



***Bishop Harold Miller with the Diocesan Evangelists
L–R: Back row – Susan McFarland, Colin Birnie, Jim
Fleming and Ian Morton. Front row – John Menagh,
Janet Fleming, Bishop Harold, Simon Henry and
David Charleton.***

Evangelism focus at Downpatrick celebrations

The theme at this year's Down and Dromore St Patrick's Day Celebrations was *'In the Footsteps*

of Patrick – Proclaiming Christ'. This is the first time that 'Evangelism' has been the focus and at the Festival Service the diocese commissioned its first group of Diocesan Evangelists. The Evangelists also led the prayer pilgrimage from Saul where the preacher at the Holy Communion Service was Captain George Newell (Church Army).

A group of 22 children from Brooklands Primary School, Dundonald (including a young 'St Patrick'), joined the celebrations on another sunny 17 March. They led the pilgrims into the cathedral and later helped to lay the wreath at St Patrick's grave.

Bishop Harold gave the address at the cross-community Festival Service which was attended by local clergy and dignitaries including Margaret Ritchie MP. The bishop began by saying that, "This centenary year, with all the resonances of 1916... brings with it many of the fault-lines which still lie open to be seen in the island of Ireland. It carries in it our different 'histories', which we need to understand, reflect on and explain to ourselves."

"We will not, of course, find our reconciliation in 1916 or 1912, in 1798 or 1690, we will find our reconciliation by going back a lot further- to

AD432, when Patrick, our common ancestor in the faith came to Saul, proclaiming Christ.”

Bishop Harold described Patrick as the “archetypal evangelist” who had declared in his Confession: “I must fearlessly and proudly spread the name of God everywhere in order to leave a legacy after my death to my brothers and children – the many thousands I have baptised into the Lord.”

he bishop commissioned 8 Evangelists to be deployed in the diocese. Warm congratulations to: Colin Birnie, David Charleton, Janet Fleming, Jim Fleming, Simon Henry, Susan McFarland, John Menagh and Ian Morton, each of whom have successfully completed a 2 year distance-learning based course accredited by St John’s College Nottingham.

Archbishop Martin: Ireland 2016 faces many challenges like poverty, homelessness

Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh said in his message for Saint Patrick’s Day 2016 -

“Although a small number of people attempt to drag Ireland back to unrest and violence, people

from across our communities are strongly committed to building bridges towards lasting peace. Ireland remains the land of a thousand welcomes: visitors to our shores remark on our friendliness, generosity and kindness. We are renowned the world over for our music, dance, literature and for the breathtaking beauty of our landscapes and coasts. Our Christian roots run deep, and Irish homes and families are largely characterised by the Christian virtues of faith, hope and charity.

“But the Ireland of 2016 faces many challenges – including poverty, homelessness and huge pressures on family life – which can so easily lead to a sense of despair and hopelessness for many of our people. I am reminded today of the words which Pope Saint John Paul II spoke many years ago to the late President of Ireland, Dr Patrick Hillery, when he said:

“Modern Ireland was founded on a vision of a society capable of responding to the deepest aspirations of its people and ensuring respect for the dignity and rights of all its citizens. That vision is linked to a profound yearning for the effective realisation of the profound human

values that have never ceased to resound in the minds and hearts of the Irish people.’

“As we reflect on Saint Patrick’s life and mission in the Year of Mercy, we remember Patrick’s deep personal sense of God’s mercy and his desire to spread that mercy to others. In bringing the message of Christianity he was sustained by his friendship with God the Father and a profound sense of Christ’s presence surrounding him – so eloquently expressed in the beautiful prayer: Saint Patrick’s Breastplate.

“Following the example of Patrick, I call on Irish people, at home and abroad: open yourselves up to a personal friendship with Christ and to an experience of God’s mercy in your lives. This experience will change your life, as it did for Saint Patrick, and it will inspire you, in turn, to reach out in mercy and charity to those who are suffering and in need.

“As Irish people, we cannot think of Patrick – the captive, the slave in exile, the undocumented, the migrant – without acknowledging the enormous humanitarian and pastoral challenges facing growing numbers of people who find themselves displaced and without status in our

world. This is so shockingly exemplified by the refugee crisis here in Europe. I ask you to pray for refugees and for all displaced families at this time.”

Great care needed in coming to terms with history, Bishop Colton

Bishop Paul Colton of Cork, Cloyne and Ross told the congregation at the St Patrick’s Day Civic Service 2016 in Cork, that great care was needed in coming to terms with history. He said -

“We are naïve, therefore, if we try lazily to peddle one single agreed narrative of our history. It is multi-faceted and multi-layered. It is complicated. Reducing the last 100 years to a comic book strip of goodies and baddies, heroes and villains is the childish option and is unworthy of our emerging nationhood and national maturity.

“The relationship of the Church of Ireland to the events of 1916 is itself very complicated. For the majority of Anglicans back then it was straight forward; I’ve no doubt, that the horror at it all

exemplified in the speech of the Archbishop of Armagh in at the General Synod in June 1916, represented what most members of this Church thought. There were others though, albeit a minority, who were actually involved or supportive, or tangentially connected. Thomas Clarke's father for example was a member of the Church of England. As Canon Patrick Comerford has pointed out (and his article is well worth reading), James Connolly's wife Lillie was Church of Ireland, as was Plunkett's cousin (Horace) and as had been Grace, the woman he married the night before his execution. Thomas McDonagh's wife Muriel Gifford was also Church of Ireland. That's before we get onto Countess Markiewicz and Dr Kathleen Lynn, and others. For some of us, even today, the whole 1916 thing raises deep-rooted existential questions. Who am I as an Irishman and where do I fit in? That question was clearcut in 1966: I was less than Irish because I was Protestant.

“In 1916 my great-grandfather, who had escaped frightful poverty in the 1870s by joining the army was stationed in Ship Street Barracks, Dublin Castle as a groom – maintaining the horses that pulled the gun carriages and on which the officers and cavalry rode. My grandmother's first

husband was en route to France where, with the 9th Inniskillings, he would charge out of Thiepval Wood on the first day of the Somme, and be killed in action at Cambrai 17 months later. The man who would become my grandfather was in German East Africa with the Army Ordnance Corps alongside the King's African Rifles – wounded for life, but returned and married the girl from Westland row whose widowed mother lived over the shop as cleaner and caretaker.

They were all poor, inner city Dublin Protestants (a story of a people barely told or recognised) whose families lived in the wretched tenements of the second city of the empire. The family stayed and did their bit. That Grandfather transferred his military experience to serve as a District Adjutant in the LDF during The Emergency, and we have become what we are in a modern Ireland.

“And so to 2016, one hundred years on, my day on Tuesday, Proclamation Day, began in Bantry – a school with 18 pupils of 6 nationalities. There, outdoors, with Whiddy Island in sight, on the edge of Bantry Bay where Wolfe Tone had tried to launch an earlier rebellion in 1796, our ceremony opened with prayers in Irish, English, Latvian, Russian, and Albanian. I deliberately

chose that starting point because it was a sign to me of what our country is now, and there is no point to commemorations that only wallow in the mementoes, or scrapbooks of history. I have made it my life's ministry, in this context, to advocate for our self-understanding as a modern, pluralist and inclusive nation where there is peace, love, justice and equality for all. I believe that is a charter supported by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.”

Presbyterian pensioner missionary works to free men falsely accused of her shooting

The Cookstown pensioner who returned to DR Congo not even a year after she was almost killed there by bandits, spent her first trip back working to free the men falsely accused of her shooting.

News Letter - Although authorities had jailed two of the men guilty of attacking Maud Kells outside her home in Mulita, a further three innocent men had also been blamed.

One man, Nelson, was so worried about the claims that he fled into the jungle with his two



Maud Kells, a Presbyterian missionary, revisited Congo and worked on behalf of two of the men falsely accused of her shooting.

young children and pregnant wife, while two others - Aungela and Onande - were thrown in jail.

In her first interview since returning to Cookstown, Maud said authorities in the country knew these men were innocent, but accused them of the crime to extort money for their freedom - “quite a lot of money” that the selfless missionary paid to secure pardons for all three.

“There were two in prison,” she explained, “and the third person, he never was in prison, but he was in hiding in the forest because they threatened to imprison him.

“His wife was pregnant when it happened and I was really concerned, but she had a live healthy baby when she was in the forest and all went well.”

Nelson, who was Maud’s head carpenter in Mulita, also took his children aged three and five into the jungle.

“One of them was very, very ill and had to go into a hospital,” Maud added. “He nearly died. He had Malaria and very severe anaemia and had to get blood transfusions.”

More at -

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/maud-kells-pays-to-free-men-falsely-accused-of-shooting-her-on-return-to-congo-1-7279634>

Methodist Church President’s plea for dialogue after murder of prison officer



The Rev Brian Anderson, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, has learned with sadness of the death of Mr Adrian Ismay.

"I offer to Mrs Ismay, her daughters and their family circle the thoughts and prayers of the Methodist People in Ireland. With others I was relieved that Mr Ismay's injuries were not as serious as first reports had indicated and was thankful to God when he was discharged from hospital.

"As Northern Ireland moves into election mode I would ask that we might have dialogue rather rhetoric from those offering for election.

“At a time when people all around the world have been celebrating the feast day of St Patrick may the Peace he envisioned become a lasting reality.”

Apprentice Boys mark St Patrick's Day with parade

The Apprentice Boys of Derry have marked St Patrick's Day with a parade and church service in Londonderry.

BBC News - The No Surrender Parent Club marched around the war memorial in the city before attending a service in St Columb's Church of Ireland Cathedral.

The march is held separately from the main St Patrick's Day parade in Derry.

A club spokesperson said it was a "possibility" that they could join the main event in future years, and said they would "consider" any invitation.

The Apprentice Boys of Derry is an organisation set up to commemorate the Siege of Derry in August 1689.



Gordon Porter said his club would consider any future invitation to join the main parade "on merit"

It is named in memory of 13 young apprentices - supporters of the Protestant King William III - who closed the gates of the walled city to stop the advancing army of the Catholic King James II.

The club decided to march this year after the success of their demonstration 12 months ago which marked their 150th anniversary.

After the parade, club spokesman Gordon Porter said: "St Patrick's Day, as you know, throughout the world is a celebration of the whole of Ireland.

"A major part of that story is the siege of Derry, which is what the association of the Apprentice Boys is all about, so it's only right that we are parading today.

"We can tell our story once again within the city of Londonderry, and it only bodes well for the city that two cultures can walk along beside each other."

When asked if the Apprentice Boys would join the main parade at any point in the future, Mr Porter said: "Possibly, in the future, there could be a situation where that might happen. If we get the invite, we'll take it on merit and we'll certainly look into that.

"At the minute we're quite happy to do this by ourselves but in the future it is a possibility," he added.

Proposals to reduce and resize C of I dioceses

A document from the C of I General Synod Commission on Episcopal Ministry and Structures makes several proposals for changes in provincial and diocesan boundaries

Members of the Commission on Episcopal Ministry and Structures have unanimously agreed to bring proposals for changes in provincial and diocesan boundaries to General Synod. It is expected that the proposals, summarised below, will be incorporated in a Bill to be lodged with the Honorary Secretaries of the General Synod on or before 31st March 2016. Full details, with maps and reasons for these conclusions, will be set out in papers to be sent to members of the General Synod in due course.

+There would be eleven dioceses, six in the Armagh Province and five in Dublin Province.

+The Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin have indicated their willingness to consent to the proposed changes in provincial boundaries: the transfer of the dioceses of Tuam and Killala (without Achonry) from the Province of Armagh to the Province of Dublin.

+Tuam and Killala (but not Achonry) (7 cures) would join with the Dioceses of

Limerick and Killaloe (17 cures) to form a new diocese in the West, with its Bishop to be based in Limerick; this diocese would be in the Province of Dublin.

+Achonry (2 cures) would join with the Dioceses of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh (23 cures); this diocese would be in the Province of Armagh.

+Those changes would come into effect when there is a vacancy in either the See of Tuam, Killala and Achonry or the See of Limerick and Killaloe – but not before the General Synod of 2017.

+Six cures would be transferred from the Diocese of Glendalough (Dublin and Glendalough currently 56 cures) to the Diocese of Kildare (Meath and Kildare currently 17 cures): Leixlip and Lucan; Celbridge and Straffan with Newcastle-Lyons;

Blessington and Manor Kilbride with Ballymore-Eustace and Hollywood; Donoughmore and Donard with Dunlavin; Narraghmore and Timolin with Castledermot and Kinneigh; and Athy, Kilberry and Fontstown with Kilkea. That change would come into effect at a date to be determined – but not before the General Synod of 2017.

+An Implementation Committee would be established to support and engage with dioceses directly affected by these changes and assist in identifying and managing the implications and practicalities arising. Issues to be dealt with include names of dioceses, unified synods and committee structures, representation, legislation for diocesan synods and the General Synod, financial schemes and administrative arrangements. This committee would report to the General Synod in 2017 and none of these changes would be brought into effect before then.

These measures are intended to strengthen the three numerically smallest

dioceses in the Church. They enable Tuam and Killala and Achonry to become part of larger unions and they give support to Limerick and Killaloe, Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh and Meath and Kildare. They help redistribute workloads. In light of all the circumstances, the Commission has concluded that adoption of these proposals is the best way forward for the Church.

Ethne Harkness – Chairman of the Commission comments, “On behalf of the Commission, I wish to record our thanks to archbishops, bishops, members of diocesan councils and other bodies and individuals who have offered their views and contributed to our deliberations, especially on this aspect of our work. The responsibility to decide and legislate on these matters now rests with members of the General Synod.”

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Death of outstanding Strabane churchwoman

A former nursing sister, midwife and prolific poet from Strabane known as ‘the Pam Ayres of the north west’ has died aged 89.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/roamer-hard-working-poet-hattie-had-so-many-strings-to-her-bow-1-7278083>

**Mail/Times/Mirror/Ind/[Christian Today](#)/BBC/Premier/
Guard**

Reports on yesterday's preliminary hearing , for the Anglican church in England and Wales, of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse ([IICSA](#)). Articles focus on comments by a lawyer of abuse survivors that former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey failed to pass on an allegation about convicted former Bishop of Lewes and Gloucester Peter Ball to police. A spokesman for the former Archbishop is quoted saying he had no recollection of receiving the allegation. The timetable for full hearings for the Anglican Church has yet to be published but [the scope of this strand of the Inquiry](#) has previously been released.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3496241/Carey-held-inquiry-priest-20-years-Former-Archbishop-Canterbury-failed-pass-allegations-abuse-police-receiving-complaint-1992.html>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article4714978.ece>

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/ex-archbishop-canterbury-allegedly-helped-7571823#iCID=nsm>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/peter-ball-details-of-paedophile-priests-abuse-delayed-because-former-archbishop-george-carey-failed-a6935346.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-35819455>

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Former-Archbishop-accused-of-delaying-abuse-investigation>

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/mar/16/archbishop-george-carey-failed-to-pass-on-abuse-claims-goddard-inquiry>

BBC

A man who was sexually assaulted by CofE priest, Vickery House, has criticised Devon and Cornwall police saying they failed to investigate his complaint when he first told them in 2001 - 11 years before an investigation was launched. Last year the priest was jailed for six and a half years for sex offences against boys. Article notes that last month, the Bishop of Exeter, Robert Atwell, met the Devon victim to apologise in person on behalf of the church and offered an unreserved apology for what had happened to him. A police spokesman is also quoted.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-35821458>

Mail

Agency reports that two-thirds of Syria's Christians have left the country, according to an Aleppo bishop. Chaldean Catholic bishop Antoine Audo blamed violence and insecurity spread by extremist groups and insisting most Christians still support the Syrian president.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3495402/Two-thirds-Christians-left-Syria-Aleppo-bishop.html>

Talk Business Magazine

A review of the Payday loans industry under the headline "Increased regulation, increased clarity". The article notes the intervention of the Archbishop of Canterbury in helping "to bring the industry into the 21st century and out of the darkness of its early days."

<http://talkbusinessmagazine.co.uk/2016/03/16/payday-loans-increased-regulation-increased-clarity/>

Premier

Reports a new £20 million fund announced in the Chancellor's Budget for repairs to cathedrals has been welcomed by the CofE (see above). In a statement it says that in 2014 a £20 million grant "went a long way" to help pay for urgent repairs on Anglican cathedrals. Adrian Dorber, Dean of Lichfield and Chair of the Association of English Cathedrals, said, "We are deeply grateful to the Government for the pledge of continuing funding for cathedral repairs."

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/C-of-E-welcomes-new-20m-cathedral-fund>

Premier

Further coverage of the Elliot review 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. The Archbishop of Canterbury has said he will ensure the recommendations are implemented as soon as possible.

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Bishop-embarrassed-by-report-into-CofE-s-handling-of-abuse-allegation>

BBC/Sun/Mail/Mirror/Exp/ITV

Reports that a vicar's wife has been jailed for 10 months for stealing £6,400 from a woman with learning difficulties while working as her carer. Ann Smale, stole from the accounts of 80-year-old Shirley Spiess while providing her with daily home care. Mrs Smale, from Robin Hood's Bay, North Yorkshire said she had "no explanation at all" for her offences, York Crown Court heard.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-york-north-yorkshire-35825377>

<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/7007071/Wife-of-vicar-thief-jailed.html?redirect=true>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3496261/Vicar-s-wife-stole-6-400-pensioner-learning-difficulties-working-carer-jailed-ten-months.html>

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/vicars-wife-jailed-stealing-thousands-7571325#ICID=nsm>

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/653088/Vicar-wife-jailed-stealing-pensioners>

<http://www.itv.com/news/calendar/update/2016-03-16/shamed-wife-of-vicar-jailed-for-stealing-from-pensioner/>

[Christian Today](#)

Further coverage of the sentencing 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.

Exp

Further coverage of 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 (see below), 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.express.co.uk/life-style/life/653151/Judas-innocent-misunderstood-bible-religious-experts-agree-betrayal-Gogglebox-documentary>

Tel

Article explains why the dates of Good Friday and Easter Sunday move every year and notes the conversations the Archbishop of Canterbury is having with other faith leaders to explore if Easter could be fixed.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12195945/What-are-the-dates-for-Good-Friday-Easter-Sunday-and-Easter-Monday.html>

GET CNI HEADLINES EACH DAY

Facebook and Twitter

Click on logo at CNI Home page

www.churchnewsireland.org

+ Please share CNI with your friends

www.churchnewsireland.org