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The Family and Media Association

Media Report



The 'X' Factor Keeping Christ at the Heart of Xmas



“**S**IMON COWELL IS MORE FAMOUS THAN GOD,” *if you are to believe a survey reported in the Telegraph* (21 December).

Whatever about the reliability of the survey, it's certainly true that Cowell's TV series, the X Factor, does feature a sort of (merciless) 'last judgement' where the contestants are judged worthy (or usually unworthy) of 'Pop heaven'!

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE REAL 'X Factor'?

The Greek letter 'Chi' is *also* represented by the symbol 'X'.

As it is the first letter of the Greek word for Christ, 'X' is often used by Christians, either by itself or in conjunction with the second letter 'rho' (Ro), to denote 'Christ'. Hence 'X mas' instead of 'Christmas'.

This year the battle to keep Christ (X) in Christmas has been waged on many fronts.

The 'secular feast' which started in November if not earlier, is urged Christians to "reclaim the encroaching upon the *real* Feast of Christmas by, for example, the

turning of St Stephen's Day into a shopping Day and by RTE and others airing the usual dose of anti-family "adult" "entertainment".

Liveline (4 December) covered a story of a hallelujah concert in which all the usual Christmas songs were taken out, ostensibly to avoid causing offense.

But, Christians are fighting back. In particular, the Anglican bishops in England have encouraged the wearing of Christian symbols (Telegraph, 24 November), and in Ireland, Fr Brendan Purcell has urged Christians to "reclaim the Christmas story". (Irish Catholic, 20 November). See also Pages 2 and 3.

Desensitised by the Media?

— Mary, is the answer!
Pope's address
— Page 2

Civil Partnership Bill
— Page 4

No 'Baby Love' from 'The Supremes'
— Page 3

WARNING!!

This publication contains strong imagery which some readers may find offensive

Pages 2 and 3

"I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep"

Ezekiel 34:15

INSIDE:...

African Synod ignored by Media...Page 4; 'Moonies go wild'... page 4 Does the virtue of justice matter to the Minister for Justice?...Page 4; The Civil Partnership Bill —a case of manipulation by the media?...Page 4

"It is urgent to communicate messages of wisdom, that is, messages inspired by truth, goodness and beauty"

— Pope Benedict to media and cultural workers
16 December

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34 Maretimo Gardens East, Blackrock Co Dublin

Happy Christmas

“And blessed is he who takes

(Extracts from ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Tuesday, 8 December 2009)

“WHAT DOES MARY TELL THE CITY? Of what does her presence remind us? It reminds us that "where sin increased, grace abounded all the more (Rom 5: 20), as the Apostle Paul wrote. She is the Immaculate Mother who tells people in our day too: Do not be afraid, Jesus has defeated evil, he has uprooted it, delivering us from its rule.

“How great is our need of this good news! Every day, in fact, in the newspapers, on television and on the radio bad news is broadcast, repeated, amplified, so that we become used to the most terrible things and inured to them, and in a certain way poisoned, since the negative effect is never completely eliminated but accumulates day after day. The heart hardens and thoughts grow gloomy. For this reason, the city needs Mary whose presence speaks of God, reminds us of the victory of Grace over sin and leads us to hope, even in the most difficult human situations.”

Pornography is “a quiet family killer” — New Study

PORNOGRAPHY IS A “QUIET FAMILY KILLER.”

That’s according to the author of a new study on Pornography, Dr Patrick Fagan, Director of the Center for Research on Marriage and Religion at the Family Research Council (FRC),

The study which is called *The Effects of Pornography on Individuals, Marriage, Family and Community* reports that men who regularly view pornography have a higher tolerance for abnormal sexuality, including rape, sexual aggression and sexual promiscuity.

It also says that pornography users “increasingly see the institution of marriage as sexually confining, have diminished belief in the importance of marital faithfulness, and have increasing doubts about the value of marriage as an essential social institution and further doubts about its future viability.

"Pornography corrodes the conscience, promotes distrust between husbands and wives and debases untold thousands of young women," said Dr Fagan. "It is not harmless escapism but relational and emotional poison."

The study can be downloaded from <http://www.frc.org/pornography-effects>

‘Rogue verses weighed’— The pro abortion mantra “rogue pregnancy agency” gets challenged

THE REPEATED (AND MISLEADING) USE of the now mantra-like expression “rogue pregnancy agency” to refer to *pro life* pregnancy agencies has finally been challenged in the mainstream media.

A ‘trial by media’ type broadcast of Today with Pat Kenny on 18 September, involved a studio face-off between

an
RTÉ
undercover
reporter,
Della
Kilroy

and representatives of a pro life pregnancy agency.

What emerged clearly from the programme was that the agency in question had been candid in saying that it did not make referrals to abortion providers. The same transparency could not be said to apply to RTE’s undercover agent, of course, whose claim to be pregnant was utterly false—an irony apparently lost on both Ms Kilroy and Mr Kenny.

More recently, the Irish Times (2 December) reported on an intervention made by Senator Rónán Mullen in a discussion by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children about outlawing “rogue pregnancy agencies.”

Senator Mullen suggested that some Crisis Pregnancy Agencies should not be funded by the Government. This raises the question: which agencies are really ‘rogue’, those that inform women about the risks of abortion and refuse to be part of the taking of innocent life or those that facilitate murder?

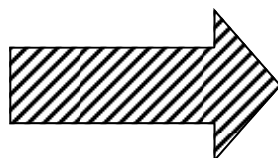
New Broadcasting Authority of Ireland

Yes it’s here and the jury is still out but keep its Chief Executive, Bob Collins (ex RTE DG) in your prayers!

Last Christmas, the BCI pulled an ad for Christmas cribs and other Christian items by the Veritas chain.

This Christmas, a boy w psychiatric evaluation after picture of Christ on (below—ABC News, 15 D

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no offense at me” -Matthew 6:11 (RSV)

Dracula meets Theology of the Body! Is the *Twilight* movie series promoting chastity?

THE ‘LATEST’ PHENOMENON SWEEPING THE WORLD OF TEENS is a series of movies called the *Twilight Saga*.

The movies are about vampires. But it’s ‘vampires with a difference’. And the nature of these differences is

causing a stir not only in teen circles but in the ‘faith scene’ in general.

First of all, did you know that not all vampires are bad?! No, some of them are ‘vegetarians’: they eat only animals, never humans!

Edward Cullen, the male romantic vampire interest (yes, romantic vampire interest) explains why: “I don’t want to be a monster,” he says.

But more specifically, he loves a mortal, Bella Swan and it really *is* love—apparently—agape love, because he always puts her needs first and is, in particular, unwilling to use her for his own ends. This is demonstrated not only by Cullen resisting the temptation to kill her but also by resisting sexual temptation (losing control would be ‘too dangerous’!).

The chivalrous self sacrificing behaviour of Cullen, played by Robert Pattinson seems to have hit a chord with young girls and the movies, the latest of which is called *New Moon* are being hailed in several quarters for encouraging chastity.

Using the Occult to promote chastity however is a risky business and for all the positive messages, the dangers of normalising and even glamourising the occult remain.

Decision by department stores to open on St Stephen's Day: (Press Release 1 December)



A SPOKESPERSON FOR THE FAMILY AND MEDIA ASSOCIATION said that it was shocked by the decision of several large department stores to open on St Stephen's Day as it would cause further erosion into the time that families have to spend together over Christmas. At a time when Ireland is facing increasing economic pressures, people need, more than ever, the support of their families. The spokesperson went on to say that this decision by the department stores is effectively *a decision to put people second*. We, all of us, need time to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas, particularly in our present circumstances. The limited time allowed to many of us to celebrate Christmas is *not an optional extra*. It is absolutely necessary for us emotionally and spiritually if we are to tackle effectively the very real and practical economic challenges that will face us in the new year. The spokesperson also said that it was ironic that the news of the St Stephen's Day trading broke on the same day that Germany's highest Constitutional Court ruled that *its* shops must remain closed on Sunday.

“BBC treats religion like rare species to be studied by Attenborough, says Church of England”

IN ITS RESPONSE TO A CONSULTATION ON BBC TELEVISION, the Church of England has warned of what it calls the ‘David Attenborough’ effect where religion is “always reported from the point of view of an observer of a fascinating and increasingly rare species, rather than explored as something of fundamental importance to the vast majority of the country.”

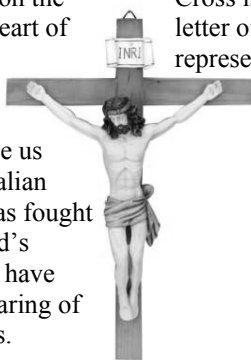
The Bishop of Manchester, the Rt Rev Nigel McCulloch, also said: “We certainly welcome regular reporting of religious affairs within the news, but there are concerns that increasingly moving religion out of specialist slots and into news and magazine programming can have a detrimental effect on the quality of the representation of religion because of the lack of specialist knowledge in newsrooms.”

No ‘baby love’ from ‘the Supremes’ —

The Supreme Court ruling on frozen embryos was both inexcusable and irrational, demonstrating how reason without faith can ultimately turn against itself. David Quinn won the debate on Drivetime (14 December - <http://www.rte.ie/news/drivetime>).

as sent for drawing a the Cross (December).

It is the Crucifix, the symbol of Christ on the Cross, the very Heart of Christmas, which the European Court of Human Rights would have us remove but the Italian Supreme Court has fought back, and England’s Anglican bishops have Called for the wearing of Christian symbols.



“Salve Crux” (“Hail Cross”), was the *joyful* greeting of St Andrew for his cross. St Andrew’s Cross is in the shape of an ‘X’ which also represents the Greek letter ‘Chi’. This is the first letter of the Greek word for Christ and is used (sometimes with the Greek letter ‘ρ’ ‘Ro’ to represent ‘Christ’, in the word ‘Christmas’, for example and on liturgical cloths.

Scottish international rugby prop forward, Euan Murray has decided not to play for Scotland in next year’s Sunday internationals because of his Christian Faith (CNN).



Murphy Report — Frontline gets it wrong! (Email to Pat Kenny 7 December)

DEAR Mr KENNY,

You clearly did not read the report.

Bishop Murray did not fail to act on allegations of child abuse contrary to your claim at the beginning of this programme.

Nor does the report itself make this claim.

Concerns were expressed by two parishioners to Bishop Murray about a priest being "too close to the altar boys". But no specific allegations of abuse were made and, furthermore, Bishop Murray did act on these concerns.

The opinion of the Murphy Report, however, was that Bishop Murray's actions were inadequate.

Whether or not Bishop Murray should resign is a legitimate question. But the answer to that question ought to be based on the facts. It is not at all helpful if these facts are distorted.

African synod ignored by Media

A CO-PRESIDENT OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS FOR AFRICA, Durban's archbishop, Cardinal Wilfrid Fox Napier, has complained that this year's African synod has been largely ignored by the media.

When asked by The Vatican's daily newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, whether sufficient attention had been given to the synod; the cardinal replied, "Absolutely not. It's been very little." The Synod involved three weeks of intensive discussion among the bishops about the challenges they face in their poor and often war-torn countries

More generally, the Cardinal complained that news about Africa in newspapers and on television in the rest of the world is usually bad news, and that positive stories are rarely reported.

'Moonies go wild' Religious discrimination alleged in Washington Times!

THE FORMER OPINION EDITOR of the Washington Times has filed a religious discrimination complaint against the paper.

The paper is owned by the Unification Church, otherwise known as the 'Moonies'. Richard Minter said that he was coerced into attending a 'Moonies' event in 2008 which included a mass wedding.

“The Commission criticised me in three cases. In none of those cases did I receive an allegation of sexual abuse. What happened in the case that they are referring to was that two people came to me, they expressed concern about the closeness of Fr. Naughton to the altar boys. Obviously I questioned them. I asked them whether there were any particular altar boys they were concerned about; they said no, they weren't suggesting anything wrong was going on”

... Bishop Dónal Murray—Limerick Today with Joe Nash—Limerick's Live 95FM, 7 December, 2009

“Bishop Dónal Murray named in the Murphy Report for failing to act on allegations of child abuse is expected to resign perhaps later this week.”

... Pat Kenny—The Frontline—RTÉ One, 7 December, 2009

“People have divorce parties, nobody has abortion parties...”

“Terminating the life of a baby in the womb is like going out and shooting somebody on the street.”

... Fiona Looney—MIDDAY—TV3, 8 December, 2009

“I used to be very pro choice ... My view changed the day I saw my baby's scan”

... Sinead Ryan (same broadcast)

“They and the Bishops' Conference have been guilty, over the past 30 years, of enormous inaction at almost every level of the Church's life: catechesis, liturgy and, above all, governance of the Church”

... Rev Dr Vincent Twomey— News (Midday)—RTE Radio One—13 December, 2009

Does virtue of justice matter to Minister for Justice? Civil Partnership Bill (Letter to Irish Times 17 July)

MADAM,— So the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform doesn't "bring whatever religion he has to the table" when he legislates, particularly as a Government Minister (The Irish Times, July 15).

This begs the question, what precisely does he "bring to the table"?

After all, one of the aspects of the religion he's leaving behind is the moral virtue of justice.

Is the Minister suffering from an identity crisis or simply seeking a new portfolio?

Civil Partnership Bill — a case of media manipulation ?

THE PUBLICATION OF THE CIVIL PARTNERSHIP BILL on 26 June was met with what can only be described as an incomprehensible response by the Irish media in general and by RTÉ in particular.

The first element of this response was a delay of several hours before RTE carried the story at all.

The second was RTE's failure to discuss the event on any of its main current affairs broadcasts that day.

Unlike virtually all the other broadcast media flagships from Today FM's The Last Word to Newstalk's The Right Hook, RTÉ's silence was deafening. It was as though nothing had happened!

Perhaps even more sinister was that where the story *was* covered—both as an item, in RTE news broadcasts, and as a discussion topic, on current affairs programmes such as The Right Hook—it was presented virtually exclusively as being about whether the “broadly welcomed” bill had gone “far enough”. You have to wait for 1 minute 53 seconds into a 2 minute 26 second report on the RTE Six One News before you hear any mention at all (about 10 seconds in an interview with Justice Minister Dermot Ahern) that some people might believe the Bill was actually going *too far*.

Instead across the length and breadth of Ireland's airwaves, we were left with the bizarre and utterly false impression that a far reaching change into the State's marriage culture was going ahead unquestioned.

It should be a matter of grave concern that such consistency was shown by the media in the manner in which it misrepresented so important an issue.