



Irish news bulletin

1st February

Liz Hughes: The woman who's in running to lead Presbyterian flock

The Presbyterian Church has nominated a woman among its five candidates for the election of a new Moderator next week.

Alf McCreary in Belfast Telegraph - Reverend Liz Hughes, of Whitehouse Presbyterian in Newtownabbey, is only the second woman to have been nominated by the Church.

Presbyterians were the first of the main churches in Ireland to ordain women ministers many years ago.

If elected, she will be the first woman Moderator of the Church and will follow in the footsteps of two other newly-appointed female Church leaders in Ireland.

Rev Dr [Heather Morris](#) became the first Methodist president last year, and Rev Pat Storey, from Londonderry, became the first female Anglican bishop to be appointed in the British Isles when she was installed as Bishop of Meath and Kildare just before Christmas. Rev Hughes, who is currently attending a Church seminar in the US, told the [Belfast](#) Telegraph: "I prayed a great deal before deciding to accept the nomination and I will be very happy to accept the outcome, whatever it may be."



She is a well-known figure throughout the Church but she will face stiff competition from the four shortlisted men – Rev [Michael Barry](#) of First Newry; Rev Robert Herron from Omagh; Rev Ian McNie from Ballymoney, and Rev Alistair Smyth from Carryduff.

This year's election is unusual because all the ministers are first-time candidates in a contest that normally contains names from the previous year's list.

One Presbyterian insider said: "The wide range of candidates and the fact that they are all first-time contestants makes the result of this year's election very difficult to call."

Representatives from the 19 Presbyteries throughout Ireland will vote next Tuesday and the result should be known that evening, unless there is a tie. In that unusual event, a second vote will be taken.

Other candidates at -

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/liz-hughes-the-woman-whos-in-running-to-lead-presbyterian-flock-29966695.html>

Priests say Church out of touch on family planning

In spite of the Vatican's stance, two thirds of priests here believe the availability of contraception is very important to their parishioners and three quarters admit the Catholic Church's stance on family planning is not accepted.

Stephen Rogers in Irish independent - The figure emerged in a survey by the Association of Catholic Priests on the Church's teachings around family life. Overall, that survey found that the church hierarchy is extremely out of touch with the lives of even traditional, church-going Catholics, according to ACP founder Tony Flannery.

"Those who participated consider the Church's teaching on family life, sexual practice, and sexual unions to be little understood, not relevant, of low influence and not agreed with, whether understood or not," the ACP said.

"These findings are consistent across all age groups and religious role [clergy, lay, etc] where identified."

Last October, a questionnaire was sent out by the Vatican as it sought to prepare a Synod on the family. The hope was that the survey would attract the widest possible response from Catholics around the world. However, the questionnaire was so complex the ACP decided to put a simplified version on its website.

The refined questionnaire attracted answers from 1,500 people, including 173 priests. The ACP was not surprised that the majority of respondents (71%) were aged 46-75 and were church-goers.

Nonetheless, the survey showed that even church-goers found ecclesiastical teachings outdated.

When asked how well the Catholic Church's teachings on the value of family was understood by Catholics today, 73% who replied ticked "poorly understood".

Just under 70% felt *Humanae Vitae*, the document which outlines the Church's teaching on family planning and rules out artificial contraception, was not accepted today. That figure grew to 76% among priests.

Furthermore, 76% of respondents consider the availability of contraception "extremely" or "somewhat" important to themselves or to their community. The 66% of priests who responded (113) also ticked one of those two options.

There was a widespread acceptance (89%) among respondents, that separated, divorced, and remarried couples were a reality in their Church. Furthermore, 98% considered co-habitation "to be a pastoral reality".

Two thirds considered dioceses to be "negative" or "hostile and condemning" toward same-sex couples. Just 11% considered them "somewhat" or "highly" supportive. That is in spite of the fact 47% considered marriage equality "extremely" or "very important" and a further 23% considered it "somewhat important".

Fr Flannery said intolerance increased going up the authority line in the Church, but that at a local level priests were much more liberal. Fr Flannery said the Vatican would be much more negative.

"Running through this whole survey, there is a clear message that the teaching of the Church is seriously out of touch even with the church-going traditional Catholics," he said

<http://www.irisht Examiner.com/ireland/priests-say-church-out-of-touch-on-family-planning-257326.html>

Bishop of London to visit Dublin and Glendalough



The Bishop of London, the Right Reverend Richard Chartres , will visit Dublin and Glendalough on February 27.

During his time here he will address gatherings of the clergy and laity and it is hoped that the discussions will contribute to the ongoing debate on the development of a shared vision for the future of the dioceses.

London Diocese has experienced encouraging development under Bishop Chartres' leadership. He has facilitated and enabled a wide variety of traditions of the church to coexist harmoniously and to flourish mutually.

The bishop will meet clergy in the Church of Ireland College of Education on the morning of Thursday February 27 starting at 9.30 am. The session will include a time of worship, an address by the bishop and an opportunity for questions and answers. The morning will conclude with lunch.

On the same day, lay people of the dioceses will have the opportunity to hear from Bishop Chartres at an event in St Catherine's Church, Thomas Street, Dublin 8. This session will start with hospitality and again there will be worship, an address and time for questions and answers.

The visit of the Bishop of London follows a gathering of the clergy of the dioceses late last year which was a first step in looking at how Dublin and Glendalough could plan for the future.

Archbishop Michael Jackson feels that those participating in the seminars will benefit from what

Bishop Chartres has to say. "There is much, I am sure, we can learn from him – especially perhaps in the vital area of hospitality and welcome, which is very much to the fore for us in Dublin and Glendalough," he commented. "I hope that this discussion will help us in our own discussion of how we can best build for the future."

There are a few places available for the lay event in St Catherine's. Anyone who would like to attend should email archdublinoffice@gmail.com for more information.

Attorney General dismayed by top court's gay B&B ruling

Attorney General John Larkin has criticised the UK's highest court for finding against Christians who refused to rent a double room to a gay couple.



News Letter -

In a defence of Christians' rights to live out their faith, Mr Larkin said that November's decision by the Supreme Court seemed to leave such Christians with the option of either leaving business or "being complicit in what the Christian must regard as deeply sinful".

Addressing the topic 'Do Christians have rights?', at a conference organised by the Presbyterian Church, Northern Ireland's first Roman Catholic Attorney General made clear his dismay at the implications of the ruling.

He said that Christians needed to be "sensitive" to someone who found themselves refused a room because of their sexual orientation.

But, referring to the case of Hazelmary and Peter Bull, who were found to have discriminated against Stephen Preddy and Martyn Hall, Mr Larkin said that the case was a strong example of "the clash of rights" — between the right against discrimination and the right to freedom of religious observance.

Referring to Baroness Hale, the deputy president of the Supreme Court and one of those who found in favour of the gay couple in a majority decision

(another was Lord Kerr, Northern Ireland's former Lord Chief Justice), Mr Larkin said that her comments demonstrated "the extent of the failure to understand the orthodox Christian position".

The outspoken Attorney General focussed on a single paragraph of Baroness Hale's decision, in which she said: "There is no question of replacing 'legal oppression of one community (homosexual couples) with legal oppression of another (those sharing the defendants' beliefs)'.

"If Mr Preddy and Mr Hall ran a hotel which denied a double room to Mr and Mrs Bull, whether on the ground of their Christian beliefs or on the ground of their sexual orientation, they would find themselves in the same situation that Mr and Mrs Bull find themselves today."

Referring to those comments, Mr Larkin said: "If these words are intended by Baroness Hale to be reassuring to Christians, I do not think that their intended outcome is likely to be achieved.

"What is striking in the passage that I have just quoted is, it seems to me, the extent of the failure to understand the orthodox Christian position."

m.newsletter.co.uk/news/regional/attorney-general-dismayed-by-top-court-s-gay-b-b-ruling-1-5847169

Belfast's Black Santa will support 205 charities

Charities and community groups will receive a share of almost £200,000 raised by Belfast's Black Santa at the annual Good Samaritans' Service in St Anne's Cathedral on Sunday.

Special guests the Revd Canon Dr Heather Morris, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, and BBC journalist Tara Mills will present cheques to 205 local organisations working with children, young people, families, community, health and people overseas.



The 2013 sit-out by Black Santa, Dean of Belfast the Very Rev John Mann, and his team on the steps of St Anne's Cathedral raised a wonderful £196,000, which is £4,000 more than in 2012.

In the wake of the devastation in the Philippines caused by Typhoon Haiyan, £20,000 of the money raised is going directly to the Philippines. Earlier this year, St Anne's held a Day of Prayer for Syria, and £5,000 from the Black Santa Appeal has been sent to Syria in response to the on-going humanitarian crisis there.

The remainder will be divided between the dozens of local charities who will be represented at the Cathedral on Sunday.

Belfast's Black Santa dates from 1976 when Dean Sammy Crooks, concerned at the emphasis being placed on necessary and costly building programmes at the Cathedral, decided to stand on Donegall Street and beg for the poor and charitable causes.

Dressed in a black Anglican clerical cloak, Dean Crooks sat out daily in the week before Christmas with a small barrel for donations and the Black Santa tradition was born.

Thanking all those who had contributed to the 2013 Black Santa Appeal, Dean Mann said: "At the Good Samaritans' Service the focus will turn from the giver of funds to those who put the money raised to good effect. It is heart-warming and very humbling to experience the presence of so many charities together in one place celebrating the work that is going on in our community and elsewhere."

The Voice of Assisi is coming to Ireland

Friar Alessandro, The Voice of Assisi, is coming to Ireland ...

- Franciscan Friary, Merchants Quay, Dublin, on Monday 17 March at 7.30pm.
- Galway Cathedral on Friday 21 March at 7.30pm
- Franciscan Friary, Cork, on Saturday 22 March at 7.30pm.

Church leaders training events

Church leaders are warmly invited to two forthcoming CPAS training events. 'Keeping watch over ourselves in leadership' on Thursday 27 March and 'Sustaining oneself in leadership' on Thursday 22 May. Both will take place at Church Church, Lisburn.

Keeping watch over ourselves in leadership

Date: Thursday 27 March, 10am–3.30pm
Venue: Christ Church, Hillsborough Road, Lisburn BT28 1JL
Cost: £20

(Please note, for those also wishing to attend ‘Sustaining

oneself in leadership’ on 22 May, we are offering a discounted price of £30 for both events).

In the book of Acts, Paul directs Christian leaders to ‘keep watch’ over themselves and stay faithful to the calling of Christ in challenging times. Help is at hand. There are good role models and excellent resources to help us stay faithful to the task. In this session, we will be looking at some of the ways in which we can maintain a good and healthy working pattern, drawing on the wisdom of others and staying close to the Father’s will.

Sustaining oneself in leadership

Date: Thursday 22 May, 10.00 am – 3.30 pm
Venue: Christ Church, Hillsborough Road, Lisburn BT28 1JL
Cost: £20

(Please note, for those also wishing to attend ‘Sustaining oneself in leadership’ on 22 May, we are offering a discounted price of £30 for both events).

In this session we will be looking at the nuts and bolts of good working patterns. Not all of us are organised by nature, but being organised enough ensures that the things that matter are the things that get done. This session will have lots of practical suggestions to help ministers give their best time and efforts to the things that matter most.

Find out more at www.cpas.org.uk/ireland or call the Rev Paul Dundas on 07740589465.



Relay for Life Carlow launching their 2014 campaign

“We, the committee are currently looking for new and existing teams to register with us and also looking for cancer survivors to partake in this years event which is taking place in Ducketts Grove Carlow on Saturday and Sunday 14th and 15th June 2014.

“We are holding an information and team registration morning on Saturday 8th February at 11.30am in Carlow IT. All are welcome. Please come along and support the Irish Cancer Society.”

Cork youth weekend success



Over thirty youth leaders from the Diocese and beyond spent a great weekend in Clonakilty recently for the annual youth leaders training weekend.

This event has become one of the high spots in the year, and it is appropriate that it does so in January in order for leaders to be re-motivated for the year ahead.

This year's theme was FAITH WORKS. The main speaker, Amy McCreagh from CIYD, led us through sessions on ‘How can we make sure we are growing in faith?’; ‘How can we share that faith with the young people in our youth groups?’ and ‘How can we encourage them to share their faith with others?’

One of the sessions required us, working in small groups, to come up with a programme on sharing faith and the resulting ideas will be put together to provide a resource for use by leaders all over the Diocese.

There were also sharing sessions where we heard what was happening in different groups and with the schools team.

There was time to meet informally and to have fun. Saturday evening was a drama session led by Ross Jonas in which groups had to write and perform sketches on Faith, Hope and Love and the Greatest of these is Love. There was plenty of laughter.

Clerical appointment

The Reverend Canon Kathryn Trimby (nee Sutherton), Incumbent of Achonry Group of Parishes, has been appointed Rector of the Border Group of Parishes (Llanyblodwell, Llanymynech, Morton & Trefonen) in the Diocese of Lichfield.

Kathy was Instituted to Achonry Union at a service held in Rathbarron Church in August 2004. She and her husband Rev George Trimby, who also served in TKA for several years, will be leaving at the end of March 2014. Kathy will be best remembered in TKA for her work in Mothers Union circles and with the uniformed youth organisations. She was also a member of the Cathedral Chapters of St Marys Tuam and St Patrick's Killala. One of Kathy's more dubious claims to fame is that, with the closure of St Crumnathy's Cathedral, Achonry some years ago and the subsequent amalgamation of the chapters of Achonry and Killala, Kathy will probably be the last Canon of Achonry alone.

Bishop's tribute to Education Correspondent

Bishop Brendan Kelly, Chair of the Council for Education of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, has issued the following statement on the death Mr Seán Flynn:

Seán Flynn was education correspondent of *The Irish Times* at a time of great change in the Irish education system during the period 1995 – 2000. In Seán's analysis of the debates in preparation for the Education Act and for the Employment Equality Act, and regarding the change in structure of boards of management at primary schools, he was fair and just in his coverage and reportage. During the education debates of the late 1990s, Seán always treated the different views and submissions made by the education partners with great respect. Seán was a reporter who always used his gifts to inform his readers. Seán possessed an inquiring and sharp mind and he put these skills to good use in his determination to present the truth in his media coverage. As education editor Seán oversaw the publication a weekly

education supplement offering a quality analysis of the primary, secondary and tertiary education sectors. Seán gave particular attention to children with education needs and also concerning the access of children from the Travelling community to education.

I wish to express my deepest sympathies to his wife Elaine, his daughter and sons, and to his colleagues in *The Irish Times*. Ar dheis Dé go raibh sé.

Services tomorrow

A new series of addresses, given in the context of the 10.45am Sunday morning Choral Eucharist in the Chapel of Trinity College, Dublin, begins tomorrow (Sunday). Entitled 'The Golden Rule' the series will seek to explore how this universal ethical principle ('Do to others as you would have them do to you') is understood and applied across several different faith traditions. The first address will be given by Ms. Alison Wortley, member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'í Community in Ireland, who will speak on 'The Golden Rule in the Baha'i Faith'. Among the subsequent speakers will be Dr. Marcus Braybrooke, President of the World Congress of Faith, Dr Yazid Said, Lecturer in Islamic Studies in Mater Dei Institute of Education, and Swami Purnananda, spiritual director and founder of the Éire Vedanta Society.

Recordings of the addresses will be available on the TCD Chaplaincy website: www.tcd.ie/chaplaincy

Tomorrow (Sunday) at 3pm there will be a service in Irish in St George's church, Belfast. This service is held on the first Sunday of each month and is part of a growing commitment in the parish to foster the use of the Irish language.

In St Patrick's cathedral, Dublin, tomorrow (Sunday) at 3.15pm the cathedral choristers will sing Benjamin Britten's 'Ceremony of Carols' while at 7.30pm in St Lasarian's cathedral, Old Leighlin, the Procession and Vespers of Candlemas will be held followed by, the now customary, refreshments.

At 5pm in Christ Church cathedral, Dublin, the Candlemas Processions will be held, after which a new portrait, by Olivia Bartlett, of the late Dean, the Very Revd Tom Salmon, will be unveiled. The cathedral, surprisingly, has few portraits of other deans. Portraits of Herbert Kennedy and John Paterson hang in the Chapter Room while among the portraits of the archbishops of Dublin, which are hung in the cathedral, are two who had been Deans of

Christ Church – Charles Cobbe, by Francis Bindon, and Richard Chenevix Trench, by Sir Thomas Jones.

At Choral Evensong in St Canice's cathedral, Kilkenny, the Dean of Ferns, the Very Revd Paul Mooney, will be installed as Precentor of Ossory and Leighlin. - *C of I correspondent, Irish Times*

Media review

Funds run out for 'shared teachers'

A scheme that employed teachers to be shared by Catholic and controlled primary schools in Northern Ireland ends despite being deemed a success. Read more:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-25951212>

DUP's fundamentalist tail still wagging the dog

Liam Clarke in the Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/debateni/blogs/liam-clarke/dups-fundamentalist-tail-still-wagging-the-dog-29963966.html>