

**ST CONLETH'S COLLEGE JUNIOR & SENIOR SCHOOL PARENTS ASSOCIATIONS INVITE YOU  
TO**

**AN EVENING IN CONVERSATION WITH MARY McALEESE**

**18th November 2020**

**at 7pm**



**St Conleth's College Junior & Senior School Parents Associations annual Speaker Event, this year, features a special live conversation, in which the former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, will offer personal insights into her unique life and public career.**

Raised the eldest of nine children in the conflict-scarred Ardoyne area of North Belfast, Mary McAleese's outlook was shaped, but never defined, by the Troubles. Following a stellar academic legal career, at Queen's University Belfast and Trinity College Dublin, and a turbulent foray into journalism with RTÉ, Mary McAleese won election as the first Uachtaráin na hÉireann from Northern Ireland, succeeding Mary Robinson as only the second woman President in the history of the State.

Over the course of two terms, from 1997-2011, she steered a historic course as a bridge-builder, playing a significant role in the peace process which, through the historic Good Friday Agreement of 1998 and subsequent referenda and disarmament process, has delivered lasting peace to this island. Despite, or perhaps because of, her own family's personal experience of sectarian violence, Mary and her husband Martin have been tireless advocates for a new pluralist understanding of Irish and Northern Irish identity, and famously reached out to the Unionist community, including former Loyalist paramilitaries, whom they regularly hosted at Áras an Uachtaráin.

At the pinnacle of her presidency, in the course of a single momentous week in May 2011, Mary McAleese welcomed President Obama and Queen Elizabeth to Ireland, cementing a new era in Ireland's relations with its nearest neighbour and its strongest ally.

A committed, but ever questioning Catholic, she followed her departure from Áras an Uachtaráin by embarking on a doctorate in canon law, in Rome, a qualification which has since equipped her academically to engage vigorously with the leadership of her Church on issues such as the role of women, LGBT rights and the handling of clerical abuse allegations.

Far from retiring, in the years since she left public office, she has seemingly re-doubled her workload, accepting a new position as Chancellor of Trinity College Dublin and returning to her former role as a television presenter, on RTÉ's ALL WALKS OF LIFE and MARY McALEESE'S MODERN FAMILIES.

She has also published a revealing memoir, HERE'S MY STORY, which her publisher is kindly making available to parents, staff and pupils of St Conleth's at a heavily discounted price of €15.99, including free delivery, by use of this link:

<https://www.easons.com/heres-the-story-mary-mcaleese-9781844884704>