

Parish of Bangor, Member of Ards Pastoral Community

Parish Priest: Very Rev Joseph Gunn St Comgall's Presbytery, 27 Brunswick Road, Bangor, Co Down, BT20 3DS
T: (028) 9146-5522 E: bangor@downandconnor.org W: www.bangorparish.com Office Hours: Mon-Fri 9.30pm to 1pm.

18th Sunday in the Year – 1 August 2021

MASS TIMES NEXT WEEK: *Every day*
at **10AM**
Monday to Friday
[no registration needed]



MASS TIMES NEXT WEEKEND:
19th Sunday of the Year
VIGIL SATURDAY 7 August @ 6.30pm
SUNDAY 8 August @ 10am, 12noon

NO REGISTRATION NEEDED

SUNDAY MASSES

On a trial basis for July and possibly August we will no longer require Sunday Masses to be reserved online. Admittance will be on a first come first served basis and if the permitted number is exceeded a notice to that effect will be posted on the Church door.

This trial is based on an analysis of the attendance patterns since the last reopening. Safety of parishioners and welcome to all, particularly families are joint top priorities. **Please note that the Covid sanitising regulations have not changed and will continue to be strictly observed.**

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PRAYING WITH THE ICONS

*under **The Four Saints** found in 'Parish Today'*

What is RCIA?

- ❖ RCIA (the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) is a process to introduce the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church to individuals who wish to learn more about Catholicism, including the opportunity, if they wish, to become Catholic through the Sacraments of Initiation.
- ❖ RCIA is a time of teaching, formation and conversion to come to know, love and develop a relationship with God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. How do I sign up for RCIA? The first step is to request a registration form by emailing rcia@downandconnor.org or to have an initial conversation, phone Fionnuala McLernon on 07702073895 to make an appointment.
- ❖ When and where does RCIA meet together? We meet Thursday nights from 7.00 - 8.30 pm at St Mary's Hall, Chapel Lane, Belfast BT1 1HH from October to May. We are also able to provide a blended approach to include online participation by zoom.
- ❖ What is the format of the sessions? The sessions begin with prayer, followed by teaching, question and answer and small group discussion.
- ❖ What is the cost for attending RCIA? There is no cost to you to attend RCIA. Resources are provided by the diocese.
- ❖ May I bring my spouse/fiancé to the sessions? Yes, you may. We encourage your spouse/fiancé to attend the sessions with you.

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**IRISH BISHOPS statement on 'imposed unjust law'** see page 4...

### **Your prayers are requested for**



#### **Recently Deceased:**

Teddy Emmett, Vera McCarney

**Month's Mind:** Sean Magee

**Anniversaries:** Kathleen McDonagh,

Maureen McGraftan, Thomas McDade, Vera Coburn, Patrick J Hinds, Catherine Forte, Jack & Madge Murray, Patrick McKinley, Joseph Waugh, James Curran, Seamus Curran, Tom Bowler, Julia Hollywood, Charles Martin, Patrick Carney, Molly Fay.

### **Sr Maura of the Columban Sisters**

has added new reflections to the website page. Find them under the 'News' section of the tool bar and in the Columban Sisters page under 'The Parish Today'.

### **BAPTISM REGISTRATION**

Evenings only until further notice at 7pm.

Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Please register online SIDE BAR under **'Sacramental Preparation'**

### **Bethany Bereavement Support Group**

we are here to support and listen.

Confidential. **075 1085 2157**

### **St Vincent de Paul**

**Helpline 077 0367 9384**

Donations of good quality furniture and clothing are suspended temporarily.

### **Podcast audio Mass is available on the parish website**

[www.bangorparish.com](http://www.bangorparish.com)

[Daily] **by 12noon.** [Sat vigil] **by 9pm.**

### **Bangor Parish Podcast**

Fr Gunn offers Mass daily in **St Comgall's Church**, Brunswick Rd and podcasts it on the parish website. You can listen to the Parish podcasts by clicking on the audio files on the website or by searching for **"Parish Of Bangor Podcast"** in the apple or google podcast apps. You can download these apps from [Apple App Store](https://www.apple.com/app-store/) or [Google Play](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.bangorparish). If you use these apps please **'subscribe'** to our channel so you receive all the latest podcasts straight to your phone or tablet.



**FULL COPY OF MISSALETTE ON THE WEBSITE**  
on the Slider or found in 'NEWS'

**THE PARISH CENTRE IS CLOSED** to **groups** until further notice due to social distancing as recommended by the Diocese of Down and Connor, which is following the government's advice.

If you would like your deceased family & friends to be prayed for please email your names to the parish office: E: [bangor@downandconnor.org](mailto:bangor@downandconnor.org)  
all names will then be mentioned on the weekly Sunday bulletin.

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As you will have noticed we have refreshed our website and have given some new prayer resources: Look under **The Parish Today**

- Daily Mass – uploaded by 11am.
- **NEW RESOURCES ONLINE... weekly** Prayer Resources & articles from the Columban Sisters – Sr Maura & Sr Suzanna.
- Family Creative Prayer.

**DOWN and CONNOR DIOCESAN TRUST ~ PARISH SECRETARY**

– PART TIME NEWTOWNARDS PARISH

A vacancy has arisen for a Parish Secretary within Newtownards Parish, 71 Upper North Street, Newtownards, Co Down BT23 4JD. The post holder will be required to:

- provide confidential, efficient and effective secretarial support to the Parish Priest, and assistance to visitors and parishioners who visit or make contact with the Parish office;
- effectively and efficiently manage and maintain the Parish Office.

The terms are based on a permanent appointment requiring 20 hours per week, Monday – Friday 9.00am – 1.00pm. Rate of Pay - £10.50 gross per hour. Full details relating to the vacancy can be found on the Diocesan website at: <http://www.downandconnor.org> clicking on the tab: **JOB VACANCIES** and on the Community NI website, where terms and conditions relating to the role can also be accessed by way of a Role Profile and Employment Application form. Application packs can also be obtained from Newtownards Parish Office.

We welcome applications from anyone who feels they meet the criteria and are interested in playing an active part in the Parish. **Closing date for applications will be 12.00 noon on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> August 2021.**

**Different ways of donating to St Vincent de Paul.**

**Direct Payment to Conferences Bank Account. St Comgall's**, Allied Irish Bank. Sort Code 93-82-03. A/C No is 25302098. **Most Holy Redeemer Ballyholme**, Allied Irish Bank. Sort Code 93-82-03. A/C No. 06885061.

For account reconciliation purposes, please provide a note of your name where indicated.

**Gift Aid Envelopes** will be made available. **Standing order form** is available on Parish website.

Taxpayers please tick the box which will give us an extra 25p in the pound. Thank you.

**Donations of good quality furniture and clothing are suspended temporarily.**

**Storehouse North Down**

Storehouse continues to help St Vincent De Paul provide non-perishable food for those in need. Storehouse welcomes donations of foodstuff at their premises, 12 Balloo Avenue, Bangor on Mondays and Thursdays between 10.00am to 3.00 pm. Cash donations are also very acceptable.

**Are You, or anyone you know, having financial difficulties due to reduced or loss of income through Covid 19?**

The Society of St Vincent de Paul, throughout North Down and Ards can help.

We know how hard it is to ask for help but these are extraordinary times and people. T: **077 0367 9384**

**The Lough Derg Pilgrim Path** on the lough shore is now open daily. The full route is a 12km loop, with a shorter 8km option, and several information boards highlight features of particular interest. Leaflets are available at the Visitors Centre.

**A guided walk experience** will be offered *on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> July*, with Mass outdoors, weather permitting. Further dates for these guided walks will follow for late August and early September.

For bookings and further information email [info@loughderg.org](mailto:info@loughderg.org) or telephone 0(0353) 71 9861518.

[www.loughderg.org](http://www.loughderg.org) *Lough Derg Pilgrim Path, Pettigo, Co Donegal. F94 N289*

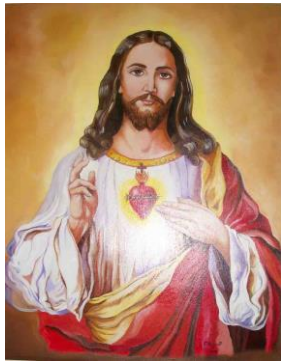


**Angel Guardian**

"Angel of God my guardian dear to whom God's love commits me here. Ever this day be at my side, to light, to guard, to rule and guide. Amen."

**Diocesan Directory available in the Parish Office.**

**Cost £4.50** Includes updated list of Priests, City & Country Parishes, Church Services, Diocesan Bodies, Religious Orders & Pastoral Organisations, Schools & Colleges, Index of deceased bishops and priests 1960 – 2019.



## 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday in the Year – 1 August 2021

**Lord Jesus, you have said, 'Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.'** I come to you in faith and trust, in love and hope. Let me know your closeness to me and your care for me and for all who are dear to me.

**My intention:** Hear my prayer (*mention intention*); grant what I ask, and may I always trust that in all that happens in life, you will be close to me as my friend, guide and saviour. And so, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in you.

**Penitential Act:** I confess to the almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

### PRAYERS AT HOLY COMMUNION

#### Spiritual Holy Communion Prayer

My Jesus, I believe that you are present  
in the most Blessed Sacrament.  
I love you above all things and  
I desire to receive you into my soul.  
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,  
come at least spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace you as if you have already come,  
and unite myself wholly to you.  
Never permit me to be separated from you.  
Amen.

*composed by Saint Alphonsus Liguori*

#### ANIMA CHRISTI

#### Prayer to the Most Holy Redeemer

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.  
Body of Christ, save me.  
Blood of Christ, embolden me.  
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.  
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.  
O good Jesus, hear me.  
Within your wounds hide me.  
Never permit me to be separated from you.  
From the evil enemy defend me.  
At the hour of my death call me  
and bid me to come to you,  
that with your Saints I may praise you  
for age upon age. Amen

### CALENDAR OF SAINTS DAYS

## JULY / AUGUST 2021

#### Friday 30<sup>th</sup> July

Saint Peter Chrysologus, Bishop & Doctor

#### Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> July

Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Priest

#### Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> August

18<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Year

#### Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> August

Saint Eusebius of Vercelli, Bishop

#### Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> August

Saint John Mary Vianney, Priest

#### Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> August

The Dedication of the Basilica of St Mary Major

**Prayer Online:** Come and join us at... [www.soulparemission.com](http://www.soulparemission.com) Who are we? We are a new interactive prayer website created by Jacinta Crockford DipTH, Spiritual Director living in Down and Connor. What's on offer? A variety of PDF meditations on Mother Teresa, St John Paul II, Ignatius Spirituality to name but a few. Lots of content to Dive into. There you will find - Podcasts on Faith, Friendship & Knowledge; Rosaries, Prayers and Marian Consecration. Come and join us and be part of the prayer movement online!

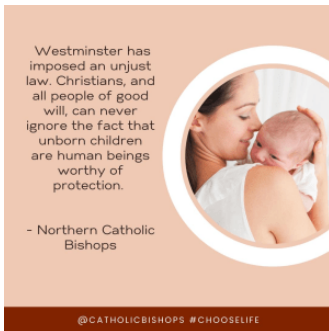
**Every Saturday at 4.30pm** - I will be leading a live Rosary broadcast and later in the evening **Every Saturday at 8.30pm** I will be leading prayer with Eucharistic Adoration on the Catholic Internet TV – Shalom World TV. Just click on the following link to access this time of prayer. [www.swprayer.org](http://www.swprayer.org) Please be assured that I will be including all the parishioners and their families during this live Rosary and live Eucharistic Adoration.

### BANGOR TROCAIRE TEAM & FRIENDS

The Bangor Trócaire team (and friends) are walking 5 million steps over 5 months (May-September). This is approximately the perimeter of Ireland! We hope to raise funds to assist in health care and pandemic programmes in the developing world. Donations via Just Giving are very welcome but if you wish to donate via cash or cheque, these can be put through the St. Comgalls Parish Office letterbox in an envelope clearly marked 'Trocaire Trekkers'. If you are eligible to claim Gift Aid please include your name and address and state that you are eligible to claim Gift Aid. Any money donated before May 16th will be matched by the government!!! Thank you very much for your support!

Online donations can be made at [www.justgiving.com/TrocaireTrekkers](http://www.justgiving.com/TrocaireTrekkers)

## Statement by the Northern Catholic Bishops on the direction of the Secretary of State to introduce abortion services to Northern Ireland



The decision last week by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Brandon Lewis MP, to direct the NI Executive and Department of Health to make abortion services available in Northern Ireland by 21 March 2022, is gravely disquieting. It is the latest in a line of decisions by the current Westminster Government which we believe threaten the fragile balance of relationships at the heart of the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement.

Sadly, some of our local political parties seem content to welcome this unilateral move by Westminster on an issue which is of fundamental importance to local voters, while rightly challenging such unilateral impositions on other issues.

With many others, from a wide range of moral, philosophical and religious backgrounds, we have consistently held that the right to life of every person, irrespective of stage of development or ability, is the prior and essential right of all other human rights. Our shared search for peace is driven in no small part by our collective rejection of the brutality and demeaning of human dignity that occurs when the right to life is diminished in any way. Thankfully, we live in an age when sensitivity to the preciousness and fragility of all life on our planet, even in its most microscopic forms, is better understood and appreciated. The failure to extend this sensitivity and care to our own fellow human beings in the womb, as well as to mothers in pregnancy will, we believe, one day be seen as a grave moral blindness on the part of this generation and a profound dereliction of our responsibility to uphold the most basic human right of all – the right to life.

In unilaterally imposing this direction on the local Northern Ireland Assembly to provide abortion services, it is as if the Westminster Government, and those local parties who have supported them, believe the answer to the issue of providing compassionate care for a woman and her unborn child in pregnancy can be framed simply and exclusively as a “healthcare issue”. Absent from the discussion however are the thousands of unborn children, who have no legal protection and whose humanity is excluded from the political equation. It is for this reason that the argument for the protection of all human life can never be abandoned or referred to human rights experts alone. Westminster has imposed an unjust law. Christians, and all people of good will, can never stand silently by and fail to raise their voices at any attempt to ignore completely the fact that unborn children are human beings worthy of protection.

As our society prepares in coming months to engage in the ultimate expression of democratic participation – the election to our local Assembly – we encourage all Catholics, and those share our view on the inviolability of all human life, to reflect carefully on the issues raised by this succession of unilateral impositions by the Westminster Government. We encourage everyone who believes in the equal right to life and compassionate care for a mother and her unborn child to ask local candidates and political parties to explain their position on these interventions and on this most fundamental of all issues. **ENDS**

· This statement is issued in the names of Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh & Primate of All-Ireland and Apostolic Administrator of Dromore; Bishop Noel Treanor, Bishop of Down and Connor; Bishop Donal McKeown, Bishop of Derry; Bishop Larry Duffy, Bishop of Clogher; and, Bishop Michael Router Auxiliary Bishop of Armagh.

**For media contact:** Catholic Communications Office Maynooth: Martin Long +353 (0) 86 172 7678 and Brenda Drumm +353 (0) 87 310 4444.

## COVID INFORMATION

An up-to-date summary of all Executive regulations and guidance can be found at:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you>

## Knock Shrine offers virtual pilgrimages in unique times

Knock has always been a place of welcome, sanctuary and sacredness. Its role as Ireland's National Marian Shrine makes it a symbol of unity, family and togetherness. Since 1880, pilgrimage groups have made their way to Knock, bringing with them their prayers and petitions. Special pilgrimage Sundays have long been a central part of the annual calendar at Knock Shrine and the season traditionally begins on the last Sunday in April.

This year, as we continue to find ourselves in unique and challenging times, pilgrimage Masses will be broadcast online from Knock Basilica every Sunday at 3pm. Each weekend, there will be a special welcome for the pilgrimage groups that traditionally travel to our National Marian Shrine for their own celebrations.

Pilgrims are welcome to join the afternoon ceremonies from their homes. The schedule for the afternoon will include the praying of the Rosary at 2.30pm, followed by Mass and Benediction at 3pm. The celebrant will be Fr. Richard Gibbons, PP, Rector at Knock Shrine.

In advance of the day, pilgrims may place their petitions online on the Knock Shrine website and these will be placed on the altar for the Mass. Many pilgrims light candles for loved ones and their intentions during their visit to Knock Shrine and this service is also available online. A candle will be lit at the outdoor candelabra for each request received.

Daily Masses continue to be broadcast on the Knock Shrine website and Facebook page at 12 Noon and 7.30pm, with Rosary at 7pm. Sunday Mass is broadcast at 12 noon, Rosary at 2.30pm and Mass at 3pm. For further details, please see [www.knockshrine.ie](http://www.knockshrine.ie).

## Holy Mass Live Stream

Holy Mass is celebrated Monday to Friday at 12 noon for friends and benefactors of **Aid to the Church in Need, Ireland**. Beginning soon, we will also host a weekly rosary, to facilitate prayerful community among our staff and benefactors. Contact [info@acnireland.org](mailto:info@acnireland.org) if you would like to join us weekly to pray for the persecuted Church.

**TROCAIRE** thank you for your help. You can donate in the following ways:

1. Online at [www.trocaire.org](http://www.trocaire.org).
2. By phone: 0800 912 1200 (NI)
3. By post to Trócaire, 10 King Street, Belfast, BT1 6AD (NI),



## DIPLOMA IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY

Drumalis Retreat Centre, in association with St Patrick's Pontifical College, Maynooth, invite applications for this two-year, part-time intensive course which begins in September 2021. Further information available at <http://www.drumalis.co.uk>, by emailing [maura@drumalis.co.uk](mailto:maura@drumalis.co.uk) or by phoning Drumalis during office hours (Mon-Fri, 9 am – 5 pm), 028 2827 2196/2827 6455. The closing date for receipt of applications has been extended to 22 August 2021.

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## Pathways – Adult Faith Development Programme Two-year, part-time course, now enrolling for 2021-2023 intake

Have you ever thought about exploring your faith... or wished that you could broaden your understanding of your faith? Would you like to explore, discuss and reflect upon issues and questions of faith, the Church, and how to link faith to life? If the answer is "yes", then Pathways may be for you.

The course runs one Saturday per month (10 am – 4:30 pm) from October to June, either in-house at Drumalis, Larne or online via Zoom. To register for Pathways, please contact Drumalis during office hours (Mon-Fri, 9 am – 5 pm) – 028 28276455/28272196 or email

[maura@drumalis.co.uk](mailto:maura@drumalis.co.uk) Further information also available on Drumalis website: <http://www.drumalis.co.uk>

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## Certificate in Christian Thought Two-year, part-time course commencing October 2021

The Certificate in Christian Thought aims to offer a space where adults can explore, reflect upon, discuss and study faith and how it relates to life in today's world, both at a personal and community level. It is possible to do the course for validation by St Mary's University College or for personal development only. The course is offered either in-house at Drumalis, Larne or online via Zoom.

For further information, please contact Drumalis during office hours (Mon-Fri, 9 am – 5 pm) – 028 28276455/28272196 or email [maura@drumalis.co.uk](mailto:maura@drumalis.co.uk)

Details also available on Drumalis website: <http://www.drumalis.co.uk>

## Theology of the Arts. Does the Church Need Art?

The Priory Institute week-long online Summer School will run from 8-13 August and again from 22-27 August. The course includes six recorded presentations and is very flexible as it is delivered entirely online.

Find out more and register on [prioryinstitute.com](http://prioryinstitute.com) or click [here](#)

## CONFIRMATION CLASSES 2021

We invite expressions of interest from parents of children not attending Catholic Schools who wish to have them confirmed. Please contact the parish office as soon as possible for registration.

**USE THE LINK BELOW TO ACCESS - Issue 67 of *Sharing the Good News*.** The current issue can be linked to and downloaded from the home page of [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie).

The July/August 2021 issue features the following articles:

- Northern Catholic Bishops oppose abortion services
- Bishop Brendan Leahy's tribute to Dessie O'Malley RIP
- Archbishop Michael Neary on the role of grandparents and elderly in the lives of young people
- Restoring Our Common Home during the Season of Creation 2021
- Trócaire thanks supporters during toughest of years
- Archbishop Eamon Martin on dealing with the legacy of our shared past
- Presentation of Papal Award to Radharc's Peter Dunn by Archbishop Dermot Farrell
- Father Charlie McDonnell thanks priests and pilgrims for supporting the new format of the Croagh Patrick Pilgrimage this year
- Accord Catholic Marriage Care Service seeks applications for Marriage Preparation Programme Facilitators

## AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED

# Faiths form united front at International Religious Freedom Summit

[Support the Suffering Church](#)

FOR THREE EXTRAORDINARY DAYS in Washington, D.C., the first-ever International Religious Freedom (IRF) Summit (July 13-15) brought together more than 30 different faiths to discuss threats to religious freedom around the world. The summit was attended by more than 700 representatives of some 70 NGOs, including Aid to the Church in Need.



The summit featured an international cast of several dozen speakers from across the political and faith spectrum, all calling for global action to ensure and protect the right to religious freedom, defined as the most fundamental human right. "Religious freedom is the fundamental right to define ourselves in relation to our creator," said Edward Clancy, director of outreach for Aid to the Church in Need-USA; "all other rights flow from this."

Asia Bibi speaks via video conference

Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that "when people lose the right to freedom of religion,

tyranny dominates." "Let's be a wall of steel to protect against oppression," he added, speaking specifically in reference to what he called China's "genocide" perpetrated against the Uyghur Muslim minority in northwest China. The regime's persecution of the Uyghur people and its deployment of sophisticated surveillance technology in its oppression of all faiths was one of the recurring themes of the summit. Former Rep. Frank Wolf, architect of the International Religious Freedom Act, condemned businesses and their supporters in Congress that seek access to the Chinese market despite the country's abuses.

In his closing keynote, New York's Cardinal Timothy Dolan reminded his audience that religious freedom is violated in 40 percent of the world. "It is the human rights issue of our day," he said, and "religion is not merely private—international affairs must be considered through the lens of religious freedom."

Chaldean Archbishop Bashar Warda of Erbil, Kurdistan—ACNUSA's principal program partner in Iraq—reflected on the social impact of Christian persecution, which, if unchecked, "eventually takes from [victims] their physical properties, their livelihoods, their security, and in the end, their dignity as human beings. Once this dignity is destroyed, the family and all social stability is destroyed with it. ... [the] restoration of dignity requires of international interveners and providers of aid something beyond the mere metrics of dollars spent and projects completed. It requires an honest and sincere treatment of affected people with a simple thing—that is, respect for them as human beings."

ISIS may be long gone, but old wounds need healing, even as the Christian community in northern Iraq is confronted with fresh threats—economic, social, and even military.

High on the Summit agenda was Nigeria, where Christian persecution is most severe. Yet the situation finds scant coverage in major media and gets insufficient attention from Western governments. Making the case for US leadership on the issue was ACN program partner Father Joseph Bature Fidelis, a psychologist in charge of the Human Resource and Skill Acquisition Center for Trauma Care in the Diocese of Maiduguri, Nigeria, birthplace of Boko Haram. The Center—designed to help the recovery and social reintegration of victims, mainly female, of jihadist violence—was funded largely by ACN.

With thousands killed, four million people are displaced, and 11 million children do not attend school. Father Fidelis, referring to "unparalleled violence," said that "nowhere else is there this magnitude of persecution." He rejects the persistent theory that Fulani violence is linked to climate-change related competition for land. The priest asks: "What do resources have to do with the kidnapping of women or the burning down of churches?" What connects Boko Haram, ISWAP (ISIS West African Province) and the Fulani is an "Islamist agenda," he charges; "religion is a key factor."

Other testimony on Nigeria came from Dr. Gloria Puldu, president of the Leah Sharibu Foundation, which works for the release of Leah who has already been held four years by Boko Haram; Joy Bishara told of her ordeal as one of the 276 Chibok girls kidnapped by Boko Haram in 2014—she escaped but 111 girls are still missing. Bishop Matthew Kukah of Sokoto, Nigeria, addressed the Summit as well on several occasions.

The Summit featured many testimonies from survivors and victims of religious hatred and persecution. An emotional highpoint came with the stories of two witnesses: Irene Weiss described her survival at Auschwitz where she arrived at age 13; she lost her parents and four siblings to the

gas chambers; Mariam Ibrahim, a Christian condemned to death, spoke of a year spent in prison in Sudan, charged with apostasy from Islam. Chained to the floor of her cell, she gave birth to a son.

Other high-profile presentations included video-taped messages from the Dalai Lama and Asia Bibi, whose plight—spending ten years on death row accused of blaspheming against Islam—symbolizes the suffering of Pakistan’s Christians.

The key organizer of the summit was Ambassador Sam Brownback, who served as US Ambassador at-large for International Religious Freedom under the Trump Administration. In that capacity, he oversaw three Ministerials to Advance Religious Freedom hosted by the US State Department in 2018, 2019 and 2020. The summit, a hoped-for annual event, was funded by several organizations, including the Templeton Religion Trust, the Alliance Defending Freedom, and the Family Research Council.

Father Joseph Bature Fidelis



“Persecution and discrimination because of one’s faith is one of the primary actions of any power-grabbing entity, be it a government or an extremist group. People who defend their right to search for truth and transcendence, and to live according to their principles are an obstacle to those who want to eliminate pluralism,” said Marcela Szymanski, the editor-in-chief of ACN’s bi-annual report on Religious Freedom in the World. Szymanski, who also in charge of ACN’s advocacy before the EU, added: “those who stop searching are very easy to manipulate. Believers have many new enemies, and this Summit allowed us to come together with like-minded organizations, share our experiences, and discuss the most effective ways to support the right to freedom of religion worldwide.”

In closing, Ambassador Brownback stressed the fundamental objective of the summit: “Freedom of religion for everyone, everywhere, all the time.”

“It’s inspiring and hopeful,” concluded Clancy, “that so large and so comprehensive an event as the IRF Summit was mounted thanks to private funding, free from government influence, and that more than 30 faith groups found common ground and harmony in calling for the guarantee of religious freedom.”

—Joop Koopman

- July 19, 2021
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725 Leonard Street | P.O. Box 220384  
Brooklyn, NY 11222 | Phone: (800) 628-6333

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