



CNI



White Park Bay is the setting for a retreat for Connor Youth Leaders - see report this issue

Latvian resources for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed from the 18th to the 25th January – the octave of St. Peter and St. Paul. However, some areas observe it at Pentecost or some other time.

The 2016 material based around the verses 1 Peter 2:9–10 was prepared for worldwide use by the Christians of Latvia, and adapted by the Britain and Ireland writers group. Peter's first letter is an encouragement to the newly baptised to live holy lives and to answer the calling shared by all the baptised to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord.

Today, Latvia is a crossroads where Roman Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox regions meet. Because of this unique location, it is home to Christians of many different traditions, but no single one of them is dominant. Gathered together by the Archbishop of Rīga, members of a variety of church communities and projects in Latvia were asked to reflect on the chosen theme and the experience of their work.

The main service is inspired by the verses from Peter's letter and Jesus' metaphors of salt and light which are important cultural themes for Latvia. Each of the days has been prepared by one of the diverse Church communities. The 8 Days are linked principally by the experience of being a Christian in Latvia.

To find out more on Latvian culture and history see the [International resources](#).

As usual, Christian Aid provides the Go and Do action points for each of the daily reflections – linking into the important work of Christian Aid in the relief of poverty and advocacy of justice.

The resources for 2016 are available as downloads at -

[Week of Prayer for Christian Unity resources](#)

There is also an order form to purchase the material in a published format or they can be purchased online through Church House Bookshop.

Public urged to donate unwanted Christmas gifts to charity

Dublin's St Mary's Pro Cathedral has urged people to donate unwanted Christmas presents to the needy rather than return them to the shops.

Irish Times - Cathedral administrator Fr Damien O'Reilly said hundreds of people living in homeless and emergency accommodation



Gifts can be brought to Dublin's Pro Cathedral - Collections began on December 26th and gifts can be left at the crib until January 6th.

received donated gifts last year as the result of a similar drive, and the initiative has been renewed for 2015 so that “people who are struggling with life will get a small token of cheer”.

Members of the public can bring gifts to the Pro Cathedral crib, where they will be collected by Catholic community group [Crosscare](#) before being distributed to young people living in care and the homeless next year.

Collections began on December 26th and gifts can be left at the crib until January 6th.

“This simple scheme allows Crosscare to give a gift to someone in their services who would not normally receive one,” said Fr O’Reilly.

It comes following the publication of a recent report from [Focus Ireland](#) which revealed that around two-thirds of the 1,500 children who were made homeless around the country this year were under the age of eight, and adult homelessness continues to be a problem.

“It is also a reminder to us all of how we can get needlessly caught up in wasteful commercialism at this time of year,” he said, alluding to repeated messages from [Pope Francis](#) regarding the need to curb wasteful practices in the modern world.

The gift drive is one of a number of charitable activities which Crosscare has engaged in over recent weeks, which also included a very successful Diocesan Food Appeal for [Dublin](#).

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Childline Ireland received over 1,000 calls and messages from children on Christmas Day

The Childlike Listening service received some 1,176 calls, texts and messages throughout Christmas Day this year.

Journal.ie - The service which is open 24 hours, 365 days a year had a total of 70 volunteers from across the country who gave up their time yesterday to listen to the worries and problems of children on what should have been a happy, carefree day for all kids.

The service said the festive season can be fraught with financial pressures, family difficulties, isolation and alcohol abuse.

The calls and messages received by Childline reflected this with children getting in touch to seek support and reassurance while some simply needed company.

Homelessness was also a common theme this year. Childline has received 900 contacts from children concerned about homelessness in 2015



prompting it to launch a dedicated text service for these particular cases.

“Children are keenly aware of difficulties in the home and often the festive period can exacerbate tensions. Many of the children who contacted Childline on Christmas Day were concerned about the effects of alcohol being consumed in the home, while several others were alone, or looking after siblings and feeling isolated and lonely,” commented Childline chief executive Grainne Long.

It can be so unbelievably difficult for a child to find the courage to get in touch with Childline and

that is why it is so important that we are here every day, especially at Christmas, to be there to listen to any children who need us. We will continue to do this and to believe and empower them and most importantly of all we will show these children that we care.

Long said it would be impossible for the service to operate the hours it does without the public's support over the last year and the incredible work of its volunteers.

The number for Childline is 1800 666 666 and the service is always open.

Connor Youth leaders to retreat with Urban Saints

Youth leaders in Connor Diocese are looking forward to their new year retreat in beautiful White Park Bay.

The retreat, on Friday January 8 and Saturday January 9, is organised by Diocesan Youth Officer Christina Baillie and the Engage Connor Youth Council. Wilson Beare, Director of Urban Saints in Ireland, will lead sessions and Jude Frame will be leading praise.

Christina said: “This will be an opportunity to get to know others, be encouraged and spend time with God. We are really excited to have time set aside at the beginning of a year to be encouraged and share in the scriptures together.”

The retreat takes place at the White Park Bay Youth Hostel. Price is £20. For more details, contact Christina Baillie at christina@connor.anglican.org or on 028 9082 8870.

News links

Nuns from Nashville rescue Dominican church in Limerick

Limerick Leader

The religious tide has been turned and St Saviour's **Church**, Glentworth ... were from Ireland, and a good number of our sisters are of **Irish** descent.”

<http://www.limerickleader.ie/news/education/nuns-from-nashville-rescue-dominican-church-in-limerick-1-7132065>

St Patrick's Boys' School choir visits Bank of Ireland Carndonagh branch

Derry Journal

Through Give Together - Bank of **Ireland's** charity and community initiative – enables staff to churchnewsireland@gmail.com

lend support to one of four flagship charities, or support ...

<http://www.derryjournal.com/news/st-patrick-s-boys-school-choir-visits-bank-of-ireland-carndonagh-branch-1-7130997>

Video: Volunteers host Christmas Day Dinner for Donegal people living on their own

Donegal Now

The tenth Annual Christmas Day Dinner for people living on their own was held today in the Conwal Parish Hall, behind the **Church of Ireland** and ...

<http://www.donegalnow.com/news/video-volunteers-host-christmas-day-dinner-for-donegal-people-living-on-their-own/65129>

Reach for the stars with UCD's choral scholars' debut international record

Irish Independent

The disc, entitled Invisible Stars, showcases traditional and contemporary **choral** music from **Ireland** and Scotland, featuring arrangements and new ...

<http://www.independent.ie/entertainment/music/music-news/reach-for-the-stars-with-ucds-choral-scholars-debut-international-record-34311286.html>

Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health to profit from NHS Choir song that beat Justin Bieber

Belfast Telegraph

The Lewisham and Greenwich **choir's** charity single, A Bridge Over You, claimed the top spot in the closest chart battle since 2009 when Rage Against ...

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/northern-ireland-association-for-mental-health-to-profit-from-nhs-choir-song-that-beat-justin-bieber-34314472.html>

Church of England could give the Kirk access to the Lords

Herald Scotland

As a member of the Church of Scotland, of course I welcome today's **news** that the Church of Scotland and the **Church of England** are to forge a new ...

http://www.heraldscotland.com/opinion/14168068.Church_of_England_could_give_the_Kirk_access_to_the_Lords/

CofE to fast track black and Asian clergy into leadership

ChristianToday

Black and Asian Anglicans are to be talent-spotted for leadership roles in the Church of

England after growing concern that under 3 per cent of clergy ...

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/cofe.to.fast.track.black.and.asian.clergy.into.leadership/74738.htm>

Married gay priest Jeremy Davies: 'The bishops say we're not modelling teachings of the church ...

The Guardian

... officiating at weddings, christenings and funerals in the **Church of England**, ... This has already resulted in Davies being banned from taking church ... He defiantly posted **news** of the bishop's confidential decision on Facebook.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/26/married-gay-priest-jeremy-davies-the-bishops-say-were-not-modelling-teachings-of-the-church-yes-we-are>

8 times religious leaders didn't think David Cameron's policies were very Christian

The Independent

In May the **Church of England** criticised the dominant creed in the ... they were talking about the **Church of England** congregations," he told Sky **News**.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/times-religious-leaders-didnt-think-david-camerons-policies-were-very-christian-a6785231.html>