



Hockey management for Bishop of Cork

In recent months, the Bishop of Cork, Dr Paul Colton, agreed to take on the role of manager of the Munster Men's under 21 Hockey Team for the current season.

Bishop Paul said:

I was never a great hockey player myself, but in earlier days I played, and over the years I've spent hours and days of involvement with hockey clubs, at matches and at tournaments. I've often had a lot to say from the sidelines so when I was asked to take on this manager role I thought I should put my money, as it were, where my mouth has been. I also think everyone should be involved in voluntary work in some way, and that's a value we keep to in our own family, whether in involvement in charities, in schools or in fundraising or support for community groups inside and outside churches. Luckily the great bunch of hockey players, many of them from clubs, schools and parishes in this Diocese, are not relying on me for coaching - for that they can rely on the fantastic Neil Welch supported by Dave Hobbs. Bishop Paul Colton (right) with the Munster Men's under 21 Hockey Team.

Limerick Bishops encourage support for flood appeal

The C of I Bishop of Limerick, RT Rev Trevor Williams has asked parishioners to support victims of the floods through the ecumenical partnership with the local Catholic diocese.

Bishop Williams commented, "I have just received this from our colleague Bishop Brendan Leahy, with whom I work closely. St Mary's Park was devastated by the recent floods as you will have seen on TV. This is within our Limerick City Parish and in fact St Mary's Cathedral is on King's Island as is St Mary's Park. Some of you have been asking how best you can help. Well this is the way to do it through our ecumenical partnership. As it states below please send contributions by cheque made payable to "St. Mary's Parish - Flood Relief Fund" C/O St. Mary's Parish, Athlunkard Street, Limerick. I know you will consider this carefully and Prayerfully."

Bishop Brendan has had a number of requests about the possibility of church collections in respect of the flood relief at St. Mary's. Having considered the matter, and discussed it with Canon O'Malley and others, the option of direct donations rather than a collection is considered the better route. Donations have already been received and a fund has been established, "St. Mary's Parish - Flood Relief Fund". Bishop Brendan requested that the following would be announced at Masses throughout the Diocese last weekend:

A Fund in respect of the flood relief at St. Mary's has been established. The Fund will be jointly administered by St. Mary's Parish and the St. Vincent de Paul Society. St. Vincent de Paul has identified the provision of food and fuel, clothing, blankets and sheets as a priority at this time. The Diocese annually supports the work of St. Vincent de Paul and will further enhance it this year with an additional contribution from the Diocesan Limerick Social Service Council.

Donations by cheque payable to:

**"St. Mary's Parish - Flood Relief Fund" C/O St. Mary's Parish,
Athlunkard Street, Limerick.**

Le gach dea-ghuí,
Yours sincerely,
Paul.

Diocesan Office, Social Service Centre, Henry Street, Limerick.

Presbyterian Historical Society Lecture

To Vote or not to Vote: Reformed Presbyterians and the electoral franchise in the nineteenth century

The next Historical Society Lecture (given by The Rev Thomas C Donachie) will be on Thursday, 20th February at 8.00pm in Newtownards Reformed Presbyterian Church, Regent Street, Newtownards and entitled "To vote or not to vote: Reformed Presbyterians and the electoral franchise of the 19th century."

The extension of the electoral franchise in the 19th century raised serious questions for the Reformed Presbyterian Church as it sought to apply its understanding of the 1638 and 1643 Covenants. The rejection of the Revolution Settlement had made Covenanters political dissidents from what they saw as a state that had dethroned the Lord Jesus Christ. How were they to deal with demands from within and from outside for greater involvement in the state?

Eco Congregation Ireland holds public meeting

Eco Congregation Ireland, an umbrella group set up by the five main churches to encourage environmental awareness in congregations, is hosting a [public meeting](#) on February 28.

This will take place in in Fitzroy Presbyterian Church, and special guest is well known Scottish author and broadcaster Dr Alastair McIntosh.

The work of Eco Congregation Ireland is supported by the Standing Committee and a number of Church of Ireland parishes have won Eco awards in the past.

For further information please visit www.ecocongregationireland.com

Concern after shared education project comes to an end

South Antrim MLA Danny Kinahan has questioned the sincerity of the Department of Education to shared education in Northern Ireland.

Antrim Times - His comments come in the wake of the ending of a teacher sharing project in controlled and maintained primary schools in County Antrim, including one at Moneynick and Duneane primary schools.

Twenty-three schools took part in a series of [partnerships](#) between schools attended mostly by either Catholics or Protestants.

The loss of funding means 10 jobs for shared teachers have been lost.

Both Duneane and Moneynick schools thought the scheme was so valuable that they are spending their own budgets to buy in a shared teacher for two days a week.

Donna Winters of Duneane Primary and Emer Hughes of Moneynick Catholic Primary have clubbed together to find the money but Ms Winters said: "We don't know how long we'll be able to fund the shared teacher ourselves, even though we do want to continue it at all costs."

Mrs Hughes said: "The results have been amazing, not just for pupils but for teachers, principals and parents."

Responding to news the project had ended, Mr Kinahan said: "If a programme like this was working - and all agree that it was - then the funding to support it should be mainstreamed – not left to short term charitable contributions."

The UUP MLA added: "In some towns where the sharing of classes and [resources](#) across the religious/educational divide had been developing organically over many years, it ended almost overnight - without any reference to 'area planning' or the greater good of wider society.

"I am afraid that the current situation means that shared education across Northern Ireland remains piecemeal and an exception to the rule."



Fresh Expressions feature Boring Wells

Recently Fresh Expressions featured Adrian and Ruth McCartney who updated the story of Boring Wells in Belfast and explain why teenagers with special needs are shouting WOW!

Adrian McCartney, Church leader: Boring Wells has existed now for over 10 years. We started with the notion that we would bore Wells, being places of life and fresh water, in communities and with people who are maybe finding it difficult to be part of church as we have known it.



We grew as a group of people and, because of the imagination and creativity of those people, we quickly discovered that just doing Boring Wells in one place or in one community didn't, wasn't, enough. So we encouraged people to feel that if there were a group of people or their own friends, or something to do with their work or some other part of the city, where they felt they could bore a Well - that could be anything from something that looks like church planting right through to just a group of people who discuss things or share their lives together. We encouraged people to do that and, without a great strategy for it, Boring Wells became a little network of groups of people; little teams of missionaries or individuals or twos or threes who decided they would try things.

One of the people in Boring Wells felt a sense of wanting to do something that was based around her workplace; she's a speech and language therapist working in a school for special needs for teenagers with profound and severe learning difficulties. She, along with one other staff member and some of the other folks from Boring Wells, decided that they would try to start something specifically to become a community of faith for those teenagers from that school.

The children are asked, 'What does Jesus say when He comes in here and sees you here?' And Jesus says, and the children all shout out, 'Wow!'

'Some in church may be homophobic'

Archbishop of Dublin Dr [Diarmuid Martin](#) has said that some people in the Catholic Church may be homophobic.

The teaching of the church could be used "in a homophobic way", he told RTE.

He said that the Church had to be very careful that this was not done in the forthcoming debate on the same-sex referendum.

Archbishop Martin said he felt that the debate had already got off to a bad start.

Discussions have to be carried out in a "mature" way so that people can freely express their views, while at the same time being respectful and not causing offence, he said..

He said that in general he believed it was the person who was offended who defined what being offended is.

"Anyone who grew up in Ireland would have told jokes that were pointed at the gay community; at Travellers; it is part of the culture we grew up in, but we have to grow out of it," he said.

He said church teaching was that marriage was between a man and a woman, exclusively, but that this approach did not exclude gay people from celebrating their union by a different means. More at -

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/republic-of-ireland/some-in-church-may-be-homophobic-29993349.html>

Martin says 12 clerical child abusers 'active' in Dublin in 1970s

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/martin-says-12-clerical-child-abusers-active-in-dublin-in-1970s-1.1685262>