



## Irish cathedrals' empathy with Orlando victims

Today candles will burn in cathedrals in Dublin and Belfast in empathy with and respect for the people who died and were injured in a shooting at a nightclub in Orlando on June 12.

A candle will be lit at the Church of Ireland's **Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin**

today(Tuesday), in memory of those who died in the attack, to help people to pray for the victims and all affected by the shooting. The Archbishop of Dublin, **the Most Revd Michael Jackson**, said: “Outrage and incredulity combine as we in Ireland, like the rest of the world, try to take in the enormity and the evil of the horrific events in Orlando, Florida, over the weekend.

“These events, targeting a specific section of the community, have, once again, brought terror and hatred to the forefront in a place where people have been among friends and living their lives.

“As people come to terms with the attack on Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, we hold all those who have lost their loved ones and all who have been injured and traumatised by the mass shooting in our prayers. We remember victims, friends and family members at this time of devastation. We echo the statements which say that this had nothing to do with religion.

“These events are becoming all too common. It is for this reason that we hold before God each individual who has suffered and each individual who has died as a special person and as a child of God’s creation. Right across the faiths of the

world we long and pray for a time when there will be an end to such attacks and an end to the needless and senseless loss of human life.”

A single candle is burning in **St Anne’s Cathedral, Belfast**, in respect for the people who died and were injured in a shooting at a nightclub in Orlando on June 12.

Prayers for the victims are being said at services throughout the day, and specially written prayers are available in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit, where those wishing to reflect on the atrocity can light a candle or spend time in silent prayer.

The **Rev Mark Niblock**, Dean’s Vicar, said: “In view of the atrocities that continue to be perpetrated by terrorists in our world today, and particularly the Orlando attack yesterday, a space for reflection and prayer is once again being established in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit in St Anne’s Cathedral.

“A single candle will burn all day and throughout the coming days, and visitors are invited to light their own candles around it to show solidarity with those who suffer at this time. Prayers have

been prepared for the use of those who come to sit or kneel as we think of all victims of violence.”

**Archbishop Eamon Martin** offered prayers for the 50 people killed and 53 injured in the Orlando shootings, which have been described as the worst terrorist incident in the United States since 9/11.

“Like many people across Ireland I have been greatly shocked and saddened when hearing of the shootings today in Orlando, Florida. Many Irish families enjoy visits to this beautiful and friendly place, and it is heart-breaking to hear about such a high number of people killed in violent circumstances,” Archbishop Martin said.

In his statement, the Archbishop said the taking of innocent human life is always wrong.

“On behalf of the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference I wish to express my profound condolences and I offer prayers of solidarity from Ireland to those who have been touched by this tragedy in the United States.”

He asked the faithful over the coming days to remember in their prayers, and at Mass, all those who have been injured or killed, and their families.

## Church leaders respond to Orlando

**The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby,** in a joint statement with **the Archbishop of York, John Sentamu,** said: “After Sunday’s attack in Orlando as Christians we must speak out in support of LGBTI people, who have become the latest group to be so brutally targeted by the forces of evil.

“We must pray, weep with those affected, support the bereaved, and love without qualification.

“The obligation to object to these acts of persecution, and to support those LGBTI people who are wickedly and cruelly killed and wounded, bereaved and traumatised, whether in Orlando or elsewhere, is an absolute call on our Christian discipleship.

“It arises from the unshakeable certainty of the gracious love of God for every human being. Now, in this time of heartbreak and grief, is a time for solidarity. May God our Father give grace and comfort to all who mourn, and divine compassion to us all.”

**The Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, the Most Revd Michael Curry,** was at

a service in Vicksburg, Mississippi, commemorating the *Martyrs of Mississippi* - three civil rights workers murdered in 1964.

In a video message from the service, produced in response to the killings in Orlando, Bishop Curry said: “We pray for the repose of the souls for those who have died; we pray for those who are wounded – that they might have healing; we pray for the families and those who grieve; we pray for our communities, our nation and our world – indeed we pray for the whole human family.”

After reciting the Lord’s Prayer, Bishop Curry added: “May the souls of the departed, through the mercies of God, rest in peace and rise in glory.”

**Pope Francis** has expressed the “deepest feelings of horror and condemnation” over a massacre at a Florida nightclub that killed at least 50 people and injured 53 more.

Vatican spokesman the Jesuit Federico Lombardi said in a statement that the Pontiff denounces the “senseless hatred” of the shooting at the Pulse nightclub in the early hours of Sunday morning.

“The terrible massacre that has taken place in Orlando, with its dreadfully high number of innocent victims, has caused in Pope Francis, and in all of us, the deepest feelings of horror and condemnation, of pain and turmoil before this new manifestation of homicidal folly and senseless hatred,” the statement said.

“Pope Francis joins the families of the victims and all of the injured in prayer and in compassion. Sharing in their indescribable suffering he entrusts them to the Lord so they may find comfort.”

He added: “We all hope that ways may be found, as soon as possible, to effectively identify and contrast the causes of such terrible and absurd violence which so deeply upsets the desire for peace of the American people and of the whole of humanity.”

The Church of England used its social media channels to publish a prayer in response to the killings:

*Compassionate God and Father of all,  
we are horrified at violence  
in so many parts of the world.  
It seems that none are safe,  
and some are terrified.*

*Hold back the hands that kill and maim;  
turn around the hearts that hate.  
Grant instead your strong Spirit of Peace -  
peace that passes our understanding  
but changes lives,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

## **Irish Presbyterian Moderator to snub Scots General Assembly over same-sex relationships**

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has decided for the second year running not to send its Moderator to the General Assembly in Edinburgh next year because of the Scots' more liberal views on same-sex relationships, Alf McCreary writes in the Belfast Telegraph.

This follows a vote last year not to send the outgoing Moderator, the Very Rev Dr Ian McNie, to Edinburgh either. This is because the Scottish Assembly Church voted last year to allow its clerics in same-sex relationships to serve as ministers and deacons. In a statement following yesterday's vote in Belfast a spokesman for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland said: "This vote





***Moderator: Dr Frank Sellar***

shows the great sense of disappointment and real concern felt by the majority of members of the Irish General Assembly at decisions taken by their Scottish counterparts over the last two years.

"It should be noted that the General Assembly earlier this week decided that the natural ongoing contacts and collaboration between the councils, convenors and staff of the two churches be maintained where appropriate."

While the ban on the Moderator going to Edinburgh is seen as largely symbolic, there was a sombre air hanging over yesterday's debate, which was the last during the five-day Assembly.

The attendance was sparse at the end of a long week and only 161 votes were cast out of a total of nearly 1,000 delegates who were entitled to attend. It is felt that yesterday's voting reflected the deep split within the Presbyterian Church on the issue.

Senior figures from both sides of the argument spoke in the debate. Former Moderator, the Very Rev Dr John Lockington, said: "It breaks my heart to vote against our Moderator going to Edinburgh next year because I wish circumstances were different.

"However, one of the most symbolic things that we can do is to say to the Church of Scotland 'We don't think that you are on the right track'. This is the only way that we have to try to make the Church of Scotland see sense."

Another former Moderator, the Very Rev Dr Roy Patton, took the opposite view. He said: "I have a great deal of pain that we find ourselves in this situation.

"However, the correct response is not to walk away from the Church of Scotland. We need to engage with them and to talk with them. We would like to see things move in a totally different direction.

## **Cookstown Presbyterian Somme Centenary Commemorations**

Plans are well under way at First Presbyterian Church Cookstown to commemorate the Centenary of the “ Battle of the Somme” . On July 1, 1916 the British Army suffered their greatest number of casualties in one day, 57,470 with just over 19000 of those killed! In the lead up to this special date the Church has organised a number of events to enable people from the Cookstown area to learn about, and remember those from the district who died during the Battle which lasted until November 18, 1916. Thirty four officers and men, from, and with Cookstown connections were killed on the first day of the Somme with many other local soldiers listed missing and wounded. The 36th (Ulster) Division suffered over five thousand casualties on the day with almost two thousand of those fatal, later on in the Battle of the Somme, the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division would take four thousand three hundred casualties during the period of November 3 - 6,



almost twelve hundred of them fatal. This event will enable people to remember those Officers and men from all the services who gave their lives during “The Battle of the Somme”.

On Sunday June 26 at 3.30pm a service of Remembrance will take place in the church. The service will be taken by The Rev Dr Isaac Thompson and the praise will be led by Tamlaghtmore Silver Band. After the service the congregation will make their way out to the front of the church for the official opening of the “Somme Poppy Garden” where the first Poppy Wreath will be laid by the Lord Lieutenant for Tyrone, Mr Robert Scott. OBE. Ideally situated

and sloping towards the main street at Loy Hill the Somme Poppy Garden has been created to enable those who wish to remember a family relative, a Regiment or certain unit involved on the Somme by placing a wooden Poppy Cross, in what it is intended to be a garden of crosses placed symmetrically to signify the headstones of the Commonwealth War Graves Cemeteries. Crosses will be available at the church all week up to 4pm on Friday July 1 and all donations will go to the RBL Poppy Appeal. At this afternoon service, and each evening during the week at 8.00pm, an Act of Remembrance will take place at the Garden with a Bugler and Piper, and with a Poppy wreath will be laid by invited organisations. Tea/coffee and biscuits will be available each night.

During the week a complimentary “Paper Exhibition” will be on display in the Assembly Rooms from 7pm each evening, this will include extracts from the Mid Ulster Mail 100 years ago showing the impact on the district in the aftermath of the opening day of the Battle. The organisers invite members of the public who may have family items from the period to bring them in and exhibit them any night they wish. The Friends of the Somme Mid Ulster Branch will be involved in the exhibition and providing information for people from their excellent “War

Dead” databases which they have created from countless hours of research which they began a good few years ago, they have three databases covering the new Mid Ulster Council area, Cookstown’s War Dead, Dungannon War Dead and Magherafelt War Dead.

On Friday July 1 after the Act of Remembrance at the town’s Cenotaph, at 7.30am, people are invited to the Assembly Rooms behind the Church to hear a presentation by the Friends of the Somme Mid Ulster Branch entitled, “The Tyrone Volunteers and the Great War”. This will begin at 8.00am and will be followed by breakfast served by the ladies of the Church.

The activities at the Church will be brought to a close at 4pm on the afternoon of July 1. Later that evening the people of Cookstown and District will again have the opportunity to remember the fallen of the Somme with a Parade and Service of Remembrance organised by Cookstown Royal British Legion timed to begin at the Cenotaph at 11.00pm.

## **Cathedral, choral and musical**

**The tenth annual Stanford Festival Weekend** - will be held in Dublin, Ireland on October 7 & 8, 2016. This Weekend will celebrate the tenth

anniversary of the founding of the Stanford Society. It will include services in both Christchurch and St. Patrick's Cathedrals , a special concert in the Chapel of Trinity College and talks by Stanford scholars. Other events and full details of the Weekend will be announced during the summer of 2016. To join the society's mailing list please contact the Society's Secretary Chris Cope at [chris.cope@accountant-services.co.uk](mailto:chris.cope@accountant-services.co.uk) . See - <http://www.thestanfordsociety.org/annual-festival/>

## News briefs

A surprise celebration to mark the contribution to youth ministry of the **Rev Dr David Rock** took place on Sunday evening in Newtownabbey Methodist Mission. David has served as General Secretary and Team Leader of the **Irish Methodist Department of Youth and Children's Work** (IMYC) for the past 15 years.

On Sunday evening he thought he was going to preach at a service only to discover a large number of friends and well-wishers waiting to greet him. The theme that came through their various presentations was of their deep appreciation of David's willingness to invest in the lives of young people.



***David Rock with Gillian Gilmore who will succeed him as General Secretary of IMYC.***

Under his leadership the IMYC team has grown in number and impact through national events, training and the Teams on Mission programme. David will move to a new position within the Methodist Church in July. He is pictured here with **Gillian Gilmore** who will succeed him as General Secretary of IMYC.

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The Rector of All Saints, Clooney, the **Reverend David McBeth**, has been awarded a British



Empire Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours for "his service to charity and to the community in County Londonderry". "I am delighted to have received this recognition from Her Majesty," Rev McBeth said, "although there are many others who share in this honour: my wife, my children and the many people I have performed with. I'm particularly thankful that our efforts here in the All Saints, Clooney Parish, in the Diocese and in the wider Church of Ireland have also been recognised."

Rev McBeth, who is a chaplain to the Foyle Hospice, has been a minister for ten years and worked previously as a dental technician. He is a familiar face at fund-raising events throughout the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe and further afield, and has helped raise large sums of money for charities including Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. The father-of-three grown-up children plays guitar and keyboards, and has released two country gospel albums, 'The Gospel Album' and 'He is Risen'. He performs regularly in local hospitals, nursing homes and caring facilities. He has been prominently involved in cross-community work in the Waterside and in Dungiven (where he was previously Rector).

## **News links to reports on faith, politics and education**

### **Roger Casement: a campaigner, not a conspirator or even an Ulster Protestant**

Irish Times

The boy's mother, Anne Jephson, contrary to widespread belief, was a member of the **Church of Ireland**. She was baptised in St George's Church in ..

<http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/roger-casement-a-campaigner-not-a-conspirator-or-even-an-ulster-protestant-1.2680244>

### **Valid reasons' for Irish-exempt students to take other languages**

Irish Times

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/valid-reasons-for-irish-exempt-students-to-take-other-languages-1.2681849>

### **Bruton to provide extra help for children in disadvantaged schools**

Irish Times

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/bruton-to-provide-extra-help-for-children-in-disadvantaged-schools-1.2682467>

### **Guard/Mail/Christian Today/Times/Tel**

Further coverage of Archbishop of Canterbury's personal article on the EU Referendum saying our vision

of the future of Britain "cannot be only about ourselves." Archbishop Justin says there is no official Christian or Church line on which way to vote and voting is a matter for each person's conscience. 'We each have to make up our own minds. But for my part, based on what I have said and on what I have experienced, I shall vote to remain'.

<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/12/lead-the-eu-dont-leave-gordon-brown-launches-labour-push-for-remain>

[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3637525/Britains-authority-EU-rise-In-vote-PM-Cameron.html?](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3637525/Britains-authority-EU-rise-In-vote-PM-Cameron.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/eu-countdown-10-days-to-go-7xnjlq86h>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/06/12/justin-welby-will-vote-to-remain-in-the-eu/>

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### **Northern Echo**

Reports that the Archbishop of York opened the gates of Bishopthorpe Palace for a major party to celebrate the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday, and joined in with the musical celebrations. The St Leonard's Hospice Party at the Palace event on Saturday attracted hundreds of visitors who brought their picnics and brollies to the palace lawns. Archbishop Sentamu joined the nine-piece party band on stage, where he provided a drum accompaniment for several songs.

### **Premier/Star/Mail**

Reports an increase in the number of Muslims converting to Christianity in the UK could be because they want to

be granted asylum in the country. The Dean of Liverpool, Peter Wilcox is quoted.

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/World/Increase-in-Muslims-turning-to-Christ-could-be-down-to-asylum-process>

<http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/522513/Muslim-immigrants-dodge-deportation-baptised>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3637471/Muslim-asylum-seekers-Iran-getting-baptised-bid-avoid-getting-kicked-Britain.html>

### **Gloucestershire Echo**

Bishop Rachel Treweek answers questions about her first year in office, the challenges she faces and women's rights.

<http://www.gloucestershirelive.co.uk/Held-Account-Bishop-Gloucester-Rachel-Treweek-s/story-29227888-detail/story.html>

### **Mail**

Reports that 'thousands' of doctors are helping terminally ill patients to die every year, a leading advocate of assisted dying has claimed. Baroness Molly Meacher, the new chairwoman of *Dignity in Dying*, also thanked the medical experts who 'risk their own freedom to help their patients.' An Assisted Dying Bill was defeated in Parliament in September 2015. The article notes that the CofE believe a change in the Assisted Dying law would lead to people either feeling pressured to, or putting pressure on themselves to, end their lives prematurely. The Archbishop of Canterbury described the issue of assisted dying as one of the 'biggest dilemmas of our time'.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3637704/Thousands-doctors-help-people-die-year-says-head-Britain-s-assisted-dying-organisation.html>

## **BBC**

Reports that survey work to find the tomb of King Henry I, who is believed to be buried at Reading Abbey, has started. Investigations using ground-penetrating radar equipment have begun on land around St James Church next to the remaining ruins of Reading Abbey. The *Hidden Abbey Project* hopes to uncover the high altar where the king and Queen Adeliza are buried.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-berkshire-36510595>

## **BBC**

Reports that an 80-year-old church in Cumbria has reopened after undergoing a £250,000 revamp. St Barnabas church in Carlisle was shut for 16 weeks during which time a new glass, timber and steel partition screen has been installed. The Revd Eleanor Hancock said she was "thrilled" with the project. The revamp was paid for from donations and the sale of a church hall.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cumbria-36510751>

## **Comment**

**Mail:** What else is the EU elite hiding from us? Comment article notes the Archbishop of Canterbury's article on the EU referendum.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3638190/DAILY-MAIL-COMMENT-EU-elite-hiding-us.html>

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