

CNI
CHURCH
NEWS
IRELAND

**14 pages of Irish and GB church news including -
Joint statement by Church leaders on Haas process
Tribute to Paul Goggan MP**

Shamed Cardinal urged to tell life story by former Irish President

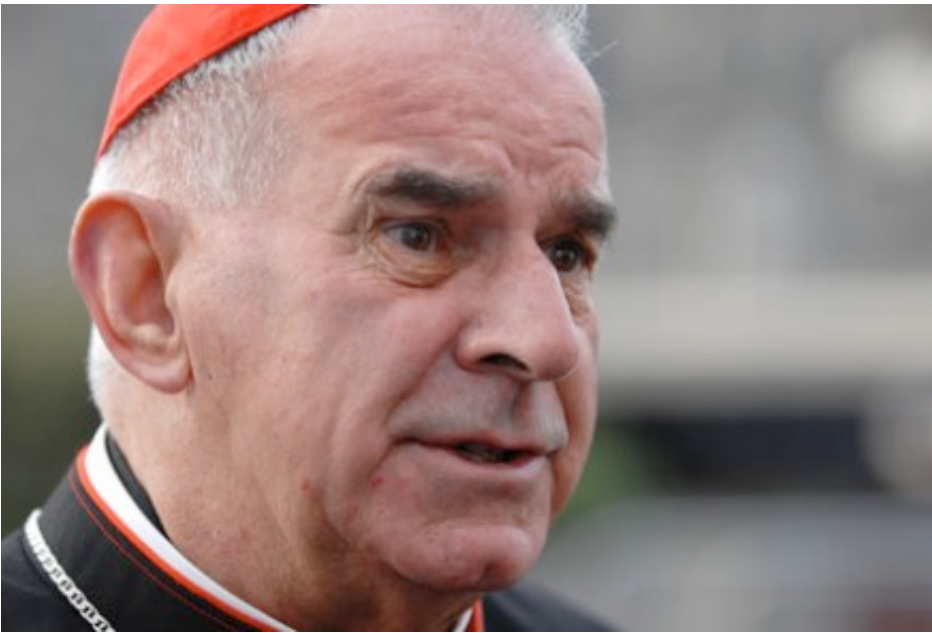
Cardinal Keith O'Brien has been urged to tell his life story to help gay people in all walks of life who have felt the need to pretend to be heterosexual.



The call came from former Irish President Mary McAleese, who said the Catholic Church had been in denial over homosexuality for decades and that it was "not so much the elephant in the room but a herd of elephants".

Alan Taylor in

Herald, Scotland - Speaking during a lecture at the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Mrs McAleese said: "I would have thought Cardinal Keith O'Brien, in telling the story of his life - if he was willing to do that - could have been of great assistance to gay people, not just in the Church but elsewhere, who felt over many, many years constrained to pretend to be heterosexual while at the same time acting a different life.



Mrs McAleese said that, like so many closet homosexuals, Keith O'Brien hoped to divert attention from himself by raising his voice "in the most homophobic way".

However this, she said, was a reflection of the

Vatican's attitude to gay people in general.

She said: "Things written by Benedict, for example, were completely contradictory to modern science and to modern understanding, and to the understanding of most Catholics nowadays in relation to homosexuality.

"Nowadays, it is not something that is perceived as something that is intrinsically disordered. Homosexual conduct is not seen as evil."

Mrs McAleese drew a -comparison with the Church's attitude to Jews. It took almost two millennia formally to revise the "Christ-killer" slander which had been repeated down the decades.

She said: "I don't like my Church's attitude to gay people. I don't like 'love the sinner, hate the sin'. If you are the so-called sinner, who likes to be called that? We also know that within the priesthood a very large number of priests are gay."

Mrs McAleese studied suicide among young Irish males, many of them gay Catholics who grew up being told their sexuality was "intrinsically disordered" and "evil".

When she took this research to the new papal nuncio in Dublin she was surprised by his response.

She said she was asked: "What do you want me to do? Do you want us to turn our back on tradition?" Her answer was: "Yes, if it's wrong."

The views of Mrs McAleese were expressed before recent events surrounding Father Matthew Despard, a priest who broke ranks and spoke publicly about an alleged culture of -homosexual bullying in the Church.

This culminated on Sunday when parishioners at John Ogilvie Roman Catholic Church in High Blantyre were handed letters from Bishop Joseph Toal denouncing Father Despard, their priest until he was suspended by the Church.

Father Despard was condemned by Bishop Toal for questioning his authority and instructions. While some parishioners accepted the criticism of Father Despard, many were highly critical of the whole idea of a pulpit denunciation and felt the issues raised should not be brushed under the carpet.

All of this controversy flowed from the resignation of Cardinal Keith O'Brien after he admitted behaving inappropriately towards young priests in his charge.

A spokesman for the Catholic Church said the intervention by Bishop Toal was intended to urge everyone to work together to heal past wounds. The church made no specific comment Mrs McAleese's intervention.

New Cork nursing director

St Luke's Home - an ecumenical church-based charity which has cared for the elderly as well as dementia and Alzheimer's sufferers in Cork since 1872 - has started the new year by welcoming a new Director of Nursing to its management team.

Neil Mackay was welcomed to his new post by the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Dr Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, and also Mr David O'Brien, CEO of

January.St Luke's. The new Director of Nursing started his work at the Home on 6th January.

Neil Mackay qualified as a Registered General Nurse in the early 1990's and has worked as a staff nurse in the UK and Ireland, predominantly in medical and elderly nursing. His career has also encompassed working at CNM2 level, followed by 7 years as an Assistant Director of Nursing in Cork University Hospital in varied roles managing inpatient and outpatient services with time also spent establishing the clinical governance service and working in the risk management quality department. Since 2008 he has fulfilled the role of Director of Nursing - St. Finbarr's Hospital, Cork which comprises of a

large elderly residential nursing facility, rehabilitation inpatient hospital facility for persons over 65 years and an outpatient day hospital service.

Neil brings over 12 years senior nurse management experience in both elderly residential and acute hospital experience, plus in depth experience of managing all aspects of the largest dedicated elderly rehabilitation hospital and residential service in Cork and Kerry ensuring that the older adult is at the centre of all aspects of the care provided. He is married with 2 boys and a Bassett Hound! In addition, Neil is a member of Eagle Athletic Club which is a running club based in Cork city. He enjoys running distance races, running about 4 marathons per year; and he has competed in races of all distances including 2 ultra-marathons also.

Over the last 130 years St Luke's has built a strong and well-respected reputation, locally, nationally and internationally, as a leading provider of residential care and support services to older people in the Cork region. The charity's ethos through its residential programme, nurtured by the Christian tradition of love and care, is to create a home-like environment where all residents feel safe, secure and supported. As well as the residential care facility catering for 128 residents, there is a day-care centre and the recently opened St Luke's Home Education Centre as part of the charity's outreach programme. St Luke's employs approximately 280 people in the Cork area.



I-r Neil Mackay (Director of Nursing, St Luke's Home, Cork) is welcomed by the Bishop of Cork, Dr Paul Colton (Chairman of the Board of Directors) and Mr David O'Brien, CEO of St Luke's. Photo: Gerard McCarthy.

Church leaders' statement on Haas proposals

A joint statement from the leaders of the Roman Catholic, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches together with the Irish Council of Churches applauds the 'strenuous and sincere efforts put in by all involved in seeking to find solutions to some of the most contentious issues we face'.

The full statement - As Church leaders we encourage politicians to sustain the momentum and energy generated by the talks of the Panel of Parties in the Northern Ireland Executive, chaired and facilitated by Dr Richard Haass and his team. Significant work has been completed in recent months and we acknowledge the strenuous and sincere efforts put in by all involved in seeking to find solutions to some of the most contentious issues we face. This is an important time for our society; the momentum for building peace should not be lost. We are aware of the focus and effort that the forthcoming elections will require of our politicians but encourage all within the Executive to keep going with the work that has begun so that an acceptable process may be developed.

We firmly believe that a peaceful and reconciled society is possible. Responsibility for building peace and the development of mutual respect and tolerance in our society does not lie with our political leaders alone, but is shared by every individual. As Christians we emphasise the value of building trust, in a spirit of generosity and forgiveness. We encourage every member of our community, church and parishes to be instruments of reconciliation and peace-building. The Christian call to reconciliation, inspired by the example and sacrifice of Christ, is one that calls us to reach out to others in a spirit of understanding, seeking to be sensitive to their concerns and recognising our need for one another.

We appreciate that the issues addressed in the Haass process are profoundly challenging. While recognising the significance many in our community attribute to issues of culture and identity, we affirm that for all Christians their primary loyalty is to the Lord Jesus Christ and his Kingdom. We continue to offer support to the many who carry deep and genuine hurts from the past and commit ourselves to continually strive together to address issues arising from the need to build a peaceful and reconciled society. We encourage all to do likewise. The deadline for the Haass negotiations may have passed but the responsibility to work for the common good remains.

Cardinal Seán Brady, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh
Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh
Rt Rev Dr Rob Craig, Presbyterian Moderator
Rev Dr Heather Morris, Methodist President
Rev Fr Godfrey O'Donnell, President of the Irish Council of Churches

Working on Faith and Gender: The Quest Continues...

Are you a man? or a woman? are you interested in exploring gender and faith? The Faith and Gender Cluster Group of Contemporary Christianity considers the next step of the journey.

After a couple of exciting opening sessions, the journey continues with a planning session to devise a retreat day and also to continue to think together about what God is saying, our own experiences and hopes for the future.

Friday 10 January at 6:06pm (timed to avoid parking charges!) in University of Ulster, Belfast Campus
(in room to left just past the welcome desk in the lobby)
and also to continue to think together about what God is saying, our own experiences and hopes for the future.

Remembering 1916

Contemporary Christianity's 2014 series of In Conversation With ... events will focus on Faith and History.

In Conversation With ... Phillip Orr will be held on Tuesday 21 January, 7:30pm in Contemporary Christianity office, 3rd Floor, 21 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast.

In 2016, there will be centenaries for the Somme and for the Easter Rising. How will these two events from deep in our collective past be remembered in just over two years time and what could or should the church be doing in to contribute to process?

Women in Politics

A NI21 Women in Politics event is being held at Queen's University Belfast in the Canada Room February 19th at 6:00pm.

The event will be structured as a panel discussion between 5 different panelists:

Tina McKenzie; NI21 Party Chair and Ceo to Staffline Belfast,
Dr. Heather Johnson; World Politics professor at Queen's University,
Anna Lo; Alliance Party MLA and
Katie Matthews; QUB Student Councillor and Young Women's Officer in the
NI21 society.
Cllr Dr. John Barry, QUB and Green Party

The panel discussion will address three questions:

- 1) Why do you think women are not getting involved in politics in NI?
- 2) Why is it important that women do get involved in politics in NI?
- 3) How do we motivate women to get more involved in politics in NI?

Cathedral Evensong to recall a stalwart

In St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin on 26th January at 3:15 Evensong featuring the "St Patrick's Service" by David Brigg - a commission honouring the late Arthur W. West's work and witness. All welcome.

This year's CMS Project

On 28 January (Belfast) and 29 January (Dublin), CMS Ireland will launch 'God's Big Family', its Annual Project for 2014.

The CMS Ireland Annual Project is a specially produced resource for Sunday schools and youth groups.

It provides original, creative material to help children and young people explore the biblical message of mission and play their part in global mission. Material is provided for at least four sessions with four different age groups.

God's Big Family



CMS Ireland Annual Project 2014

Normally, each project focuses on a particular country and highlights the work of just one of CMS Ireland's Global Partners. This year, however, as part of CMS Ireland's 200th Anniversary, the project celebrates the diversity of life, worship and mission in nine different countries. The 2014 resource is designed to help children and young people discover something of what it means to be part of the global church – God's Big Family. The fundraising

element of the project seeks to provide 'wheels' (bicycles, motorbikes or wheelchairs) for all 19 of CMS Ireland's Global Partners.

The Belfast launch of the project takes place on Tuesday 28 January, at 7.30 pm, in St Mark's, Dundela.

Following the launches in Belfast and Dublin, the CMS Ireland staff will host six Annual Project Pit Stops, including an event in Seapatricks Parish Halls, Banbridge on Wednesday 5 February. These informal events offer an opportunity for people to drop-in (any time between 8.00 pm and 9.30 pm) to look at the material, chat with staff, pick up project packs and enjoy a cuppa.

For more information on the Annual Project and the Pit Stops or to order your resources, visit CMS Ireland's website www.cmsireland.org, or contact their Belfast office.

Second Retreat in Dublin City

Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, will be the venue for *Retreat in the City* which takes place from February 21 to 23. Now in its second year the retreat is designed to help participants find peace in the midst of the busyness of the city centre.

Set in the historic surroundings of the cathedral, the retreat aims to teach those present how to create space for peace and to connect with God which will help far beyond the time of the weekend retreat itself. Sessions will teach a practice which can be taken into busy daily lives which are full of noise and mayhem.

The retreat will be led by Sue Grier of Immanuel Christian Retreat Centre in Ramelton, Donegal. Sue has a wide experience in Christian spirituality and will be leading sessions on St Bonaventure's **The Tree of Life**.

The retreat is non residential and the cost of €85 includes retreat sessions and lunch on Saturday and Sunday. For those traveling from outside Dublin, there are a number of reasonably priced hotels in the area.

Launch of Lent Bible studies

For the past three years the Biblical Association for the Church of Ireland (BACI) has provided a Lenten Bible Study Resource linked to the Anglican Communion's 'Bible in the Life of the Church Project' – on Creation, Economic Justice and Gender Justice respectively.

This year, that project being completed, BACI has chosen the subject 'Church and Culture'; and these studies have been developed with Revd Dr Ron Elsdon from a series he designed for Connor diocese. The course will be

launched in Christ Church Cathedral Dublin at 6pm on Thursday January 16th and in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast on Monday January 20th at 6pm. The Archbishop of Armagh will speak at the Belfast launch, and the Archbishop of Dublin hopes to be available to speak at the Dublin launch. (The two Archbishops are the patrons of BACI – the Biblical Association for the Church of Ireland).

Printed copies can be made available at a modest cost and e-copies will also be downloadable without charge from the BACI website www.bibliahibernica.wordpress.com from mid January. (This link was not operating as CNI Bulletin was being prepared).

GB NEWS

Death of “humane, wise and loyal” MP - Paul Goggins

Catholic Labour MP Paul Goggins has died in hospital aged 60, just over a week after he collapsed while going for a run. Labour leader, Ed Miliband said the party had lost “one of its most dignified, humane, wise and loyal MPs”.

Mr Goggins, MP for Wythenshawe and Sale East, Greater Manchester, was a former Northern Ireland and Home Office minister and had been a Member of Parliament since 1997.

He was educated at St Bede's College and Ushaw College and, before entering parliament, was director of the Church Action on Poverty campaign.

Mr Goggins had been out jogging with his son when he collapsed on on December 30. He was admitted to Salford Royal Hospital with a suspected brain haemorrhage.

In a statement released this morning, his wife, Wynn, and three grown-up children, Matthew, Theresa and Dominic, said: “Last night Paul Goggins, our dear dad and husband, died in hospital in Salford with us by his side. We are completely heartbroken. He had been very ill since collapsing last week. The way in which he has been cared for at Salford Royal has been such a comfort to us and we can't thank the staff enough for this.

“We have been overwhelmed by the support and good wishes we have received from so many people – a real sign of love and a reflection of the sort of person Paul/Dad was.”

In a statement, Ed Miliband said: "The Labour Party has lost one of its most dignified, humane, wise and loyal MPs. People from all sides of the House of Commons had the greatest affection, admiration, and genuine respect for Paul. We are deeply saddened by his passing.

"Paul was a man of deep faith whose commitment and strong values shone through everything he did. As a social worker, councillor, MP and Minister, attending to the needs of the most disadvantaged was always at the core of his particularly thoughtful and dedicated service. He was held in great affection by the people of Northern Ireland for his real understanding of the challenges they faced in the aftermath of the Good Friday Agreement.

"I know Paul's family have been profoundly moved by the outpouring of support, love and affection they have received since Paul fell ill last week. The Labour Party has lost one of its very best and one of its own. We mourn him deeply."

Experience from behind the dog collar

Young people are being given a taste of life behind the dog collar with the launch of the Church of England Ministry Experience Scheme (CEMES), run by the Ministry Division.

The scheme, which began with a pilot phase (see case studies below) this September in four dioceses, is a one year programme of theological teaching, practical experience and personal development for young people aged 18-30 who are considering future ministry in the church. The scheme was set up to encourage more young people to consider being involved in ministry and focus on the nine criteria used in the selection of clergy.

The scheme is currently being run in the dioceses of Sodor and Man, Newcastle, Peterborough and the Stepney area of London. Ministry Division are working with 15 more dioceses interested in the scheme, with a view to provide a CEMES programme in every diocese.

The Bishop of Sheffield, Rt Revd Steven Croft, who is Chair of Ministry Division said: "The Church of England has a fresh vision and commitment to see people in their teens and twenties exploring God's call to ministry. The Ministry Experience scheme will help many young people explore that call in the years to come"

Church of Scotland minister loses role as chaplain of Glasgow school after calling homosexuality a 'disorder'



The Rev Donald MacInnes made the comments on a Facebook page seen by some parents of pupils at the Glasgow Gaelic School

Head teacher removes minister from post at Glasgow Gaelic School after Facebook comments

A Church of Scotland minister has been removed from his post as chaplain of a Gaelic school after describing homosexuality as a "perversion" and a "disorder".

The Rev Donald MacInnes made the comments on a Facebook page seen by some parents of pupils at the Glasgow Gaelic School.

They complained to the city council over the remarks, with one describing them as "absolutely disgraceful".

Mr MacInnes made the comments while criticising the Scottish Government's plans to legalise same-sex marriage.

He said: "The overwhelming support of our Scottish politicians in creating same-sex marriage is very disappointing.

"Many of us, myself included, agreed that the creation of civil partnerships was necessary so that individuals suffering from this disorder were not legally penalised in any way because of their sexuality.

"We can now expect to see the school curriculum changed to the end that our children will be taught this perversion as if it were a good thing."

One parent said she did not want her children exposed to prejudice, while another said the comments were disgraceful, adding: "It is not a disorder, you cannot choose your sexuality."

A spokesman for Glasgow City Council said that while the minister was entitled to his opinions, action had been taken because his views "were not in keeping with the ethos of the school", and the council had a duty of care to the pupils.

She added: "The man is no longer the chaplain at the school and this decision was taken by the head teacher as soon as we received the complaints from parents and reviewed the situation.

"The school did receive complaints from some parents about the inappropriate comments made and a decision was taken to review the religious observance at the school."

The school, near Charing Cross, provides Gaelic education for pre-school, primary and secondary pupils.

Donald Brown, chair of the parent council for the school, said the remarks were not in line with its stance on equality.

Mr MacInnes, the minister of Gairbraid Church in Maryhill, Glasgow, is originally from the Isle of Lewis. He refused to comment on the matter.

A spokesman for the Church of Scotland said it respected the right of head teachers to appoint the chaplain of their choice, adding: "We hope that this right will continue to be exercised with due regard to freedom of religious expression in a non-inflammatory way."

He said the church was sorry the Rev MacInnes was no longer the chaplain, and also reiterated the Kirk's view that homophobia was "sinful".

Belief in devil dropping fast - poll reveals

The number of people in the UK who believe in the devil has dropped dramatically, a poll has found.

BBC News - A survey by YouGov found that although a third of the public says they are Church of England goers, only 29% of them believe in the devil.

It comes as 400 Church of England parishes begin trialling alternative child Baptism services without the words "devil" or "sin".

Peter Kellner, YouGov president, told [BBC Radio 5 live's Breakfast](#): "Perhaps the Church is bringing their practice into line with their own community."

Bishop critiques official denial of food poverty in Britain
The Anglican Bishop of Southwark has criticised government ministers who refuse to recognise food poverty and meet with those who set up foodbanks.

The comments in the Rt Rev Christopher Chessun's Christmas sermon at Southwark Cathedral, though carefully non-partisan in party political terms, nevertheless put Work and Pensions Secretary Iain Duncan Smith and his colleagues under pressure.

Government supporters mocked stories of hardship and poverty in a recent parliamentary debate on foodbanks.

Leading government representatives like Lord Freud and Employment Minister Esther McVey have suggested that they are a 'lifestyle choice' rather than testimony to the reality of deprivation and the impact of swingeing cuts and welfare changes.

The Bishop of Southwark, whose diocese covers south London and a large swathe of east Surrey, offered a very different commentary on the reality he meets in his pastoral role.

He declared: "In our own land instead of the Big Society we have in this city alone thousands of people who cannot afford to feed themselves.

"In this – one of the richest cities ever to have existed – there are people who go to bed tonight hungry.

"In the past few weeks I have been visiting some of the many foodbanks that exist across London. These impressive works of social care and relief are often run from local churches and resourced by Christian people and others, all working together with a wonderful spirit of goodwill.

"The fact they are needed at all is a terrible thing. And more alarming still is that the great trend they have all seen this year is a huge leap in the number of clients who are in full-time employment.

"There are people who once the rent is paid, and basic utilities settled like electricity water and gas, simply do not have enough money left to feed themselves.

"Is it any wonder that the payday loan companies, which seem to be little different from the loan-sharks of old, thrive in these conditions?

"So in the South London I see and know and love, it is an absolute scandal that people go hungry.

"These are often good, hard working honest people. They are not playing the system; rather, they despair of what tomorrow might bring.

"Poverty is growing in this city in ways not seen since Victorian times. I continue to find it astonishing that, despite the fact that food banks are now the fastest growing third sector social-care agency, many in positions of power and leadership refuse to visit them, acknowledge them or meet with those who lead or co-ordinate them."

The Bishop of Southwark also contrasted the rise in food poverty and homelessness with the burgeoning profits of many large companies.

"It seems to me that there is something terribly wrong with the balance of our society. Undoubtedly a healthy successful economy is a good thing. But I wonder if we have lost sight of what health and success looks like.

"The greed that stalks the city, the individualism and the selfishness that ignores the plight of those alongside whom we live is completely challenged by the child born in Bethlehem," said the Bishop of Southwark.

Prayer for Today

**God of the living,
through baptism we pass from the shadow of death
to the light of the resurrection.
Remain with us and give us hope
that, rejoicing in the gift of the Spirit
who gives life to our mortal flesh,
we may be clothed with the garment of immortality,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

