



Ancient Order of
HIBERNIANS
IRISH • CATHOLIC • AMERICAN

Ohio State Board

Newsletter

December 2024

Volume 6, Issue 12

President's Message



Brothers,

As we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, I want to wish all of you and your families a safe and blessed Christmas season.

I was glad to see so many of you at our November State Board meeting. As I've stated many times, it is important that we meet in person to share our division successes and let other divisions know how to emulate them. I appreciate all of your hard work in helping to move our State forward.

If your Division is installing a new President in December or January, please make sure you get the new President's contact information to State Secretary Pete Chrystal and myself.

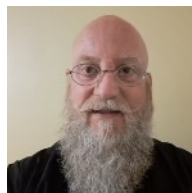
Thank you for all of the Divisions that have donated to the annual Christmas Appeal. If your Division has not donated, please do so. Any amount helps.

Nollaig Shona Duit

Denny



Chaplain's Comments



Brothers, we are starting a new liturgical year and getting ready to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord; the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. We call it Christmas. Why is Christmas such an important day for the Church? Why is Christmas such an important day for us?

Christmas is an event in history, but not just any history; salvation history. Christmas celebrates the coming of the Incarnation; God in the flesh. In Jesus Christ the incarnate Word of God; and through the Holy Spirit, God came to earth to reveal himself fully to mankind. In Jesus, we receive the gift of salvation and eternal life. Without Jesus, we would not have the expiation of our sins through the Paschal Mystery, that is His suffering, death and resurrection. Therefore, without Jesus, we would not have the opportunity to be saved. We are here to celebrate the gift of salvation that God offers to the entire world.

This celebration starts with the season of Advent; the time of preparation to receive the Christ child into the world. John the Baptist was the herald who proclaimed the coming of the messiah, the savior. Mary, the Immaculate Conception, created without the stain of original sin, to be prepared to receive the gift of the Incarnation, freely accepted God's will as her own and followed her call to become the Christ bearer, the Mother of God. Then, in the small manger in Bethlehem, Jesus comes to us as a small child, the son of Mary, born of the Holy Spirit, the Living Word, God in the form of man, fully human and fully divine; to bring hope, reconciliation and salvation to the world. These events in history are precursors for what we experience in our lives today. They prepare us to receive the gift of Christ in the world, and in our hearts.

We have been given the greatest gift of all in Jesus Christ. We have been given a chance to share in life eternal with the Father. In our Baptism we are adopted brothers and sisters in Christ, and we are made new creations in Christ. We become members of the

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Chaplain's Comments, cont.

living body of Christ, the Church. In this relationship to God, and one another, we are called to live as brothers in Christ.

While Jesus was alive, he demonstrated exactly what that means. His was the will of the Father. All he did and said provides us with examples of the Father's will being lived out in everyday life. Following the will of the Father, even to the point of death, Jesus gives us a model to follow in our lives. If we live as Jesus showed us, we will grow in faith and love, and we will grow closer to God. We will better understand His will, and more importantly, gain the knowledge of how we can best live His will in our life.

This is sometimes a difficult task with the distractions of the world around us constantly demanding our attention. Thankfully, we have the opportunity to gather as a faith community and celebrate the Liturgy of the Mass. The Mass centers our life and our attention to what is truly important. We receive the Word of God in the Scriptures. We hear them and let them settle in our hearts. In the Homily, we receive interpretation, instruction and guidance on what the reading mean to our lives and how we can apply them to everyday living. In the Hymns and Psalmodies, we sing praise and adoration to God. We give thanks for the gift of the Incarnation and we offer praise to God for generous gift of the Eucharist. We will have the opportunity to sing with the Angels and all the hosts of heaven as we sing His glory of praise. We have the opportunity to share the Most Holy Eucharist, which should be received with as much excitement and wonder as we had the first time we experienced it. The Mass and the Sacrament of Holy Communion are gifts from God that Jesus brought to prominence and instituted in the Church so the faithful can participate in the life of Christ and receive grace from God.

God's grace is the only thing that allows us to share in His life and affords us the opportunity to share in life eternal. The gift of Jesus Christ is our saving grace. In Jesus, we come to know our creator better. We are all called, in our Baptism, to live the life of Christ. As we come to receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, reflect on our relationship with Him. Know that we receive the gifts of mercy and forgiveness in the Eucharist. Understand that we are united to God and one another in the communion of Christ. Give thanks for the opportunity to share in God's gift of eternal life. Be grateful that God loves us so much that he sent us the gift of the Christ child; Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

Brothers, as we enter into the new Liturgical year, let us contemplate the importance of the historical events in the life of the Church and recognize how they are not happenstance events, or a bunch of different occurrences that have nothing to do with one another, but are a cohesive set of events that together detail God's plan of salvation for the world. In preparing to receive Christ into the world this Advent is our opportunity to herald the coming of the Lord just as John the Baptist did. It is our chance to proclaim His coming and tell others to prepare. We will not only be celebrating Christmas as the coming of Christ into the world, but celebrating the beginning of the events that are part of Salvation History, the events that show how God's plan of salvation to save all his creations and allow them to share in eternal life have played out in history and will be played out in our lives, as history has a wonderful way of repeating itself.

Have a blessed Advent and wonderful Christmas.

Deacon Bruce

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Jim Casey's New Email Address

jjcasey973@icloud.com

Newsletter News

Just a reminder. If you have information for our monthly newsletter, please send it as an attachment to an e-mail to Editor, Jim Casey at

jjcasey973@gmail.com

The **deadline** for articles is the **24th of the month.**

Ohio State Board Information

Brothers,

Below is the press release that National President Sean Pender asked me to share with you regarding yesterday's testimony of the Pat Finucane family to the Lantos Commission in the U.S. House of Representatives. If you would like to view the hearing, please see the link below:

[Northern Ireland: The Patrick Finucane Case - YouTube](#)

During the testimony, Geraldine Finucane, Pat's widow, mentioned the Ancient Order of Hibernians as being one of the groups committed to bringing this case to justice. These are the type of things that we support with the money we raise from the annual Christmas Appeal. If your division has not donated, please do so. Make a difference. If you don't think our voice can be heard in Northern Ireland all the way from Ohio, watch the video.

In Motto

Denny Parks

AOH OH State President

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HIBERNIANS BACK FINUCANE FAMILY DEMAND BRITISH ENQUIRY MUST BE CREDIBLE AND CAPABLE

National President Sean Pender has issued the following statement on behalf of the Ancient Order of Hibernians:

“Hibernians pledge to back the Finucane family’s call to help insure that Britain’s independent enquiry into the death of slain Civil Rights lawyer Patrick Finucane is credible and capable of delivering the truth. We make this pledge after being deeply moved by their Congressional testimony today, as we have been repeatedly moved by the Finucane family during their courageous 35 year battle for justice. We further commend Congressmen Chris Smith and James McGovern for holding today’s Lantos Commission hearing, and providing a Congressional platform about the murder which has such serious implications for the issue of legacy justice across the north of Ireland.

“Just as the Ballymurphy Massacre families and Bloody Sunday families revealed the truth of British Army killings and cover-ups, the Finucane family have exposed the patterns of British crown collusion behind Pat Finucane’s murder and hundreds of others.

“As Geraldine Finucane noted Pat’s murder ‘was part of an approved British government policy’ in which the British Army, British intelligence services and Royal Ulster Constabulary Special Branch conspired with loyalist paramilitaries to commit the murder of a solicitor for daring to oppose the crown using British law in British courtrooms.

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President Pender's Statement Cont.

“The Finucane family has fought for a public enquiry only because no other legal mechanism could establish the facts when so much British state involvement was involved. As Michael Finucane, observed, during the conflict ‘killings by Republican paramilitaries were heavily investigated, and people prosecuted, while the consistent experience of relatives of victims killed by the RUC or British military or even loyalist paramilitaries was of minimal investigation and no accountability.’

“Now the Finucane family’s objective is to see that any British enquiry is truly credible and capable of delivering the truth.

“Commenting on Labour’s approach on British legacy legislation, solicitor John Finucane, noted that Keir Starmer the new British Prime Minister had promised to repeal and replace the legacy act, but had made the mistake of now endorsing the ICRIR Commission created by the legacy act which he had pledged to repeal. The ICRIR denied families any ‘ability to get in and ask questions or be represented’.

The AOH is gratified that we were acknowledged by Geraldine Finucane as one of the groups which has given support to the family’s fight for justice. We pledge to continue to stand behind the Finucane family in their campaign for truth”.



Ancient Order of
HIBERNIANS
Irish Catholic American
Freedom for All Ireland Committee

**Mark Your Calendars****2025 State Convention****Akron, June 26 - 29****2026 National Convention****Omaha****Jim Casey's New Email Address****jjcasey973@icloud.com**

Veteran Affairs Report

1. I hope everyone enjoyed their day on Veterans Day!
2. Christmas is approaching and Saint Nicholas of Myra is packing his gear. He, along with Saint Brendan the Navigator, are the Patron Saints of the US Navy.
3. The Patron Saints of all in the Military, in general, are Saint Michael the Archangel, Saint George, Saint Joan of Arc, Saint Adrian of Nicomedia, and Saint John of Capistrano.
4. Saint Joseph of Cupertino, Patron Saint of pilots, and Our Lady of Loretta are associated with the U.S. Air Force.
5. Saint Sebastian, St. Maurice, Saint Martin of Tours, and Saint Ignatius of Loyola are Patron Saints of the US Army.
6. Saints Brendan the Navigator and Saint Barbara are Patron Saints of U.S. Marines. Saint Barbara is the Patron Saint of all artillery men.
7. <https://www.military.com/history/why-army-and-marine-corps-artillery-celebrate-saint-barbaras-day.html>
8. <https://www.catholiccompany.com/getfed/who-are-the-patron-saints-of-each-military-branch/>
9. https://www.army.mil/article/205174/chaplains_lead_st_michaels_jump

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Doug Gerrard Veteran Affairs Chair

5131-615-7469, Dpgerrard@aol.com

State Organizer's Report

We had a good State Board Meeting in early November which was well attended.

During the meeting, it was mentioned of a new application process coming out in the first quarter of 2025, which means we have to have ALL open applications closed by the end of the year; preferably sooner than that. I have sent the spreadsheet of the open applications to those division presidents affected and have had some good responses from them. Most of these applicants have already been contacted by us, but in some cases, they have either not responded or not decided to join. When that is the case, we will go on and close them. If the person wants to apply again in the future, they will use the new process. There are also a couple applications we are forwarding for consideration for At-Large membership.

When our State Secretary receives the 2025 Form 9s from the divisions I will get the names of the division organizers and try to set up some type of interaction between us to help in recruitment and retention. It is important for division presidents to fill out all of the appointed positions to allow the committees to operate smoothly within the State Board.

Here's wishing all my brothers a blessed Christmas season spent with family and loved ones.

Thank you and God bless.

Joe Casey

State Historian's Report

By: J. Michael Finn, State Historian

The Belfast Harp Festival of 1792



The harp has been used as a musical instrument in Ireland from the earliest times. So important was the harp that its image became a symbol representing Ireland and Irish nationalism.

In ancient Irish mythology the first harp in Ireland was owned by the Dagda of the Tuatha de Dannan. These tales tell of its theft and recovery by Lugh, the chief god of the Celts.

The harp became Ireland's own unique instrument, and subsequently, its national emblem. History tells us that the people who played it were highly trained professionals who usually performed for the nobility. They were held in very high regard and were often asked to accompany a poet who was giving a reading. Interestingly, these superb Irish musicians played with their fingernails and not with their fingertips as is done today.

It was expected in Ireland that to become an accomplished harper the player had to be skilled enough to produce a melody so sad, it would make his audience weep, an air so jubilant it would make everyone smile, or a sound so tranquil, it would lull the listener to sleep (*the player of an Irish harp, by the way, is known as a **harper**; those who play the larger concert harps are known as **harpists***).

The period starting from the 1600s during English rule in Ireland was a very difficult time for Irish harpers as the harp as a folk and court instrument was outlawed to prevent a resurgence of nationalism. Harps were burnt and harpers often executed.

Ireland has been the home of many noted harpers. The most noted harper was Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738). He was a blind itinerant harper who made his living writing music for the wealthy sponsors who provided him with food and shelter. It is said he composed over 250 pieces of music.

In 1791, over fifty years after the death of O'Carolan, residents of Belfast founded the Belfast Harp Society. This group was led by prominent citizens of Belfast including, Doctor James MacDonnell, Robert Bradshaw, and Henry Joy. They recognized the fact that many of the traditional harpers had died and the ones playing at that time were aging. Preserving the tradition and music of the harp was their chief aim. To accomplish this in 1792 they organized the first Belfast Harp Festival. Invitations were sent to all counties in Ireland offering monetary prizes for the winners of the festival.

Eleven harpers responded to the society's invitations. They were: Dennis Hempson (blind, age 97); Arthur O'Neill (blind, age 58); Charles Fanning (age 56); Daniel Black (blind, age 75); Charles Byrne (age 80); Hugh Higgins (blind, age 75); Patrick Quinn (blind, age 47); William Carr (the youngest participant, age 15); James Duncan (age 45); and Rose Mooney (the only female participant, blind, age 52). The eleventh player was a Welshman, named Williams, who played the unique Welsh triple-strung harp.

Harper Arthur O'Neill received Dr. MacDonnell's invitation while he was staying with the O'Reilly family in County Cavan. At first he refused the invitation, but he noted: "In consequence of my rheumatism I felt my own incapacity, as I had not the use of the two principal fingers of my left hand...Mr. O'Reilly would take no excuse, and swore vehemently that if I did not go freely, he would tie me on a car, and have me conducted to assist in performing what was required in the advertisement before mentioned."

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State Historian's Report, cont.

The festival began on July 10, 1792 and lasted four days. The first prize of 10 guineas was awarded to Charles Fanning, and the second prize of 8 guineas was awarded to Arthur O'Neill. All of the other participants received 6 guineas. After the festival all of the participants were liberally entertained at the home of Doctor MacDonnell.

Although he won the competition, it was recorded that Charles Fanning may not have been the best performer, but that he won by playing "The Coolin" (*An Chúilfhionn*, in Irish, means "the fair-haired maiden"). This was a piece of music that, at the time, was much in vogue with younger musicians. Most at the festival agreed that Arthur O'Neill should have taken first place in the competition, despite the handicap of his "rheumatism."

Doctor MacDonnell realized that it was necessary that the festival music be preserved and recorded. To accomplish this he hired a young Belfast organist named Edward Bunting, to record the music. In those days, recording meant writing down note-for-note each piece of music. As important as the presentation of the music by these harpers was, Edward Bunting's work at the festival was of tremendous importance.

Bunting was born in the town of Armagh in 1773, his mother was the daughter of an Irish piper named Quinn and his father was an English mining engineer. As a young student Edward began playing the organ and progressed so rapidly in his studies that he soon outclassed his teachers and older musicians. Not only did he excel in music but also in the mechanical skill to tune and repair instruments. At age 19, Bunting was approached by Dr. MacDonnell to preserve the music of the harp festival musicians.

Bunting was so inspired by the music at the festival that for the next four years after the festival he travelled around Ireland collecting and recording traditional music. This effort was financed by Dr. MacDonnell. In 1796 he published his first volume, *A General Collection of the Ancient Irish Music*, containing sixty-six native Irish airs never before published including the music that he had recorded from the festival. His second volume published in 1809 was also called, *A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland* and contained 77 pieces of music. A third volume, published in 1840 contained 165 pieces of music. Bunting's books also contain a narrative history of Irish music and musicians. Thomas Moore later drew on Bunting's work, adding matchless words to the collected airs in his popular Irish Melodies.

While Bunting gained fame from his many publications, he was not a financial success and his works were often pirated by unscrupulous publishers. He was married at age 46. He died suddenly on December 21, 1843 at the age of 70 in Dublin. He is buried in the Dublin General Cemetery in Mount Jerome. Without the pioneering work of Dr. MacDonnell and, particularly, Edward Bunting, many of the traditional tunes we know and enjoy today would have been lost.

If you would like to read more about the early music, musicians and instruments of Ireland you should read *Irish Minstrels and Musicians* by Captain Francis O'Neill (1913). It is an excellent historic work containing the biographies of many now obscure Irish musicians and their contributions to our grand musical heritage.

Enjoy the many Irish festivals this summer and patronize the traditional Irish musicians of today who still perform and preserve the ancient Irish music of our ancestors.



Catholic Action

All of December is taken up with Advent and the Christmas season. Advent is a time of preparation for the coming of the Savior. The liturgical color, representative of repentance and humility, is violet, except on the Third Sunday of Advent, traditionally known as *Gaudete* Sunday, when the color rose represents the joy of approaching the Christmas season. The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the patronal feast of the United States and a holy day of obligation, is celebrated this year on December 9, since the usual date (8th) falls on Sunday. The Christmas season begins with the vigil Mass of Christmas. The liturgical color is white.

MAJOR SAINTS AND FEAST DAYS OF DECEMBER

December 3	Francis Xavier, Priest	Memorial
December 4	John Damascene, Priest and Doctor	
December 6	Nicholas, Bishop	
December 7	Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor	Memorial
December 9	The Immaculate Conception	Solemnity
December 12	Our Lady of Guadalupe	Feast
December 13	Lucy, Virgin and Martyr	Memorial
December 14	John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor	Memorial
December 25	Christmas	Solemnity
December 26	Stephen, Martyr	Feast
December 27	John, Apostle and Evangelist	Feast
December 28	Holy Innocents, Martyrs	Feast
December 29	Holy Family	Feast

IRISH SAINTS OF DECEMBER

Finnian of Clonard (c.470-c.549)

December 12

One of at least three saintly Finnians, this Irish saint may have been born at Myshall, Carlow, Ireland. He may have spent some years in Welsh monasteries. Later he founded several monasteries in Ireland, including Clonard, in Meath, which for many centuries was renowned for Biblical scholarship. Though often referred to as a bishop, there is no solid evidence of his consecration, but certainly Finnian served as a mentor and teacher to many who in turn spread the faith throughout Ireland and beyond.

Flannan (7th century)

December 18

Son of an Irish chieftain, he received a monastic education. On a pilgrimage to Rome, he was consecrated bishop by Pope John IV. Upon returning, he settled at Killaloe and is considered its first bishop.

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Catholic Action, cont.**Ursicinus (d.c. 625)**

December 20

Probably an Irishman, he was a disciple of St. Columban on the Continent, founded a monastery at St. Ursanne in present-day Switzerland, and evangelized the local people.

Aileran the Wise (d. 664)

December 29

Nothing is known of Aileran's early life. We know that St. Finian induced him to enter the monastery at Clonard, where Aileran became known as one of the most erudite scholars of this erudite group of monks. He knew Greek as well as Latin, and studied the Eastern and Western Fathers. Aileran's works include lives of Sts. Patrick and Brigid and a commentary on the genealogy of Jesus which was popular in the Middle Ages.

NEWS AND ISSUES

A group called Do No Harm, which opposes elements of woke ideology invading the practice of medicine, recently conducted a survey based upon publicly-accessible insurance records, and found that in 2019-2023 close to 150 Catholic hospitals were providing hormone therapy or puberty blockers and gender-transition surgery to minors, contrary to Catholic teaching and the U.S. bishops' prohibition of Catholic institutions providing such services. Involvement included 520 minors and about 40 states. Much though not all of the activity was in western states. Fourteen hospitals mentioned are in Ohio, a number in the Toledo area. The study was attacked by several of the cited hospital systems and the Catholic Hospital Association (CHA), which represents many of the systems mentioned. But the criticism mounted against the study does not seem to directly address the issue. Bishop Thomas Daly of Spokane has called upon his fellow bishops to convene a special meeting to address this issue.

The American Life League reports that abortion pills from Mexico and India are easily available in states where abortion is illegal or heavily regulated. These pills are available online with no medical supervision. Several federal agencies, including USPS, would appear to be cognizant of this, but appear uninterested in enforcing applicable laws and regulations.

A new book, *The Rock from Which You Were Hewn*, presents brief biographies of over 40 modern Irish Catholic men and women whose canonization processes are in motion. The book is authored by Father John Hogan and Patrick Kenny, and is available from Ignatius Press (www.ignatius.com).

Do you have local news? Please send it along for inclusion in this report. A Merry Christmas to all.

Faternally,

Pat Lally

lally8404@hotmail.com

330-792-7135

Division News


Patrick Pearse Div. #1, Franklin Co.

Patrick Pearse Division #1 members have been selling 50/50 raffle tickets at local pubs to fundraise for our Hibernian Hunger Project donations.



Pro Life Report



Thank you to all who attended the Ohio March for Life at the beginning of October. It is important that we keep giving witness to the sanctity of life for the babies, born and unborn, and also support and love for the mothers. State amendments that would have expanded abortion rights were thankfully defeated in 3 states, Florida, Nebraska and South Dakota. But unfortunately, some states passed amendments expanding abortion rights. Please continue praying and promoting a culture of life so that we can continue to change hearts and minds. As we enter advent and prepare for Christmas, let us remember that God came to us as a little child and that it was through Mary's yes that it became possible. 

Have a Merry Christmas,

Jacob Durda, Pro Life Chair, jacob.durda@gmail.com

The 2025 Irish Budget and Irish Unity: Planning for the Inevitable Cannot Be Ignored

Judge Michael C. Mentel*

The prospect of Irish unification no longer lingers in the ether of aspiration. It has moved to the ambit of reality and must be addressed accordingly. Polling on the unification question bears this out.

In late March of this year, the European Movement Ireland (EMI), an organization operating in conjunction with the Irish Government and the European Union (EU), conducted a comprehensive poll throughout Ireland that included questions on Irish unification.

In the north, EMI's polling found that 47% of northern citizens felt that a united Ireland will happen while 43% felt that unification will not occur. Ten percent of those surveyed did not have an opinion.

In the south, 55% felt that a united Ireland would not occur within the next ten years while the remainder felt it would occur. The poll revealed that 28% of citizens in the north trust the EU as a governing body, 24% expressed trust in the Irish Government as a governing body, while only 8% trusted the British Government and the Northern Ireland Executive, respectively.

The results of the EMI poll are not surprising. Dr. Brendan O'Leary, Political Science Professor at the University of Pennsylvania, speaking at the Irish Unity Summit in New York earlier this year, opined that political support for unification is growing albeit such support would not exist today. To grow support planning and preparation is required.

Former Taoiseach [tēSHək/] and signatory to the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, Bertie Ahern, speaking in Dublin earlier this year stated that unification under the Good Friday Agreement is "the most desirable outcome for people and communities across Ireland." He added that, "[i]t is not a short-

term goal. All of those who believe in change must be committed to putting in the hard yards to build a prospectus that reaches across traditional divides and demonstrates to our unionist [neighbors] that they will be respected, their traditions will be cherished [sic] and their children will be at home in the new Ireland we build together."

Declan Kearney, Sinn Féin MLA, and Chair of the Commission on the Future of Ireland stated that, "the transition towards constitutional change and a new national, democratic, framework of governance in Ireland needs to be carefully planned and resourced...We can do this together. But we need to prepare and plan."

As with any substantive planning process, a budget must be established to make it functional. This is also true with unification. Without a budget, it becomes problematic to conduct the necessary planning in preparation for the reality that is on the horizon.

Taoiseach Simon Harris, leader of the Fine Gael party, stated earlier this year that Irish unification is not a priority. In his first interview as Fine Gael leader, Taoiseach Harris was clear that unification of Ireland is "a legitimate aspiration" however, it is not a priority he will seek as Taoiseach. "That's not where my focus and priority is right now and quite frankly, it's not where I believe our focus and priority should be...The Good Friday Agreement provides that framework. You can [recognize] different political aspirations and a clear pathway for those to be achieved."

Unsurprisingly, when the final 2025 budget was released by the coalition Government in early October, no line item was included for anticipatory planning on Irish unification.

Not so, however, in Sinn Féin's proposed 2025 budget. Included in Sinn Féin's proposal are line items directed specifically towards planning for Irish

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The 2025 Irish Budget and Irish Unity: Planning for the Inevitable Cannot Be Ignored, cont.

unification. Sinn Féin declared that “[w]e need to expand and deepen the level of research on all areas related to Irish Unity. For this reason, Sinn Féin would allocate an additional €8 million [euro] in [the 2025 budget].”

Also included in its proposed budget is a €3 million euro line item for establishment of Citizen’s Assemblies across Ireland to provide citizen input on relevant constitutional changes. Sinn Féin also proposes capital budgeting for cross-border projects and the establishment of a joint Oireachtas [/EH-ræk-təs/] committee to evaluate recommendations on unification.

In April of this year, a contested report was published by the Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA) asserting that unification would cost the Irish Government €20 billion euro a year for twenty years.

The report was authored by Professor Edgar Morgenroth of Dublin City University and Professor John FitzGerald of Trinity College, Dublin. FitzGerald is the son of the late Taoiseach and Fine Gael leader Garret FitzGerald.

The two Professors assert that unification costs, after losing British subsidies and factoring in other budgetary issues, would reach nearly €11 billion euro a year, and increase to €20.5 billion euro a year if pensions and public service pay were paired with those currently in force in the South.

They also assert that these costs could be cut if the north would immediately institute reforms in its educational system. The Professors contend however, that with immediate reforms it would take twenty years before reductions would be felt.

Rejecting the conclusions of the IIEA report, John Doyle of Dublin City University and Dr. Brendan O’Leary of the University of Pennsylvania found that the unification costs asserted in the report are “overblown.” Professors Doyle and O’Leary determined that the IIEA report had overestimated the costs of unification and underestimated the gains achieved financially from Irish unification.

One example that Professor Doyle and Professor O’Leary point out in their critique of the IIEA report is that it incorrectly attributes British pension costs to the Irish Government. According to Doyle and O’Leary, if pensions accrue to citizens of the north before unification takes place, it is the responsibility of the British Government, not the Irish Government, to pay these pre-unification pension accruals.

“Doomsters should be free to dislike the prospect of a united Ireland, but, on current evidence, they are not right to suggest it is likely to lead to the mutual ruin of the North and South,” the two Professors said.

The reality of a unified Ireland cannot be obfuscated. The Dáil Éireann [/dahl AIR-ən/] and the Seanad Éireann [/SHAN-əd(h) AIR-ən/] should consider amending the 2025 budget to include Sinn Féin’s budget proposals for Irish unification. Ignoring the inevitable does not preclude it from arriving. Irish unification will arrive. Planning for it must begin now.

**Judge Michael C. Mentel is the Presiding Judge of the Ohio Court of Appeals for the Tenth District and a member of the Patrick Pearse Div. #1, Franklin County.*

Editor's Note

The following very interesting Article, by Rob Brannan, concerning Artificial Intelligence (AI) is from the **Msgr Donal O'Carroll Div. #1, Washington Co. November/December Newsletter.**

Artificial intelligence (AI) is here, there, and everywhere. You may be familiar with AI tools capable of generating text with names like ChatGPT, Google's Gemini, and Bard. What you may not know is that you probably have interacted with AI-driven tools in unforeseen ways. Have you used a smartphone, social media, or a search engine? Then you have interacted with AI tools. Smartphones use AI for tasks like facial recognition, voice assistants, and optimizing battery life. Social media utilize AI to generate your news feeds, suggest friends, and even predict your behavior. Search engines employ AI to understand your requests and deliver relevant results. The more connected we are, the more likely we are to encounter AI to shape our experiences and influence our choices.

This is the second of four installments that explore how a small AOH division such as ours could utilize AI. I have chosen to use Google's Gemini (gemini.google.com) mainly because it is free and easy to use, and you simply have to write a question (called a prompt) in a box and hit enter to get a response.

My thought processes will be *[bracketed in italics]*, the questions (i.e. prompts) will be underlined and bold, and all of the responses are in Gemini's own words and voice. Ready to enter the world of AI?

Let's go

[My thought process was to request a paragraph about the AOH, and then ask for longer, more detailed essays about our own AOH division.]

Rob's Gemini Prompt: Please write a 300 word paragraph on the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) is a prominent Irish Catholic fraternal organization with a rich history. Founded in Ireland in the 16th century, it gained significant traction among Irish immigrants in the United States, particularly in the 19th century. Originally formed as a protective association for Irish Catholics facing discrimination, the AOH has evolved into a pillar of Irish-American identity. The organization is dedicated to preserving Irish heritage, culture, and faith while promoting civic engagement and charitable works. With a strong emphasis on community and fellowship, the AOH continues to be a vital force in the lives of countless Irish Americans.

Rob's Gemini Prompt: Please write a 500 word essay on Msgr. Donal O'Carroll of Marietta Ohio.

I do not have enough information about that person to help with your request. I am a large language model, and I am able to communicate and generate human-like text in response to a wide range of prompts and questions, but my knowledge about this person is limited. Is there anything else I can do to help you with this request?

Rob's Gemini Prompt: Please write a 750 word essay on the Washington County #1 division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

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A Cornerstone of Irish Heritage: Washington County #1 AOH

The Washington County #1 Division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of Irish heritage and community in the heartland of America. Rooted in the rich tapestry of Irish history, the division has played a pivotal role in preserving and promoting Irish culture while serving as a cornerstone for countless individuals and families.

Founded in [Year], Washington County #1 AOH has been an integral part of the local community. Its members, bound by shared Irish ancestry and a commitment to their heritage, have worked tirelessly to create a vibrant and inclusive organization. Through social gatherings, cultural events, and charitable endeavors, the division has fostered a strong sense of belonging among its members and has become a beacon for Irish pride in the region.

One of the hallmarks of the Washington County #1 AOH has been its dedication to community service. Members have volunteered countless hours to support local charities, schools, and organizations. Whether it's organizing food drives, participating in community clean-up initiatives, or providing assistance to those in need, the division has consistently demonstrated its commitment to giving back.

Beyond its philanthropic work, the AOH has played a crucial role in preserving Irish traditions. The division has organized St. Patrick's Day parades, Irish cultural festivals, and educational programs to educate the public about Irish history and heritage. By showcasing Irish music, dance, and folklore, the AOH has helped to keep the spirit of Ireland alive in the hearts of its members and the community at large.

Furthermore, the Washington County #1 AOH has served as a platform for social interaction and networking. Members have formed lifelong friendships and built strong bonds through shared experiences. The division's gatherings and events have provided opportunities for members to connect with others who share their Irish heritage, creating a sense of camaraderie and belonging.

In conclusion, the Washington County #1 division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians is more than just an organization; it is a living embodiment of the Irish spirit. Through its commitment to community service, cultural preservation, and fellowship, the division has enriched the lives of countless individuals and strengthened the bonds of Irish heritage in Washington County. As the AOH continues to evolve, it is undoubtedly poised to remain a vital force in the community for generations to come.

Note: To enhance this essay, consider incorporating specific examples of the division's achievements, notable members, or significant historical events. Additionally, explore the challenges and opportunities facing the AOH in today's world.

[Rob's thoughts: As you can see, Gemini does a pretty good job at knowing what it knows and letting you know what it does not. Examples above include the fact that it could not find the year we were founded (we were installed on Sunday, July 23, 1978) and that it cannot find any information about the man for whom our division was named (Msg. Donal O'Carroll in 1997). It also added a helpful note to the longer essay about how it can be improved.]