



Derry Church leaders lead Walk of Witness in city

Representatives of the four main Christian churches including Bishops Ken Good and Donal McKeown, have led a cross-community ‘Walk of Witness’ through the centre of Derry-Londonderry to commemorate Christ’s death on the cross at Golgotha.

It began at noon outside St Columb’s Hall, close to the city’s two largest shopping centres, and

made its way to Guildhall Square, passing through the Richmond Centre. Members of the Presbyterian, Methodist, Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland communities took part.

The Walk of Witness offered an opportunity to present a united Christian Witness on Good Friday. The organisers said instead of highlighting the churches' differences, it illuminated their common faith in the saving power of Jesus Christ through the Cross.

Members of the various churches took turns to carry a large wooden cross – symbolising Christ's crucifixion. The procession stopped at a number of points along the route to hear readings from Scripture and for hymn-singing. The event concluded on the steps of the city's Guildhall.

Jesus of the Scars key to Holy Week events, Bishop Miller

In an Easter Message, Rt Rev Harold Miller of Down and Dromore reflects on the past week's events -

“One of the biggest challenges we have in the 21st Century is to sustain a sense of hope for

the future. That is true both for people of faith, and also for people who claim no faith.

“This Holy Week, we have seen and read tragic stories in the media – a family left desolate after the accident in Donegal, and the lives of so many people taken from them through terrorism in Brussels. We can’t make sense of it in human terms or in terms of faith. If we try to, we find ourselves saying empty and meaningless words.

“It is at times like this that we are truly grateful for a faith which does not pretend that suffering doesn’t happen; for a Christ who understands grief, pain and desolation, and for a story which reaches into eternity through the resurrection.

“Edward Shillito put it like this in his poem Jesus of the Scars:

“The other gods were strong, but Thou wast weak;
They rode, but Thou didst stumble to a throne.

But to our wounds only God’s wounds can speak,
And not a god has wounds but Thou alone.”

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him.”

Academic ‘rigour’ needed in religious education, Head of Belvedere

The headmaster of one of the country’s leading Jesuit schools has spoken of the importance of “academic rigour” in religious education (RE).

Belvedere College SJ Headmaster Gerry Foley also called on Catholic schools to develop a “common language” to articulate their unique ethos.

Speaking to a meeting of Catholic educators at Marino Institute of Education in Dublin, Mr Foley warned that without an academic approach, RE risks becoming a class in which a lot of “uninformed discussion” takes place.

Addressing the issue of “absolute truth”, he warned that “personal preference takes precedence over universal value” in society today, adding that teachers of religious education were “partly to blame” for this because “unless there is an academic rigour in RE then you don’t really do it”.

Making the case for a more academic approach to religious education, Mr Foley said “it helps you to have an informed opinion and it gets you to see things differently”.

The Jesuit school headmaster also spoke about the need for a school to have a “common language” to articulate its Catholic ethos.

“If you don’t have very clear values and if you don’t have very clear vision, the RE teacher is working on their own. They are kind of left at sea and it is almost as if that person is left to do it on their own.”

Noting that teaching students to be “men for others” is a central tenet of Jesuit education, Mr Foley said “it makes it so much easier if the school has a common language that it uses to talk about vision and values”.

“If it doesn’t and if that is confined to the religion teachers or the chaplains, it makes the work of the RE teacher even more difficult because they are not working for the mission of the school,” he said.

Parishes explore Cinnamon Network micro grants

Representatives from 17 churches from Down and Dromore met in Braniel Community Church in early March to explore a new church micro grants initiative run by The Cinnamon Network.

The Cinnamon Network has been set up to encourage churches to engage their local communities with new projects and to work alongside them providing advice and initial small grants of between £1,500– £3,000. Local representative, Tommy Stewart, came along to talk through the process, including how to choose a suitable project.

The Cinnamon Network is partnered with 28 projects in categories of community need such as family, education and poverty and each one of these projects can be developed ‘off the shelf’ for different local contexts. Churches heard that if they were to start one of these projects in partnership with Cinnamon, they would be eligible for a micro grant.

Also present for the evening were some of the diocese’s church plants and pioneer ministries and we heard from two of them, Braniel and The Glen, on new community projects –especially amongst men.

For more information The Cinnamon Network please contact Andrew Brannigan or look up www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk.

Raphoe Bible-reading marathon ends on schedule

“The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.”

With these last words, from the Book of Revelation, the Dean of Raphoe, Very Rev Arthur Barrett, brought St Eunan’s Cathedral, Raphoe’s four-day long Bible-reading Marathon to an end.

Over the previous 96 hours, parishioners, members of the wider community and clergy – from the Church of Ireland and other denominations – had read the Bible aloud, as part of the parish’s contribution to the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe’s Year of Opportunity 2016.

The event had been launched on Palm Sunday by the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Ken Good, who performed the first reading. He was followed by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Raphoe, Dr Philip Boyce.

Over the following four days, people came forward – from all walks of life – to help read the

Bible in its entirety, in 192 half-hour stints, right round the clock. Among those who called at the Cathedral to take part was the Fermanagh priest Father Brian D'Arcy. Readers were accompanied, night and day, by stewards from the parish.

There was applause from the 30 or so people who had gathered in the Cathedral to hear the Dean conclude the final reading, right on schedule.

Irish cleric to be Hon Chaplain to the Queen

The Reverend Andrew Totten MBE, currently the Assistant Chaplain-General with the British Army's 1st (United Kingdom) Division based in York, has been appointed as an Honorary Chaplain to The Queen. He joins a body of chaplains who are available to Her Majesty at any time and will preach as required in the Chapel Royal in St James' Palace.

The Queen's Honorary Chaplains wear a red cassock and a special gilt badge consisting of the royal cypher and crown within an oval wreath.



Padre Totten says it is a great honour to have been asked to undertake this ministry to Her Majesty and looks forward to learning more about the responsibilities which it entails. He was ordained in the Church of Ireland in 1990 and served as Curate Assistant at St Mark's Newtownards. He was active in the Scout movement and wrote the history of the 10th Belfast Scout Group.

The appointment keeps alive a rich tradition of Irish clergy in the armed forces who have been appointed Hon Chaplains. They include three recent Chaplains General of the Royal Army

Chaplains' Department, Rev. Dr. David Coulter,
Rev Dr Victor Dobbin and Archdeacon Frank
Johnston.

C of I Primary School Management Annual Conference

The Church of Ireland Primary School
Management Association's 6th Annual
Conference will take place on Saturday 16th
April at The Heritage Hotel, Jessop Street,
Portlaoise, R32 KV20.

The conference will begin with Morning Prayer at
10.30am in St Pauls Church, Portlaoise (2
minutes from the hotel), followed by tea/coffee
and registration in the hotel.

The Rt Rev Michael Burrows, Bishop of Cashel &
Ossory, will open the Conference at 11.30am
and speakers and themes will include:

Professor Brian Mac Craith, President, DCU:
Establishment of the DCU Institute of Education
Dr Bernie Collins, Lecturer, St Patrick's College,
Drumcondra: Pilot Project on Anti-bullying and
Gender and Sexuality Issues
Ms Susie Hall, Mediation: Resolving Conflict in
Schools.

Ms Jacqui Wilkinson, CICE: Religious Education:
ERB and Ethics and Follow Me
The Anunual General Meeting of the association
will also take place. The conference will
conclude at approximately 4.00pm.

Cost: €15 per school including morning coffee
and three-course lunch.

*The organisers of the conference look forward to
each Board sending as many members as
possible to the conference as this is an annual
event only. For the purposes of catering, please
advise the number of people attending from your
school.*

Closing Date for Bookings: 11th April 2016

The Portlaoise Heritage Hotel is situated in
Portlaoise Town Centre, located only 1 hour from
Dublin, 1.5 hours from Cork and just 5 minutes
walk from Portlaoise Train Station. The Executive
Committee of CIPSMA acknowledges the
generous assistance of the General Synod Board
of Education and the generous sponsorship of
the Ecclesiastical Insurance Office PLC in the
organisation of this our 6th Annual Conference.

The Good, the Bad & the Ugly in C of I's past

March 26

A book by Canon Ted Woods has just been published as a Kindle book on Amaz



It is a light look at the Good, the Bad & the Ugly in the Church of Ireland's past. Some are principled but many are unprincipled! Some have sought to serve others but many of them thought only to serve themselves. Some are fondly remembered but others are preferably forgotten.

The book includes the rogues as well as the righteous, priests and bishops alike. You can have a preview on Amazon. Only £1.99.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Why can't the date of Easter be fixed?

BBC

Easter is early this year for those in the West. It's later in the East. Why can't it just be the same?

<http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-35880795>

If Jesus can wash his followers feet women can lead the church

Irish Times - Rite and Reason

<http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/rite-reason-if-jesus-can-wash-his-followers-feeet-women-can-lead-the-church-1.2582838>

Four girls' and boys' Catholic schools to merge in north Belfast

Irish News

<http://www.irishnews.com/news/2016/03/25/news/john-o-dowd-approves-north-belfast-catholic-schools-shake-up-462379/>

Ex-teachers back in class as graduates struggle to get jobs

Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/exteachers-back-in-class-as-graduates-struggle-to-get-jobs-34571067.html>

Belfast grammar Campbell College is damned by school inspectors

Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/belfast-grammar-campbell-college-is-damned-by-school-inspectors-34568413.html>

Archbishop of Dublin condemns gangland-style murder of Noel Duggan

Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/archbishop-of-dublin-condemns-ganglandstyle-murder-of-noel-duggan-34569105.html>

Dublin-born Orangeman and long-serving minister was 'a rock of solidarity'

Belfast Newsletter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/ni-obituaries/dublin-born-orangeman-and-long-serving-minister-was-a-rock-of-solidarity-1-7296207>

Protest against clerical sex abuse in the Catholic Church in Dublin

Irish Examiner

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/protest-against-clerical-sex-abuse-in-the-catholic-church-in-dublin-today-726762.html>

Abortion: NI ministers agree to publish guidelines for clinicians

BBC News

The Northern Ireland Executive agrees that long-awaited abortion guidelines for the medical profession are to be published.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-35895058>

Interview where Stephen Fry tells Gay Byrne God is evil is up for an award

The Journal

“How dare you create a world in which there is such misery that is not our fault. It’s not right. “

<http://www.thejournal.ie/stephen-fry-gay-byrne-god-award-2676811-Mar2016/>

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