



CNI



Marie Collins, a clerical sexual abuse survivor from Ireland

Irish woman abuse survivor resigns from Pope's panel over Vatican resistance

The last remaining abuse survivor on the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of

Minors has resigned over what she describes as resistance from Vatican offices.

Marie Collins, who joined the commission when it was established in 2014, said: “The reluctance of some in the Vatican Curia to implement recommendations or cooperate with the work of a commission when the purpose is to improve the safety of children and vulnerable adults around the world is unacceptable.”

In an [article published online](#) by the National Catholic Reporter, she added: “It is devastating in 2017 to see that these men still can put other concerns before the safety of children and vulnerable adults.”

Pope Francis created the commission to be an independent body of experts, including survivors of clerical sexual abuse, to advise him on best practices for protecting minors and vulnerable adults in the Church.

The commission is also charged with promoting responsibility in local churches by “uniting their efforts to those of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, for the protection of all children and vulnerable adults”, according to the commission’s statutes.

“However, despite the Holy Father approving all the recommendations made to him by the commission, there have been constant setbacks,” Collins said in a statement published on her website, mariecollins.net.

“This has been directly due to the resistance by some members of the Vatican Curia to the work of the commission. The lack of cooperation, particularly by the dicastery most closely involved in dealing with cases of abuse, has been shameful,” she said.

While Collins did not specifically name which dicastery, the Vatican’s doctrinal congregation is charged with investigating verified crimes the Church defines as “more grave delicts”, which includes the sexual abuse of minors. The office, through its promoter of justice, also monitors the procedures that national bishops’ conferences have in place for dealing with abuse accusations and handling the dismissal from the priesthood of those guilty of sexual abuse.

In her NCR article, Collins said that the commission’s template of safeguarding guidelines was never sent out to the world’s bishops’ conferences for helping them craft or improve their own policies and “the dicastery, which has the responsibility for reviewing existing bishops’ conference policy documents

and which has its own template, is refusing to cooperate with the commission on the combining of the work”.

The commission had recommended that a new judicial section be added within the doctrinal congregation to judge crimes of “abuse of office” by bishops alleged to have failed in fulfilling responsibilities linked to handling suspected and known cases of sex abuse.

Marie Collins said: 'The reluctance of some in the Vatican to cooperate with the work of a commission is unacceptable'

Even though the Pope and his nine-member council of cardinals approved the new section in mid-2015, Collins confirmed in her article that it was never implemented.

Another papal directive promoting accountability of negligent bishops and religious superiors, “As a Loving Mother”, was also meant to begin in autumn 2016, but “it is impossible to know if it has actually begun work or not”, Collins said.

She said the “last straw” that led to her handing in her letter of resignation was when she learned

that the same dicastery that refused to cooperate on the safeguarding guidelines had also refused “to implement one of the simplest recommendations the commission has put forward to date”.

The recommendation, which the Pope instructed that all Vatican departments follow, asked that every Vatican office “ensure all correspondence from victims/survivors receives a response. I learned in a letter from this particular dicastery last month that they are refusing to do so,” she said.

“I find it impossible to listen to public statements about the deep concern in the Church for the care of those whose lives have been blighted by abuse, yet to watch privately as a congregation in the Vatican refuses to even acknowledge their letters!

“It is a reflection of how this whole abuse crisis in the Church has been handled: with fine words in public and contrary actions behind closed doors,” she said.

She said she had pledged when she joined the commission that she would quit the moment she felt “what was happening behind closed doors was in conflict with what was being said to the

public. This point has come. I feel I have no choice but to resign if I am to retain my integrity.”

Collins was the last remaining survivor who was active in the commission’s work after Peter Saunders, a British advocate for abuse victims, was asked by the commission to take a leave of absence a year ago. He had been outspoken in expressing his opinion on sanctioning particular Church leaders for alleged abuse cover-ups and his frustrations over a lack of action on key issues.

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin’s tribute to Marie Collins

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin today paid tribute to the work that has been achieved by Marie Collins. He said that few people in Ireland have made such a consistent contribution to the change in the Church’s response to child sexual abuse.

Archbishop Martin said: “Despite opposition and resistance, she remained committed and constructive in what were for her good moments and bad moments. I have learned above all to see in her a person of integrity who is not afraid to chart her own course: where things were wrong she identified them and named them;

when she felt uncomfortable she was never tempted to take the easy path and remain quiet and I am certain that will be her position in the future.

Victims and survivors owe her an enormous debt, but she was never one to seek praise or affirmation for herself. I am happy to note her commitment to continue her contribution to the Church and I thank her for the contribution she has made to the Archdiocese of Dublin and the support she has given me personally”.

Inter-faith network launches book to help those being persecuted

A new book designed to help those undergoing persecution, of which Archbishop Michael Jackson is one of the authors, was launched this week (February 28). *Out of the Depths – Hope in Times of Suffering* is designed as a theological resource to help those who are undergoing persecution and to develop a wider understanding of the issue. It has been published by the Anglican Inter Faith Network.

At the launch, at the Anglican Communion Office in London, Archbishop Michael Jackson said it was “significantly needed” because there are

communities of Christians being disappeared worldwide who feel their voice is not being heard. “This book is timely because we live in a period of persecution which is almost becoming acceptable and therefore for people of faith to be part of the structure of a theological understanding of their experience is important. Also the fact that they have held on to significant places of faith is important for the rest of us to honour,” he said.

Co–author, Bishop Michael Ipgrave of Lichfield said: “Theology means turning to God: so what is it in our faith that equips us to face trial and difficulty? I hope the book will give some hope as people remember that deep in the story of our faith is a story of suffering; ‘Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord.’ He is with us through everything”.

The Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, Archbishop Josiah Idowu–Fearon said the issue of persecution was something close to his heart because of the religious violence in his native Nigeria. He said his prayer was that the book would challenge, inspire and encourage.

In his commendation at the start of the book, Archbishop Justin Welby said: “At a crucial time



Archbishop Michael Jackson of Dublin (second from right) was one of the co-authors who was present in London at the launch.

in world history, when religious persecution and violence are on the rise, both God's world and Christ's body, the Church, face enormous pain and suffering. We are encouraged, through engaging with this welcome resource, to renew our commitment to prayer, Scripture, reason and tradition and to be reminded of the true hope in Jesus Christ from whom all comfort, courage, and peace can be found".

The introduction sets out the context in which the book was written. "We are living in an

unprecedented time of religious persecution and martyrdom in the modern world. There were more recognised martyrs in the 20th century than in the whole of previous Christian history,” it says. “There are some books on the demography and phenomenology of persecution, but currently a lack of theological resources to help those who are undergoing persecution.”

“‘Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord’ is the beginning of Psalm 130:1. Facing the threat of being overwhelmed by the waters of chaos, the Psalmist cries out for help from the depths of his heart.

New Parish Resources section on Church of Ireland website

The Church of Ireland website now includes an area specially dedicated to sharing useful information with parishes. It is called Parish Resources and just as its name suggests, it has been designed with parishes in mind. Get there by clicking www.ireland.anglican.org/parish-resources

You’ll see that the resources are categorised by topic, such as ‘Select Vestry’, ‘Parish Finances’,

‘People & Community’, for example. They are usefully arranged so that anyone can easily access the material which is most relevant to them, whether they are a newly appointed parish treasurer, youth worker, select vestry sub-committee member, or whatever role they play in parish life. Examples of specific resources include the Parish Handbook, sample accounts, Dignity in Church Life policies, discipleship resources, forms, guidelines and many more.

The organisers state, “This addition to the website is an important part of the Church’s longer term strategy. Our aim is that those who give faithfully of their energy, time and skills in service to the Church will find support and relevant information to help them in their vital roles.

“Parish Resources is a ‘living’ project; it will be added to and amended, ensuring the content continues to grow and remains useful. The types of resources available will very much depend on their purpose. All documents may be shared and printed. Church members are encouraged to make use of them in their own parishes; this project’s success will rely on the resources being used.

“The content on Parish Resources will continue to be added to as more resources become available. Please help us by using the online contact form to share your feedback and ideas with the team working behind the scenes. Going forward, we urge every reader to consider how their own parish or diocese might benefit from using the materials, and indeed, how they might contribute as the content grows.

“Our hope and prayer is that the Parish Resources platform will serve to harness information, share experience and best practice, and foster the understanding that we are all part of one island-wide Church. The RCB is grateful for the kind generosity shown by Allchurches Trust in support of this project.”

Clogher information evening on living with autism

‘Autism – Living with Difference’ is the theme of an information evening being organised jointly by the Clogher Diocesan Board of Social Theology in Action and the Clogher Committee of the Church’s Healing Ministry.

The event takes place in Clabby Parish Hall, between Tempo and Fivemiletown on Thursday,

March 9, at 7.30pm when speakers will look at autism, their own experiences and how people can communicate with those on the Asperger's Spectrum.

During the event, there will be an opportunity to ask questions and to engage with the speakers.

The Bishop of Clogher, the Right Rev. John McDowell, said the information evening should be of interest to all involved in pastoral ministry including clergy, lay readers and diocesan pastoral assistants.

“Every parish will have families with children, and indeed adults, with autism or Asperger's Syndrome. This event should help us to learn a little bit more about autism and may also help us to think of ways in which we can adapt pastoral ministry and parish life to take into account these needs,” he added.

Sporting skills tested at the Big Connor Contest

Young people from across Connor Diocese put their sporting skills to the test at the Big Connor Contest organised by Engage Connor Youth Council on Saturday February 25.



Young competitors in the Big Connor Contest held in Glenavy on February 25.

Diocesan Youth Officer Christina Baillie described the contest, held in Glenavy Parish Halls, as ‘an amazing, competitive, intense, pizza filled, exhausting event.’

The young people were competing for the Big Connor Contest Shield and the competition attracted participants from Ballymena; Ahoghill; Lisburn Cathedral; Lambeg; Glenavy; St Peter’s, Belfast; Lower Shankill Parishes; All Saints’,

Antrim; St Paul's, Lisburn, and the Church of the Resurrection, Belfast.

During the day they pitched their skills against each other and tested their teamwork in dodgeball, uni-hoc, and volleyball, and battled to be the quickest group to 'Escape The Room.'

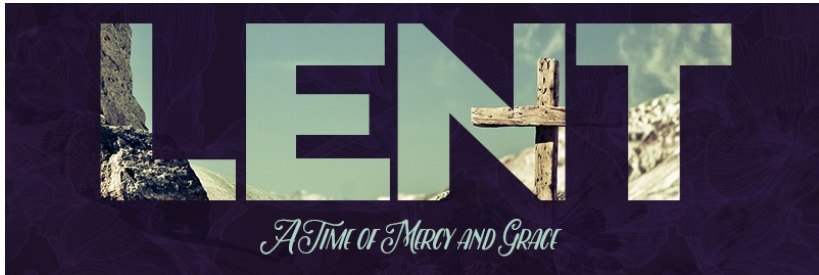
The Youth Council ran all the fiercely contested sports with groups playing throughout the day, as well as a Chill Room with some space to play X-Box or enjoy a treat from the chocolate fountain.

The team from St Paul's, Lisburn, was the overall winner, with Lisburn Cathedral and Lambeg in second and third places.

Christina said: "Connor Youth Council would like to thank Glenavy Parish for hosting us, in particular Richard, Lindsey and Andrew for all their help."

Lent is more than a time of penance, says Pope

Like the people of Israel freed from the bondage of slavery, Christians are called to experience the path toward hope and new life during the Lenten season, Pope Francis said.



Through his passion, death and resurrection, Jesus “has opened up for us a way that leads to a full, eternal and blessed life,” the Pope said at his weekly general audience on March 1, Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent for Latin-rite Catholics.

“Lent lives within this dynamic: Christ precedes us with his exodus and we cross the desert, thanks to him and behind him,” he said.

On a warm and sunny morning, the Pope held his audience in St Peter’s Square. Arriving in the popemobile, he immediately spotted a group of children and signalled several of them to come aboard for a ride. One by one, the three girls and one boy climbed into the popemobile and warmly embraced the Pope.

In his main audience talk, the Pope said that while Lent is a time of “penance and even mortification,” it is also “a time of hope” for

Christians awaiting Christ's resurrection to "renew our baptismal identity."

The story of the Israelites' journey toward the Promised Land and God's faithfulness during times of trial and suffering helps Christians "better understand" the Lenten experience, he said.

"This whole path is fulfilled in hope, the hope of reaching the (Promised) Land and precisely in this sense it is an 'exodus,' a way out from slavery to freedom," the Pope said. "Every step, every effort, every trial, every fall and every renewal has meaning only within the saving plan of God, who wants for his people life and not death, joy and not sorrow."

To open this path toward the freedom of eternal life, he continued, Jesus gave up the trappings of his glory, choosing humility and obedience.

However, the Pope said that Christ's sacrifice on the cross doesn't mean "he has done everything" and "we go to heaven in a carriage."

"It isn't like that. Our salvation is surely his gift, but because it is a love story, it requires our 'yes' and our participation, as shown to us by our

mother Mary and after her, all the saints,” he said.

Lent, he added, is lived through the dynamic that “Christ precedes us through his exodus,” and that through his victory Christians are called to “nourish this small flame that was entrusted to us on the day of our baptism.”

“It is certainly a challenging path as it should be, because love is challenging, but it is a path full of hope,” Pope Francis said.

News briefs & Upcoming events

+++ RTE TV service from Rathmines - On Sunday 5 March on RTE 1 television, a Service of the Word with a congregation from Holy Trinity Church, Rathmines, led by the vicar, the Revd Rob Jones, will be broadcast at 11.10 am.

+++Celebrating Family; Preparing for World Meeting of Families 2018 - A one-day conference taking place on Saturday April 8 at Knock Shrine to begin preparations for the World Meeting of Families in 2018. The conference will include a presentation with Fr Timothy Bartlett, Secretary General for the World Meeting of Families 2018. It will also include powerful

testimonies with families which will be facilitated by Irish Times columnist Breda O'Brien, followed by Mass at 3pm in the Basilica celebrated by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin. All are invited to attend this special day, the purpose of which is to prepare and encourage families for what is expected to be a momentous celebration of faith next year.

+++ Offer on hygiene supplies for churches -

Church Life has sent details of an offer from their long-standing client, *Galgorm Hygiene*, to freshen up the men's and women's washrooms in your church buildings. The installation of Free* *Tork* hygiene dispensers will make your washrooms easy to maintain, reduce usage of consumable and reduce overall running costs. A range of dispensers can be supplied, free-on-loan, see below. (Terms and conditions apply.) If you would like to discuss this offer, contact Vic Pollock now on 07775 861 585 or the *Galgorm Hygiene* office on 028 2564 3211. Alternatively, [CLICK HERE](#) to email Vic your enquiry / details and he will contact you. There will also be an opportunity for you and your Church Property Committee to meet with Vic at the annual *Galgorm Church Open Day* on Thursday 23 March. [CLICK HERE](#) for details of the *Galgorm Church Open Day*

+++Craigavon Legion of Mary presentation -

The Call to Fatima lifetime gift set was presented to Bishop John McAreavey and Fr Michael McGinn of St Anthony Parish Church in Craigavon (Armagh diocese) by the President of the Legion of Mary for the parish, Mary Watkins and Michael Lavery.

+++ Martyred missionary remembered in

Tralee - Relatives gathered in prayer at the monument to Bro. John Conway in St John's Park, Tralee. Brp. John Conway was murdered with priests and nuns 40 years ago by a guerrilla force in Musami Mission, Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Fr Bernard Healy and Fr Pat Crean-Lynch PP led the prayers with the relatives: Shelia Conway, Paul McDonagh, Phil McDonagh, Phil Kelliher, Eileen Tobin, Michael Conway (brother of Bro. John Conway) Fr Bernard Healy, Pat Tobin and Ann Sheehan.

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