

RSCM Ireland's island wide autumn programme of choral workshops



Former president Mary McAleese: "The church is not terribly happy with criticism"

Former President McAleese says Catholic Church's 'old boys club' has to go

Speaking in Sydney Town Hall yesterday, former president Mary McAleese argued for a greatly increased role for women in the [Catholic Church](#), saying: "The old boys' club are going to have to go."

Irish Times -= About 1,000 people came to [Sydney Town Hall](#) to see Mrs McAleese interviewed by ABC radio presenter [Andrew West](#).

In a reference to an Australian Catholic newspaper refusing to run an advertisement for the event because of Mrs McAleese's views on homosexuality and the ordination of women, Mr West said: "We have to thank the Catholic Weekly for a full house today."

Mrs McAleese said after the advert ban was reported by The Irish Times and other media “I had emails from friends in America and [Japan](#) saying ‘what’s going on in Sydney?’”

She said trying to be heard by the Catholic Church hierarchy was comparable to shouting at children: “If I’m yelling it’s because you didn’t listen to me when I said it nicely . . . I look at the curia and I don’t know too many of them who have gone through equal opportunity training.”

Mrs McAleese said the governance of the church “and the structure of church government needs to change”.

“The church is not terribly happy with criticism,” she said to laughter from the audience. “I’m saying that as gently as possible ... The church which will not listen to people who speak out of love has a very big problem.”

Speaking about [Ireland](#), Mrs McAleese said though 90 per cent of the population of the Republic were nominally Catholic “regrettably fewer and fewer” were interested in the church.

She said child abuse revelations greatly affected people’s view of the church. “Everything you thought you had, everything you thought you were, becomes a lie.”

Mrs McAleese said when she was president a senior cleric laughed at her when she said the church should open up its files on child abuse or the State would force it to do so. The State would never cross that line, he said to her. “A week later, the State crossed that line,” she told the audience.

She added that “stories came out thanks to the courage of the victims” and the media, not thanks to the church.

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/mcaleese-says-catholic-church-s-old-boys-club-has-to-go-1.1920947>

Kilbroney Residential and Conference Centre unveils major refurbishment

Local clergy, funders, politicians, and members of the community gathered on 6 September for the official opening of the refurbished Kilbroney Residential and Conference Centre in Rostrevor.

The centre, which this year celebrates 40 years as a provider of programmes and accommodation for young people, has undergone major renovation

costing upwards of £500,000 and now enjoys a Northern Ireland Tourist Board 4 Star rating. The work was jointly funded by the Church of Ireland Parish of Kilbroney, SOAR



(Southern Organisation for Action in Rural Areas) and The Church of Ireland Priorities Fund.

Kilbroney sits in 11 acres of beautiful forested land with stunning views of the Mourne Mountains and the recent work makes it one of the best equipped residential centres in the country. It has excellent kitchen facilities, state of the art multi-media equipment and can offer a range of outdoor and wet weather activities. There is a new entrance and reception area and the renovated 40 bed centre combined with existing accommodating offers almost 80 beds. Ideal for use by youth and church groups, uniformed organisations or for conferences, the centre can provide for both catered and self-catered residential groups.

Kilbroney has always had deep roots in the Rostrevor community and integral to the celebrations was a 'Fun Day' complete with burgers, bouncy castles, face-painting and candy floss organised by the local Community Association.

Chair of the Board of Directors, Mr Jarlath Quinn, thanked the Church of Ireland for providing the land and buildings and the majority of the funding and SOAR, under the auspices of DARD, "without whom," he said, "the project would not have got off the ground". Mr Quinn also thanked local MP Margaret Ritchie and Councillor Mick Murphy who were instrumental in helping to secure funding. He concluded: "We as a board look forward to the Kilbroney Centre having a central role in the life of the Rostrevor community for many years to come."



Chairman of the SOAR Joint Committee, Mr Miceal McCoy, said: It's very pleasing for us in SOAR to be able to assist in the redevelopment of this beautiful building and particularly the economic driver that it will become in the future for tourism. It's a superb product, immersed in this

community and I think that visitors to this area will cherish it.”

Local MP, Mrs Margaret Ritchie, who has been involved with the project since 2010, said that the centre had the support of the wider community and urged local people and those further afield to make use of the facilities.

The Kilbroney Centre is a partnership between the parish and the Diocese of Down and Dromore and the ribbon cutting was performed by the The Rt Revd Harold Miller, Bishop of Down and Dromore. He acknowledged the commitment and vision of Kilbroney parish and its clergy going back over 40 years and the local support the centre enjoys. He said: “This project has come into being because the whole community has worked together quite unselfconsciously. This is the kind of place we want to live in where we all bring to the table everything we have for the up–building and blessing of the whole community. I want this simply to be a place that is here for everyone.”

The board has planning permission for a hall which would be shared by the centre and the local community and suitable for sports and indoor activities, drama and community meetings or conferences. It is hoped to secure funding for this in the future.

The centre has bookings for every weekend up to the end of the year and would like to build on the success of 2 years of summer camps. The board also hopes to develop more on–site activities in order to provide an all–encompassing experience of spiritual and physical development for young people and children.

The recent work was completed by QMac Construction with Tate Stevenson Architects and David Gould Associates, Quantity Surveyors.

Priests turned down over €3.9m for coveted Jackie Kennedy letters



Jacqueline Kennedy revealed her private thoughts in letters to an Irish priest - New York publisher and Los Angeles production company made offers for 15-year correspondence

The Vincentian fathers turned down offers of \$5m for the coveted Jackie Kennedy letters to an Irish priest before returning them to her family last week.

Sunday Independent - The offers were made by an agent who said he was acting for two wealthy American clients.

Owen Felix O'Neill, a collector and dealer in rare books, told the *Sunday Independent* this weekend that he had been approached by two American clients - a New York publisher and Los Angeles production company - to make offers "in excess of \$5m" for Jackie Kennedy's 15-year correspondence with Fr Joe Leonard.

On Friday, the Vincentian order announced that the letters had been "transferred" to the Kennedy family because of the "respect due" to correspondence of a "private nature".

The Vincentians did not respond when asked whether it received money or support from the Kennedy family in return for the letters.

The decision ended the protracted debate over who owned the copyright to the 33 letters between the iconic American first lady and the Vincentian priest over 15 years.

The correspondence attracted huge international attention when it first came to light in May. The letters were discovered by the cash-strapped All Hallows College, the Vincentian seminary in Dublin where Fr Leonard lived until his death. The college planned to sell them to stave off closure. But, according to the college president, Fr Patrick McDermott, a will found in a dusty attic at the 11th hour confirmed they belonged to the Vincentians and not the college. The letters were withdrawn from auction and the Vincentians entered talks with representatives of the Kennedy family, who had made their displeasure at the sale known through the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Mr O'Neill said the return of the letters on Friday was an opportunity missed for All Hallows. "I can confirm there were two firm offers in excess of \$5m on the table," he said.

At one point it was thought that the valuable Kennedy letters were lost, according to Mr O'Neill. He said he was told about the existence of the letters when he was asked to evaluate the college's books and artefacts earlier this year. But the college staff couldn't find them. The letters had been "missing" for several months. The letters were formally reported missing to gardai in Santry on April 3. Within hours, the letters reappeared and the [Garda](#) investigation was called off. Other valuable artefacts, a set of 37 Italian prints and rare books that went missing from the college, have never been recovered.

The Sunday Independent has learnt that a man has been questioned by gardai about the missing artefacts, but has not been charged. A file is being prepared for the Director of Public Prosecutions. A spokesperson for All Hallows said the person who was questioned was not a staff member at the college.

The college was hoping to raise much-needed funds by selling off its archive. The offer of \$5m for the Jackie Kennedy letters was three times what it originally hoped to raise, but the money would not have staved off its eventual closure. The college reportedly needed around €25m to survive. It has begun winding down its operations with a view to closing, entailing the loss of 70 jobs.

Jackie Kennedy wrote the 33 letters between 1950 and 1964 to Fr Leonard, a well-connected Vincentian priest who also exchanged correspondence with George Bernard Shaw. She met him while she was a student in France and he an elderly priest. Letters written by Jackie's brother-in-law, Bobby Kennedy, and husband, John F, will be auctioned in Boston later this year.

- See more at: <http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/news/priests-turned-down-over-39m-for-coveted-jackie-kennedy-letters-30567419.html#sthash.TD1ACxdd.dpuf>

Sacrifice of the Merchant Navy marked at Belfast service

The sacrifice of sailors who faced danger at sea has been marked at an annual service.

Sinclair Seamen's Presbyterian Church, close to the Harbour Commissioner's Office in north Belfast, hosted the latest annual gathering dedicated to Merchant Navy seamen at 11 am yesterday.

Clerk of Sessions Billy Chambers said the practice dates back 1939, and is held each year close to September 3, when the Allies declared war on Germany.

Of the four hymns they sung, two had nautical themes: Will Your Anchor Hold?, and Eternal Father Strong to Save.

The church itself has a strong nautical theme, with symbols of shipping decorating it throughout.

This year saw around 80 in attendance for the service led by Rev Roy Sterling.



Cap. Brian Kane, John Coulter, Capt. Jeremy Stanley and Capt. Eric Dunwoody

Mr Chambers, 87 and from Newtownabbey, said similar services take place across the UK, but is not aware of any others in the area which host it.

Some of those attending are now in their 90s, and he added: "Each year you can see a few that are missing."

He said: "The Merchant Navy during World War Two, and World War One also, were very brave men. They were civilians, in a sense, in very dangerous areas... That's why we hold this – to thank them for the service they did."

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/sacrifice-of-the-merchant-navy-marked-at-belfast-service-1-6284280>

Living With Suicide -

Day Retreat on Lough Derg



**The Retreat
on Lough
Derg, 24th
September**

2014, is an invitation to people to come to a safe place where they might find some sense of healing & peace in the midst of pain and struggle.

It is a day for adults who have been affected by suicide, either through personal loss or with suicidal ideation, or for those ministering to the suicide bereaved or working in support services.

Advance booking is essential. For further information contact Maureen or Sharon 071 9861518 (from NI 00353719861518) email: info@loughderg.org



RSCM Ireland's island wide autumn programme of choral workshops

Meet and Sing!

**Saturday, 13 September 2014 at 2:00 PM
Down Cathedral, Downpatrick, BT30 6AB**

An opportunity to meet the RSCM Coordinator for Ireland, Mark Bowyer, accompanied by Michael McCracken (Down Cathedral) and to explore the work of the RSCM, look at accessible resources, the RSCM training schemes and of course to do some singing! Open to choirs, individuals, clergy, affiliates and non-affiliates alike. Refreshments will be provided for which a small charge will be made.

Please call +353(0)87117 2995 or email mbowyer@rscm.com to confirm your attendance.

Meet and Sing!

**Saturday, 27 September 2014 at 2:00 PM St George's Church, Belfast,
BT1 2AG**

An opportunity to meet the RSCM Coordinator for Ireland, Mark Bowyer accompanied by Emma Gibbins (St George's) and to explore the work of the RSCM, look at accessible resources, the RSCM training schemes and of course to do some singing! Open to choirs, individuals, clergy, affiliates and non-affiliates alike. Refreshments will be provided for which a small charge will be made.

Please call +353 (0)871172995 or email mbowyer@rscm.com to confirm your attendance.

Meet and Sing: Evensong!

Saturday, 18 October 2014 at 2:00 PM Saint Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny

An opportunity to meet the RSCM Coordinator for Ireland, Mark Bowyer and to explore the work of the RSCM, look at accessible resources and the available RSCM training schemes. Following the information session there

will be a rehearsal followed by Choral Evensong sung by the participants and led by cathedral musicians Malcolm Proud and David Forde. Open to choirs, individuals, clergy, affiliates and non-affiliates alike.



Please email mbowyer@rscm.com or call +353 (0)871172995 to register your interest.

Come and Sing: Fauré Requiem
Sunday, 02 November 2014 at 2:00 PM
Saint Bartholomew's Church, Dublin 4

Advance notice of a planned 'Come and Sing' event which will held in the beautiful Saint Bartholomew's Church in Dublin 4. Booking details will be available shortly on the website.

Lift up your Voice!
Saturday, 08 November 2014 at 2:00 PM
Saint Bartholomew's Church, Dublin

A course for churches with no musical leadership. Intended for lay and ordained leaders, this course offers simple, achievable music for use where there is no trained musical leadership, and insights for celebrating the church's seasons creatively. Copiable resources are included in the cost, which is €12.50 per person. The event is directed by Mark Bowyer, RSCM coordinator for Ireland.

To book and for further details please download the booking form available [here](#).

Come and Sing!
Saturday, 15 November 2014 at 2:00 PM
St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork

Advance notice of a planned 'Come and Sing' event which will held in the beautiful St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork.

Plans are at an early stage, so please check the website for the most up to date information and booking details.

RSCM Awards Service: Celebration!
Saturday, 29 November 2014 at 2:00 PM St Gall's, Carnalea, Bangor,
BT19 1BT

Come and celebrate those who have successfully completed their RSCM Voice for Life awards during 2014. The awards ceremony will take place during Choral Evensong with the combined choirs of the award winners and

local affiliate choirs. All are welcome to the service at 4pm. The event will be conducted by Rosemary Smyth (St Gall's).

Please confirm if you are attending by calling +353 (0)87 117 2995 or email mbowyer@rscm.com

Please see the RSCM Ireland website for all details regarding events and how to book, if the details are not given above.

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Anglican-supported Gaza hospital faces a future treating severe injuries, trauma

The Anglican-supported hospital in Gaza City which provided critical healthcare during the recent fighting is facing a future treating severe injuries and trauma.



AAH medical team treating a patient affected by the war at the hospital

In a message to the Anglican Communion, Bishop in Jerusalem the Rt Revd Suheil Dawani said serving the immediate needs of the community in Gaza “remained a high priority” for the Al Ahli Arab Hospital and its staff.

The bishop was writing primarily to thank the Communion for the “outpouring of support from our development partners, churches and individuals” after a humanitarian appeal for Al-Ahli Hospital on July 15th.

Thanks to support from the Anglican community worldwide and other supporters, Al-Ahli was one of the hospitals able to continue to treat men, women and children injured during the two months of violence that killed 1,663 Palestinian and 67 Israeli civilians and soldiers*.

Once described as a “haven of peace” in the middle of one of the world’s most troubled places”, the hospital has become a key centre for those impacted by the horrors of war.

“Although we celebrate the news of the August 26th ceasefire and an end to two months of violence, rebuilding Gaza will be a huge task,” said Bishop Dawani. “For Al-Ahli Hospital, serving the immediate needs of the community in Gaza remains a high priority.

“Al-Ahli has distributed first-aid packages to community-based organisations to enable them to treat some of the injured. Long-term care at the hospital is needed for those with severe injuries, while thousands of people are receiving psychosocial support to deal with the impact of the war.

“As so many buildings and homes in Gaza have been destroyed, many people still seek shelter and food for themselves and their families. With water and sanitation infrastructure damaged in many places, Al-Ahli is also working hard to help contain the spread of communicable diseases and other hazards of polluted water and inadequate hygiene facilities.”

Half of all the hospitals there were damaged or destroyed in the violence, Al-Ahli was not one of them, but it did lose staff. One of the hospital's nurses, Nivine Attar, was killed at home after her night shift at the hospital. She died on Sunday 10th August as she tried to protect her two daughters – aged 2 1/2 years and six months – during a bombardment of the area around her home. The girls are now orphans.

In the latest update from the hospital, it recorded receiving 4,300 patients; treating 45 patients a day) for burns (50% of those were children; and 120 people per day (again mainly children) were affected by the lack of sanitation, water, and food. Children in particular were suffering from chest infections, rashes and scabies.

Bishop Dawani said, the terrible news coming out of Israel/Palestine, Iraq and Syria could cause people to lose hope but he went on, “When we look more carefully at our communities – our schools, hospitals and other places of healing, as well as places of worship – we see promising signs everywhere of the Spirit moving hearts with love to help others.”

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