

## Catholic billionaire dies aged 87

THE BILLIONAIRE philanthropist who founded the super-market chain Kwik Save has died aged 87.

Albert Gubay, who once made a “pact with God” to leave half his wealth to the Church, died at his home in Cheshire.

His firm the Derwent Group announced: “It is with the greatest sadness that we have to announce the death of our founder. Our thoughts are with his wife, Carmel, his children and grandchildren.”

In 2011 Mr Gubay told the BBC that he made a pact with God as a young businessman. He said: “One Saturday, I didn’t know where the next penny was coming from and I lay on my bed and I had this conversation with God.

“I said: ‘God, help me and whatever I make over the years of my life, when I die, half will go to the Church.’”

In 2010 he had given £470 million of his personal fortune of £480 million to a



Alfred Gubay with his wife Carmel and Cardinal Nichols

charitable trust. The trust will give half of the money to causes identified by the Catholic Church, with the other half going to causes identified by the trustees.

In 2011 then Archbishop Vincent Nichols of Westminster conferred a papal knighthood on Mr Gubay, in recognition of his charitable acts.

Mr Gubay was born in 1928 in Rhyl, Wales, to an Iraqi Jewish father and an Irish mother. He began his

business career in North Wales selling sweets during the ration period following the Second World War.

He went on to launch successful businesses such as the Total Fitness empire, and acquired property developments in Liverpool and Manchester.

Mr Gubay made a fortune in excess of £1 billion, a figure he argued was “so great it does not mean anything”.

## News in brief



### Hilton foundation helps Irish vocations

THE CONRAD N HILTON Foundation is to give \$290,000 (£200,000) to fund vocations in Ireland, *The Irish Catholic* has reported. The funding, spread over three years, will enable umbrella group Vocations Ireland to support and nurture vocations to the consecrated religious life.

### Bishop and minister to meet over refugees

BISHOP Patrick Lynch will meet Richard Harrington, under-secretary of state for Syrian refugees, “to discuss what still needs to be done”, the bishop said this week.

### Carmelite group set up in Worcestershire

A LAY Carmelite community has been set up in Redditch. A Mass will mark the occasion at Our Lady of Mount Carmel tomorrow.

## SVP volunteers ‘give £11m a year back to the economy’

VISITING isolated and lonely people is of economic benefit to society, according to a study carried out for the St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP).

The SVP’s 10,000 volunteers make half a million visits to vulnerable people each year.

The research, by economists Oxera, found that the visits helped improve lonely people’s mental health, helped them navigate “the system” better, and enhanced their skills, their educational opportunities and their employment chances. This resulted in an improvement to their quality of life and a reduction in costs to the NHS and social services.

Although it is difficult to quantify the impacts precisely, the report said, “we calculated that the SVP’s befriending activities result in an economic welfare improvement of about £11 million per year”.

Every £1 spent by the SVP results in £2.87 in benefits, according to the report.

Helen O’Shea, a trustee of the SVP, said: “We see every day at first hand the benefits of our visits to isolated people, in terms of their emotional and psychological wellbeing. Now we have confirmation from economists that our visits also have substantial financial benefits as well.”



Archbishop Bernard Longley celebrated the Mass

## Archbishop celebrates old Mass

ARCHBISHOP BERNARD LONGLEY of Birmingham celebrated a Pontifical Mass in the Extraordinary Form on Sunday.

The archbishop celebrated the Mass during a visit to the Birmingham Oratory.

He said he was “pleased to be

taking my part in this beautiful liturgy”, and grateful to the Oratory Fathers and Brothers “for their influence and their service within the archdiocese”. The Mass was for the feast of the Holy Family, following the Old Rite calendar.