



Dr. McNie with members of the Nightlight team talking to door staff in Commercial Court, outside The Duke of York in Belfast's Cathedral Quarter.

Moderator joins Nightlight shining the Gospel on the streets of Belfast

On a Friday and Saturday night, from 11pm to 3am, teams of volunteers are 'on the streets' of Belfast with the thousands of people who are out for the evening to enjoy themselves, along

with the door staff of clubs and the many homeless people in the city centre.

Established in 1995, each evening the Nightlight teams offer practical assistance to anyone who needs it, often working in coordination with the door staff of clubs, emergency services and other agencies. Showing concern and support in these practical ways helps to provide opportunities for conversation, in which the love and hope of Christ can be shared with people.

Dr. McNie joined Linzie Cobain and Brian Simons, the two Nightlight staff members who coordinate the team of volunteers. While Linzie's team focuses on Shaftesbury Square and the Golden Mile, Brian's team concentrates on the Cathedral Quarter and Odyssey complex.

“At the start of the evening I accompanied Brian's team to the Cathedral Quarter, and into the many bars and clubs in that area. It was obvious that the volunteers were well known to the door staff and were very accepted within the areas they visited, and it was also clear that they had good relationships with them. This allowed the volunteers easy access into the bars and clubs.”

“I was also impressed by the SOS bus which is situated in the city at night and took the opportunity to see inside it and learn more about its role. Here people can receive counselling and support from specially trained staff,” Dr. McNie said.

However, while the Cathedral Quarter was relatively quiet, with young professionals drinking and chatting in the bars, as the night went on the Moderator was also able to see the other side of the coin, when the team of volunteers visited the Odyssey complex.

“As the clubs wound down I saw many younger people quite obviously putting themselves into vulnerable situations. Yet as it was a quieter night, we were afforded opportunities to talk with people,” Dr. McNie said.

Returning to Botanic Avenue and Kinghan Church in the early hours of Saturday morning, Dr. McNie was grateful for the opportunity to have some meaningful conversations with a number of people.

“This is a marvellous work that the Nightlight staff and volunteers are engaged in every weekend, all year round. Obviously, this is a ministry that not everyone will feel comfortable

doing – but those engaged in this work are committed and enthusiastic, sharing their faith in a meaningful way with people who under the normal course of events would not be under the sound of the Gospel,” Dr. McNie said.

Dedication of new-build Newpark Comprehensive School in Dublin

“This school is built where a great school used to stand. This is our blank canvas. This is our beginning.” These were the words of Olivia Drennan, a sixth year student at Newpark Comprehensive School at the official opening of the school’s new building on Monday, February 29. Students, teachers and staff were joined by parents, friends and supporters to celebrate a momentous day in the school’s history. The new building, which is the result of many years of hard work and campaigning, was dedicated by Archbishop Michael Jackson.

School principal, Derek Lowry, was joined by all three of his predecessors: the Revd Michael Classon, John Harris and Derek West. During the morning students’ musical talents were showcased with performances by the school choir and jazz trio Matthew Breen, Jonah Byrne



The choir of Newpark School performing during the official opening of the new building.

and Finn MacAnna, a harp solo by former student Claire O'Donnell and a piano duet by Maya Baum and Norah Corcoran-Chan. The festivities concluded with a performance by the choir of 'A Day Like This' with lyrics by Emma Horsfield of fifth year. Cian Malin provided music on the piano before and afterwards and second year student, Emily Keogh read from Colossians.

The principal acknowledged the contribution of the Department of Education in providing €12.5 million in funding for the building at a time when budgets were tight. He thanked all who had helped bring the project to fruition. He also paid tribute to the teaching staff but said the most important people were the students. "We hope they will get the most out of the six years they are here. It is important that we provide a school for

all of the students and they are all of equal importance,” he said. The principal acknowledged the support of the deputy principal, Mark Cookman, chairman of the board of management, Robert Grier and his own family.

Robert Grier said it was a remarkable day for Newpark and praised the many people who had worked towards achieving the new building. He highlighted the school’s ethos of respect, tolerance and desire to include people from a wide range of backgrounds which meant that they embraced diversity and all students could fit in there. The school’s history had been characterised by generosity of spirit and a sense of fun as well as inclusivity and the desire to see each student reach his or her full potential, he added. He paid tribute to the principal and deputy principal, all the teaching staff and the chaplain who ensured students left Newpark ready for life.

Olivia Drennan recalled life in the old building from the smell in C Corridor to the great school spirit. She said the some students had worried that the Newpark spirit would be lost during the move into the new building. “But let’s be realistic. It isn’t all about the building, Newpark is about the people.

Fourth year student, Karim Tamu, spoke of the great welcome he received in arriving at the school over two years ago having moved to Ireland from Sierra Leone. Having seen the new school being built from the ground up, he said Newparkers now had the school they deserved. “But it is the Newparkers themselves who make this school and I am proud to be part of this new chapter with the new building,” he said.

Former head boy, Ben Melvin, spoke of the qualities the unique learning community equipped its students with. “The scope of opportunities we were afforded with here gave us all a chance to flourish,” he said paying tribute to the staff and the schools free thinking ethos for allowing the students to develop independence, reason, logic and critical thinking.

Dedicating the new school building, Archbishop Jackson said visitors had been treated to an amazing snapshot of Newpark life in an electrifying morning. He prayed for those whose beliefs had held firm and who had overcome the difficulties which at times may have seemed insurmountable. He gave thanks for those who enabled an ethos of compassion and respect to

flourish in the school and gave thanks for all who would experience the school's spirit in the future.

Irish girl features in Pope Francis' new book

A young Irish girl features in Pope Francis' latest book, *Dear Pope Francis: The Pope Answers Letters From Children Around the World*, which is published by Irish Messenger Publications and Loyola Press USA. (March 2016)

Twelve-year-old Clara O'Gormain from Galway and 259 children from countries around the world including Russia, Syria, Australia, Nigeria, each wrote a letter to the Pope asking him their own personal questions.

Thirty children had their letters and drawings chosen by the Pope and he has replied individually to each child in a unique book illustrated by the children themselves.

Clara and the children were flown to Rome for a special meeting with the Pope last week where she gave him a present of a tin whistle.

“He was very kind to us but what I like most was that he took our questions seriously when he answered them – sometimes adults don't do that



with children”, she said in an interview to Irish Jesuit Communications. Clara is a pupil of the Jesuit Scoil Iognáid in Galway and wrote her letter as gaelige and it was translated into in English.

She asked the Pope if he felt like a father to everyone? And he concluded his answer with ‘Yes Clara, I like being a Dad!’

Messenger Editor Fr Donal Neary SJ, says the Pope expresses a deep theology very simply in his responses to the huge variety of questions so typical of young imaginations.

“It’s full of the joy that we associate with the Pope, like when Prajla from Albania (age 6) asks, ‘Dear Pope Francis, when you were a child, did you like dancing?’

And the Pope replies that he always loved dancing even as a child and as a young adult he loved to do the tango. And he concludes that people who can’t express joy ‘become sick with too much seriousness... so dance now children so you won’t be too serious when you grow up!’”

But there are deeper, sadder moments too, says Donal Neary.

Luca (age 7) from Australia had to deal with the death of his mum and he asks, ‘Dear Pope Francis, my mum is in heaven. Will she grow angel wings?’ “And it’s tragic to read ten-year-old Mohammed from Syria who asks ‘Dear Pope Francis, Will the world be again as it was in the past?’” says Donal Neary.

The book is the brain-child of the Jesuit publishing company in Chicago, Loyola Press, headed up by Belfast born Jesuit, Paul Campbell.

He says the book has received extensive media coverage in the states, featuring on ABC’s *Good Morning America*. “And it was also in the top ten

books selling on Amazon,” according to Fr Campbell.

Fr Donal Neary SJ says many people will buy the book as a First Communion or Confirmation present.

“But it’s a book that delights adults as well as children, and speaks from the heart to both”.

Dear Pope Francis was published on 1 March 2016 by Messenger Publications priced at €14.99

Scots piping at Carrickfergus church for BB HQ fundraising concert

A concert was held in Holy Trinity Woodburn, Carrickfergus on Saturday February 27 to raise funds for the Boys’ Brigade Northern Ireland Headquarters, Newport at Culcavey Road, Hillsborough.

Organised by the East Antrim Battalion, the concert featured Major Sinclair Memorial Pipe Band with Pipe Major John Fittis, a member of Holy Trinity Woodburn, and Ballyclare Male Voice



Pipe Major John Fittis (Major Sinclair Memorial Pipe Band) and Drew Buchanan MBE (President of the East Antrim Battalion). Both are members of Holy Trinity Woodburn which hosted the fundraising concert.

Choir conducted by Paul Briggs and accompanied by Sheelagh Greer.

Drew Buchanan MBE (President of the East Antrim Battalion and treasurer of Holy Trinity Woodburn) welcomed the audience and thanked the band and choir members for providing an evening of great musical entertainment which

concluded as the choir accompanied by the band sang, 'Abide with me'.

Members of the East Antrim Battalion executive served supper during the interval.

Mr Buchanan said: "We have exciting plans to develop the site that will start a new era for BB in Northern Ireland. We are looking for past members to get in touch and to join us as a Friend of Newport and buying into the future of The Boys' Brigade in Northern Ireland.

"If you were in BB and would like to help us, please visit [our fundraising website](#) where you will find information about the new centre and how you can support us. The estimated cost of completing the centre to its full potential is £400,000 and boys and leaders in almost 300 companies, comprising the 13 battalions of Northern Ireland, have been actively raising funds in a variety of creative ways."The concert raised £1,700.

Armagh organ recital by Edwin Gray

Edwin Gray will give the March organ recital on Sunday 20 March 2016 at 4.15pm in St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral, Armagh.

Edwin's musical career began in 1971 when he was appointed to the post of Assistant Organist at St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast. He had the privilege of working with the well-known composer, organist and choirmaster, Dr Harry Grindle, at an exciting time in the musical life of Belfast Cathedral. During that time, Edwin accompanied the Choir for the first of its visits to St Paul's Cathedral and to Westminster Abbey.

Subsequent appointments included Director of Music at Down Cathedral, and later at Holywood Parish Church. Edwin has also been active as a teacher and an examiner. Until his recent retirement, he taught music in Strathearn School Belfast, and his role as an examiner for Trinity College London has seen him working in many parts of the world, including India, Australia and New Zealand. Edwin also directs the Miskelly Chorale, an award-winning youth choir based in Comber.

Outlining his choice of music for his recital in Armagh, Edwin says, "I will be playing a programme which draws mainly on twentieth-century repertoire, but two of the pieces have a connection with the Baroque Era. Guilmant's 'March on a Theme of Handel' cleverly combines Handel's memorable theme with a fugue and then builds to a stunning climax. The second

piece is Hindemith's exuberant Second Sonata, which is composed in a neo-baroque style."

The Dean of Armagh, the Very Revd Gregory Dunstan, said, "It will be a great pleasure to welcome Edwin to Armagh. His career, combining music and education, mirrors something of the life of the Cathedral, with its musical tradition and connection with the Royal School. We look forward to hearing his adventurous programme."

As is the format with recitals in the Cathedral, admission is free, with a retiring collection towards the further endowment of the Cathedral choir through the Archbishop's Choir Fund.

Canadian Anglican Bishops unable to agree to marriage canon change

The Canadian House of Bishops has issued this: [Statement from the House of Bishops from its Special Meeting.](#)

Here is an extract:

...We spent a considerable amount of time discussing the theology of marriage and our episcopal role and responsibilities as chief

pastors, and as guardians of the Church's faith, order and unity. We concentrated on the relationship of the bishop to the Church locally, nationally and with our Anglican Communion partners, and alongside and within synods. These conversations led into considerations about the nature of our relationships within the House in light of the deep differences we have on the matter of changing the Church's teaching on marriage.

In our exploration of these differences it became clear to us that the draft resolution to change the Marriage Canon to accommodate the marriage of same-sex partners is not likely to pass in the Order of Bishops by the canonical requirement of a 2/3rds majority in each Order. Some of us talked of being mortified and devastated by this realisation. We feel obliged to share this with the Council of General Synod as they give consideration to the process for handling this resolution at General Synod. We have grappled with this issue for three meetings of the House, and we feel a responsibility to convey our inability to come to a common mind in discerning what the Spirit is saying to the Church. We share this out of respect for the considerable work that the Church has invested in preparing to debate this

motion at General Synod. We continue to wonder whether a legislative procedure is the most helpful way of dealing with these matters.

We have been conscious that the presence of this motion has brought distress to some, and we acknowledge the deep pain that our statement will cause both within and beyond the Church. And we are all saddened that we do not seem capable of unity on this issue. Nevertheless we are committed to work toward the deeper unity for which Christ died, and we pray daily that God would mend our divisions. Our hope is not in ourselves, but in Christ, and so we are committed to staying together that we might witness the miracle of our healing.

In our deliberations, we affirmed a commitment to continuing conversations and engagement with the Report of the Commission on the Marriage Canon, and to achieving the greatest pastoral generosity possible. There is a desire among us to explore other options for honouring and fully embracing committed, faithful same-sex relationships. We will also engage Indigenous and minority cultural perspectives in our Anglican family in our understanding of marriage...

There is an accompanying press release: [House of Bishops sends message to CoGS](#).

And the *Anglican Journal* has this report: [Same-sex marriage motion 'not likely' to pass in Order of Bishops](#)

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Australian Cardinal George Pell says 'Catholic Church made enormous mistakes' - Irish Examiner

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/world/australian-cardinal-george-pell-says-catholic-church-made-enormous-mistakes-384917.html>

Church to base school admissions on location regardless of religious affiliation - Irish Examiner

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/church-to-base-school-admissions-on-location-regardless-of-religious-affiliation-384575.html>

Priest who hired men to issue death threats loses sentence appeal - Irish Examiner

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/priest-who-hired-men-to-issue-death-threats-loses-sentence-appeal-384857.html>

Top Vatican cardinal says senior clergy lied about child sexual abuse - Reuters UK

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/us-pope-abuse-pell-idUKKCN0W22QN>

Vatican paper lauds 'Spotlight' for giving voice to abuse victims - Reuters

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-awards-oscars-spotlight-vatican-idUSKCN0W22MN>

Top Vatican Cardinal says Church made enormous mistakes over sex abuse - Reuters

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-pope-abuse-pell-idUSKCN0W10NV>

'We were wrong on paedophile priests' - Cardinal - Irish Independent

<http://www.independent.ie/world-news/asia-pacific/we-were-wrong-on-paedophile-priests-cardinal-34500304.html>

Priest guilty of threats to nephew loses appeal - Irish Independent

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/courts/priest-guilty-of-threats-to-nephew-loses-appeal-34500288.html>

Looking for Britain's future leaders? Try evensong -- Telegraph

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12176998/Looking-for-Britains-future-leaders-Try-evensong.html>

Premier/Christian Today

churchnewsireland@gmail.com

Reports that the Bishop of Chelmsford, Stephen Cottrell has urged Christians to give their effort, time and money to help vulnerable Syrians refugees (see above). Writing in his [blog](#), Bishop Stephen encouraged churches to support local authorities and other agencies by giving financially and offering use of their premises.

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/Church/Welcome-Syrian-refugees-and-be-God-s-spokesman-urges-bishop>

Tel

Reports that Oxbridge college chaplains have seen a steady but noticeable increase in attendances at the early evening services which combine contemplative music with the language of the Book of Common Prayer. The article notes that this mirrors a similar trend reported by the CofE for a growth in the size of congregations for “choral midweek services”.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12176998/Looking-for-Britains-future-leaders-Try-evensong.html>

Yorks Post/York University

Reports the launch of a website that offers free access to over 20,000 images of Registers produced by Archbishops of York from 1225-1650. The York Registers, handwritten on over 10,000 individual parchment folios, are one of the earliest, largest and longest locally-produced series of archives from the medieval and early modern periods. Starting 50 years before corresponding examples for the Archbishops of Canterbury, the registers are described as, “unparalleled in Europe”.

<http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/education/digital-history-archbishops-registers-go-online-for-first-time-1-7760737>

<http://www.york.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2016/research/archbishops-registers-online/>

BBC

Reports that planning applications are being submitted as part of a "challenging" bid to bring superfast broadband to Dartmoor and Exmoor national parks. Backed by six councils, the project is believed to be England's biggest wireless broadband scheme. Most transmitters will not be attached to masts - but to existing church towers, barns and other buildings or telegraph poles, to limit the "visual impact to the Moors".

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-somerset-35689534>

BBC

Reports that a radar survey of William Shakespeare's grave and an excavation of the playwright's house are among research projects marking the 400th anniversary of his death. Shakespeare's grave in Holy Trinity church, Stratford upon Avon has never been excavated, but a scan has been carried out to search below ground. This allows an investigation without physically disturbing the site. The findings are expected to be revealed in the next few weeks.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-35688546>

Christian Today

Further report that a Christian health worker has launched a legal challenge in response to her suspension after she was accused of attempting to convert a Muslim

colleague to Christianity. Ms Wastenev, who had worked as an occupational therapist at the NHS Foundation Trust in East London for more than eight years, was granted permission to appeal the decision back in October and is now returning to court to clear her name. Christian Legal Centre who are supporting the appeal are quoted.

Tel

Article explores who St David, the patron saint of Wales was and why we celebrate his patronal day on March 1st.
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/wales/12177946/Who-was-St-David-patron-saint-of-Wales-and-why-do-we-celebrate-his-saints-day.html>

Obituaries

Times: Sir Chris Woodhead, chief inspector of schools 1994-2000.
<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/obituaries/article4478164.ece>

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