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**Image of
the day**

**Saint
Patrick's,
Dublin**

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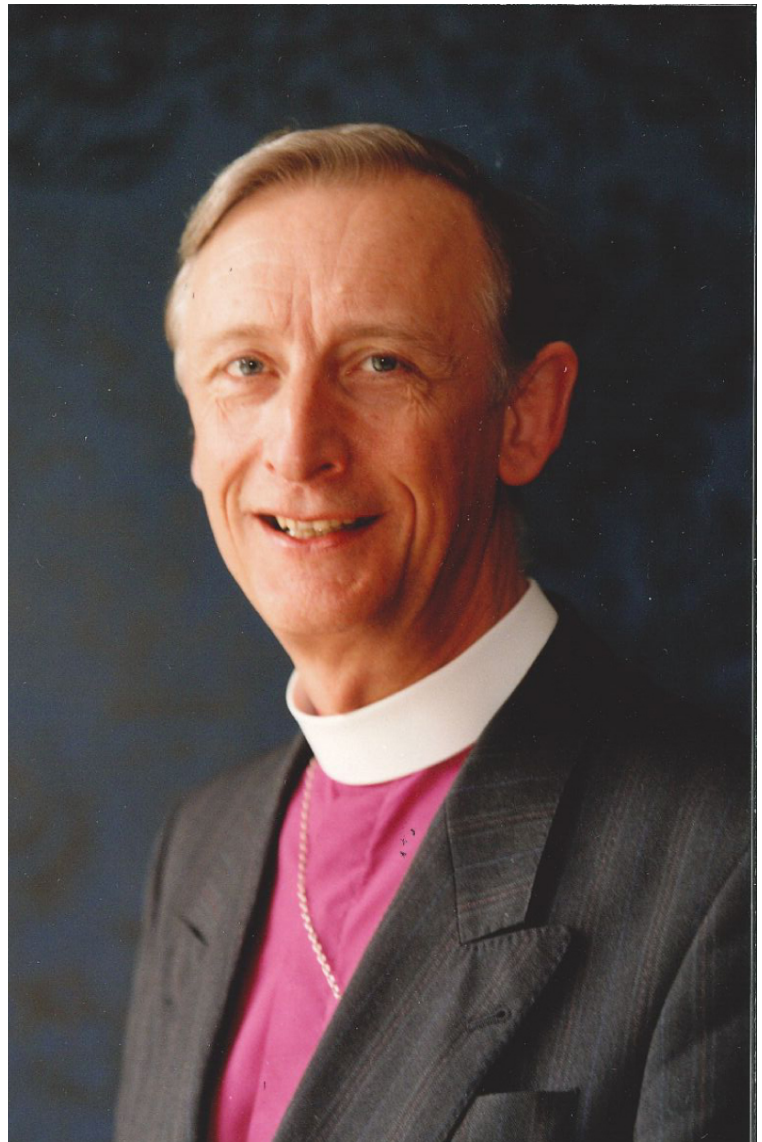
Legalising euthanasia will only worsen current provision of care for terminally ill by Baroness Finlay

People and places

Bishop Hanon's powerful words on Enniskillen spoke volumes

The former Anglican Bishop of Clogher, the Rt Reverend Brian Hannon, who died yesterday after a long illness was one of the most-respected figures in the Church of Ireland, Alf

McCreaqry writes in the Belfast Telegraph



He was also renowned internationally in the Anglican Communion for his ecumenism and bridge-building at a time when Northern Ireland was in the turmoil of some of the worst years of the Troubles.

He took office as Bishop shortly before the 1987 no-warning Provisional IRA bomb at the Cenotaph in Enniskillen which was part of his Diocese.

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The late Senator Gordon Wilson, whose daughter Marie and 10 others were killed by the blast, recalled later: “Bishop Hannon was on the scene quickly on the day of the bombing, and it was he who had given me a steady hand, which I so much appreciated as I walked down the aisle of Enniskillen Methodist Church behind Marie's coffin.”

A week after the bombing, Bishop Hannon was the preacher at a service in St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, attended by political and community leaders from all over Ireland who had gathered to pay their respects to the Enniskillen dead and wounded and their families.

In a powerful address, he said: “Thank you for the wave of prayer and compassion that has surrounded those bereaved and injured in last Sunday's tragic atrocity in Enniskillen and for the new determination by so many to say to all our fellow countrymen, 'No more of this'.

“From whatever source it comes, and in whatever cause, aggressive or retaliatory, such bestiality is a blasphemous rejection of the God who loves us, and in whose image we are made. Rather than protecting or achieving any human right, it is an abdication of our right to be called humans. Nothing in Ireland, north or south, can justify such actions.”

... He served as Bishop during some of the worst violence of the Troubles, and gained great respect as a leader, pastor and bridge-builder despite the huge challenges which he and other clerical and lay leaders faced.

Courtesy The Belfast Telegraph

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Belfast Cathedral Black Santa raises £150,000



The 2021 Black Santa appeal at Belfast Cathedral has raised £150,000 to support the vital work of charities across Northern Ireland.

This will be distributed to around 200 organisations at the annual Good Samaritans Service, which returns in person in St Anne's on February 6 – the 2021 service was held virtually due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The 45th Black Santa Sit-out on the Cathedral steps began on December 13 and continued until Christmas Eve.

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Black Santa himself, Dean Stephen Forde, said the sum raised had exceeded his expectations.

“On December 23, having reached £100,000, I issued the challenge for us to hit £150,000, and it is amazing that we achieved this,” Dean Forde said.

“The £150,000 total exceeded my expectations in a year of restricted footfall, and when many of the Cathedral’s major events had been cancelled because of the Covid restrictions.”

The Dean said that while the total raised in 2020 was £220,000, the appeal that year had received a one-off legacy of £100,000.

“So this year we raised £150,000 in direct donations, compared with the £120,000 raised last year,” Dean Forde said.

New Diocesan Chaplain for Mothers’ Union in Down and Dromore MU

The Revd Duncan Pollock has been appointed Diocesan Chaplain to Mothers’ Union in Down and Dromore by the bishop, the Right Reverend David McClay.

“I am delighted that Duncan has accepted my invitation to take on this important role in the diocese,” said Bishop McClay.



“With all the challenges that Covid–19 has brought to us recently, the Mothers’ Union has a wonderful opportunity to come alongside families with the presence of God to heal, to restore and to bless.

“The Revd Duncan Pollock will bring so much to the task of encouraging Mothers’ Union and the branches in Down and Dromore in his role as Chaplain.

“Duncan has done outstanding work during Covid–19 and is much loved in the Parish of Groomsport where he is rector. I am so pleased that the diocese at large will now benefit from his many gifts and his understanding of God’s wonderful grace for his church and for his world.

“As Duncan takes on this new responsibility I would like to thank the outgoing Diocesan Chaplain, Revd Gerald Macartney for his faithful service and pastoral ministry, especially over the extended and difficult period of the pandemic.”

Speaking of his appointment, Revd Duncan Pollock, said,
“When Bishop David invited me to take up the post of

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Chaplain to the Diocesan Mothers' Union, I was both surprised and flattered. Surprised, because it was so unexpected! At my stage of ministry such invitations are rare. Flattered, because it shows such faith in me. I hope I can live up to that faith and trust.

"I would ask that all members of the MU across the diocese keep in me in their prayers as I prepare myself to take up this new chapter in my ministry."

Ordained Local Ministers in Killala, Elfin, and Ardagh



Last Sunday, the first group of Ordained Local Ministers in KEA received their Certificates in Theology validated by Queen's University Belfast. Well done to Rev. Adam Norris, Rev. Albert Dawson, Rev. Stephen Frost and Rev. Edmund Smyth on their achievement.

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Tributes to deacon who died within a month of ordination

Deacon who died a month after ordination remembered as man of deep faith

A deacon-elect who trained with tragic Paul McCormick has remembered him as a man who had "confidence in God's plan for him", Mairead Holland writes in the Irish News.

Rev McCormick (57), a married father-of-two from Downpatrick, died on Thursday, just a month after his ordination service.

Requiem Mass took place on Saturday at St Patrick's Church in the town where concelebrants included Bishop of Down and Connor Noel Treanor.

Rev McCormick, who worked in Ulster Bank, had been diagnosed with a malignant tumour in October after suffering problems with his vision, and his ordination was brought forward by two months.

At the funeral service, mourners heard of the "courage and strength" Rev McCormick showed to everyone that day.

Jackie Breen, a deacon-elect who trained with Rev McCormick and became a close friend, was among the many people who paid tribute to him.

He said: "For the past five years I came to know Paul through our mutual studies, travelling to and from Belfast.

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What began as travelling companions for the academic demands, grew into a warm and dear friendship. This extended to our wives and families. We enjoyed social times together and supported each other.

"The friendship was not confined to Paul and myself but extended to the full diaconate group."

Mr Breen said that through Rev McCormick's "illness, suffering, courage and faith in God", he came to appreciate the depth of his spirituality.

"He was inspirational in his witness, and his confidence in God's plan for him undoubtedly helped his family and friends. ... He was a man of wit and wisdom. His giftedness and vision will be missed by all," he added.

Parish Priest Fr John Murray described Rev McCormick as a "wonderful man" and said he would have been a big help to the parish.

Among other online tributes paid was one from Elaine Kelly, a former Belfast barrister who left the profession to become a nun.

She wrote: At peace now Paul, thanks for your friendship, with prayers and heartfelt blessings for Geraldine, Liam, Niamh and all the family parish."

Courtesy The Irish News 10/01/2022

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Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts and books

Morning Service on BBC Radio Ulster

On this Sunday (January 16) will be led by the Rev Lynne Gibson, rector of St Mark's Parish Church, Ballymacash, Lisburn.

The service will begin at 10.15am and will be available afterwards online through the Radio Ulster website.

Let Us Dream - 4 Corners festival event

4 Corners is hosting Dr Austen Ivereigh, the collaborator and biographer to the Pope, for an exclusive discussion about our moment in history, and how to see it as brimming with possibility.

Book here:

accidentaltheatre.co.uk/4-corners-2022...

How is your community celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee?

This is a chance to be church at the heart of our communities, to bring neighbourhoods together for a joyful celebration. Take a look at our resources and share your plans with us: methodist.org.uk/jubilee

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Fitzroy TV

You may watch the Reverend Steve Stockman and the team on Fitzroy TV from 11am on Sundays. From Fitzroy Presbyterian Church in Belfast. ...

[https://www.fitzroy.org.uk/Groups/342726/
Fitzroy Presbyterian Church/Fitzroy TV/Sunday Service/
Sunday_Service.aspx](https://www.fitzroy.org.uk/Groups/342726/Fitzroy_Presbyterian_Church/Fitzroy_TV/Sunday_Service/Sunday_Service.aspx)

New tools to support your online and onsite church services in 2022

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The C of E's DigitalLabs blog is one of their most-read of 2021 and shares a number of amazing resources that you and your church can try!

cofe.io/OnlineOfflineChurch.

News Reports

Major challenge looms for the church' - Donegal priest

A Donegal priest says a major challenge is looming for the Catholic church as the number of people turning to the priesthood continues to dwindle.

Fr John Joe Duffy revealed that when he signed up for the National Seminary at Maynooth in 1995 there were close to 200 students. Today that figure stands at just 25, Donegal News reports.

The Creeslough and Dunfanaghy parish priest said the extra workload being heaped upon some serving clerics was “not sustainable” and that a solution needs to be found. Fr Duffy made his remarks during the latest issue of the ‘Time Out’ podcast run by former Rosses Radio DJ Tony McGettigan.

“When I went to Maynooth in 1995 you had 178 students for the priesthood, today there are 25. Maynooth was celebrating 200 years and our class was 28 and we were the smallest class in 200 years. Today there are just 25 in the entire seminary,” said Fr Duffy.

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The drop-off in interest has led to the closure of all but two Irish seminaries. All Hallows in Dublin closed in 2015, St Patrick's in Thurles closed in 2002, Dublin's Clonliffe College closed in 2000, St Peter's Wexford and St John's Waterford closed in 1999, St Kieran's Kilkenny closed in 1994 and St Patrick's Carlow shut in 1993.

In 2018 St Malachy's seminary in Belfast which trained priests for Raphoe and Derry shut its doors after 185 years. The remaining facilities are Maynooth and the Irish College in Rome.

"Almost all those that have closed were operating in my time," said Fr Duffy.

"At this moment in time fewer priests are available and it will leave big questions about how parishes will manage. We in the diocese of Raphoe in Donegal have always been very blessed to have a large number of priests and we certainly aren't facing shortage at present. But ten, 15 or 20 years from now we will be much less through sickness and retirement and so on."

Fr Duffy said Donegal had been particularly badly hit by the deaths of young priests. He pointed to the passing of Falcarragh's Fr Paul Gallagher in 2016, Fr Pat Prendergast in Glenties in 2017 and in 2018 in Frosses, Fr Seamus Gallagher.

"We lost a lot of priests very young. These were not people over a certain age, these were young men, Fr Paul being youngest. But the reality going forward will be that parishes will have to work together or some process of coming together because there will be less priests.

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“I was talking to a priest recently and he is looking after seven churches in Derry. That is not sustainable. You can’t look after seven churches, it is impossible to give a full service of Masses in seven churches.

“You can only do so much and we have to try and ensure that priests remain well, providing for a bigger community. But God has his way of working and we pray for vocations,” Fr Duffy added.

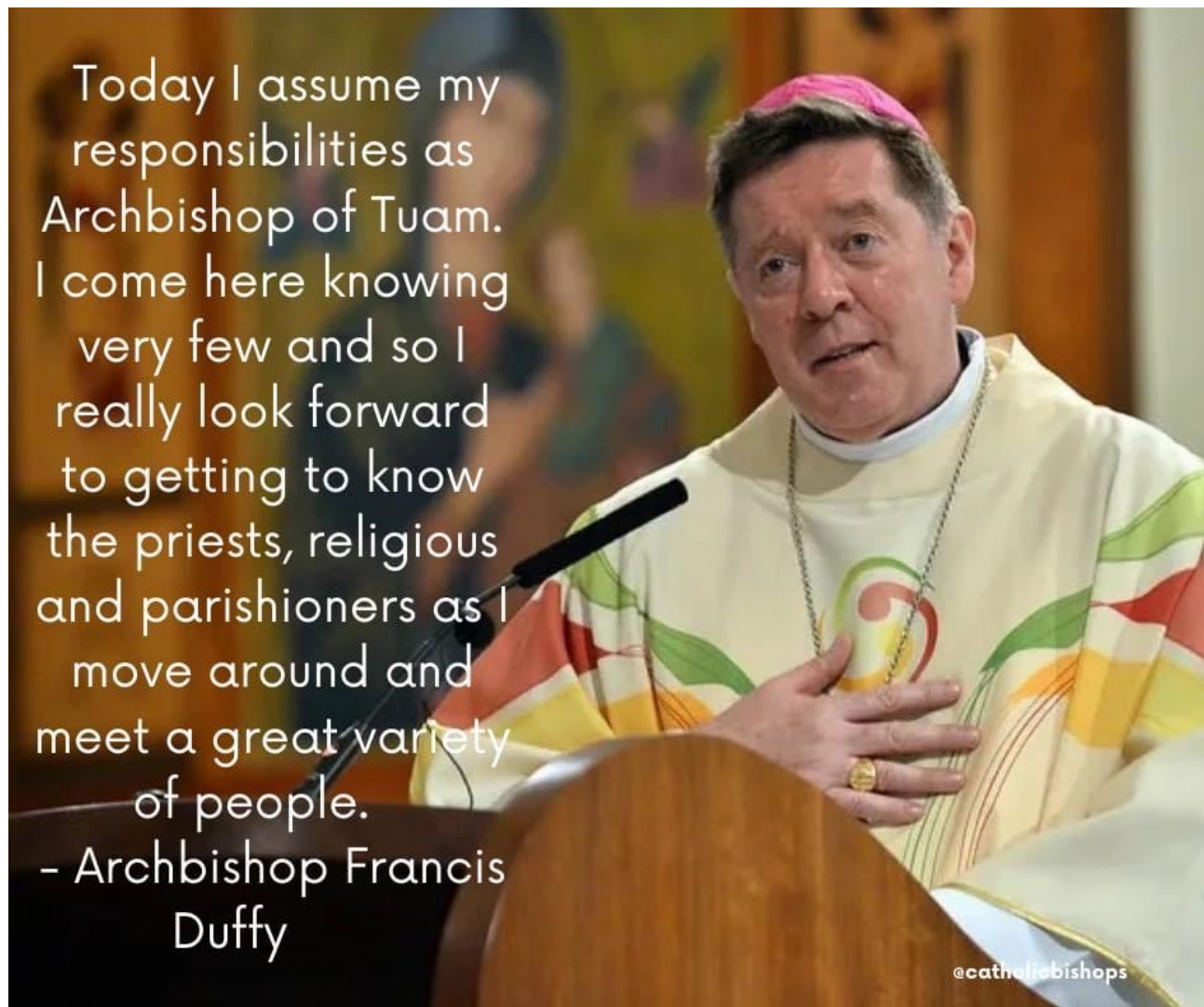
Courtesy Donegal News 09/01/2022

More changes needed as Church struggles with plummeting priest numbers, new Archbishop warns

More changes will be needed in the Catholic Church in Ireland as the number of priests continues to decline, the new Archbishop of Tuam has warned.

In his first homily as Archbishop following his installation at the Cathedral of the Assumption in Tuam, Dr Francis Duffy said the number answering the call to priesthood “has plummeted in recent decades” and “consequently, there are not enough priests to maintain the present parish arrangements”.

Addressing a tightly restricted congregation of family, close friends, the Papal Nuncio and some bishops, Dr Duffy said: “We have heard all the facts and figures. We just have to look around and see parishes where there were two or three



Today I assume my responsibilities as Archbishop of Tuam. I come here knowing very few and so I really look forward to getting to know the priests, religious and parishioners as I move around and meet a great variety of people.
- Archbishop Francis Duffy

priests there is now one and increasingly there are none, with parishes sharing a priest.”

The Archdiocese of Tuam has seen a dramatic drop in priest numbers over the past two decades, down to 47 from 115 in 1996.

There just two seminarians training for priesthood compared to 14 in 1996.

In response to the ongoing decline in vocations he highlighted that: “Structures have already been modified to meet the current needs and more changes will be

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necessary, building on good developments that have already taken place”.

The 63-year-old former Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois said the future of the Church depends on parishioners, as well as the diminishing numbers of clergy and religious, and he paid tribute to the many in the west of Ireland who over past decades answered the call to priesthood and religious life for service at home and abroad. “You know them, they are your family members, friends and neighbours.”

Of Pope Francis’ plans for synodality for the global church, he said it was timely and exciting.

While it is “the way to go”, he also stressed: “It is not an instant solution. We have to remember it is a pathway not a runway.”

Speaking in Tuam where exhumations at the Mother and Baby home run by the Bon Secours Sisters are due to take place this year, Dr Duffy said: “Truth and justice are important and, in pursuit of both, I am willing to listen and to learn.

“To move forward we must listen to all who have been hurt by their experience of Church.

“Tragically, for some people, daily life was anything but happy or joyful.

“Judgement prevailed and set the scene for harshness, not homeliness. Human dignity was not there for the living or the dead or the bereaved.”

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Elsewhere in his homily, Dr Duffy, who succeeds Archbishop Michael Neary, referred to the “terrible journey we have all had due to the virus”.

The number of guests at the installation ceremony had to be greatly reduced because of current risks from the surge in cases of the Omicron variant.

He said many people have suffered greatly during the last two years. “Sadly, for some there has been death and bereavement, illness, loss of employment, risks and isolation.”

While the experience of the lockdowns, the continuing threat [of the virus] and the restrictions have had “a very negative impact on many people”, he said, “We have also witnessed good neighbourliness, and those who continue with essential services and help keep us safe and keep life going as normally as possible.”

Courtesy Independent.ie 09/01/2022

‘Cancel culture’ is colonising us, warns Pope

Francis uses English term as he says attempts to revise history put freedom of expression in jeopardy

Pope Francis has decried the rise of “cancel culture”, using the English term for the concept for the first time in a major speech.

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In an address to diplomats at the Vatican, he described cancel culture as “ideological colonisation”.

The phenomenon of denying or trying to rewrite history “is invading many circles and public institutions”, he said.

History should be interpreted by the standards of the time, not by the standards of today, he said. Cancel culture “leaves no space for freedom of expression”, the Pope told the gathering of ambassadors. The concept is in its infancy in Italy and has barely entered public discourse, unlike countries such as Britain and the US.

‘In the name of protecting diversity, one ends up cancelling out the sense of identity’

“In the name of protecting diversity, one ends up cancelling out the sense of identity,” the spiritual leader of the world’s 1.2 billion Catholics said.

It should not be rewritten according to contemporary values. Cancel culture was leading to “one-track thinking,” he said. The Pope did not cite any specific examples of cancel culture.

But his message will strike a chord in Britain with anyone who has questioned the decision of public institutions to cover up or reinterpret the sins and failings of historical figures, from Joseph Banks to Winston Churchill. It is the second time in a month that the Pope has cited “ideological colonisation” and the culture wars.

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In December, he compared the EU to a dictatorship in its attempt to impose “woke” rules on language.

He was commenting on an EU draft guide to inclusive language which advised policy makers in Brussels to say “human-induced” instead of “man-made” and to avoid references to Christmas during the holiday season.

‘It is something that throughout history has not worked. In history, many dictatorships have tried to do these things’

Trying to ban Christian terms amounted to “a fad, watered-down secularism,” Francis said. “It is something that throughout history has not worked. In history, many dictatorships have tried to do these things. I’m thinking of Napoleon, the Nazi dictatorship, the Communist one.” He said the EU risked “failing” if it became a vehicle for “ideological colonisation”. The Vatican had been critical of the European Commission draft document.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, who as Secretary of State is the Vatican’s de facto prime minister, condemned any attempt to cancel “our roots, the Christian dimension of our Europe, especially with regard to Christian festivals”.

The Pope also used the speech to condemn “baseless” ideological misinformation about Covid-19 vaccines and back national immunisation campaigns.

His words to diplomats from nearly 200 countries gathered in the Vatican’s frescoed Hall of the Benedictions marked the closest he has come to a de facto backing of vaccine

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mandates, which have become controversial in Italy and other European countries. “In those places where an effective vaccination campaign has taken place, the risk of severe repercussions of the disease has decreased,” he said.

“It is therefore important to continue the effort to immunise the general population as much as possible.”

Francis warned against ideological statements regarding vaccinations. “We are finding increasingly that we live in a world of strong ideological divides. Frequently people let themselves be influenced by the ideology of the moment, often bolstered by baseless information or poorly documented facts,” he said.

“Vaccines are not a magical means of healing, yet surely they represent, in addition to other treatments that need to be developed, the most reasonable solution for the prevention of the disease.”

Perspective

Legalising euthanasia will only worsen current provision of care for terminally ill by Baroness Finlay

Crossbench peer Baroness Finlay writes in “The House”:

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Baroness Meacher's Assisted Dying Bill is the fourth attempt to legalise giving lethal drugs to terminally ill people to end their lives. The fundamental and practical flaws in the bill are clearly exposed by the range of amendments that have been put down. It is therefore surprising, and worrying, that proponents of what is being euphemistically called "assisted dying" have put forward an almost identical bill each time and have not addressed the concerns raised by the House on earlier occasions.

The bill would do nothing to plug deficits in care. It risks being seen and used as a cheap solution for human suffering. Every day, patients are failing to get the specialist palliative care they need, with patchy availability through reliance on voluntary sector funding.

Introducing legislation for "assisted dying," far from improving current provision of care for the terminally ill, would make the situation worse.

The experience of those countries that have gone down the "assisted dying" road shows the development of palliative care is impeded where such legislation is in place.

Canadian doctor Leonie Herx, writing in The Telegraph in October 2021 about her country's experience, said: "The impact on palliative medicine has been enormous. Hospices that do not offer assisted death face closure and loss of government funding... Administering death is cheaper and easier than providing good care."

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To read on see: www.politicshome.com/thehouse/article/assisted-dying-will-only-worsen-the-current-provision-of-care-for-the-terminally-ill

Poem for today

From Lake Isle of Innisfree by W. B. Yeats

And I shall have some peace there,
for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning
to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer,
and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now,
for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping
with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway,
or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

W. B. Yeats, Lake Isle of Innisfree (walk in the woods)

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