

EU president's praise for Catholic teaching welcomed

A call from European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker for the EU to rediscover its Catholic roots is an invitation for politicians to bring Catholic values to bear in their work, Bishop Noel Treanor (above) of Down and Connor has said.

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Addressing the spring assembly of COMECE – the European bishops' conference – Mr Juncker spoke effusively about the importance of Catholic social teaching, upon which the European project was founded in the aftermath of World War Two.

“I am a fervent advocate of the social doctrine of the Church. It is one of the most noble teachings of our Church,” Mr Juncker said on March 14. “All of this is part of a doctrine that Europe does not apply often enough. I would like us to rediscover the values and guiding principles of the social teaching of the Church.”

Speaking to The Irish Catholic, Bishop Treanor explained that Mr Juncker had been looking back on the achievements and challenges that have marked the European project over the last five years, looking ahead to the future.

“He began by emphasising that this European project is inclusive, it doesn't exclude anybody,” Dr Treanor said. “He quoted Pope John Paul II, saying it has two lungs – east and west – and went on to talk about the European Union being a peace-building project.

“He emphasised the importance of that, mentioning that after some 60-70 years of European construction the permanent challenge of building, maintaining, and consolidating peace is something that escapes those who have not had the experience of war, and in terms of our relationships with our neighbours and in terms of internal tensions the importance of building true peace and security is foundational,” he said.

Mr Juncker then observed how the European project draws its energy from a number of sources – “and especially from

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Christianity and Christian values, rooted, as he says, or mediated in reason” – Dr Treanor continued, adding that the president went on to say that “Europe and its member states needs to focus more on promoting the dignity of the human person, promoting a community of values, and also promoting and building the rule of law”.

The president’s emphasis on Catholic social teaching makes perfect sense, Dr Treanor said, given the challenges posed by today’s changing world.

“We are undergoing such profound changes in our culture and in our world, which are impacting on the world of work, which are impacting also on democracy, which are impacting on the citizen over against not only the nation state but the world economy, that institutions at regional, national and supranational level do have to take account of them,” he said. “And it is through a process of dialogue, such as COMECE is engaged in with the European institutions, that we provide for the irrigation of policy development by the social teaching of the Church.

“In other words,” he continued, “we need women and men – our fellow citizens – who in our schools and through our catechesis have discovered and have appreciated the contribution of Catholic social teaching to reflection on the human condition in all its aspects, for these people in their professional lives at national and international level to funnel into policy making the insights of Catholic social teaching.”

He described Mr Juncker’s call as “a recognition of the contribution of Christian tradition to shaping public policy and at the same time an invitation to continue making this input through the initiatives taken through an institution such

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as COMECE.” Courtesy of the Irish Catholic. Report by Greg Daly.

Discovery Gospel Choir to launch ‘Mind Yourself’ Meath and Kildare project

Meath and Kildare are launching a new community project to raise awareness of mental health issues.

One of the key issues affecting people today is their mental health – there is not a family in Ireland that does not have someone who struggles with mental health issues. The project aims to raise awareness of mental health issues, point people to where they can find support and help, and do some fundraising for Aware, one of the national mental health charities.

Project launch – with Discovery Gospel Choir

On Sunday 7th April, at 6.30pm, a launch will take place in Kildare Cathedral, with the Discovery Gospel Choir.

A staff member of Aware, a national charity focusing on mental health issues, will also speak at the event.

This will be a ‘pay at the door’ event only as it was too complicated to issue tickets all around the dioceses – so it will be a ‘first come first served’ event. The cathedral holds about 300 people at its full capacity and it would be wonderful to see it packed out. The Discovery Gospel choir will be performing at the event and they are a joy to see. Any funds raised at the event will go to support the work of Aware.

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Aware will be one of the partners in this venture, as will Bishops' Appeal, which will focus on mental health issues affecting refugees and those in our Direct Provision centres.

Diocesan Healing Service

One of the other partners is the Church's Ministry of Healing. There will also be a diocesan healing service on 9th June, in Trim Cathedral. at 6.30pm; this will be run by the Church's Ministry of Healing. At the service there will be an opportunity to receive prayer, either for yourself or those you love.

Rural Deanery Walks

Rural deaneries are being encouraged to hold walks in the Summer to get people out and about in the fresh air together!

This project is not primarily about fundraising. A number of events are planned through the year, focusing mainly on raising awareness of mental health issues around the dioceses, and signposting people to groups that will be able to help.

Royal College of Physicians adopts neutral policy on assisted suicide

The professional body for doctors in the UK has dropped its traditional opposition to assisted suicide, despite a poll that

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found a majority of its members remain opposed to the practice.

The Royal College of Physicians declared it has adopted a policy of neutrality, although a majority of doctors said they were against assisted suicide.

In a March 21 statement published on the college's website, Andrew Goddard, college president, said: "Adopting a neutral position will mean that we can reflect the differing opinions among our membership. Neutral means the RCP neither supports nor opposes a change in the law."

A poll of members conducted between February 5 and March 1 found that 31.6 per cent were in favour of the college adopting a pro-assisted suicide policy, while 43.4 per cent were opposed and 25 per cent were neutral.

A question asking doctors if they would also like to see British law changed to allow assisted suicide was answered affirmatively by 40.5 per cent, while 49.1 per cent opposed a law change and 10.4 per cent were undecided.

The college decided in advance that it would adopt a neutral policy unless a supra-majority of more than 60 per cent of doctors voted for or against assisted suicide.

Four doctors, including two Catholics, had applied to Britain's High Court for a judicial review of the way the poll was conducted but were told March 21 that their legal challenge would not be accepted.

In a March 21 statement sent by email to Catholic News Service, the four said: "We were disappointed not to receive

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permission today to challenge the decision of the college in the High Court on technical grounds.”

“Sick and vulnerable people are at risk as a result of college neutrality on assisted suicide,” they added. “The profession has not moved on this issue, so neither should the college.”

Trócaire Lenten Appeal to aid Cyclone Idai victims

Up to 2.5 million people have been left in urgent need of humanitarian aid after Cyclone Idai destroyed large parts of Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi.

Trócaire, the overseas development agency of the Catholic Church, is asking for support for their 2019 Lenten Appeal so as they can bring urgent life-saving care to people in the worst affected areas.

The cyclone hit Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi last weekend, destroying homes and crops. As well as leaving people in need of shelter and food, Trócaire has warned that the long-term effects of the cyclone could be devastating as entire crops have been destroyed.

“People in the region were waiting for rain so as their crops could grow, but what hit them was a cyclone that has destroyed everything in its wake,” said Trócaire CEO Caoimhe de Barra.

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Nyasha, Shantel and Andrew standing in front of their home which collapsed while they were sleeping.

“Trócaire is working with local partners in badly affected areas. We will be providing emergency relief to families who have lost their homes and crops. The long-term implications of this cyclone are enormous. People in the region could be left facing months of hunger as a result of the loss of crops.

“Trócaire will be there to support them throughout this crisis. Donations to our Lent Appeal will be used to support people in Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique, as well as in other parts of the world where people are in urgent need.”

The cyclone hit on Thursday at around 7.00pm local time. It started with mild rain and strong winds but soon developed

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into a full-scale cyclone that lasted until Sunday. Trócaire's local partners have been assessing affected areas. In one village of 350 houses, they reported that 30 per cent of the houses were completely destroyed.

The cyclone has left many areas inaccessible by both road and air, meaning that no official assessment has been done in large parts of the region.

Up to 2.5 million people are already known to be affected but that figure could rise as remote regions are reached.

Trócaire are making an appeal for donations now. You can find out more on their donation page.

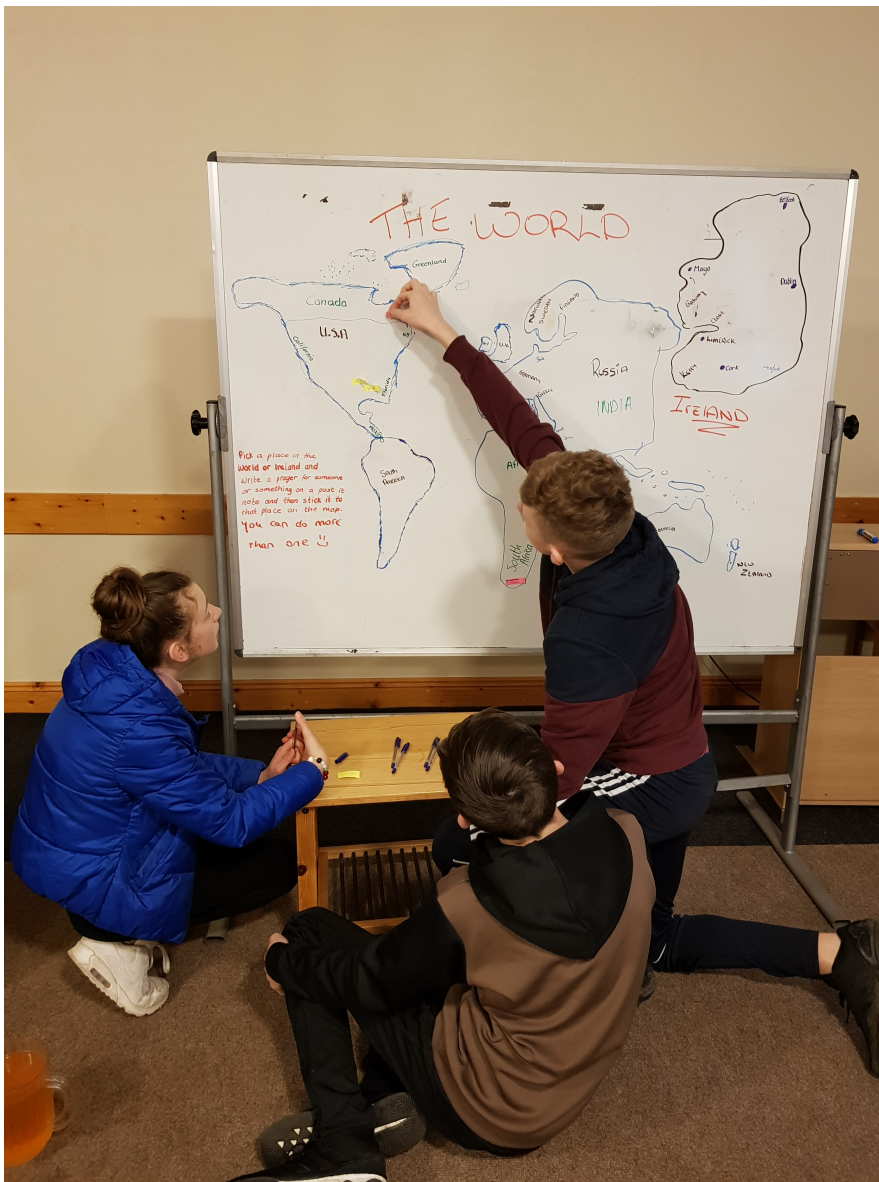
Cork confirmation weekend

This is the third year that the Cork Diocesan Youth Council (CDYC) have run a Confirmation Retreat Weekend in the Carhue Centre in Bandon, County Cork. Even though in previous years, the weekend was held over the May Bank Holiday, this year it was decided to run it in conjunction with the Bishop's Confirmation Morning in Canon Packham Hall in Douglas which was held on the 2nd of March.

Some of the candidates from around the Diocese arrived in Carhue on the Friday evening for some games, food and a 'Worship' session led by the Rev. Cliff Jeffers and Marg Everett.

On Saturday morning, they were bussed to the Bishop's Confirmation morning in Douglas. After a very enjoyable

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morning, the group were then taken to Leisure Plex in Cork for a game of Bowling and Quasar. Once back at the Carhue centre, later that afternoon, the group had dinner and a session on the 'Bible' led by Mrs. Judy Peters before more games and fun.

The weekend finished on Sunday morning,

with the Leaders in Training group organizing the last session on 'Prayer'. With very detailed and well organized Prayer Stations set up around the conference room, the candidates worked their way through them very attentively and keen to spend time at each station.

News briefs

+++Music in St Columb's, Derry - This Sunday at 11.00am, a service of Choral Matins with music by Charles

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Villiers Stanford (Benedictus in C) and Richard Farrant (Hide not thou thy face).

4.00pm Choral Evensong sung by the Cathedral Chamber Choir. Music is by Thomas Attwood Walmisley (Evening Canticles in D minor) and Richard Shepherd (I heard the voice of Jesus).

On Wednesday evening, the Lenten series continues with a service of compline at 7.30pm, sung by the Ladies Choir. The Lenten mid-week address with hymns and music also continues on Thursday at 1.05pm.

+++Easter Candle-Making Workshop - on Saturday 13th April (2-4pm) at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin. Led by Tracy Johnson of Zoe Zoe Candles, come and learn how to make a personalised candle, adding your own perfume and message. Maximum 12 people. Adults and children 10 years old and upwards (sorry, no smaller kids for this session as it involves hot wax!). Workshop is free but normal cathedral admission applies (2.50 euro for children, 7 euro for adults). All materials included. Please book your place by emailing ruth.kenny@christchurch.ie and pass this message on to anyone who might be interested. Everyone welcome.

+++Glencraig institution - The Bishop of Down and Dromore will institute Revd Catherine Simpson as Incumbent of Glencraig Parish on Thursday 23 May 2019 at 8.00 pm.

+++Church gets back to nature - A country church in Aberdeenshire is pioneering a scheme that links

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congregations with conservation groups to manage their grounds for wildlife. Belhelvie Church, around 9 miles north of Aberdeen, is one of the first churches to pilot Faith Action for Nature, a project aimed at encouraging churches in Scotland to engage with the natural world.



+++Food for thought - "You would not have called to me unless I had been calling to you," said the Lion. CSLewis - Narnia

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March 23 in Christian history

March 23, 332 (traditional date): Gregory the Illuminator, who converted a nation before Constantine even embraced Christianity, dies. A missionary to his homeland of Armenia, he converted King Tiridates, and much of the kingdom followed suit. Soon Christianity was established as the national religion, with Gregory as its bishop.

March 23, 1540: Waltham Abbey in Essex becomes the last monastery in England to transfer its allegiance from the Catholic Church to the newly established Church of England.

March 23, 1743: George Friedrich Handel's oratorio "Messiah" plays in London and is attended by the king, who stood instantly at the opening notes of the Hallelujah Chorus—a tradition ever since (though some historians have suggested it was because he was partially deaf and mistook it for the national anthem). The oratorio was actually quite controversial, since it used the words of God in the theater, and the title only made things worse. Handel compromised a bit by dropping the "blasphemous" title from handbills. It was instead called "A New Sacred Oratorio."

March 23, 1966: The Archbishop of Canterbury meets at the Vatican with Pope Paul VI—the first such meeting between Anglican and Catholic leaders since Henry VIII broke with Rome more than 400 years before.

News links

[Presbyterian minister fired from college over 'gross misconduct'](#)

BBC News

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By Robbie Meredith BBC **News** NI Education Correspondent ... The Presbyterian Church told BBC **News** NI it would not be appropriate to comment ... your employer, the Presbyterian **Church in Ireland** into disrepute," the letter read.

[Leading cleric slams gay Irish leader, says Irish church scandals "peripheral"](#)

IrishCentral

He also stated what has happened to the church in **Ireland** is a warning to ... There are two thousand priests and nearly 4,000 **religious**, along with a ...

[Moy Church to benefit from £2m faith fund](#)

Tyrone Times

St. James' **Church of Ireland** in Moy is investing over £650,000 to redevelop the Parish's church hall and is the first recipient of the new Fund.

[Church in Wales launches its first resource church](#)

Church Times

THE Church in Wales is to launch its first resource church supported by Holy ... A **press** release from the Church in Wales, issued on Tuesday, said that it ... echo of the **Church of England's** Strategic Development Grants fund (**News**, ...

[Ursula Halligan: Women have been robbed of religious heritage](#)

Irish Times

They have yet to hear the good **news**. They don't know that new evidence about the role of women has emerged contradicting everything the ...

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[The Mulligan Sisters in Church of Ireland, Boyle](#)

Leitrim Observer

The Mulligan Sisters, accompanied by Dr Padhraic Ó Cuinneagáin will be performing in concert at the **Church of Ireland**, Boyle, Co. Roscommon, this ...

[People do not have true sense of 'crisis of faith' in Ireland - Archbishop](#)

[RTE.ie](#)

Addressing a Church of **Ireland** gathering in Limerick city's St Michael's ... He cited Mr Varadkar's reference to an **Ireland** "in which **religion** is no longer ...

[Royal College of Physicians drops its opposition to assisted dying and adopts a neutral stance ...](#)

Daily Mail

In response to the RCP's survey, the **Church of England's** Bishop of Carlisle, James Newcome, said: 'We note the RCP's decision, and welcome the ...

[Gay Nigerian reverend to be ordained by Church of England](#)

The Punch

He wrote, "It is a delight to share this **news**, I am to be ordained Anglican Priest in the **Church of England** in June 2019. "Wait on the Lord, be of Good ...

[Church of England decries Home Office for denying asylum over 'violence' in Christianity](#)

RT

Church of England decries Home Office for denying asylum over 'violence' in ... The letter from the Home Office now making the rounds on social **media** uses ... The

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Church of England has even gotten involved, stating its “extreme ...

Church attacks Home Office for saying Christianity 'not peaceful' to reject asylum seeker - Telegraph.co.uk

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