



Cork Three Faiths Forum hosts Earth Day celebration

For the second year in a row, the Cork Three Faiths Forum organised an Earth Day Celebration right in the centre of Cork City. The theme for Earth Day this year was 'End Plastic Pollution' and the Forum were delighted to be joined by a representative from VOICE Recycling Ambassador Program.

The weather was glorious and many of those in the park and those passing by joined the group to listen to readings from the Hebrew Scriptures, the Quran and the Christian Bible. The delicious food

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was again supplied by the Real Olive Company in the English Market.

The aim of the Forum is to show solidarity with each other, the Creator and all of Creation. As Judaism, Christianity and Islam all share a common concern for creation, the Earth Day Celebration is a wonderful opportunity to highlight the need for all to live in right relationship with the Earth and to collaborate with each other in order to address the causes of climate and ecological degradation.

Commissioning Service for Antrim & Newtownabbey Street Pastors



On Sunday evening, April 22, St John's, Ballyclare, hosted a Commissioning Service for Antrim & Newtownabbey Street Pastors.

Street pastors are trained volunteers from local churches who care about their community. They patrol in teams of men and women, usually from 8pm to 2am on a Friday and Saturday night across many cities and towns in the UK.

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The local branch of Street Pastors, whose chair is the Rev Neil Cutcliffe, has been serving in the local community since 2013.

The branch currently covers the area of Glengormley, Mayfield, Rathcoole, New Mossley, Monstown and Ballyclare, offering support and care to people who may be out on the streets late at night during the weekend. It is hoped to expand further in Antrim.

St John's has established a new partnership with Street Pastors, now becoming the base where volunteers will set out from at the weekends. On Sunday evening, 13 additional volunteers from across many churches were commissioned for this ministry.

Representatives from the council, political parties and district policing were also present, highlighting to the congregation how important this partnership is to the wellbeing of the community.

Rector of St John's, Ballyclare, the Rev Jonny Campbell-Smyth, said: "The Church's role is to offer the hope and love of Jesus to people in our community. Street Pastors is a very tangible way in which we as a Community Church want to express that love, and through it to bridge the gap between Church and Society."

Revd Gary Hastings welcomed to Holy Trinity Killiney

A large congregation filled Holy Trinity Church, Killiney, on a beautiful spring evening to welcome the Revd Gary Hastings to the Diocese of Dublin.

Gary was instituted Rector of the parish by Archbishop Michael Jackson on Friday evening (April 20).

Gary is the former Rector of the Galway and Kilcummin Group and St Nicholas Collegiate Church, and Archdeacon of Tuam and the Archbishop welcomed he and his wife Caitriona to live and work in the Diocese of Dublin. Killiney parishioners were joined by Gary and Caitriona's friends from all over the country, former parishioners from the west of Ireland and many of Gary's clerical colleagues as well as local public representatives.



The new Rector of Holy Trinity Killiney, the Revd Gary Hastings, with Archbishop Michael Jackson, Dean Dermot Dunne, Canon Stephen Fielding (preacher), the Revd Stephen Farrell (registrar) and church wardens.

The preacher was Canon Stephen Fielding Rector of Agherton (Diocese of Connor) who noted that the members of the congregation who had travelled from far and wide reminded us that we are not only all members of the Church of Ireland but of the church of God which has no borders.

He described Gary as a capable and passionate priest, a pastor to all and someone who was ready to play a part in parish and local life. He could “deliver a deep truth with a light touch”, the preacher said adding details of his accomplishments in the Irish language, history and as an accomplished flute player.

“You will enjoy Gary’s humour and candour. It will take time to get to know him but he will enrich the life of the parish here. Value and affirm him and thank him and pray for him as he will pray for

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you, as you set out on this part of your pilgrimage as the people of God,” he commented.

Referring to the readings [1 John 3: 1–7 and Luke 24: 36b–48] Canon Fielding said ministry must be modelled on Jesus. “We look to him for example. He went into cities and villages and thought the people. He gave instruction in the faith. We all as Christians must be able to show the importance of the Christian life – living it not just talking about it,” he said.

Speaking at a reception afterwards in the parish’s Carry Centre, Clive Christie welcomed Gary and Caitriona on behalf of the vestry. He thanked all the clergy who had cared for the parish during the vacancy and parishioners who took on extra duties. He said Gary’s wide experience touched some areas which were unfamiliar to the parishioners of Holy Trinity and they looked forward to a vibrant ministry.

Archbishop Jackson also paid tribute to everyone who had contributed to the life of the parish during the vacancy. He said Gary and Caitriona would be exploring a different community having moved from Galway Bay to Dublin Bay. He said the new Rector’s reputation had travelled ahead of him throughout the Church of Ireland and looked forward to him putting his skills at the service of the parish and the community. Taking his turn at the microphone, Gary thanked the preacher and all in the parish who had put in such hard work to ensure the smooth running of his institution and to make the rectory so welcoming. He thanked all who had travelled to celebrate with him and told his former parishioners who made the pilgrimage from Galway “You’re not forgot”.

Festival on The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth

“The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth Festival” hosted by All Saints’ Tullylish, is a presentation of who Jesus was, what He said and what He did by looking at verses from the Bible and through a variety of designs, tell His story.

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It is being held on Thursday 26–Sunday 29 April 2018 in All Saints' Parish Church, 35 Tullylish Road, Gilford, BT63 6DP

Opening times are -

•Thursday 7.00 pm–9.00 pm,

- Friday & Saturday 10.00 am–9.00 pm
- Sunday 10.00 am–7.00 pm, including Sunday services at 11.30 am and 7.00 pm.

Teas, coffees, scones and pastries will also be served in the adjacent church hall at the following times: Friday & Saturday 10.00 am–8.00 pm Sunday 2.00 pm–5.00 pm

Cork confirmation candidates activities

Each year the Bishop of Cork, Dr Paul Colton, hosts a morning of activities and fun for the confirmation candidates from all the parishes across the Dioceses of Cork, Cloyne and Ross.

'I know lots of them already,' he says 'but this gives me an opportunity to meet with them and to speak about this special occasion in their lives.' Bishop Colton added:



For people who come from small parishes, they realise that they are part of a bigger picture. Those from bigger parishes meet others and realise they are not the sum total of the picture either. It is a lot of fun, but it requires a lot of support from the clergy, youth workers, parents and guardians, so I am very grateful for that.



This year's event was due to be held earlier in the year but was postponed due to the snow. It was held instead on Saturday 21st April in Douglas. The photos of the day, with the Reverend Anne Skuse wielding a camera, tell the story better than anything else. There were games to start and, with everyone in four groups, there were four main activities.

Using signs and symbols the Reverend Elaine Murray helps the young people to think about Confirmation, and welcoming the Holy Spirit.

Each year, when he meets the young people, the Bishop speaks about the Christian story, being a Christian and prayer. Every year his own gift to each child being confirmed in the Diocese is a set of [the Beads of Christ, also known as the Pearls of Life](#).

The fourth activity this year was inspired by a visit to the Church of Finland led by the Bishop, when, in some churches, Baptism trees were spotted. The idea was brought home and Kevin Carey of the

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woodwork department in Ashton School, Cork made a tree for use in the Diocese. Jacqui Wilkinson and Adrian Wilkinson spoke about different trees in the Bible, actual and figurative, as well as our connections with each other in the Church. Young people added their own leaf to the tree to recall their baptism, and also put their individual fingerprint on a tree as a sign of their belonging.

Top Spanish Catholic clerics ‘sorry for failings in face of ETA’

Major figures in the Catholic church in Spain have issued an apology for “complicities” and “ambiguities” in the face of ETA’s violent campaign, according to Spanish media.

The websites of the newspapers El Mundo and El Pais – both of which have major circulations in Spain – reported that the leading clerics had said that whilst many churchmen had been striving “heroically” to deal with the paramilitary group, the signatories of the statement said there had been failings too.

ETA waged a long and bloody campaign for independence for the Basque country, a region inhabited by a group with a distinct language and culture, centred on northern Spain. It has since called a ceasefire, and recently apologised for some of its actions.

The reports about the clerics’ apology appeared online late on Friday. According to the report in El Mundo, as translated into English by Google’s language recognition software, the statement was made by the bishops of Navarra, Pais Vasco and Bayona.

It says that the statement reads: “Throughout all these years, many of the men and women who make up the church have given their best in this task, some heroically, but we are aware that there have also been complicities, ambiguities, omissions for which we sincerely ask for forgiveness.”

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It goes on to quote it as saying it is “important that the return of the ex-prisoners to their places of origin be carried out in such a way that the victims of terrorism do not feel humiliated”. ETA stands for Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, which essentially translates as “Basque homeland and freedom”.

It first emerged in the 1950s, and only called a halt to its violent campaign of bombings and shootings seven years ago. The campaign left behind hundreds of dead victims, both civilians and security services.

In a statement published by Basque newspapers Berria and Gara on Friday, ETA issued an apology to some of the people hurt by its campaign.

It said: “We want to show our respect to the dead, the injured and the victims that ETA’s actions have caused. We really are sorry.”

AVT, a national association of terrorism victims, said the statement aimed to “whiten” ETA’s past, whilst Spanish Prime Minister

Mariano Rajoy’s government said in a statement: “ETA should have sincerely and unconditionally asked for forgiveness for the damage caused a long time ago.”

The paramilitary group was also criticised because the statement was only seeking forgiveness of victims “who didn’t have a direct participation in the conflict” – apparently excluding security personnel.

‘Gay cake’ bakers Ashers tour NI before Supreme Court appeal

The family which made headlines after refusing to produce a ‘gay cake’ are touring Northern Ireland to meet supporters ahead of a Supreme Court appeal.

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The owners of the Ashers Baking Company in Belfast are challenging a ruling that their refusal to make a cake with the slogan 'Support Gay Marriage' was discriminatory.



The UK's highest court will sit in Northern Ireland for the first time ever to hear the appeal, on May 1 and 2.

The McArthur family, who own and run Ashers, turned down the cake order because it conflicted with their Christian belief in marriage.

But after a costly legal action, the case brought by the Equality Commission went against them.

Initially, in May 2015, District Judge Brownlie ruled that Ashers broke sexual orientation and political discrimination laws.

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At the Court of Appeal hearing in 2016 judges recognised that the family did not refuse the service because the customer was gay, but still ruled that they were guilty of “direct discrimination”.

Ahead of the latest hearing, the Christian Institute has written to supporters inviting them to show their support for the McArthurs at a series of special meetings across Northern Ireland.

Simon Calvert, deputy director for public affairs at the Christian Institute, said: “People from all walks of life support Ashers because they recognise their own freedom could be infringed in the same way.

“They [the McArthurs] should not be forced to use their time, energy and skills to help campaign against their own deeply held beliefs. Nor should anyone else.”

Their legal advisor, Aidan O’Neill QC, advised that if Ashers lost there would be no defence to similar actions being taken against other businesses such as a Muslim printer asked to produce cartoons of Mohammed, or a lesbian t-shirt company asked to print shirts describing gay marriage as “an abomination”. However, John O’Doherty, director of The Rainbow Project, insisted the business was guilty of discrimination.

“We fully expect the Supreme Court to uphold the previous two judgments in this case,” he said.

“The facts are clear and established and we do not expect any newly constructed argument to sway the Supreme Court away from the settled jurisprudence on anti-LGBT discrimination.”

The McArthurs are being supported by gay rights campaigners Peter Tatchell and Jeffrey Dudgeon and also The Guardian newspaper.

Supporters will hear the same presentation and latest news at all five venues this week: • Yesterday at 8pm in Seagoe Hotel,

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Craigavon, Co Armagh • Today, Wednesday at 1pm in Marine Court Hotel, Bangor, Co Down • Wednesday at 8pm in Templeton Hotel, Newtownabbey, Co Antrim • Thursday at 8pm in Roe Park Resort, Limavady, Co Londonderry • Friday at 8pm in Corick House Hotel, Clogher Valley, Co Tyrone

