



Members from the Belfast Battalion of The Boys' Brigade leave the grounds of RBAI. The Belfast Battalion is the largest battalion in the organisation.

UK's biggest Boys' Brigade battalion parade in Belfast

Members of the UK's biggest Boys' Brigade battalion paraded through the centre of Belfast on Sunday. The youngsters belong to the roughly

6,000-strong Belfast Battalion (which actually includes members from north Down, Lisburn and Newtownabbey), and were attending their annual church service in the Royal Belfast Academical Institution in the city centre, before marching past the City Hall at about accompanied by bugle, flute and pipe bands.

Archbishop Eamon Martin pleads for information on the Disappeared

The leader of the Catholic church in Ireland has issued a plea for information about the Disappeared during an annual mass for them.

Though the remains of 12 of those kidnapped, killed and secretly buried by republicans during the Troubles, a number of such remains have yet to be found.

Archbishop Eamon Martin said: “I appeal to the conscience of anyone who has information that might help find the others to come forward to the Independent Commission for the Location of Victims’ Remains, so that, even at this late stage, the remaining families can experience the consolation of being able to offer a Christian burial to their loved ones.”



Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh

To date, the ICVLR, an independent body set up during the peace process, has recovered the remains of 12 people.

Last year two men -- Kevin McKee, 17, and 25-year-old Seamus Wright - were found in a shallow grave near Coghalstown in Co Meath last September.

They were discovered during searches for Cistercian monk Joe Lynskey who was snatched from West Belfast in 1972, just a few miles from where the body of Brendan Megraw was dug up at Oristown, Co Meath a year earlier.

To date, the searches for Mr Lynskey have been unsuccessful.

Seamus Ruddy who disappeared from Paris in 1985; Columba McVeigh who was abducted in Dublin in 1975 and SAS-trained Captain Robert Nairac who disappeared from a South Armagh pub in 1977, also remain missing.

The Archbishop was addressing an annual mass for the Disappeared in St Patrick's College, Armagh.

He added: "Over the past 17 years the families of those abducted, murdered and secretly buried have gathered to comfort one another and a close bond of empathy has developed among them.

"It is particularly merciful that many of those who have already had the comfort of bringing home for burial the bodies of their loved ones, continue to gathered in support of the remaining families who still wait in hope.

"The recovery and dignified laying to rest of Kevin McKee and Seamus Wright since our gathering last Holy Week encourages us to continue to pray and not lose hope."

Full text at -

<http://www.catholicbishops.ie/2016/03/20/homily-of-archbishop-eamon-martin-for-the-annual-mass-for-the-disappeared/>

Rubicon exploring the interplay of 100 years of Irish culture, arts and faith

On April 16, Rubicon's 5th national gathering will take place in the Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines. Rubicon is a place for discussing and debating the interplay with culture and faith, where the big questions can be wrestled with.

“Our world is changing in ways that we realise and ways that we don't. Come and join us for a hope-filled conversation with diverse voices as we explore this cultural moment and the future of Christianity in Ireland. The gathering will be intimate and intentional; a small environment designed to draw together innovators and the best ideas through which we can embody faith in public life,” explains one of the organisers, Greg Fromholz.

This year, along with an exciting list of communicators from all spheres of influence, the gathering will be looking at 1916–2016; Church



State to Secular State, how the church has evolved, changed and declined over the past 100 years as well as it's role going forward.

Speakers will include Brian Zahnd, Patrick Comerford, Stephen James Smith, Pádraig Ó Tuama, Sr Denise Boyle, Brendan Joseph, James Gallen, Sr Imelda Wickham, Ferg Brown, Rabin Das, Rob Clarke, Natasa Paulberg. Rubicon will take place from 9.30 am to 5.30 pm.

Plus on April 17 in Holy Trinity, Rathmines Brian Zahnd will be joined by worship song writer Jason Upton at the 12pm service followed by an intimate Q & A.

Rubicon was founded by Greg Fromholz and the Revd Rob Jones as a Holy Trinity, Rathmines initiative, now partnering with the United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough.

Join the conversation and participate in the change.

Tickets can be booked at
www.wearerubicon.com

C of I programme for young adults celebrates third year

A C of I Youth Department (CIYD) initiative to connect and encourage young adults who are involved in church life has just celebrated its third anniversary with a gathering at the Hub at Queen's University Belfast.

Foundations is a gathering point for young adults in their 20s and 30s which takes place every two months. It is aimed at people who want to grow and share a faith that is 'biblical, mature, heartfelt and risk-taking'. The most recent event, on Saturday night (19th March), focused on the theme of 'The God who calls' and explored the message of Isaiah. It included the usual blend of worship, teaching, chat and hospitality but with people seated around tables



to share food and communion, celebrate St Patrick and look towards Easter.

CIYD Youth Ministry Development Officer Andrew Frame said: 'It was great to welcome dozens of young adults from in and around the Church of Ireland to a night of food, worship and celebration, and a strong encouragement to hear and obey the call of God in our lives.'

Since starting in February 2013, the initiative has also included a two-year course on character development, building qualities such as generosity, perseverance and humility, with older Christians mentoring and supporting participants. More information on Foundations is available at www.facebook.com/foundationswireland

Bible-reading Marathon underway in Raphoe Cathedral

The Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Ken Good, has launched a four-day Bible-reading Marathon in St Eunan's Cathedral, Raphoe. The entire bible will be read non-stop, day and night, from beginning to end by parishioners and members of the wider community. The event has been organised as part of the Cathedral's contribution to the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe's 'Year of Opportunity 2016'.

People have been invited to come and read from the bible in 30-minute sections between 8 pm on Palm Sunday and 8 pm on Maundy Thursday, the 24th of March. There are 192 half-hour sessions over the four days of the event.

Bishop Good performed the first reading – Genesis chapters 1 to 7 – and was followed by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Raphoe, Dr Philip Boyce, who read chapters 8 to 14. The first lay-person to perform a reading was Cathedral parishioner Rosemary Meehan.

The Dean of Raphoe, the Very Rev. Arthur Barrett, says it is an event for the whole community and an opportunity for everyone to join together in reading God's Word in the

historic setting of St Eunan's Church of Ireland Cathedral. "The Bible Reading Marathon is a significant event during the Diocesan Year of Opportunity 2016," the Dean says. "Our desire is to encourage and welcome as many people as possible from across the whole community to share in our unity of God's Word."

There is a limited number of places left. To take part and book your time, please contact Dean Barrett – preferably by emailing bible.raphoe@gmail.com or by texting 085 8833856.

The Diocese of Derry and Raphoe has designated 2016 a 'Year of Opportunity', during which parishes are focusing on mission, generosity and children.

Good Friday Walks of Witness in Lisburn and Derry

A Good Friday Walk of Witness will take place in Lisburn as the churches of the city reflect on the story of the cross.

The Walk begins at 1pm outside Cafe Nero on Bow Street to walk to Market Square for a service.

Easter Sunday is a celebration of the 40 Days of Prayer in Lisburn city. A total of 18 churches have shared in these 40 days of prayer.

Christians will journey from their morning church services to Market Square for a 1pm start which will include worship, testimony, prayer and some food.

Leaders of the four main Christian churches in Derry-Londonderry will lead a cross-community 'Walk of Witness' through the city centre on Good Friday to commemorate Christ's crucifixion and death at Golgotha.

The event presents an opportunity for participants to present a united Christian Witness. Instead of highlighting our differences, it illuminates our common faith in the saving power of Jesus Christ through the Cross.

The 'Walk of Witness' will begin at 12.00 noon on Good Friday at St Columb's Hall. It will proceed to Guildhall Square, passing through the Richmond Centre (which has kindly agreed to facilitate the event) and down Shipquay Street.

The event will include readings from Scripture and hymn-singing, and all are welcome.

Irish Pilgrim Paths Festival begins

Thousands of people from all over Ireland will take part in this year's Pilgrim Paths Festival which commences today and will be a week-long event for the first time.

Easter Saturday 2014 was designated as the very first National Pilgrim Paths Day.

The event proved a huge success with almost 1,800 participants taking part at 11 pilgrim path locations across Ireland.

Following on this success, the second annual National Pilgrim Paths Day took place on Easter Saturday, 4 April 2015, with a nationwide series of walks planned along the country's major medieval penitential walkways.

Now in 2016, the Pilgrim Paths Festival has been extended to a week-long celebration running from Tuesday 22 March to Tuesday 29 March.

Speaking on local radio, Pilgrim Paths Ireland chairman and author of 'Pilgrim Paths in Ireland', John G O'Dwyer said that there has been "a remarkable renewal of interest in following in the footsteps of the past".



“National Pilgrim Paths Week offers all comers from every religious background and none an opportunity to reconnect with Ireland’s medieval heritage,” he said.

“The event is targeted, not only at those who enjoy exploring and learning more about the history of our ancient tracks, but also the growing number of people seeking to escape the daily grind of life and take some time out for reflection while enjoying the great outdoors.”

The event is also been supported by the Heritage Council. In a statement, it said that it “is delighted to see local groups engage so strongly with Ireland’s pilgrim paths”.

The Heritage Council added, “Working with the local communities, the project aimed to raise awareness of the different aspects of heritage,

built and natural, encountered along the routes, while contributing to sustainable tourism and community development in each local area.”

During Pilgrim Paths week events will take place on each of Ireland’s 13 medieval pilgrim paths.

These include Glen Colm Cille in Co Donegal, Slí Mor in Co Offaly, Tochar Phadraig in Co Mayo, St Kevin’s Way in Co Wicklow, St Bridget Pilgrim Path in Kildare, Kilcommon National Pilgrim Loop in Co Tipperary, Rath/Dysert Pilgrim Path in Co Clare, Cosán na Naomh and Cnoc na dTobar in Co Kerry, St Finbarr’s Pilgrim Path in Co Cork , St Declan’s Way in Co Waterford and the Pilgrim Path of St Brigid in Kildare.

Guides from local communities will lead each event while outlining the story of the route and pointing out places of special interest. More information can be had by visiting www.pilgrimpaths.ie

Rector appointed to Holmpatrick Group

The Revd Anthony Kelly has been appointed Rector of the Holmpatrick Group of Parishes in the Diocese of Dublin. Anthony has been Bishop’s Curate in the group, which comprises

Holmpatrick, Skerries and Kenure, Rush with St George's Balbriggan, since the Feast of St Brigid, February 1, 2012.

Since his arrival four years ago, the long-term aim of the parishes was to regain incumbency status. To this end parishioners worked towards a parish Vision Day in October 2013, where they collectively articulated a future vision for their parishes. Together they set about implementing that vision, which they hoped would lead to a renewal and a revitalisation of parish life and chart a path into the future, always having consideration for the call of Jesus to build the Kingdom of God on earth.

“It is great news for all our parishioners to hear that the incumbency status of the Holmpatrick Group of Parishes has been restored. Their collaborative work has indeed born fruit, as we have endeavoured to move away from a priest-centred model of church to an every-member model of ministry,” Anthony commented following the announcement of his appointment this morning (Sunday March 20).

“I too am delighted and humbled to be appointed Rector. Together we look forward to a bright and grace-filled future as part of ‘qahal Yahweh’ – the assembly of God, as the Hebrew

scriptures referred to the gathered people of God in the Old Testament,” he added.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Consultation on new NI church planning - News Letter

New planning regulations to protect churches have been tabled by the Environment Minister.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/durkan-plans-new-planning-rules-to-protect-churches-1-7286778>

1916 Easter Rising: David Ford declines to attend commemoration of 'violence' - BBC News

Northern Ireland's justice minister declines an invitation to Dublin's 1916 Easter Rising centenary commemoration, saying he is "uncomfortable" marking the efforts of those who engaged in violence.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-35855719>

Times/Guard/Mail/BBC

Further reports that a group has been formed to campaign for the Church to apologise for its handling of the inquiry into Bishop George Bell over sex abuse allegations. The group, which includes the Dean of Oxford, Martyn Percy and Frank Field MP, says his reputation has been destroyed. Last October the Bishop of Chichester issued a formal apology following the settlement of a legal civil claim regarding sexual abuse against Bishop Bell. The survivor has since given an

churchnewsireland@gmail.com

interview. All reports contain CofE statement: "The decision to settle the civil claim relating to the activities of Bishop Bell and make a formal apology was not taken lightly or without consideration of the impact on the reputation of George Bell. "However in this case, as in others, the overriding goal was to search out the truth and issues of reputation cannot take priority over that. Any suggestion that the reputation of the Church, or its ministers, should take precedence over the search for the truth is fundamentally misplaced."

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article4717788.ece>

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/20/church-of-england-challenged-apology-george-bell-abuse-claims>

[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3501953/Church-England-wrong-smear-sex-abuse-bishop-group-lawyers-politicians-church-leaders-say-allegation-upheld-question-named.html?](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3501953/Church-England-wrong-smear-sex-abuse-bishop-group-lawyers-politicians-church-leaders-say-allegation-upheld-question-named.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

[ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3501953/Church-England-wrong-smear-sex-abuse-bishop-group-lawyers-politicians-church-leaders-say-allegation-upheld-question-named.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-35854494>

BBC

Reports that more than 1.7m self-employed workers will earn below the new National Living Wage when it comes into force in April. The Social Market Foundation's (SMF) research claims the number will rise to 1.9 million by 2020. Currently, the government's national minimum wage is £6.70 per hour, but the National Living Wage for over-25s of £7.20 comes into effect in April.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-35857947>

Tel/Ind/Guard/Mail

Reports the marriage of a *Big Issue* vendor to one of his customers. Jack Richardson, first met Toni Osborne two and a half years ago when she passed his regular

roadside spot. On Saturday the couple got married at St Paul's church in Clifton, Bristol.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/howaboutthat/12199875/Big-Issue-seller-marries-woman-he-met-while-selling-magazine.html>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/big-issue-vendor-marries-the-woman-who-cried-when-he-asked-her-for-money-a6942461.html>

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/mar/20/homeless-man-big-issue-50p-married-wedding-bristol>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-3501188/Big-Issue-seller-marries-woman-gave-money-street-couldn-t-afford-pay-electricity-bell.html>

BBC

Reports a Kent council has been accused of leaving gravestones and memorials looking as if they have been vandalised after carrying out safety checks. Thanet Council began work two weeks ago at All Saints church in Birchington but some stones have been left broken. The council said there were more than 100,000 memorials across cemeteries in Thanet, many of which were more than 100 years old. It said the testing was being done to ensure the gravestones did not pose a danger to the public and had the support of the vicar.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-kent-35856170>

Comment

Times: Libby Purves says the trend for cremation without ceremony is a mistake, arguing a funeral is a vital part of facing up to mortality.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/columnists/article4717782.ece>

Mail online: In his blog Peter Hitchens continues his campaign in support of Bishop George Bell.

<http://hitchensblog.mailonsunday.co.uk/2016/03/the-defence-of-george-full-documents-in-the-case.html>

Obituary

Telegraph: Bruce George, who has died aged 100, was the architect who designed the Royal Military Chapel - the Guards Chapel - in Birdcage Walk after it was destroyed by a V1 bomb during a service in June 1944.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/12199584/Bruce-George-architect-obituary.html>

Christian Today

Report that Church sources in Sudan are confirming the veracity of a United National Human Rights (UNHR) report that women and children and the disabled are being subjected to rape and brutality amid the eruption of a civil war in the territory. According to the report, from April to September last year, there were 1,300 rape cases reported in Unity, one of South Sudan's 10 states.

Mail

Report on comments by former Lord Chief Justice, Harry Woolf who has said the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), chaired by Justice Goddard, is a 'huge task' and risks 'breaking the system'. Speaking at a solicitor's conference last week Lord Woolf said that inquiries suck a huge amount from the justice system. The Anglican Church in England and Wales is one of the Inquiry's 13 investigations.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3500908/Abuse-inquiry-big-break-justice-warns-one-Britain-s-senior-former-judges.html#ixzz43QxqIBIY>

S Times

Report that the Church of England is facing legal action over birth defects caused to the children and grandchildren of girls who were given large doses of prescription drugs in one of its care homes, Kendall House in Gravesend, Kent during the 1970s and 80s. The Bishop of Rochester, James Langstaff, last year announced an independent review into the case http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/uk_news/article1680187.ece

BBC

Report that churches in Truro diocese are being asked to check records for any evidence that Bishop Peter Ball may have taken services there in the 1990s after he had accepted a police caution and when his brother was the diocesan bishop. The former Bishop of Gloucester, Peter Ball was jailed last year after he admitted sexually abusing young men. Article notes the CofE has launched an independent review into the Church's handling of the case.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cornwall-35851286>

S Tel/Mail

Reports that a group has been formed to campaign for the Church to apologise over its handling of the inquiry into Bishop George Bell over sex abuse allegations. The group, which includes the Dean of Oxford, Martyn Percy and Frank Field MP, says his reputation has been destroyed. Last October the Bishop of Chichester issued a formal apology following the settlement of a legal civil claim regarding sexual abuse against Bishop Bell. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12198949/Church->

[wrong-to-name-Bishop-of-Chichester-George-Bell-a-paedophile.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3500889/Welby-urged-apologise-sex-abuse-inquiry-bishop-reputation-carelessly-destroyed-allegations.html) <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3500889/Welby-urged-apologise-sex-abuse-inquiry-bishop-reputation-carelessly-destroyed-allegations.html>

Tel

Interview and profile of Rev Kate Bottley previewing *In The Footsteps of Judas*, which she will present on BBC 1 on Good Friday.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/tv/2016/03/18/gogglebox-vicar-kate-bottley-its-like-god-said-i-was-a-show-off/>

S Tel

Report that **Christian Concern** has called on MPs to veto the appointment of David Isaac as chairman of the Equality and Human Rights Commission when he appears before a scrutiny panel on Wednesday. In a [letter to the paper](#) the group says his background as former chairman of the gay and lesbian rights group Stonewall will mean he will not be able to fulfill his role impartially.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12198972/New-equalities-head-would-be-biased-against-Christians-claim-campaigners.html>

BBC

Report that plans to build a restaurant in the former private gardens of the Bishops of Durham have been approved by Durham County Council. The Auckland Castle Trust has said work on the 17th Century walled garden in Bishop Auckland will start in September.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tees-35851699>

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