

St. Nicholas News

Francis Street Parish, Dublin 8. ---- 01-4530387 ---- 01-5611390



13 August 2017

PRIESTS TURN TO SUICIDE AS WORKLOAD AND ISOLATION INCREASE



The lot of the Irish Catholic priest today is probably at its most difficult since Catholic Emancipation in 1829. Over recent months a series of regional meetings organised by the Association of Catholic Priests (ACP) has been attended by priests from dioceses throughout the island. Each meeting has heard similar stories of an ageing cohort of

clergy struggling with isolation, dropping income, an increasing workload, mental health issues and an overriding sense of futility. This latter is inspired by knowledge that an older, 19th-century model of church is disappearing with no indication yet as to what the future will bring.

Yet it still came as a shock to many to hear that as many as eight Irish priests have died by suicide over the past decade, as those regional meetings were told by members of the association's leadership team.

One of that team is Fr Tim Hazelwood, parish priest at Killeagh in rural Co Cork. At 58, he is towards the younger end of Catholic clergy in Ireland, whose average age now is approaching 70.

He recalled that another feature of the ACP regional meetings was the sense of futility on the part of priests at "upholding the past as more and more work was piled on".

He remembered a priest in his 40s at one meeting remarking how he dreaded to hear people say "you have great ability/are a great worker" as it would mean he "could be loaded with three or four more parishes".

And all this in a context "where the future is not known yet and few dioceses have had any dialogue about it with priests and laity, apart from the synod in Limerick," he said.

He quoted association colleague Fr Brendan Hoban, who wrote recently that three Irish bishops have acknowledged what the ACP has been saying for years about "the catastrophic decline (almost disappearance) of vocations to the priesthood and its implications for the survival of the Catholic Church in Ireland".

Fr Hoban noted too that the three bishops - Denis Nulty of Kildare, Ray Browne of Kerry and Francis Duffy of Clogher - were all in their 50s.

"In other words, they're going to be bishops for almost 20 years, which means that unlike other bishops with just a few years to go, they can't find refuge in the famous lateral deflection - 'It'll do in my time,'" Fr Hoban said.

It was time "for a direct distress call" to Rome, he said.

Fr Hazelwood said there are now six parishes in Kerry with no priest. Closer to him in Cork, there were four churches near Youghal. He wonders how they would be kept maintained and open. His own church in Killeagh needs a new roof. As for Dublin, "I don't know how they will do it at all [maintain all the churches in the archdiocese]."

Yet in all such instances priests felt "we have to keep it going", even while income in parishes was also dropping.

As a parish priest, he is paid €28,000 a year, plus his house and a work-related phone allowance. His car, clothes, food, electricity and other living expenses come from his income.

A curate's income would be lower still. Few if any priests in Ireland are paid the equivalent of the average annual income, put at €36,919 by the Central Statistics Office last year.

"Older people are the ones, traditionally, who are best at supporting the priests but as they die off they are not being replaced," he said.

Parishoners in rural parts, however, remained "pretty good" at supporting priests.

To uphold their health, priests have to look after themselves, take time off, take holidays and have a support group if they are to avoid the consequences of isolation, overwork, burnout and worse, he said.

He takes his own advice on this too. But it is also a consolation to know that people in his own parish "are hugely supportive. The faith is still there."

He believes the higher incidence of suicide among priests over recent years is due "to a mixture of reasons" but some are related to accusations of child abuse. It remained the case that an accused priest "is presumed guilty" by the church authorities until proven

NOTICES

Money Matters

Sunday 06 August 2017

Thank you for your contributions.

1st Collection: p255

2nd Collection: p280

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Remembered at Mass

Recently Deceased:

Alan Norman, Sean Maken,
John McDonnell Funeral Tues 10am

Sat 6pm: Patricia Farrell (Months Mind)

Sun 11.30am: Fr. Con Curley,
John & Kathleen Dolan, Mary,
Joseph & Kevin Doyle, Richard &
Kathleen Tracey, Margaret and
Patrick Dowdall, Fr. Maurice
Reidy.

otherwise and is treated accordingly.

He claimed guidelines from the church's child protection watchdog, the National Board for Safeguarding Children, on dealing with such priests were being ignored by the church authorities, with sometimes fatal consequences.

Audits on whether those guidelines were being implemented must be undertaken by the board, he said.

When accused priests know how colleagues in similar circumstances in the past had been treated by church authorities, it can prove too much. "Being faced with that is one of the worst things that can happen [a priest]", he said.

*Courtesy Patsy McGarry
Irish Times*



Culture Night 22 September

Culture Night will take place on Friday 22nd September, hosting arts and cultural organisations and venues of all shapes and sizes. Special and unique events and

PIETA HOUSE: 1800247247

SAMARITANS: 116123

AWARE: 1800804848

workshops are specifically programmed at participating locations and everything is available free of charge. There is always so much to see here in Dublin 8, so save the date! Culture Night has grown from a relatively small scale cultural event staged only in Dublin in 2006 to the significant national cultural event it now is, with some 350,000 people visiting museums, galleries, historic houses, artists' studios and cultural centres across the country. The initiative has captured both the public imagination and the enthusiasm of artists and cultural organisations.

Among the D8 events this year are:

Outdoor film under the iconic St Patrick's Tower at Culture Night first timers The Digital Hub
Family friendly workshops at Gallery Zozimus on Francis Street
Exploring the Rebel Liberties with historian Liz Gillis
The art of spinning, weaving and all things wool at The Constant Knitter
Admiring John Hogan's 'Pieta' and a 'Harry Clarke' in beautiful St Nicholas of Myra Church on Francis Street
'After the Future' exploring the area's industrial history and the future of work at Robert Emmet CDP on Usher Street
Delving into the Guinness Archive at the Guinness Storehouse on Market Street South
Creative theatre workshops with Outlandish Theatre Platform in the Rita Larkin Theatre, The Coombe Hospital

Full details: www.culturenight.ie



19TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

A reading from The First Book of Kings 19:3 -13

Elijah was afraid and fled for his life; he took his servant and went to Beersheba in Judah.

Leaving the servant there, Elijah walked a whole day into the wilderness. He stopped and sat down in the shade of a tree and wished he would die. "It's too much, Lord," he prayed. "Take away my life; I might as well be dead!" He lay down under the tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said, "Wake up and eat." He looked around and saw a loaf of bread and a jar of water near his head. He ate and drank, and lay down again. The Lord's angel returned and woke him up a second time, saying, "Get up and eat, or the trip will be too much for you." Elijah got up, ate and drank, and the food gave him enough strength to walk forty days to Sinai, the holy mountain. There he went into a cave to spend the night. Suddenly the Lord spoke to him, "Elijah, what are you doing here?" He answered, "Lord God Almighty, I have always served you—you alone. But the people of Israel have broken their covenant with you, torn down your altars, and killed all your prophets. I am the only one left—and they are trying to kill me!"

"Go out and stand before me on top of the mountain," the Lord said to him. Then the Lord passed by and sent a furious wind that split the hills and shattered the rocks—but the Lord was not in the wind. The wind stopped blowing, and then there was an earthquake—but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake there was a fire—but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the soft whisper of a voice.

When Elijah heard it, he covered his face with his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God

Psalm 84

Let us see, O Lord, your mercy and give us your saving help.

I will hear what the Lord God has to say,
a voice that speaks of peace.
His help is near for those who fear him
and his glory will dwell in our land. R/

Mercy and faithfulness have met;
justice and peace have embraced.
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth
and justice look down from heaven. R/

The Lord will make us prosper
and our earth shall yield its fruit.
Justice shall march before him
and peace shall follow his steps. R/

Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.
O God, be gracious and bless us
and let your face shed its light upon us. R/

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia!
My Soul is waiting on the Lord,
I count on his word.
Alleluia!



Gospel

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew 14:22-33

Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he would send the crowds away. After sending the crowds away he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, while the boat, by now far out on the lake, was battling with a heavy sea, for there was a head-wind. In the fourth watch of the night he went towards them, walking on the lake, and when the disciples saw him walking on the lake they were terrified. 'It is a ghost' they said, and cried out in fear. But at once Jesus called out to them, saying, 'Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid.' It was Peter who answered. 'Lord,' he said 'if it is you, tell me to come to you across the water.' 'Come' said Jesus. Then Peter got out of the boat and started walking towards Jesus across the water, but as soon as he felt the force of the wind, he took fright and began to sink. 'Lord! Save me!' he cried. Jesus put out his hand at once and held him. 'Man of little faith,' he said 'why did you doubt?' And as they got into the boat the wind dropped. The men in the boat bowed down before him and said, 'Truly, you are the Son of God'.

This is the Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Daring

Said a disappointed visitor, "Why has my stay here yielded no fruit?" "Could it be you lacked the courage to shake the tree?" said the Master benignly.

From "One Minute Wisdom" by Anthony de Mello

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL COLLECTION THIS WEEKEND. PLEASE BE AS GENEROUS AS YOU CAN. THANKS
