



Dr Eimhin Walsh, Dr Wolfgang Marx, the Revd Prof Nigel Biggar, Dean Victor Stacey, Dr Kieran O'Mahony OSA, Dr Brad Anderson and Dr Kerry Houston.

St Patrick's Cathedral Sets Scene for 1916 Year of Commemoration

A year of commemorations to mark the centenary of 1916 began in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin,

with a special symposium exploring remembrance and memory on Saturday, January 23. Participants focused on the question: what role should remembering the past play in our lives today?

Distinguished speakers Nigel Biggar (Professor of Moral Theology at Oxford University), Mary Daly (President of the Royal Irish Academy), Brad Anderson (Mater Dei Institute) and Wolfgang Marx (UCD) guided the audience through the ethics of remembrance, the difference between history and memory, as well as what Scripture teaches about commemoration.

The symposium also included performances of music from students of the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama that showed how music can be used to explore commemoration.

Following a welcome by Dean Victor Stacey, Dr Brad Anderson spoke about 'Remembering *In* and Remembering *With* the Bible. Dr Kieran O'Mahony OSA, Augustinian friar and biblical scholar, provided a response.

Dr Wolfgang Marx spoke on the subject of 'Music and commemoration since the First World War:

remembering the dead, educating the living' with a response from Dr Kerry Houston of the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama.

The Revd Professor Nigel Biggar spoke of the Ethics of Remembering with a response by Dr Katie Dunne, Adjunct Assistant Professor in Trinity College Dublin.

Professor Mary Daly spoke on the subject of Memory with a response by Dr Eimhin Walsh, Civic Engagement and Outreach Office at St Patrick's Cathedral.

There are a number of events in the pipeline at the cathedral to remember 1916. On April 24 there will be a service of commemoration for the Easter Rising 1916. In May there will be an event entitled "Cherished Equally: An ecumenical exploration of Irishness". In June 'Proclamation: the Saint Patrick's Cathedral Summer School' will take place. In July there will be a screening of the film *The Battle of the Somme*.

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Bishop of Limerick launches book on the message of mercy

Bishop Brendan Leahy of Limerick recently launched a new book on mercy, which examines the subject through a careful reading of Scripture and by exploring literary classics and popular culture.

‘The Message of Mercy’ is the work of Amalee Meehan, a lecturer in the Masters programme in Christian Leadership in Education at Mary Immaculate College in Limerick. It is published by Veritas.

Speaking at the launch in Mary Immaculate College, Bishop Leahy said that the book contains “many fine references to literature, music and culture in general”.

He said it was “Written with an enviably light touch” and “gently guides us through deep, uplifting and challenging thoughts on mercy”.

Dr Leahy explained that the book “starts with ourselves, then brings us to consider mercy and the family, mercy and the community but then also expands us to look at mercy in the wider world”.



His words were echoed by Professor Fr Michael Hayes who said, “The Message of Mercy calls on its readers to question their own understanding of mercy – towards both themselves and others – and in so doing foster a deeper, more fulfilling relationship with God.”

He added, “In this, the Extraordinary Year of Mercy ‘The Message of Mercy’ explores relevant Scripture passages and revealing extracts from literary classics and pertinent examples from popular culture which will capture the hearts and minds of believers and non-believers alike.”

“The Message of Mercy calls on its readers to question their own understanding of mercy – towards both themselves and others – and in so doing foster a deeper, more fulfilling relationship with God.”

Speaking about the book's contents, Fr Hayes said, "Amalee cites Walter Kasper's important work on 'Mercy – The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life', a book that has been referred to by Pope Francis: 'this book has done me so much good'."

"She describes that book as "heavy lifting", and so it is!"

C of I Day of Prayer for Young People and Youth Ministry

The Church of Ireland will be holding a Day of Prayer for Young People and Youth Ministry across the island on Sunday, February 7.

Last year's day of prayer was the first of its kind and a number of dioceses featured prayer spaces, worship services and 'prayer and pancake' parties which were attended by people of all ages. At each of these events, the focus was on praying for the needs of young people and for the youth leaders and ministries that serve them.

The event has been pioneered by the Church of Ireland Youth Department (CIYD) and is supported by the Archbishops and Bishops of

the Church. Parishes are encouraged to use CIYD's resource pack to organise their events on the day or another Sunday if that is more convenient. The pack contains a selection of prayer ideas that can be used during a service, with some for praying aloud and others as a stimulus for silent prayer or a more interactive form of prayer, including writing and drawing.

These can be used during the Prayers of the People or in any other way that those leading services may consider appropriate. The aim is that the prayers would simply slot in and be part of the rhythm of the worship on that day. Alternatively, CIYD would be delighted to send packs to individuals who would like to join in prayer at home and indeed to anyone who is simply curious about prayer.

Resource packs are available from Amy McCrea, Youth Ministry Development Officer, at amy@ciyd.org

New Methodist Church World Development web site

The Methodist Church in Ireland's (MCI) World Development & Relief (WDR) department has



created a new web site at

<http://methodistworlddevelopment.org/>

The new site contains information on WDR's partners through the use of text, pictures and videos.

WDR is an expression of the Christian values of the Methodist Church in Ireland - faith, justice, compassion, equality and solidarity.

WDR believes that true partnership is the best way to achieve effective community development. It believes partnerships should be built upon trust, transparency, accountability and friendship.

WDR currently has 22 partners in 12 countries:

Asia - Nepal, India, Myanmar

The Americas - Peru, Bolivia, Brazil

Africa - Ghana, South Africa, Uganda,
Zimbabwe, Togo, Ethiopia

Middle East - Lebanon, Israel/Occupied
Palestine

If you want to find out more about the work of
WDR then visit their new site.

Also visit [WDR Facebook](#)

Follow WDR @methodistwdr

Le Tour de Church 2016: Armagh style

While many of us will still be eating our Easter eggs, Armagh's diocesan communications officer, Jonathan Hull, will be spending Easter week circling the roads of the Armagh Diocese on his bicycle to raise funds for the Bishops' Appeal.

The Route - Jonathan will be visiting all 88 parish churches in the Armagh Diocese during the



week of Monday 28th March to Saturday 2nd April 2016. The plan is to spend 1 day in each of the 6 Rural Deaneries that make up our Diocese. Total distance around 400 miles.

You are invited to: 1. Join Jonathan for the whole event, for a day, for half a day or for an hour or two.

2. Plan an event in your local parish to coincide with the cycle passing through, such as a coffee morning or lunch or just a group of people to wave their support! 3. Donate money to our cause – the Bishops' Appeal. For further information, details of the route and to become

involved, please contact Jonathan Hull on 07703 821533 or email dco@armagh.anglican.org

Kilbroney Adventure Camps booking now open

The Youth, Children and Families Department of Down & Dromore diocese ran 3 highly successful Adventure Camps at the Kilbroney Centre last summer, including the brand new J.A.M Camp (Jesus and Me) for children aged 9–11 years.

Booking is now open for summer 2016 and the organisers have added an extra J.A.M. Camp to accommodate the growth in interest. Sibling discounts are also available.

The camps are suitable for children and young people aged 9–17 years and have proven to be of great benefit to campers' faith and development, as well as lots of fun. They are attended by children from across the diocese and, as parents apply directly, there is no need for any leadership involvement from our parishes. It is also common for the friends of the children to want to attend and, as such, the camp is not restricted to Church of Ireland children and young people.



The cost for the Adventure camps is £165 pp and £65 pp for the J.A.M camps. However, there is a discount of 15% on the total cost *if two or more siblings attend* (which will apply on application). There is also financial assistance available to subsidise the cost for any children you might want to go from low-income families.

Contact [Andrew Brannigan](#) for more details.

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Don't confuse traditional marriage with other kinds of unions, says Pope

Pope Francis said there can be no confusion between God's plan for marriage as an indissoluble bond between one man and woman who are open to life, and other sorts of unions.

“The Church, in fact, can demonstrate God's unwavering merciful love toward families, especially those wounded by sin and life's trials, and at the same time proclaim the essential truth of marriage according to God's plan,” the Pope said on Friday, in a meeting with members of the Roman Rota. Francis holds the annual meeting to inaugurate the Vatican court's judicial year.

Pope Francis said the court, which hears requests for marriage annulments, helps support families and the truth about the sacred bond of marriage.

In evaluating and judging marriage cases and contributing to formation, the Roman Rota helps promote and proclaim the truth, he said.

When the Church, through the court's service, seeks to declare the truth about marriage in each specific case, it always bears in mind that those "who, through free choice or unfortunate circumstances in life, live in an objective state of error continue to be the object of the merciful love of Christ and therefore of the Church, too."

The two gatherings of the Synod of Bishops focused on the family were occasions of "in-depth, knowledgeable discernment" and they gave the Church a chance to tell "the world that there can be no confusion between the family desired by God and any other kind of union," the Pope said.

"The family, based on indissoluble, unitive and procreative marriage, is part of God's 'dream' and the Church's for the salvation of humanity," he said.

The Church will always offer the truth about marriage, he said, "not as an ideal for the few, despite modern examples based on what is fleeting and transitory, but as a reality that, with Christ's grace, can be lived by all the baptised faithful."

That means there is great pastoral urgency for adequate marriage preparation, for example, he

said, with a kind of marriage “catechumenate” that was suggested during the synods on the family. A catechumenate would entail a longer process of formation before marriage, as well as during the years right after the wedding.

While the family is considered to be a “domestic Church,” he said, the Church is the family of God. Therefore, the church must be filled with a loving, “family spirit,” where people are “no longer strangers and sojourners,” but members of God’s family, he said.

The Church — as both mother and teacher — knows that not every one of her children is perfect, he said.

“The Church knows that some Christians have a faith that’s strong, formed from love, strengthened by good catechesis and nourished by prayer and a sacramental life,” the Pope said, “while others have a faith that’s weak, neglected, unformed, poorly taught or forgotten.”

The Pope reiterated Church teaching that the level of a person’s faith “is not an essential condition of matrimonial consent” and in fact, he said, it is not unusual for engaged couples to go into a marriage with a limited understanding of the fullness of God’s plan.

“The lack of formation in the faith and even error concerning the unity, indissolubility and the sacramental dignity of marriage invalidate matrimonial consent only when they determine” or condition a person’s will, he said.

Precisely for this reason, “errors which concern the sacramentality of marriage must be evaluated very carefully,” he said.

Real Easter Egg production moves to UK

A church-backed chocolate company which produces the “real Easter Egg” has moved production of its products from Europe to the UK to cope with increased demand. The Real Easter Egg is said to be the only UK Easter Egg to explain the Christian understanding of Easter on its packaging.

The Meaningful Chocolate Company was established six years ago by the Revd David Marshall, a former communications director for the Church of England’s Diocese of Manchester. More than a million of its Easter Eggs have been sold in that time through mail order, churches and mainstream supermarkets.

“Out of the 80 million chocolate Easter eggs sold each year in the UK, The Real Easter Egg is the first and only Fairtrade chocolate Easter egg to explain the Christian understanding of Easter on and in the box,” the company says on its website. “We also give a sizeable donation from profits and Fairtrade Premium fees, to our farmers allowing them to invest in their community buying everything from school books and solar panels to providing fresh water.”

Increased demand means that production has now moved to the factory of Barry Callebaut in Banbury, Oxfordshire, in a move that has been welcomed by the acting Bishop of Oxford, the Rt Revd Colin Fletcher. “The Real Easter Egg began its public life in 2009 encouraged by individuals, churches and schools in Oxford Diocese,” the bishop said. “So it is fitting that sales are sufficient to warrant Fairtrade chocolate being moved to Banbury.

“I pray for all those involved, the workforce, the creative team behind the idea and those who will read the Easter story for the first time in 2016 and discover the Good News of hope and new life.”

David Marshall said: “Increased sales have also meant a bigger Fairtrade Premium is paid to farmers who grow the sugar and Cacao used in

the egg's production. Cash from the premium is used to invest in their communities, where everything from schoolbooks to solar panels has been purchased.”

Canadian Anglicans pledge \$300k for displaced Syrians

More much-needed necessities will soon be on their way to families displaced by the war in Syria. The [Anglican Church of Canada's] Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) on 20 January announced a \$300,000 [CDN, approximately £148,000 GBP] grant for necessities of life such as food, water, shelter, clothing, schooling, blankets, livelihood support, counselling and other forms of aid.

The assistance, PWRDF said, will go to thousands of families left homeless by the war, some still in Syria and others now living in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. The grant is being made through the ACT Alliance, a coalition of 137 faith-based organizations for humanitarian aid, development and advocacy.

PWRDF began working on Syrian relief soon after the country began to be torn apart by civil strife in 2011. This latest grant, however, was made possible by an “enormous outpouring of

generosity from Canadian Anglicans,” PWRDF said, that followed “last year’s focus on Syrian refugees entering Europe, the unfortunate death of Alan Kurdi and the re-emergence of the Syrian situation on the Canadian political agenda.”

Donations to many aid organizations spiked significantly after the publication in early September of a photograph showing the body of Alan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian boy, on a Turkish beach. Alan had died after his crowded boat capsized en route to Greece. Since September 12, 2015, according to PWRDF, Canadian Anglicans have donated \$488,605 for relief in and around Syria.

“This is how people’s donations for Syrian relief are making a difference,” said PWRDF spokesman Simon Chambers.

Until 29 February 2016, these donations are being matched dollar-for-dollar by the Canadian government for its Syria Emergency Relief Fund.

Since Syria’s civil war began in 2011, about eight million people have been made homeless inside the country, and more than four million have fled to other countries, most notably Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. According to the PWRDF,

Syrian refugees now make up more than 20 percent of the population of Lebanon.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

We will not stop using tests, say the governors of Catholic college

Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/we-will-not-stop-using-tests-say-the-governors-of-catholic-college-34392234.html>

Fee-paying schools report better results as recovery takes hold

Irish Times

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/fee-paying-schools-report-better-results-as-recovery-takes-hold-1.2508601>

Tyrone priest 'was frozen out by church for informing on colleague over child porn'

Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/tyrone-priest-was-frozen-out-by-church-for-informing-on-colleague-over-child-porn-34392956.html>

First Minister attends Kingsmill massacre church remembrance service

Belfast Telegraph

Clergy men and women from the local Presbyterian Church, **Church of Ireland** and Methodist Church - Rev Keith McIntyre, Rev Will McCracken, ...

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/first-minister-attends-kingsmill-massacre-church-remembrance-service-34391761.html>

News Letter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/kingsmills-service-marks-four-decades-since-act-of-barbarism-1-7178206>

Amount of police time spent on McConnell case revealed

News Letter

A PSNI team spent a minimum of 163 hours on the Pastor James McConnell case

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/revealed-extent-of-police-time-spent-on-pastor-mcconnell-case-1-7178385>

Alliance Party proposes clampdown on flags flown on lampposts across Northern Ireland

Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/alliance-party-proposes-clampdown-on-flags-flown-on-lampposts-across-northern-ireland-34387367.html>

Guard

Opinion piece by Larry Elliot, Economics Editor, on how the Davos summit was a key gathering of technology pioneers spurring a fourth industrial revolution, the response to which the Archbishop of Canterbury, an

invited visitor to the event, says should be spiritual as well as economic.

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/economics-blog/2016/jan/24/4th-industrial-revolution-brings-promise-and-peril-for-humanity-technology-davos>

Times

Report of concerns over fixing the date for Easter from residents of Whitby, where in 664, at a historic synod King Oswiu of Northumbria decided that his subjects would celebrate Easter in line with Roman dates rather than those used by Celtic monks in Iona. The Archbishop of Canterbury announced this month that he was in ecumenical talks with church leaders with to fix the date.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article4673255.ece>

Times

How, on the 'most depressing' weekend of the year, London was lit up, Westminster Abbey being one of the key sites around the city chosen to host Lumiere installations. Report says the Abbey stayed open late and dropped its entrance fee, thereby encouraging visitors in to the building.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/arts/article4672048.ece>

Tel

A portrait by Tom Croft of Libby Lane, Bishop of Stockport, has been hung in the hall of her alma mater, St Peter's College, Oxford. Principal of the college, Mark Damazer, is quoted saying the college had agreed it was not satisfactory to have only pictures of men. Bishop Lane's portrait was commissioned along with another of Professor Christine Greenhalgh, the first female fellow of St Peter's.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/12118330/Bishop-Libby-Lane-ends-male-monopoly-on-portraits-at-her-old-Oxford-College.html>

Mail

Report that International Development Secretary, Justine Greening, has said the government is considering whether it could do more for the estimated 3,000 children who have fled the conflict without their parents or guardians and are in Europe. The response of the UK government has been previously questioned by groups including Church of England Bishops.

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3414458/Britain-unaccompanied-children-fleeing-Syria.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490

And finally..

Chester Cathedral has reported a 25% increase in visitors to events and services over the Christmas period.

<http://www.so-cheshire.co.uk/local-news/10979/chester-cathedral-experiences-rewarding-christma>