



***Joanne McGibbon and her children at the funeral of her husband Michael in north Belfast. Picture by Hugh Russell.***

## **Michael McGibbon's widow thanks Protestant neighbours for their support since murder**

The widow of murdered north Belfast taxi driver Michael McGibbon has thanked members of the

Protestant community for their support since his death.

Irish News - Mr McGibbon died after he was shot three times in the leg in an alleyway at Butler Place in north Belfast earlier this month. His wife, Joanne who is a nurse, tried in vain to save the 33-year-old father-of-four as he bled profusely from an artery. She wrote a heartfelt message in a card which she then personally delivered to the Rev Colin Duncan at the Woodvale Methodist Manse.

Mrs McGibbon wrote: "To all our neighbours on the "other side" in Woodvale, Glencairn, Twaddell, Twinbrook...

"I just want to thank you all for the cards and support you have shown to my husband Michael and my family during this difficult time.

"I have lots of friends who are Protestants and other religions and they all mean a lot to me.

"It just shows we are all human and feel the same way. I have nursed people from other religions/cultures and cared for them all equally.

"I just hope the day this hatred and evil will be gone and we can all live happy with each other, the way it should be.

"Thank you all so much again. It is so lovely to see the two communities agreeing with each other for a change.

"It would be nice if our children could have a brighter future."

## **Nobody has a monopoly on 1916 victimhood, says Primate**

Archbishop Richard Clarke, Primate of the Church of Ireland, has said there is "more than one narrative in 1916 and its Rising".

He continued, "We must live with a plurality of narratives, or our commemoration is a self-serving and disingenuous pretence," he warned. He was speaking at a special commemorative service of Evensong at St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin on Sunday past for all who lost their lives in the course of the Rising.

Archbishop Clarke emphasised how many deaths there were among the general population, particularly in Dublin city, one hundred years ago.

"Far more than has ever been widely acknowledged until now," he said.



***Archbishop Eamon Martin and Archbishop Richard Clarke give the blessing together at the end of the special service in St Patrick's Cathedral to commemorate all who lost their lives in the 1916 Rising.***

Recalling how the focus of the commemoration of 1966 was “far narrower” and “more triumphalist”, Dr Clarke said Ireland today was called to discern a narrative that was both “more nuanced and less politicised”.

He cited Irish nationalist Tom Kettle, who was a friend of many involved in the Rising but died in a British Army uniform.

Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin has said the last words of Padraig Pearse should be a challenge to every generation.

As thousands turned out across the country to mark the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Rising, President Michael D Higgins led the annual inter-faith commemorations at Arbour Hill in Dublin. A wreath in honour of the rebel leaders was laid in the cemetery where 14 of them are buried.

Archbishop Martin spoke at the religious service in the Church of the Sacred Heart and urged people to seize the ideals of the Proclamation.

"As Irish men and Irish women we are called still today never to betray the ideals which inspired these who took part in the 1916 Rising or to let those ideals be betrayed or watered down through our cynicism or mediocrity," the senior cleric said.

He also relaid notes taken by Father Columbus Murphy, a Capuchin priest, who met rebel leader Padraig Pearse before his execution.

He read: "(Pearse) was seated with his head bowed down, sunk deep into his arms resting on a little table... Disturbed by the noise of my entry he slowly raised his head... Then recognizing the (religious) habit in which I was garbed he got up, stretching out his hand and said 'Oh Father, the loss of life, the destruction, but please God it will not be in vain'".

Archbishop Martin said Pearse's words are a challenge to every generation of Irish people.

"As Irish men and Irish women we are called still today never to betray the ideals which inspired these who took part in the 1916 Rising or to let those ideals be betrayed or watered down through our cynicism or mediocrity," he said.

And the archbishop said the most striking thing from the accounts of priests in Arbour Hill in 1916 was the total lack of rancour and revenge from the rebels. "We owe it to those leaders never to allow ourselves to resort to revenge and hatred. They fought for peace and reconciliation and justice in our country and for all who belong here or who come to our shores," he said.

## **Limerick response to proposed changes to Diocesan Boundaries**

At its meeting earlier this month the Diocesan Council of the C of I diocese of Limerick and Killaloe thoroughly discussed the latest proposals of the Commission for Episcopal Ministry and Structures (CEMS). The latest envisaged boundaries for a "Diocese of the West", as well as changes to the Dublin and Glendalough and Meath and Kildare dioceses were examined.

In a statement the Council commented, "Our diocesan synod is more than a little bit uneasy about the proposed changes. It will result in the distances that people will have to travel of Diocesan Meetings becoming almost unrealistic, especially from either end of what will be a geographically very large new diocese. The discussion was swayed by what appears to be the inevitable proposal of the changes outlined in the map to the General Synod of 2016 and apparent desire of the people of Tuam and Killaloe to join with this diocese. With this in mind the Council proposed the following motion:

"The Diocesan Council affirms its openness to change in our Diocesan boundaries and welcomes dioceses that may join with us. It urges General Synod members to establish

financial support for the increased costs of a new expanded Western Diocese”.

The motion was presented by Mr Andrew Eadie, proposed by Revd Canon Jane Galbraith, seconded by Mr Alan Armstrong and was unanimously approved. While this motion does not mandate General Synod representatives, no doubt they will take it into account when voting at General Synod 2016.

## **Girls Friendly Society Meath and Kildare diocesan service**

There was a packed congregation in St Peter's Church in Dunboyne on the afternoon of Sunday 24 April. The occasion was the Annual Service to give thanks for the work of the GFS in Meath and Kildare diocese.

Members of the GFS and their leaders gathered together for this special annual event. The Service was led by Rev Janice Aiton (Rector) and Rev Colin McConaghie (Curate) along with members of the GFS from across the dioceses. Rev Janice is the Diocesan Chaplain to the GFS. Bishop Pat Storey gave the address.

Bishop Pat Storey said “This is an opportunity for us all to pay tribute to the energy, imagination



and commitment that our GFS leaders and members bring to this organisation throughout the year”.

The Girls Friendly Society was founded in 1875. It is the oldest Church of Ireland organisation for girls and women. Now almost 130 years later the Society has broadened its scope and offers an even wider appeal. The motto, purpose and prayer has not changed down the years but one generation after another has found fresh inspiration in it.

Today the Girls Friendly Society is active in eighty branches throughout Ireland, a wide spectrum of interest is covered in the badge syllabus, which includes a study of the natural world, the community and the church, handcrafts and skills, information technology, sports and outdoor pursuits, as well as participating in fund raising to demonstrate their will to help others, both locally and globally. Membership is open to women of all ages.

## **New Scout Troop invested in Holy Trinity Dunfanaghy**

36 beavers, cubs and scouts as well as 12 leaders were invested into the newly formed 24th Donegal, Dunfanaghy Scout Troop in Holy



Trinity Parish Church, Dunfanaghy on Sunday 10 April. An ecumenical blessing of the troop flags preceded the investiture ceremony in the packed church and afterwards all enjoyed refreshments and fellowship in the parish hall. The new troop meet weekly in Holy Trinity Parish Hall and take advantage of the wonderful outdoor amenities of the area.

## **Confirmation group challenged by conditions on Cruach Phadraig**

More than 30 Candidates for Confirmation from the C of I diocese of Tuam, Killala and Achonry, met on a very frosty Saturday morning in April at the foot of 'The Reek' for their annual gathering  
[churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)

and retreat. Cruach Phadraig, the Holy Mountain of our Patron Saint, was covered in snow as they met and greeted each other at the visitor centre at Murrisk close to Westport. The plan was to climb the mountain on the Pilgrim's Path to the oratory on the summit but, while the sun shone in the early morning, the day promised bad and conditions on the The Reek were hazardous, so it was decided to limit the climb to reach just beyond the lowest snowline. Some hardy folk went that far. Others less fit or more wary went only as far as the statue of The Saint. Lunch was provided in the Visitor Centre when all had ( safely ) regained sea level. The day concluded with a short Service of the Word and a talk by Bishop Patrick Rooke.

## Cathedral and choral

**Christian Aid Ireland invite you to an evening of Brass and Voices** featuring [Ceara Grehan](#), [Downshire Brass](#) and [Voices Together Community Choir](#). All donations are in support of [Christian Aid Week](#) and the [David Gordon Memorial Hospital](#), Livingstonia, Malawi. David Gordon Memorial Hospital is a hospital run by the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP). **The concert is in [Fisherwick](#)**

April 26

[Presbyterian Church](#), 4 Chlorine Gardens,  
Belfast, BT9 5DJ on Saturday 7 May 2016,  
7:30pm . **Tickets:** £10 Please purchase tickets  
online using the Eventbrite form below, or by  
calling the Belfast office on 028 9064  
8133.[http://www.christianaid.ie/getinvolved/  
events/an-evening-of-brass-and-voices.aspx](http://www.christianaid.ie/getinvolved/events/an-evening-of-brass-and-voices.aspx)



***Artist Paul Cummins and installation designer Tom Piper after installing Poppies: Weeping Window, St Magnus Cathedral***

A stunning **installation of ceramic poppies** is on display at **St Magnus Cathedral in Orkney**. The Poppies: Weeping Window installation is

made up of several thousand bright red flowers cascading down the west wall of the cathedral.

Kirkwall is the first place in Scotland to host the 14-18 Now travelling exhibit, which grew out of the 2014 Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red installation at the Tower of London, commemorating the loss of life in WW1. More than five million people visited the Tower of London to see the exhibit, made of 888,246 hand-made ceramic poppies, each one honouring the death of a member of the British and colonial armed forces during WW1.

St Magnus Cathedral will hold the official UK memorial service for the Battle of Jutland centenary on 31 May. The Duke of Edinburgh, Prime Minister David Cameron and numerous other dignitaries are expected to attend the event to honour the naval battle where 6,094 British and 2,551 German seamen lost their lives.

Rev G Fraser Macnaughton said local people and visitors are flocking to the cathedral to view the massive artwork.

"It is absolutely stunning ," he said. "The colours change depending on the time of day, whether it is sunny or cloudy, and whether you are far away or close up. You can't imagine how it looks until you actually see it. It is really remarkable.

"The two reds—the red of the poppies and the red of the sandstone—really complement each other. For St Magnus to have such a beautiful and poignant installation as the poppies really sets it off.

"St Magnus is very much at the heart of all the commemorations that Orkney is hosting for the WW1 centenary. It is the centrepiece of Orkney civic life as anyone can tell you. So we are really pleased and delighted."

Until the end of September, **St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast**, is offering guided tours every day, with the exception of Sunday, at 11.00 am and 2.00 pm. The cathedral guides will highlight some of the key features of this historic and beautiful building which was consecrated in 1904. They include the pillars which represent life and work in the city and province, the beautiful stained glass windows, the labyrinth depicting the journey of life, the Baptistry where the mosaics of Italian glass are by sisters Gertrude and Margaret Martin – the mosaic over the font is said to hold more than 150,000 pieces. Visitors will see Lord Carson's tomb – unusually for a Cathedral it is the only one in the building – as well as the historic gems in the Treasury and the Regimental Chapel which holds important artefacts including Books of

Remembrance, and fascinatingly a Book of Prayers written on rice-paper by a prisoner of war in Korea and presented to Capt. James Majury (son of the minister of First Antrim Presbyterian Church), a gift from the prisoners who had found comfort in the services he had held for them during their captivity in 1952–53. The Cathedral has been extended over the years, and the eye-catching Spire of Hope was added in 2006. A guided tour is £4 per adult and places do not have to be booked in advance.

## News briefs



**The Dock in the Titanic Quarter** has held

church on a boat, church in a café and church on a walk – so why not church on a Wee Tram? The Wee Tram is the new guided tour of Titanic's shipyard operated by Titanic Quarter Chaplain Chris Bennett. And now pre-booked groups can avail of Chris's experience as a clergyman, a chaplain and a "Titanorak" tour guide all at once!

**The Wee Tram Pilgrimage Tour** is an hour-long journey through the shipyard with pauses for reflection, worship and inspiration. Modern-day pilgrims will stand in the footsteps of the shipbuilders, reflect on the fate of Titanic, cower under the might of Goliath and learn lessons in strength from Samson! The visit can be combined with a coffee stop at Dock Café, where pilgrims can spend time in the Prayer Garden – or just enjoy the coffee, tea, scones and squashy sofas of Belfast's famous Honesty Box Café. For more information or to make a booking, check out [www.theweetram.com](http://www.theweetram.com) or email [info@theweetram.com](mailto:info@theweetram.com).

The Wee Tram can take 34 passengers per journey – but for larger groups this can easily be doubled or tripled by taking each group in turn while the others relax at Dock Café. Pilgrims don't necessarily need sandals or staff – but an



authentic shipyard “duncher” cap will be provided!

Saturday marked the **400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare** on 23 April 1616. **Canon Patrick Comerford**, who writes a monthly column in the Dublin & Glendalough diocesan magazine, the *Church Review*, looks at Shakespeare’s interesting Irish connections in his contribution this month. Professor Comerford, who lectures in Anglicanism, Liturgy and Church History in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute, gives particular attention to Irish characters in Shakespeare’s plays, his use of Irish phrases and colloquialisms, and his supposed links with Dalkey, Co Dublin, through his friend the composer John Dowland. This interesting feature on the Bard and Ireland is also available at: <http://www.patrickcomerford.com/2016/04/england-and-world-celebrate-shakespeare.html>

**Bishop Harold Miller** of Down and Dromore is the missionary this week at **Lissan Parish**, near Cookstown, in the diocese of Armagh. The rector of the parish is Revd Alan Cross. Bishop Harold is looking at encounters with the risen Christ in the Gospels, and stories of faith are

being shared each evening. Sunday 24– Friday 29 April at 8.00 pm.

**My Journey My Voice** is a powerful of exhibition of photographs and stories designed to raise awareness about communication disability. It features nine portraits by photographer Laurence Gibson along with audio recordings made by the subjects as they tell listeners about a favourite journey in their own words. Each of the nine speakers happens to have a communication disability. One participant in this high-profile project, which was launched at Stormont last November, is **Christine Birney, a Methodist from County Fermanagh**. Read about the key role Christine is playing in this initiative in the *May Methodist Newsletter*.

The institution of Rev'd Terence (Terry) Mitchell as the new Rector of **Cloughjordan and Borrisokane** will take place on Friday 29th April 2016. At 8:00 p.m. In St. Kieran's Church, Cloughjordan. There will be refreshments afterwards in St. Kieran's Hall. Everyone is welcome to come and join the celebration and give a good Irish welcome to Rev'd Terry and his wife Julia. Rev'd Terry comes to Ireland from the Diocese of Capetown in South Africa, where he is currently Rector of Christ Church, Grahamstown. Born in Pietermaritzburg he

initially trained as a teacher, and taught English and History as well as Guidance Councillor. He was first ordained for the Methodist Church, serving in Grahamstown and in Northern Ireland before being ordained as an Anglican priest.

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

### **Queen's University moves up the uni league table**

News Letter

Queen's University in Belfast has remained just outside the top 30 in a league table of UK universities published on Monday.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/queen-s-belfast-on-the-rise-in-latest-university-league-table-1-7347608>

### **Next Irish government must reject unity calls from Gerry Adams**

News Letter

The next Irish government must reject calls from Gerry Adams for a fresh push towards Irish unity, Arlene Foster has said.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/next-irish-government-must-reject-push-for-unity-foster-1-7347751>

### **O Dowd denies leaving budgetary mess at Department**

News Letter

The education minister has rejected claims he has placed unnecessary financial hardships on schools and caused a “budgetary mess” as a result of his policies.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/o-dowd-denies-leaving-a-budgetary-mess-at-department-1-7346534>

### **Schools Week**

Further coverage of the Memorandums of Understanding between the Government and CofE and Catholic Church, ensuring they will have the final say on whether 5,500 schools under their control become academies.

Academy conversions will take place only if the relevant church authority is satisfied that the school’s religious character will be maintained. It is expected most church schools will join church-led trusts. See last week’s [CofE blog and statement](#)).

<http://schoolsweek.co.uk/church-leaders-sign-academies-agreement-with-dfe/>

### **Schools Week**

Reports that a Newcastle based CofE school academy trust plans to absorb four non-church schools. The Diocese of Newcastle has said that each school’s ethos would be protected, but the National Secular Society has objected to the move. A quote from the diocese is included in the article.

<http://schoolsweek.co.uk/newcastle-church-academy-trust-to-absorb-non-faith-schools/>

### **BBC**

Reports that the vicar at a church attended by woman and her 13-year-old daughter who were killed at their home in Spalding has spoken about how their deaths are continuing to affect the community. Katie and Elizabeth

Edwards were found at their home on 15 April. Two 14-year-olds have been charged with their murders. The Revd Mike Chesher, of St Paul's church, Spalding, said: "It's at times like this when people wish to draw together and they wish to share together and comfort one another and support one another,"  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lincolnshire-36123485>

### **Mail/Sun**

Further reports on interview with the first wife of Newcastle vicar, Rev Geoffrey Short, following news story last weekend that his second wife had left him for actor Robson Green.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3556632/What-goes-comes-wife-claims-vicar-walked-years-second-wife-left-TV-star-Robson-Green.html>

<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/7101143/Vicar-whose-wife-walked-out-on-him-for-Robson-Green-dumped-his-first-wife-20-years-ago.html?redirect=true>

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