

**CNI**  
CHURCH  
NEWS  
IRELAND

**Belfast Eco congregation event**  
**Dublin talk on Thomas Merton**  
**Irish charities want unwanted gifts**  
**Why Liberal MP decided to quit parliament**  
**after retreat**  
**Why Guiding is being “robbed of God”**



## **Should Churches be Converted?**

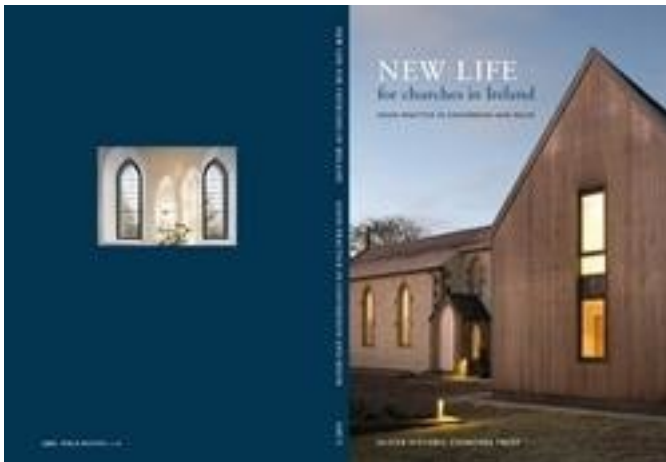
**The Ulster Architectural Heritage Society invites members and non-members to participate in a discussion on whether or not it is right to convert redundant churches to new uses.**

This will be held in St Thomas's Church, Lisburn Road, Belfast, on Thursday January 30 2014 at 7.30pm

In November 2012 the Ulster Historic Churches Trust (UHCT) published *New Life for Churches in Ireland – good practice in conversion and reuse*. In the Preface the Chairman of the Trust, Primrose Wilson, stated that 'Ireland's ecclesiastical buildings are part of the backdrop and fabric of our lives..... Fortunately the majority of our churches remain in use as places of worship and are well-loved and respected in their communities.'

However when a place of worship becomes redundant it can be demolished (if it is not listed) or become a decaying object of pity. Converting it to a new use may well breathe new life into the community of which it forms a part or it is better if it disappears altogether?

The Trust hoped that its publication will raise awareness of the issues and stimulate further debate and discussion and this event in St Thomas's forms a part of this dialogue. Copies of *New Life for Churches in Ireland* can be purchased on line at [www.ulsterhistoricchurches.com](http://www.ulsterhistoricchurches.com) and will be for sale on January 30.



The Society is delighted that the Venerable Dr Stephen McBride, Archdeacon of Connor, will act as Chairman for the evening. In order to set the scene Primrose Wilson will explain the rationale behind the publication.

Dr Paul Harron, Editor and author, will then outline the successful conversion of the former

Franciscan Church in Drogheda. Visited by UAHS members in 2013 it has become the Highlanes Gallery and is well used by the local community.

Nathan Armstrong who was the architect for the conversion of Tattykeeran Church, near Brookeborough, Co.Fermanagh, runner-up in the 2012 BBC Northern Ireland House of the Year programme, will present his project. Then the floor will be open for discussion and debate.

St Thomas's Church was designed by John Lanyon and consecrated in 1870. It is located at the junction of Lisburn Road and Eglantine Avenue. In 2008 major renovations were carried out and it is now frequently used for a variety of community uses as well as being a place of worship.

The Society is grateful to the Rector and Select Vestry for the use of the building for this event. The cost of the event, which includes a glass of wine, is £10 per person. Closing date for applications is January 27 2014.

## **Alastair MacIntosh at Eco-Congregation Ireland event**

**Eco-Congregation Ireland will be holding an event in Fitzroy Presbyterian Church, Belfast, on the evening of Friday 28th February 2014.**

There will also be an opportunity to hear from Fitzroy and other eco-congregations regarding the work that they are doing which ECI hopes will inspire other people to take up the eco-challenge in their own parishes/churches.

ECI chairperson, the Revd Andrew Orr comments -

In Co Wicklow, not far from where I live, is Tomnafinnoge Wood. It is a stunning oak forest full of life and colour, the native trees showing biodiversity



***Alastair MacIntosh whose inspiring talks at Eco-Congregation Ireland's inaugural conference last year proved so popular, will be the keynote speaker.***

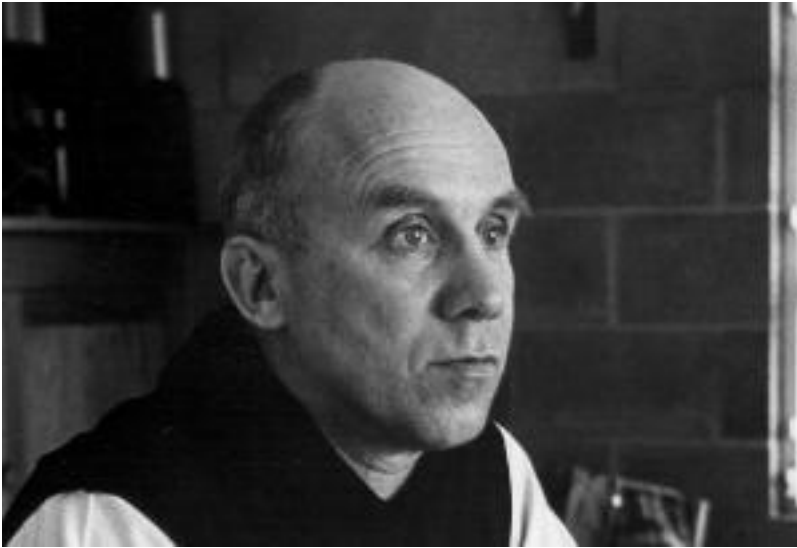
in all its glorious fullness. It is well laid out for visitors to walk alongside the Derry river, and I have been enjoying the magnificent Autumn colours that have been so fantastic throughout Ireland this year.

However, you cannot help but have a sense of sadness while walking through Tomnafinnoge. As a stone plaque at the entrance reminds visitors, it is just a small remaining fragment of the Coolattin Oak Woods which once covered thousands of acres of this part of Wicklow. Through the 19th and early 20th century the woods were carefully managed to produce excellent timber, which was used all over the

world, and this in turn generated employment and of course protected a great variety of wildlife. But from the 1950s onwards, the Woods were sold in piecemeal fashion, clear felled and destroyed. Only a small band of dedicated local volunteers, together with the Irish Georgian Society, managed to save Tomnafinnoge and other fragments from rapacious development.

What happened to Coolattin Oak Woods is a small version of what is happening to our planet. The UN Climate Change talks, COP 19, held in Poland were, once again, disappointing in their outcome. Governments proved themselves once again unwilling to take the actions needed to reduce carbon emissions: indeed it is clear that a number of governments no longer see Climate Change as an issue that they have to take seriously. So the initiative is back once again with NGOs and local groups of volunteers to put the environment back on the government agenda, by raising awareness and

encouraging local action. The Churches can be at the forefront of this, as they together have a network of local active people unparalleled by another group.



*The Irish Catholic to host talk by US-based Prof. Michael W. Higgins*

## **Thomas Merton Talk**

**‘Thomas Merton: A monk for all seasons’ will be the theme of a talk hosted by *The Irish Catholic* this month. Given by US-based Prof. Michael W. Higgins, who has written several books on Merton, the talk will explore the ongoing relevance of the spiritual master in the modern world.**

The talk will take place on Monday, January 13 at 7.30pm in the Avila Carmelite Centre, Donnybrook, Dublin 4. The cost is €5 per person and places are limited.

For booking contact Geraldine Kellett at The Irish Catholic, Bloomfield Avenue, Donnybrook, Dublin 4 on 01.687.4095 or [geraldine@irishcatholic.ie](mailto:geraldine@irishcatholic.ie)

## **Charities appeal for people to donate unwanted Christmas presents**

**Barnardos, Oxfam and Age Action Ireland are among the charities which have asked people to dig out any gifts which have been left lying under the Christmas tree which won't be used and to give them to charity shops.**

The Journal.ie - Many charities were badly hit by the fallout from the CRC scandal right before Christmas which led to a significant drop in donations.

One study found that around two-thirds of people typically receive an unwanted gift at Christmas, Oxfam said, most commonly clothes, beauty products, toiletries and jewellery. “No matter how small the donation, every little helps,” said Michael McIlwaine of Oxfam. “It takes just a moment to bag an unwanted item but it could change a life forever”.





*Charities have appealed for people to donate unwanted Christmas presents to their shops.*

Bernadette Harrington of Barnardos appealed to people to think about the gifts they've received which will not be put to use.

“Rather than smile and secretly hide them in the back of the wardrobe, why not give them to a worthwhile cause and bring a smile to a child's

face in the New Year,” she said.

Harrington said there has been a marked decrease in donations to Barnardos shops in recent years but a significant increase in the number of people coming into the shops looking for low cost clothing and household items.

## **St Patrick's Choristers RTE Broadcast**

The St Patrick's Cathedral boy choristers will broadcast morning service from the RTE studios on Sunday 12 January at 10.45 am under the direction of Mr Stuart Nicholson. The service will be led by the Rev Canon Mullen.

## **Sing Goodbye to Christmas at St Doulagh's**

**St Doulagh's Church, Malahide Road, Balgriffin, invite you to sing goodbye to Christmas at an evening of singing carols, songs and fun by candlelight on Tuesday January 8 at 8.00 pm.**

All are welcome. Music will be provided by 1st Coy. Boys' Brigade Brass. Admission is free. Donations towards the Church Restoration Fund and 1st Dublin Company Boys' Brigade will be welcome. Further information if required available from 087-6711547 or email to [stdoulaghs@yahoo.ie](mailto:stdoulaghs@yahoo.ie).

Bus No's 42 & 43 stop outside the Church. Parking available by kind permission in the Lower car park in St Doolagh's Pk opposite the church.

## Church Review Out Now

The first Church Review of 2014 was issued this weekend. The January edition of the Dublin and Glendalough diocesan magazine contains the usual mix of columns and reports with a few festive additions.

This month's cover story features the Institution of the Revd Norman McCausland as rector of Raheny and Coolock. Canon Patrick Comerford looks at the life of Irish born theologian, Fenton Hort.

There are reports and photographs from the official opening and dedication of the new sports and performance facility at Alexandra College, the Installation of the new canons at Christ Church Cathedral and the presentation of the cross left by women's ordination campaigner, Daphne Wormell, to the Bishop of Meath and Kildare. Also this month Archbishop Michael Jackson looks back at a busy year in the Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough.



## Continuing Ministerial Education

**From Tuesday to Thursday a Continuing Ministerial Education Conference will be held in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute.**

Among the speakers will be the Archbishop of Armagh, Dr Richard Clarke, the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Michael Jackson, and the Bishop of Down & Dromore, the Rt Revd Harold Miller. Students on the part time MTh course will begin a study weekend in the Theological Institute next Friday.



**GB NEWS follows**

## **New police guidance on insult law**

**Police officers will be told they are no longer able to arrest people just because others might find their words or behaviour “insulting”, in new guidance issued by the College of Policing.**

The Christian Institute - Last year the Government agreed to remove the word “insulting” from Section 5 of the Public Order Act after the amendment was voted in by the House of Lords in December 2012.

The important free speech reform, backed by The Christian Institute, is to become law on 1 February and will be known as Section 57 of the Crime and Courts Act.

“When the amendment comes into force”, the new College of Policing guidance states, “words or behaviour that are merely ‘insulting’, or the displaying of writing, signs or other visible representations which are merely ‘insulting’, within the hearing of someone likely to be caused harassment, alarm or distress, will no longer constitute a criminal offence under section 5(1).”

The campaign to change the law was spearheaded by the Reform Section 5 group, which united an unusual alliance including The Christian Institute, the National Secular Society, the Peter Tatchell Foundation, and other civil liberties groups concerned about free speech. More at -

<http://www.christian.org.uk/news/police-issue-new-guidance-on-reform-to-insult-l>

## **The sinister reason Guiding is being robbed of God**

**Peter Hitchens, Mailonline writes - But I can’t help noticing that youth movements have been hugely important in the political struggles of our age. The Russian Communists and the German National Socialists both banned the Scouts and Guides.**

And both Hitler Youth and Communist Pioneers had one thing very much in common – recruits were urged and even ordered to attack the Church. Pioneers jeered at priests in the street and even campaigned against Christmas trees.





Hitler Youths (whose meetings were held at the same time as church services) spied on priests and denounced them for the slightest criticism of the regime.

Hitler knew well what he was up to. To those many German adults who refused to follow him, he sneered: 'When an opponent declares "I will not come over to your side", I say calmly, "Your child belongs to us already . . . what are

you? You will pass on. Your descendants, however, now stand in the new camp. In a short time they will know nothing but this new community".'

Or, as the brainwashed Hitler Youth sings in the film Cabaret, 'tomorrow belongs to me'.

Parents who struggle to bring up children to love God and country know already how true this is, how their young come home from school stuffed with politically correct equality and diversity rubbish and ignorant of our history and tradition. Now the same process will affect the Guides.

Why should this happen? For those who think the Scouts and Guides are too patriotic or too religious, a Left-wing scout movement, the Woodcraft Folk, has long been available. I rather admire them for their independent-minded guts.

Long may the Woodcraft Folk flourish in our free, Christian country, but why should the Girl Guides copy them, and introduce this sickly little pledge of selfishness and squidgy loyalty to their 'community'?

You'll have to ask those who appointed Julia Bentley as the organisation's chief executive. Ms Bentley is a zealous sexual liberationist, condom



outreach worker, Blairite commissar and abortion apologist, so what did they expect?

<http://hitchensblog.mailonsunday.co.uk/2013/06/the-sinister-reason-theyre-robbing-the-guides-of-god.html>

## **Lib Dem MP decided to quit after attending Jesuit retreat**

**A Catholic MP has revealed that a month's retreat helped her in her decision to quit politics.**

Sarah Teather MP, told the Guardian that she decided to attend a Jesuit retreat while she struggled with her decision whether to continue as a Liberal Democrat MP.

Miss Teather said: "Sometimes you just have to shut up. This politician just needed to shut up and stop talking in order to make a decision."

Sarah Teather attended a retreat at Loyola Hall, a Jesuit centre just outside of Liverpool. While she was there she decided she would leave politics, partly because she did not agree with her party's stance on immigration.

Miss Teather said: "I don't hate politics and I didn't make a decision in despair. I made a careful, thought-through choice and I couldn't get that across. I felt very sad in case I'd in any way added to the disillusion that people felt about politics. I was really troubled by that."

Miss Teather wants to use her last 18 months in Parliament to highlight issues facing refugees.

## **First ordinariate monastery founded**

**The Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham's first monastery was founded on New Year's Day.**

On the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, the convent of the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Oscott Hill, Birmingham, was filled with priests and lay members of the ordinariate, local parishioners and friends, for the Mass at which the community of 10 Sisters was formally established as the ordinariate's first autonomous monastery.

The Sisters, formerly members of an Anglican Community in Wantage, Oxfordshire, professed their solemn vows, each placing her hands into those of the leader of the ordinariate, Mgr Keith Newton, who read the Decree of Erection, presided at the Mass and delivered the homily. The day was the first anniversary of the Sisters' reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

In his homily, Mgr Newton said that January 1 was an appropriate day to mark a new beginning, especially for a community under the maternal care of the Mother of God, who teaches us, he said, "uniquely, though simply and effectively, how to follow her son as his disciples".

Quoting Pope Paul VI's description of Our Lady as "the attentive virgin" whose certainty of faith flowed from her contemplative life, Mgr Newton said this was the vocation to which the Sisters had been called. "Nobody can explain its value in the world's terms but its power is immeasurable."

Mary, Mgr Newton said, taught us to ponder the divine mystery, to listen to God's voice deep within us. Addressing the Sisters directly, he went on: "For us, you will be the praying heart of the ordinariate".

Mgr Newton appointed Mother Winsome as the first Reverend Mother for an initial period of three years. Subsequent Reverend Mothers will be elected in accordance with the constitutions of the monastery.

Mother Winsome said: "For us the day was a mixture of great solemnity, but also of deep joy. We each professed our original vows separately, in the case of some of the Sisters, more than 50 years ago. For us to be able to renew our vows solemnly and publicly and to be able to share this profound moment, when we have shared such a unique spiritual journey over the last two years, felt a very special gift of God to each of us and to us corporately as Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary".

The Mass was followed by a reception for all in the Sisters' refectory.

## **Prayer for Today**

**Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, you know our necessities before we ask and our ignorance in asking: Have compassion on our weakness, and mercifully give us those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask; through the worthiness of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen**