



Fr Brendan Coffey is the sixth Abbot of the monastic community

New Abbot elected for Glenstal Abbey

The Benedictine monks of Glenstal Abbey on Saturday elected a new Abbot who will lead the Co Limerick community for the next eight years.

46-year-old Fr Brendan Coffey is the sixth Abbot of the monastic community and he succeeds Abbot Mark Patrick Hederman, who held the office from 2008.

Fr Joseph Coffey was born in Ennis, Co Clare in 1970.

After studies in Maynooth and Rome, he was ordained a priest of the diocese of Killaloe in 1995.

After ordination, he pursued postgraduate studies in canon law at the Gregorian University in Rome, after which he was appointed curate in the parish of Kilrush.

He entered Glenstal in 1998, taking the name Brendan. He professed simple vows in 1999 and made his solemn profession in 2002.

After some years working in the abbey school as a housemaster and teacher of Classics, Fr Brendan spent two years in Padua in Italy doing postgraduate studies in liturgy.

On his return to Glenstal, he served as prior of the monastery from 2007 until 2015.

He spent the academic year 2015-16 at the Catholic University of America doing doctoral studies in liturgy.

Abbot Coffey takes office immediately and the formal abbatial blessing will take place at a future date after the current renovation works at the abbey church have been completed.

The Abbot is elected by all of the monks who have made their solemn (ie lifetime) profession of vows and the process will probably take two or three days.

The election was overseen by Dom Ansgar Schmidt, the Abbot-President of the family of monasteries to which Glenstal belongs, the Benedictine Congregation of the Annunciation.

According to St Benedict, the Abbot “is believed to hold the place of Christ in the monastery, being called by a name of His, which is taken from the words of the Apostle: ‘You have received a Spirit of adoption ...by virtue of which we cry, Abba — Father’.”

Methodists in Ireland: Political Identities and Changing Contexts

“Methodists in Ireland: Political Identities and Changing Contexts” is the title of a lecture to be give by Dr Fergus O’Ferrall at Edgehill Theological Colege, Belfast in October. The event is being organised by the Methodist Historical Society of Ireland

Dr Fergus O’Ferrall is a native of Abbeyderg, Kenagh, Co.Longford. He attended Wesley College, Dublin and Trinity College, Dublin, where he obtained a Moderatorship in Modern History and Political Science, a Masters Degree in Health Services Management and a doctorate in Irish History.

Amongst his publications are *Catholic Emancipation Daniel O’Connell and the Birth of Irish Democracy 1820-1830* (Gill & Macmillan, 1985) and a short biography *Daniel O’Connell* (Gill & Macmillan, 1981 and 1998). He edited with the County Archivist Martin Morris *Longford History and Society* (Geography Publications, Dublin, 2010). Together with Martin Morris and Sarah Gearty he edited *Longford* in the Royal Irish Academy’s Irish Historic Towns Atlas series.



Dr Fergus O'Ferrall

He has also written a comparative study of the three towns, Athlone, Mullingar and Longford, which is published in *Maps and Texts Exploring the Irish Historic Towns Atlas*, edited by H.B. Clarke and Sarah Gearty (Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, 2013). He is a regular contributor to *Teathbha*, the Journal of the Longford Historical Society of which he is a Life Member. He is a member of the Committee of the Methodist Historical Society of Ireland. He has contributed articles on aspects of Irish history and health policy to a number journals including *Studies An*

Irish Quarterly and to the online *Dublin Review of Books*.

Dr O’Ferrall has held the following positions: Adelaide Professor in Health Policy, Trinity College, Dublin; Director of the Adelaide Hospital Society; Director of the National Bible Society of Ireland; Chief Executive of Macra na Feirme, President of the National Youth Council of Ireland; Chairman of The Wheel, the co-ordinating body of the Irish voluntary sector. He is currently a Governor of *The Irish Times* newspaper. Recently he has been asked to co-chair a new initiative by the Carnegie Trust and The Wheel to stimulate a national People’s Conversation directed towards producing a New Vision of Citizenship in Ireland to be launched in 2016. He was designated Lay Leader of Conference, 2016-18, by the Methodist Church in Ireland in 2015.

Event Date: Friday, 21 October, 2016 -19:30 to 21:00. Venue: Edgehill Theological College, 9 Lennoxvale, Belfast BT9 5BY, Methodist Historical Society of Ireland Email: robin.rodzie@irishmethodist.org Website with Further Details:

<http://methodisthistoryireland.org/events/mhsi-annual-lecture-2016/>

Church woman's book on her experience of Locked-in Syndrome

Inspirational Leah Batchelor, a young Dundonald woman who has defied the odds in her recovery from Locked-in Syndrome, has written a book about her experiences.

In the book, entitled *Believe*, Leah reveals how she was confined to a hospital bed able to move nothing but her eyelids. She felt flickers of movement returning and prayed to God for more.

Leah was just 21 when, in September 2011, she suffered a major brain stem stroke caused by an aneurysm. Her prognosis was not good and her parents Allison and Tom were told she may not survive.

Five years on she has graduated from University, passed her driving test and is now a published author! A parishioner at St Michael's Parish Church, Belfast, Leah admitted that her faith in God was tested in the early days of her illness.



Leah Batchelor with her book 'Believe'

“I did very early on question God, but I was so scared that I soon forgave Him and turned back to Him,” she said. “As I couldn’t talk or move, He was the only one who knew what I was feeling, thinking. At the time I could only talk to Him.”

Leah’s book chronicles her life since that fateful day in 2011. “It was very hard to write, but I started writing when I was still in hospital as at the time I’d no speech and it was my way of understanding what I’d been through,” Leah said.

“I edited these notes to create the book, but the first few chapters were really hard to write as they brought back so many unhappy memories, I could only edit a small section of this at any one

time. I've been writing it for the last four years so I was also writing as events happened.”

Leah graduated from the University of Ulster with a 2:1 in Graphic Design last December, and at the ceremony amazed everyone with her courageous determination to walk on the stage to pick up her certificate. Since graduating, she has been doing freelance work and is on the lookout for a permanent part-time job.

She is a Girls' Brigade leader in St Mary's, Ballybeen, and has been helping to develop the Lower Shankill brand COILS (Church of Ireland Lower Shankill).

Leah is still in therapy, and travels to London to a specialist clinic once a year for a fortnight of rehabilitation treatment as no similar service is available in Northern Ireland.

A delighted Leah took delivery her first batch of copies of *Believe* on August 12.

“My hope for the book is to inspire others going through a difficult time not to give up,” she said. “Also I want doctors and nurses to read it to hear what it's really like so they can hopefully have a

better understanding of how to care for patients with this syndrome.”

Anyone wishing to order a copy of Believe (£7) can contact Leah at believe.leah@gmail.com

Faithful flock to Lourdes under heavy security

Catholic pilgrims from around the world, many sick or disabled, flocked to Lourdes on Monday under exceptional security after recent extremist attacks.

Armed soldiers and police patrolled the train station, town centre and inside the sanctuary at Lourdes, where a 19th-century village girl had visions of the Virgin Mary.

As a helicopter circled overhead, visitors bearing candles and banners streamed toward the grotto and the sprawling plaza of the basilica, apparently undeterred by new security restrictions or the recent attacks.

Crowds began gathering at the sanctuary before dawn for a series of outdoor Masses in multiple languages celebrating the Feast of the Assumption.

Thousands attended a candlelight procession on Sunday night, though the route was reduced from past years to ensure better security.

French authorities had already been planning extra security for the annual holiday, but concerns mounted after a series of attacks in July — notably the July 26 murder of Fr Jacques Hamel in Saint-Étienne-du-Rouvray, Normandy.

Lourdes officials refused to cancel this year's pilgrimage, although some other summer festivals around France have been dropped.

To reach the Lourdes sanctuary, pilgrims proffered up their bags for repeated checks, and authorities funnelled visitors through three access points, reduced from past years.

Roads were closed to allow pedestrians, some in wheelchairs, to reach the site unhindered. Car attacks are a new concern after a driver rammed his truck into Bastille Day revellers in Nice last month, killing 85.

Nearly 300 extra forces were brought to Lourdes — including mobile intervention teams, soldiers, bomb squads, canine units — to help local

forces, raising the overall security presence to over 500.

The Catholic Church has recognised dozens of miracles at Lourdes since villager Bernadette Soubirous, gathering stones in the grotto in 1858, had visions of the Virgin Mary.

French Olympic swimmer honours his grandfather, a holocaust survivor

32 year old Fabien Gilot swims at the Olympic Games for Team France. He has picked up a few medals in his Olympic career which started with the 2004 Games in Athens Greece. This week Fabien received his 3rd medal, a silver, for his role on the French men's 4x100 freestyle relay team. He has a gold and another silver medal from previous games. He won the gold in the 2012 London Games when the French men's 4x100 relay team beat the US team.

Every time that Fabien raises his arms in victory, spectators catch a glimpse of his tribute to his grandfather, Max Goldschmidt. Mr Goldschmidt was a Jewish man from Berlin who survived the



Fabien and his 2016 French 4x100 freestyle relay team with their silver medals.

holocaust at the Auschwitz Nazi concentration camp. Max Goldschmidt was Fabien's grandfather by marriage, as he was Fabien's grandmother's second husband. Fabien was very close to his grandfather and he considers him a hero.

On Fabien's inner left arm is a tattoo inscribed in Hebrew. It says, Ani Klum Biladeihem (אני כלום בלעדיהם) which translated means, "I am nothing without them." His grandfather died in early 2012 before he could see Fabien's team place second in the relay and Fabien revealed his tribute to his grandfather at those London Games games. The

2012 Games were also the 40th anniversary of the massacre of members of the Israeli Olympic team to the 1972 Munich Games.

Church music

+++ Vacancy parish organist/ director of music - Rathfarnham Parish is a vibrant parish with a developing mission focus for people of all ages. We are seeking an organist inspired to enrich worship through music and encourage the broader choral and music life of the church community.

Currently there is a very committed and competent adult choir of 30 voices who rehearse midweek, a sizeable school choir and a fledgling music group.

Presently our monthly pattern of Sunday worship at 10.30am involving organist, adult and/or school choir is as follows: 1st Sunday Morning Prayer with adult choir; 2nd and 4th Sunday Holy Communion with adult choir; 3rd Sunday Family Service with adult and school choir.

Remuneration in line with Church Music Dublin guidelines. Should you be interested in applying, please send CV and 2 recent references to the

Rector (adriennegalligan@gmail.com) by Friday 26th August 2016.

Interviews & Auditions will be held early September.

Address for correspondence: Rev. Canon Adrienne Galligan, Rathfarnham Rectory, Rathfarnham Road, Terenure, Dublin 6w, D6W XV62

+++ Crash course in worship guitar - Peter Blake, former worship group leader in St Paul's, Lisburn, and a part-time ordinand, is holding a crash course in worship guitar in St Paul's on Saturday August 27.

This will be an introduction to leading worship on the guitar and the class takes place from 1pm-4pm.

Peter, who runs PB Guitar Tuition which teaches guitar in around 30 schools, said the course would be of interest to many people who were inspired to buy a guitar, but who have never had the opportunity to properly learn to play it.

“Wipe the dust off that instrument and let's spend half a day learning the skills that will allow you to lead your bible study group or home group in a

few songs,” Peter said. “It will all be very gentle and I’ll give you some material to look over beforehand.”

All are welcome to this free workshop. To contact Peter, he invites you to friend him on Facebook or email peter@pbguitartuition.co.uk

News briefs

+++ Monkstown art and craft exhibition - An Art & Craft Exhibition will take place in Knox Hall, Monkstown from August 26 to 28. The official opening will be performed by Peter Pearson on Friday August 26 from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm. The exhibition will be open on Saturday August 27 from 10.30 am to 5.30 pm and Sunday August 28 from 12.15 pm to 5.00 pm. The exhibition is in aid of Monkstown Church Roof (finials) restoration.

+++ Vacancy, Head of Alpha Northern Ireland

- Alpha UK is looking for someone passionate about Alpha and the local church to head up Alpha in Northern Ireland. “If you are living in Northern Ireland and are already involved with Alpha we’d love to hear from you. As a team we

strive for excellence and endeavour to be gracious and professional in everything we do. Alpha is an exciting and challenging place to work, where innovation, initiative and creativity are encouraged. As a Christian community, faith is an integral part of our working culture. You can find out more details about this role [here](#) and, if you are interested in applying, further information is available from the people below.”

Christian Selvaratnam – Head of Alpha UK

Regions christian@alpha.org

Amy Walker – Head of Alpha UK Operations

amy.walker@alpha.org

+++ African Anglicans concerned by lack of

"sustainable peace" - The leaders of Africa’s Anglican churches have expressed their “deep concern” that the continent has yet to achieve a sustainable peace. In a [communiqué](#) issued at the end of last week’s meeting of the Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa (Capa) in Kigali, Rwanda, the continent’s primates said that they “decry the numerous lives lost and futures and hopes destroyed in meaningless wars.” They were challenged by Rwandan government minister Francis Koboneka to use their influence “to contribute to building cohesive, peaceful and thriving communities” on a continent that is

“deeply wounded and needs healing.” They added: “The continuing mis-investment in weapons of war at the expense of productive sectors like agriculture, social services, job creation and research into initiatives that will enable communities mitigate the effects of climate change and food insecurity is a major concern to us.”

+++ Anti-Muslim protestors disrupt church service

- A group of anti-Islam protestors dressed as Muslims and interrupted a church service in New South Wales, Australia, on Sunday. The group, from the far-right Party for Freedom movement, walked into Gosford Anglican Church as the Rector, the Revd Rod Bower, was delivering a sermon. They played Quranic verses through a bullhorn and mocked Islamic prayers while shouting anti-Islamic slogans. “I think one of the most awful things was that we had some asylum seekers who fled an oppressive Muslim regime in the congregation this morning,” the Church later [said on its Facebook page](#). “They thought they were going to be blown up. They were beside themselves with stress and were so traumatised. That was terrible to see.” The protestors left the church peacefully after a few

minutes of protest and Father Bower continued with his sermon, which was based on Luke 12:49-59, the Gospel reading set down in the lectionary of the Anglican Church of Australia. He was focusing on Jesus' statement that he had not come to bring peace but division. "That was the best sermon illustration I could have possibly had," he told the congregation as he resumed the service. "You could have forgiven me for staging that, but I didn't. I wish I had have, but I didn't," he joked.

+++ Equality demanded for Dalit Christians and Muslims - Churches in India held a "black day" of protest last week against the continuing discrimination faced by Christians and Muslims in the country's caste system. Indian society has, for centuries, operated the caste system of social stratification; with the population assigned to four specific groups. At the top are the Brahmins, or poet-priests; these are followed by the Kshatriya, or warrior-chiefs; the Vaishya, or traders; and then the Shudras, or servants. The Dalits, or untouchables, are seen to be below the Shudras and are often excluded from education and employment. In an effort to end caste discrimination, the Indian government introduced a raft of measures to protect Dalits.

These included an obligation on educational facilities and certain employers to appoint a specified percentage of Dalits in the number of students or employees. But in the 1950s, the government introduced a controversial Scheduled Caste Order, under which the term Dalits was defined as excluding everybody except Hindus. This was extended to include Sikhs in 1956 and Buddhists in 1990; but Christians and Muslims continue to be excluded. The government says that as the Caste system is based on Hindu beliefs, Christian and Muslims, by definition, can't be Dalits. And yet they are still ostracised and excluded from society because they are seen as such.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

NI child abuse: Safeguarding board criticised by independent panel

BBC News

An independent review criticises the board set up to oversee the safeguarding of children in Northern Ireland for failing to improve their protection.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-37078078>

Three countries represented at Omagh bomb memorial service

News Letter

A special service has taken place in Omagh to mark the 18th anniversary of the most lethal terror attack in Northern Ireland.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/wonderful-service-marks-18-years-since-omagh-bomb-1-7526364>

Eileen Battersby on a bid to halt demolition of Casement's school

Irish Times

A former **Church of Ireland** national school, St Paul's on Adelaide Road, Glashule, currently operating as a creche, is believed to have once included ...

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/environment/eileen-battersby-on-a-bid-to-halt-demolition-of-casement-school-1.2756140>

The Voice

Reports that Canon Eve Pitts, a C of E vicar in Birmingham, is planning to lobby the government and the local authority to recognise August 1 - Emancipation Day - as a national day in Britain to remember those who were enslaved. Emancipation Day is already recognised in many former British colonies in the Caribbean. It marks the anniversary of the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act, which made slavery illegal in August 1834. The Revd Pitts was speaking following the latest in a trilogy of church services, entitled *Sons Arise*, to honour and remember the millions who were taken from Africa to labour on the sugar plantations of the Caribbean.

<http://www.voice-online.co.uk/article/vicars-crusade-new-civil-rights-movement>

Premier

Reports a tribute paid to the late Revd Roly Bain who won accolades including two Clown International awards and who reportedly died following a one-year battle with cancer. The Revd Patrick Forbes, who co-founded the *Holy Fools* network of Christian entertainers with Roly said, "There was a time when the idea of a lowly priest hurling a custard pie at a bishop in the Anglican Church would have been impossible to imagine. It's possible for senior people to take themselves far too solemnly. Roly went to work on that with great success and the bishops, bless their hearts, took it in very good [humour]."

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Church-urged-not-to-forget-pie-throwing-priest-clown>

Star

Reports that St Mary's church, Portsmouth is laying on special events for Pokemon-Go players. Curate, the Revd Darcy Chesterfield-Terry discovered the church is both a Pokémon Gym and a Pokéstop, meaning players of the virtual monster game go to the building to stock up on features and battle one another. He is quoted.

<http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/537829/Pokemon-Go-church-Portsmouth-curate-attendance-St-Mary-s-Church-Pokestop>

Guard/Scotsman

Book Review: *A Little History of Religion* by Richard Holloway.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/aug/14/a-little-history-of-religion-richard-holloway-review>

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/book-review-a-little-history-of-religion-by-richard-holloway-1-4202821>

Obsv

Feature on church planting in the CofE with a focus on projects round the country. Bishop of Islington, Ric Thorpe, is quoted along with the Bishop of Kensington, Graham Tomlin, president of St Mellitus College, described as 'the fastest growing ordinand college in the country'. Obsv also carries a [critique](#) of the current renewal and reform programme from the Dean of Oxford, Martyn Percy,

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/13/church-of-england-evangelical-drive>

Tel

Report that some parishes in England are giving over parts of their churchyards or neglected land around their buildings to cultivating fruit and vegetables amid surging demand for grow-your-own food. Article focuses on St John The Evangelist, Old Trafford in Manchester (*See stories worth listening above*).

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/08/13/stuck-on-an-allotment-waiting-list-your-prayers-could-be-answere/>

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