

**The essential daily
brief on the Irish
churches**

**Study Visit to
India by the
Moderator**

Yesterday, the Moderator, Rt. Rev Dr Rob Craig and his wife Karen, along with Leah McKibben from the [Bible Society in Northern Ireland](#), went to visit the Gujarat Diocese of the [Church of North India](#) and the [Bible Society of India \(BSI\)](#).



The Presbyterian Church in Ireland's [Youth and Children's Ministry](#) team are adopting the work of BSI as one of its mission projects in 2014/15.

This support will be used by BSI as it works with the many orphanages in the country, providing the kids there with Scripture materials, blankets, shoes, notebooks and other necessities.

This visit will allow the team to find out more about the work in India and how God's Word is impacting the lives of kids there.

They will be visiting **Ahmedabad** in the State of **Gujarat** in the West of India at the invitation of Bishop Rt. Rev. Silvans Christian, President of the Bible Society's Gujarat Auxiliary.

They will be briefed by the Auxiliary's General Secretary Rev David Desai, who also looks after the local Presbyterian Church.



While visiting orphanages and finding out about the work of BSI, they hope to get a flavour of what the Church in India is like, and how they continue to share the love of God with people there.

Only away for a short time, the group hope to come back home with a sense of what it's like to be actively sharing God's Word in the communities of India, and how we in Ireland can play a part in this vital ministry.

Archbishop of Dublin Appoints Theological Advisor

Archbishop Michael Jackson has appointed the Revd Dr William Olhausen (pictured) as his Theological Advisor.

Commenting on the appointment, the Archbishop said: "I am delighted that the Revd Dr William Olhausen has accepted my invitation to be my Theological Advisor in the service and leadership I seek to offer within Dublin and Glendalough Dioceses.

"William has shown himself to be assured in the area of hermeneutics and through his pivotal contributions to the Biblical Association for the Church of Ireland. He also puts these talents and gifts at the service of parish and diocese.

"As we actively develop vision and mission in these dioceses I know that William will be invaluable in the contribution and commitment he will provide in the service of God and neighbour. His capacity is unquestioned as is his energy.



"Theological derivation along with theological underpinning are essential to the work of mission and the articulation of vision. I know that William will open up new pathways for us in all ways which are attractive and principled."

Dr Olhausen said he was looking forward to the opportunities the role presented. He stated: "I am honoured to have been asked by Archbishop Michael to become his theological advisor. These are challenging but exciting times for our church and I look forward to assisting him in any way that I can in furthering God's mission in these United Dioceses."

Archbishop's sympathy to Haughey family

The Archbishop of Armagh, *The Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke* expressed sympathy to the family of Lord Ballyedmond on behalf of the Board of Governors of Armagh Observatory and Planetarium -

'On behalf of the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium Board of Governors, I wish to express my sincere condolences to those who have been so suddenly bereaved by yesterday evening's helicopter crash near Gillingham, Norfolk in which Dr Edward Haughey, Lord Ballyedmond of Mourne, and three other people were killed.

Among Lord Ballyedmond's many valuable contributions to society in Northern Ireland, he was a respected member of the Board of Governors of the Observatory and Planetarium and our thoughts and prayers are with those both currently working at the scene of the crash and those coming to terms with this tragic news.'

The Archbishop of Armagh is Chairman of the Board of Governors

Rev Dr Dennis Cooke

The death occurred on Thursday 13 March of academic, author and ecumenist the Rev Dr Dennis Cooke. A past principal of Edgehill Theological College.

Dr Cooke is remembered with great affection by many former ministerial students, particularly by those who benefited from his pastoral support. The April Methodist Newsletter brings an illustration of this in the form of the Rev Dr Sahr Yambasu's account of the way Dr Cooke took him under his wing when he first arrived in Belfast from Sierra Leone.



Sahr writes: 'At Belfast International Airport, I was met by the Rev Dr Dennis Cooke. Dennis was the Principal of Edgehill Methodist College to which I was headed. "Thanks for coming to meet me, Dr Cooke," I said to him. "No problem," he said, "but please call me Dennis." "Dennis?" I pondered quietly. "How can I call you Dennis? You are not only older than me, but you are an academic doctor and the principal of the college in which I'll be studying. Do you understand what you are asking of me? It is like a visitor to the Queen of England being asked to address her as Lizzie. Besides, I have been brought up in my country to give honour where honour is due. And I know and I'm convinced that honour is due to you from me, sir." But that is how he wanted it, and I had to learn to do it his way. I knew, though, that it would take me quite a while before I could get used to it. *From Between Africa and the West – a Story of Discovery by Sahr Yambasu; Trafford Publishing, North America 2013.*

Stock appeal

East Belfast Mission charity shops urgently require stock.

A spokesperson said - We are happy to send our van to your home to collect good quality donations. We need clothes, shoes, handbags, other accessories, bedding, curtains, bric-a-brac! Furniture items are also urgently required – large or small! Ring your nearest restore to arrange collection or simply drop the goods off to any of our shops.

Vintage clothing, wedding dresses and all wedding accessories urgently required for our Vintage shop in Royal Ave Belfast. Fabulous range of bridal gowns available – ex shop display at knock-down prices. Call Claire on 028 9023 7268

Irish Bishops statement on Family Synod questionnaire

The Irish Bishops Conference has issued the following statement on the questionnaire on family life issued ahead of next October's Synod on the Family.

Bishops thanked the thousands of people who responded to the questionnaire on the theme "Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of Evangelization". These responses from the dioceses of Ireland are already helping to inform the preparations for next October's Extraordinary Meeting of

the Synod of Bishops. The responses also provide us with a framework for considering important pastoral issues regarding marriage and the family.

Support for marriage and family life is central to what the Church teaches and lives. Marriage is a sacrament, a sign of God's love, which mirrors the love of Christ for His Church. The gift from God of the family, based on the love of wife and husband and open to life, is a gift that the Church seeks to protect and cherish. As the original cell of society, the family is essential for the formation of members of society. It is a place where generosity, tenderness, forgiveness, stability, care, acceptance, and truth can be best taught and learned. Parents are also "the first and best teachers of their children in faith". The parish community has an important role in assisting parents in bringing their children to Jesus Christ and leading them in the ways of faith.

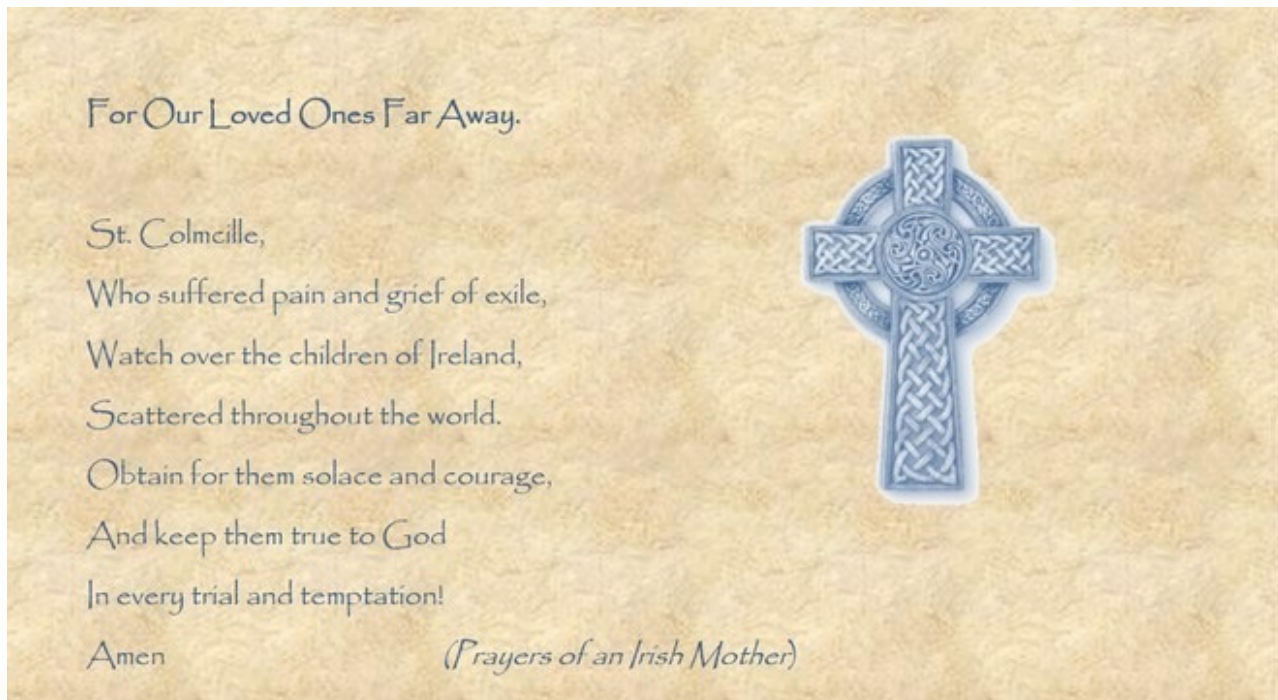
The responses to the Synod questionnaire identify the immense challenges faced by families in Ireland, including problems arising from severe financial hardship, unemployment and emigration, domestic violence, neglect and other forms of abuse, infidelity and constant pressures on 'family time' together. Some respondents expressed particular concern about the limited amount of State support for marriage and the family.

These challenges form the context in which the Church in this country continues to proclaim to the world the 'Gospel (Good News) of the family'.

We wish to encourage and accompany with love those who are struggling to live family life. Many of those who responded to the questionnaire expressed particular difficulties with the teachings on extra-marital sex and cohabitation by unmarried couples, divorce and remarriage, family planning, assisted human reproduction, homosexuality. The Church's teaching in these sensitive areas is often not experienced as realistic, compassionate, or life-enhancing. Some see it as disconnected from real-life experience, leaving them feeling guilty and excluded. We recognise our responsibility as bishops to present faithfully the Church's teaching on marriage and the family in a positive and engaging way, whilst showing compassion and mercy towards those who are finding difficulty in accepting or living it.

Bishops encourage all the faithful to engage in continued dialogue and discussions in these critical areas particularly over the coming two years. This will be facilitated by the Bishops' Council for Marriage and the Family which will host a special conference on the family and marriage on 14 June next. The Extraordinary Synod in the Vatican in October will be followed by an Ordinary Assembly of the Synod in 2015, also be themed on the 'Family'. In addition, the World Meeting of Families will take place in Philadelphia in September 2015.

Irish bishops ask people, priests and religious to pray for families and for the success of these gatherings in line with Pope Francis' recent request in his Letter to Families on 25 February.



Emigration information pack 2014

Although the number of people leaving Ireland remains high – eighty-nine thousand people left our shores between April 2012 and April 2013 – it appears the tide is turning and the number of people emigrating has begun to fall.

The Economic and Social Research Institute predicts that seventy-eight thousand people will have left the country in the 12 months to April 2014, a decrease of 14 per cent.

While this is welcome news, emigration continues to have a profound effect on Irish society as many well-educated, enthusiastic young people travel abroad in search of new opportunities. It is vital that those considering emigration are prepared for the experience.

The Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants has produced an Emigrant Information Pack to assist those considering emigration. This pack includes a section on each of the main receiving countries, with information about visa and immigration requirements, advice on obtaining accommodation, employment and healthcare, and contact details for relevant organisations.

The information pack also highlights the importance of taking care of your mental health when away from home. Depression, suicide and drug and alcohol abuse are issues that affect many Irish communities overseas and it is vital that emigrants are aware of the need to take care of their mental health and reach out for help if they need it. The information pack also examines how emigrants can prepare when returning home to Ireland after spending a period of time overseas.

The Emigrant Information Pack also contains resources for use in parishes, including homily notes and prayers for emigrants.

Events and services

Today (Saturday) Alice Leahy, from Trust, will be the speaker at the ecumenical service in All Hallows College at 7.30pm.

On Wednesday in Powercourt School Hall at 7.30pm., Fr Tony Flannery will speak on 'Repairing a Damaged Church'.

On Thursday evening the Bishop of Clogher will reflect on baptism in the Cassandra Hand Centre, Clones, while in the Stillorgan Park Hotel at 8pm Swami Purnananda will talk about living as a Hindu in Ireland.

Tomorrow (Sunday) evening the recently retired Bishop of Manchester, the Rt Revd Nigel McCulloch, will preach in Clogher cathedral at the installation of the Ven. Helene Steed as Archdeacon of Clogher, while in Freshford parish church the Revd Tim Irvine will be instituted as Vicar of the Kilkenny union of parishes. In St Columb's cathedral the Bishop of Derry & Raphoe will preach at the installation of two new canons – The Revd Michael Roemmele, Rector of Camus-juxta-Bann (Macosquin) and the Revd Harold Given, Rector of Tamlaghtfinlagan (Ballykelly).

In Christ Church cathedral, Dublin on Tuesday the lunchtime lecture will be given by Professor Raymond Gillespie from NUI Maynooth who will speak on 'Christ Church and its History'.

A service of Choral Evensong in Memory of the Victims of Homophobic Violence will be held in Trinity College Chapel on Thursday at 5.15pm. The guest speaker at this Rainbow Week event will be Jerry Buttimer, T.D., member of Dail Éireann for Cork South Central and Chairperson of Oireactas Committee on Health and Children. There will be a reception after the service in House 27. All welcome. - C of I notes Irish Times

On the map - Irish churches uniting in prayer today

New Wine Ireland has an interesting map linking up those churches which are praying for Ireland today. Its not too late to join.

“We have a map that we want to mark the churches that are praying and our aim is to have a church in every community in Ireland praying that day. Keep checking back as we will keep updating this every day.”

<http://www.newwineireland.org//praying-ireland>

Prayer for Today

O God, in you we live and move and have our being. You have blessed us with the gift of life and a world to live in.

In you we are blessed and we offer praise and thanks. Empower and strengthen the witness of your church throughout the world, that true to its calling it may embody your radical and boundless love.

Strengthen all the members of the Body of Christ. Grant that, nourished and sustained by Word and Sacrament, our service and witness in this and every land may be full of faith and love.