

## **Record number of adults baptized in Dublin as faith grows among young Irish.**

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/264517/record-number-of-adults-baptized-in-dublin-as-faith-grows-among-young-irish>

By Patrick J. Passmore

Dublin, Ireland, Jun 5, 2025 / 06:00 am

Thirty-year-old Mahon McCann was baptized during the Easter Vigil Mass in his parish of Rathfarnham in Dublin this year. He was one of 70 adults baptized into the Catholic faith that evening in the Dublin Archdiocese, the largest number of adult baptisms recorded there. The recent upturn in the number of people being received into the Catholic faith in Ireland can be partly explained by young adults who are seeking and searching, people who are looking for a home, somewhere they can be accompanied and grow in faith, according to Patricia Carroll, director of the office for mission and ministry in the archdiocese.

“The new Irish are coming from other countries. Then the others are Irish,” Carroll told CNA. “A lot of parents here decided that they wouldn’t bring their children through the sacraments. So that generation is starting to come to the fore, seeking and searching, looking for something.” Carroll highlighted one development she considers integral and essential. “In our diocese, our youth and pastoral teams have focused a lot on training catechists. That means places are growing where you can come to get your catechesis.”

In Dublin in May, 52 laypeople received certificates as catechists. The archdiocese offers a dedicated course in catechetics for those who feel called to the ministry of catechist, including people already doing some parish catechesis and members of parish sacramental teams. Auxiliary Bishop Donal Roche of Dublin speaking at the Presentation of the Diocesan Certificate in Catechesis Our Lady of Victories Church in Ballymun said: “We are making great progress in the task of opening the hearts and minds of those who have come to the door of the Church to look in, not sure who or what they will encounter inside.” Speaking at the 800th anniversary of the canonization of Laurence O’Toole in France in May, Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell directly referenced the phenomenon of faith resurgence happening in Ireland. “Beneath the surface in Dublin, another story emerges, albeit faintly,” the archbishop said. “Small numbers of young adults are discovering their faith and gathering to celebrate it. Dublin had the largest group ever

seeking adult baptism during this Jubilee of Hope. Most of these people are young adults who have come to Ireland, and it is among the new Irish that renewal is most evident.”

McCann is one example of that. “I was raised as an atheist, not just with no religion but in opposition to religion,” he said. “In the sense that there was no God; Christianity was a lie. Catholicism was a lie. It was kind of something we would get past or get over. I never went to Mass and would have gone to a few funerals. I had no real experience with Catholicism or any institutional religion at all.” When McCann was growing up in Dublin, the percentage of people answering “none” to the question of their religious denomination was in the single digits; now it has ballooned to about 25%.

Carroll told CNA that there is a noticeable increase among adults seeking baptism.

“Since Easter, I get two or three calls per week from young persons who want to become Catholic and wonder what they are to do,” she said. “So what we do is direct them to parishes where there are catechists so that they can accompany them.”

“That is a kind of spin-off of two years now of catechist training,” she continued. “Diocesan catechism in our RCIA [Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, now called OCIA in the U.S.] is becoming more alive and more intentional. So I think those are all factors explaining why the numbers have gone up.”

### **Carroll is optimistic for the future.**

“I expect the numbers to continue to go up because I think in the city of Dublin itself, there are a lot of what I would call ‘seeking and searching’ young people, and they’re looking for a home, they’re looking for somewhere they can be accompanied and grow in faith. So that’s a very hopeful kind of story, really, for us, and it counteracts that story of the Church is dying. The Church is not dying. The Church is not going to go back to the way that it was. And that would be regressive anyway. There is a new Church emerging.”

Carroll outlined the typical journey these new Catholics take when it comes to joining the Church. “It’s a process of accompaniment,” she said. “First of all, there’s a whole period of inquiry. And that’s not about filling in a form; that’s about that spiritual search moment. Depending on the person, that can be a long, extended period, or shorter. After that, they are then into the catechumenate. They need to more intentionally be accompanied, to

understand the sacramental life, the Church, and the creed. Those were two big things, and once they've done that, they're ready for the Easter Vigil."

There are many positive stories elsewhere. In the Diocese of Dromore, Tyrell Scarborough recently underwent the journey of seeking faith, culminating in his baptism. "Many of my friends throughout my life have been Catholic, and I've always been curious about Catholicism. Everyone, except for myself, was Catholic, and I was like, I just felt like the odd one out every single time I would go to events."

He told CNA: "I thought would it hurt for me to also, like, look into delving into this, this religion I've always felt a close association with. So I was like, right, why not at least look and see what this journey would be like, or would it be like for me to become that?"

"I was just recently diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. They call it the lonely disease because it is, like, not working anymore. I needed a sense of community again, and the Church has provided it for me," he shared.

In Dublin, McCann's faith journey continues: "Obviously, I've never done any of this stuff before, so I'm working off the kind of five stones or five pillars: trying to go to Mass every week, prayer, a bit of fasting, you know, reading Scripture, and also just trying to meet other people who are on a similar journey, getting a sense of community, and then, you know, giving back in any way I can."

Patrick J Passmore lives on the north coast of Ireland. He has worked with St Brigid Media on a range of projects as a consultant and writer.