

Judge queries mother's claims of father's violence

A MOTHER has been accused of making up claims that her former partner was violent towards their six-year-old daughter.

It was alleged that she had invented the claims in a bid to stop him from seeing the child.

The Family Court in Dublin was told that the man is 'at the end of his tether', having been blocked from seeing his daughter on access visits 32 times since the accusations were made.

After hearing there was no objective evidence to support the claims of violence by the father, Judge Sarah Berkeley expressed doubt about the mother's claims and ordered an urgent HSE inquiry.

The judge, who voiced concerns about a lack of State resources to examine childcare matters, said:

By **Paul Caffrey**

'The mother clearly doesn't want the father having any access. What chance has that child got with her mother?'

The couple split four years ago and now live separately. Judge Berkeley said she was concerned that the woman might simply wish to exclude her ex-partner from their child's life.

The HSE will now investigate the child's circumstances and decide if any action is required. Judge Berkeley ordered the HSE to fast-track the inquiry.

After hearing evidence from the mother yesterday, Judge Berkeley said she had concerns about the mother's attitude. The mother, in her 40s, said the child did not want to see her father.

However, Judge Berkeley pointed out: 'Any normal six-year-old wants both parents.'

The Circuit Court's family division heard how earlier this year, gardai were called to investigate claims the girl had been punched in the eye by her father.

The mother-of-two previously claimed her daughter had been left with a black eye. But after examining a photo, Judge Berkeley said she could not see evidence of a black eye. The mother replied: 'The child had a mark on her eye... Anybody else in my position would do the same.'

The father's solicitor, Chris Horrigan, said there was 'no objective evidence of assault', adding: 'He's at the end of his tether.'

The case will come before the court again in January.

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

I remember the tears for Pope Paul VI

IT was the morning of August 6, 1978. I was in Coventry on my summer holidays. As I ventured downstairs, I heard someone softly sobbing. I entered the kitchen and found my grand-aunt in tears. 'What's the matter?' I asked, perturbed that a woman normally so vivacious seemed so troubled. 'The Pope is dead,' she mumbled.

I had never heard those words uttered before. Pope Paul VI had led the Catholic Church for 15 years. In that moment, this eight-year-old realised that popes are not immortal.

My grand-aunt was sister to Dr Martin O'Donoghue, the then minister for economic planning and development. The Irish community in Coventry were honoured that one of their own should have such a celebrity as a brother. This was also a community whose identity was strongly shaped by its Catholic faith.

Pope Paul was not a superstar like his successor, St John Paul II. He was neither charismatic nor a people's pope. In overseeing the Second Vatican Council, he was blamed by conservatives for dismantling the ancient traditions of the Church. In reinforcing the Church's ban on contraception in the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, he was denounced by liberals.

To those like my grand-aunt, none of that mattered. He was the 'Holy Father', a figure who inspired love simply because he stood in the shoes of the fisherman. Although his death was expected, it still shocked her when it happened.

I did not cry when I heard that Paul VI was dead. However, in seeing those around me mourn the Pope, I realised that, for Catholics, Peter's successor really is a father. He is a living symbol of their faith.

Pope Paul was a constant presence in my life. When I started serving Mass in 1977, I became friendly with an old priest who had great devotion to the Pope.

Canon Union was retired and confined to a wheelchair, his cassock permanently covered in snuff.

On Sundays, a younger priest would wheel Canon Union to one side of the high altar. Each week, he would beckon me to his chair for a chat. 'One day, I will bring the altar boys to see Pope Paul in Rome,' he regularly exclaimed.

Even then I knew this was fantasy but it triggered in me a lifelong fascination with the papacy.

Pope Francis says that Paul is one of his models. This is not surprising given that Paul abandoned many of the trappings that then surrounded the papal court. He was a man of deep simplicity and piety, one who wore a hair shirt during Lent. He was

also the first 'pilgrim pope', visiting all six continents.

Still, he was a remote and seemingly austere figure. For much of his pontificate, Paul seemed incapable of offering clear guidance to a Church that was in serious crisis.

As he wrote in his diary in 1975: 'What is my state of mind? Am I Hamlet or Don Quixote? On the left? On the right? I don't feel I have been properly understood.'

Yet, the tears of my grand-aunt told a different story, one mirrored in the surprising support for Paul from traditionalists such as Canon Union. What they saw was a holy man heroically trying to hold the Church together in the midst of unprecedented turmoil.

They saw a man once described by John Paul II as 'fatigued by love' who carried his cross until the bitter end. For them, he was a symbol of continuity in the face of change. He oversaw the reforms of Vatican II yet he was at pains to preserve the Church that he undoubtedly loved.

I say all this now because, on Sunday in Rome, Pope Francis will conclude the Synod on the Family by beatifying Paul VI. This means he is now only a step away from sainthood. Benedict XVI, whom Paul regarded as a 'remarkable teacher of theology', is expected to attend.

Paul's last words before he perished were those of the Lord's Prayer. As he died, a small alarm clock rang on his bedside table. It was one he had brought back from Poland in 1923.

ONE month later, I heard those words for a second time. 'The Pope is dead,' said my grandfather, this time speaking of John Paul I. The long era of the Polish Pope was about to commence.

In the excitement that followed John Paul II's election, it was very easy to forget that few popes in the history of the papacy had changed the face of the Church more than Paul VI. His plain wooden casket lay on the ground before St Peter's Basilica, adorned only by the Book of the Gospels whose pages fluttered in the breeze. As he requested in his will, the late Pope was then laid to rest in the earth.

There is much in the reforms of Vatican II that I don't like. However, as he is 'raised to the altars' next Sunday, I shall fondly remember those who were thankful for Blessed Paul VI. I shall recall my dear old grand-aunt, Canon Union and all those who, even then, believed he was a saint.

They loved and wept for their pope, a misunderstood 'man of constant sorrow'.

Perhaps now the world may finally understand why they did so.

—mark.dooley@daily@mail.ie—

€5 OFF AT THE BODY SHOP®

WHEN YOU SPEND €25 OR MORE IN-STORE



The Irish Daily Mail has teamed up with The Body Shop® to offer readers €5 off when you spend €25 in a single transaction in any of the 11 The Body Shop® stores located across Ireland.

To claim €5 off when you spend €25, cut out the voucher below and take it along to your nearest The Body Shop® store.

€5 OFF AT THE BODY SHOP®

WHEN YOU SPEND €25 OR MORE IN-STORE

This offer is valid in Republic of Ireland only. This offer excludes the purchase of: (a) charitable items; (b) Love Your Body™ membership cards; (c) gift cards; (d) reduced price; (e) threading, eyelashes, tinting or nail services. This offer cannot be redeemed in conjunction with any other offer, discount or promotion including the 10% Love Your Body™ membership discount. This voucher must be presented at the time of purchase at till point. This offer is not valid in concessions (Pharmacies and Department Stores). No refund on purchases. Offer is only valid from 17th October to 26th October 2014.



Irish Daily Mail

Store Contact Details: Sligo: 40 O'Connell St, Sligo (07191) 41300, Grafton Street: 11 Grafton Street, Dublin 2 (01 6774359, Dundrum: Dundrum Town Centre (0)1296 3224, Blanchardstown: Blanchardstown S.C - (0)1 822 2239, Liffey Valley: Liffey Valley Shopping Centre (0)1 623 4055, Swords: Pavillions Shopping Centre (0)1 897 1995, Limerick: Crescent Shopping Centre (0)61226 822, Newbridge: Whitewater Shopping Centre (0)45 434242, Cork: 81/82 Oliver Plunket St., Cork (0)21 427 2539, Galway: 36 William St, Galway (0)91 568 260, Athlone: Athlone Town Centre, Athlone (0)90 647 9538.