



Secret deals on priests' children should not be 'unjust' to mother or child - Irish bishops

Irish Catholic bishops have come out against confidentiality agreements in cases where a priest has fathered a child, according to correspondence between it and newly formed organisation Coping International.

Irish Examiner - Coping International, which is seeking to support the children and ex-partners of priests in different countries around the

world, including Ireland, had written to the Irish Bishops' Conference regarding the confidentiality agreements — querying if such agreements were ethical.

It based its comments on the UN's Children's Rights Commission and its concluding observations on the second periodic report of the Holy See, in which the UN body said: "The committee is concerned about the situation of children fathered by Catholic priests, who, in many cases, are not aware of the identity of their fathers.

"The committee is also concerned that the mothers may obtain a plan for regular payment from the Church until the child is financially independent only if they sign a confidentiality agreement not to disclose any information about the child's father or the plan."

Writing on behalf of Coping International, Fr Thomas Doyle submitted to the bishops that the use of confidentiality agreements perpetuated secrecy and that, in some cases, "Church authority figures would make an unspecified assertion that Canon Law was the basis for the confidentiality, 'for the good of the Church'".

In its response, the Irish Episcopal Conference wrote: “Such an agreement is unjust if it compromises the consent of the parties involved, for example if undue pressure is brought to bear on the mother.

“Such agreements may be unjust if they hinder the basic good of mother and child, for example, if they are used primarily to protect the reputation of the priest or the institutional Church by creating a veil of secrecy that isolates the mother and child from relationships, knowledge and resources which are owed in natural justice.

“Systematic power can distort the workings of natural justice consistently asserted in Catholic Social Teaching.”

The Catholic Bishops said such agreements ought only be entered into with full knowledge and full freedom by both parties.

Coping International welcomed the response from the bishops, claiming: “Any agenda that stands in front of the rights of another human being is unethical.”

The organisation, which launched to little fanfare on December 16, has already attracted a number of contacts from interested parties

around the world, with Patricia Casey, a senior consultant psychiatrist at the Mater Hospital, claiming it would act as a “signpost” for people who are either the former partners or the children of priests so they can receive support.

http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/secret-deals-on-priests-childrenunjust-322540.html?utm_source=news&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=newsbriefing

Irish Imam condemns persecution of Christians in Muslim countries

Muslims in Ireland have held a two minutes silence for the 148 Christian students killed in a militant attack on a Kenyan university.

Independent - Shaykh Muhammad Umar Al-Qadri, Imam of the Al-Mustafa Islamic Centre, condemned the persecution of Christians in the Muslim countries as he led his congregation to remember the victims in Garissa al-Shabab.

Independent - Gunmen from the al Qaeda-aligned group al Shabaab killed 148 people on Thursday when they stormed the Garissa University College campus, some 200 km (120 miles) from the Somali border.



***Shaykh Dr.
Muhammad Umar
Al-Qadri***

The Kenyan air force has since bombed two al Shabaab camps in Somalia.

Shaykh Al-Qadri dedicated the first part of his sermon last Friday – which was also Good Friday - to mention the similarities between Islam and Christianity, and dedicated the second part to condemn the prosecution of Christians.

The Iman, who is based in Blanchardstown, west Dublin, said most scholars speak only about the differences between these religions.

“This is not the method of the Koran,” he said.

“The Quran when mentioning Christianity not only highlights the differences but also the similarities between these two faiths. In order to build trust and bridge the gap between these two largest religious communities in the world it is important to emphasise on that what is common between these two faiths.

“The belief in one Creator, in the Virgin Mary, the Prophet Jesus, Life after Death are among some of the similarities between Islam and Christianity.

“Loving the Creator, loving ones neighbour, and charity are also important parts of the two faiths.”

More at -

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/irish-imam-condemns-persecution-of-christians-in-muslim-countries-31121234.html>

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The memorial stone in Mount Jerome

More names added to evangelical Bethany home memorial

The names of five more children who died at the Bethany Home have been added to a memorial stone in Mount Jerome Cemetery.

Journal.ie - That brings to 227 the number of children who were discovered to have been buried in unmarked graves in the Harolds Cross cemetery.

The news was announced by Bethany Home survivor and campaigner Derek Leinster, who said that the names were discovered in records.

Located on Dublin's Orwell Road, the home was for unmarried mothers and was run by an evangelical Protestant group.

The stone was unveiled almost a year ago, in April 2014, at a ceremony in Mount Jerome.

Over 200 children died while in the care of Bethany Home, and survivors say they suffer physical and mental effects from their time there.

"222 Bethany children were denied so much in their short lives and even in death the right to their name on a headstone," said Derek Leinster [at the launch last year](#).

He said at the time that the children were placed in unmarked ground, until being rediscovered by the Bethany Survivors' campaign in 2010.

The names of the children were researched from Mount Jerome Cemetery records by Niall Meehan of Griffith College, Dublin.

The memorial was funded by the State.

The Bethany Home survivors recently [launched a new website](#) dedicated to their work.

<http://www.bethanygroup98.co.uk/>

http://www.thejournal.ie/bethany-home-names-memorial-2024828-Apr2015/?utm_source=twitter_self



Paedophile Priest's Order Quitting Co Cavan Abbey

The religious order of serial paedophile Fr Brendan Smyth is quitting its Co Cavan abbey.

Irish News - The Norbertine Fathers are departing Kilnacrott Abbey near Ballyjamesduff.

The five remaining priests held their last Mass at the abbey on Easter Sunday.

First put on the market in 2007, with an asking price of €3m, it was initially thought the abbey and its

44 acres would be transformed into a 60-bed residential nursing home after being reportedly sold for €900,000 in 2011.

However, that sale fell through and the property eventually sold in 2012 for €610,000 to a controversial lay religious group known as Direction For Our Times, which is run by Chicago native Kathryn Ann Clarke, otherwise known as 'Anne a lay apostle'.

The Norbertines are hoping to raise a further €100,000 when the contents of the abbey go under the hammer in early June.

Its bookshop will remain open until the end of the month.

The order, which sold its farm and livestock in the mid-1990s, has confirmed that some of the profits from the sale will be used to help those abused by Fr Smyth.



Belfast-born Smyth, who joined the Norbertines in 1945, sexually abused children in Northern Ireland, the Republic, Wales, Italy and the US.

During the 1990s, he spent three years on the run from the RUC, staying mainly at Kilnacrott. The scandal led to the downfall of the Fianna Fáil/Labour coalition in 1994.

<http://www.irishnews.com/news/paedophile-priest-s-order-quitting-co-cavan-abbey-1424905>

Tales of Brian Boru - for children and adults

The Market Place Theatre in Armagh is hosting another of its Family Super Saturdays on April 11, this time with 'The Tale Of Brian Boru' told via a puppet show.

Brian Boru was the first High King of Ireland and is reported to be buried in Armagh's Church of Ireland Cathedral.

During the show, you can meet Fiachra the File, Brian Boru's personal story collector. He will tell you the heroic tales of the first High King of Ireland with help from his friend Brian O'Brien and Ken Kennedy. The ticket price includes one hour of post-show activities including themed crafts, face painting, balloon modelling and a fancy dress competition with prizes for the best dressed boy and girl.

Super Saturdays are recommended for children aged 4 and over. Performances are at 2pm and 3.30pm and tickets cost £6.

For the adults, and following 2014 events across Ireland to mark 1,000 years since the death of Brian Boru, The New Theatre presents a tale of

two brothers of conflicting ideals who sail to Ireland to defeat the High King Brian Boru.

Over the course of the journey they part enemies, and meet again on opposite sides of the battlefield. Brian Boru was assassinated at the battle of Clontarf in 1014.

‘The Assassination Of Brian Boru’ will be staged on Friday, April 17 at 8pm. Tickets are priced £14.50 and £12.50 (concession).

Tickets for all events can be booked through the Box Office on [028] 3752 1821, or online at www.marketplacearmagh.com.

Gay teachers suffering 'real anxiety' over religious law

GAY and lesbian teachers suffer "real anxiety" because of a law that allows a school to protect its religious ethos when it comes to who they employ.

Independent.ie - Equality Minister Aodhan O Riordain has promised to amend the legislation - but the Irish National Teachers Organisation insists that it must be abolished completely.

"Amending a bad law does not change it," INTO president Sean McMahon said in his opening address to the union's annual conference.

The issue of rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) teachers is taking on a new significance in light of the forthcoming referendum on same-sex marriage.

Mr McMahon said Section 37.1 of the Employment Equality Acts caused real anxiety to teachers whose family status, sexual orientation or gender identity may be perceived as being in conflict with the ethos of a school.

Under existing law, religious-run schools are not considered guilty of discrimination if they take action to stop an employee from "undermining the religious ethos of the institution".

While job applicants may not be asked about their sexual orientation at an interview, it has allowed schools to not hire certain teachers or to stop people from advancing.

According to Mr O Riordain, scrapping Section 37.1 would be a constitutional issue and the most the Government could do was to amend it. The minister had hoped to have announced his plans for changes to the legislation by Easter.

Dion O'Caoimh, secretary of the INTO LGBT group, told the Irish Independent that the proposed change in the legislation would only say that schools could not discriminate against LGBT teachers, but it would not protect them against getting into trouble in school for expressing their views.

Cara O'Mahony, another member of the INTO LGBT group, and also of the Kildare north branch, said in terms of a teacher's mental health, it was very important that "everyone feels equal in the workplace".

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/education/gay-teachers-suffering-real-anxiety-over-religious-law-31122706.html>

RE teachers 'not ordinary', GB campaigners say

An initiative to recruit more trainee RE teachers was launched last week by the Religious Education Council. The campaign "Beyond the Ordinary", intended to address the existing shortage of qualified religious education specialists, has coincided with the publication of fresh data showing a drop in applications for

university- and school-based RE teacher-training courses starting in September.

Church Times - Figures published last week by the University and College Applications Service showed that, so far this year, only 250 students had accepted places on postgraduate RE courses beginning in September - ten fewer than at the same time last year.

This suggests that many places on PGCE courses in RE - recently increased by the Government to 600 - will not be filled. Last year only 400 of the 500 available places were taken up. If the situation worsens this year, some universities outside the Cathedral Group of church-based universities and university colleges may decide to close postgraduate RE courses.

The drop in applications suggests that the reintroduction of substantial bursaries for postgraduate RE trainees has not so far succeeded in attracting well-qualified graduates to the subject. It also suggests that the increasing interest in RE among school students, with a steady rise in entries for GCSE religious-studies examinations, has yet to feed through to career choices.

The education-data analyst Professor John Howson said that it was disappointing that belated ministerial support for RE had failed, so far, to increase recruitment. But, he suggested, the position for RE was reflected in an overall reduction in enthusiasm for teaching as a career. Applications for PGCE places overall have fallen by 1000 in a year.

The campaign "hopes to interest philosophy and other humanities graduates, as well as theology specialists, in an RE career, and career changers", the REC's newly appointed chief executive, Rudolf Elliott Lockhart, said. "Good RE helps students make sense of the issues of religion and belief that so frequently top the news agenda."

[www.teachreco.uk/beyondthe ordinary](http://www.teachreco.uk/beyondtheordinary)

Media digest

Times

Report that Christian congregations in northern Nigeria had taunted Boko Haram insurgents with defiant hymns about religious war before their churches were overrun and burnt and their people slaughtered. Article states that Muslim

community leaders have claimed that the militants targeted specific Christian communities after learning that people had circulated the songs, a cross between jingly church music and synthetic pop but with sectarian lyrics

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/africa/article4403628.ece>

Mail

Report that Pope Francis urged the international community not to 'look the other way' and act over the killings of Christians around the globe, during his Easter Monday address. Speaking in St Peter's Square, the pontiff asked for 'tangible help' from communities all over the world for Christians persecuted because of their faith - but stopped short of suggesting what actions should be taken.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3027496/Pope-uses-Easter-Monday-address-warn-world-not-look-way-Christians-killed-Islamic-extremists.html#ixzz3WbFW1WLS>

Exp/Guard/BBC

Reports on introduction of new powers allowing those 55 and over to decide for themselves what to do with their retirement savings. All highlight Michael Gunn, a 57-year-old retired chartered accountant from Devon, who will use part of his initial payout to help replace a church hall

destroyed by fire four years ago at St Luke's Church in Newton Poppleford.

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/568748/Pension-pot-pay-wedding-and-cruise>

<http://www.theguardian.com/money/2015/apr/06/pensions-revolution-off-to-a-quiet-start>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-32152728>

Times

Columnist Philip Collins on the history of the Orthodox date of Easter, which, he says, means it is possible to celebrate two Easters.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/columnists/article4403768.ece>

TES

Feature on the rise of the role of chaplaincy in schools and FE colleges - with link to blog from Revd Garry Neave, National FE Adviser and lead on chaplaincy for the Church of England's Education Division.

<https://news.tes.co.uk/b/news/2015/04/02/chaplaincy-on-the-rise-as-stressed-teachers-seek-support.aspx>