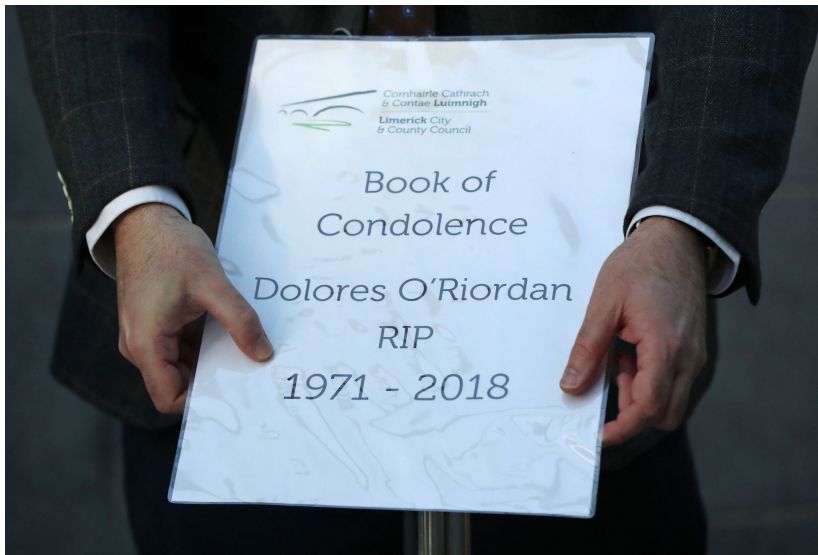


Thousands gather at church to remember Cranberries singer Dolores O’Riordan



Thousands of people gathered at a church in Limerick to remember the life of Cranberries frontwoman Dolores O’Riordan, The Irish Independent reports.

Fans young and old, many clutching white roses and daffodils, streamed to St Joseph's Church where a public reposal was held yesterday, Sunday.

Hundreds of Munster Rugby fans also arrived at the church to pay their respects after their crunch European tie was postponed.

Large crowds lined the road outside for most of the afternoon as they waited patiently to get into the church.

O'Riordan's distinctive voice filled the building as her songs were softly played throughout the service.

A floral tribute beside her open coffin read: "The song has ended, but the memories linger on."

Photographs of the Irish singer performing and one of her with the Pope, were placed along the church walls.

Four books of condolence were also opened inside the church for mourners to sign.

The public reposal is the first in a series of services to be held before the funeral mass taking place in the Church of Saint Ailbe in

Ballybricken, Co Limerick, on Tuesday at 11.30am.

Canon Liam McNamara, the Associate Pastor and a close friend of the O’Riordan family, will act as the Chief Celebrant of the Requiem Mass.

Father James Walton will be the chief co-celebrant, alongside Archbishop Kieran O’Reilly, Archbishop of Cashel and Emly and Archbishop Dermot Clifford, the Archbishop Emeritus of Cashel and Emly.

The funeral mass will be broadcast live by Limerick’s local radio station.

Tuesday’s service will be followed by a private family burial.

Churches not suitable to hold wakes, says bishop

Churches are not suitable places for wakes, a Catholic bishop has decreed in new guidelines designed to stop the growing practice of people being brought directly to the church for a vigil, The Irish Times reports.

Bishop of [Cloyne](#), Dr [William Crean](#) said that vigils for the deceased, which conclude with the



According to an undertaker, the practice of holding removals in churches has led to wedding rehearsals and practice for Holy Communion having to be cancelled.

closing of the coffin, should be conducted in a funeral home or the family home of the deceased person, but not in a church where the coffin must remain closed at all times

“The church, as the place where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved and where other services must take place, is not a suitable place for a wake,” said Bishop Crean in a new set of Guidelines for the Celebration of Funerals just published by the diocese which covers much of [Cork](#) county.

In introducing the guidelines Bishop Crean pointed out that “in a fast-changing culture some well intended but mistaken ‘novelties’ have crept into our practice of funeral celebrations” and the guidelines will help keep a focus on “the essential and most important elements of the funeral rites”.

A Diocese of Cloyne spokesman explained that the new guidelines were published in response to a number of queries that the diocese had received regarding the practice of re-opening coffins when a deceased person is brought directly to the church rather than lying in repose in a funeral home.

And he stressed that, when for pastoral reasons, a vigil for the deceased is allowed to take place in the church, the family of the deceased person should be asked to accept that “the coffin must remain closed at all times while in the church”.

According to one undertaker contacted by *The Irish Times*, there has been an increase in the number of funerals in some parishes where the body of the deceased is taken directly from the place of death to the church, rather than to their home or a funeral home for a wake.

“It’s been around for the last 20 years that the removal takes place in the church even though it was rare enough but over the past 12 months or so it’s becoming much more prevalent and it’s causing major disruption for priests but they don’t want to refuse families at a time of bereavement.”

According to the undertaker, who didn’t wish to be named, the practice has now evolved to the point where in some instances the church has replaced the funeral home as social outlet for people to catch up with relatives and others whom they may not have met for months if not years.

More at -

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/churches-not-suitable-to-hold-wakes-says-bishop-1.3363021>

Mountmellick young Methodists transform worship

Usually the evening service in Mountmellick Methodist church on the Midlands and Southern District is a fairly quiet, traditional affair, but recently the service was given over to the young people of the church who completely



The young people of Mountmellick who organised and conducted the evening service.

transformed the occasion. In the February issue of the *Methodist Newsletter*, Nigel Gill described the service. Below is an extract of a description of the beginning of the service:

“The church was dimly lit. The buzz of excitement, tangible, as extra folk had gathered. Coloured lights swirled around the room from strategically placed globes. The overhead and a lamp were the only source of ‘true’ light. Four large canvasses of beautiful artwork, produced by one of our members, Yeoyoel, hung on the church walls displaying the theme. There was a hush, no one had called time, it just happened. ‘Hi I’m Ben,’ came a slightly shaky, soft-spoken,

voice from the semidarkness. ‘This is Jessica and Joshua. We are the worship team for tonight. Now we will have worship.’ The music started to flow. Once Ben started singing, his confidence kicked in and we all sang our way through three opening songs. The singing was powerful.

“It is amazing what can be done by a small group of people with vision and the courage to try new things!”

President of Irish Presbyterian Women visits partner churches in Lebanon

Elma Leeburn, President of Presbyterian Women (PW), was in Lebanon last week to get alongside and encourage the women of the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland’s (PCI) partner church in the Middle East, and see first-hand something of the life of the Church, in particular its work with refugees who have fled the conflict in Syria.

Speaking from Beirut, Elma said, “Since we arrived in Lebanon I have been very richly blessed. It has been a fascinating and



challenging experience, in particular meeting some refugee women in the cities of Tyre and Sidon and learning how the Lebanese church is reaching out with the love of Christ. As a result of the continuing conflict in Syria, Lebanon's population has grown considerably.”

The [National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon](#) (NESSL) contains 39 congregations split between the two jurisdictions, although a number of churches have closed due to the conflict in Syria and the displacement of members. The first Evangelical congregation was founded in 1848; the Synod itself was established in 1920 and has around 12,000 members.



Accompanied by her husband Ian, Women's Ministry and PW Development Officer Pauline Kennedy and PCI's Global Mission Secretary, Rev. Uel Marrs, the group had an encouraging visit

to one of the six refugee schools that NESSL has set up. The schools were supported by last year's PCI Youth and Children's project '[Journey's of Promise](#)'.

The group also visited the headquarters of the Bible Society of Lebanon and saw something of the impressive work that the Society is doing. They were welcomed by its General Secretary

Dr. Mike Bassous, who spoke at PCI's '[Hope Unexpected](#)' conference last year.

Before coming home Elma hopes to be able to meet with NESSL Church leaders, including Rev. Najla Kassab, who heads up Women's Ministry and to meet with women from the wider church, especially the Damascus Congregation, which Presbyterian Women recently supported. In 2017 Rev. Kassab was elected President of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, of which PCI is a member.

“Although we come from very different cultures, global borders are nothing to God. His heart is for people from every nation and it has been a privilege to witness what God is doing in the Middle East today,” Elma said.

“On my return home I hope to be able to give our members a vivid picture of everyday life in Lebanon, encourage prayer for the region and help Presbyterian Women consider how we can best take an interest in the churches in Lebanon and Syria and our sisters in Christ.”

Talking about their time in Lebanon, Rev. Marrs said, “The visit by the PW President is an important step forward in encouraging PCI's longstanding relationship with the Reformed Church in Lebanon and Syria.”

You can find out more information on [Presbyterian Women](#) here.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity



Newry Cathedral

Bishop Harold Miller of Down and Dromore was among those attending the 50th Annual South Down Clergy Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in Newry Cathedral on Thursday.

All the major denominations were represented and the preacher was The Revd David Latimer from First Derry Presbyterian,

Capt Gary Roberts represented the Newry parish of St Mary's and St Patrick's and the service was also attended by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Dromore, The Most Revd Dr John McAreavey.

Dublin



Church leaders at the Inaugural Service in Dublin for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2018.

In Dublin and Glendalough the inaugural service took place in the Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel in Johnstown/Killiney., on Thursday last.

Organised by Dublin Council of Churches, the service was attended by many Christian church leaders from Dublin including Archbishop

Diarmuid Martin. Archbishop Michael Jackson was represented by his ecumenical advisor, the Revd Norman McCausland. Dean William Morton of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, was also present.

The theme of the service, as for the whole week, was 'That All May Be Free' and was based on material from the Church in the Caribbean which has focused on Exodus 15.

The address was given by Dr Jessie Rogers, a scripture scholar from St Patrick's College. She observed that the celebration of the Hebrew slaves when they realised they were free, as depicted in Exodus 15: 1–3, was only the beginning of the journey of the people of God. "They have been set free *from* bondage, yes, but also set free *for* something: to be the people that God has created them to be, a community of people with value and dignity," she explained.

Glendalough

Clergy from South East and North East Glendalough and their counterparts from other Christian traditions gathered in the Bel Air Hotel in Ashford on Friday (January 19) to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.



The annual ecumenical lunch is designed to enable clergy of the area to get together in an informal atmosphere to share food and worship.

Derry church leaders meet

Leaders from the four main churches in the North West met at the See House in Derry on Friday to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which began on Thursday. They gathered to demonstrate their personal friendship and to discuss aspects of church and community life that called for a united approach.

The Bishop of Derry, Donal McKeown, the Bishop of Raphoe, Alan McGuckian, Rev Craig

Wilson, representing the Moderator of the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal and Rev Peter Murray, the Superintendent of the Methodist Mission in the North West, were hosted for lunch by the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Ken Good, and Mrs Mary Good.

During the meal, the clergymen discussed a range of issues, including the Food Pantry, which is sponsored by the four main churches in the North West. The Food Pantry provides food parcels to families and individuals who are experiencing financial distress. The church leaders shared their concern that the demands being made upon the Food Pantry were increasing year on year.

As they gathered, the church leaders were conscious of the threat posed by the current cold snap, particularly to anyone who is homeless. Rev Peter Murray – a former President of the Methodist Church in Ireland – spoke to his fellow leaders about the increasing pressure on accommodation in the Men’s Hostel which is run by the Methodist Mission.

He said, ‘More younger men than ever before are homeless these days. So, the Mission has appointed Neo Maboe – a young South African graduate – to get in touch with local churches,

schools and students in college, in an effort to help people understand the causes of homelessness.’ The church leaders praised the work of all the paid and voluntary workers who help homeless people to get their lives back on track.

The church leaders also discussed the uncertainty over Brexit and the political situation at Stormont. They said they were thankful that talks between the main political parties in Northern Ireland and the two governments were scheduled to begin again next week in an effort to restore devolution. They asked the members of all churches taking part in this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity to pray for a successful outcome to the talks.

Church criticises Down’s abortion rate

The Church of England is to lobby the Government over a rising number of Down’s syndrome abortions.

Religious leaders have raised concerns that a growing number of parents are choosing to terminate their pregnancy if they discover the child will be born with the condition, sometimes

because the diagnosis is being presented as “bad news” from the outset, they say.

The Church’s governing body will debate a call to regulate providers of non-invasive prenatal testing – a relatively new test for the condition which carries no risk of miscarriage, unlike older procedures such as amniocentesis.

In a document entitled Valuing People with Down’s syndrome, the Church warned: “In countries such as Iceland and Denmark, which have almost universal screening and close to 100 per cent termination rates, there is a real possibility that people with Down’s syndrome will effectively disappear from their populations.”

In 2010, 482 pregnancies were terminated after a Down’s syndrome diagnosis. In 2016 there were 706. During the same period, there was a fall of 6,000 in terms of overall terminations.

C of E to debate sharing ordained ministry with Methodists

Church of England leaders are braced for a potentially controversial vote on whether it should share ministers with the Methodists as part of plans to boost struggling rural churches.



The proposals will be debated at the Church's governing body, the General Synod, next month.

The plans would allow officials from each church to preach at the other, and would help areas where there are “serious challenges in sustaining a Christian presence”, church leaders suggest.

The Rt Rev Dr Christopher Cocksworth, Bishop of Coventry, said the plans would also be a boost in “urban areas, perhaps particularly those where there are high levels of deprivation”.

“Acceptance of the proposals would be a profound sign of reconciliation, a healing of

wounds that go back to the origins of Methodism in the 18th century,” Christopher Cocksworth, the Bishop of Coventry and chair of the Church of England’s faith and order commission, said in a briefing document published on Friday.

“The generosity asked of both churches would speak powerfully of a desire for the flourishing in unity and witness of the whole Church of God, and not first and foremost the entrenchment of our own institutions,” he added.

However, the plans could prove to be decisive as the proposals would mean Methodist clergy who had not been ordained by a bishop would be entitled to hold Church of England services. William Nye, the Church of England's most senior civil servant, told The Times bishops felt this was a "bearable anomaly" but others would be "concerned" that the proposal would break the "continuous apostolic succession" that Anglican members believe links their clergy and bishops to the original followers of Jesus Christ.

Some in the Church see the division as “a terrible tragedy, in that John Wesley was an Anglican clergyman who never intended to set up a separate church”, he added.

The plan, which will be seen by many as a step towards reunifying the two churches after more than 200 years, is the latest attempt to bring them closer together after similar proposals mooted in 1972 and 1980 failed.

Cardinal rebukes Pope over Chile 'slander' abuse comments

The Pope's top adviser on clerical sex abuse has implicitly rebuked the pontiff over his accusations of slander against Chilean abuse victims, saying that Francis' words were "a source of great pain for survivors of sexual abuse".

Cardinal Sean O'Malley, the archbishop of Boston, said he could not explain why Francis "chose the particular words he used".

In an extraordinary effort at damage control, Cardinal O'Malley insisted that Francis "fully recognises the egregious failures of the church and its clergy who abused children and the devastating impact those crimes have had on survivors and their loved ones".

Francis **sparked national uproar upon leaving Chile on Thursday** by accusing victims of the



country's most notorious paedophile priest of having slandered another bishop, Juan Barros.

The victims say Bishop Barros knew about the abuse but did nothing to stop it - a charge which the bishop denies.

"The day they bring me proof against Bishop Barros, I'll speak," Francis told Chilean journalists in the northern city of Iquique.

"There is not one shred of proof against him. It's all calumny. Is that clear?"

The remarks shocked Chileans, drew immediate rebuke from victims and their advocates and

once again raised questions over the 81-year-old Argentine Jesuit's stance on the issue.

The scandal over the crimes of the Rev Fernando Karadima has devastated the credibility of the Roman Catholic Church in Chile, and Francis' comments will likely haunt it for the foreseeable future.

Cardinal O'Malley's carefully-worded critique was remarkable since it is rare for a cardinal to publicly rebuke the Pope in such terms.

But Francis' remarks were so potentially toxic to the Vatican's efforts to turn the tide on decades of clerical sex abuse and cover-up that he clearly felt he had to respond.

Cardinal O'Malley headed Francis' much-touted committee for the protection of minors until it lapsed last month after its initial three-year mandate expired. Francis has not named new members, and the committee's future remains unclear.

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