



North Belfast teenagers to March for Peace tonight

Over 400 teenagers from local post primary schools will take to the streets of North Belfast tonight Friday December 11, for a cross community Christmas Peace Walk.

Young people from seven local schools will walk side by side in their uniforms in a visual display of hope as their community moves into 2016.

Rev Stephen Thompson, Joanmount Methodist Minister and one of the 10 North Belfast clergy taking part on the walk said:

“Over many years sections of North Belfast have been the focus of community unease at times spilling unto our streets. Just below the turbulent waves there exists a calmer sense of community cohesion and commonality that often fails to reach media attention. Local clergy hope the walk will represent a growing sense of a hunger for a co-existence that celebrates diversity without diminishing inclusiveness”.

St Patrick’s College is one of the schools taking part. Head Boy Michael McNicholl said:

“Young people are eager to become involved with events which are positive and will help to break down barriers. We want to play our part in building a better more peaceful future for all.”

The walkers, who will be accompanied by local clergy and school staff, will assemble at Holy Family Parish Centre (120 Cavehill Road) at 9.30am and make their way along the Cavehill, Westland and Oldpark Road before finishing in Boys' Model School on Ballysillan Road where they will enjoy some light refreshments. The estimated time of arrival at the Boys Model School is 10.30am.

Derry’s Catholic Jubilee Year of mercy will begin in C of I church

The Bishop of Derry will begin the Catholic Church’s Year of Mercy by attending a service in



Dr. Donal McKeown

the nearby Protestant Church this Sunday morning.

Derry Journal - Dr. Donal McKeown will join the congregation in the Church of Ireland's Christ Church at 11 a.m. for the start of what is believed to be a unique ceremony which will culminate in the opening of the Holy Door at nearby St Eugene's Cathedral.

It is believed that it will be the only ceremony of its kind which will begin in a church belonging to another Christian denomination.

The Derry Bishop said that Pope Francis's declaration that the next twelve months should be a year of Mercy was part of the pontiff's desire to reach out to people in pain and distress.

"There is so much fear, conflict, anger and hurt," he told the 'Journal.' "In Ireland and in Derry we want to get out the message that God is a God of compassion. It's a chance for us in church to experience the mercy of God. A way to see if we can help people who are in pain to know some sort of healing in their lives."

Bishop McKeown says he's looking forward to the beginning of the Year of Mercy on Sunday.

"We will begin with the service at the Church of Ireland Church," he said. "We will then begin our pilgrimage of mercy to St. Eugene's cathedral.

"Pilgrimage will form an important part of our year of Mercy. Rome, Lourdes and Lough Derg, but also a series of local pilgrimages. Maybe a pilgrimage to a Mass rock, or walk to Lough Derg, before we complete the three day pilgrimage there. We are thinking about having a card which can be stamped when someone completes a pilgrimage."

Bishop McKeown also revealed that the sacrament of reconciliation will be available on the Saturday before Christmas.

“In Derry, Buncrana, Omagh and Maghera we will be holding confessions all day,” he said.

He stressed that these would not be quickie confessions but a time when people can speak one on one to a priest.

“There are people who want the time for reflection and we want to make that opportunity available,” he said. “People want time, almost therapeutically, to name things that are bugging their lives. Our faith encourages us to go on that inward journey. We also want to work with priests to ensure that in confession they are compassionate and know how to deal with people who are coming in with serious issues. “

Welcoming Bishop McKeown to Christ Church Archdeacon Robert Miller said: “It is a great honour for the congregation of Christ Church to have been included in the ceremony to open the Holy Door in our neighbouring church, St Eugene’s Cathedral. The friendship between our two churches has been growing and deepening in recent years and Sunday’s unique occasion –

the only ceremony of its kind we are aware of to begin in another Christian denomination's Church – is a further sign of that developing relationship. I wish St Eugene's every success during the Year of Mercy and beyond. Everyone is welcome to join the Churches in this unique celebration. ""

Dogs Take Centre Stage at Peata Cathedral Carol Service

Joyful barks joined the beautiful voices of the girl choristers of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin on Tuesday evening at the annual Peata Carol Service. More than 100 dogs, most of them therapy dogs, their owners and many people who benefit from visits from Peata volunteers attended the service which was led by the Dean, the Very Revd Dermot Dunne, with the Revd Abigail Sines.

Peata is a voluntary organisation which provides a pet therapy service to caring institutions. Its visiting scheme involves approved volunteers and their dogs who generally pay weekly visits.

Welcoming the congregation, Dean Dunne said that the dogs were the star attractions and



Dean Dermot Dunne delivers the pet blessing.

encouraged everyone to sing or bark along to the well known carols. He also paid tribute to the Peata dog owners who gave of their time so that others could gain comfort from interacting with their pets. “God’s plan is not just for human beings but for the whole of creation,” he said.

During the service all the dogs came forward to the screen for a pet blessing.

Community Christmas Tree Festival in St Aidan’s Belfast

A Community Christmas Tree Festival will run from December 14-19 in St Aidan’s Parish Church, Blythe Street, Belfast.

This will be launched at a United Carol Service for all the family will be held in the church on Sunday September 13 at 6pm. The service has been organised by local churches.

Opening times for the Christmas Tree Festival are Monday to Friday 2pm-4pm and 7pm-9pm, and Saturday 12-2pm.

Admission is free and refreshments will be available.



Lisburn prepares for relentless prayer

During Lent 2016, churches across the city of Lisburn will be joining to pray relentlessly for 40 days and 40 nights.

They have produced a [video](#), narrated by Lisburn Cathedral Vicar the Rev Simon Genoe, highlighting what the churches say is going to be



At a service on December 6 a prayer chain was created to pray for Lisburn City.

an amazing time of unified prayer as the city approached celebrating Easter.

“We believe this is going to be an initiative that sees Lisburn changed dramatically, because we believe that when the people of God cry out for the presence of God then transformation is inevitable!” said Simon.

You can follow Relentless on [Facebook](#).

Bikes from Down to help Sudanese clergy

The Down and Dromore Council for Mission has purchased 15 bicycles for our link Diocese of Maridi in South Sudan. They replace bicycles lost in the last bout of fighting in the area. Most pastors do not live in their parishes and without other means of transport have to travel long distances on foot on rough tracks through the bush. A simple bicycle can transform their ministry.

It has been a difficult year, with sporadic violence and unrest in Maridi town and lives lost in the tragic explosion of a petrol tanker in September. Bishop Justin sent the following message: “The bicycles were a real encouragement to the pastors who lost their properties during the violence in Maridi. Many thanks for the support. +Justin Badi.”

Catholic bishops concern for school autonomy

The Catholic bishops of Ireland have issued the following statement :

“Faith schools exist because many parents wish to have their children educated in accordance with their religious convictions. If the ethos of faith schools is undermined then the rights of such parents are compromised. The Bishops’ Council for Education supports the need to update and revise the 165 rules contained in *Rules for National Schools*. However the two rules (68 and 69) which deal with religious education, and referenced by the Minister for Education & Skills Jan O’Sullivan, should not be dealt with in isolation.

“The ethos of faith schools is given expression in multiple ways. These include their programme in religious education and their admissions policies. It is not the role of the Minister to determine or interfere with the ethos of faith schools. Legal advice available to the Department of Education & Skills confirms this. In our view the autonomy of schools, with regard to religious education and admissions policies, should be enhanced rather than weakened.

“Religious education plays a key role in all faith schools. In Catholic schools religious education is based on a holistic vision of the human person with a clear respect for people of different faiths

or of none. This is expressed in a commitment to learning about faiths and engaging in interreligious dialogue in age appropriate ways.

“Given the current political and social situation in Europe, any rational analysis would suggest that religious education, as part of the school curriculum, is more important now than ever before. Bishops, in their role as patrons of Catholic schools, would welcome dialogue with the Department of Education & Skills on this matter.”

New home for Lambeth Palace's priceless historic library planned

Proposals to construct a new library at Lambeth Palace are being drawn up. The Church Commissioners for England have appointed husband and wife architects Claire and Sandy Wright to draw up plans for a new library to house one of the world's most important collections of historic religious documents and artwork, second only to the Vatican in size and importance.

The couple's firm, Wright and Wright, will work with the Commissioners to develop and cost their proposals over the next few months. They were



The Lambeth Palace Library contains historic manuscripts and documents dating back to the ninth century

chosen from a long list of 40 architects' practices and a shortlist of 10 who were asked to submit bids.

“This wasn’t a design competition – it was more about picking the architects we felt most confident in to deliver the vision,” the Commissioners’ director of libraries, archives and information services, Declan Kelly, said. “There is a lot of work between us and the architect over the next year to produce a design that will then

go back to the board of trustees for final approval.”

The [Lambeth Palace Library](#) currently holds around 200,000 printed books, with more than 30,000 from before 1700, more than 5,000 manuscripts, 600 of which are medieval, and records of past Archbishops of Canterbury. Its earliest records date from the ninth century.

Reports say that the new Library will be the first building constructed in the grounds of Lambeth Palace in 180 years. In the year 2000 a courtyard was glazed to create The Atrium. Linking the main palace building to the chapel, this area is now used for receptions and informal gatherings.

The library’s collection is currently spread over numerous buildings and it is difficult to maintain the necessary temperature and humidity conditions to ensure their preservation. The new building will enable the librarians and custodians to preserve the priceless collection of historic documents in the right conditions.

It will be designed as a “zero carbon building” that will “fit in with the historic landscape which includes some grade I listed buildings,” Kelly

said. To ensure that the building relates well with the Lambeth Palace gardens, Wright and Wright have teamed up with Chelsea Flower Show Gold Medal winner Dan Pearson Studio as they develop their plans.

“We look forward to working with the Church of England to develop a dynamic design to house a historic collection at Lambeth Palace so that it can be preserved and viewed by more people in the future,” Wright & Wright Architects’ partner Clare Wright said.

Media digest

Minister has no role in faith schools' ethos - bishops

[RTE.ie](http://www.rte.ie)

Ireland's Catholic bishops have said that the two rules dealing with **religious** ... to the **news** that Minister for Education Jan O'Sullivan wants to delete Rule 68, ... Ms O'Sullivan questioned whether 30 minutes daily on **religion** was ...

<http://www.rte.ie/news/2015/1209/752248-rule-68-religion-schools/>

Almost half of the population would not choose a Christian school for their child

[BreakingNews.ie](http://www.breakingnews.ie)

“At present only 6% of schools at primary level in **Ireland** are not **Christian** so ... “The other findings are that eight out of 10 people believe that the **Irish** ...

<http://www.breakingnews.ie/ireland/almost-half-of-the-population-would-not-choose-a-christian-school-for-their-child-710614.html>

Irish Schools—Out of Sync With a Modern, Multicultural Society?

Wall Street Journal (blog)

As a Hindu, Eva is not baptized, and in **Ireland**, where the majority of publicly-funded schools are run by the Catholic **Church**, that meant her ...

<http://blogs.wsj.com/expat/2015/12/10/irish-schools-out-of-sync-with-a-modern-multicultural-society/>

Muslims in Ireland: Past and Present, Reviewed

Dublin Inquirer

He joined the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language, married an “Englishwoman”, and had his son Arthur baptised at the **Church of Ireland** ...

<http://dublininquirer.com/2015/12/09/muslims-in-ireland-past-and-present-reviewed/>

Spectator

‘The tide is turning in this country:’ Michael Gove interviews the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby.

<https://new.spectator.co.uk/2015/12/the-tide-is-turning-in-this-country-justin-welby-interviewed/>

BBC/FT/Mail/Mirror/Guard

Reports on comments from the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby saying it is a tragedy that people are still going hungry in the UK. He was speaking in support of the Feeding Britain report being launched today, which says that armies of people in the UK are still going hungry and calls on the Government to tackle the issue. The report, from the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Hunger and Food Poverty, also proposes a sugar tax to fund food projects during school holidays.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-35057721>

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/e1cdcc08-9e7d-11e5-b45d-4812f209f861.html?ftcamp=published_links%2Frss%2Fworld_uk_politics%2Ffeed%2F%2Fproduct#axzz3ttlSkJj8

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-3353635/David-Cameron-urged-turn-energies-dealing-hunger-UK.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/labour-mp-says-david-cameron-6985739>

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/dec/10/justin-welby-hunger-tragedy-welfare-reform-blame-poverty>

Mail

Report that the Feeding Britain report shows that demand for foodbanks is levelling off. Includes ref to support by Archbishop of Canterbury for the report.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3353520/Is-food-bank-boom-demand-finally-eases.html>

Times

Report that the Church of England has accused cinema chains of hypocrisy for showing a seven-minute animation about Hinduism despite banning an advert featuring the Lord's Prayer.

Includes comment from Rev Arun Arora, Director of Communications for the Archbishops' Council.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/arts/article4636839.ec>

Mail

Report that police believe they have smashed a network encouraging people to support Islamic State terrorists as they infiltrated the suspected cell in Luton, meeting in front rooms and an Anglican church hall.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3353638/Cell-called-jihad-Luton-church-hall-Police->

[believe-smashed-network-encouraged-people-support-ISIS.html#ixzz3ttlwtaDf](#)

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