NOTICE of Annual General Meeting
Saturday 24th November
12 noon
Ely House, Ely Place, Dublin 2
Agenda overleaf
Agenda of AGM 24th November 2018

(it is hoped that Holy Mass can be arranged for 11.30 before the meeting. A finger lunch will be available at 1.30 pm, the business of the meeting will recommence afterwards)

Welcome and Opening Prayer
Minutes of the last AGM (9th December 2017)
Activity Report 2018
Approval of the Financial Report for 2017
Appointment of Auditors
Proposal for significant funding of projects proposed by:
The Prolife Campaign
LifeWorks
The Iona Institute
ADFAM — Alliance for the Defence of the Family and Marriage
Co-option of New Executive Committee and Board members
Any other business of which notice has been given (deadline for such notices 14th November)
Informal discussion of other relevant topics.
Note! Some of our members find that the font size in the Newsletter is too small. The font size has been increased in hopes that it will be more readable!

Contents
Activity Report 2018
Editorial
Promoting the Gospel of the family: the role of family associations today, Antoine Renard, FAFCE President at the World Meeting of Families
Do Not Remain Christians in “Words” Pope Francis
A reminder of what Family Solidarity is.

Editorial
Another blow to those of us who hold Christian Family values dear has been the result of the recent referendum on Blasphemy.

The fundamental reason for this and the result of the referendum to remove the 9th Amendment, is that the notionally Catholic population, is just that, notional. Most of the population do not have any knowledge of what are the fundamentals
of Christianity and that Christian morality is based on the love God has for us all, which we should reciprocate.
Poor and confused instruction has created a people with a poor sense of true morality.

From 50 or 60 years (and more) of popular literature, films, TV soaps etc. have by preaching directly and by innuendo taught that unbridled sexual activity outside and inside marriage is "natural" and "normal" regardless of the consequences. Failure to accept and to teach the teachings of the Pope in Humanae Vitae laid the ground for the present situation where the murder of the unborn is acceptable to many, or a misplaced compassion is taken to justify it.

This selfish sexual activity has many consequences, which it's proponents have tried to limit by promoting contraception in an attempt to control its natural outcome, and abortion when the sexual act achieves its natural and divinely ordained outcome of the conception of a new being.
But even before that, the consequences of the trivializing and subordinating the sex act for pleasure
damage those who engage in it outside its original purpose of the procreation of children within a stable relationship which would enable the children to be nurtured and developed into useful members of society.

Self restraint and chastity are ridiculed as outdated.

Modesty is scorned.

This mentality creates a climate in which the murdering the unborn is glossed over and even promoted as a compassionate option.

What is to be done to retrieve the situation?

Getting back to the basics of Christ’s message to humanity.

Re-evangelisation by instruction, example, and personal conversations.

Highlighting the consequences, of unbridled sexual activity, of artificial contraception, and of abortion on Society, nations and peoples in general.
Highlighting the brutalising of society as a consequence of not having true compassion for the child (born or unborn).

Encouraging honest and scientifically verified facts on the consequences and the publication of the results of this research to the public, without fear or favour to the biased media, but understanding and compassion for those who have, in the past, ignored the teachings of the Popes, or have or are suffering from the consequences of artificial contraception, abortion, promiscuity, etc.

A Long hard road is ahead of us.

Prayer and mortification (much needed but much ridiculed), are absolutely necessary.
“\textit{I plead with you--never, ever give up on hope, never doubt, never tire, and never become discouraged. Be not afraid.}”

\textit{Saint Pope John Paul II,}
ACTIVITY REPORT for 2018
(for presentation at FAFCE Board Meeting in Brussels 6th November 2018)
The Chairman (Liam Ó hAlmhain) and Treasurer Arthur Cullen attended the April 2018 FAFCE Board meeting in Vienna.
They offered to facilitate attendees of member associations to the World Meeting of Families and while some contacted us none took up the offer. We did sponsor the Secretary General of FAFCE to attend and the FAFCE Stand at the RDS. The stand was manned by a couple from France who stayed at the home of the Chairman, and the Secretary General of FAFCE, Nicola Speranza, and 3 members of Family Solidarity.
64 (29 from Ireland) visitors to the stand gave their names for future contact.
Family Solidarity also sponsored the lunches for Volunteers at the RDS
We also sponsored the activities in the Family Arena a specific programme that ran each morning during the congress, which families could attend as a family (in contrast to some of the presentations, where they may go as individuals to different presentations). We received a thank you letter from Most Reverend Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of Dublin saying how delighted he was “that Family Solidarity was in a position to support what was a wonderful event.”

As a consequence of our support the Chairman was invited to a pre Croke Park Special Concert reception where, among others, he met Joanne O’Riordan one of seven currently living people born with the condition Tetra-amelia syndrome, (and who survived childhood, because of supportive parents). Like the others, she is a high
achiever. (see “No limbs no limits” on YouTube) She was a speaker at the World Meeting of the Families

In the course of the year we also provided funds or subscriptions to

- FAMILY AND LIFE
- IONA INSTITUTE
- GIANNA CARE
- PROLIFE CAMPAIGN
- ZENIT
- WOMEN'S COUNSELLING SERVICE
- MOTHERS AND FATHERS MATTER.

4 Issues of the Newsletter were sent to the members and others who might be interested. Those prior to the 8th Amendment Referendum reminded members of the arguments to be used to persuade people to vote for its retention.

VIA FAMILIES is supported by FAFCE and Family Solidarity. See www.viafamilies.com

Via Families is an international community of families to exchange students with each other, host a student or send a student to a host family.

Find yourself the host family that best suits your needs and interests, nobody like you will know how to better choose the type of family you need or would like. You register, validate your identity and contact to reach an agreement between you. There are no predetermined dates for exchanges, there are no premises, only you choose when, where and with whom.
Promoting the Gospel of the family: the role of family associations today

"It is not good for man to be alone". It is also not good for families to be alone; “the family cannot remain isolated like a monad”, said to us the Holy Father in June 2017, “they need to dialogue and to encounter others, in order to build a unity that is not uniformity and that can generate progress and advance the common good”. Family associations offer a framework of assistance and actions to respond to this need, with at their core the strength of the gospel message.
ASSISTANCE

Since at times more than a century, family associations were founded first in order to organise mutual assistance between neighbouring families. In France, in the 20s, families from the countryside pooled resources to buy a washing machine, which was shared from one family to the next during the week; later people came together to watch television together during family evenings.

By responding to concrete needs, they facilitate mutual exchange, dialog, sharing; they respond to their call: “God has given the family the job of “domesticating” the world”; and they favour a “healthy injection of family spirit” (Amoris Laetitia - AL 183).

This grass roots knowledge through meeting people leads to responding in a natural way to new and varying needs according to the places and times, often before they are cared for by national solidarities.

In Poland, family associations help large families find housing.

In Austria, they use their network to help in welcoming families of migrants.

When Christian Family life flourishes, the civilised world benefits
In the Czech Republic, they come to help young mothers in distress, parents of handicapped children, etc.
Since their beginnings, they have been interested in educational matters, as school is not able to do everything; too often parents feel distressed realizing the scale of the task; yet, the Pope recalls to us that “the overall education of children is a ‘most serious duty’ and at the same time a ‘primary right’ of parents. This is not just a task or a burden, but an essential and inalienable right that parents are called to defend and of which no one may claim to deprive them” (AL 84).
Today, faced with an urgent necessity, many of them, in Germany, in Poland, in France, in Italy propose programs to help with sexual education. “Where sex education is concerned, much is at stake.” (AL 284).
Here, family associations come into play, in defence of this fundamental right, to always remember that the one who educates always does so in the name of and at the request of the parents.

**ACTION**
With their knowledge of the field, the concrete needs of the families of which it is composed, and those with whom it acts, the local family association is able
to intervene with the local authorities to propose initiatives facilitating daily life (housing, transport, work, education, health, environment, leisure ...)

By grouping themselves up to the scale of a country, they become an interlocutor of the national political authorities who direct and lead the action of the State, which, the Pope emphasizes, “the State has the responsibility to pass laws and create work to ensure the future of young people and help them realize their plan of forming a family” (AL 43).

Saint John Paul II had warned: “families should grow in awareness of being "protagonists" of what is known as "family politics" and assume responsibility for transforming society; otherwise families will be the first victims of the evils that they have done no more than note with indifference” (Familiaris Consortio 44).

In this respect, France is a special place, whose effectiveness in family policy (birth, work of women) is often cited, deserves to be extended: since 1945 the Union of Family Associations has been an institutional partner of the State and a major craftsman of this policy, compulsorily consulted by the government and legislature on any measure affecting the lives of families... This has not, alas,
prevented everything bad or allowed everything good.

CATHOLIC FAMILY ASSOCIATIONS

They are not intended to address only Catholic families. Their services are offered to all: here lies an evangelizing force. Indeed, the reference to the Catholic faith is expressed through their political action (not pastoral) and their proposals are based on the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church; it is a rich, comprehensive and coherent source, generally respected as such, including by those who do not adhere to it. This makes it possible to come very quickly to concrete proposals. The associations are only humble practitioners, who find it advantageous not to hide their Christian identity, proud to know this teaching "based on the dignity of the person" as we were told by Pope Francis last year: "Man and woman He created him, in His image and likeness": when God creates the woman we could say that he creates the family, because both, man and woman, together, are the image of God ... In this sense, the family is evangelizing in itself, and family associations are not ecclesial movements or courses of formation in the faith. They only facilitate, precede and follow the work of evangelization that is the duty of every
Christian ("Woe to me if I do not announce the Gospel!", Says Saint Paul in 1 Cor 9,16), and this fire of bringing to all the love of God motivates and provides a solid foundation for those who become part of a Catholic Family Association. Founded more than 20 years ago, FAFCE regularly brings together the leaders of the Catholic Family Associations of 16 EU countries (a few are lacking...!) to share, educate and prepare useful interventions directed towards the European Institutions (Council of Europe, Parliament and Commission of the EU), in particular to cooperate on the 4 ubiquitous crises across our continent: demography, migrations, work and education.

She has limited means; we often say that if every affected family in Europe gave us one euro a year, we would have more than enough. We could then carry this experience of family associations further in Europe and beyond, showing that “families are not a problem; they are first and foremost an opportunity”(AL 7). With regards to the numerous lobbying groups working in Europe, in Brussels, we have the strength that comes from the Gospel, the Good News, and that gives meaning to our work. Behind us, on our shoulders, when we are working
almost alone in Brussels, far from the day-to-day life of the families that we represent, there is people who believe. This people have faith in the true God, a God who, in coming to earth, did not choose to come as a prince or a hero, but chose to come as a child in a family.

Do Not Remain Christians ‘In Words’

OCTOBER 25, 2018 ANNE KURIAN (Zenit)
POPE’S MORNING HOMILY
There are many Christians “in words”, but the true holiness is to realize the message of Christ, Pope Francis said October 25, 2018, at the morning Mass at Casa Santa Marta in the Vatican. He gave two ways to know Christ.

Who is Christ for you? he asked in his homily reported by Vatican News. It is easy to answer by reciting the Creed, said the pope, but the personal question “puts us a little embarrassed” because we must go to the “heart”.

Saint Paul, he continued quoting the first reading, did not know Jesus “by starting theology studies”: “What Paul felt, he wants us Christians to feel. To the question, we can ask Paul – “who is Christ for you?”” –
he will give his own simple experience: “he loved me and gave himself for me”. But he is involved with Christ who has paid for him ... Paul wants Christians ... to enter this experience so that everyone can say: “He loved me and gave himself for me”. ”

“The first step in knowing Christ,” Pope Francis emphasized, lies precisely in recognizing that we are sinners. He said that in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we confess our sin – but, he noted, “it is one thing to tell our sins,” and another to recognize ourselves as sinners, capable of doing anything.” St Paul “had this experience of his own wretchedness,” and recognised that he needed to be redeemed, recognised that he needed someone who “would pay for his right to call himself a ‘son of God’”: “We are all sinners, but to say it, to feel it, we need the sacrifice of Christ.”

The second step advised by the Pope: contemplation. “A saint said this beautiful prayer: ‘Lord, that I know you and know myself’: to know oneself and to know Jesus ... not to be content to say three or four words about Jesus”, because “to know Jesus is an adventure, but a serious adventure, not a teenage adventure.”
“St. Paul says,”
He has the power to do infinitely more than we can ask or even conceive ... But we must ask.

“Lord, that I know you; that when I speak of you, I do not say words of parrot, that I say words born of my experience “. Christians in words, there are many. We are sometimes too. It is not holiness; holiness is to be Christians who realize in life what Jesus taught,” insisted the Pope.

In conclusion, he summed up the ways to know Jesus: “The first step, to know oneself: sinners; sinners. Without this knowledge and without this inner confession, that I am a sinner, we can not move forward. The second step, the prayer to the Lord, that he may make known to us by his power this mystery of Jesus who is the fire he brought to the Earth. It will be a beautiful habit if every day, at certain times, we can say: “Lord, that I know you and that I know myself.”
A reminder of what Family Solidarity is.

Family Solidarity was founded in 1984. In the language of the time its Objects and Aims as stated in our Memorandum of Association were:
“To altruistically protect, preserve and promote a healthy and safe moral social and family based environment in Ireland; to inform and advise member families on issues affecting family life and to help families to favour a manner of living according to Christian values, and to publicly represent the best interests of Irish families wherever and whenever necessary; to see that Irish laws and social institutions not only do not offend but actively support the God-given rights and duties of the family.”

From Family Solidarity came the separate single issue organisations such the Pro Life Campaign and the Anti Divorce Campaign, and it strongly supported Mothers and Fathers Matter which unsuccessfully fought for the retention of true marriage in the Marriage Referendum.

In recent years most of our direct efforts have been in “informing ad advising member families on issues affecting family life, and by way of this Newsletter
help families to favour a manner of living in accordance with Christian Values. While representations have been made on various issues in the best interests of Irish Families, mainly by supporting organisations such as the Iona Institute, the various Pro Life organisations, Mothers and Fathers Matter, Gianna Care, The Women’s Counselling Service, Family and Life, the Family and Media Association, FAFCE and the World Meeting of Families 2018 it is time for us to be again actively campaigning that our laws support the God-given rights and duties of the family.

To do this we need to attract a new generation of active young people to our organisation.

All are welcome at our AGM whether interested in helping us or not.

Thank you all who have paid their subscriptions and made donations to further our aims. We have put a return envelope with a subscription slip with all copies of the Newsletter as it is simpler than selecting those from whom we have not heard. Please bear with us!