



***Archbishop Michael Jackson and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin with the combined choirs of Christ Church and St Mary's Pro-cathedral.***

## **Historic Dublin Cathedrals' Eve of St Patrick's Day Evensong**

The Church of Ireland and Catholic Archbishops of Dublin joined the Choirs of Christ Church Cathedral and the Girls' Choir of St Mary's Pro-

Cathedral to convey a powerful message of Christian unity on Wednesday evening (March 16). Hosted by Christ Church Cathedral's music department, the choirs' voices united for a magnificent Festal Choral Evensong on the Eve of St Patrick's Day.

The service was led by Archbishop Michael Jackson and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and was the brainchild of Christ Church Cathedral's director of music, Ian Keatley. Having grown up in the context of the Troubles in Northern Ireland Ian has always been inspired by the way in which the Feast of St Patrick creates a strong and positive sense of unity throughout the island of Ireland.

“At Christ Church Cathedral seek to reflect this sense of community with an ecumenical service promoting a shared desire for Christian unity symbolised by two cathedral choirs singing together as one ensemble on the eve of a Feast which brings us all together in celebration,” he explained.

In his sermon, Archbishop Jackson said that St Patrick had brought everyone together in the cathedral for a celebration of the gift of faith given by God to the people of Ireland. He said that the contribution of a faith tradition to any

country was hard to gauge and in the Ireland of today it was difficult to see anything other than a decline in religion.

“This is an extremely dangerous place to be and to settle down for the evening because it means that our custodianship of the tradition does not get a chance to breathe into the society of today with the freshness it deserves. We do a dis-service to others and to ourselves. This caution is of a piece with what I keep telling myself in my day-to-day work: It is not about me, it is about them; and also with what I tell to those who work with me: It is not about you, it is about them,” the Archbishop said.

Drawing on St Patrick’s Confession, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin said that the saint described himself as a sinner. However, he said Patrick’s awareness of being a sinner meant that he could recognise the grace of God. He continued that Pope Francis, in his first interview after his election as Pope, also described himself as a sinner.

“It is when we identify ourselves as sinners that we truly appreciate the abundance of the infinite mercy of God,” the Archbishop said. “No human sin can prevail or limit the mercy of God. One who considers himself in the first place a sinner

can never be harsh or arrogant in his judgement of others.”

## **Inter-church Blessing of the Shamrock in Garvagh**

St Paul's Church in Garvagh was packed on Wednesday evening for the local parishes' annual joint-service to commemorate the Feast of St Patrick.

This was the fifth year of the event, which brings together members of St Paul's Church of Ireland Church in the village and parishioners from St Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Glenullin.

The highlight of the evening was the blessing of the shamrock, after which button-holes were distributed to members of the congregation. The shamrock were carried to the front of the church by children from both parishes, preceded by a local piper.

The Rector of Errigal Parish, Rev Paul Whittaker, said the annual service – which alternates between the parishes – has grown hugely in popularity since it began in 2012. He reminded those present of St Patrick's spiritual conversion after he had been brought to Ireland as a slave,



and of the saint's return to the land of his captivity to bring Christianity to Ireland.

Rev Whittaker said neither of the two traditions in Ireland could lay exclusive claim to Patrick. He said the saint transcended any such division.

The Garvagh service included hymns and prayers, as well as pipe music, Irish traditional music and Irish dancing, and the guest speaker was the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe's Communications Officer, Paul McFadden.

Afterwards, worshippers crossed to the nearby parish hall for Irish stew, apple tart and fresh cream.

Rev Whittaker thanked local businesses for supporting the event: McAtamney's Butchers, Costcutter in Glenullen and Eurospar in Garvagh

## **The shamrock is to be preached not drowned, Bishop McKeown of Derry**

When Church and State are too closely aligned, people of faith can lose their prophetic voice, the Bishop of Derry has warned.

In his sermon for St Patrick's Day Mass in St Patrick's Church, Pennyburn, Derry City, Bishop Donal McKeown said it is at the edges that faith is always at its best and most uncomfortable.

He said the Churches on the island of Ireland – and especially in the North – “have a wonderful opportunity to work together and to speak uncomfortable truths to those in power” though he admitted that they might lose some support and have to pay a price.

“Pope Francis has told us to be a poor Church for poor people. He has called on us to go out to



***Right - Bishop Donal McKeown of Derry***

the margins. As we will see in Holy Week next week, that is where Jesus went and where He died.”

The Bishop emphasised that conflicts – whether WWI or the Easter Rising – “are always signs of the failure of human relationships, never a model to be imitated or glorified”.

Speaking on St Patrick’s Day, Dr McKeown said, “St Patrick certainly was not an early nationalist, he didn’t dress like a 19<sup>th</sup> century catholic bishop nor can he be hijacked as the original Free Presbyterian!” and he added that St Patrick

“did not play on differences but knew that faith could build bridges rather than walls”.

Elsewhere in his homily, the Bishop of Derry underlined that the shamrock is there “to be preached, not just drowned!”

Acknowledging the global popularity of St Patrick today, he noted that last year 160 iconic buildings around the world were illuminated in green for St Patrick’s Day – from Rome to Sydney via Las Vegas, China and Malaysia.

But he said St Patrick’s fame has come about thanks, not mainly to slick marketing, but to the waves of Irish emigrants and missionaries who have left their mark around the world in recent centuries.

He added, “St Patrick’s Cathedrals existed in New York, Auckland and Karachi long before Tourism Ireland or green beer cashed in! Today we are invited to reflect on the man Patrick who has contributed so much for 1550 years – and not just to the marketing ploy that has sprung up in the last couple of decades.” Asking what might St Patrick say to his spiritual descendants today, as his memory and legacy is celebrated, Bishop McKeown said the shamrock is a popular symbol of Patrick’s faith and of Irishness.



“But his teaching about the Trinity was not vague woolly spirituality. It spoke of a Father who created the people in His image and likeness; of a Son who died on the Cross to bridge the gap between the Creator and his creatures; and, of a Spirit who makes His Temple in our bodies. That is good news for then and for now.”

Patrick’s own struggles and sufferings were a testimony to the fact that there is no cheap grace. The bishop said that Ireland’s patron saint may have tried to supplant the teachings of the Druids – but he did not seek to replace it with a fuzzy form of religiosity that demands little and promises everything.

“Patrick would tell us that the healing of the world will not happen through our own work or the power of magic crystals,” he said and emphasised that the year of mercy reminds us that salvation does not come from within us but through the power of the Risen Christ.

## **Methodist home staff success in dementia care**

Twelve members of the Belfast Central Mission’s Kirk House staff recently successfully completed the Certificate in Best Practice in Dementia Care Development Programme.



The Best Practice in Dementia Care Development Programme is organised and awarded by the [Dementia Services Development Centre \(DSDC\)](#) at Stirling University. It is an international centre of knowledge and expertise dedicated to improving the lives of people with dementia

[Kirk House](#) is a "housing with care" facility in which independence, freedom of choice, self-esteem and dignity are respected and promoted. Residents are supported to maintain links with their family and local community and the level of care each receives is tailored to meet their individual needs. Kirk House is managed by [Belfast Central Mission](#).

## **Dublin and Glendalough welcome New Mothers' Union Diocesan President**

There is a new hand at the helm of Mothers' Union in Dublin and Glendalough. Karen Nelson was commissioned as Diocesan President of Mothers' Union at a service in Holmpatrick Parish Church in Skerries on Tuesday evening (March 15). She takes on the role at a very important time as Mothers' Union celebrate the organisation's 140th anniversary and next year will be the 130th anniversary of MU in Ireland.

The service, which was attended by All Ireland Mothers' Union President, Phyllis Grothier, was celebrated by Archbishop Michael Jackson and Karen was commissioned by Diocesan Mothers' Union Chaplain, Canon David Mungavin. During the service the members of Mothers' Union present were also rededicated to the work and values of the organisation.

Welcoming the large congregation of members who had travelled from all over Dublin and Glendalough to celebrate with their new president, the Revd Anthony Kelly, Bishop's Curate of Holmpatrick, congratulated Karen on her appointment. He noted the theme of the



***MU Chaplain, Canon David Mungavin; newly commissioned MU Diocesan President, Karen Nelson; and Archbishop Michael Jackson.***

service was ‘Celebration of Faith’ and said this was refreshing as there had been a growing trend of excluding the voice of Christianity from the public square.

The sermon was preached by Canon Cecil Hyland who took up the theme of ‘Celebration of Faith’ and pointed out that joy and celebration underpinned every act of worship. “Celebration is primary to being a Christian,” he said.

The service of commissioning was obviously an occasion of celebration and joy as the congregation rejoiced that Karen was taking on the role of President of Mothers' Union in the dioceses, he stated. He said Karen came to the office with wide experience within Mothers' Union and the parish of Holmpatrick could add their knowledge of Karen's dedication to her MU credentials.

"Mothers' Union in the dioceses will be in good hands as Karen builds on the work of those who have preceded her," Canon Hyland commented. He added that she does not take on the role alone as God calls everyone to serve and also promises to be there with her.

"Each of us is called to live the Gospel every day in a world and society that is hurting in all sorts of ways. The needs of people are many and varied. Our neighbour is the person who lives next door, it is the homeless person, the victim of violence, the person who struggles in the war torn areas of the world, in refugee camps, crossing the Mediterranean.

"We are a privileged people but with privilege comes responsibility and challenge," Canon Hyland concluded.

## Stainer's Crucifixion will aid Gaza hospital

A massed cathedral choir of 90 voices will sing "The Crucifixion" by John Stainer in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, on Monday 21 March at 8pm. This work comprises many well-known and rousing Easter hymns.

Stainer's *Crucifixion* is amongst the most popular of all English choral works and vividly portrays the events of the Passion of Christ. The piece combines recitatives, solos, and masterful choruses that range from the graphic mob shouts of *Crucify Him* to the ethereally beautiful meditation at the work's centrepiece *God so loved the world*.

To support the event you may buy tickets now from

<https://www.topattractionsireland.com/index.cfm/christchurchcathedral/select-tickets/?attractionid=97>

The organisers are aiming to raise €185,000 for the Al Ahli hospital in Gaza

(<http://www.j-diocese.org/index.php?page=129666024424&sub=129698368736>).

## **Aspects of Dublin 1916, Unitarian Church series**

Dublin Unitarian Church is putting on lunchtime public talks (1-2 pm) on aspects of Dublin in 1916.

Thursday 25 February: Padraig Yeates on Political and social life in Dublin in 1916

Thursday 3 March: Elaine Sisson on Irish education and Pearse's St Enda's School in 1916

Thursday 10 March: Mary Muldowney on Women in work, trade unions and the Irish Citizen Army

Thursday 24 March: Martin Maguire on Dublin Protestants and the Easter Rising

Admission is Free. For further information contact: The Dublin Unitarian Church, 112 St. Stephen's Green West, Dublin 2, Phone: +353 (0)1 478 0638

## **Belfast installation**

The Rev Mark Taylor, rector of the United Parish of Whitehead and Islandmagee, will be installed

as a Canon representing Connor Diocese in the Chapter of St Anne's Cathedral during the 3.30pm Evensong Service on Palm Sunday, March 20.

## **C of E responds to UK Budget's measures on cathedrals and schools**

Britain's finance minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, has this week delivered the annual budget speech to MPs in the House of Commons; and the Church of England has been quick to respond to two measures which will affect churches.

The first is the announcement of a £20 million cathedral repairs fund. It follows a similar provision in the 2014 budget, which "went a long way to help meet the costs of urgent repairs to these buildings and support local fundraising efforts by Church of England and Roman Catholic Cathedrals," the Church of England said in a statement.

"We are deeply grateful to the Government for the pledge of continuing funding for Cathedral



repairs,” the Very Revd Adrian Dorber, Dean of Lichfield and chair of the Association of English Cathedrals, said. “Every Cathedral faces steep challenges in keeping this great collection of inspiring and historic buildings safely and properly; whereby we can continue to welcome nearly a quarter of the English population every year.

“Cathedrals play an important role as community hubs: they foster volunteering, music making, public debate and social action, alongside their primary task of worship and prayer. They seek to be constantly accessible to the public and offer a setting where some of the big questions in life can be asked, alongside a tradition of wisdom and hospitality that can minister to the diverse needs of all who come. We also play a role in economic regeneration and are increasingly recognised as important contributors to local and regional economies.

“What we spend on repairs helps us sustain craft skills and local employment. We congratulate the Chancellor on helping us steward and sustain a key national asset.”

The announcement was also welcomed by the director of the C of E's Cathedral and Church Buildings Division, Janet Gough, who said: "The value of Cathedrals as community hubs is now being recognised widely and I warmly welcome the Government's continued support for the amazing work that goes on in these culturally important buildings, the Jewels in the Crown of our built heritage."

The C of E said that "cathedrals are active community hubs hosting activities from food bank collection, lunch clubs for older people, parent and toddler groups and support for vulnerable groups such as the homeless to concerts, exhibitions and of course daily worship."

It said that its 42 cathedrals in England "welcome over 11m visitors a year, including over 300,000 children on school trips.

"Research has shown that 78 per cent of people living in a city with a cathedral felt it was at the heart of their city."

In addition to the fund for cathedral repairs, the Chancellor also announced changes to the structures of schools. The history of universal

education in England and Wales was begun, primarily, by the creation of churches by church groups. Each school was managed by a local trust. In the early 1900s schools were taken under the control of local authorities – with church schools continuing to be supported by diocesan boards of education.

In recent years, schools were allowed to apply to become self-governing academies, run by trusts outside of local authority control. This afternoon the Chancellor said that all schools in England must become academies by 2020 or have official plans to do so by 2022.

“Providing great schooling is the single most important thing we can do to help any child from a disadvantaged background succeed,” the Chancellor said. “It’s also the single most important thing we can do to boost the long-term productivity of our economy; because our nation’s productivity is no more and no less than the combined talents and efforts of the people of these islands.”

Responding to the announcement, the C of E’s chief education officer, the Revd Nigel Genders, said: “As the provider of 4,700 schools and the

largest provider of academies, the Church of England has built up a bank of expertise and a collaborative partnership between dioceses, the Department for Education and Regional Schools Commissioners.

“We will continue to build on this following today’s announcement by the Chancellor and will take an active interest in the fine detail of the proposed legislation due to be published in tomorrow’s White Paper.

“Our primary concern is ensuring children have the kind of education that enables them to flourish and we will work at national, diocesan and local level to ensure our schools are able to continue to offer the excellent education which parents so clearly want for their children.

“The aim of the academy programme is not to create homogenous institutions but to ensure talent and expertise are pooled and resources maximised to secure the best possible futures for our young people.

“We will continue to embrace the opportunities to do that, recognising the particular challenges that many smaller primary schools will face as they

seek to develop such partnerships, especially in rural communities.”

Seals -

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2016/18-march/news/uk/cathedrals-and-top-tax-payers-do-well-in-budget>

## **WCC supports new campaign against sexual abuse**

The World Council of Churches’ commitment to child rights and gender justice is manifested by its support for Together for Girls’ Every Hour Matters campaign, which was launched last week. The campaign aims to increase awareness of the critical importance of quickly accessing post-rape care.

Together for Girls is a global public-private partnership dedicated to ending violence against children, with a focus on sexual violence against girls. The organization claims that one in three women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual violence.

Surveys estimate that 25 per cent of girls' first sexual encounters were forced, the majority of which occurred before the age of 16, and that less than five per cent of sexually abused girls and boys ever obtained services to help them recover.

Together for Girls' mission, as described on the organization's website, is to mobilize and sustain a global movement to end such deep human rights violations, public health impacts and the long term individual and social consequences associated with violence against children, especially sexual violence against girls.

- [Click here](#) for more details of the Every Hour Matters: A Call for Post-Rape Care campaign.

## **News links to reports on faith, politics and education**

**Church services, week beginning March 19 -  
Irish Times**

[http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/  
religion-and-beliefs/church-services-1.2577590](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/church-services-1.2577590)

**Biblical role for County Antrim actor - News  
Letter**

A Co Antrim actor has told of his delight at starring in an 'epic' multi-million dollar movie which hits cinemas across the UK on Friday.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/ni-actor-stephen-hagan-stars-in-biblical-epic-risen-1-7283509>

## **Why the Church kept a 'vow of silence' after the Rising - Irish Examiner**

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/analysis/why-the-church-kept-a-vow-of-silence-after-the-rising-387201.html>

## **Jordanstown Parish Church feature - News Letter**

Aside from the pleasure of sharing News Letter readers' stories on this page twice a week, the icing on Roamer's gratefully received cake is travelling around Northern Ireland to local groups and gatherings.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/roamer-one-of-belfast-s-most-attractive-churches-1-7267614>

## **Times**

Further report on findings of the Elliott Review published this week, focusing on the advice given by the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group and its relationship to the Church of England. The insurer states that its advice to the Church highlighted in the Review "followed Law Society rules . . . that communications about the claim had to be made through his lawyer".

**CofE statement:** "The Elliott Review revealed the failings of the church to respond to a survivor who suffered horrific abuse and one of the recommendations is that financial considerations should never be given priority

over a pastoral response. We are working closely with Ecclesiastical to develop better protocols and to improve our survivor-led response."

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article4715924.ece>

### **BBC/Guard**

Reports that the American Secretary of State, John Kerry has stated that the ISIS group has committed genocide against Yazidis, Christians and Shia Muslims. Mr Kerry also said ISIS was responsible for crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing in areas it controls in Syria and Iraq.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-35831711>

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/17/john-kerry-isis-genocide-syria-iraq>

### **Mail** (*scroll down*)

Quentin Letts parliamentary diary item includes a short item about questions to the Second Church Estates Commissioner and the time taken to appoint the next Bishop of Oxford. "Was the process being run by Sir John Chilcot?" asked Richard Benyon (Con, Newbury).

[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3498079/Bryant-gives-turn-worthy-Julian-Clary-Buttons-QUENTIN-LETTS-sees-panto-like-Business-Questions-Commons.html?](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3498079/Bryant-gives-turn-worthy-Julian-Clary-Buttons-QUENTIN-LETTS-sees-panto-like-Business-Questions-Commons.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

[ITO=1490&ns\\_mchannel=rss&ns\\_campaign=1490](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3498079/Bryant-gives-turn-worthy-Julian-Clary-Buttons-QUENTIN-LETTS-sees-panto-like-Business-Questions-Commons.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

### **Ind**

A review of the historical evidence as to whether Christ was nailed or tied to the cross for his execution.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/world-history/was-jesus-christ-really-nailed-to-the-cross-a6936881.html>

[churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)



**Comment**

**Spectator:** How 'damning' is the report into the Church of England's handling of sex abuse?

<http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2016/03/how-damning-is-the-report-into-the-church-of-englands-handling-of-sex-abuse/>

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