

of the city



Fr Shem Furlong, OSA, Prior of the Augustinian Community of Cork, was attracted to the Augustinians by the order's community focus. Fr Furlong says that Cork people have been very supportive of the order in the city.

Picture: Donna McBride / News Digital

O'Shea on Monday



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Deleting all the fancy stuff from mobile phones

ROBERT O'SHEA
reflects on the 'convenience' of modern technology

SOMETIMES I wish everything were as easy to find as a mobile phone. If you could ring up your glasses or car keys or the remote control and they would play the polyphonic version of Thin Lizzy's *The Boys Are Back In Town* from behind the sofa or inside the dog's belly or wherever they are. The ease of rediscovery is one of the boon points of the contraption, but, of course, its very conspicuousness also proves to be a nuisance in some instances.

I doubt anyone who visited more than a couple of films at last week's festival was not also treated to an impromptu tinny performance of some classical tune as a flustered cinemagoer fumbled through bag or pockets to kill an incoming call. It so frequently happens now to be almost acceptable, if not inexcusable.

My own experience took place in the Opera House this past weekend and is memorable due to the proximity of the offender, just two seats over. Seemingly engrossed in the movie, she did not flinch until I delivered as stern a stare as I could muster (I sort of arched my left eyebrow and curled my lip downwards — on later studying the expression in a mirror, I noted that it made me look constipated). She got the message and quickly moved to reach for the phone and before I could furrow my brow in preparation of a final angry grimace and deliver a single, critical "Tut", she smiled shyly and mouthed a silent "Sorry."

And so my gaze melted from angry grimace to an almost apologetic "Er, sure that's all right it could happen to anyone, and do you think we could maybe meet up after the show and, I don't know, discuss the plot perhaps?" grin.

I managed to stop myself from giving her the full thumbs up and mere moments later had my eyes resting on the screen once more, when what should I hear but a soft "Hello" from two seats over.

Using my foot as a fulcrum, I removed the lady from the theatre while the audience's cheers rang in my ears. Maybe I should have empathised more because the major problem with my mobile is also that it rings at inappropriate times, although not in the same sense: What my phone does is make outgoing calls when I am unawares.

This last Friday morning at 2am is the most recent example. My mother rang me the next day to inquire as to why I should be ringing her so late and leaving a three-minute message. I could only ensure her that wherever I was at that hour, I was certainly not trying to contact her.

Strangely, the very next morning, at the later time of 3am, a colleague of mine reported his own phone had

made a similar call to his mother. After meeting to discuss the problem and comparing the berating we received about the bad language overheard by our mothers (note to mothers out there: After midnight and thinking they are out of your earshot, your children will often use grown-up language) we both decided this was no mere coincidence. We have come up with no decent theory as to why these separate incidents happened yet, but we both suspect the Government is involved.

Yet no matter how irksome these little boxes of irritation appear to me, the people of Cork never seem to tire of buying into and upgrading in this mobile culture.

Mobile shops never run out of customers willing to queue up in them. The shops themselves seem to have an upgrade every six months or so, with a closure for renovations for a day or two followed by a reopening with no immediately obvious changes to the interior — in some way ironically reflecting their products, perhaps. The newest idea in phone technology, from Japan, is the downgraded mobile, and it is proving more popular than anything else on that market. So long the purveyors of newest and more sophisticated technology, the Japanese are now buying phones with two simple functions — you're never going to believe this: Making and receiving phone calls.

As someone who is tired of text-messaging, of taking a picture of his ear instead of answering an important call and who has been humiliatedly defeated at chess on numerous occasions by his own phone, I, for one, cannot wait until these new, stripped-down-to-the-bare-essentials phones arrive on these shores.

As a journalist it would probably become of me to apprise you of the details of their date of arrival, price, and so on, but unfortunately I cannot right now as my dog is ringing.

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