

International Commission of inquiry

**To bring justice to victims of crimes committed
by the Roman Catholic Church!**

In the Republic of Ireland, like everywhere else, it is time to “separate Religions and the State”!

The whole world has been informed that the **remains of children and newborn babies** have been found in a concrete tank, near a former Catholic convent in the city of Tuam, co. Galway, in Ireland.

Between 1925 and 1961, that convent accommodated young unmarried mothers. Historian Catherine Corless, who was undertaking research on the archives of a former convent at Tuam – now converted in a block of houses – has found that 796 children had been buried there without coffins or tombstones. **They** could have been secretly dumped by the nuns of the Bon-Secours convent.

This discovery reminds of another scandal involving unmarried women. Between 1922 and 1996, more than 10,000 young girls and women had worked for free in laundries run by Catholic nuns in Ireland. The inmates, labelled «*Magdalene Sisters*», were unmarried pregnant women or those whose behaviour was deemed immoral in that country submitted to the Social Doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church and its subsidiarity principle, notably since the 1937 Constitution, **authored by Taoiseach Eamon De Valera (*Fianna Fáil*) under the advices of Monsignor John Charles McQuaid**, archbishop of Dublin.

Malnutrition, pneumonia, tuberculosis and, undoubtedly, ill-treatment, the reasons of their deaths are unnumerable. A survey by public health services, as early as 1944, unearthed by Catherine Corless, mentions death rates for children in the Tuam mother and baby home – where the remains were found-, and in similar institutions, were four to five times that of the general population. Also, the document mentions emaciated children.

70 year later, a citizen, William Joseph Dolan, related to a child who had lived in this institution, filed a complaint so as to understand what happened at that time.

And the Tuam children might not be the only ones to have disappeared in Irish convents. *The Irish News* reminds that, in recent years, different organizations have been campaigning for an investigation to be made on that matter. A total of 4,000 children might have been dumped in common graves near ten convents which had accommodated about 35,000 women as late as the 1960s in Ireland.

“*The revelations are deeply disturbing and a shocking reminder of a darker past in Ireland*” said Charlie Flanagan, minister for Children and Youth Affairs in the coalition *Fine Gael-Labour* government in Dublin, who demands an investigation in which the Church claims to be “*willing to participate*”.

The Church has not changed: have a memorial built, work on compassion and “*details*” so as to minimize the whole thig and protect their benefits.

By the way, Monsignor Michael Neary, Catholic archbishop of Tuam, has already declared that “*the Church had no knowledge of what was going on in those convent*”...

The Guardian, a Manchester daily paper, in its issue of June 4, 2014, concluded by wondering : “*Were the Tuam Bon Secours sisters an anomalous, rebellious sect? Or were church practices much the same the country over? If so, how many died in each of these homes? What are their names? Where are their graves?*”

The European Coordination Bureau of Freethought insists on reminding the following:

- On November 9, 2005, Liz O'Donnell, *Progressive Democrat* TD [Teachta Dála] for Dublin-South, took the floor at the Dáil Éireann (Irish Parliament) concerning the report on events that had taken place in the diocese of Ferns, Co Wexford. An independent commission of investigation having denounced sexual abuse by Catholic priests between 1960 and 1980, in a report written by three judges:

“The victims... suffered not only the most awful forms of sexual, physical and psychological abuse at the hands of clergy but also suffered the silence, betrayal and inaction on the part of the church who placed the protection of the most vulnerable below the church’s priority of protecting themselves and the church. Child protection came last.(...) This report, however, is a landmark in another respect. I hope it will change forever the special relationship that has existed for many decades between church and State. But this new beginning cannot happen unless the old relationship ends. The unrelenting deference, which constituted the relations between church and State, must end. It was given for many decades and expected for many decades. This special deference and relationship was extremely influential in terms of outcome, and it must end. Only then can the State act as it should, which is objectively.

- On July 18, 2010, Ivana Bacik, *Labour Party* Senator of the Irish Seanad, then said: *“Time is ripe to campaign for a secular constitution that could represent the pluralist character of society”.*

- On July 20, 2011, before the Dáil Éireann, Taoiseach Enda Kenny, Prime Minister of the Republic of Ireland and Fine Gael leader, a political party founded in 1933 and historically linked to the social doctrine of the Church, delivered a speech following a damning report on the Catholic diocese of Cloyne (county Cork) by a Commission of investigation: *“Thankfully, for them and for us, this is not Rome; nor is it industrial school or [Magdalene Ireland](#), where the swish of a [soutane](#) smothered conscience and humanity, and the swing of a [thurible](#) ruled the Irish Catholic world. This is the [Republic of Ireland](#), 2011 — a republic of laws, of rights and responsibilities, of proper civic order, where the delinquency and the arrogance of a particular version, of a particular kind of morality, will no longer be tolerated or ignored.”*

The **European Coordination Bureau of Freethought**, which regroups organizations in a wide range of actions referring to the Free Thought and Atheism (*fight for the separation of Religions and the State, rejection of dogmas, complete emancipation of Humankind, pacifism, etc.*), is independent from every institutional, state or supranational structure..

It makes known to the secular public opinion that, at the 4th World Congress of the International Association of the Free Thought (IAFT) which will take place at London (Conway Hall), on Monday, August 11th 2014, Keith Porteus Wood, one of IAFT spokespersons and Executive Director of the British NSS, will report on those issues, for an

International Commission of inquiry to bring justice to those victims of crimes committed by the Roman Catholic Church!

In the Republic of Ireland, like everywhere else, it is time to “*separate Religions and the State*”!

Paris, London, 28/04/2014