



Priest's epic journey raises more than €150K so far

A Catholic priest is making an epic journey the length of Ireland to raise awareness and money for two motor neurone disease organisations. Fr Tony Coote, parish priest at Mount Merrion, Dublin, was diagnosed with motor neurone disease (MND) earlier this year.

July 24 2018

His fundraising journey, “Walk While You Can”, began in Letterkenny, Donegal, on 10th July and is due to finish in Ballydehob, Cork, on 6th August.

Fr Coote is making the journey in 28 stages. Yesterday he was on stage 11 – Claremorris to Tuam. Speaking to CatholicIreland on the road to Tuam, he said he was feeling “brilliant”. The Dublin priest had spent a couple of days in Knock this week, where he spoke at Mass.

“We have 40 today [walking with me]. We have different people every day and some are doing the whole thing. It’s great to see so many people coming out walking,” he said.

Fr Coote explained that while others were walking, he could not physically walk the more than 500km from Letterkenny to Ballydehob. “I couldn’t physically walk that far myself because I fall. I’m being pushed in a mountain trike,” he said. “It’s a great way to see Ireland, and there is great hospitality in towns all over the place.”

So far, the “Walk While You Can” campaign has raised over €150,000, with a lot of additional money being donated by people along the way. The money raised will go to the Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association and Research Motor Neurone.

The former chaplain from UCD came up with the idea of “Walk While You Can” as a means of raising both awareness and money. “The Government gives no funding to motor neuron [disease] and we need more research and more nurses to care for those who are sick.”

On his website Fr Tony explains that the only medication for MND is 24 years old. “The Motor Neurone Disease

July 24 2018

Association can only provide three nurses for the whole country, with just over 400 people living with this illness. Their salaries are paid for by church gate collections.”

Fr Coote, who used to play squash twice a week, received his diagnosis in March 2018. “I have got used to the idea. I’m adapting and that’s the best way to live,” he told CatholicIreland.

He said it had had no impact on his faith. “It is really the suddenness of change that has affected me, like it would affect anyone. It’s like a whirlwind. I have great faith. I often think of the prophet Abraham who never reached the promised land, and yet he remained faithful to what he was asked to do in the mission of life. So I feel like that myself.”

RTÉ is filming Fr Coote’s walk for a documentary to be aired later in the year. People wishing donate to the Motor Neuron Disease Association and Research Motor Neuron through “Walk While You Can” may do so at www.wwyc.ie.

Quakers in Ireland agree to same sex marriages in their meetings for worship

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Ireland has agreed to the holding of same-sex marriages in Quaker meetings for worship, currently legal in the Republic of Ireland.

If any Quaker Meetings, solemnisers or members do not wish to participate in meetings for worship for same sex-marriages as a matter of conscience, there is no obligation

July 24 2018

to do so. This is to facilitate the range of views held within the Society.

The decision was reached at the Society's Yearly Meeting – its annual conference – which took place in Limerick Institute of Technology from 18-22 July 2018.

Quakers have a diversity of views on marriage between people of the same sex taking place in a meeting for worship because of the range of their theological, spiritual and biblical approaches but we are united through love for one another.

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) is a Christian denomination founded by George Fox in England in 1652. Quakerism was introduced to Ireland by William Edmundson in 1654 and there are approximately 1,500 Quakers today in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Quakers hold testimonies on Simplicity, Truth, Equality, Peace and Community that all members are encouraged to live out in their daily lives. There are no clergy and meetings for worship are based on silence with everyone present welcome to make a vocal contribution if they feel moved to do so by the Holy Spirit.

Heritage Week in Monkstown Parish

During Heritage Week (Saturday 18 – Sunday 26 August) Monkstown Parish Church will be open daily (2pm to 5pm) with self-guiding tours, exhibitions, local history information and historic artefacts on display. There will be free guide leaflets, quizzes for adults and treasure hunts and quizzes

July 24 2018

for children alongside displays of artefacts and historic treasures.

The parish will also participate in Culture Night (Friday 21 September) when the church will be open for visitors from 5pm to 11pm with self-guiding tours and organists playing the historic church organ. Complimentary tea and coffee will be served.

Monkstown Parish Church is open every Saturday afternoon from 2pm to 4pm from Saturday 30 June to Saturday 1 September. (no booking required). This architecturally unusual church in the centre of Monkstown Village dates from 1789 and was radically extended by John Semple & Son in 1830. Semple also designed churches at Whitechurch, Kilternan, Tallaght, St Mary's Chapel of Ease (Black Church), Abbeyleigh and Killeslin.

When opened on Christmas Day 1831, the Dublin Penny Journal claimed that 'there was not a spot in the church where the eye can rest without pain'! One hundred years later Sir John Betjeman described it as 'a cheerful Irish castle with a seaside rather than a fortress flavour'. The church is partially wheelchair accessible, and free guide leaflets, quizzes for adults and treasure hunts and quizzes for children are available.

Burglars attack St Patrick's Church in Saul - but only find a tin of biscuits

Callous thieves attempted to burgle one of Ireland's most historic churches - but left empty handed after finding no more than a tin of biscuits.

July 24 2018

St Patrick's Church, Saul, where St Patrick is reputed to have created Ireland's first Christian church in 432, is the latest church targeted by criminals in [Co Down](#) in recent weeks.

A mourner at a nearby graveyard is also reported to have been left "badly shaken" this weekend after her handbag was stolen from her locked car while she prepared a grave for cemetery Sunday.

Dean Henry Hull, rector at St Patrick's Church of Ireland, said it was "deeply disappointing" that burglars were targeting churches and "quite deplorable" to steal from graveyards.

He said the vandalism was bound to have given a bad impression to 40 Italian tourists who were visiting Saul church, which is on Ireland's tourist trail, when police arrived to investigate the break-in.

He added that criminals must realise few churches store money and revealed that the burglars in Saul found little more than a "tin of biscuits".

He said: "They knew what they were doing and smashed the locks right through to get in and tried to force in the main church door.

"Clearly they were looking for money as there was a data projector and other items that they did not touch. They rummaged in a cupboard where there was a tin of biscuits and nothing else.

"The church is open to visitors every day so I have no idea why they tried to break in when it was closed.

July 24 2018

"This church is very much on the tourist trail and this is not a good impression for tourists to take away with them."

Police have confirmed they are also investigating the theft in the nearby parish of Kilclief in which a car window was smashed.

The woman was reported to have been "badly shaken" by the ordeal, which has angered the local community.

Police have asked anyone who saw anything suspicious in the Saul area, or could assist the investigation, to call 101 and quote reference 557 of 18/07/18 (church break-in) or reference number 797 of 21/07/18 (Kilclief theft, or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Queen's University to review theological college link

Queen's University will conduct a "comprehensive" review of its relationship with Union Theological College, BBC News NI has learned, reports Robbie Meredith for BBC NI.

The college is run by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), but delivers theology degrees to Queen's students.

[The PCI faced criticism after it decided anyone in a same-sex relationship could not be a full member](#) of the church.

The college said it would work closely with the university on its review.

BBC News NI understands the review will be carried out by a panel which includes external experts.



Queen's University will conduct a "comprehensive" review of its relationship with Union Theological College

They will be expected to produce recommendations regarding the future of the collaborative relationship between Queen's and Union Theological College.

Dual role

"The university is taking forward a full and comprehensive review of the governance, management and delivery of Queen's academic programmes within Union Theological College," a Queen's spokesperson said.

"It is expected that this review will be completed by October 2018."

The college is based in a separate building just behind the main Lanyon campus of the university.

July 24 2018

It has a dual role in that it prepares some students for the Presbyterian ministry, but also educates students of other denominations studying theology degrees at Queen's.

There are about 200 students at the college. The majority are undergraduates or postgraduates enrolled with the university.

A spokesperson for Union Theological College said: "To ensure students are offered an enriched learning experience with high academic standards, like all academic institutions we participate in a range of regular reviews."

"We look forward to working closely with Queen's regarding this anticipated review."

'Lack of diversity'

A previous internal review carried out by Queen's in 2016, and seen by BBC News NI, raised a number of concerns.

It said the college's curriculum was "largely based on Protestant evangelical teaching with little input from other perspectives", and said there was a "lack of diversity in the teaching provision and staff".

It added: "In a post-conflict Northern Ireland, it is highly unsatisfactory that the teaching of theology is not provided across denominational lines."

That review noted there were no full-time female staff teaching undergraduates in the college.

It went on to recommend a radical increase in diversity among the "teaching staff, student body, teaching methods and teaching content as well as in issues of gender, race, sexual orientation and most particularly in faith affiliation."

July 24 2018

It also said the university had "no control over college staff appointments."

Climate Justice Candle hosted in Eco Congregation services in Sneem and Kenmare

On Sunday 22nd July, the Church of the Transfiguration, Sneem and St Patrick, Kenmare hosted the Climate Justice Candle in special services as part of their progress towards the objectives of Eco Congregation Ireland. The regular congregation was joined by visitors from the US, Germany, England, Greece and Limerick, illustrating the fact that we are one family under God, all with an equal share in the responsibility to nurture and protect His beautiful creation.

Priest-in-charge Michael Cavanagh gave an example of the issues we must address from the week's news, when the luxury goods manufacturer Burberry announced that they were to destroy around £30million of their products 'in order to preserve the exclusivity of their brand'. This followed on from recent stories describing the owner of Cartier watches and MontBlanc stationery declaring that they had destroyed some £430million of their own goods for the same reason.

Irrespective of the utter waste, he wondered how the craftsmen and women who created such superb quality work felt, knowing that their skill was considered of no value compared with the need to maintain profits. And how then must God feel when He sees His own creation abused and treated as disposable in the name of economic 'growth', with warnings about climate catastrophe and social disintegration ignored for the sake of financial gain?



The issue is not new, he continued; exactly the same careless overconsumption is recorded in the Book of the prophet Jeremiah, and it is inevitable that the same outcome will result, with warnings ignored as ‘fake news’ for the sake of financial gain. In the great scheme of things, there does not appear to be much that we, as individuals, can do – decisions are made at governmental levels by those least likely to suffer the consequence, with the poorest being the ones who will feel the pain. It seems likely that the motive for addressing climate change will be primarily economic, with technology seen as the way to salvation, at least for those who will be able to afford it.

July 24 2018

But that will not be the answer, and we can make a difference. Einstein didn't actually say 'Insanity is doing the same thing and expecting different results', but it's true nonetheless. What happened to Judah and its leaders will happen again; and it is again only God who will be able to come to our rescue. This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. (Jer 31:33)

The permanent answer to global warming and climate change is not technology, or indeed any man-made solution – neither should our motivation be economic or nationalistic. It is by each and every one of us having the heart and mind of Christ, and making social justice our first and highest priority. If we seek to serve rather than to be served; to care for the poor and dispossessed; to put our efforts into creating a society where every part of God's creation is equally valued; to truly love our neighbour as we love ourselves – then all the rest will follow.

News briefs

+++Obit: Revd Berni McAvoy - the death has taken place of Revd Berni McAvoy (right) who passed away peacefully at Newry Hospice on Sunday 22 July. Berni was ordained deacon in Saul Church on 21 October 2017. Medical



July 24 2018

treatment had prevented her from joining her classmates in September so it was especially joyful to witness Berni reach this point in her Christian journey. Trained as a primary school teacher, Berni had a fruitful lay ministry as she lived out the personal faith she had discovered at the age of 20. Prior to ordination training, she had worked in community outreach and pastoral care in St Jude's Ballynafeigh. Berni was born in Newry, and her faith came alive for her through her mother's involvement in the early days of the Christian Renewal Centre in Rostrevor. Bishop Harold Miller writes: "Berni was a passionate follower of Jesus Christ, with a lively and inquiring mind, and a great sense of humour. She loved studying theology, and had a wide range of experience of the wider church from her journey of faith. Being with her in these last days has been a privilege beyond measure. My last moments with her were spent planning her funeral service, which she had worked through in great detail. We will greatly miss her, but with the absolute assurance that she is 'absent from the body, present with the Lord'".

+++Presbyterian clergy record - Licensed: Philip Boyd Houston, by the North Belfast Presbytery, on 10 June 2018, Ben Johnston, by the East Belfast Presbytery, on 10 June 2018, Robert William McFaul, by the Derry & Donegal Presbytery, on 17 June 2018, Richard Morrison, by the Route Presbytery, on 3 June 2018, Campbell Mulvenny, by the Newry Presbytery, on 3 June 2018, James Alexander Porter, by the Ballymena Presbytery, on 10 June 2018.

Ordained and Installed:

Bryan Alexander Kee, as minister of First Newry, on 8 June 2018,

Alistair John McCracken, as minister of Cloughwater, on 1

July 24 2018

June 2018 **Inducted:** Graham Robert Stockdale, as Prison Chaplain, on 3 June 2018. **Installed:** Nathan William Duddy, as minister of Downshire, Carrickfergus, on 31 May 2018. **Retired:** Amanda Best, as minister of Ramelton & Kilmacrennan, on 4 June 2018. **Resigned:** Thomas James Conway – released from his charge as minister of Culnady & Swatragh on grounds of Medical Incapacity on 16 June 2018, Nathan William Duddy, as minister of Arklow, on 30 May 2018. **Died:** Rev Prof James Stanley McIvor, Theological Professor (Emeritus), on 23 May 2018

+++Clogher Readers commissioned - A Service of Holy Communion and the Commissioning of a new Diocesan Reader and Admission of Parish Readers, took place in Inishmacsaint Parish Church, near Derrygonnelly, on Sunday, 22nd July 2018. The commissioning of Harry Anderson as Diocesan Reader and the Admission of Linda Brunt as Parish Reader for Kilskeery and Trillick Group of Parishes and Joe McAlpine as Parish Reader for Maguiresbridge and Derrybrusk Group of Parishes was led by the Bishop of Clogher, the Right Revd John McDowell. The Bishop was also the preacher. A solo was sung by Michele Elliott. The first reading was by Linda Brunt and the Gospel reading was by Joe McAlpine. The prayers were led by Harry Anderson. The collection was taken up for the Diocesan Ministry Fund.

+++Hereford choir voted Children's Choir of the World - The Cantabile Girls' Choir of Hereford Cathedral School has been voted joint Children's Choir of the World. They tied in first place with the British Columbia Girls' Choir. The choirs won the title at the International Musical Eisteddfod Festival in Llangollen, Wales, beating choirs from the USA, Canada,

July 24 2018

Australia, New Zealand, India and Europe. The International Eisteddfod, whose patron is the Prince of Wales, was founded in Llangollen in 1947. This is the first time in its history that an English choir has claimed the children's choir title. Jo Williamson, director of Cantabile, said: 'I was speechless when I heard how well we had done and I couldn't be prouder of the girls.' Williamson, a former opera singer, founded the choir over ten years ago. She has since been voted conductor of the year at the International Eisteddfod in past years.



July 24 2018