely would not pass the test

of cultural sensibilities of "faithful" Samaritans'. Perceiving Jesus to be a prophet, after he revealed her relationship history, she asked him to settle the Mt Gerizim/Mt Zion worship controversy. In his reply Jesus affirmed that salvation was from the Jews and their greater knowledge of God (probably because of more complete Scriptures). But he must have stunned her when he dismissed worship in both Jerusalem (Mt Zion) and Shechem (Mt Gerizim) as passing practices. Just as true disciples are born of the Spirit (Jn 3:6, 8), so true worshippers will worship in Spirit and truth.

For the woman there remains the issue of the Messiah. Jesus says to her, 'I Am, the one speaking to you'.

When the disciples return the woman departs to her village and returns bringing her community with her. They believe first because of her word (Jn 4:39) and subsequently because they heard Jesus for themselves. (Jn 4:41–42). The woman who suffered like Joseph, also like Joseph, became the instrument of salvation for her community. The question of whether the Samaritans belong to Israel has been answered positively. They too belong in the reconstituted Israel formed around Jesus.

This story of a hated 'other' who was female in a male-dominated society, possibly marginalised because of her marital history, follows the story of Nicodemus, a privileged male of Jewish religious life. Together they indicate the range of those who may belong to this newly constituted community. All may belong regardless of one's past or ethnicity. The entry requirement is to be born of the Spirit, while the life of the community must be nourished by worship in spirit and truth.

Mother Mary Martin (Part 2)

Brendan Comerford SJ adds the second part to his life of the foundress of the Medical Missionaries of Mary.

We saw last month that Marie Martin had made the acquaintance of the papal nuncio to Ireland, Archbishop Paschal Robinson. He approved of Marie's idea of her going to the Benedictine Abbey of Glenstal in Limerick to receive some spiritual formation.

Along with a friend, Miss Leydon, Marie arrived in Glenstal on 21 March 1934. The novice master, Dom David Maffei, was appointed to give spiritual conferences to them.

Through the help of Archbishop Robinson, word came from Rome that Miss Martin's ideas and proposals for a new congregation were to be highly recommended. The formation of the future Sisters would have to be entrusted to a religious of another congregation already approved by the Holy See.

On 19 January 1937, Marie was back in Calabar, Nigeria, along with two others. Monsignor James Moynagh was there to welcome them. In Easter Week he had received word from Rome that he was authorised to erect the Congregation of the Medical Missionaries of Mary (MMM) and to receive the vows of the foundress. On Low Sunday, 4 April 1937, the ceremony of the First Profession of Marie Martin took place. She was now Sister Mary of the Incarnation.

In April 1938, the archbishop of Armagh, Cardinal McRory, gave Mary permission to found a novitiate in the

Armagh archdiocese. Mother Mary (as she was now called) succeeded in obtaining a Holy Child sister, Mother Edith, as novice mistress. Vocations began to multiply and young women with qualifications as nurses and doctors applied for interview.

Monsignor O'Callaghan of Drogheda offered Mary the new hospital he was having built. All the time vocations were multiplying; one candidate gave Mother Mary her car. That car became well-known to Gardai throughout Ireland, for its owner ignored all traffic rules!

The Drogheda hospital was opened by Cardinal McRory on 8 December 1939 and named 'Our Lady of Lourdes'. Desmond Martin, Mary's brother, designed the new novitiate. By mid-December 1940 the Sisters were in the novitiate. A new wing was added to the hospital in 1942.

By the end of 1944 there were around one hundred MMM sisters, including two qualified doctors, two pharmacists, ten students of medicine in University College Dublin and ten training as nurses. Not all who applied were accepted. Some were proved unsuitable, lacking robust health or other qualities, including a sense of humour. This last, the ability to laugh with others and at oneself, was a trait Mother Mary liked to see in her 'daughters'.



Three sisters left for a mission in Tanganyika, now Tanzania, early in 1947. In 1948, Mother Mary went on visitation there, stopping in Rome on the outward and return.

In 1949, Mother Mary had her first meeting with Cardinal Richard Cushing of Boston. He was to prove to be one of her great supporters. He promised her a foundation in Boston. She travelled to Boston in 1950, Cardinal Cushing had found a house for the Sisters at 36 Commonwealth Avenue. It was the first foundation of MMM in the United States and was a gift from the Cardinal. Six sisters from Ireland formed the first community.

In 1950, Mother Mary decided to build a new International Missionary Training Hospital in Drogheda and launched an appeal for £100,000.

On a bleak February evening in 1952, the new novitiate building in

Drogheda was gutted by fire. Nothing gained as much publicity, sympathy and good-will as the fire that destroyed most of the novitiate. Mr Denis Guiney, of Clery's Store in Dublin, opened an appeal for funds, urging all business firms to subscribe.

In August 1953, Cardinal Cushing paid another visit to Drogheda and left a generous cheque for the building fund.

The Marian Year, 1954, began with the completion of the first part of the new hospital. Pope Pius XII sent a gift of £10,000 for the new hospital in November 1954. Vocations were plentiful. In the seventeen years since the foundation of the Congregation vocations had grown from three to almost three hundred. In their twenty hospitals and clinics in West and East Africa, they had extraordinary success in lessening infant and maternal mortality. By 1954,



Entrance to Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda

the MMMs had twenty-one houses, five in Ireland, fourteen in Africa, one in Italy (Naples) and one in the U.S.

In Drogheda, on 3 October 1956, three storeys of the new hospital were blessed and opened. The sight of the half-finished part of what promised to be a really fine hospital moved the Irish government to give a grant of £150,000 towards its completion. The most tireless and generous benefactor of Mother Mary and her work was Cardinal Cushing.

The completed hospital in Drogheda was blessed and opened on 22 September 1957. The MMMs were twenty years ahead of their time: they wore practical grey suits, drove cars, collected for flag days, were allowed home when parents fell ill or died, or for family weddings. In 1959, Mother Mary left on a world tour: Rome, Naples, Nigeria, Angola, Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Thailand, Japan, Los

Angeles, Boston. One gets breathless even typing the destinations! Travel was to be a consistent feature in Mother Mary's life right up to 1965.

On 26 February 1966, Mother Mary received an honorary fellowship at the Royal College of Surgeons and in June 1966, the Freedom of Drogheda was conferred on her. In 1967, her brother, John, came to see her but she did not recognise him. The failure to recognise her brother was the beginning of seven years of illness, with its periods of lucidity, confusion and frustration for the rest of her life. She died on Monday 27 January 1975. She was almost eighty-three.

One of Mother Mary's favourite sayings was, 'People matter more than things ... Before you act, pray ... No rule will ever help you more than interior union with God ... Live in the presence of God ... Love God and you are as free as air.'

Pope Francis: Ten Years

Fr Vincent Sherlock, parish priest of Tubbercurry,
marks ten years of the papacy of Pope Francis.



In the recent synodal pathway questionnaire, young people were asked, 'What would you say to the Pope if you had five minutes with him?' Maybe that's not a bad place to start as I reflect on Pope Francis' papacy, ten years on.

If I had the chance to say one word, it would be 'thanks'. If I left, having said no more, I would be happy enough, since I truly believe he deserves our thanks. Not least because not everyone agrees. Sadly, many feel no sense of gratitude for his approach to being our 'Holy Father'. The interpretation of his approach to the papacy has creat-

ed more than a small share of tension, if not total disaffection, for all too many. Since I do not believe that this was ever his intention, and I believe that all he has sought to do is in the name of the Church he truly loves and believes in, he needs to know that many are thankful.

I recall the night he was announced. I was at a meeting of priests in our parish cluster, and we watched television as the smoke rose and the subsequent announcement was made. As he approached the balcony, my heart sank. He looked so lost and so old. The flush of youth was not on display and the



Francis has really tried to make us think differently about who we are as Church. I firmly believe he holds the central truths of our faith in the very core of his soul.

balcony looked tired and out of touch. The room I was in held its breath, the world held its breath and as the white smoke got lost in Roman fog, he smiled and said, ‘Brothers and sisters, good evening’. The Square erupted, the world erupted, and he then spoke about the conclave’s job of selecting a bishop of Rome and joked that the cardinals seemed to have gone to the end of the world to get him! ‘But here we are’, he continued. He asked for prayers for Pope Benedict and referred to him as the ‘Bishop Emeritus’ of Rome. Subtle shifts in emphasis marked the future he hoped for. Bishop first, pope second, local first and universal second. A good beginning and all this from a man who would never go

home again. What a sacrifice.

It strikes me that he is at his best in photographs. Thumb up! Smiling face, uncontrolled laughter, thoughtful, prayerful, present to all. Among my favourites was the one of the little boy with additional needs who ran forward and occupied the chair by his side. A chair, that surely had been left there for someone who felt more entitled to it, but the boy saw the space beside the man he wanted to be close to and went for it. Francis was in his element. I would like to think he saw the cardinal, the archbishop, bishop or at the very least monsignor for whom the chair was intended and thought, ‘You’re grand where you are! You will have another opportunity to sit here, but this is his moment, and, as Jesus said to Martha, “It is not to be taken from [him]”’.

Francis has really tried to make us think differently about who we are as Church. I firmly believe he holds the central truths of our faith in the very core of his soul. He knows what we could be. He might be likened to a teacher, sending home a school report, speaking of a pupil that he holds in high regard but aware that ‘She could try harder ... do better. Just needs to apply herself.’ I feel that is the way he sees the Church at times – knows there is more in us.

I have a friend who jokes that Francis is ‘great on the ground, but when he gets on a plane; look out’. He has had some moments in the air, for certain, responding to journalists’ questions and maybe saying that little bit more than enough! I never doubt his sincerity.

So, the five minutes are up! Pope Francis, ten years on, THANKS.

Ignatian Spirituality for Today

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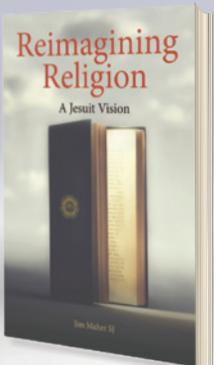
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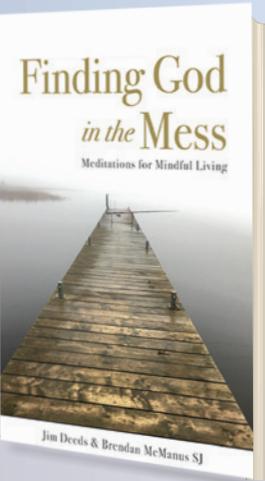
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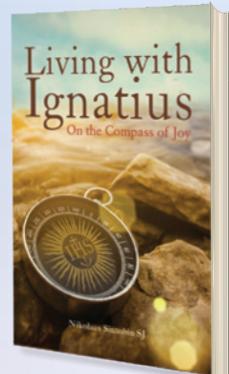
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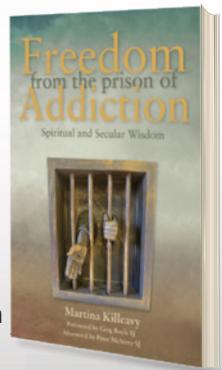
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Our Deepest Desire

Jesuit Eamonn Walls SJ reflects on how God guides us through life using our deepest desires.

It is said that God raises up saints at particular times and places in order to communicate an aspect of the call of holiness addressed to each one of us. What does the life of St Ignatius show us? First, that we are all pilgrims journeying to God; and second, that God guides each of us along the trails and contours of our pilgrim path using our deepest desires.

It took Ignatius a very long time and hundreds of miles of walking to discover what his deepest desire was. The picture he paints of his early life is less than flattering. He was ‘a man given over to the vanities of the world’. A dandy, a brawler, a flatterer of women: he was just the sort of man God needed.

His conversion came courtesy of a

On the Camino, the popular pilgrim route to Santiago de Compostella, the way is marked all along by yellow arrows. God gives us such arrows in our lives. They are the desires, attractions and activities that give us joy and increase our faith, hope and love.

cannonball that shattered his leg at the battle of Pamplona. It was a hopeless task to defend the city against the French. Ignatius knew this well, but he persuaded the soldiers in the city to defend it for honour’s sake. People undoubtedly died and were maimed that day because of his vanity.

It was while convalescing in Loyola that he was able to recognise that what he thought he wanted – fame, prestige, the hand of a certain lady at court – left him dry, lifeless and thwarted. This is an experience of what he would later call ‘desolation’. However, as he considered a life of following Christ and the saints, he experienced ‘consolation’: a deep sense of peace, joy, rightness and meaning. This led him to abandon the life he had known and to search for another one. The disciples left everything they had and followed Jesus; Ignatius decided to do the same. He spent the next few years on the road, going as far as Jerusalem, before deciding that the best way he could help people was to become a priest and share what he’d learned with them.

All this walking around gave him a particularly important insight about what our lives are for. He called this the principle and foundation. This is how he puts it, in the language of his time: ‘the human person is created to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord, and by so doing to save his or her own



Yellow arrows indicating the direction to walk in the Way of St James, Camino de Santiago, Spain.

soul'. That is the deepest desire of the human heart. Pope Francis likes to make the same point by quoting Leon Bloy: 'The only real sadness, the only real failure, the only great tragedy in life, is not to become a saint.'

Perhaps this sounds hopelessly out of reach. An American Jesuit on his deathbed was asked if he felt close to God. He replied, 'I'm doing okay, but I'm no Teresa of Ávila!' Firstly, I would qualify Bloy's exhortation by suggesting that while we cannot make ourselves saints – only God can do that – we can want to be saints. God can work with that. Secondly, we can follow the prompts that God gives us along the way. On the Camino, the popular pilgrim route to Santiago de Compostella, the way is marked all along by yellow arrows. God gives us

such arrows in our lives. They are the desires, attractions and activities that give us joy and increase our faith, hope and love. The arrows may look different for each person, but they are there. Follow the arrows!

How will we know that we have not misread the signs? What is the road supposed to look like? Pope Francis provides some helpful criteria for discernment by examining the lives of the 'saints next door'. He finds fruits of this everyday holiness 'in those parents who raise their children with immense love, in those men and women who work hard to support their families, in the sick, in elderly religious who never lose their smile'. The marks of our growth in holiness are faith, hope and love; 'and the greatest of these is love' (1 Cor 3:13).

Was Jesus Funny?

A well-rounded human being has a sense of humour. Kevin Hargaden, director of the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice, finds many places in the Gospel where Jesus' sense of humour is evident.

During the summer I had a fascinating conversation with a friend. They told me that while they loved Jesus as the son of God, they weren't sure they would like him as a friend. The impression they had was that Jesus was harsh and even humourless. I was surprised by this. One of the reasons I left atheism behind was how compelling I found Jesus when I read the Gospels as an adult.

I asked my friend where they had gotten this impression of Jesus. They pointed me toward the interaction that Jesus had with a 'Syrophoenician' woman (Mark 7:24–29). The woman came to Jesus and asked for help healing her daughter. Jesus responded with what seemed like an obnoxious, almost prejudiced answer: 'First let the children eat all they want, for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs.' She replied that even dogs under the table can find crumbs to eat, at which point Jesus praised her faith and healed her daughter.

Read with our current cultural assumptions, this does indeed look like a passage where Jesus is harsh or unpleasant. We easily forget, however, that before he recounts the exchange, Mark makes clear that the woman 'was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia'. She

is, in other words, far from the ideal of the Israelite religious elite. She is an outsider, a 'Gentile', far from the people of God. At face value, it looks like Jesus is replicating this superior attitude when he says his job is to feed the children of Israel. But when we think about what the woman says in response, we can almost hear her smirking. Jesus is not endorsing the common racist view of this woman's inferiority.

When we re-read this passage with the awareness that Jesus might be deploying irony to teach his disciples that their cultural complacency about religious identity is misplaced, what was a confusing passage starts to make sense. Like some modern-day comedians, who are able to use humour to turn a mirror on our society, Jesus exposes the absurdity of viewpoints that were common in his day. The Syrophoenician woman is in on the joke and extends it. It is more like this: 'They say we are dogs, but they even let their dogs eat under their tables', and then Jesus confirms it by saying, in effect, 'This woman – who is far from Israel's traditions by birth – gets what my mission is better than you who pride yourselves on your elite spiritual status.'

Repeatedly through the Gospels, we find Jesus saying things that are

baffling if taken at face value and that make complete sense if he is being ironic. In the Sermon on the Mount, he says that anyone who is tempted by what they see should cut their eye out and anyone who is seduced by what they can touch should cut their hands off (Matthew 5:27–30). This is absurd! Unless, of course, he is saying that if you think you can attain a purity that makes you better than your neighbour, you'll end up dismembering yourself. It's not a joke in the sense of a punch-line that makes you laugh, but it is a humourous use of irony to prompt you to further thought.

Similarly, right before his arrest, Peter assures him that he has two swords. Jesus responds, 'That's enough' (Lk 22:38), which makes no sense because two swords couldn't defeat the Roman Empire and did not in fact stop him being taken captive. But it makes complete sense if we read him here as humourously pointing out Peter's crazy idea that Jesus could battle his way to safety.

I read Jesus as like the contemporary phenomenon of what we might call the 'prophetic comedian', who uses humour to highlight the absurdity of the world in which we live. They still are funny, but they provoke us to think as well as laugh. When Jesus described camels going through the eyes of needles (Mt 19:24), or fraudsters being praised as canny businessmen by their boss (Lk 16:1–13), or fathers who give their sons stones instead of bread (Mt 7:9–12), he offered descriptions that are almost like verbal cartoons. They are intrinsically amusing, and they tease us into thinking differently. This is a kind of humour Irish people are very familiar with, most notably

I read Jesus as like the contemporary phenomenon of what we might call the 'prophetic comedian', who uses humour to highlight the absurdity of the world in which we live.

evidenced in the novels of writers like Flann O'Brien or the movies and plays of Martin McDonagh.

I suspect that Jesus is great company, because he is most warmly welcomed by those most easily abandoned by decent society: the prostitutes, the tax collectors, the women maligned because of their sexuality and the men who are alienated because of their frailty. His opponents describe him as a 'drunk and a glutton' (Lk 7:34). There is no evidence that this was anything but slander, but the Gospel texts do provide plenty of evidence that Jesus was friends with people that could accurately be described that way. Hedonists aren't usually known for hanging out with tiresome bores!

Fundamentally, no one can attract the kind of crowds that Jesus drew without being compelling. I find him again and again to be deeply amusing, not like a clown or a jester, but as someone who knows that even though this world can seem dreadfully dark, the surprising and happy good news is that God is making all things new. And this, historically, is the true meaning of comedy: a story with a surprising ending so happy, listeners couldn't hope to dream it up themselves.

Belfast: A Jesuit Venture

A report on the opening of the Belfast Jesuit Centre for Spirituality from its director, Fr Gerard Clarke SJ.

Irish Jesuit Provincial, Fr Leonard Moloney SJ, launched and blessed the Belfast Jesuit Centre for Spirituality on Saturday, 22 October 2022. The day-long event was attended by a large audience including the then Bishop of Down and Connor, now Apostolic Nuncio to the EU, Noel Traynor, Jesuits, colleagues, friends and local people. Dr Austen Ivereigh, author of two biographies on Pope Francis, was the keynote speaker, and he launched a book on Ignatian spirituality *Discover God Daily*, by Jim Deeds and Jesuit Brendan McManus (Messenger, 2022). The Provincial paid particular tribute to Bishop Noel Treanor of Down and

Conor for his input into the centre's development.

Jesuits had been living and working in 28 Brookvale Ave for thirty years, and as the years passed the need and desire for a spirituality centre grew. Jesuits in Belfast who contributed to the culmination of this day included Terry Howard SJ, who played a key role in setting up the centre, and Gerry Clarke SJ, Tom Layden SJ, Brendan McManus SJ and Piaras Jackson SJ, the four current team members.

Local historian Jimmy McDermott informed the audience of the rich history of the area, which included an introduction to Belfast and St Patrick's Church.

St Patrick's parish is a living, breathing community in Belfast's city centre not far from Ulster University's Belfast campus, with its significant cohort of staff and students. The church serves a large local resident community, a thriving population of workers in Belfast's cultural and social heartland – the Cathedral Quarter. So the centre, in its history and location, lends itself well to the vision held for it into the future as a place of service in Belfast, open to and welcoming younger people in the city. The Jesuit centre will be ecumenical in its outreach and synodal in its way of proceeding.



Jim Deeds, Dr Austen Ivereigh and Brendan McManus at the launch of *Discover God Daily*



The recently opened Belfast Jesuit Centre for Spirituality. Image by Brendan McManus

It will be a hub of activities such as spiritual companionship, workshops, courses in Ignatian spirituality, faith formation and creative pathways to encountering God at work in the hearts and minds of those attending and at work in the wider socio-cultural surroundings.

Director Fr Clarke said the programmes and events already planned include preparing for Lent, creative writing and processing trauma. There will be weekly worship with music, a four-week course for priests, deacons and parish leaders on 'Scripture at the heart of the parish' and even a book club on Pope Francis's reform of the Church, 'using reflection to "channel

your inner fire"' (*The Irish News*).

Irish Jesuits have been working in Northern Ireland for decades. Beginning in Portadown, the ministry expanded into Belfast and Armagh where Fr Brian Lennon SJ has been engaged in community dialogue for many years now.

Of the current Belfast community, Fr Tom Layden SJ is engaged in spirituality ministry, as is Fr Brendan McManus SJ, and Fr Clarke SJ's work is leading the centre. Fr Michael Hurley SJ, deceased, a leading figure in Belfast, founded the ecumenical Columbanus Community. Fr Henry Grant SJ worked on many peace initiatives in Bangor in the 1980s.

Direction and Faith

Colm Brophy, artist and art therapist,
continues his series on art.

Students of theology will come across Hans Urs von Balthasar. He takes a different route in his theology, a fresh look, far from the rules and doctrines that were presented to those of us who went to school in the mid-twentieth century. Instead of being told ‘faith means this’ and ‘thou shalt not do that’, he says that faith means to be overcome by beauty. He includes the beauty of great art, the wonder of the earth, the beauty of a galaxy. The core of all beauty he sees in being overcome by the greatest beauty of all: the mysteries that surround God and our faith in God. To be overcome by that beauty is to take a great leap of faith, but often moments of faith come in small steps. One of those small steps came to me about fifteen years ago when I ‘wrote’ an icon – the one you see here.

Coming from the icon is a truth. It is an icon of Mary, ‘God-bearer’. I had been invited to join a small group for a week-long spiritual exercise of learning how to ‘write’ an icon. With guidance, we very slowly and carefully each drew out our image, learning in the process how to combine dry powdered pigment with the yoke of an egg. The work was quiet and meditative because we were not trying to prove our talent. We absorbed the

stillness of the image. We were writing one of the great truths of Scripture. Being such a truth, the image took on a mysterious beauty in itself. There was the delicate gold-leaf to be applied, which brought out the glory surrounding the scriptural announcement contained in the icon. This was one of many small steps for me in deepening my direction of faith by experiencing afresh a different form of religious language, which I had not been in the habit of seeing or hearing. It gave me a new insight into our need for such a language, which was common place at one time in the culture of icon writing. It is very unlike the religious language of the nineteenth century that we grew up with. The same language was kept alive in the twentieth century, when Western culture had lost the taste for a language that could no longer nourish its faith. I was reminded in that week of ‘writing’ a scriptural truth in a beautiful image of how much we need to find new depths in the expression of religious faith. The changes of culture in which we now live are radical and widespread. So finding an attractive, might I say, beautiful, direction to go in our way of speaking faith is essential for our survival.

During the early period of Covid-19, I was looking for a new direction in my



Clusters and Superclusters of Stars in the Antennae Galaxy by Colm Brophy

art. I was tired of painting landscapes, and I wasn't ready to steel myself again for the intensity of painting portraits. Then the bright idea came to me – why don't I paint the stars? When I looked up at the sky, however, I could only see odd glimpses of the moon. The stars were hidden, and I wasn't living near a dark, rural sky. I dropped the stars project, but I found a book about space in Dun Laoghaire library with images from the Milky Way. And then there were images of our very distant neighbours, revealing a few of the billions of galaxies beyond our reach. This is where I paused to paint. The painting here is of star clusters and star superclusters that appear in the Antennae Galaxy. The distance to the moon is about 384 thousand kilo-

metres, but to this Antennae Galaxy the distance is only measured in light years, approximately 15 million light years away from us.

Though I started looking for something beautiful to paint by looking in the direction of the stars, I ended by painting a whole galaxy of stars that are beautiful but which I will never directly see. They are brought to us by the old Hubble telescope, which tells me to believe that such a sight exists. It struck me that it is not because I see the images of scientific research that I believe they are true. I believe they are true because of something that I cannot see, namely, that space-scientists are being truthful. The image is exciting; it is beautiful, because it bears the truth of its beautiful exis-

tence. What do I experience with an image like that? I was just doodling with a pencil at first trying to get a feel for something so far beyond me. Then it seemed to be so packed with energy that I was moving around the galaxy with my paint brush with enthusiasm and enjoying trying to capture its unusual beauty. With this image, the focus is on the beauty that the image holds in itself without anyone's response or reaction. And the strange thing about this image is that it is not still and unmoving like a still-life painting. Instead it is an unimaginable, massive area in space where everything is action and reaction, where all is movement and interdependence due to gravity and heat. Such a vast area of movement, billions of miles across, is compressed onto a small 80 x 60 cm of canvas.



Icon of Mary the Bearer of God, 'written' by Colm Brophy based on the original icon.

PETITION

First Friday:
3rd March 2023

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All petitions received are placed on our Sacred Heart altar, and Mass is offered by the Editor each Wednesday and Friday for our readers and promoters.

Send to:
The Sacred Heart Messenger,
37 Leeson Place,
Dublin, D02 E5V0, Ireland.

The Resource for Junior Certificate Religion Studies
by Jacqueline Flattery

Ireland's Patron Saint



The feast day of St Patrick is celebrated each year on the anniversary of his death, 17 March. It is a special day for Irish people in Ireland and those who live in other parts of the world. St Patrick is one of the patron saints of Ireland, along with St Bridget and St Columba. St Patrick is best known for spreading Christianity throughout Ireland as a missionary during the fifth century. A missionary is a person who goes into a community to teach them about Jesus Christ.

Life of St Patrick

Most of what we know about St Patrick comes from writings by the man himself, the *Confession* and the *Letter to Coroticus*. St Patrick was born in Britain when it was part of the Roman Empire around 386 CE. When he was about sixteen years old, he was captured and sold into slavery in Ireland. He was forced to work as a shepherd and lived in Ireland for six years. During this challenging time, he turned to prayer and his faith in God grew strong.

One night, St Patrick had a dream that a ship was waiting to bring him back to his family. He ran away and found a ship that took him home to Britain. Later, he had another dream where heard the voices of the Irish people calling him to come back and help them learn more about Christianity. St Patrick did not want to go back to Ireland, but he trusted in God, and so he returned. As soon as he got to Ireland, he knew he had made the right decision.

St Patrick travelled all over the country, baptising people and teaching them about God. He is thought to have

brought Christianity to Ireland. He used a shamrock as a metaphor to help explain the complicated concept of the Trinity – the Christian belief that there are three persons in one God: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Shamrock is a type of clover with three leaves, each one representing a person of the Trinity. Irish people began to wear shamrock to honour St Patrick around his feast day. Every year on St Patrick's Day, the taoiseach visits the White House and presents a bowl of shamrock to the president of the USA. This is to symbolise the special relationship between Ireland and America.

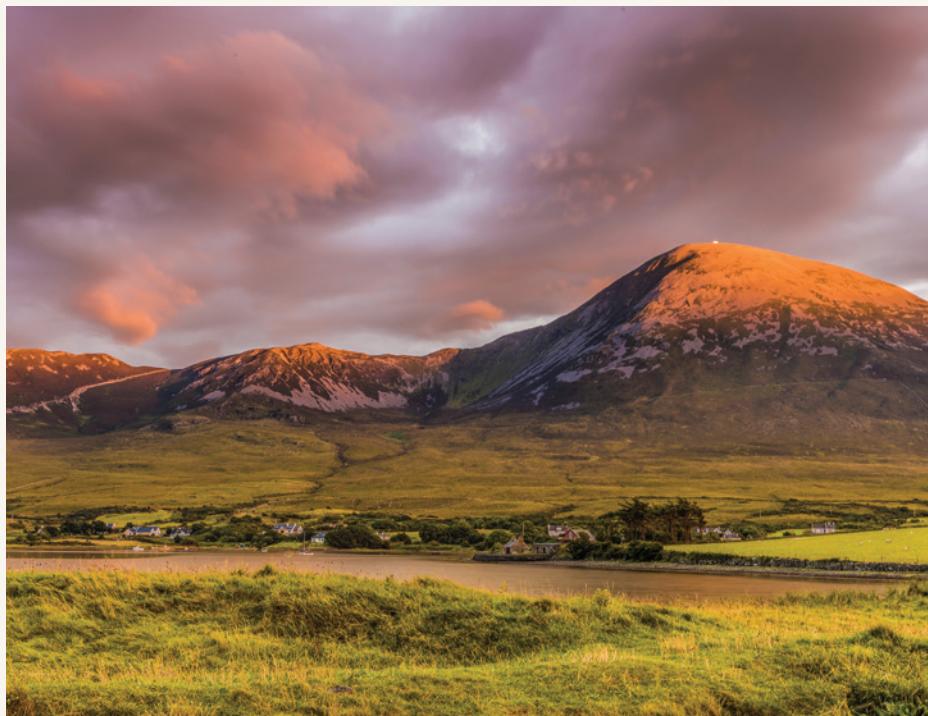
Source: The Story of St Patrick www.scoilnet.ie



Croagh Patrick

Croagh Patrick is one of Ireland's most famous landmarks and is known as Ireland's Holy Mountain. It is located just outside the town of Westport, County Mayo. The mountain, which is 764 metres high, is particularly associated with St Patrick. The name Croagh Patrick, in Irish Cruach Phádraig, means Patrick's Stack. According to tradition, in 441 CE St Patrick spent the forty days of Lent praying and fasting on the mountain top. It was at this time that he was trying to convert Ireland to Christianity. It was on Croagh Patrick that St Patrick was said to have driven all the snakes out of Ireland. It is unlikely that snakes or reptiles ever existed in Ireland due to the climate, but this legend is thought to symbolise St Patrick introducing Christianity to the country and banishing evil.

A pilgrimage is a journey a person



Croagh Patrick is a 764 m mountain and an important site of pilgrimage in Mayo

or pilgrim makes to a holy place. The mountain was an important place of pilgrimage before the time of St Patrick. Before Christianity, Ireland was a pagan, polytheistic country. People believed in many gods and goddesses and had a close connection to nature and the changing of the seasons. After Christianity came to Ireland, some of the pagan holy places became Christian holy places, in a process called inculcation. This means that pre-Christian practices were changed and adapted to suit the Christian message and given a new meaning.

In ancient times, people climbed Croagh Patrick to celebrate Lughnasa, the grain harvest. Croagh Patrick contin-

ues to be a special place of Christian pilgrimage today. It is estimated that 100,000 pilgrims climb Croagh Patrick each year. Since ancient times, many pilgrims have climbed the mountain barefoot, as an act of penance. The official day of pilgrimage is the last Sunday in July or 'Reek Sunday'. Thousands of people climb from midnight throughout the day, and Mass is celebrated and confessions are heard in the chapel at the summit. The small church on top of Croagh Patrick, known as St Patrick's Chapel, was built by locals in 1905. It is believed that there has been a chapel or place of worship on the site since the fifth century.

There are three pilgrimage stations on the way to the summit of Croagh Patrick:

First Station: Base of the Mountain

- Walk 7 times around a mound of stones while saying 7 Our Fathers, 7 Hail Marys, 1 Creed.

Second Station: The Summit

- Kneel and say 7 Our Fathers, 7 Hail Marys, 1 Creed.
- Pray near the chapel for the Pope's intentions.
- Walk 15 times around the chapel while saying 15 Our Fathers, 15 Hail Marys.

- Walk 7 times around Leaba Phádraig (Patrick's Bed) saying 7 Our Fathers, 7 Hail Marys, 1 Creed.

Third Station: Roiligh Mhuire

- Walk 7 times around each mound of stones saying 7 Our Fathers, 7 Hail Marys, 1 Creed.
- Walk 7 times around the whole enclosure of Roiligh Mhuire praying.

Source: Croagh Patrick www.mayo-ireland.ie

Video Link

This short video provides a good summary of the life of St Patrick and the history of his feast day – search St. Patrick's Day: Bet You Didn't Know on www.youtube.com.

Did You Know?

- The first St. Patrick's Day parade took place in America not in Ireland! It was on 17 March 1601 in a Spanish area of Florida called St Augustine.
- In 1772 a group of Irish soldiers who were in the English army marched in New York City on St Patrick's Day. This eventually developed into the New York City parade, which is

the largest in the world. It has over 150,000 participants and 3 million people line the streets to watch it each year!

- Every year, the Chicago River is dyed green in honour of St Patrick.

Sources: *The History of St Patrick's Day* www.history.com

St Patrick's Breastplate

The following is an extract from a prayer written by St. Patrick. It is a powerful prayer of hope and has an important message for those facing difficult times:

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

Learning Outcomes Associated with this Topic:

1.4 investigate how Christianity has contributed to Irish culture and heritage

1.6 examine and appreciate how people give expression to religious belief in religious rituals, in formal places of worship and other sacred spaces.

A Synodal Church

Nicola Brady is chair of the Irish Bishops' steering group on synodality. She has taken part in media discussions and written in national media on synodality.



As chair of the synod steering committee my hope for the Church of the future is that it will be one in which synodality is deeply embedded across all areas of Church life. We are still learning about what that might look like in practice. In our synodal journey to date we have seen the transformative power of deep and respectful listening, with positive stories in the media about welcome, hospitality and hope. There have also been disappointments, such as the lack of attention to issues of social justice, both close to home and in the wider world. This article offers some brief reflections on five characteristics of the synodal Church that I hope

we will develop for the future.

An authentic synodal process is Christ-centred. It is about so much more than a good conversation, although this will often be an important part of the experience. Pope Francis has been very clear that a synodal Church is a missional Church — a Church that, rather than being inward-looking and obsessed with its own internal dynamics, is equipping itself to be a field hospital at the service of a wounded society. The invitation to be part of the synodal journey is an invitation to know Christ and experience His healing presence in our lives, while also feeling inspired and supported to

The journalist Gavin Esler was similarly inspired on witnessing the visit of Pope Francis to Bahrain in November 2022.

Admitting that he was initially sceptical about what a visit of this nature might achieve, he was deeply moved on seeing the impact of friendships that cross deep divides.

share that gift with others.

To help us share our faith, we need to better understand the barriers that come between people and the love of Christ, and the role the local parish can play in promoting a culture of welcome and belonging. Already we are seeing that this listening is making our Church more pastorally-sensitive and responsive to the circumstances that are impacting people's lives and wellbeing. During the local listening phase, which took place between October 2021 and April 2022, dioceses took the opportunity to have conversations on the impact of Covid-19, something that was traumatising and isolating for many people. Without the synodal process we may not have been intentional in providing that much-needed space to help us come back together as a community. The winter of 2022 has been dominated by a cost-of-living crisis with a similarly isolating effect which requires great pastoral sensitivity as a community. Synodality provides

us with the tools to open up conversations about these situations and the many others that can leave people feeling marginalised, such as family circumstances, personal relationships, physical or mental health, poverty, unemployment or homelessness. Underlying all of this work is the recognition that we are still coming to terms with the devastating failings in the Church's response to the abuse crisis and the need for focussed attention and training to ensure our local parishes are safe spaces for victims of all violence and abuse.

Ireland's National Synthesis for the Universal Synod notes that the rich resource of the Social Teaching of the Church, did not feature as much as might have been hoped during our synodal conversations of 2021–2022. It is worth reading the global synthesis of the contributions of the over one hundred other bishops' conferences throughout the world, the 'Working Document for the Continental Stage', to be inspired and challenged by the voice of the Church in other parts of the world who speak out of the reality of war, religious persecution, famine and climate breakdown. There is undoubtedly great generosity and service to the poor and most vulnerable in the Irish Church — especially St Vincent de Paul and Trócaire as just two examples — but people are perhaps not being sufficiently supported to connect this work to their spiritual and prayer life and to the work of mission.

Speaking during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2022, Bishop Brian Farrell described the synodal process as an opportunity for every local community to open their doors to 'a new and deeper ecumenical relation



in their area'. Progress on this aspect of the work has been slow to date in Ireland, despite the fact that it promises to greatly enrich our synodal journey through the learning from synodal practices in other denominations, and the hopeful witness of the unity in diversity that is modelled when we come together from our different traditions around our shared faith in Christ.

When I launched Ireland's national synthesis during the Knock novena in August 2022, I shared about an encounter with an Imam who expressed his love for Pope Francis, stating that he considered him 'a unifying figure for peace'. The journalist Gavin Esler was similarly inspired on witnessing the visit of Pope Francis to Bahrain in November 2022. Admitting that he was initially sceptical about what a visit of this nature might achieve, he was deeply moved on seeing the impact of friendships that cross deep divides: 'This was not talk about "diversity". It was diversi-

ty brought alive, with concrete plans to take this message to a wider audience'. By strengthening our sense of our own Christian faith, and equipping us to better share that faith in a multicultural society, the synodal process has the potential to address the fears that can prevent us from offering the hand of friendship to those outside of our faith community.

The guiding question for the national synodal pathway for the Irish Catholic Church is 'What does God want from the Church in Ireland at this time?' In this article I have outlined some of the responses that arise when I reflect on that question. Everyone reading this will have their own ideas, hopes and priorities. I hope that you have had the opportunity to join the synodal conversation in your parish or diocese, or, if you have not yet, that you will in the near future, because the work of shaping the Church of the future needs your voice and perspective.

Empty Homes in a Housing Crisis

Peter McVerry SJ is a regular contributor to
The Messenger on social issues.



Derelict tenement building in Dublin's inner city

In every city, town and village in Ireland empty, boarded-up premises are to be seen, an eyesore which impacts on the quality of life of residents of the community. On the night of the census, 3 April 2022, there were 166,752 empty homes in Ireland, excluding holiday homes. Some of them were empty for good reasons: maybe the occupants were on holidays or staying with friends on that particular night, some may have been up for sale, or

part of the Fair Deal scheme for elderly people in nursing homes, or tied up in legal disputes over ownership, or advertised for rent but not yet occupied or in serious disrepair. Nevertheless there are tens of thousands of empty residential buildings that could be brought back into use for those who are homeless or on the housing waiting lists.

There are three government-funded schemes that seek to bring empty

homes back into use:

1. Repair and Lease Scheme.

This offers financial support to owners who cannot afford to fund the repairs needed, who then lease the property to the local authority at an agreed rent. The value of the repairs is gradually offset against this rental payment over the course of the lease.

2. Buy and Renew Scheme.

This scheme allows the owner of a vacant property to sell it to the local authority who will then undertake the repairs themselves. The Housing Agency also has a fund for purchasing vacant properties from financial institutions and investors. A new €50 million Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund will also support bringing vacant and underused buildings in our towns and villages back into residential use.

3. Long Term Leasing Initiative.

This allows owners of vacant property that is in good condition to lease the property to the local authority for up to twenty-five years. This provides a guaranteed income to the owner of up to 85% of the market rent over the period of the lease.

While these schemes are worthwhile, the uptake has been very disappointing. The target for such schemes up to 2021 was 5,600 but only 1,672 were actually achieved. Returning vacant homes to use is quicker, cheaper and better for the climate than building new homes from scratch. However, identifying the owners of vacant homes and negotiating with them to bring them back into use is time consuming and local authorities may not have the resources to do so

on the scale that is required. In the eighteen months from January 2021 to June 2022, Waterford local authority brought forty-one units back into use, Limerick twelve, Clare ten, Mayo nine under the Repair and Lease Scheme, but sixteen other local authorities brought only one, or even none, back into use, suggesting a lack of urgency or priority in allocating the resources needed.

What is required? A dedicated vacant homes officer in each local authority area, increased use of compulsory purchase orders where no action is being taken by owners, specific year-on-year targets for each local authority area and a punitive vacant homes tax, where a property is vacant for a certain period of time for no good reason. If every local authority emulated Waterford, in 2023 we could add over 1,200 residential units under the Repair and Lease Scheme alone.

There are over 25,500 Airbnb properties in Ireland, many of which are not registered and, where required, do not have planning permission. If it were illegal to advertise a non-compliant Airbnb property, and illegal for the Airbnb platform to accept such advertising, we could bring another 10,000 properties, at least, back into residential use. Again, there is no good reason why we cannot have 5,000 modular units in place in 2023.

Addressing the housing crisis more effectively is possible. Perhaps it requires a minister for housing who is angry enough to get things done, to demand more action from some local authorities, to speed up the planning process, to challenge land speculators and other vested interests. It can be done, but will it?

Who Is This Fr Browne?

A look back at the life of a well-known Jesuit photographer,
adapted from www.jesuit.ie by the editor.



Few can claim to have seen as much in their life as Francis Browne, sailing on the Titanic, serving in the First World War, travelling the world. Not only did he live it but, as an amateur photographer, he also recorded his life and experiences, allowing us today immeasurable insight into that period in our history.

Born in Cork in 1880, Francis Browne was the youngest of eight children. His mother died of puerperal fever not long after his birth, and his father died

in a swimming accident when he was nine. Browne was taken care of by his uncle, Robert Browne. After finishing school in Dublin in 1897, Browne went on a grand tour of Europe, seeing France and Italy. For his travels, his uncle bought him his first camera as a present, and this began Browne's lifelong interest in photography.

Upon returning to Ireland, Browne entered the Jesuit novitiate in Tullabeg. He studied at the Royal University of Ireland in Dublin, where he was class-

mates with James Joyce. He taught in Belvedere before his ordination and founded its first camera club, which is still to the good today and gave many pupils, including your good editor, a chance to learn about photography, go on photographic tours and print their own black and whites (mine are still in excellent condition today!).

In 1911 he began studying theology in Milltown. The following year, his uncle gave him a ticket aboard the newly built ship *Titanic*, to sail from Southampton to Queenstown, now Cobh. Browne brought his camera, as was his hobby, and took many pictures. When he arrived in Queenstown he would have continued on the crossing to America, but was told in no uncertain terms by his Provincial to return to Dublin, ‘Get off that boat!’. When word arrived days later of the sinking of the *Titanic*, Browne realised how valuable his photographs were and sold them to various newspapers leading to their publication all over the world.

Browne was ordained in 1915, and the following year was sent to Europe where he served as chaplain to the Irish Guards. During his time in the service, Browne was at the Battle of the Somme, at Flanders, Ypres, and many other places on the frontline of the war. He was wounded on five occasions, and was awarded a military cross and bar for valour in combat. During this time too he took photographs, recording life at the frontline. His commander said of him: ‘Fr Browne was the bravest man I ever knew’. He was decorated as a military chaplain during the First World War.

Returning to Dublin in 1920, Browne experienced recurring ill health from his time in the war, and was sent to

Browne was ordained in 1915, and the following year was sent to Europe where he served as chaplain to the Irish Guards. During his time in the service, Browne was at the Battle of the Somme, at Flanders, Ypres, and many other places on the frontline of the war.

Australia in 1924. Never parting from his camera, he took countless photos of the places he saw on his way over, as well as in Australia. After returning, he was appointed superior in Gardiner St community where he oversaw the first sound system in the church. He was later appointed to the Retreats and Mission staff, and travelled all across Ireland. By the time of his death in Emo novitiate in 1960, Browne had taken photographs in many parishes in Ireland. He developed his own negatives and there are stories of the community going to take a bath and finding his negatives in ‘fixer’ in the bath! When his negatives were discovered twenty-five years later, there were in the order of 42,000 of them, which have since been restored. Twenty-three volumes of his work have now been published and the importance of his work has been recognised internationally.

His best-selling book is *Travelling on Titanic* revised recently. Other books are *Wandering Wicklow with Fr Browne*; *Fr Browne’s First World War*; *The Life and Lens of Fr Browne*, all available from Messenger Publications and edited by EE O’Donnell SJ.

Teriyaki Salmon

Trained chef Seamus Buckley prepares a gentle teriyaki salmon, followed by the perfect partners in raspberry and white chocolate muffins.

My first recipe this month is for a teriyaki salmon. It is full of gentle far-east flavours and is quick to marinade and cook. I like to serve this simply with a basmati rice.

Ingredients – 4 servings

- 4 fillets of salmon
- 50 g / 2 oz honey
- 1 tbs sesame seeds (optional)
- chopped spring onions for garnish
- 120 ml soy sauce
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 25 g / 1 oz ginger, chopped finely
- 1 red chilli, sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- salt

Method

- Prepare the marinade by mixing the soy sauce, lemon juice, ginger, chilli, garlic and sea salt together.
- Mix the salmon into the marinade, cover, and marinate for 15-30 minutes.
- In a large pan with a little oil, pour in the marinade and add the honey and sesame seeds.
- Mix together until it starts to bubble.
- Add the salmon and gently fry for a couple of minutes on each side.
- The sauce will thicken and put a nice glaze on the salmon.
- When cooked take off the heat and garnish with more sesame seeds, spring onion, red chilli.

Raspberry & White Chocolate Muffins



My second recipe is for raspberry & white chocolate muffins. Often you find foods that seem to be made for each other. White chocolate and raspberries is one of those flavour combinations. They compliment each other perfectly.

Ingredients

- 300 g plain flour
- 1 tbsp baking powder
- 100 g caster sugar
- 100 g butter
- 2 large eggs
- 200 ml butter milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 150 g fresh raspberries
- 100 g white chocolate cut into small chunks

Method

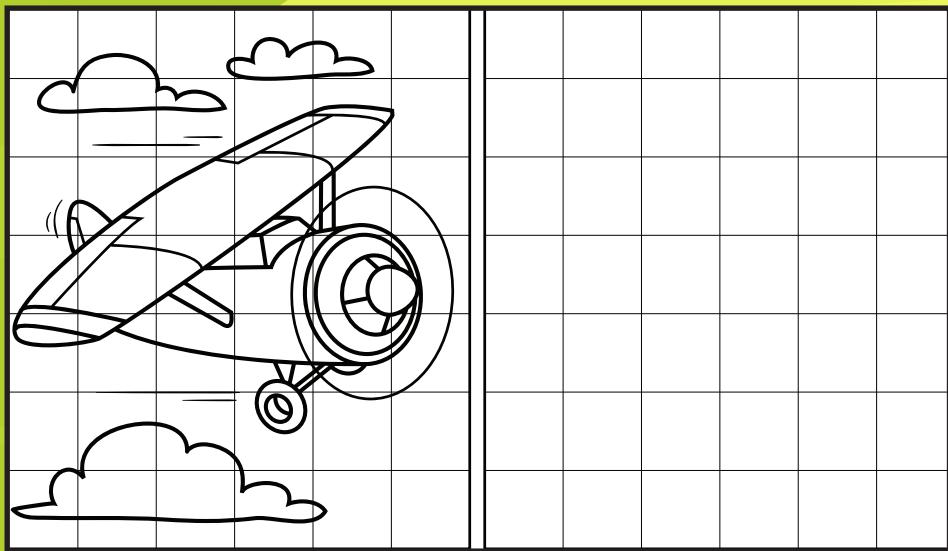
Preheat oven to 180°C. Line your muffin tin with 12 paper cases.

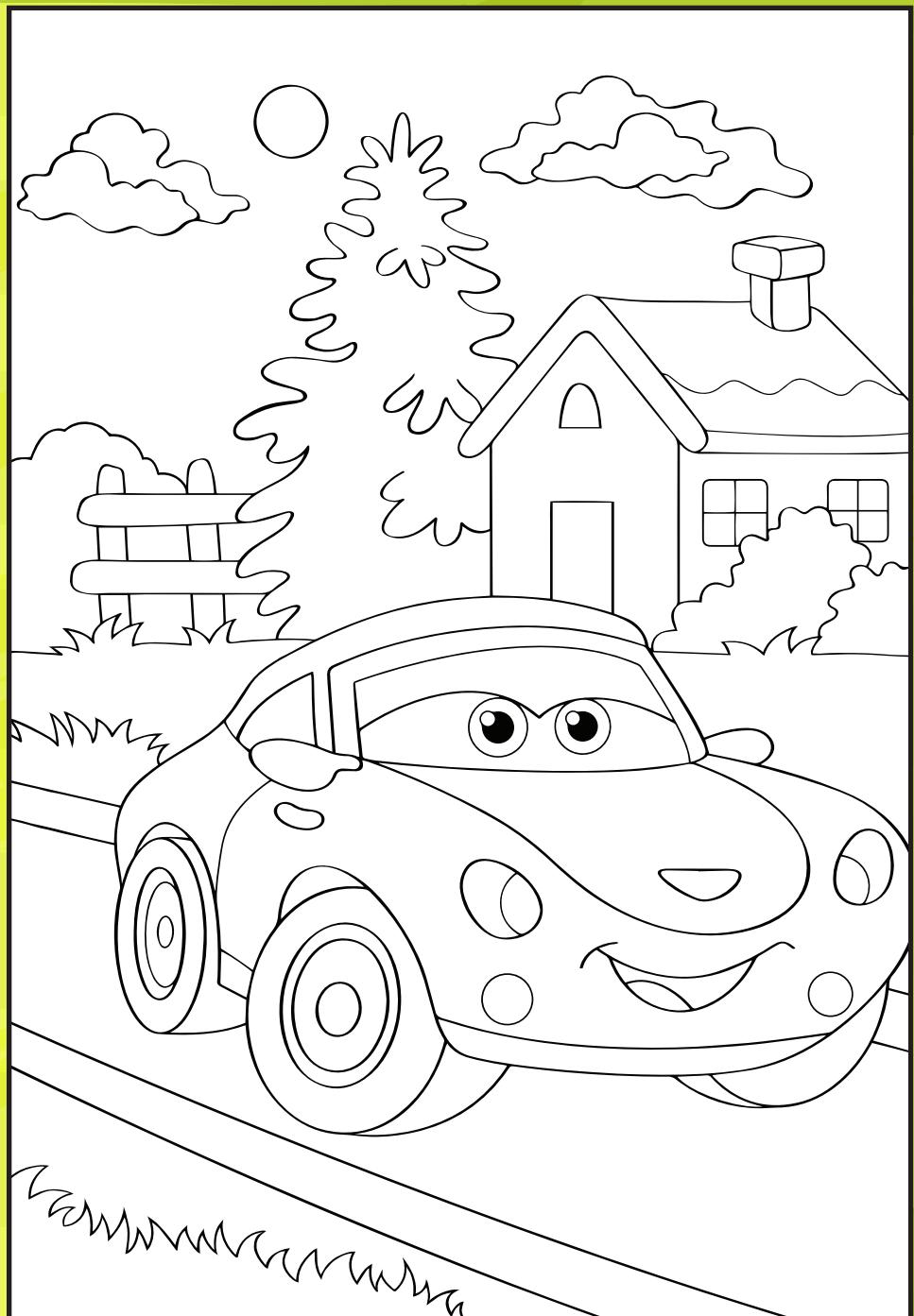
- Sieve the flour and baking powder into a large bowl.
- Add the sugar.
- Melt the butter.
- In a separate bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk and vanilla extract.
- Pour the melted butter and the egg mix into the flour.
- Stir but take care not to over mix.
- Stir in the raspberries (holding 12 back) and the white chocolate chunks and stir them into the mix.
- Spoon the mixture between the cases.
- Dot with the remaining raspberries. Cook for 20–25 minutes until golden. Let the muffins cool a little before tucking in.



Childrens Pages

Copy the aeroplane, follow the maze and colour in the car!





ADULT CROSSWORD

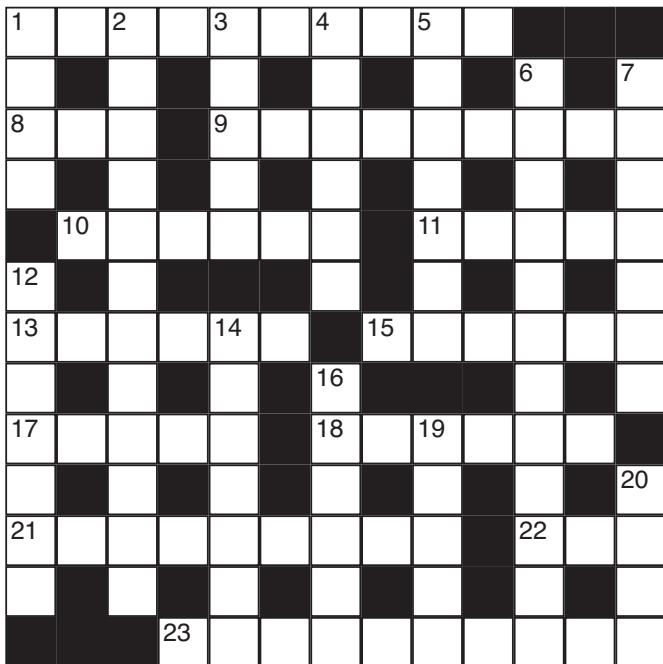
WIN A €50



VOUCHER!

Name: _____
Address: _____

Send to: Adult Crossword 03, Messenger Publications,
37 Leeson Place, Dublin, D02 E5W0, Ireland, by 24th
of the month.



Across

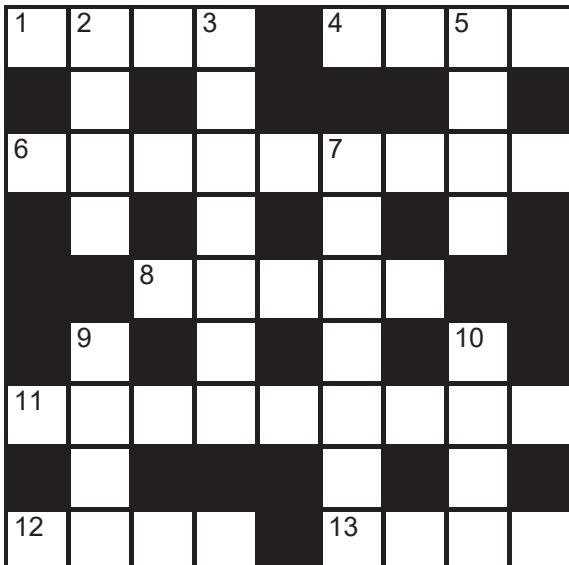
- 1 Not country ladies in the guild? (10)
- 8 Prohibit most of the orchestra (3)
- 9 Noticed variety record included in illusion (9)
- 10 Dull boy taken in by snake (6)
- 11 One alternative (5)
- 13 Fat again brought back from pantry (6)
- 15 Untape potential fruit from the ground (6)
- 17 Expression of impatience about paint (5)
- 18 Song of praise the man composed (6)
- 21 Start, took courses that come into existence (9)
- 22 It surrounds some of these archipelagos (3)
- 23 Opposition movement (10)

Down

- 1 & 20 Set the table (8)
- 2 Seat in Berkshire? (7,5)
- 3 Walk sideways, is led astray (5)
- 4 Take up space in hold (6)
- 5 Go off in a rage? (7)
- 6 It is possible perhaps when not out of one's senses (6,6)
- 7 In the account Ruth told a lie (7)
- 12 Found in some drinks cool Hal mixed (7)
- 14 Unaccompanied cellist? (7)
- 16 Mails a concoction of garlic sausage (6)
- 19 Pinching the feet (5)
- 20 See 1 down

A €50 voucher for the first correct adult solution opened and a €30 voucher for the first correct children's solution opened. Judge's decision is final. Entries must reach us by the 24th of the month.

CHILDREN'S CROSSWORD



**WIN A €30
One4all
VOUCHER!**

Name: _____

Age: _____

Address: _____

Send to: March Children's Crossword, Messenger Publications, 37 Leeson Place, Dublin, D02 E5V0, Ireland, by 24th of the month.



Across

- 1 A thought on the way to a solution (4)
- 4 Painful (4)
- 6 Pastime (9)
- 8 Small forested area (5)
- 11 Way of serving eggs (9)
- 12 Get rid of wrinkles from clothes by pressing (4)
- 13 Disney character from 2013 film (4)

Down

- 2 Get rid of (4)
- 3 European country with many ski resorts (7)
- 5 Position in a police force, for example (4)
- 7 Not fixed (7)
- 9 Evidence of an earlier wound (4)
- 10 Used by anglers to retain their catches (4)

December 2022 Crossword: Solutions and winners

Adult Crossword December Across: 1 Address book; 9 Cased; 10 Cleaner; 11 Re-elect; 13 Wiped; 14 Out; 15 Phlox; 16 Cwm; 17 Optic; 19 Dungeon; 21 Granary; 23 V-sign; 24 Nationality.

Down: 2 Dissent; 3 Ridge; 4 Sac; 5 Beeswax; 6 Own up; 7 Scarborough; 8 Predominant; 12 Tiled; 15 Peccavi; 16 Chemist; 18 Tiara; 20 Novel; 22 Yen.

Children's Crossword December Across: 1 Size, 4 Urge, 6 Eyes, 7 Robe, 8 Idle, 9 On, 10 Near, 12 Grey, 14 He, 15 Envy, 16 Also, 17 Mice, 18 Safe, 19 Tray. **Down:** 1 Strangers, 2 Zebra, 3 Eye, 4 Using, 5 Everybody, 11 Rhyme, 13 Ruler, 16 Act.

Adult's Crossword Winner December: M L McFaulk, Co Antrim

Children's Crossword Winner December Aaron Dowdall, Co Cavan

An Tobar Retreat House

For an occasional series on retreat houses, Ronan Barry writes of An Tobar, outside Navan, giving an account of its history and what is on offer.

An Tobar (The Well) is located just outside Navan, County Meath, in the townland of Ardblaccan. Also, located in this townland is the Holy Well of St Ultan, and it was this link that inspired the Holy Ghost Missionaries, now called the Spiritans, to name their residence and retreat centre, 'An Tobar'. An Tobar is now the centre of Spiritan spirituality in Ireland and is an ideal place in which to nourish the spirit as well as the mind and body.

Since 1956, members of the Spiritan congregation have been resident here, and while An Tobar is known as a retreat house, it also has strong connections to the local community. The retreat centre is situated on grounds adjacent to a woodland and lake, and it has facilities to accommodate up to twenty-two people and host large groups, but it is best known for its welcoming spirit and hospitality for all.

Parallel to running a year-round programme, there are many activities located in the grounds including a men's shed programme, a local scout group, a support service for children with disabilities as well as other local groups. This engagement with the local community gives An Tobar a unique ambiance that is rooted in people's



daily lives.

Responding to the daily life and the spiritual needs of people, the Spiritan community living at An Tobar recognise the sacred pilgrimage that people journey on. Acknowledging the reality of life, the Spiritan community at An Tobar offers many events and initiatives in its programme that respond to people in an environment that fosters justice, peace, sustainable living and the care of the earth.

Starting with reflective Sunday Eucharists, the approach to all events is rooted in an openness to the Spirit and the Word of God sustained by prayer and way of life. Each of the events offers a hospitable space for sharing with fellow pilgrims at key liturgical and non-liturgical moments during the year. Reflection days and retreat programmes are offered at Christmas, Advent, Lent and Easter and many other moments throughout the



calendar.

The Spiritan community offers accompaniment, programmes for the deepening of faith and prayer, poetry nights and other spaces that support the holistic development of the participant. An Tobar also offers a reflective space for parish-based groups, parish pastoral councils as well as school retreat programmes. The school retreat schedule offers two core elements: a confirmation programme and a second-level programme.

Confirmation is an important moment in the life of a child and has been described as the sacrament of maturity. This retreat programme offers time to young people to think and pray what this might mean. Central to the confirmation programme are the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Students are encouraged to explore the meaning of ‘Life in the Spirit’, enabling them to actively participate in the reception of the sacrament

and beyond. The confirmation retreat day is divided into workshops exploring community, prayer and meditation, mission and the care of the earth.

Secondary school is an important time in a young person’s life. In recent times Pope Francis has emphasised the importance of accompaniment and prayer in the life of young people. Our secondary-level programme aims to accompany and to creatively engage young people. We use various age-appropriate forums including meditation, pilgrimage, music and prayer. Together, we explore the Gospel, following Jesus who said, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind’, and ‘Love others as well as you love yourself’ (Mt 22:37–40)

An Tobar is a Spiritan community that is a welcoming place for all on pilgrimage in this world. Should you be passing its door, you are welcome to ‘come and see’.

Laudato Si' Action Platform

Jane Mellett is the Laudato Si' Officer for Trócaire and also works with the Laudato Si' Movement. She is the co-author of *The Deep End* series (Messenger Publications). She writes about the Laudato Si' Action Platform and its seven Goals.

In November 2021, Pope Francis launched the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform, a seven-year programme for the Church to live out the call to care more deeply for God's creation. The platform is based around achieving seven *Laudato Si'* Goals (LSGs) across seven Church sectors over seven years – a jubilee for the earth. These sectors include: families and individuals, parishes and dioceses, educational institutions, healthcare institutions, organisations and groups, businesses, and religious orders. As the ecological crisis and its effects continue to worsen around the globe, we are invited as individuals, families, parishes and schools to engage with this *Laudato Si'* Platform. But what does this involve?

The first of the seven LSGs is called a Response to the Cry of the Earth. This is a call to protect our common home for the wellbeing of all, as we address the climate crisis alongside biodiversity loss and try to live more sustainably. Under this goal we are reminded that both the climate and biodiversity crisis are inextricably linked and need to be addressed together if we are to safeguard our world for generations to come.

The big actions for this goal include switching to more renewable sources of energy, in the home, school and parish and introducing energy saving measures. However, each LSG has a low, medium and high ask, so we could begin to look at energy use simply by conducting an energy audit for our parish buildings and seeing what might be realistically possible from there. Installing more efficient appliances when they are due to be replaced is one possible action. In Ireland, we can explore the grants that are available to parish communities in order to switch to renewable sources of energy. Over time, this can save a parish money while also witnessing to the call to care more deeply for creation by moving away from fossil fuels.

The first LSG also includes the call to protect biodiversity, and perhaps for families and parishes this is a good place to start. As Spring arrives, we can look at the land around our churches, graveyards, schools and our homes and consider planting pollinator friendly flowers and plants, which can replace a boring lawn. We can all engage with local groups to plant Irish native trees where appropriate, restoring them to the landscape. There are



many local and national groups, under the banner of the National Tree Council, who are looking for communities to work with. People can also check out the Faith Community Pollinator Plan as a handy place to start. The first LSG also invites us to promote sustainable agriculture, and guarantee access to clean water for all.

Hosting workshops locally on litter and recycling also comes under the first LSG, as a means to address what *Laudato Si'* calls a 'throw-away culture'. We might consider what it really means to live in a circular economy – where everything that is produced can be either repaired, recycled, upcycled, reused etc. Inviting the wider community to workshops on such issues can be a means of sharing church teaching on care for creation and seeing where local groups could collaborate with the

parish or school. There are lots of local groups already leading the way on solutions. Engaging the expertise that is already out there will be essential for church groups who wish to move forward on these LSGs. *Laudato Si'* is a document which embraces dialogue on all of these issues.

Most of us are overwhelmed when it comes to the environmental crisis but the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform is a way forward, a roadmap, a gift. As we continue our Lenten journey, each of us can discern where we are called to act. Go to www.laudatosiactionplatform.org. Perhaps your family, school or parish could consider signing up?

'Your unique "culture, experience, involvements, and talents" are needed on our journey towards greater love for our Creator, each other, and the home we share' *Laudato Si'*, 14.

Revival of Mámeán Shrine

The pilgrimage site at Mámeán in County Galway is reputed to be the mountain pass where St Patrick saw the western coast for the first time. Fr Micheál Mac Gréil describes some of the recent history of the pilgrim path.



Maumeen-Pass, two thousand years ago it was an important Celtic shrine.

Mámeán (the pass of the birds) is a Patrician shrine on a pass in the Maamturk Mountains between Recess and the Maam Valley in North Connemara. It is in the tradition of Croagh Patrick (southwest Mayo). Both shrines were places of popular divine worship in Pre-Christian times. It is believed that St Patrick visited the shrine, blessed the Holy Well and slept on a stone flag while there. (The stone flag has been chipped away by devout pilgrims over the years). By degrees, Mámeán became a major place of Christian

pilgrimage over the years.

According to 'Aistir an Iarthair', St Patrick visited Mámeán in 441 AD on his way from Kilmaine to Aghagower and Croagh Patrick. Throughout the centuries the annual pilgrimage to Mámeán became a very 'popular pattern' with a wide range of activities, as well as prayers and devotions. During the early part of the twentieth century the extra-curricular celebrations were not approved of by the clergy and Mámeán began to lose its attraction in favour of Croagh Patrick and 'Cnoc Mhuire'

(Knock). Support declined to a few loyal families.

In July 1979, I offered Mass at St Patricks Bed (Leaba Phádraig) in Máméan for an Irish Language Youth Camp (Ógras) and local residents. At the end of Mass £34 were left on a rock beside the Leaba, and I suggested that we use it to build a proper altar (Carraig Aifrinn) voluntarily. I also promised to offer Mass there every year as long as my health would enable me.

During 1979–80 a voluntary committee was founded (Coiste Mháméan) with Michael Conroy as chairperson, Caitín Bean Uí Thiarnaigh as secretary and Lorna Keogh as treasurer. A public altar and the Stations of the Cross were constructed voluntarily under the leadership of Tommy Coyne, a local stonemason.

On the first Sunday of August 1980, Archbishop Joseph Cunnane of Tuam consecrated the altar and I was given the privilege by the Archbishop of formally establishing the Stations of the Cross (Turas na Croise).

Two major annual pilgrimages were established, i.e., Mass and Stations of the Cross every first Sunday in August and Stations of the Cross every Good Friday. Both ceremonies would commence at 3pm. ‘Caoineadh na dTrí Mhuire’ (in totality) would be sung and a list of the local dead (who passed away during the year) would be read out and remembered. All ceremonies would be in the Irish language.

The revival of the Máméan Pilgrimage was much greater than expected. Large numbers of pilgrims attended. In 1985, a small chapel was built to mark the 1600th anniversary of the birth of St Patrick in 385 AD, also a beautiful statue of St Patrick (as a Shepherd) was

Image: CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org>.



Maumeen Chapel at Máméan Pass in County Galway

created by Clíodna Cussen and a new Holy Well was blessed by Archbishop Neary in 1993 to meet the demands of the pilgrims. The path to the altar on both sides was duly repaired by local schemes. Archbishop Francis Duffy led the pilgrimage in August this year.

Two other artists deserve mention. Sculptor John Coffey of Westport created the Máméan Cross (a copy of which is on each of the stations). The images on each station were created by Sister Pius (Margaret Dyer) of Westport Convent of Mercy, as were the four portraits on the stained-glass windows in the chapel of Our Lady, St Joseph, St Bridget and St Patrick.

Note: ‘Máméan’ translates as ‘pass of the birds’, and you can notice small birds swooping in and out of burrows under large rocks with views through the Maamturk mountains to the peaks of the Twelve Bens. The Máméan walk is part of the Western Way Hike. Many seminarians of Tuam archdiocese helped in the development of the pilgrim site.

St Patrick: An Everyday Saint

Fr Gerard Condon is the director for Mission and Ministry in the diocese of Cloyne and parish priest of Killavullen. He takes St St Patrick off the pedestal, and presents a man of abilities available to us all.

We like to think of St Patrick as a wonder-worker, ‘the Irish Moses’, as one historian called him, who singlehandedly evangelised the island, banished serpents and, according to one legend, had the power to melt mountains. The truth is more mundane. The fifth century saw a number of Christian missionaries in Ireland, among them Palladius, who was sent by Pope Celestine in 431 AD, ‘to the Irish believing in Christ’. The particular success of St Patrick’s mission was his ability to translate the Gospel into the local culture, a model of evangelisation known as inculcation. The more fanciful stories about him date from several centuries after his life. Their purpose was to embellish the reputation of the monasteries who claimed him as their founder.

Fortunately, we can still gain insight into the real St Patrick, thanks to his surviving writings. His *Confession* is the earliest Christian text from Britain or Ireland and a rich source of spiritual theology. In it, St Patrick expresses his humility, describing himself as ‘a sinner, a simple country person and the least of believers’ (*Confession*, 1. Translation by Pádraig McCarthy for the Royal Irish Academy). He attributes the success of his mission to divine grace, rather than

his own abilities. He ends the short account of his mission to Ireland with the words: ‘It was a gift of God’ (C, 62).

Historians believe that St Patrick was born into a well-to-do Christian family in Roman Britain towards the end of the fourth century. At that time, Great Britain had become vulnerable to raids by Irish pirates, especially following the withdrawal of the Roman garrison to mainland Europe in 407 AD. It was during one such raid that sixteen-year-old St Patrick was captured and sold into slavery, ‘along with thousands of others’ (C, 1). He ended up tending sheep on an Irish hillside in appalling conditions.

The sufferings St Patrick endured brought about a profound religious conversion. Of his previous life, he said, ‘I did not know the true God’ (C, 1); St Patrick prayed continually, up to one hundred times, day and night. His faith in the Lord’s presence strengthened St Patrick’s resolve. After a few years, thanks to a series of providential events, he escaped and managed to find his way back to his family. ‘They welcomed me as a son, and they pleaded with me that, after all the many tribulations I had undergone, I should never leave them again’ (C, 23).



Saint Patrick Catholic Church, Junction City, Ohio. Stained glass detail, photo by Nheyob.

His experience in Ireland had changed St Patrick forever. In his night dreams, he heard the call of the Irish: ‘We beg you, holy boy, to come and walk again among us’ (C, 23). These dreams were followed by others where he heard ‘authoritative words’, which he attributed to the Holy Spirit, affirming his vocation to return to Ireland as a missionary. He awoke from these dreams ‘full of joy’ (C, 24). He experienced what St Ignatius of Loyola would term ‘consolation without previous cause’.

There followed a time when the authenticity of St Patrick’s vocation was tested by Church authorities. They may have been critical of the extent to which St Patrick wanted to evangelise the Irish. Thanks largely (though not

exclusively) to St Patrick, Ireland would be the first nation outside the Roman Empire to hear the Good News. Like St Paul before him, St Patrick believed that the Good News should be carried to the ends of the earth.

According to one ancient tradition, his training as a clergyman took him to Lérins, in the French Riviera, where St Honoratus had founded a monastery in 410 AD. The language of the *Confession* shows St Patrick’s familiarity with the Bible, and it is especially influenced by the theology of St Paul. Paragraph four of the *Confession* is a fine summary of the Christian faith, a rewording of the Nicene Creed which was, in St Patrick’s time, a recent addition to the Church’s teaching.

Of the sources for St Patrick’s faith,



Lérins Abbey is a Cistercian monastery on the island of Saint-Honorat on the French Riviera.

spirituality and mission, the most surprising has to be his night dreams. There are seven distinct dreams or dream-like visions reported in the *Confession*. Some of the dreams gave St Patrick assistance to make good his escape from his captivity in Ireland. This type resembles the practical guidance given through dreams to St Joseph and the Wise Men in the Gospel of Matthew.

In the dream he remembers in paragraph 25, St Patrick sees in himself another being ‘one who was praying. It was as if I were inside my body ... above my inner self. He prayed strongly, with sighs.’ St Patrick understands this mysterious figure as the inner voice of God’s Spirit, reassuring him with words he could not find himself. He links the dream with the theology of prayer in St Paul’s Letter to the Romans

(8:26–30).

St Patrick clearly trusted at least some of his dreams as representative of God’s presence. Other saints of the early Church, among them Ss Perpetua, Jerome and Augustine of Hippo, had a similar faith in the ability of dreams to communicate God’s love and purpose. It was only centuries later, as theology became more dogmatic and rational, that suspicion grew around the use of nocturnal dreams in Christian spirituality.

We tend to put our most successful saints on a pedestal and wonder at the marvels of their miracles and achievements. In truth, most of the time they were drawing on their human courage, their constant prayer, the study of their faith and reflection on their interior experience. These everyday abilities and processes are available to us all.

Lenten Reading

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Spirituality



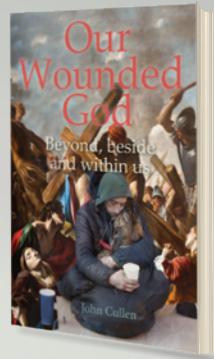
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Faith Matters, The Irish News



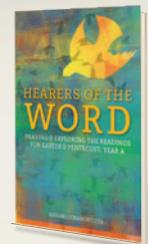
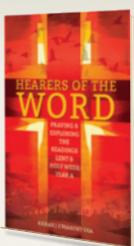
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March 2023

Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
5 2nd SUNDAY OF LENT	6 Listen to my Beloved Son Mt 17:1-9 St Kieran	7 St Perpetua St Felicity	8 You are all siblings Mt 23:1-12	9 St John of God	10 St Francis of Rome	4 St Casimir
You will get only one sign Lk 11:29-32	Avoid making your authority felt Mt 20:17-28	Awareness of the other's distress Lk 16:19-31	Control your anger Mt 5:20-26	Love those who hate you Mt 5:43-48		
12 3rd SUNDAY OF LENT	13 The importance of dialogue Jn 4:5-42	14 Jesus is rejected at home Lk 4:29-30	15 How often must I forgive? Mt 18:21-35	16 Keep to my teaching Mt 5:17-19	17 First love God and love your neighbour Mt 12:28-34	18 St Cyril of Jerusalem
The man was cured at once Jn 5:1-16	The people were amazed Lk 11:14-23	Whoever believes has eternal life Jn 5:17-30	Be fruitful, not greedy Mt 21:33-43, 45-46	Compassion for the lost son Lk 15:1-3, 11-32		
19 4th SUNDAY OF LENT	20 Joseph take Mary as his wife Mt 1:16, 18-21, 24a	21 St JOSEPH Husband of Mary	22 St Enda	23 You have no love of God in you Jn 5:31-47	24 The Jews were out to kill him Jn 7:1-2, 10, 25-30	25 The Annunciation
I was blind but now I see Jn 9:1-41	Joseph take Mary as his wife Mt 1:16, 18-21, 24a	The man was cured at once Jn 5:1-16			The Lord is with you Lk 1:26-38	
26 5th SUNDAY OF LENT	27 I am the resurrection Jn 11:1-45	I do not condemn you Jn 8:1-11	I am not of this world Jn 8:21-30	28 I have come from God Jn 8:31-42	29 I have come from God Jn 8:31-42	30 They wanted to arrest him Jn 10:31-42



And then he told them,
‘Go into all the world
and preach the Good
News to everyone
Mark 16:15

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