



Archbishop Eamon Martin reads to Erin, 11, and Eoin, 11, Primary 7 pupils at St Patrick's Primary School Armagh at the Launch of "Dear Pope Francis".

Pope's new children's book appeals to the child in all of us, Archbishop Martin

The Primate of All Ireland, Archbishop Eamon Martin, has said Pope Francis' new children's book "appeals to the child in all of us" as he recommended it to the families of Ireland.

Launching '*Dear Pope Francis: The Pope Answers Letters from Children around the world*' at St Patrick's Primary School, Loughgall Road in Armagh on Tuesday, the Archbishop said that in his responses to letters from children around the world on matters of faith, life and love, Pope Francis never comes across as a 'know-it-all'.

He said it was evident in the book that the Pope is searching like all of us. "We are also reminded by his responses that we are all children before God," the Archbishop of Armagh said.

From reading through the questions from the children, he detected parallels in the questions that many of us still think about as adults: questions about the loss of a loved one, on how we might settle struggles in the world and bring peace, and questions about how God listens to us and hears us.

He acknowledged that many people will be immediately drawn to some of the more amusing questions which are asked of the Pope in the book such as 'When you were a child, did you like dancing?' or 'Why do you like to play soccer?'

Others will be moved by the question from seven year old Luca from Australia who asks: "Dear



Pope Francis, My Mum is in heaven. Will she grow angel wings?”

He added that they will equally be moved by the answer from Pope Francis who writes, “She hasn’t grown wings. She is still your mom, the person you know, but she is more radiant than ever. And she watches you and smiles at you as her son.”

Archbishop Martin congratulated 11 year old Clara from Galway whose letter to Pope Francis is published in the book.

he asks the Pope in Irish: “An airíonn tú mar Phápa gur tú athair ag an domhain iomlán?”

She wants to know if Pope Francis feels like a father to everyone. He replies that he does like the role of father figure.

“While this is a book for children, teachers, parishes and schools, I particularly recommend it to the families of Ireland as a beautiful gift directly from Pope Francis,” he said as he invited families to read it together and to talk to each other about the matters of faith it raises.

The publishers received 259 questions from 26 countries in 14 languages.

The book’s editor, Fr Paul Campbell, SJ, then sat down with a committee and chose the questions to send the Pope.

He told Vatican Radio, “One of the lines we use to describe this book is: Little children have big questions.”

“Yes they are questions from little children, but they are very, very profound questions,” Fr Campbell said and added, “The Holy Father was very clear that it was terribly difficult to answer these questions.”

The Jesuit priest said one thing that comes out of reading the book is the Holy Father's profound sensitivity to the suffering of children around the world.

Lord Sacks awarded the 2016 Templeton Prize

Former British Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks has been awarded the 2016 Templeton Prize.

The prize, valued at £1.1 million, is awarded each year to “a living person who has made an exceptional contribution to affirming life's spiritual dimension”. Previous winners include Jean Vanier, Mother Teresa and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

Jennifer Simpson, chair of the Templeton Foundation's Board of Trustees, said that the award recognised Lord Sacks's “response to the challenge posed by radicalisation and extremism.”

A prolific writer and a contributor to Radio 4's Thought for the Day, Lord Sacks has written several books on the subject of religion, pluralism and conflict, most recently Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence.

He has said that extremism must be met with “a message of love as powerful as the message being delivered by the preachers of hate,” adding, “it really has to speak to young people and we have to use the same social networking, the same technology as the extremists and we’ve got to do it as well and better than they do.”

Simpson said that Sacks “has always been ahead of his time and, thanks to his leadership, the world can look to the future with hope, something we are very much in need of right now.”

At a press conference in London this morning, where the award was announced, Lord Sacks said: “Religion, or more precisely, religions, should have a voice in the public conversation within the societies of the West, as to how to live, how to construct a social order, how to enhance human dignity, honour human life, and indeed protect life as a whole.

“Each religion, and each strand within each religion, will have to undertake this work, because if religion is not part of the solution it will assuredly be a large part of the problem as voices become ever more strident, and religious extremists ever more violent.”

The former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord George Carey, who nominated Sacks for the award, wrote of him: “There are public intellectuals and religious leaders, but few who are both at the same time. There are academic scholars and popular communicators, but he is both, reaching out far beyond his own constituency through the spoken, written and broadcast word.”

Lord Sacks was Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth from 1991 to 2013. He has published more than 25 books, on subjects including the ethics of the market and the relationship between science and religion.

The prize will be formally awarded at a public ceremony in London on May 26.

Overview of March's edition of the Presbyterian Herald

The Bible Society for Northern Ireland is well known for its work in sharing the Good News, and as John Doherty retires from his role as Secretary in May, he reflects on how the Society spreads the Easter message around the world.



“Technology has aided Bible availability greatly... we may live in a spiritually hungry world but now we have unprecedented means to reach people with the gospel,” John said.

The term ‘The Easter Rising’ may have differing connotations for different people – especially for those living on the island of Ireland. However, in his article Dr. Ian McNie reflects on the first Easter Rising, and how lives have been transformed by the power of the gospel through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The 1916 theme is continued in ‘Remembering 1916’, as Noreen Erskine reports on the recent ‘Church in the Public Square’ conference in Assembly Buildings. The Conference explored the historical significance and context of two key

events that shaped Irish history – the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme.

The idea of going away to do mission work is also considered. In 'To go or not to go...' Bert Houston recounts with honesty his experience of taking the plunge into short-term mission when he went to Malawi in July 2015.

“It was a thought-provoking experience, which challenged my thinking in a number of ways.

“Our brothers and sisters there need our relationship in partnership as well as our material resources, but are we willing to give it...?” Bert said.

Last month in the Herald the topic of fear was explored, in this month's issue another common experience is explored, that of grief. Andrew Conway discovers the importance of worship in the midst of grief in his article 'Glorifying God in grief'.

The subject of mission can be tackled from many different angles. In 'A mapping mission', Suzanne Hamilton explores how maps can transform lives in disadvantaged areas of the world.

Continuing to look at the work supported by United Appeal and the theme of a Caring Fellowship, Lisa Skinner visited Corkey House, one of the Presbyterian homes for older people run by the Council for Social Witness. At the home she spoke with both residents and staff, discovering that the original vision for Corkey House as a place where love is shown and the dignity of older people is maintained, is still very much the case today.

Television screens continue to show images of migrants and refugees seeking new homes in other countries, including our own. In 'Mission fields on our doorstep', Ajoy Sunil and his family, originally from India and members of the Presbyterian–Methodist congregation in Galway, appeals for the Church to involve itself with the mission opportunities on its doorstep.

For those who enjoy history, Bill Addley's article on Dr. Jack Weir will be of interest. Here the story is told of how this giant of Irish Presbyterianism, as Clerk of the Assembly, successfully directed the Church through some unstable times in the 1970s.

"The Herald also brings our regular and popular columns: 'As I see it...' with Jonny Hanson, a Christian environmentalist, 'Life Lessons' with

Susan Martin, Former GB captain and recent recipient of the British Empire Medal, as well as Betsy Cameron's reflection in 'Sameness and difference,'" editor Sarah Harding said.

March's Herald; [to download](#) this edition or to see how you can [subscribe](#), visit the Presbyterian Herald section of the website.

New rector of Monkstown Dublin was a Leap Year Day Internal transfer

Leap Year Day 2016 saw the start of a new relationship between the people of the Parish of Monkstown and their new Rector. Canon Roy Byrne was instituted as Incumbent by Archbishop Michael Jackson in Monkstown Parish Church last night (Monday February 29).

Canon Byrne came to Monkstown on an 'internal transfer', as the Archbishop put it, having been Rector of Drumcondra and North Strand. He is a native of Clondalkin and a Canon of Christ Church Cathedral and the large congregation that gathered to wish him well reflected these different facets of his ministry. Large numbers of his clerical colleagues joined parishioners as did



Archdeacon David Pierpoint, Canon Aisling Shine, Canon Roy Byrne, Archbishop Michael Jackson and the Revd Stephen Farrell.

pupils of St Columba's National School in North Strand to mark his move to the Southside.

Heralding the start of a new chapter for Canon Byrne and the Parish of Monkstown, Canon Aisling Shine said she believed the Holy Spirit had led the people of Monkstown and Roy to a good decision. In her sermon, Canon Shine, who is attached to the Parish of Drumcondra and North Strand, described her former parish colleague as a good pastor at many different levels. But she said the people of Monkstown were not getting a saint (which she suggested



The Service of Institution in Monkstown Parish Church.

would be very hard to live with) as their new Rector had a great sense of humour and fun.

The preacher wondered what it was about the Parish of Monkstown that had attracted not one but two Rectors from Drumcondra and North Strand, so she Googled the parish. She noted that at the top of the parish's homepage was their mission statement: 'May the Holy Spirit inspire us to reach out, encourage, share the Good News of God's Love and focus on the example of Jesus'. Suggesting that this raised fresh questions for the people of Monkstown, Canon Shine asked what they would make of

their new ministry and what new direction would they take. She said change was exciting and the parishioners had a duty to use their new Rector's gifts to fulfil their mission.

To the new Rector she said that as he got to know his parishioners over the coming months he would know that he had been called by God to carry them in his heart. Traditionally February 29 is when men can be proposed to and Canon Shine concluded: "Roy, Monkstown has proposed to you and you have accepted. This new relationship begins tonight".

A reception followed the service in the Knox Hall. There Rural Dean, the Revd Ian Gallagher, thanked all who had helped out in the parish during the vacancy which arose following the retirement of Canon Patrick Lawrence. He thanked former Archdeacon of Dublin, Gordon Linney, for taking the majority of the services and paid tribute to the parish administrator, Liz Neill-Watson.

Alzheimer's Carers Information & Support Programme

A one day concentrated workshop to support people caring for a person with Dementia will be held on Saturday, 12 March, 2016, from 10:00 to

16:00 in Agape Centre, 238 Lisburn Road
BELFAST BT9 6GF

Please contact Danny Wilson on 028 90387787
for more details or to book onto a course.

Alzheimer's Society.

Email: belfast@alzheimers.org.uk Phone: 028
90387787

*Lunch is not provided but plenty of eateries
nearby

Creation Care Network to meet in Newtownabbey

The group meets twice yearly to share ideas,
problems and successes within the various
groups or churches represented.

The 7th meeting will be in Glenvarna Christian
Centre, 34a Ballynure Road, Newtownabbey
BT36 5SW (junction of A8 & B59) at 10.00 am on
Saturday 19th March 2016 at 10.00 am to 12.00

Anyone interested in creation care is welcome to
come and discuss or just listen. Information on
previous meetings can be found in the News
section of the Eco-congregation Ireland website,
under 'Next Eco-Network meeting...'

Contact - Bertie Stirling. ECO Congregation

Ireland. Email: bertie.stirling@arocha.org

Phone: 02893341673

Website with Further Details:

<http://ecocongregationireland.com/archives/5288>

New communications director for Anglican Communion

The Anglican Communion has appointed former BBC journalist Adrian Butcher as its new director for communications. He will take up the post immediately after Easter.

Adrian began his career in newspapers before joining the BBC in 1990 as a producer in its national radio newsroom where he wrote and edited news summaries and bulletins across the range of radio networks. He also worked on television, as a producer on the One and the Six o'clock news bulletins, and for the BBC World Service and at the parliamentary unit in Westminster.

“The Anglican Communion is an amazing global family which it will be a privilege to serve,” Adrian



Adrian Butcher will take up his new role as the Anglican Communion's director of communications after Easter

said today. “I want to build on the excellent work already done here to communicate what that family is doing – whether it is in the corridors of power or among the world's poorest communities.

“There are so many stories to tell and, with the revolution we are witnessing in communications, I hope to make it easier to get those stories told and shared.”

Adrian is married to Catherine who is a journalist and editor. She is director of communications for [HOPE](#), and formerly worked for Mothers' Union, where she launched Families Worldwide.

Catherine has just co-written [The Servant Queen and the King She Serves](#), a book about the Queen's Christian faith which has been published to coincide with Queen Elizabeth II's 90th birthday.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Support has “continued to pour in” for the Christian bakers - News Letter

Support has “continued to pour in” for the Christian bakers at the centre of the so-called ‘gay cake’ row ahead of an appeal court hearing on Thursday, the Christian Institute has said.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/heartening-support-ahead-of-ashers-case-1-7242935>

NI Sustainable schools policy must be reviewed - BBC News

There should be a "root and branch" review of the Department of Education's sustainable schools policy, a Stormont committee says.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-35701038>

Irish schoolgirl meets Pope Francis after her question to him features in book - Irish Examiner

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/30-questions-pope-francis-responds-to-children-s-queries-1.2556007>

30 questions: Pope Francis responds to children's queries - Irish Times

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-35696308>

David Ford 'still hurt' over losing church role for supporting same-sex marriage - BBC News

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-35688401>

Catholic priest Fr Stephen Crossan 'caught snorting cocaine in Nazi room' - BBC News

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-australia-35703685>

Australian sex abuse victims want meeting with Pope - BBC News

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-australia-35692810>

Pell blames bishop for Australia child abuse cover-up - BBC News

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-pope-poverty-idUSKCN0W4160>

Pope says Church does not want 'dirty money' - Reuters

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-pope-poverty-idUSKCN0W4160>

Guard/Premier

Reports a speech made by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the House of Lords on the refugee crisis in Calais. Archbishop Justin called for Britain to “very quickly” take more unaccompanied children from the Calais camp known as the Jungle, parts of which French authorities are demolishing. “Issues of compassion should easily trump issues of administrative efficiency and tidiness. We should take more children very quickly,” he said.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/01/calais-camp-razed-refugees>

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/World/UK-should-take-in-more-children-from-Calais-urges-Archbishop>

Guard

Reports that secular campaigners say they have brought end to faith school admission arrangements prioritising places for children whose parents help at church. The British Humanist Association (BHA) and the Fair Admissions Campaign (FAC) said their efforts had forced all schools to drop criteria such as church cleaning and flower arranging from admissions policies after they lodged a series of objections with the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA). A spokesperson for the Department of Education is quoted saying, “There is nothing new in this – it has been the case for a number of iterations of the admissions code that the activities the BHA describe are not permissible as means of prioritising applicants.”

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/mar/01/faith-schools-admissions-church-flower-arranging-eradicated-england>

Christian Today

Reports the launch of the *Equipping Christian Leadership in an Age of Science* project which aims at helping Christians understand how to engage with science today. The three-year ecumenical project, a partnership between the University of Durham and the Church of England, and funded by the Templeton Foundation, plans to carry out research into the attitudes of clergy, offer theological resources and advice on complex scientific questions and run conferences on issues of concern.

Exp

Reports that a vicar, the Revd Andrew Wickens has been criticised by UKIP and Conservative councillors on Dudley Council after he claimed that Brexit backers “need to be aware of the risks of stoking anti-European sentiment”. He spoke out at the start of a council meeting when he was leading prayers.

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/649039/Fury-meddling-Vicar-OPENING-PRAYERS-to-warn-Brits-against-leaving-the-EU>

Times

Reports that high resolution mapping of the ceiling above the Quire of St Paul's Cathedral has as revealed what appears to be a secret in the design by William Blake Richmond: support for Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. Simon Carter, the Cathedral's head of collections says the mosaic contains a clear acknowledgement of Darwin's theories through the depiction of toothed fish “fighting for survival”. Richmond was commissioned to decorate the ceilings in

the 1890s, when Darwin's theories were still controversial.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article4703485.ece>

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