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CATHOLIC UNION OF GREAT BRITAIN: PRESS RELEASE

CRAIGMYLE LECTURE 18 OCTOBER 2018: BARONESS NUALA O'LOAN ON "KEEPING FAITH IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE"

A packed audience of Catholic Union members and others came to Notre Dame University in London on Thursday 18 October to hear Baroness Nuala O'Loan, a crossbench peer and former Police Ombudsman of Northern Ireland, deliver the annual Catholic Union Craigmyle Lecture.

Baroness O'Loan gave an uplifting address about faith and public life beginning with Pope Francis's observation that "you cannot be a part-time Christian". She drew on her experience as a special envoy from the Irish Government to Timor-Leste (East Timor) in 2008 to say that in situations of armed conflict, when the structure of the State has collapsed, the Catholic Church is often the last thing standing. She gave a moving account of the role of a local priest who had persuaded some of the last remaining fighters to surrender because they trusted him and that trust was essential to faith.

Focusing on the UK scene, Baroness O'Loan referred to Pope Benedict's speech in Westminster Hall in 2010 on the right relationship between faith and reason, that they "need one another and should not be afraid to enter into a profound and ongoing dialogue, for the good of our civilisation". She referred to the increase in the number and scope of abortions since the 1967 Act and to the need for better protection of conscientious objection for

The Catholic Union of Great Britain: The Voice of Catholics in Public Life

President: Sir Edward Leigh, MP

Vice-Presidents: Professor Lord Alton of Liverpool, Baroness Morris of Bolton OBE, Lord Clarke of Hampstead CBE, KSG,
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Mr John Deighan KSG, Mr Leo Simmonds KCSG

medical practitioners which is the subject of her Bill in Parliament. The Bill has reached its Committee Stage in the House of Lords but is unlikely to become law.

She referred to her time as Ombudsman in Northern Ireland and said that there was a duty to give effect to the truth. The level of shootings and assaults showed that the Troubles were not yet over and the trauma of violence is passed down the generations with the injuries of parents and grandparents being absorbed by the children. She lamented that there were so many families waiting for inquests on their loved ones who wanted to know why and where they died.

She referred to the “profoundly difficult” problem of child sexual abuse and the responsibility of the laity to help put things right but also to the work being done to combat human trafficking through the Santa Marta group and the Church’s pastoral care, an example of the Church’s influence for good in the public square.

Notes for Editors:

Two photo are attached featuring Baroness O’Loan and David O’Mahony (Chairman of the Catholic Union).

The Craigmyle Lecture is given annually in honour of Donald, Lord Craigmyle, a former President of the Catholic Union.

The Catholic Union was founded in 1870 and is the voice of lay Catholics in public life. It makes representations to Parliament, the Government, regulatory bodies and the media.

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