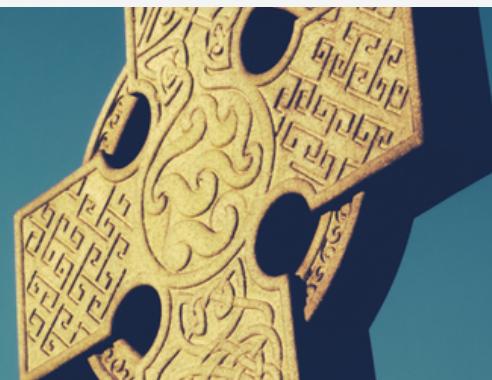


Sharing the Good News

NEWSLETTER OF THE IRISH CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

Initial submission phase of Synodal Pathway begins for the Catholic Church in Ireland



Bishops have announced the initial submission phase of the Synodal Pathway for the Catholic Church in Ireland. Before embarking on the Synodal Pathway consultation, bishops are inviting submissions to reflect on what methods/models to adopt in these coming two years of conversations. For example: parish hall meetings, focus groups, questionnaires, deep-listening sessions, written submissions, family-focused gatherings, summary of findings of assemblies that have already taken place across dioceses, and/or conferences.

Feedback, which should be no more than 300 words and submitted by Pentecost Sunday 23 May 2021, ought to focus on the nature of the process for the consultation i.e. how we can best go about this initial phase of establishing the conversation, rather than on the prospective themes for the Synodal Pathway, which will be addressed in the next phase.



Commenting on the call for submissions, Bishop Brendan Leahy of Limerick said, "It is said that the journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. I think the possibility of submissions on the Irish Bishops' Conference website on what methods/models to adopt in the coming two years of conversations is a simple but significant step and I hope many will offer their suggestions."

On the new Synodal Pathway webpage people are invited to offer feedback to the following question: *What would be your preferred option for engagement in a conversation process about the Synod?* The responses will be considered by a task group to be put in place by the bishops this summer to plan and oversee the first steps along the synodal pathway. To make a submission see www.catholicbishops.ie/synod.

IN THIS ISSUE



Church Leaders' call for unified political response to address violence and community tensions

Following recent disturbances in Northern Ireland, the Church Leaders Group (Ireland) has written an open letter to political leaders in Northern Ireland, the Governments of the United Kingdom and Ireland, and the European Union.



In their letter the Church Leaders echo the appeal from local Church and community leaders for political leaders to treat Northern Ireland's fragile peace with care. They also emphasise the importance of the three strands of the Good Friday Agreement and the consequent responsibility to respect all identities and foster good relations within Northern Ireland, on the island of Ireland and between the UK and Ireland.

The Church Leaders also call on the Northern Ireland Executive to make a joint approach to the UK Government and the European Union in relation to the challenges posed by the Northern Ireland/Ireland Protocol; and, express their support for the PSNI and underline the importance of ensuring that any concerns about policing are addressed in a way that supports and strengthens democratic institutions and processes.

The letter is signed by Archbishop Eamon Martin, Catholic Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland; Archbishop John McDowell, Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland; Rt Revd Dr David Bruce, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland; Revd Dr Tom McKnight, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland; and, Very Revd Dr Ivan Patterson, President of the Irish Council of Churches.

You can read the letter in full on www.catholicbishops.ie.

Further delay in resettling refugee children “appalling” – Bishop Denis Brennan



Bishop Denis Brennan, chair of the Bishops' Council for Immigrants, is calling on the government to act as quickly and decisively as possible to bring these children to safety and shelter. Bishop Brennan said, “I was deeply saddened to hear recent reports that plans to resettle children seeking refuge from the Moria camp in Greece, to Ireland – originally scheduled for September 2020 and again last month – have been further delayed.

“Those forced to migrate have already experienced immense hardship to reach camps like the one in Moria. Following the devastating fire last September, which exacerbated the already cramped, unhygienic, and inhumane conditions in the camp, the commitment made by the Government to relocate 28 children from the Moria camp to Ireland was, in the circumstances, good news. However, it also represented the bare minimum support and refuge that we should be offering, particularly to unaccompanied children who have suffered so much trauma in even their earliest years. The fact that seven months on this has not yet happened is appalling. For anyone, and especially for a child on their own, another day, another month living in fear in dire conditions in a refugee camp is another day of suffering and trauma that no one should have to endure.” You can read Bishop Brennan's statement in full on www.catholicbishops.ie.

Archbishop Michael Neary pays tribute to Father Enda McDonagh following his death, aged 90

Archbishop Michael Neary of Tuam has paid tribute to Father Enda McDonagh, following his death on 24 February, aged 90. Speaking at his funeral Mass, which was held in the Maynooth College Chapel on 1 March, Archbishop Neary said, "Father Enda McDonagh opened the door for friend and stranger, and countless generations of Irish seminarians, to experience the excitement that is the quest for faith seeking understanding."



Archbishop Neary went on to say, "In life, Enda was unassuming, warm-hearted, welcoming of people and ideas, and blessed with a gentle and at times mischievous sense of humour. In today's society where the presence of the Church may be resented, Enda's prophetic voice was respected. He recognised the influence of the media in society, understood the media, and used the language which media understood. A masterful weaver of words, with Enda, the Word continued to become flesh whether in hospital wards, in boardrooms, broken homes, or breaking hearts – all those situations derived hope when Enda spoke."

You can read the Archbishop's homily in full on www.catholicbishops.ie.

Maynooth College reflects on COVID-19

Freedom of the Spirit in the Midst of a Crisis



Maynooth College reflects on Covid-19

Where is God in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic? This is one of the many questions looked at in a new book by members of the Faculty at Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth, from the perspectives of theology, scripture, philosophy, ethics, liturgy, pastoral, and canon law.

Maynooth College reflects on Covid-19 is edited by Jeremy Corley, Neil Xavier O'Donoghue and Salvador Ryan, with a Foreword by Archbishop Eamon Martin. It is published by Messenger Publications and is available from book shops and from www.messenger.ie.

Archbishop Eamon Martin highlights the important role of grandparents in passing on the faith

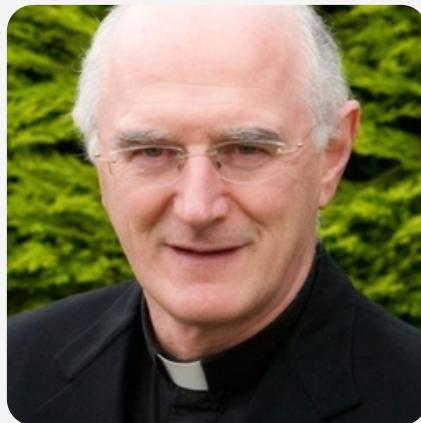
Archbishop Eamon Martin highlighted the important role that grandparents play in passing on the faith in the family in his address to the April Grandparents' Faith Café - a monthly gathering of grandparents from around the world on Zoom, Archbishop Eamon said, "We need to identify the kernel of what it is that we want to share and to connect young people with – what is our theme? What is it that we want to give our children and grandchildren? This is a question which St John answers beautifully in the opening lines of his first letter: '*Something which has existed since the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have watched and touched with our own hands, the Word of life -this is our theme.*' (1 John 1:1)



"In other words what we wish to connect our young people with is the greatest story ever told – the story of Jesus; the story of our salvation! We wish to communicate our encounter and friendship with him so that they can themselves find him in their lives."

Archbishop of Dublin establishes a Task Force to support the renewal of parish communities in a post-Covid Church

Archbishop Dermot Farrell of Dublin has highlighted the importance of clergy and laity working together in a post-pandemic Church. Speaking at the annual Chrism Mass in St Mary's Pro-Cathedral on 31 March, he said, "Parish by parish we need to encourage the active incorporation of all the baptised in the life and responsibilities of the Church."



Archbishop Farrell went on to announce a Task Force in the Archdiocese to advance analysis and encourage dialogue and engagement.

Composed of clergy, religious and laypeople, the Task Force will prepare an assessment of the needs of the people of the Archdiocese of Dublin as it emerges from the Covid-19 crisis. Archbishop Farrell said, "I am asking the Task Force to prepare an approach to a pastoral strategy that supports parish communities of faith to undertake a radical renewal, looking to the future with creativity. I have asked the Task Force to complete its work by the end of the Summer. There is an urgency, and this cannot be an endless process. It will give us all a basis for moving forward together with hope, confident that the Spirit is with those who respond to the call to follow the One who is the Lord of tomorrow as well as today."

You can read the archbishop's homily in full on www.dublindiocese.ie.

Look to Saint Joseph as an example of faithful service Pope's message for Vocations Sunday 2021



In his message Vocations Sunday on 25 April, Pope Francis offers Saint Joseph as a model for all members of the clergy and religious. He says, "Saint Joseph is an extraordinary figure, not because of any astonishing charism or special status, but because he accomplished extraordinary acts of service in his daily life."

"God looks on the heart," he said, "and in Saint Joseph He recognized the heart of a father, able to give and generate life in the midst of daily routines."

"Vocations have the same goal of begetting and renewing the lives of others. The priesthood and consecrated life", he said, "require men and women with open hearts, who are capable of great initiatives, generous in self-giving, compassionate in comforting anxieties and steadfast in strengthening hopes." Pope Francis goes on to focus on three key words which Saint Joseph suggests for each individual's vocation: dream, service, and fidelity. He also draws heavily on his Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde (With a Father's Heart)*, released on 8 December 2020 for the Year of Saint Joseph. You can read the Pope's message on www.catholicbishops.ie.

Trócaire Poetry Competition 2021 open for entries

Trócaire and Poetry Ireland have launched their annual poetry competition which this year will focus on the theme 'Pathways to Peace'. With this year's theme, Trócaire hopes to highlight the plight of families who have lost their homes and loved ones to war and are rebuilding their lives through love and friendship. The closing date for entries, from adults and children across six different categories, is Friday 7 May 2021. More details can be found on www.trocaire.org.

