



The Rt Revd Patrick Rooke was the preacher at the communion service prior to the General Synod

Armagh archbishops to lead youth to the Somme and Glasnevin

Archbishop Richard Clarke told the General Synod yesterday, "In just over a month from now, I will have the privilege, along with Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh, of leading a group of young people from Church of Ireland churchnewsireland@gmail.com

and Roman Catholic backgrounds, from both jurisdictions, on a three day journey which will take us from these shores to the battlefields of the Somme. That journey will start in Glasnevin cemetery at the new memorial wall that remembers by name all those who died at the Easter Rising in Dublin 1916 – Irish, British, military and civilian. We will then take a flight to Belgium and travel down to the battlefields of the Somme, where men from both traditions and both parts of this island fought and died together, side by side. Before we return home we will pause for a time of reflection at the Irish Peace Park in Messines. A shared journey on so many different levels, reflecting on our past but also looking to how we can shape our future.”

Earlier the Archbishop commented, “On this island, we are at present in the midst of what has become widely known as a ‘decade of centenaries’, running from the Ulster Covenant of 1912 through to the civil war in the then Irish Free State which reached its conclusion in May 1923. This year, 2016, is central to these commemorations as the centenaries of both the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme fall within weeks of one another. They have both moved into history and historical interpretation as crucially symbolic events in the modern history of our island. I would want to suggest, as churchnewsireland@gmail.com

someone who has rather more than a dilettante interest in the history of this period, that neither event should be commemorated or interpreted through the lens of a single narrative. They were both highly complex affairs, both in the history of the events themselves, and also in subsequent interpretations of those events – but also deeply symbolic and emblematic and we have all been shaped in different ways and to differing degrees by them.”

Archbishop responds to ‘Long term church’ concerns

In his presidential address to General Synod, Archbishop Richard Clarke recognised that there were concerns about the “Log Term Church” programme which is underway in the Church of Ireland.

“As I have said on many occasions over the past couple of years, the Church of Ireland must look beyond its own self-interest and its own survival. It must reach upwards to God in trust. It must look beyond itself in every way. Not least, it must look beyond the present into the future to which we believe God is calling us.

In this context, I am aware that there may be some misunderstanding among a number of

people as to the nature and scope of the ‘Long-Term Church’ project on which we as a Church are embarked. We need to be very clear that we should never imagine that the mission of the Church throughout every diocese and local community can somehow be ‘achieved’ by a central Church initiative. It is almost always in a local context – whether diocese, parish, or other local community or even through an event – that men, women and children are enabled to meet Jesus Christ and to grow into a greater maturity as his disciples. How this will happen will inevitably be different according to place and context.

“What the central Church can and should do, however, is to ensure that it gives as much support and structural shape as it can achieve, in order to serve local communities in their mission and service to the world. This is the thinking behind the Long-Term Church venture. We should be thinking into the mid-term and even into the long-term with confidence in the purposes of God for the future of the Church of Ireland. I have a personal dislike of the phrase ‘fit for purpose’ in the context of the Church (as it rather seems to denigrate the efforts and work of many people who selflessly serve Christ with energy and commitment), and so I prefer the image of seeking to re-shape some of our

structures so that they may more effectively serve the wider life, outreach and witness of the Church into the long term, hence the strap-line for Long-Term Church, 'Shaping to Serve'. We have, as I have suggested, been shaped by the heritage we have received. While maintaining an essential continuity with that legacy, we need to play our part, with God's help and guidance, in continuing the work of shaping the Church for the future.

“A great deal has already been done under the heading of Long-Term Church, some of which relates to initiatives that had begun before this project had been articulated, but which nevertheless can be seen as being within this overarching concept. In this category, there has been a very useful computerising of the RCB's database of all Church property. This is of tremendous value, not only for parishes and diocese (in addition to the central Church), in their collective stewardship and management of Church property. It will also be of great benefit in establishing the nature of our legal trusts, a matter of concern to the commissioners for charities in both Northern Ireland and the Republic. From this perspective it is also important that members of Select Vestries are fully aware of their responsibilities, not only in Church law but also in the civil law, and the first

section within the ongoing Parish Handbook project – that part dealing with the responsibilities of Select Vestry members – should be in the hands of parishes within the next few months.

“New civil responsibility for the Church, particularly in relation to greater accountability in support of its charity status, has meant that much work has been done in our different dioceses to prepare for new methods of reporting on our finances and structural activities. This has had a beneficial concomitant value in that parishes and dioceses will have to report to the civil authorities, not simply on the financial management of their assets but also on the work and service that they undertake, if they wish to retain charitable status. This will indeed concentrate minds on what is being done by the Church at local level for more than the dubious end of its own self-perpetuation. Draft templates for use in this regard are therefore in the process of preparation. We all need to take a long and hard look at ourselves, as individuals and as communities, to evaluate just what we are doing in forwarding the mission of the Church in our localities and, ironically, it may be that we will be grateful to the state authorities for helping us to undertake such rigorous self-examination.

A more user-friendly Constitution and video-conferencing for C of I

Archbishop Richard Clarke informed the General Synod that ,”As part of the movement to make the work of the Church as a whole more accessible to all its members into the future, a group is now looking at how we could make the Constitution of the Church of Ireland more ‘approachable’. That we need a Constitution and statute law is undeniable, but are there ways in which these may be made as little esoteric as necessary? We are fortunate that Sir Paul Girvan, former High Court justice in Northern Ireland, has, in company with a small reference group, kindly agreed to investigate the possibilities of how this might be done, without beginning the process of an entire re-writing of a Constitution, which would indeed take decades of the General Synod’s time and attention.”

The Archbishop later referred to the use of video-conferencing, commenting “Modern technology might enable members of central committees to participate more readily in the work of such committees, without the need to travel to every meeting. Tele-conferencing has long been available, but there are today more sophisticated modes of video-conferencing

which serve to make the immediacy of such participation far greater. The central Church is investing in this technology, with the hope of having a number of venues in different parts of Ireland equipped with this technology. Individuals will also be able to participate in such meetings using their own computers.

“The purpose is not simply to save time, energy and money on over-frequent travel (although it will certainly achieve this end), and it is certainly not in question that meetings will continue to be held with the physical presence of all the membership being desirable.

“The use of modern technology should however mean that more people will be available for shorter meetings, and also that people who might not be able to make day-long trips to central meetings on a regular basis would consider becoming members of such committees or boards.

“My hope is that younger people may in this way be encouraged to involve themselves in the life and work of the central Church.”

Generosity of spirit essential - Synod preacher

The Synod Eucharist took place in St Paul's Church, Glenageary, on Thursday 12 May and the preacher at the service was The Rt Revd Patrick Rooke, Bishop of Tuam, Killala and Achonry.

Bishop Rooke preached from St John's Gospel on the theme of 'Generosity of spirit' and referred to the need to reach out to people affected by the refugee crisis and the progress made on Christian unity through ecumenical engagement.

He said: 'Generosity of spirit demands compassion and courage – it is the hallmark of the strong, not the excuse of the weak.' Bishop Rooke concluded: 'As members of General Synod and as individuals, it is incumbent upon us to put our best foot forward and refine our efforts, to practise what we preach, aware at all times of the grace and empowering love of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we may all be one.'

Moderator supports church presence at Balmoral Show

Presbyterian Moderator, Rt. Rev. Dr. Ian McNie, paid a visit to the 148th Balmoral Show

yesterday, where he spent time on a special stand taken by the Presbytery of Dromore.



At the Dromore Presbytery stand at the Balmoral Show are (seated L-R) Anne McNie, Presbyterian Moderator Rt. Rev. Dr. Ian McNie and Rev. Bobby Liddle of Legacurry Presbyterian Church with (standing L-R) Brian Copes of First Dromara, Rev. Kenny Hanna, Second Dromara and Ian Watson who attends Moira Presbyterian Church.

where he spent time on a special stand taken by the Presbytery of Dromore.

This is the second year running that congregations within the Presbytery have put

their hand to the plough and attended Northern Ireland's premier Agri-Food event.

Speaking on the opening day of the Show, one of the organisers Rev. Kenny Hanna of Second Dromara Presbyterian Church, said, "Drawing on a very happy experience from last year we have taken a larger stand this year.

"We were thrilled by the very warm response we received as we welcomed folk from all arts, parts and backgrounds, offering a seat to rest weary legs, a refreshing cup of tea and face-painting for the children. It all came together to make for a most enjoyable three days and I am sure that this year will be no different."

Mr. Hanna explained that in everything they did, "We tried to be good ambassadors for Jesus, by pointing people to our Saviour, in word and action. Once again, the hope is to share the good news of Jesus, as conversations arise, supported by suitable literature."

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has traditionally drawn much of its strength from rural areas. For many years congregations and presbyteries have attended Ireland's agricultural fairs and shows.

Congratulating the Presbytery on their Balmoral initiative, Dr. McNie said, “A theme that I have often gone back to during my year in office is that the church of Jesus Christ has been entrusted with a responsibility and message that no other organisation or institution has been mandated to share.

“Put simply it is the unique message of the gospel of Jesus Christ’s birth, life, teaching, death and resurrection. All that we ought to do is centred on this and is an outworking of our response to Christ’s grace and love, and this is exactly what the Presbytery of Dromore is doing at Balmoral, and I commend them for it.”

The organisers are keen to stress that the stand is not only for Presbyterians. An open invitation is extended to all: Stand EK23, in the Eikon Exhibition Centre, which is situated between the cattle tents and the big wheel at Balmoral Park, the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society’s Show Grounds at the Maze.

£100m shared school campus underway in Omagh

Six schools facilitating around 4,000 students on one shared campus costing over £100m

(€126m), is the ambitious project currently underway in Omagh, Co. Tyrone which may be paving the way for the future of education in Northern Ireland.

The Strule Shared Education Campus is the first project of this scale and type in Northern Ireland, but some hope it is to be a template for 10 similar shared education campuses across the region, where the Department of Education has made a commitment to shared education as an alternate to integrated schools.

In the Omagh development Controlled schools, largely attended by Protestant children, will join Catholic maintained, grammar, non-selective and a special needs school on the 140-acre site of the former Lisanelly Army camp. The six schools involved are: Loreto Grammar School, Omagh Academy Grammar School, Sacred Heart College, Omagh High School, Christian Brothers Grammar School and Arvalee School and Resource Centre.

The Arvalee special needs school, whose existing building was badly damaged by fire in 2012, is the first school to be constructed and is scheduled to open this September. With facilities for over 175 pupils and staff, the new school will

have sensory rooms and hygiene and hoisting facilities, as well as bespoke teaching areas.

The shared education model differs from integrated education, where children from different backgrounds are educated together, in that each school retains its separate identity and ethos while pupils will be able to share resources. This means the widest range of subjects will be available to the students.

As joint chairs of what was originally the Lisanelly Shared Educational Campus Working Group, Rev. Robert Herron of the Trinity Presbyterian Church and Msgr Joseph Donnelly of Drumragh parish have been a driving force in the project from the beginning.

Rev. Herron said that he thinks “the reality has been that integrated education in Northern Ireland has not developed and expanded in the way that some people might have hoped”.

He continued, “I do believe there is a desire in Northern Ireland for children to build relationships to share their education together, to understand one another and build a better future. I think many people do see the campus as a flagship project which will perhaps stimulate thinking and open doors in other places.”

The army vacated the Lisanelly site in 2007 and it has remained unoccupied since then. Plans for the campus were first submitted for approval in 2010, then demolition of the 200 derelict houses and a wide range of other buildings and facilities at the site began in March last year, with the target completion date for the whole campus set for September 2020.

“There has been a lot of discussion and debate about the viability of moving in this direction,” Msgr Donnelly said “but the site was eventually acquired and made available for education and the project of the building of the schools is part of programme of government here in Northern Ireland.

“The schools had to look very carefully at the wisdom of making that move and it was not an easy decision to make. A very good working relationship has developed over the years between the schools and there has been a lot of hard work. The principals and senior management are shouldering a lot of the work in the meetings and negotiations, and there is a dedicated team in the department (*of education*) looking at the different aspects of the project.”

The main areas of sharing across the campus will be the ‘Shared Education Hub’, covering
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areas like technology and design, music, drama, art, science, home economics and Sixth Form Study. There will also be a shared 'School of Activity', including a large sports complex, multiple courts, a covered multi-use games area and spectator seating.

Gay marriages soon to take place on UK military bases

Gay marriages could soon be celebrated on military bases for the first time.

In a **response to a parliamentary question**, Minister for Armed Forces Penny Mordaunt revealed this week she had ordered a pilot study for Ministry of Defence sites to be registered for civil marriages and partnerships.

Christian Today **reported last December** that no same-sex couples in the Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force had been married in a military chapel in spite of regulations making provision for such ceremonies being passed two years ago. This was because all 12 of the "sending Churches" responsible for the supplying chaplains to minister in the country's 190 military chapels are opposed to same-sex marriage.

Labour MP Madeleine Moon tabled a written question to Mordaunt last December asking how



Minister for the Armed Forces Penny Mordaunt at 10 Downing Street

many military chapels are registered to conduct same-sex marriages.

Mordaunt, MP for Portsmouth and a Royal Navy reservist, replied at the time: "The Ministry of Defence allows same-sex marriages in military chapels, but none of the sending Churches using the chapels currently allows same-sex marriages to be conducted there.

"I have asked the chaplaincies of the three services to advise me on how Parliament's sanction of same sex-marriages may be fully implemented."

Moon then followed up with another question, to which Mordaunt replied that the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 "reflects the Government's commitment that no religious organisation or representative will be forced to conduct or participate in same sex marriages."

She continued: "Recognising the established position of the Sending Churches which does not allow for the conduct of same-sex marriages within military chapels, I have recently directed that a pilot project is implemented to explore registering Ministry of Defence sites for civil marriages and partnerships; this includes same-sex unions. The timing of the project is being finalised but I anticipate that it will start shortly and run for a number of months."

A long-term ban on homosexual people in the armed services ended in 2000.

National Secular Society spokesman Keith Porteous Wood said: "Most people will be astonished that same-sex couples in the armed forces are denied the religious freedom to have a

religious marriage in any military chapel, all of which are paid for from public funds.

"The law must be amended to prevent such marriages carried out by liberal religious organisations being vetoed by other religious denominations sharing the premises.

"Similarly, places of worship should have the legal freedom to conduct such marriages, under the principle of subsidiarity, as many do.

"The law should not be enforcing unpopular denominational religious discipline."

News briefs

General Synod online - Throughout the next three days you can view reports, news items and photographs to give you a flavour of the life of the annual meetings of Synod at <http://synod.ireland.anglican.org/2016/> .

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Glenageary Concert of Choral and Organ Music - will take place at St Paul's, Glenageary on Friday May 13 at 7.30 pm. The concert takes place every year at the beginning of May.

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Hope Café Monaghan Town Centre - A fresh & imaginative missional project. "The vision for Hope Café is to be a welcoming environment in the town of Monaghan, where anyone can pop in and have an opportunity to be introduced to the Jesus of the Bible. The idea was something planted in the hearts of some leaders of Ballyalbany Presbyterian Church during a bible study!"

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Montreal mayor visits Cavan Cathedral - Mayor Denis Coderre of the City of Montreal, Canada – who can trace his family the McCabes back to Cavan - was given a guided tour of the Cathedral by Sean Coll, Director Kilmore Diocesan Pastoral Centre on a visit to the town.

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Tipperary sacristan honoured - A Bene Merenti medal was presented by Fr Pat Mulcahy PP to Mary O'Meara for her 50 years of service as sacristan in the church of the Most Holy Redeemer, Redwood.

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Tipperary choir members honoured - Richie Bourke and Eileen Mannion were presented with

Bene Merenti medals for their long years of service to the Church Choirs in Lorrha and Rathcabbin in North Tipperary.

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The National Month of Prayer for toddler group ministries - will take place in June 2016.

The aim is to encourage people to pray and to get their churches praying! 'Living life to the full' is the theme this year and John 10 v10 is the keynote scripture '*I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*' With over 20,000 churches estimated to be running toddler groups in the UK, we believe that it is so important for groups, the leaders, the children and their families to be supported in prayer. Visiting the 1277 website <http://www.1277.org.uk> will inform you about the group and registering your Parent and Toddler group will help to increase the number of church toddler groups that are known about. It is also a good place to find out about resources and events as well as making the most of Toddler groups.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

New minister must act quickly on denominational schools issue

Irish Independent

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The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recently found that **Ireland's** ... The law that allows schools to discriminate on **religious** grounds in ...
<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/education/going-to-college/new-minister-must-act-quickly-on-denominational-schools-issue-34703322.html>

UN hearing hears call to halt Irish school enrolment on religious grounds

[RTE.ie](http://www.rte.ie)

The United States has urged the **Irish** Government to ensure that publicly-funded schools stop showing preference to applicants for places on grounds ...
<http://www.rte.ie/news/2016/0511/787734-un-hearing-ireland/>

Church of Ireland report findings on Royal Black are wrong

Belfast Newsletter

Indeed they have gone out of their way to reconcile 'Bethel Church' with the **Church of Ireland** doctrine. This is disturbing, especially after reading the ...
<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/church-of-ireland-report-findings-on-royal-black-are-wrong-1-7378221>

Guard - Reports that the minister for the armed forces, Penny Mordaunt, has ordered a pilot project to explore registering MoD sites for civil marriages and partnerships, including same-sex unions. The move was disclosed in response to a parliamentary question on the use of military chapels for same-sex weddings. There are 190 state-funded military
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chapels in England and Wales. The C of E and another 11 Christian denominations provide chaplains to the armed forces.

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/may/11/mod-may-allow-gay-marriage-ceremonies-on-military-bases>

Varsity - Reports that more than 1,000 professors from twenty countries have signed a letter urging shareholders in Exxon Mobil and Chevron to pass resolutions to be more open on climate change issues. Positive Investment, a Cambridge based campaign group, says that the letter calls on shareholders to pass eight climate-related resolutions at the companies' Annual General Meetings (AGMs) on 25th May. The Church Commissioners are referenced as being part of the campaign and article includes a quote from Helen Wildsmith of CCLA.

<http://www.varsity.co.uk/news/10241>

Exp - Reports that the Christian charity Open Doors has mapped the most dangerous places in the world to be a Christian. North Korea has been named the most dangerous place for the 14th year running with Iraq and Syria also in the top five. More than 7,000 Christians were murdered because of their

faith in the last year with millions punished for their beliefs.

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/669376/mapped-most-dangerous-places-in-world-to-be-Christian-North-Korea-Syria-Iraq>

Exp - Reports that ISIS executed at least 16 Ethiopian Christians for refusing to convert to an extreme version of Islam. The video showing the killings includes scenes of cities under the control of ISIS including Ninevah and Mosul with churches in both cities being blown up.

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/669405/ISIS-kills-Christians-for-refusing-convert-Islam-sickening-video>

Comment

[Christian Today](#): The Queen Cameron and Welby: A metaphor for Church-state relations

Mail online: Peter Hitchens continues his blog in support of George Bell

<http://hitchensblog.mailonsunday.co.uk/2016/05/at-last-a-small-victory-in-the-rehabilitation-of-george-bell.html>

Obituary

Telegraph: The Revd Prof Dennis Nineham, one of the C of E's most distinguished scholars and teachers.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/obituaries/2016/05/11/the-rev-prof-dennis-nineham-scholar--obituary/>

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