



*Revd Canon Kenneth Kearon, Bishop-elect of Limerick and Killaloe*

## **Methodist leaders to take part in historic consecration of new Church of Ireland Bishop**

A moment of history will occur when the Rev Canon, Kenneth Arthur Kearon will be consecrated as Church of Ireland Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe.

During the service, which will take place in Christ Church Cathedral Dublin this coming Saturday 24th January, the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Rev Peter Murray, The Rev Donald Ker, former President and General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland and former President and Co-Chair of the Covenant Council, the Rev Winston Graham will join with other Church of Ireland Bishops in the laying on of hands on the newly elected Bishop.

This is the first time that participation by Methodist leaders has taken place. It has been made possible by the decision of both the General Synod and the Methodist Conference allowing for the interchangeability of ministry. As a result of this Methodist Presidents are now regarded as Episcopal Ministers and as such can participate in this service. This participation also marks the start of full interchangeability of ministry between both Churches.

The service which commences at 2.30 pm will be led by the Archbishop of Dublin, The Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, and the preacher will be The Most Revd Barry Morgan, Archbishop of Wales.

Canon Kearon has been a member of the Chapter of Christ Church Cathedral since 1995 and served as chancellor since 2002. He has also been secretary general of the Anglican Communion since 2005. In September, 2014, he was elected Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe following a meeting of the Episcopal Electoral College which took place at Christ Church Cathedral, succeeding The Right Rev Trevor Williams who retired in July, 2014.

Born in Dublin in 1953, he attended Mountjoy School and Trinity College where he studied Philosophy. Following further study at Cambridge and in Dublin, he was ordained a priest in 1982 and served as curate in All Saints Raheny and St John's Coolock before his appointment as dean of residence at Trinity College Dublin. In 1991 he became rector of Tullow before becoming director of the Irish School of Ecumenics in 1999. Canon Kearon is married to Jennifer and they have three daughters.

For those unable to attend, the service will be streamed by the cathedral : <http://christchurchcathedral.ie/worship/live-webcast/>

For more information on the Covenant visit the [Covenant Council web site](#)

## **Dublin Catholics invited to take part in worldwide discussion on the family**

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin has invited priests and parishioners to take part in a diocesan wide discussion process in advance of the Synod of the Family this year.

Archbishop Martin will attend the second session of the Synod, called by Pope Francis, in Rome this October on the theme "*The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and Contemporary World*".

In a letter to priests and parishes the Archbishop said it was the desire of Pope Francis that God's people around the world should have an opportunity to make their contribution to the process. He said: "Worldwide, there is a great appreciation of the fact that Pope Francis

wanted to hear the sentiments of God's people on the theme of the Synod. I believe, we owe it to Pope Francis to use this opportunity for reflection– and indeed a new model of Church practice – which he offers.”

It is anticipated that this widespread reflection and discussion process will take place in parishes during the months of February and March. Each Parish is to determine how that discussion should take place.

The responses of each parish are expected back with Diocesan Office for Evangelisation and Ecumenism before the end of March. This will allow for a consolidated report of the Irish Church to be produced in time to prepare the formal working document of the Synod.

Archbishop Martin said there is an important distinction between purposes of the two Synods which should be reflected in the discussion process. He said the aim of the *extraordinary* Synod, held last year was to gather factual information about the situation of the marriage and the family in our times. The aim of the Ordinary Synod of 2015 is to take up the conclusions of the extraordinary Synod and begin to reflect on how Church pastoral services to support marriage and family life, should be strengthened and renewed.

## President Michael D Higgins to Open the Carry Centre at Holy Trinity, Killiney



***The Carry Centre was opened to Parishioners of Holy Trinity Killiney for the first time last Sunday, January 18.***

President Michael D Higgins will perform the official reopening of the Carry Centre, the parish centre of Holy Trinity, Killiney, on Sunday January 25 at 3.00 pm. The newly refurbished centre will be blessed by the Archbishop of Dublin, the Most

Revd Dr Michael Jackson. The President will be welcomed by the Rector, the Revd Niall Sloane.

Over the past six months, the parish has undertaken works to upgrade the Carry Centre to enable the wider community to benefit from the hall. As a parish, Holy Trinity, is committed to rebuilding a sense of community amongst all the residents of Killiney. They have identified the parochial hall as a catalyst for this development.

The upgrading works have brought the hall in line with current regulations and with 21st century expectations. The project has received some small grants from private charities but the majority of funding has come from within the parish through gifts and loans.

In addition to the Centre's current usage, the new hall could be a venue for potential new activities including a mother and toddler group, clinics/workshops, educational activities, senior citizens clubs and socials, integration of non-Irish citizens to the community, ministry to children and young people, youth organisations and groups, local clubs and environmental and heritage awareness events and workshops.

The Revd Niall Sloane said the refurbished centre was part of the parish's plan to strengthen its outreach to the community and contribute more to the development of the surrounding area by meeting the needs of the locality.

“We hope the Centre will provide an invaluable base which those, with the necessary skills but lacking a venue, could utilize to the locality's benefit. Such developments would be seen as generally putting heart into the broader community, which has very little in terms of such collective activities or events, and currently does not even have a venue where such events may take place.

We are delighted that President Higgins will formally open the Centre in January 2015,” he stated.

The original parochial hall was dedicated and officially opened by the Most Revd Dr George Otto Simms, Archbishop of Dublin on Sunday 10 May 1958. Since then it has been a focal point for numerous activities, socials, clubs and events. In November 1986 the hall was renamed 'The Carry Hall' as a tribute to Canon Austin Carry who retired that year and in recognition of



the support which he gave to this project. It is now being renamed 'The Carry Centre'.

## **Irish Catholic group calls for Yes vote to same-sex marriage**

A liberal Catholic lay group has strongly supported calls for a Yes vote in the same-sex referendum next May.

Irish Times - We Are Church (Ireland) also said that adoption and surrogacy are not part of the referendum but will be dealt with in separate legislation.

The group added that its core leadership unanimously supports the proposed referendum on Marriage Equality in Irish Civil Law and believes “social justice requires that loving, committed relationships between two consenting adults should be treated equally by the Irish State, regardless of gender or sexual orientation”.

It continued: “Although civil partnership in [Ireland](#) was an significant step forward in relationship recognition for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people it did not provide them with

the same responsibilities, obligations and status that marriage gives. There are important inequalities still remaining. These range from issues relating to the family home, finance, legal procedures and parent and child.”

## **Evolving institution**

It further noted that the Constitution does not define marriage as between a man and a woman. Article 41.3.1 “states that ‘The State pledges itself to guard with special care the institution of Marriage, on which the Family is founded, and to protect it against attack’,” it said.

“It was the 2004 Civil Registration Act that defined marriage as between a man and a woman. But Irish Courts have consistently interpreted Article 41.3.1 as inferring that marriage is between a man and a woman.”

Marriage, it said “is and has been a rapidly evolving institution”. In Ireland’s past it has included practices like arranged unions, payment of dowries and the legally recognised inferior status of women. Marriage was seen as primarily about the protection of property and wealth rather than based on the free loving assent between two human persons, it said.

It also noted that “the important issues of adoption and surrogacy are not part of this referendum. They are being addressed by separate legislation.”

“The proposed referendum will not redefine marriage but rather refine it to make it more inclusive and so enhance the meaning of marriage,” said We are Church (Ireland) spokesman [Brendan Butler](#).

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/irish-catholic-group-calls-for-yes-vote-to-same-sex-marriage-1.2072853>

## **Canon who discovered Obama's Irish roots is moving on**

The man who discovered Barack Obama's ancestral links to Moneygall is heading for pastures new.

Neagh Guardian - Canon Stephen Neill who has ministered in Cloughjordan for the past seventeen years, is upping sticks and moving to Celbridge in Co Kildare to become Rector of Newcastlelyons parish.



As part of the move he relinquishes his Church of Ireland "Canon" status.

"I will be getting €50 less a month, so I'm not going for the money," he laughs. "But I feel, at 45, I need a new challenge.

I'm too comfortable and I have a bit of an itch that needs to be scratched."

Still, he admits that leaving Cloughjordan won't be so easy for him, his wife Nicola and teenage son Aaron.

"I feel a slight sense of guilt and regret walking away after such a long time, because we have made real friends and people who were with us

through thick and thin. We have been very happy here."

In this week's Nenagh Guardian, Reverend Canon Marie Rowley-Brooke reflects on her eventful tenure of almost 10 years as Rector of Nenagh Union of Parishes. She is retiring now and will hold her final service at St Mary's in Nenagh on February 1st.

## **Irish government says no referendum on blasphemy before election**

The Irish government said it will not hold a national referendum to remove the offence of blasphemy from the country's constitution.

Currently, the crime of blasphemy is punishable by a fine of up to \$28,900 for publishing or uttering material "grossly abusive or insulting in relation to matters held sacred by any religion."

In the wake of the attacks on the satirical French magazine Charlie Hebdo, the Irish government has been under increasing pressure to propose a vote to repeal the blasphemy law. However, Prime Minister Enda Kenny told parliament on

January 20 that his government has no plan to hold such a vote before a general election in the spring of 2016.



***Ireland's Prime Minister Enda Kenny***

The offence of blasphemy was first introduced in Ireland in 1937. However, no one has ever been prosecuted, and in 1999 the Supreme Court ruled that the constitutional provision was incompatible with another article guaranteeing religious equality.

Legislation in 2009 addressed the constitutional conflict and restored the offence of blasphemy, specifying that for a crime to be committed it was necessary that the intent and result are “outrage

among a substantial number of the adherents of that religion.”

A defence is permitted for work of “genuine literary, artistic, political, scientific or academic value.”

The Irish Council of Churches, which represents all mainline Christian traditions in Ireland, including the Catholic Church, has expressed the view that the “current reference to blasphemy in the Constitution of Ireland is largely obsolete and may give rise to concern because of the way such measures have been used to justify violence and oppression against minorities in other parts of the world.”

The Council of Churches said it is “vital to ensure that the rights of individuals and communities to practice and live out their faith openly are protected by law.”

However, it said “these guarantees may be better achieved through established or new constitutional and legislative provisions for the protection for freedom of religion, belief and expression, as well as legislation against discrimination and hate crimes.”

The Constitutional Convention, a 100-member body — one-third elected legislators and two-thirds citizens — has recommended that blasphemy be replaced by a new general ban on incitement to religious hatred.

## **Christian Aid helps Middle East displaced families face winter - Syria and Gaza appeal**

The most violent winter storm for two decades swept across conflict-affected areas of the Middle East last week bringing heavy snow, rainfall, high winds and freezing temperatures.

Christian Aid has sent emergency funds to provide sheeting and blankets for 6,000 people living in temporary accommodation in Gaza, and stoves and fuel for 4,600 people in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley.

Euan Crawshaw, Christian Aid's Regional Emergency Manager for the Middle East said: "The current situation remains precarious for the displaced populations, particularly given the extremely poor conditions in which they already live.



“With the threat of further severe winter weather in the coming weeks, Christian Aid is delivering vital assistance through local partners on the ground in Gaza and Lebanon. We have worked as fast as possible to distribute blankets, plastic sheeting, stoves and fuel to more than ten thousand people.”

Humanitarian needs across the region remain unprecedented, with more than 1.3 refugees from the Syrian conflict in Lebanon, and more than 100,000 people still displaced in Gaza after last year’s Israeli offensive.

The sudden onset of extreme winter conditions has left displaced families in desperate need of basic assistance, with the Palestinian authorities declaring a state of emergency over the storm.

Christian Aid and its partners are continuing to provide immediate lifesaving support for the most vulnerable by purchasing local winter supplies and will continue to monitor the situation closely.

Christian Aid website for more information about their [Syria](#) and [Gaza](#) appeals.

## Media digest

### **Belfast Catholic training college - Funding cut threatens future**

St Mary's Catholic teacher training college in west Belfast is in danger of closing because of the removal of a special payment, according to Sinn Féin.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-30908087>

### **Victims of violence - Deal does not press Dublin to come clean on Troubles role**

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/deal-does-not-press-dublin-to-come-clean-on-troubles-role-say-victims-1-6530426>

### **Academic says Stormont deal asks UK to make full disclosure on past – not Dublin**

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/academic-says-stormont-deal-asks-uk-to-make-full-disclosure-on-past-not-dublin-1-6530428>

### **'Gender divide' in religious belief**

A gender divide exists between men and women in their 40s in belief in God, with a poll suggesting more men describe themselves as atheists or agnostics.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-30910342>

### **Dromore Pub is transformed into alcohol Recovery Cafe**

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/video-pub-is-transformed-into-alcohol-recovery-cafe-1-6533053>

## **BBC Look North/Channel 4**

Archbishop of York, John Sentamu talks about his book *On Rock or Sand?* which was launched yesterday evening.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04y8yvx>

<http://www.channel4.com/news/catch-up/>

## **Guard**

Extract from section by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, which talks about the economic and social divide across the country and how towns and cities already in decline have fewer government resources to support economic development. He also writes about signs of hope, where the Church is acting as catalyst and convenor.

<http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/jan/20/justin-welby-britain-urban-crisis-cities-abandoned-hopeless>

## **Mail**

Further report from the book launch at which Dr Sentamu said Britain needs to rediscover firm and moral principles on which to build its future. Columnist Ephraim Hardcastle also writes about the Archbishop of York who is reported to have described free schools as a 'confused

policy' which helps only the rich. He states Dr Sentamu has opened the Aspire Academy, in Hull, sponsored by the Diocese of York, quoting his prayer for students to aspire and transform their lives.

[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-2918915/UK-needs-rediscover-principles.html?](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-2918915/UK-needs-rediscover-principles.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2919254/](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2919254/EPHRAIM-HARDCASTLE-Mandelson-s-attack-mansion-tax-unsurprising.html#ixzz3PR2k6O83)

[EPHRAIM-HARDCASTLE-Mandelson-s-attack-mansion-tax-unsurprising.html#ixzz3PR2k6O83](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2919254/EPHRAIM-HARDCASTLE-Mandelson-s-attack-mansion-tax-unsurprising.html#ixzz3PR2k6O83)

## **BBC**

Report on how the inquiry into historical child abuse, which will look into institutions including the Church, is likely to be the longest and most complex ever. Article charts the problems over setting up the inquiry.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-30903013>

## **Ind/FT/Times**

Reports on how a coalition of investors has pledged to put pressure on BP and Shell to become more environmentally friendly by forcing the UK oil giants to assess, announce and tackle the dangers they pose to the climate.

They state the [Environment Agency's](#) pension fund has teamed up with more than 150 other investors, including the [Church of England](#) and

several large local authority pension funds and have filed shareholder resolutions urging both oil companies to take more action on global warming.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-change/coalition-of-investors-to-pressure-oil-firms-to-go-green-9991291.html>

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/e4fa3cee-a0c8-11e4-8ad8-00144feab7de.html?siteedition=intl#axzz3PL8mEd6J>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/money/article4328993.ece>

## **Farmers Weekly**

Report that a Christian charity has urged churches to pray for and support British dairy farmers who are struggling to survive amid falling milk prices. The Arthur Rank Centre (ARC), a charity supported by rural churches, said its rallying call was prompted after First Milk announced it would delay payments to 1,200 farmer members because of a financial crisis at the farming co-operative. Canon Dr Jill Hopkinson, national rural officer for the Church of England is quoted.

<http://www.fwi.co.uk/news/pray-for-struggling-british-dairy-farmers-charity-urges.htm>

## **Times/Mail**

Report that middle-aged women are far more likely than men to believe in God and life after death, according to a study of religious views. It found that almost two thirds of women in their early forties believe in some sort of afterlife compared with only a third of men. It states the survey, by the Institute for Education, comes after the Church of England announced that the Rev Libby Lane will be the first female bishop, when she is consecrated as Bishop of Stockport next week.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article4329058.ece>  
[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2919058/Women-likely-believe-God-afterlife-Two-thirds-faith-compared-half-men.html?ITO=1490&ns\\_mchannel=rss&ns\\_campaign=1490](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2919058/Women-likely-believe-God-afterlife-Two-thirds-faith-compared-half-men.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

## **ITV**

Report that the Queen will distribute the Royal Maundy money at Sheffield Cathedral in April. It states it is the first time in over 900 years, that this State Occasion has taken place in South Yorkshire. The Queen will personally distribute a gift of Maundy Money to 178 individuals over the age of 70 in recognition of their service to the church and community.

<http://www.itv.com/news/calendar/update/2015-01-20/the-queen-to-visit-sheffield-for-maundy-thursday/>

## **Guard**

Report that grieving parents of a five-year-old girl whose Zimbabwean grandparents have been refused a visa to attend her funeral have appealed to the prime minister to overturn the Home Office's decision. It states their fight is being supported by the bishop of Chichester, the Rt Rev Dr Martin Warner, who condemned the decision in a letter of support. The report says the Home Office had refused permission for the temporary visa because the grandparents were deemed "too poor" and therefore likely to abscond once in the UK.

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/jan/20/andrea-gada-parents-write-cameron-funeral-visa-plea-rejected>

## **Mirror**

Report on how people with depression or mental illness are more likely to lose benefits than those with a physical condition like a broken leg or bronchitis, according to new data released by a consortium of church groups and charities shows. The most common reason for being sanctioned is being late or not turning up for a Work Programme appointment, according to the data released by the Methodist Church, Church

of Scotland, Church in Wales and mental health charity Mind.

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/ampp3d/how-benefit-sanctions-punish-people-5005786>

## **Tel**

Report that a senior Nigerian clergyman has called for Western ground troops to be sent in to defeat the growing threat from the Boko Haram Islamist group. Bishop Oliver Dashe Doeme, whose diocese in the city of Maiduguri lies in the heart of Boko Haram's northern strongholds, said that foreign "land forces" were the only way to stop a complete terrorist takeover of the region.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/nigeria/11357385/Nigerian-bishop-Send-in-Western-troops-to-crush-Boko-Haram.html>