

# Hand over €129k funds, Apollo House group told

CAMPAIGN group Home Sweet Home should give the remaining €129,000 it raised from public donations to existing homelessness charities, Dublin Lord Mayor Brendan Carr has said.

The group made headlines when it occupied the vacant Apollo House in Dublin city last December. During the occupation, it received almost €190,000 in donations, most raised through the fundraising website GoFundMe.

Mr Carr said the group should now hand that money over to charities that have experience dealing with homelessness.

'I am calling upon those with authority over the Home Sweet Home funds to do the right

By **Ciara Mooney**

thing,' he said. 'These monies should be given to any of the several charities and organisations which have for many decades been doing all they can to both raise awareness and effectively deal with this cycle of crises.'

Home Sweet Home spokeswoman Freda Hughes said the group was deciding what to do with its remaining funds.

'We are trying to get all parties to reach an agreement on how to spend the remainder of the donations made and we are already working closely with some small charities,' she said. 'Our fundamental goal is

to ensure we have a watertight plan in place to help those who are in desperate need of housing.

'Down the line, we would like to use the money raised to open a support centre for the homeless where we could provide information and guidance to help people get back on their feet and out in the workforce.

'For now though, we are going to continue our campaign on homelessness.

'Our plan is to help those in crisis, such as families that are living in hostels and people that are sleeping rough. We understand that this is an immediate concern.'

# Dr Mark Dooley



## MORAL MATTERS

# Being happy? It's a delicate balancing act

**A**SK anyone what they desire most in this life and they will invariably say 'happiness'. But where is happiness to be found? Some search for it at home, others in their job, on the track or at the end of a bottle.

Is happiness the fulfilment of desire? You desire a new job, house, relationship or degree. You work hard in pursuit of your dream, believing that it alone will make you happy.

Finally, you succeed only to discover that the happy high soon subsides. What you thought would provide lasting happiness gives only a temporary buzz. The new car quickly dates, the night out ends in exhaustion and the achievements of yesterday become today's forgotten memories.

We all know that having money does not, in itself, make you happy. It provides security and rescues people from a multitude of problems. But we also know that there are many with money who are plainly miserable.

At a time when so many are suffering from stress and burnout, from exhaustion and despair, we need to know the true source of happiness. What all the great thinkers agree on is that it cannot be found in objects outside ourselves. Happiness, they say, comes from within.

The genuinely happy person is balanced and calm. Aristotle says that what makes us human is our ability to avoid extremes. The extremist is excessive in everything and, as such, is never happy.

The balanced person flourishes because he always knows when enough is enough. He knows when to stop and when more is needed. In leisure, work or sport, he aims at equilibrium.

Balance leads to happiness because it neither exhausts nor disappoints. Only the extremist suffers from exhaustion and from that sense of disappointment which comes from feeling that one has failed. But when excess gives way to moderation, inner harmony is restored and the result is happiness.

In all areas of life, we have lost that sense of balance and moderation. Excess in everything is the new norm. Why wonder, then, when so many are falling prey to the plague of stress?

What worries me most is the negative impact of this on children. Our schools have become a breed-

ing ground for stress-related sickness. Children as young as five and six are in therapy, while teenagers, suffering from low self-esteem, end up with eating disorders.

As a secondary schoolteacher, Mrs Dooley can only observe this phenomenon with increasing alarm. The fact that so many children are chronically tormented by stress caused by excess, is a terrible indictment of our society. And yet it seems that we are nowhere near finding a lasting solution.

The problem is, of course, that Irish society is itself totally off-balance. And the effects of this are all too obvious: rampant crime, selfishness and bad manners. We have lost our equilibrium and with it, it seems, our soul.

Interestingly, the Ancients linked virtue and happiness. Virtue, for them, is happiness because virtue avoids extremes. The virtuous person always aims at moderation, knowing that excess only leads to misery.

This means that a happy life is a good life because balance produces goodness. It is good not to eat too much or too little, not to sleep too much or too little. In both cases, the moderate person enjoys a life without stress.

Few will dispute that we need ethics in the classroom. But what is ethics if not a training in virtue, a training in how to find balance in all areas of life? And in discovering how to avoid extremes, and how to steer clear of excess, you simultaneously discover the true secret of happiness.

**T**HE good life is a stress-free life. In stress, we are bad-tempered, ill-at-ease and distracted to the point of despair. Our relationships and work suffer, our health and harmony declines.

If stress is a disease wrought by excess, happiness is our natural condition and is the offspring of virtue. This is something all children need to learn if they are to grow up as balanced people. It is something that teachers and parents must understand if we are to save society from tipping over the edge.

As things stand, far too many of our little ones are living mindlessly. The fact that they cannot cope, and are seeking refuge in dark places, should bring us to our senses.

That so few of us seem to notice shows that we, too, may be looking for happiness in all the wrong places.

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