



The 90th birthday of the Queen - four generations of royals

The Queen: 'A constant in our time' - Moderator

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Rt. Rev. Dr. Ian McNie, has described Her Majesty The Queen as 'a constant in our time' and spoke of her devoted service to the nation and 'the One who is King of Kings' in a

letter congratulating Her Majesty on her ninetieth birthday, which she celebrates today.

Sending the greetings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland ‘and our warmest congratulations’, Dr. McNie wrote, “On behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, I write on the occasion of Your Majesty’s 90th birthday, offering the greetings of the General Assembly and our warmest congratulations.

“It would be a considerable understatement to say much has happened and much has changed in those 90 years – yet for nearly three-quarters of that time, as Queen - and with The Duke of Edinburgh by your side - Your Majesty has remained a constant in our time.

“As a Church we would humbly express our deep gratitude for Your Majesty’s devoted service throughout those years, both to our nation and ultimately to the One who is King of Kings. May you know His blessing in a special way at this joyous time.”

Interfaith Service remembers victims of Brussels attacks



An interfaith service of commemoration for the victims of last month's terror attacks in Brussels was held in the Church of The Sacred Heart in Donnybrook on Tuesday evening (April 19). President Michael D Higgins attended the service which was arranged at the request of the Ambassador of Belgium, His Excellency Philippe Roland. Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and Archbishop Michael Jackson presided.

The Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland, Archbishop Charles Brown, as well as Imam Sheikh Hussein Halawa and the Cantor of the Jewish Community were also in attendance. President Higgins was joined by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Críona Ní Dhálaigh, the Minister for Foreign

Affairs, Charles Flanagan, and members of the Diplomatic Corps.

On 22 March, the Belgian capital was hit by twin suicide bomb attacks at Brussels Airport and Maelbeek Metro station which killed 32 people.
See -

<http://www.catholicireland.net/must-stand-together-rejecting-culture-violence/>

Ardoyne priest praises Orange lodges for 'generosity'

Ardoyne priest Father Gary Donegan has praised the 'generosity' shown by Orangemen at Twaddell protest camp after they decided to withdraw their nightly protest - which was to be held as a vigil for murdered taxi driver Michael McGibbon was taking place.

News Letter - Hundreds turned out for an emotionally charged vigil for the murdered father-of-four at Holy Cross Church.

The funeral for 33-year-old Mr McGibbon - who was shot three times in the leg after being ordered to meet the gunmen responsible for his death in an alleyway at Butler Place in Ardoyne



Joanne McGibbon with her young daughter at the candle light vigil that was held at Holy Cross Church in support of her husband Michael

on Friday night - was held yesterday in Holy Cross Church.

Holy Cross parish priest Father Donegan said: “The numbers who attended the vigil were quite phenomenal. There were hundreds of people there from all walks of life.

“There were ministers there from other churches, politicians, historians from Queen’s university, the ordinary 5-8 who are the heart and soul of Ardoyne and people who would not know how

to find a church unless they were following a hearse.

“It was a heart rending and incredible experience for everyone who was involved in it.”

During the vigil Joanne McGibbon was applauded as she said the Ardoyne community must “stay strong and stick together”.

The north Belfast cleric told of his admiration for Orange Lodges who decided to withdraw their protest because of the McGibbon family vigil.

“I got a call yesterday from a couple of leading loyalists to say that the protest was going to be suspended,” said Fr Donegan.

“We have had over 1000 nights in Twaddell and that was the first time.

“We also had a big mission in the church and I was able to make an announcement and acknowledge the generosity of the lodges in the church and it got a very positive response.”

PUP Leader Billy Hutchinson welcomed the move by the local Ligoniel Lodges to withdraw their protest as a mark of respect for murder victim Michael McGibbon.

“This was a terrible and cowardly murder, and my thoughts and sincerest condolences go out to the family of Michael McGibbon,” he said.

“I very much welcome the efforts by the local Ligoniel Brethren to withdraw their protest this evening as the memorial service is conducted and as a mark of respect to the victim’s family. I would like to thank all those who have been involved in efforts to bring about this gesture.”

Belfast church’s mini-book fest starts with ‘Politics and Peace’

Fitzroy Presbyterian Church in Belfast is holding a mini-book fest over the next eight weeks in Fitzroy’s evening programme. The Minister, the Reverend Steve Stockman said, “We will be looking at four key books in understanding social, spiritual and political context that we live in in N. Ireland.

On April 24 in Fitzroy at 7.00 pm David Mitchell will comment on his book “Politics and Peace in Northern Ireland - Political Parties and the Implementation of the 1998 Agreement.”

Politics and Peace in Northern Ireland is a penetrating and accessible examination of the

post-settlement experience of a region widely regarded as an international beacon of the possibilities of peace. Drawing on extensive original research, this book explains the promise and limits of the Good Friday Agreement. It also explores post-Agreement Northern Ireland through the eyes of each of the five main political parties and reflects on the likely direction of parties and politics in the future.

In the book, author Dr Mitchell (Associate Professor at Irish School of Ecumenics) provides a fresh theoretical account of the conflict and post-1998 politics which foregrounds how the 'extremes' sustained and nurtured each other and shows how and why unionists' and nationalists' mutual insecurities repeatedly derailed peace implementation.

Hundreds of young Irish pilgrims prepare for World Youth Day in Poland

Several hundred young people from Ireland will attend World Youth Day in Poland this summer where they will be joined by Pope Francis from 27 to 31 July 2016.

Irish pilgrims will be in Poland from Monday 25 July to Monday 1 August 2016.

In the lead up, dioceses are holding preparation days for these young people.

Usually WYD is for young adults aged over 18 but this time teens aged sixteen and over, accompanied by adult youth leaders, will attend the event.

The group of 300 from the Archdiocese of Dublin will be the largest diocesan group, bringing young people on five separate flights to Poland. The Archdiocese has held three preparatory meetings so far, and two more are planned.

The Archdiocese of Armagh is bringing 100 young people to WYD and has already held three preparation meetings. Youth Director, Dermot Kelly told CatholicIreland.net that the days are going well and the group is “bonding well”.

“The biggest challenge will be to bring back the experience and life of WYD to our parishes and communities. I’ve been to two or three of them. We talk about ‘bottling’ the experience to bring it home.”

The numbers of pilgrims coming from the dioceses who responded to

CatholicIreland.net's query regarding numbers are: Tuam – 50, Cashel and Emly – 14, Elphin – 30, Limerick – 100 (including 50 from the Polish community), Dromore – 50, Derry – 60, Kildare and Leighlin – 130, Killaloe – 30 and Kilmore – 50, Raphoe – 30, Cork and Ross – 20, Kerry – 35 and Meath – 56.

Around 2.5 million young people are expected at WYD which runs from Tuesday 26 July until Sunday 31 July.

Events at the Krakow gathering include moments of catechesis, shows, reconciliation services, and its highlight, meetings with the Pope including an evening vigil (on Saturday 30 July) and concluding Mass on Sunday 31 July.

The theme of the 31st World Youth Day, chosen by the Holy Father, is “Blessed are the Merciful, for they will receive mercy” (Mt 5:7).

An opportunity for pilgrims from different dioceses to meet and work together in advance of WYD is being provided by Music Ministry Together which is holding a preparation weekend on Saturday April 30 and May 1 in Cistercian College, Roscrea.

The theme of the weekend is “Through the Eyes of Mercy”.

Although particularly focused on WYD preparation, with an emphasis on music, the gathering is open to all people involved in ministry “even if you are not travelling to WYD, however if you are travelling we have special workshops for you,” says the invitation.

North West Church Leaders join students for ethical remembering workshop

Leaders of the four main churches in the North West joined students and teachers at a workshop in Londonderry on Tuesday to learn about ethical and shared remembering. Among those who went 'back to class' were the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Ken Good; the Bishop of Derry, Donal McKeown; the Moderator of the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal, Rev Craig Wilson and the Methodist Church's District Superintendent, Rev Peter Murray. The Clerk of the Derry and Donegal Presbytery, Dr Robert Buick, was also present.

The event in the DiverseCity Community Partnership's premises was part of the 'Journey Together' project, which is coordinated by the Churches Trust. The project has brought together 60 pupils from a dozen schools from



across the community and from both sides of the border to jointly explore two of the most significant events in modern Irish history – the Battle of the Somme and the Easter Rising.

The workshop was delivered in a ‘café culture-style’, with students from different schools divided into small groups to discuss the impact of events in the decade from 1912-1922. The students heard presentations from Dr Johnston McMaster and Maureen Hetherington, and the ensuing group discussions were facilitated by members of the DiverseCity Partnership.

The church-leaders hope the ‘Journey Together’ project will have a positive impact on education and community relations in the North West.

The young people have already taken part in joint visits to the Somme Centre and Dublin, and been involved in a series of workshops and other events which explored this complex period in our history. A major event is planned for Derry-Londonderry Guildhall next month to mark the completion of this phase of the project.

New Member of Staff for Down and Connor Safeguarding Office

Philip O'Hara joined the staff at the Safeguarding Office earlier this month, as a new, full time team member for a two year period. Barbara McDermott, Safeguarding Director writes - "As part of his duties, Philip will undertake the role of Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection and the "Champion Role" for Adult Safeguarding, both of which are currently carried out by Andy Thomson. This arrangement has been put in place to facilitate Andy to concentrate predominately on Vetting for the Northern Dioceses.

"However, Andy will continue to have a "Presence" in the Down and Connor Safeguarding Office, providing advice and guidance on safeguarding and vetting matters

and will continue to be available for consultation, advice and guidance on all vetting matters.

“Philip, whom we are also delighted to have as a team member, is a professionally qualified social worker with 30 years experience. Philip has worked across a number of social work specialities, including child protection, children and disabilities, residential work and as an Inspector with RQIA (The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority).

“Philip is no stranger to the work of the Safeguarding Office within the Diocese of Down and Connor. He has been the Chair of St Anne’s Parish Safeguarding Committee since its inception in 2006 and is also a member of the Diocesan Advisory Panel. Given his previous experience as a PSC (parish safeguarding committee) chair, Philip will also work alongside Susan Gordon in the Safeguarding Office, assisting her in the role of supporting Parish Safeguarding Committees.”

Retirement tribute to The Rev Canon George Irwin

The Rev Canon George Irwin has retired after 27 years as rector of St Mark’s, Ballymacash, Lisburn.



Mr Hilary Morrison (left) and Mrs Kaye Somerville (right) present a framed picture of St Mark's Church to Canon George Irwin while Mrs Irwin was presented with a flower arrangement.

A Farewell Evening was held on April 16 in the Parochial Hall and was attended by around 200 parishioners

Writing an Open Letter to his parishioners in the latest issue of the Ballymacash Parish News was, Canon Irwin said, 'one of the most difficult tasks of my ministry, stretching over 36 years.'

He wrote: “This has been our home for over 27 years and the place where our children Richard and Rosalind Jane were reared.”

Canon Irwin presided at three radio broadcasts and two television broadcasts involving St Mark’s parishioners and led seven Christian Stewardship Renewal Programmes. He appointed 24 Churchwardens, five Glebewardens, five Mother’s Union Enrolling Members and five Sunday School Superintendents. He trained five curates and saw five parishioners go forward to ordination with another three commissioned as Readers.

Two former curates paid their own personal and very poignant tributes to Canon Irwin, with Tom Gordon, now Dean of Leighlin, stating: “Through him was learned the pastoral priorities of house visiting, the care of the sick and an abiding love of the Anglican tradition. George’s ministry is one of which has stood the test of time in his love of people, sheer hard work and gentle humour.”

Captain John O’Neill, a Church Army Evangelist, described Canon Irwin as ‘a sincere, genuine and caring man of genuine faith.’

“I recall time after time at the start of our Tuesday morning staff meeting being handed a

fairly large pile of index cards with the names and addresses of people to visit and quite often wondering if it would be possible to see so many people in such a short space of time before George would hand me another pile of index visiting cards,” John recalled. “I soon discovered that his passion for pastoral visiting was as a result of his many years of experience and he had it finely tuned...to a fine art.”

Entertainment at the farewell evening was provided by the Choir and Music Group under the guidance of their Director of Music Mr Tim Howe. A varied programme ranged from ‘Pachelbel Canon in D’ to ‘Lord of the Dance’ and the Beatles classic ‘Hey Jude’ to personal favourites of Canon Irwin including ‘My song is love unknown’ and ‘O thou who camest from above’ and Chilcott’s ‘Irish Blessing’ which brought the musical element to a close.

Comper for the evening was George Spence who kept the programme moving in his own inimitable style before two of the parochial nominators, Mr Hilary Morrison and Mrs Kaye Somerville, who played a role in bringing the Rev Irwin to Ballymacash 27 years ago, presented Canon Irwin and his wife Deirdre with a framed picture of the church.

C of I commitment to support Children's Ministry

At the April meeting of the General Synod Standing Committee, Mr Ken Gibson reported on the Honorary Secretaries' recent encouraging meeting with a dynamic and enthusiastic group from the Children's Ministry Network, Boards of Education, and Sunday School Society. He stressed how critical work with children is to the life of the Church.

Standing Committee passed a resolution to support and encourage the ongoing discussions in making children's ministry a central and integral part of the life of the Church of Ireland, and endorsed the projects that are currently working to develop children's ministry.

Cathedral and choral

You are warmly invited to attend the next **Dublin and Glendalough Come&C Songs of Praise** service on Monday 25th April at 5.15pm in the Inter Faith Centre in Dublin City University's Glasnevin Campus. The theme of the service will be 'To respond to human need by loving

service', based on the third Mark of Mission of the Anglican Communion.

Everyone is welcome to join with members of the DCU community, other Dublin Universities and local parishes for this informal, interactive service, which will have lots of hymn singing and thought-provoking reflection. A newly composed hymn, entitled 'Come and See' will be taught and sung at the service. Music will be led by the newly formed DCU Gospel Choir. The preacher will be the Rev Rob Jones, Chaplain of Dublin Institute of Technology and Vicar of Holy Trinity, Rathmines.

The service is one of a series of Songs of Praise type events which are taking place around the United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough during this Year of 'Come&C'. Each service focuses on one of the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion but also bears the hallmark of the host location.

The DCU Service will therefore reflect a number of changes in Anglican Chaplaincy in Dublin Universities and also the incorporation of the Church of Ireland College of Education into DCU. The Inter Faith Centre in DCU, is also marking its 25th anniversary year and is a unique space, having been funded by the four main

churches in 1990 to serve a multi-faith University constituency.

For those visiting, there are a number of public bus options and there is a multi-storey car park just off the Collins Road entrance (which is used regularly by visitors to the Helix Theatre for example). The parking costs €2 for 2 hours. The Inter Faith Centre is located about 50 metres from the Helix Theatre in the centre of the Campus, just across the open plaza. Feel free to ask anyone for directions, if you get lost.

The **Zacchaeus Outreach** project is running a **concert** on Friday 22nd April in **Pomeroy Presbyterian Church Hall** which has been kindly given to them by the church. The concert is to raise funds to help purchase some equipment for our bus and also to buy bibles. The Zacchaeus Outreach project is Church Army/Church of Ireland project, which has been running for the past 5 years and is headed up by Church Army Evangelist Valerie Thom. **Rev. David McBeth**'s music is frequently heard on both Radio Ulster and Downtown and other independent stations. He will bring some of his friends with him to take part in the concert. Tickets can be obtained from Valerie Thom on 02887749920 or you can pay at the door

News briefs

Eucharistic Prayer Vigil for Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life, will be held in St Patrick's Church, Belfast on the 21st April 2016, 7pm – 10pm. The vigil will conclude with Mass at 9pm.

A **Celebration for the Queens 90th Birthday** will take place in St Paul's Garvagh on 24 April 2016 at 11:00 . Both the Church and the Hall will be decorated for the day and afterwards we will go to the hall for tea and birthday cake. It will be an all-age service, with lots of activity and fun, and everyone is invited. Every family at Church will receive a free booklet, The Servant Queen and the King She Serves, to mark Her Majesty's birthday.

Maghera & Kilrea Rural Deanery is holding a **Service of Dedication for churchwardens, glebewardens and Select Vestries** in Saint Patrick's Church, Kilrea, 24 April 2016 18:30 at 6.30pm. The Preacher is the Reverend Terence Kerr.

Clontarf Parish is holding a **festival of flowers** to celebrate the church's 150th anniversary from Friday May 13 to Monday May 16. The festival

will be launched with a concert on Friday May 13.

Dublin District of the Methodist Church hosted its second district wide night for young people last weekend. “Teams from around Dublin battled it out in a series of fiendish challenges and things got competitive!”



A small group from **Cairnshill Methodist Church** welcomed the First Minister Arlene Foster and Emma Pengelly to offer support and good wishes following the fire their halls on Friday.

Clergy from Meath and Kidare dioceses came together on Monday 18 April for a Clergy Training Day. The event was held in the Diocesan Centre in Moyglare, Maynooth. A strong theme running through the day was that of building a strong sense of team. Clergy who took part found it very encouraging for their personal ministry. The day was facilitated by Bishop Lee Rayfield, suffragan Bishop of Swindon.

In Kilgariffe Parish Church **the Reverend Kingsley Sutton** was instituted to the Incumbency by the Bishop of Cork. The preacher was Bishop Pat Storey. The Mayor of Clonakilty, Cllr. Cionnaith Ó Súilleabháin was present.

The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, has extended his condolences to the **Rev Canon Denise Acheson** on the death of her daughter Ruth. Canon Acheson was until recently Dean's Vicar at St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast. Bishop Alan said: "We send Denise and her family our love and assure them they are in our prayers in these difficult days."

A prayer for Ethiopia following attack in Gambella

A prayer for Ethiopia, where last Friday 19th April 108 women and children were abducted and 208 people killed in a cross-border raid into the western Gambella region by a group from South Sudan. - From Us - United Society

Loving God,
We pray for your suffering people in the Gambella region of Ethiopia.
Strengthen all who have been captured, protect the women and children who are vulnerable,
receive into your merciful arms those who have been killed,
and comfort those who are injured or bereaved.
Breathe your Spirit of justice and peace into the hearts of those who have carried out this violence,
help us to respond with compassion and love, that your just and gentle rule may move into this place.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Vigil for victim of north Belfast paramilitary attack

BBC News

A vigil is held in north Belfast for the father-of-four who died after being shot in an alleyway in Ardoyne on Friday night.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-36086555>

Concern over requirement to study Koran as part of Leaving Cert Arabic exam

Irish Times

“I am very distressed that having arrived in **Ireland** and having been granted refugee status on the basis of the threat to us as Christians we should ...

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/concern-over-requirement-to-study-koran-as-part-of-leaving-cert-arabic-exam-1.2615921>

A Christian Statesman in Ireland

Catholic World Report (blog)

Bruton was elected to Dáil Éireann (the **Irish** parliament) in 1969 at the age of 22 as a member of the Fine Gael party. He served in various ministries in ...

http://www.catholicworldreport.com/Blog/4734/a_christian_statesman_in_ireland.aspx

International Business Times

Further coverage of the private meeting between the Archbishop of Canterbury, Anglican bishops and Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe on Sunday.

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/archbishop-canterbury-robert-mugabe-discussed-same-sex-marriage-1555652>

New Statesman

Comment piece "In the name of the father" (scroll down) returning to the recent news of the DNA discovery of the Archbishop of Canterbury's natural father.

<http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/economy/2016/04/boris-s-taxes-justin-welby-s-posh-paternity-and-how-left-can-rescue>

The Voice

Reports that the CofE is trying to recruit more black and ethnic minority clergy. In a collection of new resources at [Church Support Hub](#), the Church calls for new role models, more minority ethnic vocations, young vocations and more women to take up more leadership roles.

Bishop of Guildford, Andrew Watson is quoted.

<http://www.voice-online.co.uk/article/church-england-seeking-more-black-clergy>

Premier

Reports that Holy Trinity church, Stratford-upon-Avon, where William Shakespeare is buried, is set to be the focal point of celebrations to mark 400 years since his death, this weekend. A number of events are being planned with tourists and fans from across the globe expected to descend on the town on April 23rd. Vicar, Revd Patrick Taylor is quoted.

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Church-prepares-for-Shakespeare-celebrations>

Comment

Times: The Pope must learn you have to be cruel to be kind. Alice Thompson argues that migrants are better off in camps near their home countries than living in luxury elsewhere. The article notes that many, including the

Archbishop of Canterbury, have offered to open their homes to refugees.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/comment/the-pope-must-learn-you-have-to-be-cruel-to-be-kind-cflvprjf6>

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