



A refugee waits to greet Pope Francis on the Greek island of Lesbos

Pope brings 12 Syrian refugees with him to Rome

Pope Francis took three Syrian families and their six children back with him on the plane to Italy when he left the Greek island of Lesbos after his six-hour visit on Saturday.

The Syrian refugees were chosen from amongst those who were already present in the refugee

camp on Lesbos before the recent deal was signed between the EU and Turkey.

According to the Director of the Vatican's Press Office, Fr Federico Lombardi, the Pope wished to make a gesture of welcome and solidarity to the refugees.

The initiative was organised and made possible by discussions between the (Vatican) Secretariat of State and the Greek and Italian authorities.

All the members of the three Syrian refugee families are Muslims. Two of the families come from Damascus and the third one comes from Deir Azzor which is located in an area controlled by the so-called Islamic State group. The homes of all three families were destroyed by shelling.

The Vatican will be taking care of the costs involved in housing and looking after the refugees. According to Fr Lombardi, the Sant'Egidio community will be providing the initial shelter for them.

During this visit to Lesbos on Saturday, Pope Francis expressed his admiration for the Greek people who, despite their own great difficulties, have "kept open their hearts and their doors."

Addressing civil authorities and the catholic community on the island, the Pontiff renewed his “heartfelt plea for responsibility and solidarity in the face of this tragic situation.”

In his address, the Pope said he had wanted to visit Lesbos ever since migrants arrived there seeking peace and dignity.

He continued, “I wish to express my admiration for the Greek people who, despite their own great difficulties, have kept open their hearts and their doors. Many ordinary men and women have made available the little they have and shared it with those who have lost everything.”

Information morning for clergy and church leaders on homelessness

The Church and Society Commission (CASC) of the Church of Ireland is issuing an invitation to clergy and church leaders from all denominations to attend an information morning addressing issues surrounding homelessness, including contributions from leading professionals in the sector.

The event, taking place in Belfast, will be introduced by the Bishop of Connor.



CASC states: “Homelessness has been a prominent topic in the media in recent months, relating in particular to the tragic death of a number of those sleeping rough in Belfast. During the morning, we hope to raise awareness about wider issues relating to homelessness, and to signpost resources.

“We are delighted to confirm that among those contributing on the day will be Kerry Anthony, CEO of DePaul Ireland, and Kelan McClelland, Head of Homelessness Prevention Services for the Simon Community Northern Ireland. The introductory remarks on the day will be made by the Right Reverend Alan Abernethy, Bishop of Connor.”

The seminar will take place in the Skainos Centre, 239 Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 1AF, on **Wednesday 27th April**, from 9.30am and will conclude with a light lunch at 12.45pm. Attendance is free.

Places are limited, and will be allocated on a first-come/first-served basis. To secure a place, please email seminar@ireland.anglican.org or contact Peter Cheney in Church of Ireland House, Belfast, at 028 9028 8882.

Moderator congratulates President on his 75th birthday

Presbyterian Moderator, Rt. Rev. Dr. Ian McNie, has congratulated the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, on his 75th birthday, which the President celebrates today.

Writing to offer Mr. Higgins the greetings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland “and our warmest congratulations”, Dr. McNie also referenced the President’s 2015 poem, *The Prophets are Weeping, and the line* ‘A shared space, / Of love and care, / Above all for the stranger.’

The Moderator wrote, “Throughout my year in office, which concludes on 6th June, I have promoted the fourth of our Church’s five-year ‘Fit for Purpose’ programme. The theme that has fallen to me has been ‘A Caring Fellowship’. It includes welcoming the stranger, learning from one another and valuing the gifts of each individual, while offering pastoral support to all in need - A theme I seek to promote when visiting congregations across Ireland.

“I mention it as it coincides with your thoughts, expressed in your most recent poem *The Prophets are Weeping*. Here you speak of A shared space, / Of love and care, / Above all for the stranger.’ He concluded by saying, “As a society I pray that we continue to welcome the stranger as the Lord Jesus Christ encourages us to do, ‘...for by so doing...’ as the writer of the Book of Hebrews tells us, ‘...some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.’

The north’s last clerical principal bows out

The last priest serving as a principal of a Catholic school in the north is preparing to leave his post.



Fr Kevin Donaghy is stepping down as principal of St Patrick's Grammar School in Armagh

Irish News - The retirement of Fr Kevin Donaghy from St Patrick's Grammar School in Armagh marks the end of an era for the Catholic sector.

Once there were hundreds of priests and members of religious orders walking the corridors of the north's schools.

Fr Donaghy is now believed to be the last priest in post.

The only other remaining religious principal is Sr Julie McGoldrick at Sacred Heart in Newry. St Patrick's has advertised for a "dynamic, energetic and visionary" leader to take charge of the 970-pupil school from September.

Fr Donaghy has been principal of his alma mater for the last 17 years.

Established as a junior seminary in 1838, it remained under the direction of priests of the Archdiocese of Armagh until 1861 when the Vincentian Order was invited to take charge.

The Vincentians continued until an amalgamation with CBS Greenpark in 1988. Christian Brothers remained on the staff until 1999.

Up until recently, the school retained strong links to the Catholic Church's most senior figure. Successive Cardinals - Tomás Ó Fiaich, Cahal Daly and Sean Brady - each served as chairman of the governors.

Fr Donaghy oversaw the transformation of St Patrick's into an all-abilities college.

Veteran educationalist Prof Patrick Murphy said the decline in religious in schools, which has followed a similar pattern in the Republic, is more a reflection of changes in the Church than in education.

With much fewer people becoming priests now, Prof Murphy said it stood to reason that the

number of clerics in schools had sharply declined.

C of I Historical Society meeting in Armagh

The next meeting of the Church of Ireland Historical Society will be held in the Armagh Public Library on Saturday 23 April beginning with coffee and registration at 10.30am.

In the morning session Valerie Adams, a former senior member of staff in PRONI and now the Librarian & Archivist in the Presbyterian Historical Society in Belfast, will speak on 'Exploring Church of Ireland Records held in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland'. She will be followed by Ruairí Cullen, a doctoral student in Queen's University, Belfast, who will give a research paper on 'George T. Stokes and the oriental origins of Irish Christianity'.

After lunch Dr Jane McKee, formerly Senior Lecturer in French in the University of Ulster and Chair of the Irish Section of the Huguenot Society of Great Britain & Ireland, will speak on 'Peter Drelincourt (1644–1722): his Huguenot

background and early career in Ireland'. The final lecture will be given by Colin Armstrong, a visiting research associate at the School of History & Anthropology in QUB, on 'A Laudian in Ulster: the Irish career of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, 1658–67'.

Participants can register online at <http://churchofirelandhist.org/membership/> Queries may be either addressed to the honorary secretary, Dr Adrian Empey, by email at secretary.coihs@gmail.com or visit the society's website: <http://churchofirelandhist.org/>

Presbyterian Church tries to recapture the rhythm of devotion

Spearheaded by the Presbyterian Church's Council for Congregational Life and Witness, "Tides" - a daily e-mailed devotional - aims to help individuals discover afresh what regular engagement with God and His Word can mean for their lives.

In a short [promotional video](#) PCI's Discipleship Development Officer, Rick Hill asks, "In the constant cycle of life, what would it take to

recapture a rhythm of devotion for the people of God today? What if we could resource ordinary followers of Jesus with a regular pattern of Bible reading and prayer that will provoke lives of service and mission?”

The new resource is aimed at doing just that. As part of PCI’s vision to better resource congregations, the new devotional rhythm will help God’s people discover afresh what regular engagement with God and His Word can mean for their lives.

“Subscribing to the new Prayer Journey is easy. Just go to presbyterianireland.org/tides and fill in your name and email address. Then from Monday 25th April each subscriber will receive a daily passage to read, a succinct thought to reflect on and a simple way to respond, Rick explained.

A team of 12 writers – a combination of ministers and lay people from a mix of ages from within the PCI family – have taken it in turns to write five daily devotionals around the theme of the ‘Marks of a Disciple’.

“Through a regular email arriving at the start of every morning, Tides will help us to read God’s Word, reflect on what it means through the brief commentary and push each of us to respond through challenges or questions. Over 100 people have already subscribed and I know that more will do so and benefit from this fresh rhythm of devotion,” Rick said.

Multiple fires lit in Belfast Methodist church arson attack

A sinister attempt to deliberately burn a Castlereagh church to the ground has shocked members of a normally quiet community.

Belfast Telegraph - On Thursday night, a back window was smashed in Cairnshill Methodist Church on the Ballylenaghan Road, before a number of chairs were set alight starting several fires on the ground floor.

Fire crews responded rapidly to an emergency call at 10.35am and managed to extinguish the flames by 11.27am.

It was reported that entry was forced to the premises during the night and a number of fires started within the building.



Arson attack on Cairnshill Methodist Church in south Belfast. Minister for the church Rev. Louise Donald. Photo: Jonathan Porter/PressEye

Church members were horrified to see large areas of several rooms on the ground floor completely scorched, with the walls black with soot and thick smoke in the air.

Detectives are appealing for witnesses following the incident.

A Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service spokesperson said: “Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) received a call at 10:35am to a report of a fire at a church at the Ballylenaghan Road area of Newtownbreda.



Arson attack on Cairns Hill Methodist Church in south Belfast leaves severe damage to the building. Picture by Jonathan Porter/PressEye

“Two Fire Appliances from Central Fire Station were deployed to the scene of a small fire in the entrance lobby of the church. Two firefighters using a hose reel jet extinguished the fire and Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service finished at the scene at 11:27am.

“The fire is being treated as deliberate and the incident has been passed through to the Police Service of Northern Ireland.”

Rev Louise Donald said: "Well it's a very sad day for us but there we are no one was injured or hurt and it's not a reflection on the community

here, we've very lovely relations with the community.

"But it is very sad, but it's the church building and not the church that has damaged, the church will survive as the people. As soon as we can we'll be back in action."

"I would just say that I find it very, very sad that this is who they want to spend their life causing destruction and pain to others and I just wish they could see the joy of the children who come here and the lovely community rather than sadly getting caught up in something that can only be damaging to them.

See also -

[https://
methodistnewsletterireland.wordpress.com/.../
cairnsh.../](https://methodistnewsletterireland.wordpress.com/.../cairnsh.../)

News Letter - Arsonists will not succeed in destroying a church targeted in an early morning attack on Friday, a Methodist minister has said.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/the-church-is-the-people-says-minister-after-cairnshill-arson-1-7332507>

Safeguarding Board launches 'Child Safeguarding Learning and Development Strategy' 2015-2018

The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland has launched a new strategy aimed at ensuring safeguarding training is delivered effectively and consistently by all of its member agencies.

The multi-agency strategy will equip staff and volunteers with the skills, knowledge and competence to promote the safety and well-being of children and young people, within the remit of their roles and responsibilities. Speaking at the launch at Radar NI on Thursday 7 April, James Marshall, Chair of the Education and Training Committee from SBNI explained: "The strategy and associated framework was developed by the SBNI's Education and Training Committee and builds upon existing good safeguarding training.

"It sets minimum training standards and provides a graduated framework, on four levels, for agencies to use when planning and delivering safeguarding training in Northern Ireland. It also provides an opportunity for member agencies to improve opportunities for inter-agency and multi-



Pictured (L-R): Dawn Shaw (Operational Director, Action for Children NI); Paddy Mooney (Director, Include Youth); Barbara McDermott (Director Down & Connor Safeguarding); James Marshall (Lay Member, SBNI); Lynda Wilson (Director, Barnardo's NI); DCS George Clarke (Detective Chief Superintendent, PSNI); Margaret Burke (Professional Officer, SBNI)

disciplinary training and education over the next three years.

He added: “Safeguarding is everyone’s business and the new strategy contributes to making this a reality. It promotes the importance of effective single and multi-agency child protection, education and training and includes advice on; training planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation.

“When used by member agencies, it will improve their ability to ensure that their staff and key personnel have good quality, up to date, safeguarding training. This should enhance the safeguarding of children and young people in Northern Ireland. I am very pleased that the strategy is already being used by our member agencies and partners.”

Detective Chief Superintendent George Clarke, Head of the PSNI’s Public Protection Branch, added: “The PSNI is committed to safeguarding children and young people and we welcome the publication of this strategy which further builds on our current safeguarding training.

“It is vital that we all work together to protect children and young people and this strategy will form an integral part of our approach to engaging with them.”

News briefs

On Saturday **Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI** celebrated his birthday . He is 89 years old. On board the Papal plane en route to the Greek island of Lesbos where he was visiting refugees, Pope Francis remembered his predecessor in his prayers saying, "I would like to remind you that

today is the 89th birthday of Pope Benedict XVI.
Pray for him"

Congratulations to the **Revd Sonia Gyles, Rector of Sandford Parish**, on her recent engagement to Greg Ward. Parishioners organised a presentation last weekend to mark the occasion.

On Tuesday in Clonakilty the Bishop of Cork will institute the **Revd Kingsley Sutton** to the **Kilgariffe union of parishes**. Mr Sutton has, most recently, been Rector of Newry in the Diocese of Dromore.

In Belfast next Friday evening at 7.30pm **Canon Giles Fraser** will give a lecture as part of the bi-centenary celebrations of **St George's parish church**. Canon Fraser, a former *Church Times* columnist, is well known for his contributions to BBC's 'Thought for the Day' and for his column in *The Guardian*. He will speak on 'Refugees – An Old Testament Perspective'.

For the fourth successive year Living Youth is sponsoring a **Habitat team who will travel to Ethiopia** in August. To help raise funds a Gala Ball will take place on Friday 22

April in The Tullyglass House Hotel,
Ballymena. Tickets £40 per person;

The **Reverend David White**, B.A., B.Th.
M.Phil(Ecum) , will be the new Rector of **Carlow
Union** of Parishes. He is currently Curate-
Assistant of Bandon Union of Parishes, Co. Cork
and is a Minor Canon of St Fin Barre's
Cathedral, Cork. He was ordained a priest in
2013. It is hoped he will be instituted in Carlow
at the end of August.

The **Revd Rob Clements** was given a warm
welcome when he was instituted as Rector of
Kiltiernan Parish last week. Family, including
his wife Julie and mother Etta, friends,
parishioners of Enniskillen and Dean Kenny Hall
as well as clerical colleagues joined the
parishioners of Kiltiernan for the celebration.

The funeral of **Mrs L Forysthe** will take place
today at noon in All Saints' Parish Church,
Antrim - Wife of a former rector, Canon Leslie
Forsythe, and mother of Mrs. Patrick Rooke,
wife of the Bishop of Tuam.

The March of Life will take place in in **Belfast**
on Sunday May 1 2016, 3 - 4pm. On and around
this date the March of Life will take place in

many different cities in Germany, Europe and across the globe to remember and honour the memory of the victims of the Holocaust. March of Life in Northern Ireland will meet at Jaffe fountain, Victoria Square, Belfast and end at Belfast City Hall. For more information and to confirm details please contact the organisers at: marchoflifeuk@outlook.com

The Church of Ireland General Synod 2016 will take place in the [Royal Marine Hotel](#), Dún Laoghaire from Thursday 12th to Saturday 14th May. The Synod service will be held at 10 o'clock in [St Paul's Church, Glenageary](#).

Cathedral and choral

On Tuesday at lunchtime in **St Patrick's cathedral, Dublin**, the Revd Paul Arbuthnot, Sacrist in Westminster Abbey and former member of the cathedral choir, will speak on the **19th century music of St Patrick's**. Paul is a past chorister and choir member of Belfast Cathedral.

Yesterday, (Sunday) morning the Bishop of Cork presided at Choral Eucharist in **St Fin Barre's cathedral** to commemorate the **Easter Rising**.

The preacher was the Archdeacon of Tuam, the Ven. Gary Hastings, and Cor Cuil Aodha, directed by Peader O Riada, sang a setting of the Eucharist composed by Sean O Riada.

Yesterday, (Sunday) afternoon in **St Anne's cathedral, Belfast**, there was an ecumenical service to mark the 75th anniversary of 'The Blitz'.

In **St Patrick's cathedral, Armagh**, there was an organ recital by Paul Mullen, Organist of St Patrick's church, Greystones, and in **St Patrick's cathedral, Dublin**, David Leigh continued with his series of organ recitals to mark the centenary of the death of Max Reger.

In **St Macartan's cathedral, Clogher**, the Dean of Derry, Dr William Morton, preached at the annual Friends' Service while in **Donegal parish church** at Choral Evensong was sung by the Leterkenny based ensemble, Gaudium Chamber Choir.

**News links to reports on faith,
politics and education**

Second Northern Irish woman faces jail under abortion laws after helping daughter have termination

The Independent

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/second-northern-irish-woman-to-stand-trial-on-abortion-charges-a6972726.html>

Times/Mail/Sun/Eve Stand/Exp

Reports on the sentencing yesterday of former church youth worker Timothy Storey to 15 years in jail for sex attacks on two “vulnerable” young women. *Times* and *Mail* focus on comments by Judge Philip Katz, QC who criticised the Diocese of London for mishandling the case. The judge said that a press statement by the capital’s Church of England diocese after Storey, 35, was convicted in February may have been “a shameful misrepresentation of the truth” that implied that the “blameless” police failed to stop Storey committing his crimes.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/church-leaders-failed-two-girls-raped-by-trainee-vicar-sxw6zqwdt>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3542117/Youth-pastor-35-groomed-two-teenage-girls-Facebook-raped-jailed-15-years-judge-criticises-church-brushing-aside-victims.html>

<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/7078774/Trainee-vicar-who-preached-abstinence-but-raped-a-teenage-girl-sheltering-from-the-rain-in-a-church-is-jailed-for-15-years.html>

<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/trainee-vicar-jailed-for-15-years-for-raping-two-teenage-girls-a3226691.html>

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/661296/Timothy-Storey-vicar-raped-teenage-girls-St-Michaels-Church>

Christian Today

Report that Christian leaders in Britain are reluctant to use the term 'genocide' to refer to ISIS' atrocities against Christians, Yazidis and other religious minorities in the Middle East. Includes comment from Bishop of Durham, Paul Butler: "I don't want to reduce genocide of its meaning, but nor do I want to diminish the horrors of what ISIS have been doing in terms of attacking our communities – the Christian communities, the Yazidi communities, and they've been killing many fellow Muslims as well." The report is in advance of a House of Commons debate next Wednesday.

BBC

Report on Pope Francis' trip this weekend to the Greek island of Lesbos, which hundreds of thousands of refugees and migrants have used as a stepping stone in their trip to northern Europe. It notes that the visit clearly emerges from the Pope's own personal desire as migrants and refugees have always occupied a central part of his discourse - and so has his criticism of the way developed countries have dealt with this crisis.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-36053880>

BBC/Exp/Ind

Reports on Saturday's memorial service to remember the 96 fans who lost their lives at the Hillsborough disaster noting it was staged for the last time at the ground with

the families of the victims having decided it is time for closure. Trevor Hicks, whose two daughters died in the tragedy, said during Thursday night's Europa League match "Anfield was a cauldron, today it's a church". The service included hymns and Bible readings.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-36039458>

<http://www.express.co.uk/sport/football/661531/From-cauldron-to-church-Liverpool-hold-final-memorial-service-Hillsborough-News>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/news-and-comment/hillsborough-final-memorial-held-at-anfield-for-the-96-liverpool-fans-who-lost-their-lives-a6986496.html>

Exp/Guard

Report on comments yesterday on the EU debate by Cardinal Vincent Nichols who called on voters to think about the human impact that leaving would have, insisting "economics is not the crucial issue in this debate".

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/661564/Cardinal-Vincent-Nichols-European-Union-EU-referendum>

<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/apr/15/archbishop-signals-support-for-britain-staying-in-eu>

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