

Sharing the Good News

NEWSLETTER OF THE IRISH CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

Reek Pilgrimage on Croagh Patrick to be four-days per week in July



The annual Reek Sunday Pilgrimage on Croagh Patrick, which was cancelled last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, will be going ahead this year albeit in a much extended format from Wednesday to Saturday, 1- 31 July. Announcing the good news, Administrator of Westport Father Charlie McDonnell said, "It's been a different and a difficult year, a year in which we have had to hand so much over to the Lord, to place so much in His hands. Pilgrimage has always been a strong vehicle for both petition and thanksgiving and, in 2021, above any year, we are delighted to offer and extended Reek Pilgrimage acknowledging and giving thanks for the fact that we journey very much under the protective hand of God.



Photo: Brenda Drumm

This year, due to ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, it would be impossible to facilitate the pilgrimage on one day only so I am arranging to greatly extend provision of the Sacraments for pilgrims throughout the month of July. It is my dear hope that this unprecedented and adventurous undertaking will provide all those who wish to come to Ireland's Holy Mountain as pilgrims to do so safely and in their own time."

Father Mc Donnell went on to say, "For generations, the annual Croagh Patrick Pilgrimage has held a central place in the life of the Church in Ireland and I am delighted that an extended version will be available next month. Reek Pilgrimage 2021 is an exciting and ambitious project to undertake and will require great generosity on the part of lay volunteers and priests alike. It is wonderful to be in a position to go ahead under very clear health management guidelines and I encourage all pilgrims to enter into it in a way that makes it a success for all involved. To be safe, I ask that pilgrims take care to plan their pilgrimage well in advance and try as best they can to choose a day that would traditionally be quieter on the mountain. Parishioners throughout the country are by now well familiar with restrictions and while this will apply in the same way it will involve numbers allowed for outdoor gatherings."

Archbishop Michael Neary will celebrate the annual Reek Pilgrimage Mass at 6.30pm on the eve of the traditional Reek Sunday, 24 July, in Saint Mary's Church, Westport.

Pilgrims intending to do the Reek Pilgrimage during July are invited to use a QR code, which can be scanned using a smart phone, for the most up to date information on this year's pilgrimage.



Bishop Nulty welcomes Pope Francis' message to Grandparents and the Elderly

Bishop Denis Nulty, chair of the Bishops' Council for Marriage and the Family has welcomed 'I am with you always', the Pope's message for the first ever World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, which will be celebrated on Sunday 25 July. In his message Pope Francis says there is a need for the whole Church to be close to all the elderly and grandparents at this time of pandemic.

Welcoming the message, Bishop Nulty said, "There have been so many unsung heroes and heroines during the pandemic – grandparents and elders, including our older priests and religious – all who are to be applauded for how they have coped with the challenges and uncertainty brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. As a society we have learned a lot from their stoicism and pragmatism in the face of so many challenges.



Bishop Nulty went on to say, "I would love to see parishes in every diocese across the country celebrating grandparents, elders, not forgetting our older priests and religious, who have given lives of dedicated service to their families and communities. I would also encourage parishes to ensure that their local nursing care home is included in this annual celebration."

You can read the Pope's message and download resources from the Council for Marriage and the Family for the World Day on www.catholicbishops.ie.

Pope Francis appoints Father Ger Nash as Bishop of Ferns

On Friday 11 June, Pope Francis appointed Father Ger Nash, a priest of the Diocese of Killaloe, as the new Bishop of the Diocese of Ferns.

Gerard Nash was born on 27 February 1959 at Glandree in the parish of Tulla, Co Clare. His parents Tommy and Mary are deceased and he has two sisters, Teresa and Margaret. His sister Bernie died in 2008. He went to the local primary school in Drumcharley and then to secondary school in Tulla. After the Leaving Certificate he studied business and then worked in manufacturing industry for a number of years. After choosing to study for the Diocese of Killaloe in Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth, he was ordained on 15 June 1991 in Drumcharley Church, Tulla by Bishop Michael Harty. For statements and reactions to his appointment see www.catholicbishops.ie.



Irish Church Music Association Summer School goes virtual

For the first time ever, this year's Irish Church Music Association (ICMA) Summer School will be hosted online from Wednesday 7 to Saturday 10 July. This year's theme is 'Songs of Love, Faith, Trust & Praise'. Each session of the Summer school will begin at 8.00pm each day on Facebook Live and YouTube. For those unable to tune in each day, a recorded version of each session will be available on the ICMA website. For more information see www.irishchurchmusicassociation.com.



Bishop Michael Router highlights Towards Healing counselling service for survivors



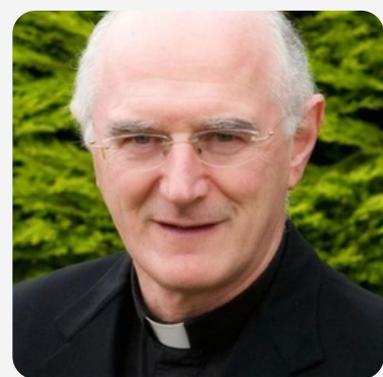
Over the past twenty-five years the Church's counselling service 'Towards Healing', and its forerunner 'Faoiseamh', have provided support to almost 7,000 survivors of institutional, clerical, and religious abuse, and to members of their families.

During this year's Armagh Diocesan Pilgrimage to Knock, Bishop Michael Router acknowledged the 7,000 survivors, and family members, who have availed of Towards Healing since its inception in 1997.

Speaking about the importance of the counselling service to survivors, Bishop Router said, "We are all too aware that many people here in Ireland and abroad, have suffered sexual and physical abuse at the hands of clergy and religious. For too long they suffered in isolation, without being heard, acknowledged, or helped. Over the past twenty-five years, however, the Church has, through the organisation 'Towards Healing' that it funds, and its forerunner 'Faoiseamh', provided a counselling service that almost 7,000 people have availed of, survivors of institutional, clerical, and religious abuse and members of their families. The service has a network of counsellors in Ireland and abroad which it engages to provide essential therapy to those who have suffered such abuse."

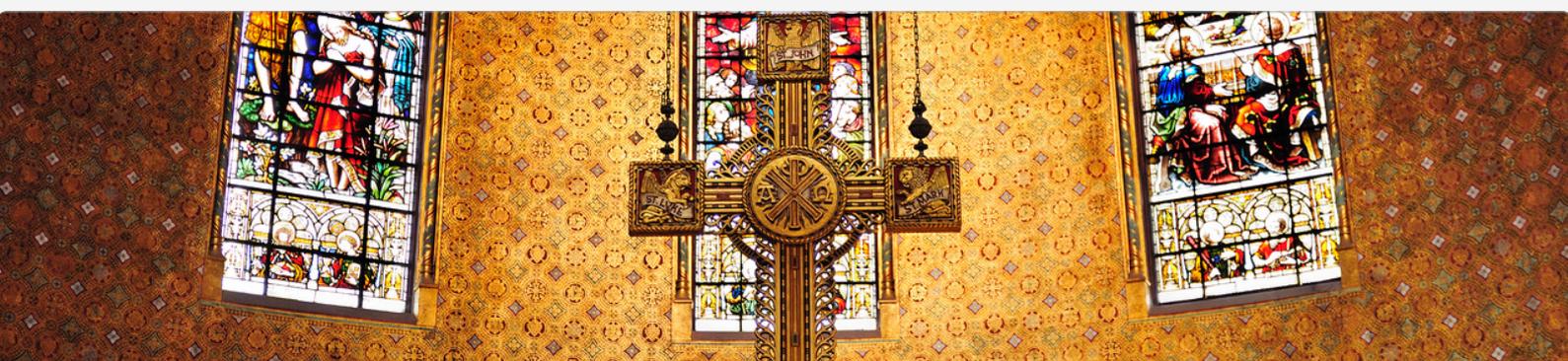
For more information on the Towards Healing service see www.towardshealing.ie.

Archbishop Dermot Farrell on responding to God's call



Archbishop Dermot Farrell of Dublin celebrated Mass for Trinity Sunday, 30 May, at the Church of Our Mother of Divine Grace, Ballygall, which was televised by RTÉ. In his homily Archbishop Farrell said, "Our faith in the Trinity is about a God who is for us, who lived as a blessing for the 'little ones' and mourners, confronted the power of evil, entered with compassion into the world of human suffering, broke down the barriers between human weakness and divine holiness and reconciled enemies. If Jesus - the very face of God, and the fullness of God's presence - is "with us" what should we be doing?"

"One way to recognize God's presence among us is live in harmony and communion with every creature in our common home, eat with modern-day lepers and other outcasts, pray constantly, respond to God in faith, hope and love, eventually becoming unrestrictedly united with God. How much more is this necessary in these difficult pandemic days?" You can read the archbishop's homily in full on www.dublindiocese.ie.



Bishops express thanks for over 550 submissions received for Synodal Pathway



At their Summer General Meeting meeting, which concluded via video link on 16 June, bishops expressed their thanks for the over 550 submissions received from the public as part of the initial phase of the Synodal Pathway which ran from Easter to Pentecost this year.

Having also decided to establish a Synodal Steering Committee and a Synodal Task Group to help move forward the Synodal Pathway process for Ireland, bishops announced that Dr Nicola Brady has been appointed as chair of the Synodal Steering Committee and the vice-chairs appointed are Mr Andrew O'Callaghan and Bishop Brendan Leahy of Limerick.



The full membership of the Steering Committee and of the Synodal Task Group will be published as part of the official launch of the Synodal Pathway in the coming months. Following her appointment Dr Brady said, "The Synodal Pathway is an important and hope-filled development in the life of the Catholic Church in Ireland and I am grateful for the opportunity to help guide and shape this work."

Bishops said, "By a happy coincidence, these first two years of our Synodal Pathway in Ireland will complement the Catholic Church's worldwide journey towards the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of Bishops in Rome entitled, For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission. This 9 and 10 October Pope Francis will officially launch the Universal Synod and has asked that the whole Church prepare for this Synod which is scheduled to take place in Rome in October 2023."

For more on the Synodal Pathway see www.catholicbishops.ie/synod.

Synodal Pathway FAQs: What does it mean for the Catholic Church in Ireland to embark on a synodal pathway?



It means walking together on our pilgrim way in faith towards God, conscious of our God-given gifts. Essentially, it is listening intently to each other. We are then called to engage in reflecting and praying together about what we are hearing. We journey in this way to allow the Holy Spirit to guide us in our mission of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Ireland and beyond.