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Accord publishes 2018 returns for marriage preparation and for marriage and relationship counselling

Accord has released new figures for its marriage preparation and counselling services for 2018. The figures were released as part of the annual blessing of an engaged couple at the Shrine of Saint Valentine in Dublin ahead of the Feast of Saint Valentine.

Bishop Denis Nulty, President of Accord Catholic Marriage Care Service CLG, blessed engaged couple Ms Emer Duffy and Mr Killian Casey, both from Rathfarnham in Dublin, at the Shrine of the holy relics of Saint Valentine in the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Whitefriar Street, in the Archdiocese of Dublin.

Accord returns for 2018 show that 16,048 people attended Accord marriage preparation courses last year

and 87 per cent of couples attending found information and discussion on sacramental marriage, and commitment to each other the most beneficial elements of their course.

In 2018, Accord also undertook 24,153 sessions of counselling. Accord specialises in the skill of "couple counselling" which involves the counsellor supporting the relationship, as well as the individuals. Issues that arise frequently in counselling sessions include communication and emotional intimacy issues, family conflict, concerns about separation, criticism and insults, use of digital technology, loss or grief, addiction, finances and problematic behaviours.

Speaking at the Shrine of Saint Valentine, Bishop

Nulty said, "The heart is very much the symbol of love and Valentine's Day. The heart is at the centre of our work with Accord as we continue to support and accompany couples in working towards a deeper understanding of the gift of sacramental marriage. The love of a married couple is a very special kind of love, a love that is life-giving, permanent and exclusive."

Bishop Nulty went on to say "This annual blessing ceremony allows us in Accord to reflect on the valuable contribution marriage and the family offer the wider society. I thank all those who work in Accord – facilitators, counsellors and staff."

For more on the work of Accord see www.accord.ie.

Candles of atonement to be lit on Day of Prayer for Survivors and Victims of abuse

The bishops of Ireland have blessed and dedicated candles of atonement for use on the annual Day of Prayer for Survivors and Victims of Sexual Abuse on Friday 15 February, a week before the special meeting in Rome to discuss child safeguarding throughout the universal Church. Before travelling to Rome, Archbishop Eamon Martin

of Armagh said, "I welcome the candles of atonement initiative and the accompanying prayer which was written by a survivor of abuse. In lighting these candles we will bring to mind our brothers and sisters, and their families, who have been left with a lifelong suffering as a result of

abuse, whose trust was so deeply betrayed and whose faith has been so cruelly tested within the sanctity of the Church by perpetrators of abuse." For more see www.catholicbishops.ie.



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Sharing the Good News

NEWS SNIPPETS

A car used by Pope Francis during his historic visit to Ireland last summer for the World Meeting of Families 2018 has been formally donated to



Derry's Foyle Search and Rescue service. The Skoda Rapid estate was one of two cars used by Pope Francis during his visit to Dublin and Knock last August. Spokesman for Foyle Search and Rescue, Pat Carlin, said the charity was astounded when it learned it had been nominated to receive the papal car. He said, "We are absolutely delighted. We intend using the car for education and operational purposes. Archbishop Eamon Martin said he thought of us because of the work we've been doing over the last 26 years".

A miracle attributed to the intercession of Cardinal John Henry Newman has been recognized clearing him for canonization. He was born in London on 21 February 1801 and died in Edgbaston on 11 August 1890. The noted theologian and poet was first an Anglican priest and later a Catholic priest and cardinal. He was beatified by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in September 2010. Pope Francis signed the decree for canonization on Tuesday 12 February.

Ireland can and should have a world class health care system - Archbishop Diarmuid Martin

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin, has called for more openness where health matters in Ireland are concerned. He was speaking at Mass to mark the World Day of the Sick 2019 in the Church of Corpus Christi in Drumcondra, Dublin. Archbishop Martin said, "Confidence can only be gained through openness. People want to know honestly why things go wrong and when all is not all right. The answers will not come from polemics. Ireland can and should have a world-class healthcare system. We have to get on with that." The Archbishop said that care of the sick is something that involves all of society. It involves community and a special form of community that feels the call to be with the sick and to give them something of ourselves and to learn something from them. Concluding his homily Archbishop Martin said, "On this World Day of the Sick we are called as a Christian community not just to hold a prayer service; we are called as a Church community to become a community that reaches out to the sick who so often suffer as much from loneliness than from their specific illness." See www.dublindiocese.ie for the full homily.



New Bishop Larry Duffy answers "call within a call" in front of a 1,000 plus congregation



Forty-three years after he was ordained a priest, Msgr Larry Duffy stepped forward at Saint Macartan's Cathedral in Monaghan on Sunday 10 February to be ordained Bishop of Clogher.

In his homily at the Mass of Ordination, Archbishop Eamon Martin said, "To become bishop is your call within a call. But do not lose your priestly and pastoral instinct to serve, and to build up hearts. This is one of your gifts and you can bring it to your episcopacy. Your choice of episcopal motto – 'God is Love' – is simple, yet profound and challenging."

Photographs and the text of Archbishop Eamon's homily are on catholicbishops.ie.



Join forces to end human trafficking - Pope Francis



Pope Francis has once again drawn attention to the "plague" of human trafficking, and called on government leaders to confront the causes of the trade in human beings.

The Holy Father highlighting the plight of human trafficking has been a staple of his pontificate from the outset. During his weekly Angelus prayer at Saint Peter's Square on 20 January, Pope Francis invited people to pray for those responsible for human trafficking and its many victims. Pope Francis has also released a video of prayer intentions denouncing human trafficking. It can be viewed on www.thepopevideo.org