

Review of international and Irish news

Vatican calls on Muslim leaders to condemn Islamic State 'barbarity'

The Vatican has called on Muslim leaders to condemn the "barbarity" and "unspeakable criminal acts" of Islamic State militants in Iraq, saying a failure to do so would jeopardise the future of interreligious dialogue.



Catholic Herald - "The plight of Christians, Yazidis and other religious and ethnic communities that are numeric minorities in Iraq demands a clear and courageous stance on the part of religious leaders, especially Muslims, those engaged in interfaith dialogue and everyone of goodwill," said a statement from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue released by the Vatican today.

"All must be unanimous in condemning unequivocally these crimes and must denounce the invocation of religion to justify them," the statement said.

"Otherwise, what credibility will religions, their followers and their leaders have? What credibility would remain to the interreligious dialogue patiently pursued in recent years?"

The document noted that the "majority of Muslim religious and political institutions" have opposed the Islamic State's avowed mission of restoring a

caliphate, a sovereign Muslim state under Islamic law, to succeed the Ottoman Caliphate abolished after the founding of modern Turkey in 1923.

The Vatican listed some of the “shameful practices” recently committed by the “jihadists” of the Islamic State, which the US government has classified as a terrorist group. Among the practices cited are:

- “The execrable practice of beheading, crucifixion and hanging of corpses in public places.”
- “The choice imposed on Christians and Yazidis between conversion to Islam, payment of tribute or exodus.”
- “The abduction of girls and women belonging to the Yazidi and Christian communities.”
- “The imposition of the barbaric practice of infibulation,” or female genital mutilation.

“No cause can justify such barbarity and certainly not a religion,” the document continued. “Religious leaders also are called on to exercise their influence with the rulers for the cessation of these crimes, the punishment of those who commit them and the restoration of the rule of law throughout the country, ensuring the return home of the deported. These same leaders should not fail to emphasise that the support, financing and arming of terrorism is morally reprehensible.”

Archbishop of Canterbury interviewed about Iraq crisis

During the interview the Archbishop said there is "a sense of near despair at the fact that we've got to this point, and a longing to be able to do something because that's always our instinct".

He added: "I was noting this morning when I was praying about that sense of helplessness and looking at one of the Psalms speaking about, the Psalmist saying to God: ‘Where are you? What are you doing?’"

The Archbishop repeated his backing for the call made by three CofE bishops last week for the Government to offer refuge to Iraqi Christians.

"France, as we know, has opened its doors, and I think that is something we could do, we have the resources to do. It's a humanitarian thing, to recognise

people in the extremes of despair and helplessness and to provide a beacon of hope. We've done that throughout our history; it's a good thing if we go on doing it," he said.

Asked if he had concerns about the possible implications of the Iraq crisis for Christian-Muslim relations around the world, the Archbishop said he was concerned but stressed that Muslim leaders throughout the United Kingdom have been condemning the atrocities in northern Iraq.

"This is an incredibly complex conflict, and it is a particular group that is carrying out the attacks that many Muslim leaders deny has any real theological validity. I mean, the great trial and challenge to Christians is Jesus saying to us 'forgive your enemies, love your enemies.' That may not solve problems, but in the end it changes the world. It may not be a quick fix, but it is the right thing in the end.

"Clearly ISIS, IS, are an enemy. How do we deal with them? It's very, very hard to say. But what we mustn't do in blanket terms is condemn all Muslims as though they were all members of this group, because very, very clearly the overwhelming, enormous majority of them have no sympathy with what is going on at all."

[*Listen to the full interview on the Radio 4 website \(starts at 32min 42secs\)*](#)

15 Shocking Numbers That Will Make You Pay Attention To What ISIS Is Doing In Iraq

13,000

The **number of square miles thought to be under Islamic State control**, a stretch between Syria and Iraq that is [roughly the size of Belgium](#). [Other estimates](#) suggest the Islamic State controls an area closer to 35,000 square miles, or roughly the size of Jordan.

1,922

The **number of people killed in Iraq in June**, according to government figures, making it the deadliest month since May 2007. [Official figures report](#) 1,393 civilians, 380 soldiers and 149 policemen among the dead. Another 2,610 people were wounded, the majority of them civilians.

30,000 - 50,000

The **number of militants now fighting with the Islamic State**, [according to a recent estimate](#) by Dr. Hisham al-Hashimi, an expert on the group. Many former Iraqi Army soldiers have been forced to join and others have been recruited from around the region [and beyond](#).

5

The **number of nations with which the Islamic State has engaged in direct fighting**. In an effort to expand its holdings, insurgents have attacked soldiers from Iraq, [Iran](#), [Lebanon](#), Syria and [Turkey](#) this summer alone. The group is [currently pursuing a large offensive](#) against the Syrian Arab Army in the northeast of the country, snatching up large quantities of munitions from military bases.

\$2,000,000,000

The **approximate value of the Islamic State's cash and assets**, [according to estimates](#) from terrorism experts. In the midst of its most substantial campaign in June, Islamic State fighters captured the city of Mosul, looting hundreds of million of dollars from banks and acquiring hundreds more in military assets from the Iraqi Army.

More at -

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/08/11/isis-iraq-numbers_n_5659239.html?&ir=Politics&ncid=tweetInkushpmg00000016

Moderator appeals for prayer for persecuted Christians in Iraq | Presbyterian Church Ireland

The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Right Rev. Dr. Michael Barry has issued the following statement:

“We have all been distressed at hearing the reports as thousands of Christians and other religious minorities are being forced to flee their homes in Northern Iraq. I have read accounts of atrocities, via Canon Andrew White of Baghdad, that are too graphic for me to repeat.

“On behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, I call upon the UK and Republic of Ireland governments to give all available support in terms of humanitarian aid to help those in dire need.

“The issue at heart comes down to freedom to express religious beliefs. We continue to work in this country towards a tolerance of other religions and we

would expect the same in other countries. Life is precious and it is not for us to take away from anyone. What is happening in Iraq shows no regard for humanity.

“As God showed concern for Ninevah in the days of Jonah, let us demonstrate our love to fellow believers in that same area, in their distress. Whilst we may feel helpless in the situation, we must pray for God’s help and compassion to those left heartbroken thousands of miles away.

“Unfortunately, persecution of Christians is not unique to the country of Iraq. There are other countries in the world where people are being oppressed and killed because of their Christian faith.

“I would call on Christians on this island to pray earnestly for their brothers and sisters in Christ and other minorities that are being persecuted in Iraq. Pray also for the leaders in Iraq and other nations, that they respond to IS (Islamic State) effectively. Those suffering such horrendous treatment for their belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, wherever they are in the world, will remain in my prayers at this time.”

Forced Israel plaque removal ‘disgraceful’

Alleged attacks which have forced the removal of a plaque to mark the birthplace of a former Israeli president have been condemned.

News Letter - The Ulster History Circle (UHC) blue plaque at the spot in north Belfast where Chaim Herzog was born has been the subject of what DUP councillor Brian Kingston called “anti-Semitic” incidents, including graffiti and items being thrown.



Having been in place since 1998, it was removed last week.

Mr Kingston said: “It is disgraceful that this item of Belfast history has been repeatedly targeted due to its connection with Israel.”

The UUP said in a statement such incidents are “a damning indictment of the intolerance within some elements of our society”.

The police has no reports of any incidents at the address in question.

However, the UHC said: “The Circle understands the plaque has been the subject of unwelcome attention recently, and with regard for the safety of the building and its occupants, it has been removed.”

150,000 pilgrims expected to attend Annual Knock Novena

The annual national public novena will take place at the Basilica of Our Lady of Knock, Queen of Ireland, in Co Mayo from 14 until 22 August.

The theme for the 2014 novena is ‘Witness to hope’ and this focuses on honouring the fifteen people who were *witnesses* to the Marian apparition 135 years ago in 1879, and the theme also highlights the *hope* and prayers of the faithful for the renewal of the Church in Ireland at this time.

150,000 pilgrims, young and old, are expected to come from all over Ireland to attend this year’s nine-day novena. Daily Mass and prayer sessions will be complemented by seminars and workshops to assist the faith development, and faith renewal, of the pilgrims in attendance.

According to Father Richard Gibbons, Parish Priest of Knock, “There is a new departure this year with the national novena – and as part of the 135th anniversary celebration of the apparition – we have developed a faith renewal programme incorporating seminars and workshops designed to give people a practical as well as an intellectual approach to the lives of pilgrims. There is something for in Knock for everyone in 2014! As usual our novena sessions will give everyone a great sense of encountering The Lord, together through the Eucharist, and also other sacraments such as Reconciliation/Confession. All are welcome.”

Institution at Rathdrum and Derralossory

The Revd Brian O’Reilly will be instituted as the new Rector of Rathdrum and Derralossory with Glenealy, by Archbishop Michael Jackson on Monday August 25 (St Bartholomew).

The new Incumbent comes to the Diocese of Glendalough from Cobh and Glanmire in the Diocese of Cloyne.

Brian was ordained deacon in 2007 and served his curacy in the Parish of Seagoe (Down and Dromore). Prior to his ordination, he worked as a land surveyor, having completed his surveying studies in the College of Technology, Bolton Street (now DIT) in 1984.

Brian grew up in Dublin, but spent some of his early working years in the UK. He is married to Karen and they have a son Cillian.

Ballymena for WW1 centenary

The ringers of St Patrick's, Ballymena, rang the church bells for the Royal British Legion WW1 Service which was held in the Memorial Park, Ballymena, on August 4.



Tower Captain Sam Letters is pictured lighting one of the candles for the 'Lights Out' as Ronnie Fleming, Alastair Marrs, Jayne Service, Ivan Stacey and Colin Watt look on.

St Patrick's bells rang out as the RBL parade passed the church on its way to the Memorial Park. Later that evening a single bell tolled during a Vigil in the park. Members of the public who attended the Vigil which followed the Service commented how poignant the single bell was tolling in the clear night air.

Library interns active in Belfast Cathedral

The library in Belfast Cathedral has been a hive of activity in recent weeks as a group of interns from Queen's University delve into the colourful past of the cathedral and its antiquities.

Students Gemma Kernohan and Elinor Rowing are each spending a month cataloguing all the books in the library collection, while Dr Thérèse Cullen is

focusing on St Anne's beautiful stained glass.

Gemma and Elinor are arranging and cataloguing every book, ancient and modern, in the library's extensive collection, and Thérèse is writing a fresh history of each of the 42 features stained glass windows to produce a booklet with photographs of each window.

Their internship is co-ordinated by the Revd Janice Elsdon, one of the clergy team in the cathedral, who took up an offer from Queen's University.

The cathedral looked at areas where such research support would be beneficial and Gemma, Elinor and Thérèse all successfully applied for the internship. Their posts are funded by Queen's.



Janice said: 'This scheme enables valuable work to be done for the cathedral while providing an opportunity for those involved to gain valuable work experience and to extend their skill base.'

Thérèse has just finished a PhD in Irish Studies at Queen's. Originally from Dublin, she has a degree from the University of St Thomas and St Paul in Minnesota and a Masters in Theology at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. Thérèse returned to Ireland to do a second Master's degree in Theology at the Irish School of Ecumenics in Belfast and then the PhD at Queen's.

'I love this work,' said Thérèse. 'I love the research and going through the archives. I will be producing a guidebook giving the history of the windows and how they were added at different periods in the cathedral's history. I am sifting through the information I find and freshening it up.'

'The most interesting find so far is discovering the layouts drawn for the windows in the north and south transept by the original stained glass glazier, Mr Powell from Whitefriars. It seems the windows were changed before they were put in.'

'There is also no sequential order to the windows depicting the prophets,

because when the glazier sent them over the windows were just put in by someone local. Mr Powell asked the Cathedral Board to take them out and put them in order, but the Board decided against it.'

More at -

<http://ireland.anglican.org/news/5260>

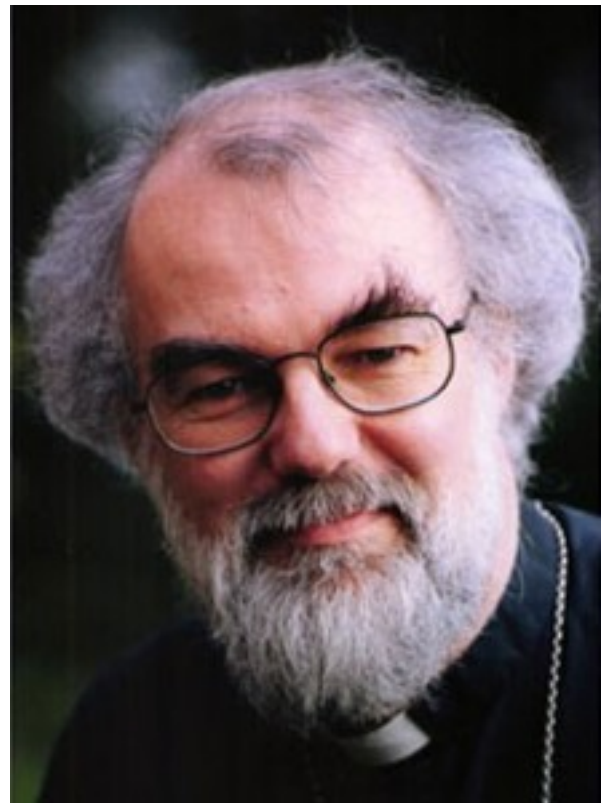
Press Review

Rowan Williams on Iraq persecution Times

Report on comments from the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, who said the persecution of religious minorities in Iraq could turn to "complete genocidal breakdown". Speaking at the Edinburgh International Book Festival, he said Western government must not repeat the mistakes of military intervention and that the situation in Iraq is "hideous" but "unfortunately entirely predictable". He added the current approach of taking humanitarian steps was now essential to try and prevent "complete genocidal breakdown".

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iraq/11025930/Lord-Williams-warns-Iraq-conflict-could-lead-to-complete-genocidal-breakdown.html>

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/aug/11/alex-salmond-rowan-williams-and-george-rr-martin-a-day-of-unlikely-trios-at-the-edinburgh-book-festival>



Times

Robert Crampton reflects on unfaithfulness in marriage and loving your neighbour.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/life/article4173134.ece>

Times

Various reports on Iraq situation, includes an eye witness account of the massacres in Iraq by IS in *The Times*. *Express* and *Mail* report on calls for the government to take military action, while *BBC* says RAF Tornados are patrolling the skies ready to take action in the country.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/middleeast/iraq/article4173616.ece>

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/498214/ISIS-threat-to-world-peace-Britain-should-join-US-air-strikes-in-Iraq-say-top-Tories>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-28746403>

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2721170/The-West-intervene-Iraq-killing-starts-says-Lord-Dannatt.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490

Mirror

Report on the Pride of Britain awards and people who changed the world. Includes the story of Chad Varah, who as a new vicar in the East End of London in the 50s, created the Samaritans after conducting a funeral for a 14-year-old girl who had taken her own life. Samaritans' chief executive Catherine Johnstone said: "When Chad set up Samaritans, it was just one man in one room with one phone. Today the service is run by 21,200 volunteers answering more than five million calls a year."

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/pride-britain-carol-vorderman-looks-4038218#ixzz3A9OF0kuc>

Guard

Further report on sale of 400-year-old Pollen Estate in London, a plot of land owned by the Church of England, which has been bought by the Crown Estates and Norway's sovereign wealth fund.

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/aug/11/norway-sovereign-wealth-fund-london-landmarks>

Mail

Further report on 'champing' - sleeping overnight inside a disused church - which is the latest initiative by The Churches Conservation Trust (CCT), the charity which looks after more than 300 redundant churches nationwide.

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/travel_news/article-2721522/Glamping-Try-champing-Latest-holiday-experience-allow-visitors-spend-night-disused-churches-try-raise-funds.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490

Letters

Ind

Letter claiming the massacres by IS in Iraq is the consequence of Washington and London's reckless interventions in Iraq, Libya, and Syria. It states the various sects that lived in peace under the rule of Saddam Hussein, Gaddafi, and Assad are butchering one another, and a new group, IS, is in the process of creating a new state out of parts of Iraq and Syria.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/letters/letters-yet-another-intervention-in-the-middle-east-9662254.html>

Blogs

Nick Baines: Clearing out the demon

<http://nickbaines.wordpress.com/2014/08/09/clearing-out-the-demon/>

Archbishop Cranmer: None dare call it evil, except Archbishop Justin Welby

<http://archbishop-cranmer.blogspot.co.uk/2014/08/none-dare-call-it-evil-except.html>