

Sharing the Good News

NEWSLETTER OF THE IRISH CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

Accord's new online counselling service launched



Bishop Denis Nulty has launched Accord Catholic Marriage Service CLG's first online counselling service to support individuals and couples experiencing difficulties in their relationships. Welcoming the new service, Bishop Nulty, President of Accord CLG, said, "For the first time in our near sixty years service, Accord Catholic Marriage Care Service CLG is now operating its specialist counselling services online to those who, for whatever reason, are unable to travel to an Accord centre to access in person counselling.

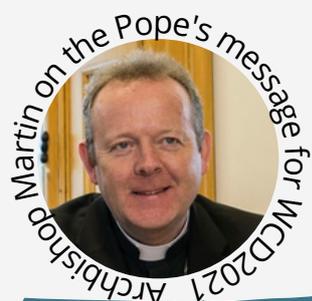
"All Accord counsellors are professionally trained in the specialism of couples and relationships counselling. Our counsellors providing the new online service have completed additional, comprehensive training accredited by the Association for Counselling and Therapy Online (ACTO) to ensure that the standards of client care and quality of professional service in online counselling match those of Accord CLG's in-person service.



"In launching the new online counselling service we hope to maximise accessibility to individuals and couples experiencing challenges in their relationships, even if they are unable to physically travel to see us," Bishop Nulty said.

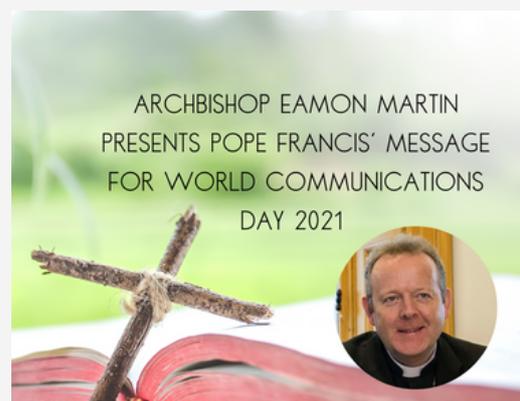
Couples or individuals seeking online counselling with Accord CLG are advised to have in place an uninterrupted, confidential space that has stable broadband, as well as a PC, laptop or iPad/tablet. Couples living in the same household may join their online counselling sessions on a shared device. The new service will also meet the needs of couples who may be living apart and need to join the counselling sessions from their separate locations. Online counselling appointments can be accommodated every day from 9.30am through to 9.30pm. Those interested in availing of the service should access accord.ie or make contact with Accord CLG's administration team on onlinecounselling@accord.ie. For more see www.accord.ie.

IN THIS ISSUE



Archbishop Eamon Martin pays tribute to journalists who gave their lives in search of the truth

Archbishop Eamon Martin has paid tribute to journalists who gave their lives in search of the truth as he presented the Pope's message for World Communications Day 2021. In a video message published on Sunday 16 May, the archbishop introduced some of the key themes of the Pope's message for World Communications Day on the theme "Come and See" (Jn 1:46). Communicating by Encountering People Where and as They Are."



"Pope Francis acknowledges in his message the courage and commitment of journalists and other media professionals who often risk their lives helping us to learn the reality of life around the world today. They beam onto our mobile devices and into our living rooms the hardships facing countless people around the world, like persecution, oppression, poverty, war and injustice. In recent times, they have helped us to see first hand way that the Covid-19 pandemic has been impacting people not just here at home but also in the poverty-stricken villages of Asia, Latin America and Africa."

Archbishop Martin continued, "I'm conscious today of the work of brave journalists here in Ireland like Lyra McKee, Veronica Guerin and Martin O'Hagan, who have lost their lives while seeking to uncover and report the truth. I think also of the two Spanish journalists who were killed last month in Burkina Faso along with the Irish conservationist, Rory Young.

Concluding his video message, Archbishop Martin said, "Every media tool has its value in handing on the faith, but what really impresses others is a personal witness to faith, hope and charity. That is the challenge that faces all of us - to communicate our love for Jesus by encountering others, where they are and as they are, and inviting them to "Come and See". God bless you in this mission, and may truth guide all those who are working in media and journalism here in Ireland."

Minister's report a cause for concern for Irish prisoners overseas and their families - ICPO

The Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas has reacted with concern following the publication of the Minister for Justice and Equality's Annual Report on the operation of the Transfer of Sentenced Persons Acts (1995 and 1997). The report, published this month, provides annual figures on the number of prisoners transferred into and out of the State.



Brian Hanley, Coordinator of the Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas, said, "The figures for 2020 shine a light on what is at this point, a barely-functioning system. No Irish prisoner was transferred into the State from an overseas prison for the fourth year in a row, and three quarters of those who applied to transfer to an Irish prison were refused last year. These numbers are unprecedented and run contrary to the Government's stated policy that prisoners should be permitted to serve their sentence close to their families - not least because of the humanitarian benefit to prisoner's families but also because of the improved resettlement outcomes such family engagement and supported release programmes have for society."

You can read the statement on www.catholicbishops.ie.

Archbishop Farrell acknowledges holistic value of Catholic schools and their role during Covid-19 pandemic

Archbishop Dermot Farrell of Dublin has acknowledged the holistic value of Catholic schools in Ireland and their vital supporting role during the Covid-19 pandemic. He was speaking at the Annual Conference of the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association - an organisation that represents all the boards of management of the over 2,800 Catholic primary schools in the Republic of Ireland.



Archbishop Farrell said, "I wish to commence my address by thanking the school principals and staff for how well they have cared for the school children throughout the Covid-19 pandemic that affected and disrupted freedoms, habits and certainties. You have engaged very closely with parents and guardians throughout the health emergency to ensure that the education of their children continued. I commend the Catholic schools for their tremendous work in providing for and encouraging young people, supporting their parents, and being of service to the community more broadly. To be a school leader, or chairman of a Board of Management, can at the best of times be a lonely occupation, but none more so than during this present health crisis when for several months all activity had to be carried out remotely without the actual physical presence of teachers, pupils and parents." You can read the address in full on www.dublindiocese.ie.



Official Prayer and Hashtag launched for WMOF2022



The official prayer for the 10th World Meeting of Families, to be held in Rome from 22 to 26 June 2022, has been launched. The official social media hashtag has also been launched as #WMOF2022. The prayer is inspired by the theme chosen by Pope Francis for the 2022 meeting which is: "Family love: a vocation and a path to holiness". For more on the World Meeting of Families 2022 see www.laityfamilylife.va.

Pope Francis institutes the Ministry of Catechist

With a new Apostolic Letter *Antiquum ministerium* Pope Francis has established the lay ministry of catechist, intended to respond to an urgent need for the evangelisation of the modern world. The Holy Father said that receiving the lay ministry of catechist "will emphasise even more the missionary commitment proper to every baptised person". You can read more about the Ministry of Catechist on www.vatican.va.

Final call for initial submissions on the Synodal Pathway

Synodal Pathway

Easter to Pentecost 2021 - Call for Submissions

www.catholicbishops.ie/synod



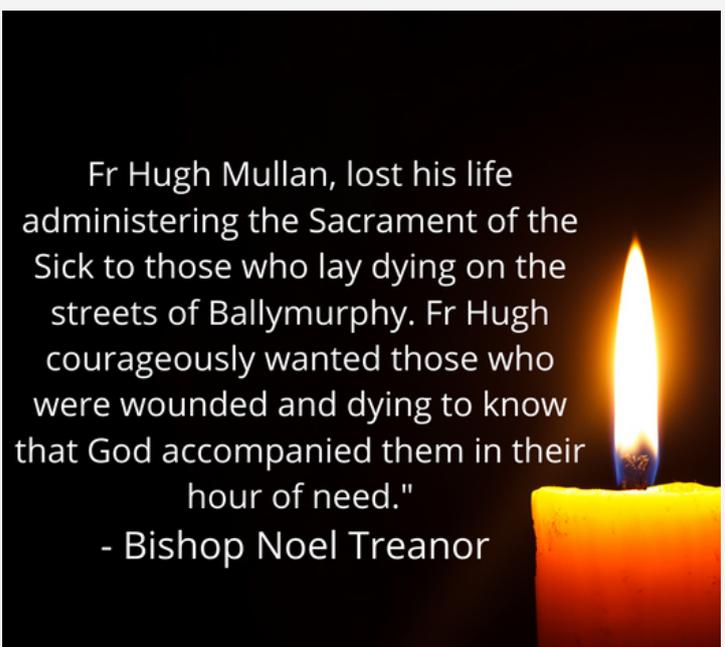
Submissions to the initial phase of the Irish Bishops' Synodal Pathway are closing on Pentecost Sunday - 23 May. This phase of the Synodal Pathway is inviting submissions to reflect on what methods/models to adopt in these coming two years of conversations. Those who wish to make a submission can do so by logging on to www.catholicbishops.ie/synod.

Bishop Treanor welcomes Ballymurphy findings and prays victims can find 'peace and consolation in the truth'

Bishop Noel Treanor of Down and Connor responded to the publication of the findings of the Ballymurphy inquest on 11 May and welcomed the findings that ten innocent civilians were unjustly killed in August 1971. Bishop Treanor said, "It was immensely humbling and moving to sit alongside the relatives of the Ballymurphy victims as they listened to the findings of the Inquest.

These families have sat through and listened to the harrowing and graphic evidence about how their loved ones died as well as how they were treated both before and after their deaths. These same families can now say with one voice that the truth has been heard. History will forever record the innocence of their loved ones."

Amongst the dead was Father Hugh Mullan, who lost his life while administering the Sacrament of the Sick to the dying on the streets of Ballymurphy. Bishop Treanor said, "With selfless pastoral devotion, Father Mullan made the ultimate sacrifice and lost his life anointing his parishioners. Bringing consolation to the dying, Father Mullan prayed, 'Through this Holy Anointing, may the Lord in His love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit.'"



Fr Hugh Mullan, lost his life administering the Sacrament of the Sick to those who lay dying on the streets of Ballymurphy. Fr Hugh courageously wanted those who were wounded and dying to know that God accompanied them in their hour of need."
- Bishop Noel Treanor

Help is at hand on the Digital Hub

The Digital Hub is a new resource from the Catholic Communications Office of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. The resource has been designed to assist dioceses and parishes to effectively 'put out into the deep of the net'. The resources available on the Digital Hub are gleaned from best practice in the Church across Ireland. You will find a mixture of guidelines and principles for engaging on the digital highways. You can access the resource on www.catholicbishops.ie/digitalhub and read a complementary monthly column in *Intercom magazine*.

