



## **Pope Francis must speak out on church abuse, says McAleese**

[Pope Francis](#) should not only meet survivors of clerical child sexual abuse on his visit to [Ireland](#) but “he also has to address what he plans to do for the future”, former president Mary McAleese has said, the Irish Times reports.

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The pope will meet Taoiseach [Leo Varadkar](#) at Dublin Castle on Saturday, August 25th. Mrs McAleese said Pope Francis should use the occasion to speak about the abuse issue, noting “the citizens of this State have a huge interest in the matter”.

He should also set out “his plan for addressing that within the church because at the end of the day he is the man responsible for the systemic changes that are needed to create a culture in which this no longer occurs”.

Those who had suffered “really do need to be included in some way”, Ms McAleese added. When the visit was announced she wrote to the papal nuncio “and raised this issue with him and also the issue of going to Northern Ireland”. She was told the Pope would be on a very tight schedule and “ was only coming to Dublin.”

Then “they found time to go to Knock, which is a whole morning even though he’s only going to be there for eight minutes or so. A time was found for that and I think time has to be found somewhere because these are people who have been overlooked, neglected”.

## **Forcefully**

She told *The Irish Times*: “I think, in fairness, we have an Archbishop in Dublin who has been making this case very, very forcefully and I agree with him absolutely. Francis has to meet them [survivors] but he also has to address what he plans to do for the future. What is his plan to create a situation where a future generation does not have to bear this burden of hurt.”

Meanwhile, the Government has invited all [Northern Ireland](#) party leaders, including Arlene Foster of the DUP, to Pope Francis's mass in the Phoenix Park. However, it is not yet clear if Mrs Foster, who was at the Ulster Senior Football Championship Final earlier this summer, will attend. It is understood the invitations were only sent late last week. Speaking at a briefing for political correspondents in recent days,

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar said that he will tell the pope that Irish people regard families led by heterosexual and homosexual couples as equal. Mr Varadkar, while saying he is unsure how long his talks with the pope will be, said he would also raise the concerns "Irish people have in relation to the legacy of the past".

"If the opportunity arises, I will certainly want to express to him the real concerns Irish people have in relation to the legacy of the past, in relation to issues such as the church's involvement in Magdalene laundries, mother-and-baby homes, and sexual and physical abuse."

## **Varadkar: I'll push Pope on accepting same-sex families**

Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar says he will tell Pope Francis that families headed by same-sex couples are equal to traditional families when the Pontiff visits Ireland later this month, the Catholic Herald reports.



The two are due to meet at Dublin Castle as the Pope visits for the World Meeting of Families, the Catholic Church's celebration of the family.

Asked what he would say to Pope Francis, Varadkar told journalists last Tuesday he would express "our view as a society and as a government that families come in all sorts of different forms and that includes families led by same-sex parents".

Although he was "really glad" the Pontiff was visiting the Republic of Ireland, he said he was "not sure exactly what the detail of my interaction with him is going to be".

"[The meeting at] Dublin Castle may be very short but, first of all, I will want to welcome him to Ireland and, if the opportunity arises, I will certainly want to express to him the real concerns Irish people have in relation to the legacy of

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the past, in relation to issues such as the church's involvement in Magdalene laundries, mother-and-baby homes, and sexual and physical abuse."

The Republic's Minister for Children has also previously said she will tell the Pope he is wrong to say only heterosexual couples can form real families, while the Culture Minister will tell Pope Francis to abolish priestly celibacy.

Health Minister Simon Harris also attacked Church teaching on contraception on Sunday, saying religion "will not determine health and social policy in our country any more."

The minister exclaimed "Please make it stop!" after a bishop said the principles of *Humanae Vitae* have been ignored for too long.

The Irish Times reported that Bishop Kevin Doran of Elphin said the teaching in *Humanae Vitae* should be "presented in a new way".

"As a church, we probably have not lived up to that demand," he said.

"It needs to be presented in contemporary language in an appropriate context.

"There is undoubtedly a place in schools for an appropriate presentation of the church's teachings on human sexuality. I think we have, again, problems to address there. Not least, having a very good quality, Catholic inspired programme for relationship and sexuality."

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However, Simon Harris tweeted in response to the article: "Please just make it stop! Increasing access to & availability of contraception is and will remain public health policy. Religion plays an important role for many on an individual basis – but it will not determine health and social policy in our country any more. Please get that."

## **Andrea Bocelli to perform for Pope at Dublin event**

World-renowned Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli will perform at an event in Dublin to be attended by Pope Francis later this month.

The August 25 Festival of Families concert will celebrate families and their faith from all around the world.

Over 70,000 people will take part, organisers have said.

The singer said: "Singing before Pope Francis is a privilege for our soul; it is an honour for what the Supreme Pontiff represents in the world.

"For the indescribable human fragility, typical of the average man such as myself, it brings me great pleasure and immense satisfaction to even have the privilege to be close to a person of such exceptional importance and grace.

"It is a joy to be able to offer my most modest contribution on the occasion of this grand meeting and moment of reflection about the family.

"The family remains the strongest building block of society, a cluster of affection, and a privileged space in which one





can teach and learn - in every action - how to choose a life that leads toward the greater good."

Father Timothy Bartlett, secretary general of the World Meeting of Families 2018 event, said he was delighted.

"He will bring so much to our gathering not just because of his wonderful talent but because of his love for his faith.

"We are honoured that he has taken time out of an intensely busy schedule to come to Ireland to be part of our global celebration of family life."

Bocelli has met Pope Francis and has performed for him on more than one occasion including at the last World Meeting of Families which took place in Philadelphia in 2015.

He is a devout Catholic and he has spoken openly many times about the importance of faith and how it takes first place in his life.

He has regularly donated his time and talent to causes and events that he is passionate about.

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Bocelli will join other well-known acts already announced for the event including Nathan Carter, Daniel O'Donnell and Moya Brennan.

## News briefs

### +++ Radio panel discussion on ordinations -

The Rev  
Canon Will  
Murphy,  
Director of  
Ordinands for  
Connor (right),



was part of a panel which discussed the challenges of vocation and how churches can attract more people to work in ministry on BBC Radio Ulster's *Sunday Sequence* on August 5. Also on the panel were the Rev Andrew Faulkner (Presbyterian Church in Ireland), Anne Marie Whelan (a Catholic Vocations Officer) and Father Ultan McGoohan (Vocations Director, Catholic Church, Kilmore Diocese). Canon Murphy has considerable experience meeting with ordinands over many years and has been actively involved in the vocations process in the Church of Ireland and with the Foundation Course that leads on to ministerial training at the Col Theological Institute. You can listen to the discussion on the BBC Radio Ulster – it begins



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34 minutes into the programme. Canon Murphy spoke about ordination in Connor Diocese in an interview in last autumn's issue of the diocesan magazine Connor Connections. You can download and read the article here.

**+++Rape offences up in Northern Ireland - The number of rape** offences has increased by almost 10% in Northern Ireland over the last year, according to a police report. Over the last 12 months reported incidents rose by 71 cases or 8%. However an organisation providing counselling for victims says its workload has risen by 50%. Nexus Chief Executive Cara Cash says that a large number of people are afraid to report cases to the police. "We still firmly believe that there is still under-reporting of these crimes so while the increase (in reports) is welcomed, there are still many victims who do not yet feel they can come forward, many who may be blaming themselves or unsure as to what might happen. Ms Cash said demand for the counselling service has risen significantly in the last few years and has been used by children under the age of 10. More at -

<http://www.itv.com/news/utv/2018-08-06/rape-offences-up-in-northern-ireland/>

**+++Drug offences up by almost 1,000 in just a year -** The number of drug offences in Northern Ireland increased by around a fifth over the last year, police said. Public health officials expressed concern about the risk of serious side effects or death through overdose. On average 554 offences involving the potentially lethal substances were reported each month during the 12 months to June, compared with 472 during the previous period, PSNI statistics showed. In total, an extra 986 drugs offences

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were recorded, an increase of 17% to 5,795 over the last 12 months. Michael Owen, health and social wellbeing improvement manager at the Public Health Agency (PHA), said alcohol and drug misuse was a common issue.



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