



St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, in festive green

Keeping A St Patrick's Day Tradition Alive In Cyprus



Soldiers from the Second Battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment currently deployed to Cyprus with the United Nations held their traditional St Patrick's Day celebrations on Saturday 12 March at Wolseley Barracks, Nicosia, along with the other soldiers in the Battlegroup from Northern Ireland.

A traditional Ulster Fry was served for breakfast, after which the soldiers were presented their shamrock by Mrs Antonia Pollington, the wife of Col Seb Pollington, Defence Attaché at the British High Commission in Nicosia.

Among the spectators were officers from An Garda Síochána, who as part of UNPOL, the UN Police force in Cyprus, work alongside the R Irish on a daily basis.

The shamrock tradition dates back to 1900. In that year Queen Victoria, shocked by the losses suffered by Irish soldiers during the Boer War, issued a decree. From that day on all ranks in Her Majesty's Irish regiments would wear a sprig of shamrock to mark the gallantry of their fallen comrades. Before 17th March 1900, the 'Wearin' of the Green' had been banned.

Limerick priest to be new vice-rector of Irish College in Rome

The Pontifical Irish College in Rome has appointed a priest from the diocese of Limerick as its new vice rector.

Fr Paul Finnerty has served as Limerick diocesan secretary for the past 12 years, and will take up his new post this June.

Congratulating Fr Finnerty on his appointment, Bishop Brendan Leahy of Limerick said, "It will be with a heavy heart but the very best wishes that the diocese will bid farewell to Fr Paul after 12 sterling years as diocesan secretary."

Bishop Leahy said that he had been immediately struck by his integrity, hard work and deep humanity, when he himself was appointed bishop in Limerick.

He added that Fr Finnerty would “leave a big gap when he departs” and he paid tribute to the many causes he had championed including the Le Chéile School in Roxboro which he said as a model of an inclusive educational entity would stand the test of time.

Bishop Leahy signalled that after years of service in Limerick as diocesan secretary he and Fr Finnerty had discussed where the young priest might next serve.

One possibility was the missions in Peru but then the position as vice rector of the Irish College in Rome came up and he was recommended for this and selected by the Trustees.

“He will be a great loss to the Diocese of Limerick but a great addition to the Irish College and I have no doubt that he will play a huge role in the formation of many future priests,” Bishop Leahy said.

Commenting on his appointment, Fr Finnerty said, “It is an exciting time to be involved in the formation of future priests who will minister to the pilgrim people of God in Ireland.”

“The face of the Church in Ireland is changing, as is the culture and environment in which

priests will minister. I have had 12 wonderful years here in the diocese of Limerick. It has been a time of great change and a time of great challenge. There were some dark days but there has always been light.”

He said he was leaving the diocese at a time of real hope as it prepares for the Synod next month and the reimagining, together with the people, of how the Church will continue to serve in the years and decades ahead.

Insight from Presbyterian church plant in Donabate

One congregation that began as a church plant and is now a full PCI congregation is Donabate in Co. Dublin. Rev. Andy Carroll was a part of the Donabate church plant from the beginning in 2010, and remains its minister. He will be speaking on 17th April in Ballyclare Presbyterian Church.

“The then Board of Mission in Ireland, CMI’s predecessor, was involved in the very early stages of Donabate, talking through plans with the leadership of Howth & Malahide Church as they sought God’s leading for a possible church plant in Donabate”, Andy said.

“Offering insight, leadership and support to us all in Donabate. We continue to get advice and help from CMI, in particular as we transition from new church to a church with its own local leadership that retains its missional heart.

“We thank God for how He's used the structures and the island-wide people of PCI to see a new church planted and take root in a town where there hasn't ever been a Bible-teaching church. We have felt and experienced the benefits of this connectedness in so many ways”, Andy said.

Wonder of Baptism Shines Out at Clontarf Come&C Service

A celebration of Baptism and Easter was at the centre of the latest Come&C service in Clontarf Parish on Saturday evening (March 12). The 150 year old Church of St John the Baptist was the venue for the service which saw people of all ages renew their baptismal vows and recommit to taking action on the pledges made on their behalf when they became members of the Church.

All the Come&C services are diocesan but with a local flavour designed to enable people from all



Members of the congregation making their thumbprint commitment.

parts of Dublin and Glendalough meet up and get to know each other and see what life is like in other parishes. They also provide an opportunity engage with one of the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion to enable people to deepen their own discipleship while imagining what the Marks of Mission can look like in their own lives.

The service was led by the Rector, the Revd Lesley Robinson, who outlined the history of the church which opened its doors in May 1866 and which is one of the largest Church of Ireland churches on the north side of Dublin. The church has recently undergone extensive renovations and the Rector said their thanks for the resources that were available to carry out the work lay at the heart of their anniversary celebrations.

The parish school is Green Lanes National School and Ms Robinson said it was a blessing to the parish. Children from the school sang during the service.

The theme of the service was 'To Teach, Baptise and Nurture New Believers', based on the second Mark of Mission of the Anglican Communion. The Rector said that since her arrival, the parish had welcomed 59 babies and children to full membership of the Church.

Exploring Baptism the congregation undertook an exercise being piloted by the Church of Ireland Youth Department in their Confirmation programme putting together jigsaws of texts about Baptism. With Easter just around the corner, members of the congregation, young and old, were given the opportunity to renew their

baptismal vows. They made a thumb print commitment on a special banner pledging to recommit to an area of the promises made at their Baptism: to recommit to regular worship; to repent of a persistent sin; to recommit to proclaiming Gospel values; to work on loving and serving others; and to work for peace and justice in the world around us. People placed their thumbprints on their chosen pledge.

The Thumbprint Commitment Banner will join the Good News Banner from Tallaght and the Tree of Hope from Castleknock at the remaining Come&C services.

Pointing out that the Gospel commissions us to Baptise and teach, the Rector called on the assistant parish organist, Stephanie Maxwell who thought the congregation an uplifting Easter hymn from the new hymnal supplement *Thanks & Praise* entitled 'See What a Morning'. The other hymns were played by John Rowden who celebrates a long history as parish organist. The service concluded with prayers based on the Five Marks of Mission and a blessing from Archbishop

Priory Singers anniversary concert tomorrow

The Priory Singers (directed by Robert Thompson) are to give a recital in St Molua's, Stormont tomorrow Friday (18) at 8.00pm. St Molua's focussed as a venue for the very first recitals directed by the late Dr Harry Grindle, and it is appropriate that a 30th anniversary recital be held at St Molua's. The recital will include music for Passiontide.

The director, Robert Thompson, is a former Organist at St Molua's, and the current musical director, Brian Hunter, and several members of the parish choir, sing with the group. All are welcome at this recital, and you can pay at the door (£10).

Belfast Junior Girls' Choir makes its Evensong debut

On Friday March 11 the St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, Junior Girls' Choir sang Evensong for the first time.

They sang the opening plainsong responses, a form of Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis as well as an anthem and a hymn.



The St Anne's Cathedral Junior Girls' Choir.

There was a good attendance of parents and friends and lots of photographs were taken afterwards.

The Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev John Mann, said: "This was an important moment for the 20 young girls, all from the three Cathedral Choir Schools, and they responded well to the challenge.

"Thanks to Thérèse, who directed, and Anna and Aoife, who supported them and to Ian on the organ. It was a most encouraging service and we hope that we will hear more of them as the

months pass and that some of the girls will find a place, after audition, in the Senior Girls' Choir.”

The Cathedral Choir School project teaches choral singing daily in three north Belfast primary schools, Sacred Heart, Edenbrook and Cliftonville Integrated.

Dismay at news of NI prison officer's death

President Michael D Higgins along with church leaders on Tuesday expressed their shock at the “tragic news” of the death of Belfast prison officer Adrian Ismay.

The 52-year-old father of three died from injuries sustained in car bomb attack in Belfast on 4 March.

A new dissident republican group calling itself the New IRA claimed it was responsible for planting the device under the prison officer's van.

In a statement, Bishop Noel Treanor of Down and Connor said he was shocked when he heard the news and extended his deepest condolences and prayerful support to Adrian Ismay's family in their grief, and to his colleagues



Bishop Noel Treanor

within the prison service at this extremely difficult time.

“As a society, let us be more determined than ever to work for peace and for the good of each other,” Bishop Treanor appealed.

He added that the future of Northern Ireland can only find its foundation in community engagement and political dialogue rather than through “the senseless and destructive pursuit of violence”.

President Michael D. Higgins said the news of the prison officer’s death was distressing.

“His family will feel his loss most acutely, but his death is also a travesty to all of us who are committed to the cause of peace in Ireland,” the President said.

On behalf of the people of Ireland, President Higgins extended his heartfelt sympathy to officer Ismay’s family and colleagues.

See CNI yesterday for statements by Moderator of PCI and Bishop Harold Miller.

Derry & Raphoe Diocesan Secretary retires

The pleasant spring weather has arrived in perfect time for Diocesan Secretary, Geoffrey Kelly, who retires today after over 30 years in the post.

Geoffrey – a keen gardener – joined the diocesan office staff in 1982 and since then has been a hugely-valued member of the team. Colleagues and former colleagues joined him yesterday for a lunch at the Beech Hill Country House Hotel to mark his retirement.

Bishop Ken Good thanked Geoffrey for his “faithful service over such a long number of years” and said Geoffrey’s “steady and careful



Retirement party for Geoffrey Kelly

work” was appreciated by all his colleagues. The Bishop presented Geoffrey with a gift in appreciation of his three decades of service to the Diocese and wished him a long and happy retirement.

Geoffrey says he is looking forward to spending a lot more time in his garden and pursuing one of his other main interests – travelling.

With Geoffrey’s departure, the Diocese has created a new post, Diocesan Accountant Administrator. Gavin Harkin, a Chartered Accountant who worked previously with ILEX,

took up the new position in the middle of February.

Church of England 'will change' after abuse report

The Church of England has promised to change the way it handles sexual abuse claims after a report into alleged abuse of a young man by clergymen.

BBC News - The abuse allegedly took place 40 years ago, and the man's repeated attempts to get help from the Church resulted in "frustration and failure", child protection expert Ian Elliott said.

His report said "very senior" church figures were reportedly told of abuse.

The Church accepted the recommendations of the "deeply uncomfortable" report.

The man has already received an "unreserved apology" and a "financial settlement", the Church added....

... Bishop of Crediton Sarah Mullally said the abuse had "clearly devastated" the victim's life.

"I apologise profusely for the failings of the Church towards him, and for the horrific abuse he suffered," she said.

"It has taken him years of heartache and distress to get his story heard and believed by those in authority and it is clear he has been failed in many ways over a long period of time.

"We should have been swifter to listen, to believe and to act. This report is deeply uncomfortable for the Church of England."

She said the Archbishop of Canterbury had seen the report's recommendations and would ensure they were implemented "as quickly as possible".

The recommendations include training for people who "may receive a disclosure of abuse", and detailed recording of all abuse allegations.

More at - <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-35813744>

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Theft from Presbyterian Church denied - News Letter

A 56-year-old man has denied stealing £22,000 from a Presbyterian Church.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/man-denies-22-000-theft-from-co-londonderry-church-1-7277974>

Sinn Fein Education Minister accused of bias in allocation of funds - News Letter

The outgoing Sinn Fein Education Minister has been accused of using an eight-figure tranche of cash to help indulge an “obsession” with Irish language schools.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/o-dowd-school-buildings-cash-shows-irish-obsession-dup-1-7278912>

West Belfast parents protest at school staff absenteeism - News Letter

About 20 parents of children in De La Salle College in west Belfast protested outside the school on Tuesday about ongoing staff absences at the school.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/parents-protest-outside-west-belfast-college-over-staff-absences-1-7279006>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-35809434>

Guard/BBC/Mail/Times/Ind/Christian Today/Tel/Church Time

Reports on publication yesterday of the independent Elliott Review (see *above*), commissioned by CofE into its handling of disclosures from a survivor of alleged sexual abuse by two senior church figures. Bishop of Crediton, Sarah Mullally, received and commented on the findings at the request of the survivor. Many publications saw full report and detail both the abuse and failure by the Church to respond adequately. The Archbishop of

Canterbury has said he will ensure the recommendations are implemented as soon as possible.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/15/damning-report-reveals-church-of-england-failure-to-act-on-abuse>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-35813744>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3494461/Dozens-Church-England-officials-ignored-sex-abuse-victim-decades.html>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article4714329.ece>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/church-of-england-figures-ignored-sadistic-abuse-of-15-year-old-boy-by-senior-priest-for-40-years-a6932641.html>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12195083/Archbishop-of-Canterburys-office-criticised-for-ignoring-abuse-complaints.html>

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2016/18-march/news/uk/abuse-case-turns-spotlight-on-to-flawed-c-of-e-safeguarding-practices>

Ind/Sun/Premier/Mail/Tel

Reports a TV documentary, which reappraises the life of Judas Iscariot presented by the Revd Kate Botley. All feature quotes from the Bishop of Leeds, Nick Baines, in comments to the *Radio Times*, saying, "I feel a bit sorry for Judas. Judas had invested himself in the revolutionary leadership of Jesus of Nazareth ... only to find himself let down." *In The Footsteps Of Judas* will be shown on BBC One at 9am on Friday March 25.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/did-biblical-villain-judas-iscariot-get-a-lousy-press-church-of-england-clerics-bishop-of-leeds-and-a6932596.html>

<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/7003448/Church-chiefs-insist-bible-villain-Judas-has-had-a-lousy-press.html?redirect=true>

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/I-feel-sorry-for-Judas-says-bishop>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3492865/I-feel-bit-sorry-Judas-says-leading-bishop-Cleric-argues-traitor-s-betrayal-complicated-Bible-suggests.html>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12193826/Judas-has-had-a-lousy-press-as-prominent-clerics-call-for-a-reappraisal-of-the-disciple-who-betrayed-Jesus.html>

Christian Today

Reports that the Nigerian primate, Archbishop Nicholas Okoh has pleaded for "special status" in the worldwide church to allow it to maintain its stance on homosexuality. Nigeria has also announced it is to boycott the next meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council meeting in Lusaka, Zambia. In his statement, Archbishop Nicholas pleads the case for a "special status" for provinces within the Anglican Communion to continue to uphold the "traditional biblical standard on marriage and homosexuality".

Even Stand

Report on the sentencing yesterday at Blackfriars Crown Court of retired vicar Leonard Skinner, who was jailed for eight years for sexual offences against boys in the 1970s. He was working as a vicar in Grange Park, Enfield, London diocese, when he carried out the abuse. <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/exvicar-abused-boy-from-enfield-church-over-four-year-period-a3204126.html>

Tel

Review of last night's *Mary Barry's Easter Treats* on BBC, describing the programme as 'thoughtful and insightful'.

It included material shot at Lambeth Palace with the Archbishop of Canterbury.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/food-and-drink/features/mary-berrys-easter-feast-episode-one-thoughtful-and-insightful/>

Guard

Further coverage that Canon Jeremy Pemberton, who last year lost an employment tribunal against the CofE, has said he has won the right to appeal the decision. The tribunal had ruled he was not discriminated against when he was stopped from taking up a new post as a hospital chaplain after marrying his partner, Laurence Cunnington. But he said that he has heard from the Employment Appeal Tribunal that they had accepted his application for an appeal and there would be a two day hearing later in the year.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/15/gay-clergyman-jeremy-pemberton-to-appeal-after-losing-discrimination-claim>

Co-operative News

An article highlighting the growth and performance of Credit Unions in the UK. The item notes the launch of a Task Force Group by the CofE in January 2014 as part of its aim to promote a fairer financial system.

<http://www.thenews.coop/103623/news/banking-and-insurance/credit-unions-the-mystery-of-the-disappearing-members/>

BBC

Reports that the funeral of Sir George Martin, the Beatles producer who died last week at the age of 90, has taken place. His manager confirmed a private ceremony was held on Monday. The *Sun* reported close family and

March 17

friends attended the ceremony at All Saints church in
Coleshill, Wiltshire, where Sir George lived.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-35814797>

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