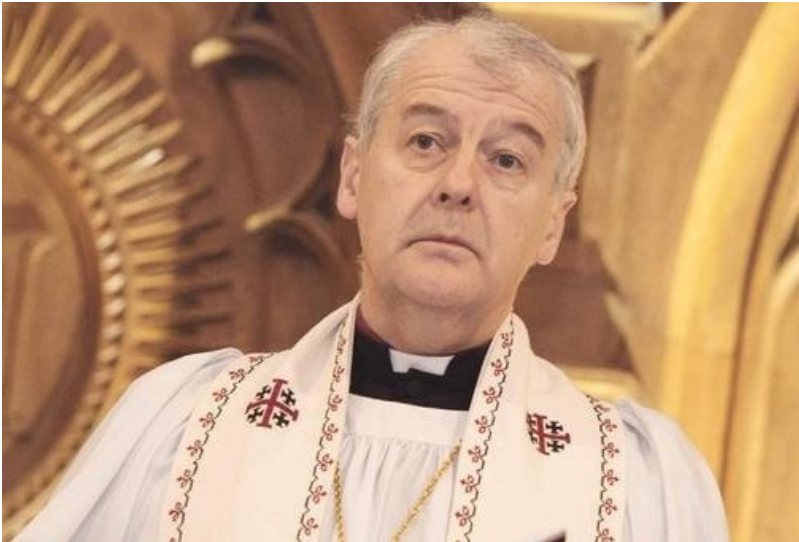


**Down & Dromore diocesan Year of Prayer**

**Dublin archdiocese major fundraising starts**

**Redemptorist critical of Irish church leadership**

**Scots moderator's concern on easy access to gambling**



## **Christians must speak up for what matters -- archbishop**

Archbishop [Michael Jackson](#) has said one of his hopes for 2014 is that people of a Christian conviction would "speak up for what matters to them".

In an interview with the [Irish Independent](#), the Archbishop of [Dublin](#) said: "Religion still matters for an awful lot of Irish people, of it and the fact that other people are doing it for and with them."

However, he said there was an awful lot of frustration among those whose expectation was that everybody must be the same and "muck in".

"Actually it is not as easy as that. There are questions of identity. Respect towards difference can be quite an important way of giving people time to accommodate to one another and find things which they can honourably do together."

He wants a healthy democratic society that respects and accommodates differences.

This, he said, was not to "disrespect the integrity of those who are secular, as a healthy society debates vigorously".

"Most of us rejoice that we are part of a secular society because it gives us tremendous openness and freedom," he said.

Speaking in St Maelruain's parish in the Dublin suburb of Tallaght, the Co Fermanagh-born archbishop said the gift of Christianity was its promotion of the respect that came from valuing human beings as being made in the image of God.

The leader of the capital's 45,000-strong Anglican community paid tribute to the warm relations he had with many of his counterparts in the Catholic Church in Ireland.

Archbishop Jackson recently raised hackles within his own church when he criticised those who used the term "polyester Protestants" about newcomers, usually Catholic converts to Anglicanism.

He said: "Sometimes you have to be very careful that you don't -- through your own enthusiasm -- seek to take the community for which you have responsibility somewhere it might not want to go or it might want to go at its own pace."

## **MATURITY**

Discussing the decade of anniversaries and 2014's centenary of the start of World War I, the archbishop said 2016 would be "tremendously interesting and potentially electrical" due to centenaries of both the Battle of the Somme and the Easter Rising.

In November, he hit out at the way members of his own church who had fought in World War I or World War II were shunned as "disloyalists" on their return to Ireland.

He said the forthcoming centenaries would be "a test of the two parts of Ireland" as to their "independent maturity -- how together we mark with respect the entitlement of others to mark something vital to them and how we show together that we can be good neighbours".

The 57-year-old told the Irish Independent that it often came as a surprise to people that the Church of Ireland community was an "overwhelmingly rural church" and also a minority both in the Republic and in [Northern Ireland](#), where other traditions like Presbyterianism and Methodism gave an overall Protestant majority.

Speaking of the impact of immigrants from places like Nigeria and eastern [Europe](#) on smaller parishes, he said: "I would like people to hear who we are becoming."

Expressing his support for the benefits of immigration, he added: "Any island culture needs to repopulate itself from people without that island."

Citing one example of the changing face of the Church of Ireland, he said one of his clerics based in Dun Laoghaire was from [Iceland](#).

The Lutheran priest was doing work there with the homeless, he said.

"She goes out one night a week throughout the night with a bus and gives food, hospitality and friendship to people who are living rough," Archbishop Jackson said.

On the issue of celibacy, which is not compulsory in the Church of Ireland, the married father of one said it was "a very difficult option".

"I see lots of happy people who are celibate and I really admire them because the mutuality of relationship is something that would be important to me," he added.

## Diocese embarks on a year of uninterrupted prayer



**The Diocese of Down and Dromore has launched a Year of 24-7 Prayer from the slipway at Titanic Belfast.**

At midnight on 31 December, Bishop Harold Miller and about 70 others welcomed 2014 with

prayer and, to the sound of ships' horns, a rendition of Auld Lang Syne.

At the same time, back in the Dock Café Prayer Garden, others took up the prayer mantle, and so began an unbroken chain that will thread throughout the diocese during 2014 and lay the foundations for a Year of Mission in 2015.

Bishop Harold Miller formally handed over the 24-7 prayer scroll to Revd Chris Bennett, Chaplain to the Titanic Quarter, as a symbol of their commitment to sustain prayer until 4 January. The scroll will then pass to Ballymacarrett where it will remain for 7 days.



***The Bishop of Down presents the prayer scroll to Rev Chris Bennett of the Dock Church***

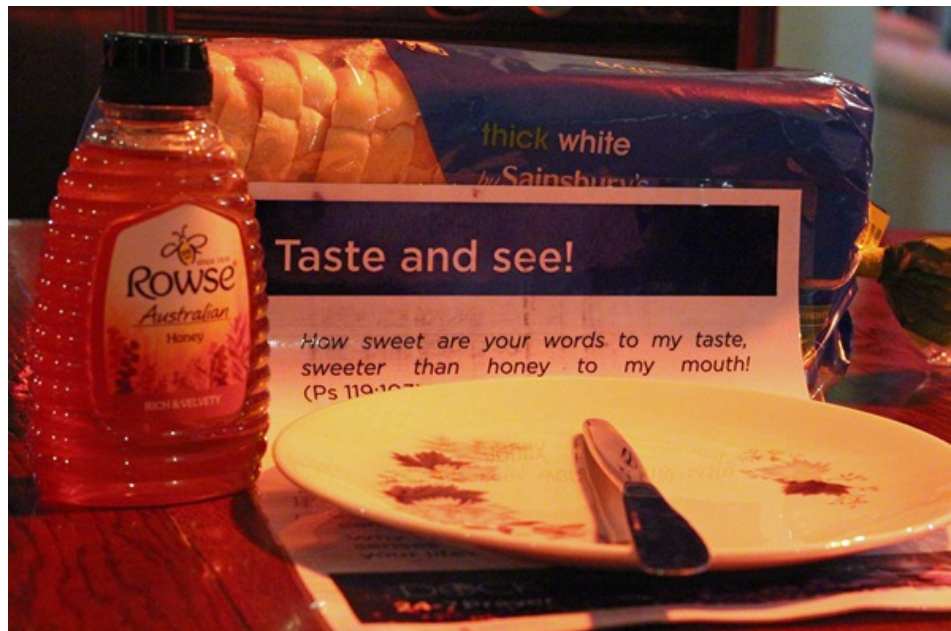
As well as its symbolic value, the scroll documents the prayer journey through the diocese.

Between 1 January and 6 March the prayer scroll will travel between 17 parishes in the area from Titanic to Helen's Bay. Every parish will take part over

the year ensuring that night and day throughout 2014, at least one person will be interceding in a prayer room in the diocese.

You can follow 24-7 prayer journey via Twitter at hashtag #DDYOP and on the diocesan website [www.downanddromore.org](http://www.downanddromore.org).

The Dock Cafe has a wonderful 'Prayer Garden' but at the moment there are also lots of extra, very creative prayer stations set up which will remain till January 4.



***A prayer station at the Dock Cafe***

If you're looking for inspiration, or you're just curious, do call in.

Even better, help out the Dock (which isn't a typical parish with a regular congregation AND all the students are off) by joining their prayer rota.



They particularly need folk to sign up overnight on Thursday and Friday.

## **Meath Diocesan records start Archive of the month 2014**

**During 2014 the RCB Library will continue its Archive of the Month initiative which aims to showcase its collections to a worldwide audience by presenting detailed catalogue lists of some collections that have recently come into its custody and been processed. To begin the year the focus is on the Meath Diocesan Archive.**

The body of records constituting the Meath diocesan archive deposited in the RCB Library is by no means complete. Until 1922, the collection consisted of a rich heritage of administrative, testamentary, matrimonial and court records, covering the period from the sixteenth century to 1870. Tragically this material had been transferred to the Public Records Office of Ireland in the 19th century, and reduced to ashes following the bombing of the Four Courts during the Civil War in 1922. Thus, what survives for Meath represents just a small corpus of what was originally a much larger collection, and it has survived solely because for one reason or another it was retained by the diocese for administrative purposes, or, remained in parish custody until transfer to the diocesan registry at a later stage.

The loss of so much early material notwithstanding, the surviving Meath archive provides a fascinating insight to the workings of a Church of Ireland diocese from the late 17th century onwards. The collection is sorted and arranged into some 19 record groups, beginning with the diocesan visitations being the bishop's (later rural dean's) inspection reports on each parish in the diocese, and includes one rare seventeenth-century return compiled by the Most Revd Anthony Dopping, Bishop of Meath, 1682–1685, covering the duration of his episcopacy, and in his hand. The collection ends with the working papers of Canon John Healy (1850–1942) who served as honorary secretary to both the Diocesan Council and Diocesan Synod 1897–1928, diocesan registrar 1904–14, and archdeacon 1914–28. These provide a vivid sense of the interconnectedness of various organs of the Church (the registry, the Diocesan Council, the Diocesan Synod, the RCB as well as the clergy and other officials representing individual parishes) and how they related to one another.

Of additional value for local and family historians is a range of materials such as the original return for the 1766 religious census of the town of Navan County Meath, giving head of households' names, numbers of adults, children, Protestant and 'Papist' servants, and total in each household,

organised by location (gate, street etc) in the town; the detailed returns of every Protestant household in the diocese arranged by on a parish by parish basis for the years 1802 and 1803 (as commissioned by the Most Revd Thomas Lewis O'Beirne, bishop of Meath 1798–1823); and the later 19th century census compiled in the aftermath of disestablishment, again organised by parish, and providing the names of the head of each family, numbers in the each family unit, and other observations.

Concurrent with this census, completed in 1879, is the complementary collection of returns of baptisms and burials for every parish throughout the diocese including summary totals used by the diocese for parish re-organisation with the details of the actual entries. For some parishes such as Almorita whose original registers were so tragically lost in the fire at the Public Record Office of Ireland in 1922 (including baptismal registers to 1884 and burials to 1885) the copied complete nine-year run of entries from 1870 to 1879 may provide hidden gems of family information that otherwise have been lost.

[www.ireland.anglican.org/library/archive](http://www.ireland.anglican.org/library/archive)

## Irish law clarifying abortion grounds comes into force

**A law has come into force in the Republic of Ireland setting out for the first time when abortion is permitted.**



*The death of Savita Halappanavar drew attention to the lack of clarity about the legal position*

It was passed in July, after the death of a woman refused abortion highlighted the lack of legal clarity.

The Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act allows terminations where there is a threat to the life of the mother.

It will also be allowed where doctors agree the

expectant mother may take her own life over her pregnancy.

The government has stressed that the new law does not weaken the general prohibition on abortion.

Savita Halappanavar, a 31-year-old Indian dentist, was admitted to hospital in Galway while miscarrying in October 2012. Her request for an abortion was turned down, and she died a week later from septicaemia.

Her inquest heard that she could not get a termination at the time because her life was not in danger but, by the time her life was at risk, an abortion would have been too late to save her.

## Dublin diocese rolls out major fundraising drive

**A major fundraising drive is being rolled out in the Dublin diocese in an attempt to ease the increasing financial woes of the Church there.**

The fundraising efforts spearheaded by newly appointed Episcopal Vicar for Financial Development Fr Andrew O’Sullivan and conducted by leading fundraising firm CCS, will involve an extensive consultation process involving priests and representatives of parish finance committees.

In a letter to the Dublin clergy, seen by The Irish Catholic, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin said it is “necessary” to raise funds in order to “sustain the life and mission of the Church in the parishes of the diocese in the coming years”.

Archbishop Martin told priests his decision to embark on an “exploratory phase” regarding financial planning followed discussions with the Diocesan Finance Committee and the Council of Priests.

He said the consultative process will be central to “on-going efforts to maintain costs and increase income” in the diocese and clergy would be “kept up-to-date as this planning exercise progresses”.

The consultation is being co-ordinated by a Steering Committee, chaired by Fr O’Sullivan. This



group, according to the archbishop, will seek to consult with as many relevant people as possible to “ensure that the committee sees the diverse nature and needs of the diocese”.

“They will give notice in advance of their meetings allowing time to reflect and prepare therefore enabling the most positive outcome possible. I encourage you to support this initiative as it is vital to our future and in particular, it is essential to our core task as priests to share the Good News of Jesus Christ,” the archbishop said. A spokeswoman for the diocese told The Irish Catholic the initiative “hopes to identify new ideas on how parishes can ensure more sustainable long-term financial support for their activities”.

“The current initiative is about what parishes can do to generate the necessary income to support priests and parish activities. It is separate to efforts to manage financial support and spending for diocesan services which are under a more general review,” she said.

## 'Silenced' priest says church here is bereft of leadership



**Redemptorist Fr Tony Flannery**

**Radical Irish priest Fr Tony Flannery has described the Irish church as "bereft of leadership" in a stinging rebuke to the Irish bishops.**

The Redemptorist, who was silenced by the Vatican in February 2012 and is currently

forbidden to say Mass or minister as a priest because of his liberal views, said he believed the

Vatican's "witch hunts" against liberal priests were over, thanks to the election of Pope Francis.

Speaking to the [Irish Independent](#), the 66-year-old said of the spate of censures which targeted Irish clerics: "If Pope Francis had been elected a



year earlier, I would not be in the position I am in, and neither would the other five priests in Ireland -- because clearly Francis doesn't approve of this."

The Co Galway-based cleric, who had an unblemished 40-year record as a missionary until he was censured by the Vatican's doctrinal watchdog, The [Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith](#), said the Pope had made it clear that he "doesn't want to be hearing this sort of thing in the Vatican and that he wanted this to be dealt with at the local level by the bishops."

He called on the Irish bishops to have the courage to follow the lead of Pope Francis and bring about the removal of "all forms of sanction" against these Irish priests. Asked about his future in the Catholic Church, he said he hoped 2014 "would bring some clarity".

### *CONSULTATION*

Fr Flannery also hit out at the lack of consultation with priests and laity over the recent spate of new appointments to the Irish hierarchy.

"All the indications are that in the past couple of years, appointments were made to the hierarchy with even less consultation than there had been in the past. So the Association of Catholic Priests haven't made any headway in changing that system." The liberal priest said Pope Francis's comments, where he ruled out women cardinals and women priests, while disappointing to some reform groups, needed to be looked at again.

"He talks about bringing women into positions of real decision-making in the church but not clericalising them. I actually think that is better. Just ordaining them isn't the solution because the whole area of priesthood needs to be seriously revised and reformed anyway," he said.

## **GB NEWS**

### **Moderator warns against the normalisation of gambling**

The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has warned against the normalisation of gambling in her New Year message.

The Right Reverend Lorna Hood said Scotland was in danger of turning into a society "with an ever increasing desire to acquire what we want, when we want it". She was critical of adverts placed during sports and other TV programmes encouraging viewers to place bets via their tablets and smartphones.



***The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Right Reverend Lorna Hood***

"Gambling has a long history, but we are now in an era where it is more accessible because of new technology and promoted more through mass advertising," she said.

"The ads seek to present regular gambling as a cool, normalised part of our culture. Companies may become richer through this commerce. The danger is that individuals and their families simply become debt-ridden, with all the misery that entails.

"It is of little comfort that other adverts seem to suggest that it is pragmatic to solve financial problems by taking out loans with eye-watering interest rates."

She went on to name other areas of concern, such as the impact of benefit cuts, the increased use of food banks, and continued violence, but she also encouraged Scots not to give up on dreaming of a better Scotland as the country prepares to vote on independence.

"In 2014 we in Scotland will make some decisions which will chart the course of our future as a country. Imagining Scotland's future - a consultation led by the Church of Scotland - has provided us with some key elements of these hopes and dreams," she said.

"Individuals coming to the gatherings in church halls across the country are telling us that, regardless of the referendum result, they wish society to be characterised by integrity, fairness and a sense of wellbeing."

She continued: "It would be terribly easy, faced with so many seemingly insurmountable problems, to give up hoping and dreaming. From within the Christian faith we are called upon not only to dream of a just and fair society but to put all our efforts into building that society."

"So dream with me of a world where children do not go to bed hungry or in fear; where the lonely and the elderly are cared for with dignity and respect; where the poor and vulnerable are not the prey of those with few scruples. Dream with me of a world where we can live in peace, respectful of one another's beliefs."

"God, whose love for us is boundless, is hoping and dreaming for us more than we can ask or even imagine possible. In Him we trust and in Him we place all our hopes and dreams. A blessed and peaceful New Year to you all."

## **Prayer for Today**

**O god of Abraham and Sarah,  
in due season, you fulfilled a promise almost too wonderful to imagine.  
Awaken us to the workings of your will in our midst,  
and keep us attentive to the things that matter,  
until the day when your mystery,  
hidden throughout the ages,  
stands fully revealed in the kingdom of all your saints. Amen.**