



Parishioners from Derry & Raphoe worship in candlelight at launch of 'Year of opportunity'

Derry and Raphoe's 'Year of Opportunity 2016' to focus on focus on mission, children and generosity

Hundreds of parishioners from all across the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe converged on Letterkenny on Friday evening for a special

event to celebrate the Diocese's 'Year of Opportunity 2016'. They were joined by leaders of other Christian churches in the North West and among the highlights was a video message – which had arrived only hours before the event began – from the Bishop of Butere, in Kenya, whose first Christian church was established by a missionary from Derry and Raphoe one hundred years ago this year. The event included prayers and hymns – among them a rendition of 'Amazing Grace' led by local piper Billy Doherty.

This year, 2016, has been designated a 'Year of Opportunity' in Derry and Raphoe, with a special focus on mission, children and generosity. Bishop Ken Good told the hundreds gathered in Letterkenny Institute of Technology that they were embarking on this year "not out of a sense of duty or as a burden or an inconvenience, but with a sense of gratitude, of love and of thanksgiving in joyful response to what God has first done for us."

Bishop Good reminded those present of the Church of Ireland Census of November 2013, which revealed that 80% of Church of Ireland people chose not to be in church on Sunday mornings. He described this as a real spiritual and missional challenge. "This Year of Opportunity is about taking the 80% census

statistic seriously. It's about believing that God has a future and a hope for his church and we want to get involved in seeing things change. Before God we are acknowledging that mission really matters.”

The Bishop also outlined to the audience the “creative plans” which parish teams throughout Derry and Raphoe had come up with to reach out and make connections with people during the Year of Opportunity. They include a parable pageant, wedding dress festivals, a Mission Week, Walks of Witness, a flute band event, a Village Nativity Event and a Bible Reading Marathon. Commending parish teams for their initiative, Bishop Good said: “Change and growth happens ‘one life at a time,’ ‘one person at a time’, ‘one step at a time’, ‘one spiritual encounter at a time’.”

Friday night's celebration event saw the first copies of a new booklet – produced by the Diocese – being distributed. ‘One More Step’ recounts the faith journeys of nine members of the Derry and Raphoe Diocese and is intended to be used as a prayer resource in parishes. One of those featured in the booklet, Omagh fire-fighter Paddy Quinn, joined the Bishop on-stage to share his personal faith experience. A free copy of the booklet was given to everyone

present and free copies were also distributed to parish teams.

In his video message to the Celebration Event, the Bishop of Butere, Tim Wambunye, thanked Derry and Raphoe for its generosity towards his diocese. His film showed the financial difficulties experienced by his clergy as they minister to a growing diocese of around 30,000 members. Bishop Good told the audience that a Confirmation Group in Macosquin had undertaken to raise one thousand pounds by May 15th which would be used to provide a cow for one of the parishes in Kenya. He sensed that “this project could catch on as a timely idea” for other parishes here.

The event in Letterkenny had light as its theme.

As it ended, the audience were invited to switch on small electronic tea-lights, symbolising their commitment to the Year of Opportunity.

Bishop Good said the Year of Opportunity 2016 was about members of parishes all over the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe “being the light of the world, making a positive difference in Transforming Community and Radiating Christ, as we ‘let our little light shine.’”



Trocaire photographic exhibition in Newry

If you are near Newry, check out the stunning photo exhibition showcasing our work in Kenya, by award-winning photographer, Justin Kernoghan.

The exhibition is highlighting the #UKAid Match initiative, which means all donations to the Lent campaign in Northern Ireland matched by DFID - UK Department for International Development.

The exhibition will be in the Buttercrane Shopping Centre, Newry from Monday 14th to Saturday 26th March.

Documentary on Irish nun's education for girls in South Sudan

South Sudan is the world's youngest country, and despite huge hopes, educating girls is still a rarity.

Only 35% of girls in South Sudan will attend school, and of those a large majority will drop out. It's not just a matter of getting girls into school, it's a case of keeping them there too.

One person who understands the importance of educating South Sudan's girls is Loreto nun Sr Orla Treacy IBVM.

A Co Wicklow native from Bray, Sr Orla has dedicated her life to educating South Sudan's girls.

Over the last 10 years, Sr Orla as Principal of the Loreto Secondary School in Rumbek has passed on her love and enthusiasm for education to all of her students.

The school has grown from 35 students to 183 attracting girls from all across South Sudan.



Sr Orla Treacy IBVM from Bray is principal of the Loreto Secondary School in Rumbek which has grown from 35 students to 183 since it opened in 2008.

Sr Orla spoke to Fergal McCarthy in South Sudan for a Misesan Cara commissioned documentary “South Sudan 101: Education in the World’s Youngest Country” which was broadcast on Newstalk FM on Saturday, 12 March.

The documentary focuses on the transformation that education can achieve through the work of Irish missionaries like Sr Orla.

She herself had an unorthodox nomadic childhood as she and her family relocated to different parts of Ireland every few years until

they finally settled in Bray, Co Wicklow. It was here that Sr Orla's calling to be a Loreto Sister was born.

“While I was a student in the finishing school, I had a strong desire to be a Loreto Sister. When we came obviously South Sudan didn't exist, it's a new country since 2011 and we've just celebrated our fourth year of independence,” says Sr Orla.

In 2004, the Loreto Sisters in Ireland and worldwide started a new movement called ‘Courage to Move.’

It was an invitation for all Loreto Sisters in different countries to start a new mission, to re-engage with missionary spirit that was reflected in the early foundations, and to try to start a new mission in new countries. Sr Orla was one of many who took up the call.

“I actually felt very drawn to the idea of coming here, and working in South Sudan. I had never been to Africa. I didn't know anything about the life of a missionary as such but there was just some attraction to it.”

“That was 10 years ago, and I'm still here. I feel very much at home. There is a massive challenge every day. There is definitely a God-

thing in it because I think the whole mission that we have here is one big miracle after another,” says Sr Orla, “it’s been a great journey, and it’s great to see the girls grow. It’s great to see the school grow.”

The Loreto Secondary School is located on the edge of Rumbek town the capital of the Lakes State. It’s the only school of its kind in the region.

“We started with the Secondary School with two classes with 35 girls, and we now have 183 girls...They live with us pretty much like the Irish school timetable,” says Sr Orla, “we have three terms in the year. They can go home every mid-term if their families are close enough depending on what is happening or they can stay here with us during the mid-term.”

Bangor diocese visits Meath & Kildare

Nine members from Bangor Diocese visited Meath and Kildare diocese. Bangor is a partner diocese with Meath and Kildare. Their team was led by Bishop Andy John.

The Bangor team were hosted by members of Meath and Kildare. During the weekend they had an opportunity to hear about life in Meath and Kildare parishes. There was also a visit to Kildare Cathedral, and local parishes as well as a special Service in Trim Cathedral on the Sunday evening, with singing led by the diocesan choir. Bishop Andy was interviewed by Bishop Storey at Sunday morning Service in Dunboyne.

Bangor diocese covers the whole of the north-western quarter of Wales, taking in the old counties of Anglesey, Caernarfon, Meirionnydd and the northern portion of Montgomeryshire, and is roughly co-terminous with the ancient kingdom of Gwynedd. It extends from the port of Holyhead in the north to the rural market town of Llanidloes in the south; from the holy island of Bardsey in the west to Llandudno in the east, along the North Wales coastal strip; behind which lies Snowdonia and the most mountainous areas of Wales.

C of I Clerical installations

Yesterday (Sunday) the former Dean of [Cashel](#), Dr [Philip Knowles](#), preached at the installation of the Revd [David Hilliard](#), Rector of Tartaraghan & the Diamond, and the Revd Joyce Moore, an

NSM working in the parish of [Dundalk](#), as canons of St Patrick's cathedral, Armagh. Canon Moore is the first female canon in the cathedral's long history. In [Belfast](#) the Bishop of Connor introduced Canon [James Carson](#) as Minister-in-Charge of the parish of St Stephen, St Luke & St Michael.

Moderator announces first "farming minister" during Ayr Presbytery visit

The Church of Scotland is appointing its first ever dedicated "farming minister" to help support people in the hard-pressed agricultural industry.

Moderator of the General Assembly the Rev Dr Angus Morrison unveiled the "innovative and creative" Pioneer Ministry post during a visit to Ayr Mart this morning.

The announcement has been warmly welcomed by National Farmers Union Scotland and rural charity RSABI who say the perilous state of the ailing sector is taking a "serious" toll on the health and wellbeing of many people who too often "suffer in silence".



The Church of Scotland is to appoint a' minister for farming' Rt Rev Dr Angus Morrison unveiled the "innovative and creative" post during a visit to Ayr livestock mart

Union leaders say low produce prices and major problems with Common Agricultural Policy payments were contributing to high levels of stress and mental health issues among farmers, who often feel isolated and cut off from other people.

Dr Morrison, who grew up in the Highlands, said: "I am delighted to announce the creation of this new ground breaking post to reach out to people in the farming community in Ayrshire.

"It is hoped that through this new position the Church can meet farmers where they are and build relationships that will allow an understanding of the issues and stresses related to modern day farming.

"The Church cares deeply about people in all our communities and I am confident that whoever fills this important role will make a substantial difference to the lives of many people.

"Ayr Presbytery is to be warmly congratulated for responding to a pressing need in such an imaginative way."

The Pioneer Minister, who is expected to have a keen understanding of rural affairs, will visit farms to provide spiritual and family support, counselling and champion the industry, workers' rights and encourage people to buy local produce.

They will also interact with young farmer groups, NFU representatives, visit the weekly livestock mart, annual agriculture shows and draw together groups of people linked to the industry like vets, mart staff and estate workers.

The five-year pilot post, which is being advertised shortly, could be rolled out across other parts of rural Scotland in the future if it

proves successful in reconnecting rural Ayrshire with Christianity.

Thousands visit Edinburgh's Royal chapel within days of re-opening

A Royal chapel considered to be one of Scotland's architectural jewels has finally re-opened to the public after being shut for more than a year due to a spate of thefts.

[St Giles Cathedral](#) in Edinburgh has hired Gary Wilson and Andrew Barr to provide security in the Thistle Chapel, which is the spiritual home of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle - Scotland's order of chivalry.

More than 5,700 people have visited the Cathedral since the ornate room, which contains stalls for the 16 knights and Lady, the Sovereign's stall and two Royal stalls, was re-opened to the public on Monday.

Mr Wilson, 26, an ancient history graduate from Edinburgh University, said he was delighted to be playing a part in ensuring visitors were once again able to marvel at the unique, ornate carvings.



Gary Wilson is one of two new guards who will keep a watchful eye over the Thistle Chapel in St Giles Cathedral.

The Thistle Chapel was locked in February last year following a spate of thefts.

Ceremonial items including a seat cover, a 19th-century Dutch alms plate, an altar cloth, a tassel from the Queens's throne cushion and a plaque which commemorated Alexander Bruce, the 6th Lord Balfour of Burleigh, were taken.

In addition to being responsible for the security of the Thistle Chapel, designed by famed architect Robert Lorimer and built in the style of the High Gothic architecture of the 15th century,

Mr Wilson and Mr Barr are also providing visitor information.

Mr Wilson said: "People have been disappointed that they have been unable to visit the Chapel in the last year so I am very pleased to be playing a part in ensuring that it is once again open for visitors to enjoy.

"It is a core part of St Giles Cathedral and visitors come from around the world to see it because the carvings are quite profound - particularly the Angel with Bagpipes."

St Giles Cathedral was rated in the top five free attractions in Scotland by a recent study published by Glasgow Caledonian University. More than one million people visited the building on the Royal Mile in 2015.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Sun Times

Report that the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, has urged the government to intervene to halt the rise of "poisonous" anti-semitism on British campuses. In a letter to a student victim of

anti-semitic comments, Lord Williams, now master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, disclosed that he had written to Jo Johnson, the universities minister, because of the “muted” official response so far to rising anti-semitic behaviour.

http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/uk_news/Education/article1678027.ece

S Tel

Interview with Cabinet Minister Justine Greening on Europe saying the Government is not trying to scare people to stay in. She also backed comments from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, who last week said that a public debate about the impact of immigration must not be stifled by allegations of racism.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/eureferendum/12192248/EU-referendum-Its-not-Project-Fear-to-want-answers-from-Leave-campaign-says-Justine-Greening.html>

Mail on Sun

Report that Christian magistrate, Richard Page, removed from the bench for saying in a

TV interview that it was better for children to be brought up by a mother and a father is to sue Lord Chancellor Michael Gove. Mr Page who is backed by pressure group Christian Concern, is to take his case to an employment tribunal, where he will argue that he is facing religious discrimination
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3489676/JP-sacked-gay-adoption-row-sues-Michael-Gove-failing-stand-rights-Christians.html#ixzz42m0PhZA1>

Mail/Guard/Tel

Further comment on the Archbishop of Canterbury's interview with the Parliamentary House Magazine, focusing on comments about the refugee crisis. He said he understood the genuine fear about mass migration, particularly in fragile communities, noting he has worked in such areas during his ministry.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3488630/DAILY-MAIL-COMMENT-Migration-smug-Left-s-legacy-misery.html#ixzz42gEi5Kbk>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3488681/PLATELL-S-PEOPLE-Hallelujah-Archbishop-preaching-sense.html>
<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/mar/11/justin-welby-immigration-unwanted-friends-archbishop-canterbury>
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/12191532/Justin-Welby-is-right-Its-not-racist-to-worry-about-the-migrant-effect.html>

Guard

News report on the above interview noting that Downing St has backed the comments made by the Archbishop, saying immigration is a legitimate public concern.

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/mar/11/downing-street-backs-archbishop-over-immigration-comments>

BBC/Mail/Christian Today

Report on visit by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge to XLP in London, to learn about how the Christian charity is helping young people on the verge of exclusion. The focus of the visit was specifically on XLP's mentoring

scheme, which now operates across the country.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-35789717>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-3487810/Kate-Middleton-Duchess-Cambridge-Prince-William-visit-mentoring-project.html>

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/william.and.kate.visit.christian.charity.xlp/81703.htm>

Christian Today

Report that former Conservative government minister Ann Widdecombe is to head the pro-Brexit campaign group, Christians for Britain, founded by Adrian "Arbishop Cranmer" Hilton and CofE priest and Guardian columnist Dr Giles Fraser.

Mail

Report on the case of a policeman suspended over the death of a man in custody more than seven years ago who cannot get ordained into the Church of England - having completed the training - as he is unable to resign from the Met Police while

investigations continue. Andrew Birks, is currently working as a licensed lay worker, in Chichester diocese. A statement from Chichester Diocese is quoted saying that that PC Birks' ordination, which was due to take place in September 2014, has been put on hold 'indefinitely'.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3488703/Police-man-suspended-man-s-death-seven-years-ago-working-Anglican-curate.html>

Comment

S Exp

Editorial saying that as the Archbishop of Canterbury rightly pointed out last week, it is not racist to be worried about the impact of the migrant crisis on Britain.

<http://www.express.co.uk/comment/expresscomment/652157/border-about-space-not-race-migrants-immigration-statins-truth-hotel-hounded>

Sun Times

Columnist Rod Liddle looks at the many offers of accommodation for refugees from leading

public figures, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, and notes the bedrooms are still empty. A Lambeth Palace spokesperson is quoted saying there will be an update soon.

[http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/
comment/columns/rodliddle/
article1677879.ece](http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/comment/columns/rodliddle/article1677879.ece)

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