



Theresa May criticises National Trust over ‘ridiculous’ decision to drop ‘Easter’ from egg hunt

Theresa May has criticised the National Trust after the word ‘Easter’ was dropped from its annual egg hunt. The Prime Minister called the decision “absolutely ridiculous”.

Cadbury, which sponsors the annual event that takes place at National Trust properties across

Britain, said it had taken the decision to drop the word 'Easter' from the egg hunt title for the first time in a decade in order to appeal to "people from all faiths and none".

Speaking in Saudi Arabia where she is on a trade visit, May, an Anglican, said Easter was "very important" to her and she didn't know what the National Trust "are thinking".

"I'm not just a vicar's daughter – I'm a member of the National Trust as well. I think the stance they've taken is absolutely ridiculous and I don't know what they're thinking about," she told ITV News.

"Easter's very important. It's important to me, it's a very important festival for the Christian faith for millions across the world. So I think what the National Trust is doing is frankly just ridiculous." The National Trust said it was "in no way downplaying the significance of Easter" and that Cadbury "are responsible for the branding and wording of our egg hunt campaign."

A spokesman for Cadbury said: "Each year, our Easter campaigns have a different name and this year our seasonal campaign is called the 'Cadbury's Great British Egg Hunt'.

“It is clear to see that within our communications and marketing we clearly state the word Easter and include it in a number of promotional materials, including our website, where we do also promote our partnership with National Trust at this seasonal time of year. We invite people from all faiths and none to enjoy our seasonal treats, which can be found around Easter time.”

A Catholic Labour MP has described the Prime Minister’s criticism of the National Trust as “faux outrage”. Conor McGinn, the MP for St Helens North, wrote on Twitter that “this nonsense Easter eggs story does more to devalue the place of Christianity in modern Britain than any ‘PC brigade’”. He added that “Jesus wouldn’t care”.

PM’s faux-outrage on this nonsense Easter eggs story does more to devalue the place of Christianity in modern Britain than any “PC brigade”

— Conor McGinn MP (@ConorMcGinn) April 4, 2017

The Church should focus on Easter’s meaning & Theresa May on running the country. Leave the chocolate eggs to Cadburys. Jesus wouldn’t care. - Conor McGinn MP (@ConorMcGinn) April 4, 2017

Sarah Teather, Country Director of the Jesuit Refugee Service and former Liberal Democrat MP, shared the Prime Minister's statement on Facebook and wrote: "While on a trip to promote arms sales to a country that engages in torture, Theresa May criticises the National Trust's Easter egg hunt for dropping references to Christianity. What a disincarnate vision of the faith she seems to have: all about English tradition and labels, but no respect for human lives."

A spokesman for the Church of England said Cadbury and the National Trust were "airbrushing faith", while the Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu said that calling the event the Cadbury Egg Hunt was like "spitting on the grave" of the company's Christian founder, John Cadbury.

Clogher diocese focus on response to autism

A group within the Church of Ireland Clogher Diocese has been discussing how the church can respond to the needs of those families affected by autism. The Diocesan Board of Social Theology in Action held an information evening on autism – 'Dealing with Difference' – in Clabby Parish Church.

This month, April, is Autism Awareness Month when the development disorder is highlighted to the public. Those attending the event in Clabby Parish Church, including clergy, people working with autistic children and young adults and carers, heard from Ethel Johnston, a mother of an autistic 16-year-old boy on how his condition affects her family, how they cope and how faith has played a major part in them accepting he is different.

The meeting also heard from Mark Sproule, who organises courses on autism for parents, teachers and carers of autistic sufferers across the British Isles and how his own sons have coped with the disorder.

Ethel Johnston, speaking at the meeting, gave her personal experiences of living with autism within the family and home setting. Her eldest son, Isaac, was diagnosed with autism at the age of two after Ethel and her husband, Sam, had become concerned about him when he was one and a half years old, as he appeared distant and did not have appropriate speech for that stage.

So what is it like to be living with autism?

“Unfortunately there is an ignorance and lack of understanding. Autism is a lifelong development

disorder which affects the person's communication skills and how they relate to the world around them," she explained.

"Autistic children have difficulty with communication, social interaction and imagination. When Isaac was diagnosed at the age of two, the bottom fell out of our world. We mourned the child we had planned for but we accepted the gift of Isaac which God gave us," she told the meeting.

"We had to accept how God had created him."

Ethel went on to explain how they as a family cope with Isaac's disorder.

"Our home life is very busy. We live with autism 24/7. Isaac loves outdoor activities, playing on the trampoline outside, playing football with his brothers, Ski Mobility at Craigavon ski slope and keeping fit but he can be aggressive and forceful.

"Respite is important, not only for Isaac but also for the whole family," Ethel said. Faith plays a huge part in the lives of the Johnston family. Ethel explained: "Our church and our faith keep us going."

Isaac was presented for confirmation and he attends church as often as possible with members of the family. Going to church as a family is one of Ethel's favourite moments.

There are difficult times but Ethel explains how she and her family know they are getting God's support.

“Autism has a ripple effect on siblings and family members. At times I have been heartbroken but we give thanks daily for Isaac. There are dark days but with God's help we will carry on. Isaac has taught us so much and his brothers' lives are enriched as well.”

Also speaking at the meeting was Mark Sproule, a tutor who runs courses on autism across the British Isles for people working and living with autistic children. He spoke on Positive Behavioural Support.

“There is a lot of ignorance of autism in Northern Ireland,” he said at the outset. As Mark and his wife, Arlene have two grown up sons with autism, they established a martial arts club in Newtownstewart for children with autism and family members of autistic children. The idea of the club is to give autistic children renewed confidence and improved social skills.

He explained the various degrees of autism. One of the problems is that autistic children and adults do not pick up on body language and tone of voice, for example. Children with autism will also challenge parents. He gave some helpful hints to those engaging with autistic children and young adults such as speaking in a calm but persistent voice, having a firm manner, being positive but non-threatening and using as few words as possible. Autistic sufferers are often sensitive to lights.

During a discussion following the presentations, the thoughts of those present turned to adapting church services to make them more meaningful to autistic children and adults.

Religious order rejects calls to share redress costs with state

Pressure by politicians on religious congregations to pay half the €1.5 billion cost of compensating those abused in Catholic institutions “is immoral and should stop”, one of the congregations has said.

The Oblates (Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate), who were severely criticised by the Ryan Commission report which investigated institutional abuse, dismissed the notion they

were under “moral pressure” to pay more towards the compensation bill.

Nor do any of the 18 congregations involved “have a moral obligation to pay a share of the administration and ancillary costs of the Commission of Investigation and the redress board. Such a demand has never been made in all the history of the State,” it said



The Biggest Indoor Easter Egg Hunt in Belfast

Belfast Cathedral is HUGE – especially if you are aged 12 or under! Imagine all the fantastic places the Dean could hide an Easter egg!

The Cathedral invites families to call in on Easter Tuesday from 12pm until 4pm so children aged 0-12 can have a good explore of the Cathedral's Nave, Baptistry, side Chapels and other nooks and crannies in the search for those hidden eggs. Find six and claim a prize. Entry to the hunt is just £1 per child.

Adults will be free to look around this beautiful building while the young ones get stuck into the serious task of egg hunting.

St Anne's looks forward to seeing you on Easter Tuesday – it's going to be EGGstraordinarily good fun!

Derry's Good Friday Walk of the Cross

A Christian walk of witness to take place on Good Friday 14th April 2017.

The four Churches Together 'Walk of the Cross' starts at St Columb's Hall at 11:45am and continues proceeding through the Richmond Centre, down Shipquay Street and into Guildhall Square.

There will be stops for readings, singing, and prayers on the way.

The four
Churches
Together

GOOD FRIDAY

"Walk of the Cross"

**Friday 14
April**

**11.45 am
meet at
St Columb's Hall**

The cross will be carried by the people and concluding prayers will be offered at the steps at the Guildhall by the four church leaders.

Join the walk at any point or wait for its arrival at the Guildhall — everyone welcome.

Bishop of Truro to be new Bishop at Lambeth

Lambeth Palace has announced the appointment of Rt Revd Tim Thornton, the

current Bishop of Truro, as the new Bishop at Lambeth.

Bishop Thornton will take up this post in September, replacing Rt Revd Nigel Stock, who is retiring.

His duties at Lambeth will include supporting the Archbishop of Canterbury's work in the House of Bishops, General Synod and the Archbishop's Council.

He will also be heavily involved in the Lambeth Conference 2020, and take on the role of Bishop to the Forces.

Bishop Thornton became Bishop of Truro in 2009. During his time as bishop he co-chaired an inquiry into foodbanks which led to the report Feeding Britain, and was President of the Royal Cornwall Agricultural Association. He is chair of the Development and Appointments Group which oversees the leadership development work among senior clergy.

Bishop Thornton said: "It has been a privilege to serve as bishop in this very special part of the country. I have especially enjoyed being part of the wider life of the county and community, as well as working with wonderful colleagues to



implement a strategy for discovering God's kingdom and growing the church.

“It will of course be a real sadness to leave Cornwall. However I am very much looking forward to working with the staff at Lambeth, and thinking about how we continue to embed Archbishop Justin's priorities of prayer, evangelism and reconciliation into the life of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion.

“I am particularly interested in the Archbishop's emphasis on spirituality and prayer, and seeing how the incredible work of Thy Kingdom Come continues to flourish.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said:

“I am delighted to be welcoming Bishop Tim to Lambeth Palace. He brings a wealth of experience to the role. He already has extensive knowledge and understanding of the College and House of Bishops, and a heart for those on the margins of society, who are often overlooked. His work on Feeding Britain demonstrates his range of ability and skill in bringing people together.”

Bishop Thornton is married to Sian and they have two children and three grandchildren.

The Big April Ask: Pope wants to know views of young people

Pope Francis has proposed that next Synod of Bishops will focus on *“Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment”*. In order to prepare for the Synod of Bishops, a Preparatory Document has been released to assist reflection and discussion. It also contains questions for young people and leaders.

The Big April Ask is a national survey prepared by Youth Leaders throughout Ireland. It needs to be completed by the end of April 2017.



The survey is hosted on Survey Monkey and is ideal for students in school, third level students and any young person aged 16-30. It takes approximately two minutes to complete. Click below to access the survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/bigaprilask>

St John Passion to be performed in Welsh for the first time

The first ever Welsh-language performance of Bach's *St John Passion* will be broadcast on S4C on Good Friday.



The work was translated from German by soprano Elin Manahan Thomas over a two year period, and was performed at Llandaff Cathedral by a specially chosen Baroque ensemble, chorus and soloists under the baton of Huw Williams.

The soloists are Elin Manahan Thomas, Eirlys Myfanwy Davies, Jeremy Huw Williams, Robert Davies and tenor Gwilym Bowen, with tenor Rhodri Prys Jones in the role of the Evangelist.

‘This work was very close to my heart and my motivation to undertake it was not only my love for Bach and Baroque music but also that religious singing is so central to Welsh culture,’ Manahan Thomas said. ‘Christ’s suffering and crucifixion on the cross and the way that Bach expresses this in his original work is so powerful.

‘I enjoyed playing with the words and making everything fit and match the music. I was helped

by Heini Gruffudd, who has such a great knowledge of both Welsh and German, and it was a great privilege to do the adaptation with him.'

S4C will also broadcast a behind-the-scenes account of the making of the unique performance. *Byd Mawr Bach* will be presented by Elin Manahan Thomas and televised at 6.30pm 13 April, with *Y Dioddefaint yn ôl loan* shown at 9pm on Good Friday.

News briefs & Upcoming events



Prayers for South Sudan

cmsireland
renewing the church in mission

Saturday 8th April 10am - 2pm
Dromore Cathedral

Saturday 29th April 10am - 2pm
Ballyrashane Parish

Saturday 13th May 10am - 2pm
Kill O' The Grange Parish, Dublin

+++ Prayers for South Sudan - CMSI is hosting three special prayer events, offering opportunities to respond to our Global Partners and the wider situation. There will be a chance to reflect, to learn and to pray. There will also be opportunities to write a greeting or

encouragement in one of the 'Blessing Books' that we'll be sending to our partners. Each event will run for four hours – with the opportunity to 'drop-in' to pray at any time and stay for as long as you want.

+++ Haydn Mass in Downpatrick - Missa in Augustiis (Nelson Mass) will be performed by Cathedra (incorporating Cadenza and Down Cathedral Choir). Lynda Barrett (soprano), Jennifer Bourke (contralto), Glenn Tweedie (tenor), David Robertson (bass). Orchestra (leader: Julie Bell). Directed by Michael McCracken. Monday 10th April 2017 at 7.45pm. Down Cathedral, Downpatrick. Tickets: £15 and £5 (Students). Tickets may be purchased at the door. Light refreshments available.

+++ African Children's Choir concerts in Carryduff and Newtownards - The African Children's Choir travels the world, acting as the ambassador for Africa's most vulnerable children, raising much needed awareness as they go. The concerts reflect the energy, beauty, dignity and unlimited ability of these incredible children through song, music and dance. Many of the Choir Children have lost one or both parents to poverty and disease. The performances are both uplifting and humbling and are an opportunity to experience the vitality

of the youth from this challenged continent. There will be a concert in St Ignatius Parish, Carryduff, Friday 7th April @ 7.30pm. Tickets £5 pp including light refreshments. Tickets from : Keith Shaw 07901935205. There will be concert a St Mark's Parish Church, Newtownards on Wednesday 12th April at 7pm. Tickets are available from the church office. Prices adult (£5); child under 12 (£3); family ticket, (£12). Tel 028 9181 3193 or office@stmarksnewtownards.org.uk.

+++ Latin Mass in Derry on Easter Sunday -

Mass in the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite will be celebrated in St Columba's Church, Long Tower at 2.00 pm on Easter Sunday. All are welcome.

+++ Basic Hebrew course - Drumalis Retreat centre, Larne - 21st - 23rd April 2017

Shalom, shalom to all those who have wanted to understand and read the bible in the Lord's own language; to hear His words and to understand the context of meaning that His Word expresses. This course is a first opportunity to learn Hebrew in a natural way. Over the course of the weekend you will develop an understanding of the Hebrew language, through the Lord's Prayer. Please contact Katey Moreland: wordofthelord2009@gmail.com or check the

drumalis website for further details and to listen to the introductory video.

+++ Connor Mothers' Union Festival Service -

was held in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, on Sunday April 2. Many branches from across the diocese were represented and brought their banners for the procession and for display. Lady Christine Eames, a former World President of the Mothers' Union, spoke of the work of the Mothers' Union throughout the world and encouraged all members to feel part of the worldwide effort. She paid tribute to two members from Connor - Mrs.Paddy Wallace former All Ireland President and to Mrs Roberta McKelvey for her work as World wide Trustee with he MU Literary Development programme. The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, was present to enrol new office bearers for the diocese and the Archdeacon of Connor, the Ven Dr Stephen McBride, Diocesan Chaplain of the Mothers' Union in Connor, took part along with the Diocesan President, Mrs Valerie Ash.

Today in History

April 5, 1524: Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli marries Anna Reinhart for the second time—this

time in public. In 1522, Zwingli (and 10 other priests) appealed to the bishop of Constance for permission to marry. When the bishop refused the petition, Zwingli married secretly and, later that year, resigned from the priesthood.

April 5, 1649: John Winthrop, the first governor of Massachusetts Bay, dies. Profoundly religious, Winthrop, who left England because of its persecution of Puritans, believed New England to be "a city upon a hill" for the world to see and emulate.

April 5, 1811: Robert Raikes, founder of English Sunday schools in 1780, dies. Raikes built his Sunday schools not for respectable and well-mannered children of believers, but for (in one woman's description) "multitudes of wretches who, released on that day from employment, spend their day in noise and riot." In 4 years, 250,000 students were attending the schools, by Raikes's death, 500,000, and by 1831, 1.25 million