

Sharing the Good News

NEWSLETTER OF THE IRISH CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

Bishop Brendan Leahy welcomes publication of Vatican document on Synodality



For a synodal Church
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Bishop Brendan Leahy of Limerick has welcomed the publication on 7 September by the General Secretariat for the Synod in Rome of the Preparatory Document, indicating the guiding principles of the Synod on Synodality that is due to take place in Rome in 2023. Bishop Leahy said, "As we embark on our own Synodal Pathway in Ireland, we can look forward to letting ourselves be inspired also by these valuable guiding principles. I share the goal of the listening process as laid out in the preparatory document which "is not to produce documents, but to plant dreams, prophecies, and hopes. The Preparatory Document published by the Vatican lays out ten "thematic nuclei" that can now be explored in greater depth in order to contribute in a richer way to the first phase of our consultation in the coming months in Ireland. Synod is not just about meetings; it is a way of life, a way of living out our identity as members of the People of God." For more see www.synod.va and www.catholicbishops.ie/synod.

Northern Catholic Bishops webinar series marking centenary of partition and establishment of Northern Ireland

The Northern Catholic Bishops are hosting an online webinar series of historical talks marking the centenary of partition and the establishment of Northern Ireland. These talks are led by Dr Éamon Phoenix, political historian, columnist and broadcaster, who will be joined by a number of academic historians from the North and South over four Monday nights from 13 September to 4 October 2021. Welcoming the announcement of the webinar series, Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, said, "This webinar series is an opportunity for people of all traditions to engage with our shared history."

Hosted by the Northern Catholic Bishops and led by Dr Éamon Phoenix, you are invited to:
A webinar series to mark the Centenary of the Partition of Ireland and the Establishment of Northern Ireland

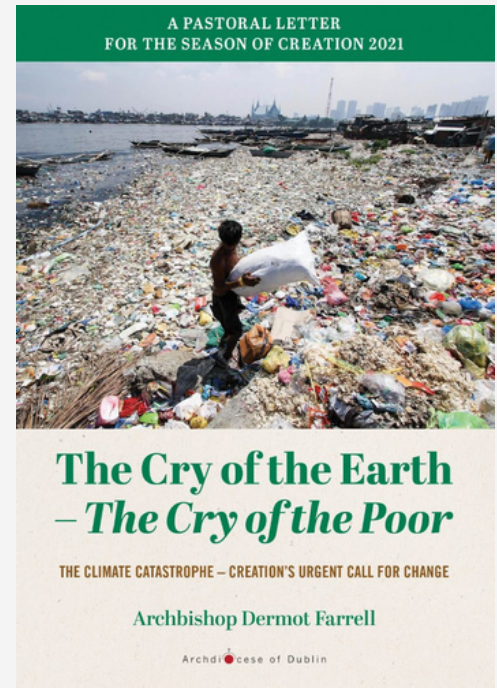


Booking is by email to cjp@iecon.ie.

Archbishop Dermot Farrell publishes pastoral letter on the climate crisis

Archbishop Dermot Farrell of Dublin has published a pastoral letter on the climate crisis. The pastoral, which is entitled *The Cry of the Earth - The Cry of the Poor*, was published by Veritas to coincide with the beginning of the Season of Creation 2021 (1 September to 4 October),

Archbishop Farrell said, "We are living on the edge of huge historical change. Our common home, indeed our only home - this planet - is under threat. Our lifestyles, and the economies which support them are contributing significantly to climate change, and to the crisis it is causing: the many wildfires raging in these days, the melting of the polar caps, the rise of sea levels, the loss of biodiversity, and the depletion of the soil on which life depends. The future of life on this earth, which God created and which "he saw was good" (Genesis 1:21, 25), hangs in the balance. This pastoral letter, which I have titled, *The Cry of the Earth, the Cry of the Poor*, approaches the climate catastrophe from the perspective of faith." See www.veritas.ie to order a copy.



Church Leaders call on Government to provide 100% redress for mica and pyrite families

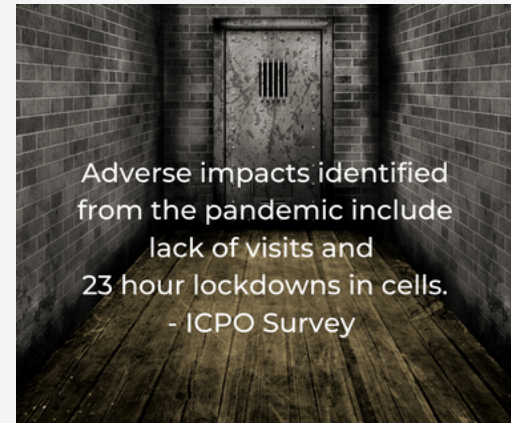


Catholic and Church of Ireland bishops, and a leading Presbyterian clergyman, have called on the Government to offer full and immediate redress to the thousands of people whose homes have been affected by the mica/pyrite crisis. Numerous family homes have been seriously damaged because defective building blocks were used in their construction. The Church Leaders said: "Housing and homelessness are recognised as key political and social justice issues of our time. In this context, immediate action is needed to alleviate the mica/pyrite crisis which is affecting the health, well-being and safety of homeowners and their families.

"As Church Leaders, we are gravely concerned at the families' plight. While many of our impacted citizens live on the periphery of our island, it is disturbing that their basic need for good housing also seems peripheral to the agenda of our political leaders. A number of us have had the opportunity to visit some of the affected homes and heard from campaigners. Our foremost concern now is getting support for these families." For more see www.catholicbishops.ie.

60% of Irish prisoners abroad experience mental health difficulties – ICPO survey

The Irish Council for Prisoners Overseas has published the results of a global survey of its 1,100 client-base which is made up of Irish citizens imprisoned overseas. The survey provided feedback of first-hand accounts and testimonies of the experience of prison abroad, with all the additional challenges that that entails. The objective of the survey was to engage directly with clients so as to better inform the future work of the ICPO.



Commenting on the survey findings, Bishop Denis Brennan, chair of the ICPO said, “Our survey highlights the mental health difficulties experienced by Irish people who are in prison abroad. While it is widely accepted that such problems are a reality for many in prison at home, in the case of a citizen in prison in a foreign country these are exacerbated by time; distance, especially from loved ones and family; finance; isolation; language, and a myriad of potential cultural barriers. Our findings complement the ongoing feedback we receive as to the importance of outreach to people on the margins of society.” To read the survey findings in full see www.icpo.ie.

Archbishop Eamon Martin unveils plaque in Warrenpoint in honour of Saint Maximilian Kolbe

On Sunday 5 September, Archbishop Eamon Martin unveiled a plaque in St Peter's Church in Warrenpoint, Co Down, to commemorate the 80th anniversary of martyrdom of Saint Maximilian Kolbe, a Catholic priest and Franciscan Friar, who volunteered to sacrifice his life in place of a father facing execution in the Nazi death camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland. Archbishop Martin was joined by the Very Rev Father Brendan Kearns PP, and the faithful of the Parish of Saint Peter's, Clonallon, as well as the Polish community of Warrenpoint and Newry.



Bishop Donal Mc Keown pays tribute to Pat Hume RIP

Bishop Donal McKeown of Derry has paid tribute to Pat Hume, wife of the late Nobel Peace Prize recipient John Hume, following her death on 2 September. Bishop Mc Keown said, "In her death the city and indeed our country has returned to God an extraordinary person. She was small in stature but a colossus at a very difficult time in the history of this island. She was the rock behind the man who rightly has been credited as the architect of our current peace."

Joy for the Diocese of Ferns as Bishop Ger Nash is ordained as the 81st bishop of the diocese

There was an outpouring of joy and celebration for the Diocese of Ferns on Sunday 5 September following the Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Ger Nash as the 81st Bishop of Ferns. The Chief Ordaining Prelate was Archbishop Dermot Farrell Dublin, who was assisted by Bishop Denis Brennan of Ferns and Bishop Fintan Monahan of Killaloe. His Excellency Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland, was also in attendance.

Addressing Bishop Nash in the homily for the ceremony Father Billy Swan, Administrator of Wexford Parish, said, "Your call will not be to preside over the building of physical churches, but to build living churches of people with living faith. These might be smaller but will be creative, convinced and committed. We pray for you today that you will lead us to be a Church of Spirit-filled evangelisers where the gifts of all the baptised are mobilised for the mission and are encouraged to use their gifts as Saint Paul encourages the Christians in Rome to do in the second reading today."

For more see www.catholicbishops.ie.



Photos: John McElroy and Brenda Drumm



Assisted suicide reflects a failure of compassion on the part of society - Bishops' Day for Life Message 2021

Day for Life 2021 will be celebrated on Sunday 3 October. This year's Day for Life message from the Irish Bishops' Conference is focusing on the theme of assisted suicide. In their message the bishops highlight how during the Covid-19 pandemic the Oireachtas was being asked to discuss legislation to provide for assisted suicide. In their message the bishops say, "Assisted suicide reflects a failure of compassion on the part of society". The bishops' message and related resources for parishes for Day for Life are available on www.councilforlife.ie.

