

**Preaching taken seriously**  
**God's Cadets - Tonight's BBC TV**  
**documentary**  
**Violence is affecting more clergy**  
**Pope announces date of Holy Land visit**



*The Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross (left) and the pupils of St Mary's Church of Ireland National School, Carrigaline, Co Cork, listen as the rector, the Reverend Elaine Murray (right) explains and shows the difference in smell between frankincense and myrr*

## **Epiphany celebrated in Cork schools**

**Standardisation of the school year by the Department of Education and Skills has meant that, for the first time in living memory, Irish primary school children returned to school before 7th January in 2014.**

Traditionally school Christmas holidays didn't end until after the Feast of the

Epiphany (6th January).

In Cork, Cloyne and Ross, schools under the patronage of the Bishop, the Right Reverend Dr Paul Colton, were asked, therefore, to make a special effort to celebrate Epiphany on the first school day of 2014. Schools across the Diocese held special assemblies supported by local clergy, or attended the Epiphany celebrations in the local parish churches.

## **Renewal and revival theme**

**There will be a service in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast on Monday, 27 January 2014 at 8.00 p.m. on the theme of praying for the renewal and revival of the faith in this land.**

The speaker, Archdeacon David McClay has been rector of Willowfield Parish Church in East Belfast for over ten years. They have experienced great growth in that inner city parish in recent years. As a church they also have all sorts of community projects serving the people of that area. One of the latest was at Christmas time when they had a spectacular exhibition of Christmas trees telling the whole Nativity story. David McClay will share some of the lessons learnt about the growth of faith in a tough area of East Belfast.

Worship will be led by St John's Church Music Group from Ballyclare. As well as praying for our city and our land, personal prayer for healing and anointing with oil will be available.



## **Parish raises £850 for Scottish Cot Death Trust**

**Parishioners in Magheragall raised £850 for the Scottish Cot Death Trust at a Service of Nine Lessons and Carols on December 22.**

The Rector, the Rev Nicholas Dark, and the Select Vestry of the Connor parish, decided to give the parish the opportunity to support Scottish Cot Death Trust through a special collection at the service, commemorating a lovely little girl.

Isla Nancy Rose Brash, the daughter of Michelle Chambers and James Brash, died on August 16

2013. Isla was born on June 5 2012. Many Magheragall parishioners know Michelle well; she was a member of the congregation from birth until she moved to Scotland. Isla and her family last visited her grandparents

Lawrence and Carol Chambers in July and many parishioners remember Isla visiting the Church Hall with her family on the 12th. The news of her death in August was met with great sadness and heartfelt sympathy for her whole family.

Magharagall Parish responded by offering parishioners the opportunity to donate to the Scottish Cot Death Trust in memory of Isla. In Scotland every nine days a baby or child will die of cot death and the majority of their families will never know why they died. The Scottish Cot Death trust funds research,

supports bereaved families and educates the public and professionals about cot death.

## Preaching taken seriously

### **Preaching is taken seriously in St Patrick's and it is the only Church of Ireland cathedral which maintains the pattern of Sunday sermons at both the morning service and at Evensong.**

C of I correspondent Irish Times - In earlier days many churchmen had their sermons published not only to spread the word but also in hopes of promoting their careers. Sermons at important events such as the commemoration of the 1641 Rebellion and the commemoration of Charles I, King and Martyr, were often printed in pamphlet form and these have proved to be valuable historical resources. In St Patrick's in 1690 Dean William King preached before King William III at a special day of thanksgiving for the victory at the Battle of the Boyne, Dean Patrick Delany preached in 1720 to the undergraduates of Trinity College who regularly attended the services in St Patrick's, and Dean Jonathan Swift preached in 1726 on the anniversary of the execution of King Charles I. A rare unpublished sermon by Dean Thomas Lindsay, preaching in St Patrick's on the death of Queen Mary II in 1695, reveals that the cathedral was hung with black, perhaps the first occasion when such mourning was observed. In 1865 the sermons of both the Archbishop of Dublin, Richard Chenevix Trench, and the Bishop of Meath, Lord Plunket, preached at the re-opening of St Patrick's after the Guinness restoration, were published.

More recently two deans have published selections of their St Patrick's sermons. *Memoir in Sermon* by the late Dr Maurice Stewart was published in 2000 and in 2008 Dr Robert MacCarthy's *A Year of Sermons in St Patrick's* appeared.

Each year the annual 'Rotation of Residence', together with a list of the cathedral's officers, is printed (on St Patrick's blue paper, of course!) and posted and distributed. Each of the dignitaries (dean, precentor, chancellor and treasurer) is in residence for two separate weeks each year when they preach twice on the Sunday of their week of residence, and the same is the case for most of the 24 prebendaries. The Dean, by tradition preaches on Christmas Day and Easter Day and the Archbishop of Dublin, as Prebendary of Cualan, is listed to preach on Whit Sunday (8 June) and the 3rd Sunday of Advent (14 December).

## GB NEWS

### God's cadets - BBC explores being in the Salvation Army - tonight



**A documentary exploring the joys and hardships of cadets as they work towards becoming officers in The Salvation Army will air on the BBC this week.**

In order to gain the title of officer, members must give up their jobs,

enrol in two years of training, live in assigned housing on campus and work full time for The Army for an annual pay of just £7,500.

The documentary follows several cadets as they make this journey, bringing to light stories of personal calling, transformation and a desire to practically live out Jesus' commands.

Officers-in-training must sign a declaration in which they promise "to care for the poor, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, love the unlovable, and befriend those who have no friends". It is a key moment in their training, as it signifies their commitment to uphold The Salvation Army's values and make the saving of lost souls their primary motivation.

"Sign if it's where your personal passion intersects with the world's compelling need," cadets are told in the one hour thirty special, perfectly summing up the heart of The Salvation Army's message.

Beyond the uniforms and army structure, we see cadets chatting with street cleaners they've come to know by name, befriending homeless people and spending time in brothels, bringing compassion and a listening ear to women in the sex industry.

Jesus' command to look after those in need is lived out and met by people of faith who are responding to and motivated by a God-given calling.

"I just want people to get Jesus, to have the opportunity to meet this Jesus that I love," says one cadet.

The documentary does not paint an altogether glossy or perfect picture of life as a Salvationist, however. As we are given an intimate look into the lives of those families and individuals who have made the life-changing decision to train at William Booth College, the sacrifices they make are uncovered. First year recruit Darren has left a successful career as a baker to pursue his calling, while young married couple Cathy and Luke Johnson moved to William Booth with their two small children a year ago to begin the course.

The deep issues that cadets struggle with are sensitively unearthed, namely the reconciliation between faith and doubt. Each person interviewed admits to experiencing periods of questioning and unbelief, but the conclusion is made that doubt is, in fact, an essential element of an authentic, real faith.

"Some people say doubt is the opposite of faith, it's not. Doubt is a part of faith. That's honest," says Captain Steve Dufield, Course Tutor at William Booth.

Training Programme Director Major Malcolm Marton agrees: "People with doubts says to me that they are people who are open to exploring, understanding, to broadening their understanding."

The programme offers a fresh perspective on an organisation as known for its brass bands as for its Christian charity, and reveals the people behind the mission, who make big sacrifices to see the lost come to know and love God.

God's Cadets: Joining the Salvation Army will air on BBC Four on Tuesday 7 January at 9pm.



## **Gift Aid provides windfall for C of E**

**Donations to Church of England parishes have more than doubled over the past 30 years despite a fall in attendance of more than a quarter,**

**research by the charity publishing company Civil Society has found.**

Church Times - The organisation says that the increase is the result of organised campaigns promoting tax-efficient giving, such as Gift Aid; and says that £212 million of the additional £217 million given to churches was given in a tax-efficient way.

"The Churches pioneered the idea of regular weekly or monthly gifts – the practice goes back to biblical times 2000 years ago," said Ian Clark, a fellow of the Institute of Fundraising, who serves as a consultant to Civil Society.

"As wage and salary payments changed, they adapted as weekly envelopes were replaced by bank standing orders and direct debits. The tax reliefs provided by Gift Aid certainly motivated many more donors to switch from casual to committed giving, thus helping to both grow and stabilise the Church's income."

## **Clerical life - dog bites, attacks and beatings**

**Call for attacks on religious leaders to be made a hate crime as police records give glimpse of tide of everyday violence against priests and vicars from attacks with sticks and stones to being bitten by dogs and even people**



***Rev John Suddwarts who was stabbed to death in his vicarage in Thornbury last year.***

Telegraph - It is about as far removed from the traditional image of the English vicar as it is possible to imagine.

Records collected by police forces reveal a litany of attacks on priests and church ministers and give a rare glimpse of

the everyday risks taken by Britain's clergy.

The crimes, detailed in lists disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act, range from scores of low-level assaults, recorded almost routinely, to cases of clergy being stalked by obsessives, beaten in their own churches or bitten by dogs and even, on occasion, humans.

Responses from 25 police forces in England list around 200 attacks on clergy over the past five years.

But because of the way crimes are recorded they give only a snapshot of the threats and violence clergy face and could represent just the tip of an iceberg. More at -

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/10525676/Dog-bites-gang-attacks-and-beatings-in-church-all-in-the-life-a-21st-Century-vicar.html>

## **Don't fear Romanian and Bulgarian migrants, says Welsh church leader**

**Migrants have a positive, not negative impact on Wales, says a senior Welsh church leader, rebutting scaremongering about Romania and Bulgaria.**

The comments from the Rev Aled Edwards, chief executive of Cytûn (Churches Together in Wales), the official ecumenical body, came as restrictions on movement from these two Eastern European EU accession states ends today (1 January) amid virtual hysteria in some sections of the media.

Mr Edwards, who has worked extensively with asylum seekers and refugees in Wales, pointed out to Wales Online and the Western Mail that migrants had made an important contribution to Welsh life in a whole range of sectors.

He said: "I dread to think of a Wales without migrants. A number of areas would suffer. Academia is one such example, where there are a lot of students from other countries coming to Wales. Medicine is another. And, of course, the economy also benefits.

"There will, of course, be some issues around the Bulgarian and Romanian migration – but none of them are insurmountable," he said.

The churches and civic groups are seeking to work positively with local communities on accommodation, cultural and other matters involved in people movements and changing patterns of settlement.

The Cytûn CEO continued: “The real difficulty here is that the issue has become disproportionately political. That causes problems, particularly for migrants who come to this country with a view to work and make a contribution.

Concerning the fear and alarm whipped up by tabloid newspapers and some politicians, Mr Edwards added: “This xenophobia has to stop because the reality is, Wales has benefited hugely from migrant workers.”

New figures released by the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS), show that, after an initial surge, net migration from the EU8 (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) has decreased by almost two-thirds since 2007.

\* Cytûn - Churches Together in Wales: <http://www.cytun.org.uk/>

\* Rev Aled Edwards: <http://www.alededwards.com>

## Pope to visit Holy Land



**Pope Francis has announced the dates of his trip to the Holy Land in May.**

The Holy Father will visit Jerusalem, Bethlehem in the West Bank, and the Jordanian capital, Amman. 24 May to 26 May.

Francis made the announcement “in the footsteps of Jesus Christ” during his weekly Sunday blessing in St Peter’s Square yesterday.

The Pope was invited to visit the Holy Land by Israeli President Shimon Peres and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, and he will celebrate Mass at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, built on the site of the crucifixion.



On the 50th anniversary of Paul VI's historic meeting in Jerusalem with Patriarch Athenagoras I of Constantinople, Pope Francis said: "In the climate of joy typical of this Christmas period, I would like to announce that from 24 to 26 May, God willing, I will carry out a pilgrimage to the Holy Land."

## **Prayer for Today**

**Eternal God, in Christ you make yourself our guest. Amid all our cares and concerns make us attentive to your voice and alert to your presence, that we may prize your word above all else, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**