



## ***‘Legio Sanctae Familiae’***

### **The Legion of the Holy Family**

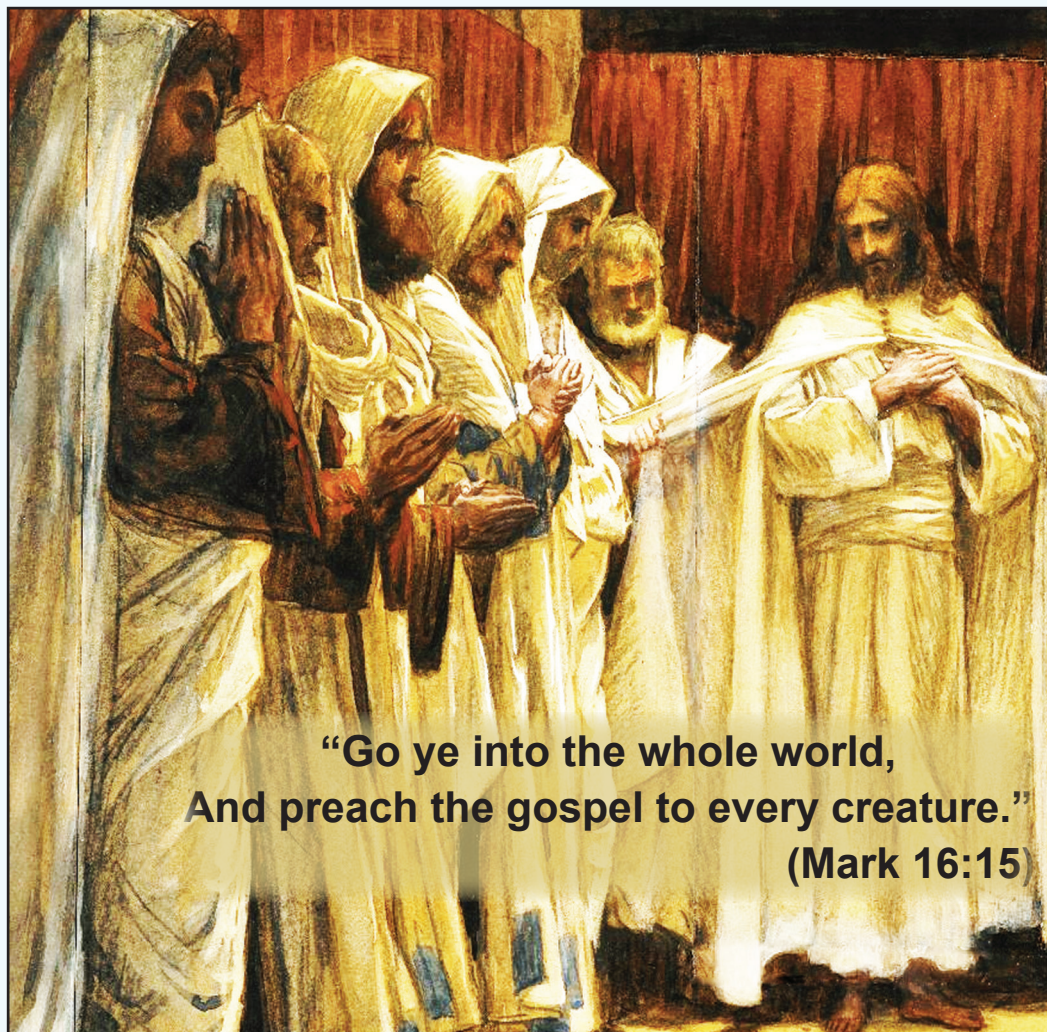
Under the Patronage of  
The Sacred Heart of Jesus  
The Immaculate Heart of Mary  
The Most Chaste Heart of St Joseph



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**“Go ye into the whole world,  
And preach the gospel to every creature.”  
(Mark 16:15)**

# Welcome to the Year of Our Lord 2023



John Lacken  
'Legio Sanctae Familiae'

Welcome to the first 'Legio Sanctae Familiae' newsletter of 2023. Already it promises to be an interesting year with the death of Pope Benedict XVI, on 31st December, 2022, being closely followed by the death of Cardinal George Pell, on 10th January, 2023. Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord.

Both men were great supporters of the Traditional Latin Mass and helped to accelerate the revival of solemn traditional liturgical worship throughout the world. Their deaths could signal many challenges for those of us who are attached to the traditional Latin Mass but,

the life of a Catholic is always beset by challenges, and we are called to face them bravely whilst helping to promote our beautiful Catholic Faith. Catholics should never become despondent, despite the many temptations, because we know that Christ's Kingdom will conquer all, and that in the end, The Immaculate Heart of Mary will Triumph.

In 1969, Pope Benedict XVI, when he was then simply Fr Ratzinger, a professor of theology in Regensburg, made some radio talks. In one of these he spoke of the future of the Church. This talk was published by Ignatius Press in the book 'Faith and the Future', in 2009. Pope Benedict said that the Church depends on those who take their Catholic faith seriously and who are willing to sacrifice themselves for the Church.

*"To put this more positively: The future of the Church, once again as always, will be reshaped by saints, by men, that is, whose minds probe deeper than the slogans of the day, who see more than others see, because their lives embrace a wider reality. Unselfishness, which makes men free, is attained only through the patience of small daily acts of self-denial. By this daily passion, which alone reveals to a man in how many ways he is enslaved by his own ego, by this daily passion and by it alone, a man's eyes are slowly opened."*

Pope Benedict then spoke of a smaller Church which will lose much of her 'social privileges' and which will have to "start afresh more or less from the beginning". He spoke of a process of renewal that



Pope Benedict XVI  
(16th April 1927 - 31st December 2022)

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will be “long and wearisome” but which will result in “a more spiritualised and simplified Church”. He finished on a positive note.

*“And so it seems certain to me that the Church is facing very hard times. The real crisis has scarcely begun. We will have to count on terrific upheavals. But I am equally certain about what will remain at the end: not the Church of the political cult, which is dead already, but the Church of faith. It may well no longer be the dominant social power to the extent that she was until recently; but it will enjoy a fresh blossoming and be seen as man’s home, where he will find life and hope beyond death.”*

Cardinal George Pell was no stranger to hard times in his later life, having served 405 days in prison after being falsely convicted for child abuse. He was eventually exonerated by Australia’s High Court in a unanimous decision overturning the previous conviction.

I had the great pleasure of meeting Cardinal Pell in March 2015, when I lived in Knock. At the time I was running a little shop in Knock where I was reproducing classic Catholic art and trying to make a living. One morning, after the early morning Mass in the parish Church, my wife nudged me and pointed to St Joseph’s altar, which is on the left hand side of the main altar. I noticed that it was set up for a Latin Mass and I thought that perhaps the altar cards had not been removed from the previous Latin Mass that was said the day before. However, the sacristan came out and lit the candles. I decided that I would stay for the Latin Mass and sat up at the front with a little Latin Mass booklet and the bell for Mass. The priest came out to start Holy Mass and saw me sitting at the front. He gestured for me to approach him and then he asked me if I knew how to serve the Mass in Latin. I had been re-trained a few years earlier up in Ards Friary so I was delighted to be able to tell him that I could serve, and so I did.

After Holy Mass the priest introduced himself as Fr Mark Withoos, from Australia, and when I enquired why he was in Knock, he told me that he was Cardinal Pell’s secretary and that they were meeting with Irish priests from the Confraternity of Catholic Clergy. I invited Fr Withoos to our house for breakfast and he said that he would love to join us but that he had to go over to the hotel first. He couldn’t stay for very long and after breakfast I asked him if he could come in a bless my shop which was in Knock. He said to leave it with him and that he would try to get the Cardinal to come and bless the shop, but that they had to be in Dublin and did not have much time.

I left him back to the hotel and opened up the shop. After half an hour or so I thought that they must have gone on to Dublin. A few minutes later, a car pulled up outside the shop and Cardinal Pell and Fr Mark Withoos emerged. I never realised how tall Cardinal Pell was, at least six foot. They came in and Cardinal Pell greeted me and he then proceeded to bless the shop. A good friend was with me at the time and he asked if it was OK to take a photo. Fr Withoos



## Eternal Rest Grant Unto Them O Lord

thanked me for my hospitality and told me that if I or any of the family were ever in Rome to contact him. Some of my sons did just that, and met with Fr Withoos and Cardinal Pell as well. I was delighted to find that Cardinal Pell was so approachable and that he took time out of his busy schedule to confer a blessing on my little undertaking. The image below is of myself, Cardinal Pell and Fr Mark Withoos and was taken on 12th March, 2015, in the True Devotions Shop in Knock.



May God have mercy on the souls of Pope Benedict XVI and of Cardinal George Pell. Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and may perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen



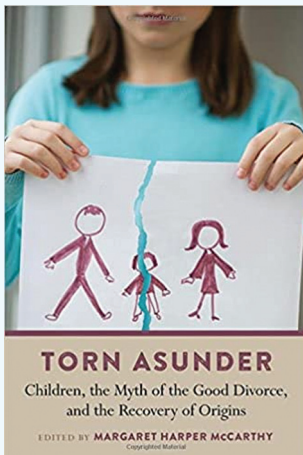
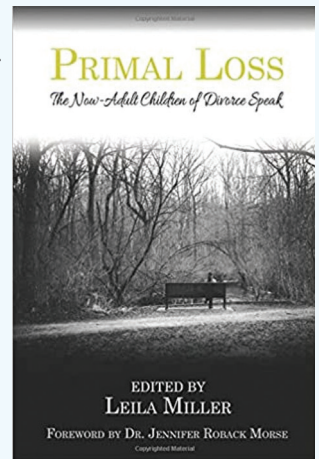
The battle mentioned by the then Fr Ratzinger is coming to fruition right before our eyes. This is especially evident in Ireland, once the land of Saints and Scholars. Catholic bishops in Ireland have lost their influence over the people, and we now have widespread contraception, growing divorce rates, legal recognition given to sexually active same-sex relationships, putting them on a par with marriage, and abortion. There is a push to legislate for euthanasia and to bring graphic sex-education into our primary schools, exposing children to inappropriate materials in the name of freeing them from the influence of the Catholic ethos.

## The Battle to Destroy the Family Rages On

This decline in the social importance and influence of the Catholic bishops, has led to the situation where our ‘catholic’ schools are failing to teach the Catholic Faith in its fullness to the children who attend. Another recent development will see a sizeable Catholic primary school in Athlone drop its Catholic ethos in favour of becoming a multi-denominational school. This is part of the Department of Education’s - ‘Schools Reconfiguration for Diversity Process’. This school will no longer be obliged to teach the truths of the Catholic Faith to the children who attend. As the future Pope Benedict XVI noted back in 1969, “She [The Church] will no longer be able to inhabit many of the edifices she built in prosperity. As the number of her adherents diminishes, so it will lose many of her social privileges.”

The divorce, marriage, and birth statistics in Ireland also bear testimony to the decline of the importance of the Catholic Faith. In 2020, the divorce rate increased by 29% on 2019, to 5,266 divorces. In 2021, it increased by a further 11% to 5,856 divorces. In 2021, the combined number of civil and humanist marriages in Ireland, 7,449, was greater than the number of Catholic Marriages, which came to 6,721. Another aspect of this is that there were 24,172 births registered as outside marriage/civil partnership in 2021, which accounts for 41.4% of all births.

These statistical trends will have grave negative consequences for our society and for our children and grandchildren. The book, ‘Primal Loss’, edited by Leila Miller, examines the long term negative effects of divorce on people. This book looks at the responses to eight questions, from adults whose parents were divorced. The book makes for hard reading as one realises the emotional carnage and destruction that is caused by divorce. But anyone who objects to divorce today, is portrayed as uncaring, and this further increases the hurt caused to the innocent victims of the divorce culture as their grief is not taken seriously.



‘Torn Asunder: Children, the Myth of the Good Divorce, and the Recovery of Origins’, is another book that looks at the negative consequences of divorce. This one is edited by Margaret Harper McCarthy and contains essays by “theologians, philosophers, political scientists, lawyers, psychologists, sociologists, and cultural critics”, all of whom question the wisdom of the current divorce culture.

## We Must Fight For The Catholic Family

It is important to realise that the current decline in our society did not come about by chance. It has been brought about by very wealthy individuals who believe that there is a better way to run society than that given to us by God. These ideologists do not believe that there are any absolute moral norms or that there is an afterlife. They believe that this life is all that we have and that therefore we must spend our time having as much pleasure and enjoyment as possible. They believe that humans are just animals who should be managed and controlled according to what these wealthy individuals think is best. They do not wish to serve God.

Their beliefs are at odds with Catholic moral teaching and this is why they seek to destroy and eliminate the influence of Catholics within society. They have been very successful in their efforts in Ireland, and in the western world. They operate by producing constant negative propaganda against the institutional Catholic Church, some of it deserved, but they do not hold themselves to the same standards. They also denigrate and mock those who dare to publicly proclaim their adherence to the Catholic Faith which results in many Catholics falling silent.

Nobody really believes that same-sex relationships are equal to male-female relationships, because simple observance clearly shows that they are not equal. Nobody really believes that boys can become girls, or girls, boys. Yet our politicians campaigned madly to legislate for same-sex relationships based on these absurdities. Why? The answer is, that it was required of them by the wealthy individuals who control Ireland's finances. These ideologists believe that Ireland's Catholicism needs to be eradicated.

Our Lord tells us that "He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathers not with me, scatters." (Matthew 12:30) He also tells us that "Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house. So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:15-16)

As Catholics, we are all called to bear witness to our Catholic Faith and to defend it when it is under attack. To do this, we must make sure that we are conversant with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Sister Lucia of Fatima famously said that the final battle between Satan and Christ will be over Marriage and the Family, and so it is vitally important that Catholics understand exactly what the true nature of Catholic marriage is, and that we are able to defend those teachings and help others to understand them.

With this in mind, and after some feedback regarding my book on the Traditional Catholic Family, I have taken the decision to publish the book privately, in order to have it ready this coming April. I also hope to begin a speaking tour of Ireland, beginning in April of this year, to formally launch the book. We are living in dark times and the light of Christ needs to be shone into every corner so that we can begin to dispel the darkness.

At the time of writing, I am making plans for the proposed speaking tour of Ireland and I hope to visit every county at least once. I have produced a provisional timetable

and I am hoping to begin booking venues for the talks very shortly. I will post updates on the Legio Sanctae Familiae website and via e-mail as and when I have news. I am also hoping to place advertisements in the Catholic newspapers.

Each event will consist of a two hour presentation on the Traditional Catholic Family, by myself, John Lacken. The presentation will cover, in brief, the four parts of the forthcoming book - 'The Traditional Catholic Family'.

- Part 1 - The Godly Origins of the Traditional Catholic Family
- Part 2 - The Fruits of Marriage
- Part 3 - The Attacks on Marriage
- Part 4 - Restoring the Traditional Catholic Family in Society

The presentations will begin at 7.00pm and will conclude at 9.00pm to be followed by a question and answer session. Updates as to venues will be posted out and made available online. Please pray for the success of this initiative.

## Provisional Timetable for Ireland Speaking Tour

### First Stage

Tuesday 11th April 2023 - **Limerick**

Wednesday 12th April 2023 - **Kerry**

Thursday 13th April 2023 - **Cork**

Tuesday 18th April 2023 - **Clare**

Wednesday 19th April 2023 - **Tipperary**

Thursday 20th April 2023 - **Waterford**

Tuesday 25th April 2023 - **Donegal**

Wednesday 26th April 2023 - **Sligo**

Thursday 27th April 2023 - **Leitrim**

Tuesday 2nd May 2023 - **Galway**

Wednesday 3rd May 2023 - **Mayo**

Thursday 4th May 2023 - **Roscommon**

### Second Stage

Tuesday 16th May 2023 - **Kilkenny**

Wednesday 17th May 2023 - **Wexford**

Thursday 18th May 2023 - **Carlow**

Tuesday 23rd May 2023 - **Laois**

Wednesday 24th May 2023 - **Kildare**

Thursday 25th May 2023 - **Wicklow**

Tuesday 30th May 2023 - **Dublin South**

Wednesday 31st May 2023 - **Dublin North**

Thursday 1st June 2023 - **Meath**

### Third Stage

Tuesday 12th September 2023 - **Longford**

Wednesday 13th September 2023 - **Westmeath**

Thursday 14th September 2023 - **Offaly**

Tuesday 19th September 2023 - **Louth**

Wednesday 20th September 2023 - **Monaghan**

Thursday 21st September 2023 - **Armagh**

Tuesday 26th September 2023 - **Cavan**

Wednesday 27th September 2023 - **Fermanagh**

Thursday 28th September 2023 - **Tyrone**

Tuesday 3rd October 2023 - **Derry**

Wednesday 4th October 2023 - **Antrim**

Thursday 5th October 2023 - **Down**

# Please Help Me to Share The Good News

As always, I am completely dependent on the generosity of those who would like to see the restoration of the Traditional Catholic Family to its rightful place within our society, so that once again a Catholic culture can flourish in Ireland. There is no 'short-term' solution to the problems that we are faced with as Catholics, and we will continue to be marginalised and excluded by those who do not fear God and who control both our politicians and our media outlets.

Without God, we can do nothing. But we must remember that when the apostles wondered who could be saved, after hearing about how hard it is for the rich man to enter Heaven, Our Lord told them that, "with God, all things are possible."

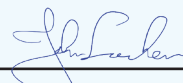
The great Catholic archaeologist, Giovanni Battista de Rossi, writing about Pope Callistus, noted that in Rome, "The Christian faith, hitherto embraced only by individuals, had then become the faith of families; and fathers made profession of it in their own and their children's name. These families already formed almost the majority in every town; the religion of Christ was on the eve of becoming the public religion of the nation and the empire."

You cannot have a Catholic society and culture without Catholic families who earnestly follow the traditional teachings of the Catholic Church on marriage and family life. For decades these teachings have been contradicted and obscured, even within the institutional Catholic Church. It is vital that new life is given to Catholic families through giving them a correct understanding of the traditional Catholic Church teachings on marriage and family life so that their family life may be strengthened, so that they will avail of all the graces available to them from the sacrament, and so that their children and grandchildren have a better chance of attaining sainthood and Heaven.

Catholic saints will reshape the Church and our society. The future of the institutional Catholic Church, and of our society, is dependent on Catholic families, for this is where the future Saints will come from.

Please pray for this initiative and please help me to cover the costs involved in travelling to every county in Ireland to proclaim the good news about Traditional Catholic marriage and family life. Please also share this good news with your friends. You can contact me for more of these newsletters.

May God bless you



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