



***People walk away from Brussels airport after explosions rocked it.***

## **Pray for Brussels at each Holy Week service, Archbishop of Canterbury**

Yesterday morning following the blasts that occurred at Brussels' international airport, and 30 minutes later at the Maelbeek Metro station, the Archbishop of Canterbury, made a short but

direct statement encouraging prayer for the victims and those caught up in the events.

Archbishop Justin Welby said, “In the great Holy Week of Christian prayer and mercy, the Brussels attacks shock all those who seek peace and justice through the terrible cruelty and utter separation from all that is of God. Once again we see the contrast between the vain efforts to terrify through indiscriminate murder, and the call of God to be those who show mercy, who seek peace and pursue it. Let us at every service this week pray for those caught up in the traumatic events at the airport and in the City of Brussels.”

**The Archbishop of Dublin, Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson** said, “As the horrific events in Brussels unfold we hold those who have lost loved ones and those who have been injured and traumatised in these terror attacks in our prayers.

“I wish to express my sorrow and solidarity with the people of Belgium at this time and with all who have suffered and all who mourn the death of those dear to them. I wish also to express concern for members of the emergency services who experience horror and trauma as part of their commitment to service in their work.

“Brussels, as we all know, is home to people from all over the world and many Irish people will know the city well and identify with its citizens as they come to terms with what is happening there today.

“As we travel through Holy Week towards Easter and the Resurrection, a time of sorrow and suffering followed by a time of hope, let us pray that there can be an end to such terror attacks and hope for a future in which peace and security will prevail over violence and destruction and the loss of human life.”

## **Holy Week and Easter message from the Archbishops of Armagh**

The Most Revd Richard Clarke & The Most Revd Eamon Martin write -

As we again ponder, and “pray with”, the events of the first Holy Week and Easter, we once more become aware of the enormity of God’s mercy to humankind. In the darkness of Calvary on Good Friday and in the celebration of Our Lord’s resurrection on Easter Day, we see both sides of Divine mercy. God is with us in the darkness of all human suffering and bewilderment, but God

also holds out the hope of a new and wonderful dimension to human existence, both in this life and beyond this life. Herein is the miracle of that great mercy held out for us.

This year is a particular “year of mercy” in the Roman Catholic tradition, but for all Christian disciples – of whatever tradition – the heartbeat of the Beatitudes echoes through all true spiritual endeavour with its central message, “Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy.” (Matthew 5.7)

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to respond to the mercy of God, shown to us most vividly in the happenings of Holy Week and Easter. We do so with real humility but also with a new determination to reflect that mercy of God, however imperfectly, in the way we live our own lives. There are those around us who are fearful and lonely and who feel little hope for themselves or for their families. There are those further afield who are have lost everything in this world and who are the recipients only of suspicion and even hatred. We cannot simply stand aloof, if we claim the name of Christ.

The opposite of merciful is not unmerciful but merciless, a chilling and frightening word. None of us wishes to be regarded as merciless, and

yet indifference to mercy is indeed merciless behaviour. Our prayer for ourselves and for all Christian disciples is that we may all, however inadequately, show something of the immeasurable mercy of God – shown to us most vividly in the events of Holy Week and Easter – in our daily living.

May the God of all mercy bless you and all His people



***Procession from St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork to the Bishop's Palace following the St Patrick's Day civic service.***

## **1916: C of I Archbishops encourage commitment to peace**

The C of I Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin said in a statement issued yesterday that “In remembering the past, we must not glorify violence or engage in acts of hatred.”

The Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke of Armagh, and The Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson of Dublin, issued their statement at the request of the Standing Committee of the General Synod. It reads -

“This year at Easter time many will be marking the centenary of the 1916 Rising in Dublin including the opportunities provided at public events of commemoration. We are mindful that there will also be people grieving or remembering the loss of loved ones as a result of violence, either very recently indeed or in the past. We wish to uphold in prayer those who have been hurt by conflict and we pray also that all across this island commit themselves to peace at this time.

“In remembering the past, we must not glorify violence or engage in acts of hatred but seek at all times to work for the common good as

citizens who care for neighbours across differences and divisions. As the Church Leaders jointly stated at the beginning of this year, may our memories and commemorations of the past, alongside our hopes and longings for the future, strengthen our resolve to live together in harmony, trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

## **Buncrana tragedy unites churches in Derry and Donegal**

Bishop Donal McKeown commenting on the loss of life when a family group perished, has said, “As we enter Holy Week, the thoughts of Christians turn to the death of Christ on the cross on Calvary. Suffering, which is so evident during Holy Week, can be a very challenging part of our experience of human life and of our lives as Christians.

“We are coming to terms today with the news of the tragic events in Buncrana. I have visited expressing sympathy, on behalf of the people of this diocese, to a local woman and family circle who have lost so many family members. There are no adequate words in the face of such pain.

“My thoughts and prayers are with those who are bereaved, in particular a grieving mother. I

ask the people of the diocese to keep this family in thoughts and prayers over the coming days and weeks. I pray for the recovery of the young child and for the man who was injured while assisting at the scene. I pray also for those who witnessed the traumatic events and the emergency services who attended.

“We depend upon the emergency services each day, above all in such tragic circumstances. We owe a debt of gratitude to those who assisted at Buncrana.

“May Christ, who suffered on the cross on Calvary, be with all those touched by this painful event.”

See also -

## **No adequate words' for clergy tasked with comforting pier tragedy mother**

Belfast Telegraph

Catholic cleric Donal McKeown and **Church of Ireland**

Bishop for Derry and Raphoe Ken Good together went to the home of Louise McGrotty

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/no-adequate-words-for-clergy-tasked-with-comforting-pier-tragedy-mother-34559054.html>



## **Refugee crisis continues: Church and Christian organisations call for concerted ambitious action**

Ahead of a meeting of the European Council, five European ecumenical organisations have written to EU political leaders urging action on the refugee and migrant crisis. The Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), the Conference of European Churches (CEC), Eurodiaconia, EU-CORD, and ACT Alliance EU call on European governments to fulfill their promises and obligations under international law. The letter calls on the EU to increase civilian search and rescue efforts in the Mediterranean region, while at the same time creating safe and legal passages for refugees and appropriate support services once in Europe. Safe passage must include sizable refugee resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes, as well as private sponsorships and family reunion, among other mechanisms. Such an approach is necessary to prevent refugees from risking their lives or resorting to smugglers.

The refugee crisis is a challenge for both the EU and its neighbourhood, requiring extensive

cooperation and collaboration with countries beyond the EU's external borders. The letter expresses concern with the proposed EU–Turkey deal, which includes a blanket return of refugees to Turkey and a so-called 'one in, one out' plan for Syrian refugees, leaving out refugees from other countries, such as Afghanistan and Eritrea.

"European states must not shift the responsibility for refugee protection on other countries, they have to share and take the responsibility and alleviate the countries most affected by the current refugee crisis, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey," Doris Peschke, general secretary of CCME commented. The letter welcomes EU participation in peace processes, and calls for enhanced efforts to end conflict in Syria. All must pay heed to the example set out by many people in Europe in welcoming refugees, providing services and humanitarian assistance and extending a hand of friendship. Together, CCME, CEC, Eurodiaconia, EU–CORD, and ACT Alliance EU call on European governments to develop more humane responses for refugee protection. Europe can and must do more to protect the lives and dignity of the most vulnerable among us.

[For the full text of the letter, please click here.](#)

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

### Reports Graves vandalised in Donegal churchyard - Donegal Democrat

Rev David MacDonnell, Rector of Holy Trinity Dunfanaghy, of which St Paul's is a part, said he and his parishioners "are thankful for the overwhelming show of support from the local community following vandalism in our churchyard".

<http://www.donegaldemocrat.ie/news/home/204646/Graves-damaged-at-Ray-Church.html>

### Apprentice Boys banned from marching around Anglican church

Belfast Newsletter

The Parades Commission has been slammed for banning an Apprentice Boys parade from walking around the **Church of Ireland** building at the end of ...

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/northern-ireland-news/apprentice-boys-banned-from-marching-around-anglican-church-1-7287620>

### Christian Today

Reports an interview given by the Archbishop of Canterbury for a BBC documentary, *The Battle for Christianity*. The documentary features 'missional' churches which are becoming more confident, lively and assertive than the traditional British model, often

preaching conservative Biblical views on issues. Speaking of the wider Church, Archbishop Justin says "We are not a political party we are a family, and if part of the family is struggling, you want to encourage that part of the family." The programme, presented by Professor Robert Beckford, is screened tonight at 10.45 pm.

### **Tel/Times/Mail/Western Daily Press**

Reports that Bishop Peter Ball may have taken services in Truro diocese in the 1990s after he had accepted a police caution and when his twin brother was the diocesan bishop. The former Bishop of Gloucester, Peter Ball was jailed last year after he admitted sexually abusing young men. An interview given by the Bishop of Truro, Tim Thornton to the *BBC* is quoted and a diocesan statement confirms that PTO had been given by Archbishop George Carey. Articles note the CofE has launched an independent review into the Church's handling of the case.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12200726/Paedophile-bishop-Peter-Ball-may-have-taken-services-in-place-of-his-identical-twin-brother.html>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article4718549.ece>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3503093/Paedophile-bishop-duped-congregations-impersonating-identical-twin-brother-bishop.html>

<http://www.westerndailypress.co.uk/Fears-bishop-paedophile-Peter-Ball-impersonated/story-28962768-detail/story.html>

[The Argus](#)

Report that a lawyer who represents a woman who received compensation and an apology from the Church of England last year following a claim of sexual abuse against Bishop George Bell has criticised the Bell group,

launched at the weekend, for not treating her client with the respect she deserves. The group says the Church should apologise for the handling of the case which has ruined Bell's reputation. Speaking yesterday Tracey Emmott said; "It is disappointing that my client's account continues to be so relentlessly challenged in what appears to be nothing short of a campaign to discredit and invalidate her evidence which has already been considered by independent experts as part of her legal claim."

### **BBC/Star/Ex**

Reports that the government has been defeated in the House of Lords after peers voted to accept 3,000 unaccompanied child refugees into the UK from Europe in an amendment to the Immigration Bill. Lord Dubs, who came to the UK as a child refugee, said it would save children from exploitation and abuse. The Bishop of Chelmsford, Stephen Cottrell is quoted. The government said the amendment would not target those most in need.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-35865508>

<http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/502738/refugee-crisis-Calais-Syria-House-Lords-politics>

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/654498/refugee-crisis-Calais-Syria-House-Lords-politics>

### **Tel/Guard**

Reports that an interview given by Stephen Fry, in which he calls God 'evil' has been shortlisted for the 2016 Sandford St Martins Awards, which celebrate excellence in religious broadcasting. Other programmes nominated are a documentary about Buddha, shown on BBC 4, and The Ark, telling the story of Noah. The *Guardian* quotes the Bishop of Leeds, Nick Baines. The winners will be

announced at a ceremony at Lambeth Palace in June.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/celebritynews/12200734/Stephen-Frys-God-is-evil-interview-shortlisted-for-religious-award.html>

<http://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/mar/21/stephen-fry-god-evil-interview-religious-broadcasting-award>

### **Exp/Christian Today**

Reports that chocolate egg packaging has lost the word 'Easter' on millions of boxes during the past five years. But the results of a YouGov poll, commissioned by the Meaningful Chocolate Company found that 79 per cent of people disagreed with the idea that manufacturers should avoid using the term 'Easter' in their packaging. The Bishop of Salisbury, Nicholas Holtam is quoted.

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/654515/Cracked-manufacturers-egg-drop-easter-chocolate-packaging-Christian>

### **Christian Today/Premier**

Reports that Archbishop of Canterbury has announced a new set of Lambeth awards (see above) as he marks the third anniversary of his installation. The non-academic awards recognise outstanding service in various fields and winners this year include UK Coptic church leader Bishop Angaelos, worship leader Matt Redman and former MP Sir Tony Baldry.

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Matt-Redman-and-Bishop-Angaelos-among-list-of-Lambeth-Awards-winners>

### **Christian Today**

Report that a clergyman has issued a High Court writ against two CofE bishops under data protection laws over information in a reference. The article quotes the *Sun*

which carried the story at the weekend.

### **York Press**

Reports that the Archbishop of York will continue his Pilgrimage of Prayer, Witness and Blessing in Hull during Holy Week (see above).

[http://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/14373834.Archbishop\\_heads\\_for\\_Hull/?ref=rss](http://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/14373834.Archbishop_heads_for_Hull/?ref=rss)

### **Christian Today**

Reports that a Church of England primary school in Hartfield, East Sussex is holding a "transgender day" event, which was designed by the school to "empower lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans young people." The school's head teacher, Emma Maltby, said the classes are part of meeting the government's requirement to teach children "British values." Some parents have said they will keep their children away from school in protest.

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