

CNI
CHURCH
NEWS
IRELAND

**The largest review of
Irish church news
published today**



Ulster rugby stars at Shankill Church

Three legends from Ulster Rugby – Paul Marshall, Ruan Pienaar and Johann Muller (pictured left to right with the rector) – recently stopped off at Shankill Parish Church to do some filming for a programme about Christians in Sport.

All three are Christians with strong faith and were on their way to a Christian Vision for Men event in the Hub at Brownlow. In the recordings at Shankill, the three stars spoke of how Jesus is their captain, their guide, their all – inspiring stuff.

The vision of CVM is to connect men with Church and Church with men and the recordings will be used in a variety of settings to encourage even the strongest of men to see a personal relationship with Jesus as something which we all need to bring wholeness and completeness.

All three took time out to chat with some parishioners who were in the church and posed for photographs. They were welcomed to Shankill Parish by the Rector Geoff Wilson and they were impressed with the grandeur, elegance and the quiet presence of Shankill Parish Church.

Parishioners Urged to Have Their Say in Diocesan Vision

A new initiative to create a Vision Statement for Dublin and Glendalough is underway. The document will help to guide the expression of vision and mission in the United Dioceses and in order for it to reflect the voices of a wide range of people, the Archbishop is looking for input from parishioners throughout Dublin and Glendalough.

For the first time parishioners in all areas are being asked their opinions. They are being asked for information which will provide a picture of life in their parish and what they as parishioners celebrate together.

The aim of the process is to tie two strands of life together – the life of the parish and the life of the dioceses. Parishioners often think of their parochial lives as taking place within certain boundaries. However, what they do in their parishes contributes to the overall life of the dioceses and can be celebrated in that broader context.

This process of finding points of celebration started with the Diocesan Growth Forum in Autumn 2012. Many initiatives have sprung from that gathering but are often going unsung by the diocesan family. Other parishes may find inspiration by seeing what their neighbours are doing and may be able to look to each other for help and support.

The survey will provide direction for diocesan thinking. By providing a picture of what is going on in the parishes, parishioners will help to shape where the dioceses as a whole is going and where development and resources can be channelled in the future. Clergy have also contributed at a gathering which took place in November.

Archbishop Michael Jackson is urging every parish to take part as it is only by hearing a wide range of voices that a full picture can be painted. He points

out that activities which a parish may consider insignificant can be part of the lifeblood of the parish.

“I am delighted to be able to encourage all members of the United Dioceses to participate in the Mission and Vision Initiative which I am offering to the people of the dioceses. I trust that it will give you a chance to celebrate and to share what matters most to you in the life of your parish. As I go from parish to parish I see strong evidence of commitment to making a difference in parishes and in communities in Dublin, Wicklow and Kildare,” he stated. “I also hope that you will enjoy doing this together and that you will find the hand of God moving you forward as you participate in shaping the next stage of Christian presence in your community. I wish to express my appreciation in advance to you for your participation. I wish you all that is best as you discover the exciting things which you are already doing as well as those you want to do in your parish in the future,” he concluded.

A letter from Archbishop Jackson has been emailed to representatives in every parish along with a questionnaire.

Anyone who has not seen this communication can download it [here](#).

<http://dublin.anglican.org/news/2014/03/Dublin-and-Glendalough-Parishioners-Urged-to-Have-Their-Say-in-Diocesan-Vision.php>

The power of invitation - Back to Church Sunday

A Season of Invitation began as ‘Back to Church Sunday’ in 2004, which was an annual opportunity for churches across the UK and abroad to invite people to come with them to church.

Ten years on, ‘Back to Church Sunday’ has launched a new initiative, moving from one invitational service to five. As we prepare for a Year of Mission in 2015, let’s take another look at the very simple but powerful act of invitation.

- Back to Church Sunday (September)
- Harvest (October)
- Remembrance (November)
- Christmas Starts (early December)
- Christmas (December)

Visit their [brand new website](#) to learn more and access a host of resources.

<http://seasonofinvitation.co.uk/>

Conference on anger for counsellors and pastoral carers

Anger is the subject of The Association of Christian Counsellors (NI) and Pastoral Carers Spring Conference.

It will take place on 14 and 15 March for those in your congregations involved in pastoral care (14th) or in counselling (15th) in Orangefield Presbyterian Church, Belfast.

The speaker, Pauline Andrew, who wrote the book Toxic Church, has much to share on how to deal with anger in pastoral, counselling and church situations and how to recognise and handle our own anger.

Book on the ACC website www.accni.co.uk

TOO ANGRY
TO SPEAK & TOO ANGRY TO LISTEN

2014
SPRING CONFERENCE

14 & 15TH MARCH 2014
Fri + Sat: 10am-4pm, Orangefield Presb
464 Castlereagh Rd, Belfast, BT5 6BH
registration: accni.co.uk

Price: £35 | Members: £30 | Per Day
*friday is primarily for pastoral carers
saturday is primarily for counsellors
includes lunch & refreshments / cpd inc.*

Engage children with the Bible training

Training outline: Engaging the heart, Engaging Hostility, Engaging Boys, Engaging BIG WORDS.

Rory Bell is director of Teaching and Training Ministries, an organisation that equips ordinary people to teach the Bible to children.

Rory and his wife, Kim, have worked in a number of different sized churches in a range of contexts both in South Africa and the UK. He has conducted extensive training in churches and theological colleges in South Africa, Singapore, Dubai, Zimbabwe, Uganda and throughout the UK and parts of Europe.

When: Saturday 22 March 2014 from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm

Venue: St Elizabeth's Church Halls, Church Green, Dundonald, Belfast, BT16 2LP

Cost: £15 per person (includes refreshments
– bring your own packed lunch)

Booking is essential!

Online: www.tntministries.org.uk/conferences

Email: ror@tntministries.org.uk

Mobile: 0772 266 3703



Dublin and Glendalough Kids Camp

The United Dioceses of Dublin & Glendalough have announced details of their 2014 Kids' Camp. The camp will take place from Sunday June 29 to Friday July 4 2014 in St Columba's College, Whitechurch, Dublin 16.

The week will be full of the best of what camp has to offer: plenty of games, outdoor pursuits, swimming, disco, arts and craft, good friends, laughter and fun. It's a place where kids can hang out and just relax. There will be great adventures in a safe and caring environment. Kids will be enabled to be themselves and will have opportunities to explore their faith in God.

The cost for the week will be €175 which includes all food, accommodation, trips and activities. Tuck shop money is all that is required at camp. The Camp is open to those finishing 4th Class up to 6th Class and booking is on a first come first served basis.

For further information contact Lynn Storey:

dublinandglendaloughkidscamp@gmail.com, mobile – 087 6957061.

Brochure at -

<http://dublin.anglican.org/news/2014/03/Details-of-Dublin-and-Glendalough-Kids-Camp-Announced.php>

Ramoan Youth Fellowship sponsors schoolchildren in Tanzania

Members of Ramoan Parish's youth fellowship (Ballycastle) hosted a coffee morning which raised funds to sponsor school places for 10 children in Tanzania.

The young people and their leader, Mrs Shona Bell, heard about the work carried by the charity Kids 4 School at a service in church. This Larne based charity provides support to children in Tanzania in order that they can attend school.

The youth fellowship decided to do something to help the children of Tanzania and organised a coffee morning held in the rectory prior to worship.

They raised enough to sponsor 10 children, and Mrs Joanne McFarlane, a representative of Kids 4 School, recently visited the parish to meet the young people who had organised the coffee morning.



Sister Churches Lent Course

The Dalkey Sister Church's Lent Course takes place on Tuesdays during Lent at 7.30 pm in Our Lady's Hall. This year's subject in response to requests last year is 'Social Justice in the Bible Today.'

The programme is:

March 11: Revd Prof John Bartlett, Social Justice Principles from the Bible

March 18: Yanky Fachler, Jewish Insights and Practice derived from Torah and Tanakh.

March 25: Fr Peter McVerry SJ, Putting our Principles into Practice in today's world.

April 1: Anne Thurston, Gender, Justice and the Women of Luke's Gospel.

April 8: Fr Kieran O'Mahony OSA, Welcoming the Alien and the Stranger.

Clergy and parishioners of St Patrick's Church of Ireland and the Church of the Assumption are most grateful to the speakers. There is no charge for attendance, but contributions towards expenses and honoraria can be made on each occasion.

Service marks fifth anniversary of Massereene murders

A cross-community service of remembrance has taken place at the site where two soldiers were murdered by dissident republicans five years ago.

Belfast Telegraph - Rev Stephen McBride from All Saints Church of Ireland joined Father Sean Emerson at the gates of the former Massereene Army Barracks yesterday.

Prayers were said for Sappers Mark Quinsey (24) and Patrick Azimkar (21), who were killed at there by gunmen.

The soldiers had been collecting pizzas for their colleagues just hours before they had been due to deploy to [Afghanistan](#) from the then base. A pizza delivery man was also injured in the hail of bullets.

An act of remembrance took place at the memorial to the soldiers in Market Square, Antrim, before a service outside the former barracks.

[Ulster](#) Unionist councillor and chairman of the Antrim branch of the Royal British Legion (RBL), Paul Michael, said people in the area could hardly believe it had already been five years.

"It shows how strong the feeling still is in Antrim that people are still so keen to remember them," he said.

When the Army vacated Massereene in 2012, they took a memorial to Sappers Quincey and Azimkar with them. The RBL erected a memorial to them at the cenotaph at Market Square, but talks are under way about founding a new one at the site of the shooting.

PUP's Ken Wilkinson, who also attended, said he was in touch with the family of Sapper Azimkar and said acts of remembrance meant a lot to them. The sappers' families did not attend.

On Monday, the [Belfast](#) Telegraph reported comments made by the mother of Patrick Azimkar paying tribute to the people of Antrim for remembering her son.

She said it "warmed" a cold place for her.



Irish highlight gap between church teaching and practice in views on contraception, remarriage and gays

Two of Ireland's most prominent dioceses say responses to the Vatican survey on marriage and the family reveal a gap between Church

teaching and practice.

Sarah McDonald, *The Tablet* - Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin said the responses to the questionnaire indicated a “theory-practice” gap in relation to the Church’s teachings, which were poorly accepted and disconnected from real-life experience of families. His remarks relate to answers given to questions on contraception, Communion for divorced and remarried Catholics, and same-sex unions.

Respondents in the Archdiocese of Tuam indicated, for example, that while *Humane Vitae*, Pope Paul VI’s encyclical banning artificial contraception, was for the most part well understood, it was not generally accepted. The decision by Dublin and Tuam to publicise the survey findings contradicts an earlier statement by the Irish Bishops’ Conference that none of the results would be published. A decision not to publish has also been taken by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales.

The Vatican asked bishops’ conferences last year to circulate the questionnaire as widely as possible so that the findings can be considered by the synod to be held in Rome in October on the theme of “Pastoral challenges of the family in the context of evangelisation”.

A spokesman for the Irish bishops said two weeks ago that the results from the survey would not be released because it was “a matter for the synod of bishops and not the local Church”, adding it would “undermine the integrity of the information collection process”. But Archbishop Martin revealed some of the survey findings at a meeting for priests and parish council members in the north Dublin deanery on 27 February, while Archbishop Michael Neary published some results in the Tuam diocesan magazine.

Archbishop Martin cited one reply, which stated that “Church teaching often appears theoretical and remote from an understanding of the real lived experience of couples”, while another responded, “a lot of preaching and teaching does not relate to everyday life; it is above the head of struggling and hurt people”.

On cohabitation of couples before marriage or due to divorce and remarriage, concern was expressed about the high number of people in this situation.

“Many spoke of these people suffering, feeling guilty, feeling marginalised, feeling excluded, feeling hurt, even despised,” the archbishop revealed, adding: “The strong pattern in the responses was that there should be an attitude of openness and compassion, outreach and welcome to these people, with less judgment and more listening to their experience.”

The survey respondents also stressed that children should never be victimised in such situations and that if parents wished their children to have a religious education they should be welcomed in love.

Regarding same-sex relationships, some respondents in Dublin saw the Church's position "as being purely negative and judgemental" and many felt there should be some way of civilly recognising stable same-sex unions although there was uneasiness and opposition to gay marriage.

In Tuam, respondents said the rate of cohabitation before marriage is "very high" and that "it was felt by some that there was a sustained cultural/secular campaign to normalise this situation and society readily accepts this."

On same-sex marriage it was stated: "The pastoral care of homosexual persons has not been as sensitive as it might have been."

This week, the Catholic Communications Office in Maynooth appeared to signal a shift in the position on whether dioceses would share the synod survey results.



Deep concerns at handling of clerical abuse case were cut out of church report: author

The former head of the Catholic Church's child safety watchdog has revealed that serious concerns he had about the handling of an abuse case in [Northern Ireland](#) were omitted from an official report.

Belfast Telegraph - Ian Elliott alleges that the Diocese of Down and Connor blocked the release of information it held about its handling of the case of ex-priest Jim Donaghy, who was jailed for 10 years in 2012 for abusing two altar boys and a trainee priest.

Mr Elliott investigated the diocese last May, a month before his retirement from the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church.

The report on the diocese that was subsequently published by the safeguarding board last December, did not refer to his concerns, and gave the diocese a clean bill of health.

The Bishop of Down and Connor, Dr Noel Treanor, declined to answer questions about the "contents and integrity" of the report, saying it was a matter for the safeguarding board.

In a statement, he said the diocese was "fully open" and "transparent" in its dealings with the board. Mr Elliott said the report that was published did "not accurately reflect the child protection situation" in Down and Connor.

He said he tried to investigate the Donaghy case last year, but was blocked by the diocese from doing so on the grounds that there was no basis for a review.

However, he later uncovered records that indicated to him an investigation of the handling of the Donaghy case was necessary.

"What was known to the diocese wasn't shared with us," Mr Elliott said.

Last night the National Board for Safeguarding Children issued a statement and said that it "rejects any implication that any external pressure was brought to bear on the authors of the report.

It added: "The allegations made by Ian Elliot appear to question the professionalism and integrity of our board, our CEO and our staff.

"Consequently, we are seeking legal advice regarding our options and will make no further comment at this time".

Mr Elliott has previously clashed with Dr Treanor, who accused him of spinning against the church in media briefings.

An inquiry led by a retired Supreme Court judge in the Republic found there was no basis for this claim.

Mr Elliott conducted "field work" in the diocese – the second largest in Ireland in terms of population, covering Antrim, Down and parts of Derry – last May.

"I was directly involved in this investigation, so I know exactly what the findings were," he said.

"The report was issued in December of last year, after my departure.

"The concerns that I raised with the (Irish) minister were that the report does not equate with the findings of the field work.

"It was attributed by the bishop as coming from me, but nothing could be further from the truth.

"This is not my report. These are not my findings and this is not what has resulted from the field work that I was involved in."

Mr Elliott contacted the safeguarding board seeking an explanation, but said none was forthcoming.

Before his retirement, Mr Elliott said he held face-to-face meetings with Dr Treanor and the chairman of the safeguarding board, [John Morgan](#). "They are both intimately aware what the concerns were and they are not reflected in the report," he said. More at -

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/deep-concerns-at-handling-of-clerical-abuse-case-were-cut-out-of-church-report-author-30074228.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-26495820>

Prayer for Today

**O God, in you we live
and move and have our being. You have blessed us with the gift of life and a
world
to live in. In you we are blessed and we offer praise and thanks. Empower and
strengthen the witness of your
church throughout the world, that true to its calling it may em
body your radical and boundless love. Strengthen
all the members of the Body of Christ. Grant that, nourished and sustained by
Word and Sacrament, our service
and witness in this and every land may be full of faith and love.**