

Sharing the Good News

NEWSLETTER OF THE IRISH CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

**“Westminster has imposed
an unjust law”
– Northern Catholic Bishops
oppose abortion services**



The Northern Catholic Bishops have issued a response to the introduction of abortion services to Northern Ireland. Bishops described the decision last week by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mr Brandon Lewis MP, to direct the NI Executive and Department of Health to make abortion services available in Northern Ireland by 21 March 2022, as “gravely disquieting”. Bishops emphasised that this is the latest in a line of decisions by the current Westminster Government which threatens the “fragile balance of relationships” at the heart of the Good Friday Agreement.

Bishops continued, “In unilaterally imposing this direction on the local Northern Ireland Assembly to provide abortion services, it is as if the Westminster Government, and those local parties who have supported them, believe the answer to the issue of providing compassionate care for a woman and her unborn child in pregnancy can be framed simply and exclusively as a ‘healthcare issue’.

“Absent from the discussion however are the thousands of unborn children, who have no legal protection and whose humanity is excluded from the political equation. Westminster has imposed an unjust law. Christians, and all people of good will, can never stand silently by and fail to raise their voices at any attempt to ignore completely the fact that unborn children are human beings worthy of protection,” bishops said. You can read the bishops' statement in full on www.catholicbishops.ie.

Bishop Brendan Leahy pays tribute to Dessie O'Malley RIP

Bishop Brendan Leahy of Limerick has paid tribute to ‘family man’ Des O’Malley, following his death on 21 July, aged 82. Bishop Leahy said, “Limerick and Ireland have today lost a man and politician of immense courage and decency and a great family man into the bargain. He had a deep love for his late wife Pat, his children and grandchildren and it was clearly a shared love. So, for all that he did in the political world, it’s essential too as we pay tribute to him that we acknowledge just what family meant to him.” See www.catholicnews.ie for full statement.

The elderly can be wonderful role models for the young.

– Archbishop Michael Neary

Archbishop Michael Neary of Tuam has highlighted the close relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren as being of mutual benefit. Archbishop Neary was speaking in the at the International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine in Knock, Co Mayo, on the occasion of the first World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly on Sunday 25 July, which also coincided with the National Grandparents' Pilgrimage.

Archbishop Neary said, "Grandparents and the elderly have such a rich reservoir of wisdom which can and needs to be shared. They are in an ideal situation to provide a sense of family history and in many ways can transport grandchildren back over the years by relating stories of times past, of family traditions, sharing and commenting on old photographs,



enabling them to feel welcome, loved, safe and secure." You can read the Archbishop's homily in full on www.catholicbishops.ie.

Archbishop Neary is pictured above with Bishop Denis Nulty, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin and chair of the Bishops' Council for Marriage and the Family, and Father Richard Gibbons PP and Rector of Knock Shrine, planting an Irish oak tree in honour of the first World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly.

Season of Creation 2021: Restoring Our Common Home

The Season of Creation 2021 takes place from 1 September to 4 October (Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi patron of the environment) on the theme 'Restoring Our Common Home'. During this season we are asked to join together to celebrate creation and protect our common home through prayer, reflection and action.

The global Christian family is called to awaken to the urgent need to heal our relationships with creation and with each other and to encourage our parish communities to do the same, "for we know that things can change!" (Laudato Si', 13).

As our world continues to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic as well as a devastating climate and biodiversity crisis, we are looking forward to two UN Conferences in the Autumn, COP15 (on Biodiversity, due to take place in China) and COP24 (on climate change, Glasgow) in the hope that world leaders take the urgent action that is needed to restore our common home.

Resources for the Season of Creation are available on www.catholicbishops.ie.

Trócaire thanks supporters during toughest of years

Launching their annual report on 27 July, Trócaire, the Overseas Development Agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland, thanked the people of Ireland for their remarkable support in helping to raise €73 million during one of the toughest years in living memory. The Covid-19 pandemic impacted every community at home and in every country across the world. Despite challenges presented by the pandemic here in Ireland, Trócaire was able to reach 2.7 million people in 25 countries who were in urgent need of humanitarian aid.

The solidarity shown to the world's poorest by Irish people during the pandemic was humbling according to Trócaire's CEO, Caoimhe de Barra. Launching the annual report Ms de Barra said, "I am immensely grateful for – and humbled by – the response of our staff, partners, supporters, governing body members and donors. All of these individuals and organisations worked extremely hard to help Trócaire respond in support of those most affected by this global pandemic."



Trócaire's annual report details an increase of 15% on funds raised from the previous year with the total amount of €73 million being the highest income raised in three years. See www.trocaire.org for more.



**Dealing with the legacy of our shared past is not an easy task.
- Archbishop Eamon Martin**

Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, has said that the British government's decision to ban all Troubles-related criminal and civil actions, and legacy inquests, will be seen by many victims as a betrayal of trust which denies justice to them and to their loved ones. It is disturbing that victims and survivors, those have paid the highest price for the fragile peace we all enjoy today, once more feel marginalised and neglected. Dealing with the legacy of our shared past is not an easy task. It is a complex undertaking which belongs to all of us. It has no "quick-fix". No "line can be drawn" to relieve the deep hurt still carried in the aftermath of years of violence, death and life-changing injury." You can read the statement in full on www.catholicbishops.ie.

Archbishop Dermot Farrell presents Papal Award to Peter Dunn

On 6 July, Archbishop Dermot Farrell of Dublin, presented Peter Dunn with the Papal Award, Pro-Ecclesia et Pontifice, in recognition of his leadership of the Radharc Trust. The Radharc television series was an experimental, innovative, impactful, provocative religious affairs – programme on RTÉ which saw more than 420 documentary films produced in 75 countries from 1962 to 1996. For more on the Radharc legacy see www.radharc.ie.

Father Charlie McDonnell thanks priests and pilgrims for supporting the 2021 Croagh Patrick pilgrimage

The Administrator of Westport Parish, Father Charlie McDonnell, has thanked priests and pilgrims for their support in making this year's Croagh Patrick Pilgrimage a success. Speaking as this year's pilgrimage came to a close, Fr McDonnell said, "The 2021 Croagh Patrick pilgrimage, which is operating differently this year, continues to work well. By spreading the pilgrimage-out over the month, we have placed safety first and have given tremendous flexibility to pilgrims who wish to climb Ireland's holy mountain. In previous years, the pilgrimage season has stretched from June to September and religious facilities were only afforded to pilgrims on the last Sunday of July, Reek Sunday. However, this year's novel and adventurous departure has successfully broadened the availability of sacramental and other faith ministries provided by the Church, not only on the summit of Croagh Patrick, but also for the first time ever at the base of the mountain where Adoration and Confessions have been made available. I sincerely wish to thank priests and pilgrims for all their support and cooperation in making the 2021 pilgrimage season a success to date."



Photos: Martin Long and Father John Kenny



Accord Catholic Marriage Care Service seeking applications for Marriage Preparation Programme Facilitators

Accord Catholic Marriage Care Service CLG is recruiting volunteers to train as marriage preparation programme facilitators. Accord's facilitators come from a wide variety of professional backgrounds and are trained and work under supervision in accordance with best practice.

The closing date for receipt of application forms to be included in selections for this year is Friday 27 August. Email info@accord.ie for an application form. For more information see www.accord.ie.

