

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

**Fr Tony Flannery  
Addresses  
Powerscourt  
Ecumenical Lent  
Talk**

**Redemptorist priest, Fr  
Tony Flannery was in  
Powerscourt on  
Wednesday evening  
(March 19) speaking  
about his experiences  
over the last two years.**



*Fr Tony Flannery addressing the audience in Powerscourt School Hall.*

The Galway priest, who was silenced by the Vatican in 2012, addressed parishioners of Powerscourt and St Mary's, Enniskerry, as part of a series of ecumenical Lenten talks in Powerscourt New School Hall.

The talks have been coordinated by the Revd Terry Lilburn, curate assistant of Powerscourt and Kilbride and Dr Tom Carey of St Mary's Parish. This year's theme is 'Credo – I Believe' and Fr Flannery spoke about how more than 40 years of being a Redemptorist priest and his experience over the last two years had affected his faith.

Outlining his journey to Ordination, Fr Flannery said he was the youngest of four boys who all joined the religious life. They lived close to a Redemptorist monastery in Galway and the priests there suggested sending the boys to the Redemptorist boarding school in Limerick. All four brothers went on to join the seminary.

He said it was difficult to recall his motivation for joining the seminary 50 years ago. He grew up next to a Bord na Mona bog and of his class in

primary school, just two others went on to secondary school – the rest went to work on the bog or emigrated to Birmingham. He said his parents were ambitious for their sons and didn't want that for them.



*Rector of Powerscourt and Kilbride, Archdeacon Ricky Rountree; Dr Tom Carey of St Mary's Parish, Enniskerry; Fr Tony Flannery; and the Revd Terry Lilburn, curate assistant of Powerscourt and Kilbride.*

When Fr Flannery joined the Redemptorists he was 17. There were a lot of other

young men joining at the time and it was also the era of the Second Vatican Council. "It was an exciting time and we had a vision of a whole new Church," he recalled. "Did that have anything to do with my beliefs? Belief and faith are complicated things."

However, he recalled the visit of Pope John Paul II and said that contrary to the great enthusiasm felt nationally, he came away from the youth event in Galway with a sinking feeling. "It was partly to do with what he said but mostly to do with his face... I remember thinking that the era of openness was over," he said.

Fr Flannery said he wasn't an academic and felt the Vatican would not have noticed him had he not been one of the founding members of the Association of Catholic Priests. "We were independent and spoke with an independent voice. We were pushing out the boundaries... we became well known spokespeople on anything to do with the Church and the Vatican didn't like that. I don't know why they picked on me in particular," he stated.

He said they objected to a couple of articles he wrote on the origins of the priesthood but he said the Vatican also wanted him to state that he accepted that women would never be ordained to the priesthood in the Catholic Church and that he accepted the moral teachings of the Catholic Church, which he said included its stance on contraception. He said this was the breaking point and he knew in the autumn of 2012 that he would not be let back into ministry.

His experience has resulted in a lot of disillusionment, Fr Flannery said. “I think I still believe in God and I’m very much trying to work out what God I believe in. In my earliest days, God and religion were mediated to me through the Church, and by that I mean the institutional Church, and my view of the Church is different now. So of course that affects my view of God. So I’m in the in between time,” he stated.

The talks in Enniskerry continue for the next three Wednesdays. For details see the events section on [dublin.anglican.org](http://dublin.anglican.org).

## **Christ Church Cathedral Open Doors Quiet Morning**



**This Saturday morning, March 22, the latest Open Doors Quiet Morning will be held in Christ Church Cathedral.**

The quiet mornings are designed to support those who seek a more contemplative way of life in the Christian tradition or who are interested in creating opportunities for silent reflection on the action of God in the midst of life.

This month the quiet morning will be led by Amada Dillon. Amanda is an artist with a passion for the spiritual life and she will use art to inspire during the times set aside for reflection.

Amanda says: “Works of art, both ancient and modern, may often reach places in the soul that words do not. The secret is to have the time to engage with these in a reflective and leisurely way.”

The morning begins at 10.00 am in the ancient east end of Christ Church Cathedral, which will be set aside for the morning’s reflections. Booking is not required but if you would like more information about the morning, contact the Rev’d Garth Bunting at the cathedral on 01 6778099 or [garth.bunting@cccub.ie](mailto:garth.bunting@cccub.ie).

Amanda assures all those coming that no artistic experience or knowledge is necessary and encourages people to come along and try out a quiet morning if they've never been to one before. "Art has another way of speaking to us about the spiritual journey and engaging us in contemplative practice. Beauty refreshes and restores and this is an opportunity to set aside for yourself a little time and space to gently enter into that," she explains.

More information about the cathedral's spirituality programme can be found on the cathedral website <http://www.christchurchdublin.ie/Worship/Spirituality.htm>.

## **Belfast Community Gospel Choir Lurgan Concert for Tearfund**

**Come and experience the joy, passion and energy of the amazing Belfast Gospel Choir in Shankill Parish Church, Lurgan on 22 March 2014.**

Led by their charismatic Director, Marie Lacey, Belfast Community Gospel Choir (BCGC) is one of Northern Ireland's most sought-after musical groups. The Choir has performed for the Queen, at the Titanic opening, as well as at scores of festivals, weddings and charitable events.

During the concert, Marie Lacey and local journalist Will Leitch will share inspiring stories of the incredible change they saw in the lives of people who were able to access clean water for the first time.

There will also be an opportunity to see Tearfund's inspiring film featuring Olympic Rower Peter Chambers and Bishop Harold Miller as they race up the spiral staircase of Victoria Square shopping centre with a 20kg jerry-can.

As the concert marks World Water Day, proceeds from it will go to help hundreds of people access clean water around the world. You can find more about Tearfund's One Big Mountain campaign, featuring a powerful film with Olympic Medalists Peter and Richard Chambers, to provide clean water for thousands of people [here](#).

Tickets £12.00 and concession £10.00 - here:

<http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/belfast-community-gospel-choir-concert-to-mark-world-water-day-tickets-10203004461?aff=eorg>

## Mass to celebrate Pope Francis' first year

**The Archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin has said Pope Francis does not wish to be a superstar drawing attention to himself.**



At Mass in Dublin this evening (**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> 17:45pm**) to celebrate the first anniversary of the inauguration of Pope Francis, Archbishop Martin said, “He wants to remain himself, a human being and a priest, who is driven in all his activity not by public relations gestures or by seeking popularity, but by responding authentically to the Joy of the Gospel.” The Mass, in Dublin’s Pro Cathedral was celebrated by The Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Charles Brown with Archbishop Diarmuid Martin preaching the Homily.

On this special occasion, Our Lady’s Choral Society, sang “*Misa Criolla*” by the famous Argentinian composer Ariel Ramirez. The Mass, composed by Pope Francis’ fellow countryman, included solo singing from tenor Andrew Bushell and boy soprano, Andrew Jones. “*Misa Criolla*” combines Spanish text with indigenous instruments and rhythms and included the harpsichord, guitar and percussion. This was one of the first Masses to be composed in a modern language following the Second Vatican Council. Ramírez wrote the piece in 1963–1964. It was first recorded in 1965.

Reflecting on the first year of this papacy, Archbishop Martin said, the success of Pope Francis’ agenda depends on the “missionary disciples of Jesus Christ, and how far we are willing to make his agenda truly and uncomfortably our own and bring it into the life the world around us, in family, at work, in society, in politics, in the fight to defend the poor, the exploited and the marginalised.”

He said, “When we come to analyse what Pope Francis has achieved in this year there are many keys of interpretation. The first temptation is to acclaim the things that we like and shy away from other aspects of his teaching.” The Archbishop added, “the Church needs renewal and that renewal will only be

one which is marked by the joy of the Gospel. Pope Francis does not want Christians with sour faces!”

## Prepared to Go workshop for short term mission overseas

**'Prepared to Go?!' is a day of practical, interactive training workshops for individuals, team leaders and members of teams, who are preparing for involvement in short-term mission overseas,**

Going overseas, even short-term, and sharing in God's mission to the world can have a significant impact on those who go, as well as those they go to serve and work amongst.

Good preparation is vital if the overseas mission experience is to be fruitful and worthwhile. Appropriate training can make all the difference to an individual or team's ability to achieve their objectives, and have a good experience in the process.

However, there are some important elements of preparation, training and orientation for going overseas that individuals (particularly) and teams may not easily be able to source or resource themselves. Recognising this, 'Prepared to Go?!' seeks to 'fill this gap'.

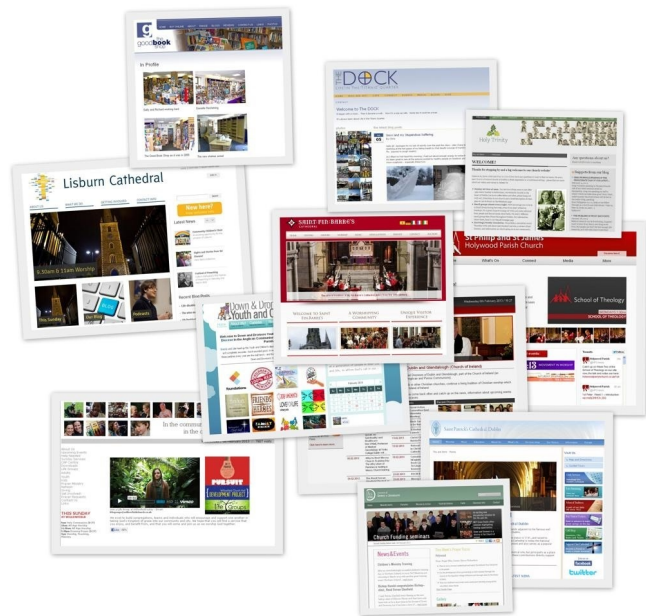
All individuals, team leaders AND members of teams planning to participate in short-term mission overseas should attend this fantastic training day on **Saturday, 5th April 2014 in Knock Presbyterian Church, East Belfast**

This training event is being administered by PCI's Board of [Mission Overseas](#), in conjunction with [Mission Agencies Partnership](#).



## C of I communications competition

**The Central Communications Board's annual Magazine, Website and Social Media Competition is now open and invites entries within each category (details below) from Church of Ireland parishes, dioceses and associated organisations as well as individuals whose social media activity clearly relates to Church activity/outreach/witness.**



Quality of presentation, strength of content and outreach potential are once again to be the standards of excellence against which entries will be judged. The closing date is Friday 11 April 2014. Winners will be announced at the General Synod in Christ Church Cathedral Dublin, 8–10 May 2014.

CCB Chairman, the Rt Revd Trevor Williams, says: “Progress is only possible with good communication. Without it confusion and disintegration are inevitable. As a Church, those who assist our communications assist us in living as the Body of Christ. Communications is a ministry we value and want to develop. This competition is more than finding winners. The intention of this competition is to learn from one another, to encourage more people to get involved, and to express our gratitude to all who serve the Church so faithfully in the ministry of communication. Be part of the Church of Ireland Communication community, and send in your entry.”

Further details at -

<http://ireland.anglican.org/news/5036>

## Write a winning short story

**Maybe you enjoy telling stories to friends and family and have wondered if they might interest a wider audience. Maybe you have a little stash of stories tucked away in a drawer.**

Maybe deep down you have always had an urge to write but have never quite got round to it. Maybe you are already in the habit of writing and would welcome a fresh opportunity to put your talent to good use....

The Methodist Newsletter, in partnership with Edgehill Christian Writers' Group, is delighted to invite entries for our new short story competition. You will find details in the April magazine, along with writing tips from our competition judge – the multi-award-winning author, Sheena Wilkinson, currently Writer in Residence at the Church of Ireland College of Education in Dublin.

Competition results will be announced at the end of November, when prize-winners (1st – £50, 2nd – £30, 3rd – £20) and runners-up will have the opportunity to meet Sheena at a special reception. In consultation with Sheena, the Methodist Publishing Company welcomes the possibility of bringing out a booklet of the ten best stories. So, we are inviting stories on a Christmas theme – stories that capture the true meaning and spirit of Christmas in a creative way. The closing date for entry is Monday 30 June 2014.

Further information about competition rules and how to enter will be posted on the Methodist Newsletter website in April.

## **Thanksgiving service for Z Cars' Jimmy Ellis**

**The Bishop of Clogher Rt Rev John McDowell, former rector of St Mark's Dundela will participate in the thanksgiving service.**

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/police-escort-for-z-cars-jimmy-ellis-as-his-cortege-journeys-through-his-beloved-city-of-belfast-30109464.html>