

# Sharing the Good News

NEWSLETTER OF THE IRISH CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

## Lent an ideal time to focus on the Synodal Pathway – Bishops

At their Spring General Meeting in Maynooth, Bishops were encouraged to hear of how the Synodal Pathway is gaining momentum in parishes and expressed thanks to the Steering Committee and Task Group (pictured right) for their generous commitment. A network of local listening sessions is

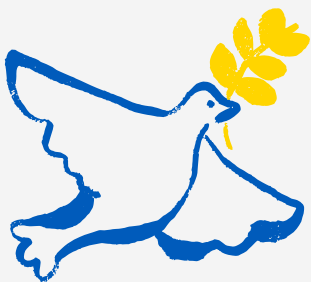


now underway across Ireland in response to the invitation for synodal conversations during this first year of the Irish Synodal Pathway, and this coincides with the Universal Synodal Pathway launched by Pope Francis. There is a growing awareness and engagement in the process and bishops see Lent as an ideal timeframe for individuals and parishes, religious orders, ecclesial movements and others groups to focus on the Synodal Pathway, so as to reach out also in creative ways to hear the stories and views of those who might not normally be in Church circles.

Some dioceses have already received many written submissions around this year's themes and after Easter, on the basis of the Synodal conversations, each diocese will be preparing a ten-page synthesis. The Synod Task Group will shortly be meeting with Synod Diocesan Delegates to offer some direction and support in preparing these.

A National Synodal event will be held on 18 June next to discern the themes that are to be forwarded from Ireland to the Universal Synodal pathway. For more on the Synodal Pathway see [www.synod.ie](http://www.synod.ie).

## Special Collection for Ukraine on weekend of 26 – 27 March



Bishops have asked that a Special Collection for Ukraine be taken up in parishes on the weekend of 26 and 27 March. The proceeds of this Special Collection will be directed to Caritas Internationalis which is the helping hand of the Church on the ground in the Ukraine and surrounding areas. Bishops said, "It is a source of inspiration that people all over Ireland are responding with customary generosity to support humanitarian efforts in this crisis." For more see [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie).

# Church in Ireland to join Pope Francis as he consecrates Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary

The Catholic Church in Ireland will join wholeheartedly with Pope Francis on Friday 25 March, to pray a solemn Act of Consecration of Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Pope Francis made an appeal for Catholics around the world to join him in a letter released earlier this week. In his letter, the Holy Father lamented the “immense suffering” the war in Ukraine is inflicting upon its “sorely tried people” and which is “threatening world peace.” The Pope also expressed his gratitude to the many Catholics who have already responded “with great generosity to my appeals for prayer, fasting, and charity.” He said his decision to perform the Act of Consecration for the nations at war came partly in response to the “numerous requests by the People of God.”



The Act of Consecration, which the Holy Father will lead from St Peter's Square, will be broadcast by Vatican Media from 5.30pm on Friday 25 March. For details of moments of prayer in Irish dioceses see [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie).

## Archbishop Dermot Farrell highlights plight of those caught up in modern day slavery in his Saint Patrick's Day homily

Archbishop Dermot Farrell focused on the plight of the enslaved and exploited women, children, and men who have come to our shores in his St Patrick's Day homily at Mass in St Mary's Pro Cathedral, Dublin, which was attended by President Michael D. Higgins and his wife Sabina.



Photo: John McElroy

Also present at the Mass was Timothy Schmalz's whose bronze sculpture 'Let the Oppressed go Free', blessed by Pope Francis and depicting Saint Bakhita, is now on display in the Pro-Cathedral, Dublin.

You can read Archbishop Farrell's homily in full on [www.dublindiocese.ie](http://www.dublindiocese.ie).



# **Pastoral kit launched for dioceses and parishes as three month countdown to WMOF2022 begins**



The Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life has made available a Pastoral Kit for dioceses and parishes to assist with the local celebration of the 10th World Meeting of Families, which will take place from 22 - 26 June. As numbers going to Rome for the event are restricted due to the pandemic, Pope Francis has asked that families around the world be given opportunities to feel part of the gathering through events held locally and by engaging with the events in Rome which will all be live-streamed.

The pastoral kit which offers a step by step guide to celebrating the event, can be downloaded from [www.romefamily2022.com/en/wmof-diocesi/](http://www.romefamily2022.com/en/wmof-diocesi/) with additional materials available on [www.laityfamilylife.va](http://www.laityfamilylife.va).

## **War in Europe should help us learn lessons for our own peace process – Archbishops of Armagh**

On the vigil of the Feast of Saint Patrick, the Catholic Primate of All Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin, and the Church of Ireland Primate of All Ireland, Archbishop John McDowell, led the annual Saint Patrick's lecture and discussion organised by Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council in the Market Place Theatre & Arts Centre, Armagh. Following this event, the archbishops delivered their Saint Patrick's Day message expressing concern about the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.



They said, "It would be unconscionable for us to celebrate the feast of Saint Patrick this year without offering the solidarity of our prayers, charity and welcome for the people of Ukraine. We also acknowledge the many Russian people, here and in their homeland, who bear no responsibility for this heart-breaking situation and who share our desire for peace and an end to this terrible violence."

Highlighting the similarities between the life of Saint Patrick and the massive number of refugees displaced by the war, the archbishops said, "May all Christians of Europe, including Patriarch Kirill and the Russian Orthodox Church, unite in daily spiritual and practical efforts in support of a ceasefire, humanitarian outreach and the immediate laying down of weapons. Christ's cause can only be advanced by Christ's means." You can read more on [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie).

# Pope Francis reforms the organisation and structure of the Roman Curia



On Saturday 19 March, the Feast of Saint Joseph, the Vatican published a document implementing Pope Francis' reform of the organisation and structure of the Roman Curia. The apostolic constitution, *Praedicate evangelium* ("Preach the Gospel"), was nine years in production by the pope's Council of Cardinal Advisers.

The constitution underlines that "any member of the faithful" can lead one of newly constituted Vatican dicasteries or other bodies, "given their particular competence, power of governance and function." It also outlines some of the new structures that are being put in place so as the Curia can better serve the Church around the world.

*Praedicate evangelium* replaces *Pastor bonus*, the apostolic constitution on the Roman Curia promulgated by Pope John Paul II on June 28, 1988, and later modified by both popes Benedict and Francis. You can read more on [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie).

## "It is encouraging to see a return to full public worship in our parishes" – Bishops

At their Spring General Meeting in Maynooth bishops welcomed the full return to public worship. They said, "As the remaining Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted, it is encouraging to see a return to full public worship in our parishes, and the resumption of all aspects of Church and community life. At the heart of the life of our parish communities is the Sunday Mass. When we gather for the Eucharist on the Lord's Day, we do so to express our joy in the Risen Lord and to unite with our brothers and sisters in the Church in thanksgiving and praise to God. This is a communal celebration which shapes us as a community of faith, life and charity.



"During the Season of Lent, we encourage everyone to return to Sunday and weekday Mass in our churches, welcoming each other back as we gather once more together. From Easter Sunday, 17 April, this will once again be deemed an essential expression of faith for all in our Church in Ireland. As always, those whose health is vulnerable or who are unwell will not be under any obligation to attend Mass, and should keep themselves safe and pray at home until they are better."



# News in Pictures



Meeting in London on Friday 4 March, the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the Bishops' Conferences of Ireland, Scotland and England & Wales called for prayer and peace for Ukraine. Pictured are: Cardinal Vincent Nichols and Archbishop Malcolm McMahon of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales; Archbishop Eamon Martin and Archbishop Dermot Farrell of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference; and, Bishop Hugh Gilbert and Bishop John Keenan of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland.

Father Bryan Shortall Ofm Cap, PP of Priorswood Parish in Dublin, is pictured at the Harris Group on the Naas Road on 22 March, after he blessed an aid convoy of five trucks taking medical grade supplies and other vital materials to the Poland/Ukraine border. Father Shortall called the initiative, "a labour of love." He said, "In the midst of this darkness there's light,"



At the Rite of Election on 6 March, a total of 14 people from parish communities of the Archdiocese of Dublin were called by Archbishop Dermot Farrell to complete their initiation at the Easter Vigil in their parishes.

On Sunday 6 March, Archbishop Francis Duffy, Archbishop of Tuam, celebrated Mass at the International Marian and Eucharistic Shrine, Knock, Co Mayo.

After the Mass Archbishop Duffy joined Father Richard Gibbons, Parish Priest and Rector of the Shrine to pray for peace in Ukraine.



**If you have photos you would like featured in a future issue of *Sharing the Good News*, please email them with a brief caption to [info@catholicbishops.ie](mailto:info@catholicbishops.ie)**