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## Queen offers prayers after deadly Grenfell Tower blaze



**The Queen has said she is praying for those affected by a resident tower block fire in west London which has left at least twelve people dead.**

As firefighters revealed they were no longer expecting to find anyone else alive at the Grenfell Tower in North Kensington, a statement released by Buckingham Palace also paid tribute to the "bravery" of firefighters.

Her Majesty said: "My thoughts and prayers are with those families who have lost loved ones in the Grenfell Tower fire and the many people who are still critically ill in hospital."

London Fire Commissioner Dany Cotton said on Thursday morning that the number of bodies in the 24 storey building was still "unknown". The death toll is expected to rise further.

She told Sky News: "Tragically now we are not expecting to find anyone else alive. The severity and the heat of the fire would mean it is an absolute miracle for anyone to be left alive."

Firefighters are still to search the upper floors of the building. Prime Minister Theresa May visited the scene today, Thursday, where she spoke with emergency service personnel.

The Queen went on to say: "Prince Philip and I would like to pay tribute to the bravery of firefighters and other emergency services

officers who put their own lives at risk to save others.

"It is also heartening to see the incredible generosity of community volunteers rallying to help those affected by this terrible event."

Dozens of people attended a vigil outside Notting Hill Methodist Church - a short distance away from the Grenfell Tower - on Wednesday evening.

Rev Mike Long said: "There are times when all the words we can say are not adequate and sometimes words fail us because no words can do justice to how we feel, or what we have seen or what has happened. Today is one of those days. What we can simply do is look to all that we have seen today which is good, which is fabulous - people getting together."

The fire's cause is still under investigation.

## **Minister calls for prayer instead of donations following Grenfell fire**

A Methodist minister serving close to Grenfell Tower has told Premier News that people should



pray instead of bringing more donations to his church.

Rev Michael Long from the Notting Hill Methodist Church said the amount of people that had turned up to drop items off had been "powerfully overwhelming" and urged people to help in different ways.

He said: "Some people have carried things a long way - they've brought things in cars and lorries and it's very frustrating for them if then they find nowhere that they can actually then deliver it to."



He instead urged those wanting to donate to "simply hold people in their prayers".

Community centres and churches became overwhelmed with donations with some centres being forced to turn people's offers away because they run out of space.

Speaking about the importance of prayer during this difficult time, Rev Long said that while it may be hard knowing what words to say to God, people should pray that "some sense of peace for those that have suffered so much might emerge".

Dozens of people gathered for a vigil outside his Methodist Church on Wednesday evening

following the west London fire that left at least 17 people dead.

## **Methodists must provide a voice for the marginalised, says new church president**



### **New Methodist President the Rev Dr Laurence Graham**

New Irish Methodist President the Rev Dr Laurence Graham said his church must always reach out to the margins of society, Billy Kennedy reports in the News Letter.

“We must ever be a voice for marginalised people, here at home and around the world,” said Dr Graham, at the annual conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland last night.

The Dublin-based minister, superintendent at the Central Mission there, said it was “a joy” to serve in “a truly multi-ethnic” church.

Dr Graham, who replaces the Rev Bill Mullally for a one-year term as president, urged his church and congregations to cross sectarian barriers.

He said one of the key decisions that they would make at this year’s Methodist conference is with regard to the proposed new connexional church structures in the Irish church.

“The idea behind these proposals is that they would better facilitate and enable mission through our church.

“However, in all of our talk about new structures and systems to manage for mission let us never forget that the structures for managing mission will not matter if there is no mission to manage.”

Dr Graham recalled: “In 1999, 60 of us from Ireland went to be with the Methodist Church in Uganda. At that time, the church there had only

recently begun and there were five congregations.

“The Church in Uganda has lots of structural and organisational problems and very few resources, but the fact is that five congregations in 1999 is 41 congregations in 2017.

“And it’s not just new young churches where we see the same thing. A few months ago I had the pleasure of representing all of us at the bi-centenary of the Methodist Church of Haiti.

“This is a church 200 years old that retains an absolute instinct for mission, whether or not resources are available,” said Dr Graham, urging the church in Ireland to follow the example of others.

- The Methodist conference will continue until Saturday in Trinity Methodist Church, Lisburn.

## **Clonard’s festival of faith will draw more than 100,000 visitors**

Thousands of visitors are expected to descend on west Belfast this week for the annual Clonard Novena.





The nine-day event, described as a festival of faith, held in honour of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, annually draws more than 100,000 visitors.

This year, those attending will see a woman take to the altar as a resident preacher for the first time.

Anne Walsh, from Newfoundland in Canada, is one of four resident preachers taking part in this year's event, which runs until June 22.

Ms Walsh, who has more than 30 years' experience with the Redemptorist Lay Community, has worked as a catechist and director of adult faith formation at parish, school board and diocesan levels

The other preachers include Fr Michael Kelleher, Fr Brendan Kelly and Fr Michael Brehl, the Superior General of the Redemptorists worldwide.

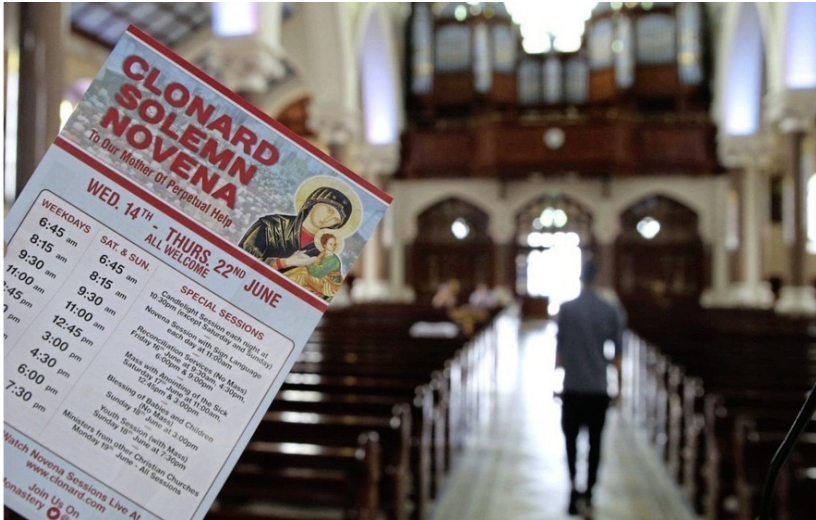
The novena, which has the theme 'Home isn't a place, it's you and me', is set to explore various aspects of family life and the idea of the church as a home.

This year's event will also be running a new, updated webcam service, which will allow new angles to be streamed to viewers to help them "participate more fully in the Eucharist". Behind-the-scene footage, including interviews with visitors, will also be broadcast between Masses.

Fr Noel Kehoe, Rector of Clonard Monastery, said the Clonard community was "very excited for the beginning of this year's Novena, especially as it deals with family and family life.

"Yesterday, the preparations were well under way," he said.

"Marquees went up, the toilets were installed and the shop was installed. The flags are up and the area is looking amazing. There is a real sense of buzz on the streets.



"Everybody is welcome to come, off all religions and none. This is an opportunity to reconnect again with the community to allow ourselves to be blessed by God in astounding ways and often surprising ways".

\*\*Weekday sessions take place at 6.45am, 8.15am, 9.30am, 11am, 12.45pm, 4.30pm, 6pm, 7.30pm, 9pm and 10.30pm

Weekend sessions take place at 6.45am, 8.15am, 9.30am, 11am, 12.45pm, 3pm, 4.30pm, 6pm and 7.30pm. Irish News report. Photos by Hugh Russell.

## Key issues examined by Irish Catholic bishops at summer conference

The Summer 2017 General Meeting of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference concluded yesterday afternoon in the Columba Centre, Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth.

Bishops offered prayers for those who have died, for the injured as well as for the emergency services who responded to the scene of the fire early yesterday morning at the Grenfell Tower block in North Kensington, London. Bishops remembered the victims and their families at Mass, as well as those who have died in recent terrorist attacks in Britain, and assure all those affected of the prayerful solidarity of the faithful across Ireland.

The following issues were discussed by the bishops during their three-day Summer meeting:

- Bishops welcome Pope Francis' World Day of the Poor
- Synod of Bishops on youth, faith and vocational discernment
- New National Vocations Office
- Catholic Schools Week 2018

- Trócaire – presentation on current hunger crisis in east Africa
- World Meeting of Families 2018
- Asylum seekers in direct provision
- Northern Ireland Assembly
- Faithful across Ireland invited to celebrate the centenary of the Fatima apparitions
- Appointments and retirements
- *In Memoriam*: Archbishop Thomas White RIP and Bishop Eamonn Casey RIP
- Bishops welcome Pope Francis' World Day of the Poor

Bishops welcomed Tuesday's announcement, by the Holy Father Pope Francis, that the first ever World Day of the Poor will be held on Sunday 19 November 2017. Bishops reflected that, on the conclusion of the Jubilee of Mercy in 2016, Pope Francis announced that he wished to offer the Church a World Day of the Poor, "so that throughout the world Christian communities can become an ever greater sign of Christ's charity for the least and those most in need" and he invited "the whole Church, and men and women of good will everywhere, to turn their gaze on this day to all those who stretch out their hands and plead for our help and solidarity."

The new message by Pope Francis for the World Day of the Poor is entitled *Let us love, not with*

*words but with deeds* and the faithful are invited to read this powerful message on [www.catholicnews.ie](http://www.catholicnews.ie) and to continue to support local parish, diocesan and wider-Church initiatives which are reaching out to the poor.



## **Dean of St Patrick's Gift Day**

Each year, the Dean hosts a Gift Day at the Cathedral, where donations towards the upkeep of the fabric of this significant building are gathered. On this year's Gift Day, we are seeking your help to allow us to erect new railings in the

graveyard, which will ensure that those visiting the grounds can do so in a safe way.

You are invited to come to the Cathedral on 17 June 17 (11.30 to 13.00) for the Gift Day to talk about this important initiative over a cup of tea with the Dean. All donations will be most gratefully received. If you are unable to come in person on the day, please feel free to forward your donation to the Cathedral Office, made payable to "Saint Patrick's Cathedral," or donate via credit card using the link below.

[stpatrickscathedral.us10.list-manage.com/track/click?](https://stpatrickscathedral.us10.list-manage.com/track/click?)

[u=5b7489759a827465422b21985&id=e01157812b&e=2bb9d00158](https://stpatrickscathedral.us10.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5b7489759a827465422b21985&id=e01157812b&e=2bb9d00158)

## **People are being encouraged to take part in an interfaith pilgrimage in support of refugees and sanctuary**

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees and Christian Aid Scotland are organising a trip to Ben Ledi, a mountain near Callander, on July 2 as part of Refugee Festival Scotland.



One of the projects being supported will raise money for refugees affected by conflict in South Sudan.

The Church of Scotland's Needing a Neighbour project raises money to reach out to those in desperate need of basic life sustaining necessities such as clean water, food, shelter and medical care.



South Sudan is the world's newest nation and was established in July, 2011.

It has been in the grip of a political and ethnic civil war since December, 2013 following a failed coup which has left thousands of people dead.



## Atrocity

Many have been forced to flee their homes to Uganda where they are living in refugee camps.

The South Sudan Council of Churches said food is scarce, education opportunities scant, healthcare inadequate and “terrible crimes have been committed against women and children”.

“We call for the immediate cessation of hostilities and a halt to the atrocities which are being committed,” it said in a statement.

“We call for the needs of the people to be prioritised over personal and political interests.”

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees co-ordinator David Bradwell is taking part in the 10km walk – titled Shoulder to Shoulder - which is open to people of all faiths and none.

He hopes to raise at least £2,500 for the Needing a Neighbour project, spearheaded by the Church of Scotland’s World Mission Council.

Mr Bradwell said: “This pilgrimage provides me an excuse to ask all my colleagues, friends and family to give money to support work with refugees.



“Practical help is still urgently needed to support people living through refugee emergencies around the world.

“I am asking people to give to the Church of Scotland’s Needing a Neighbour project – funds raised go directly to support the Church’s partners working in South Sudan.

“This situation is largely forgotten about by the media, and so the interest and engagement by the Church of Scotland’s World Mission Council with the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan is really critical at this time.”

Sanctuary

Mr Bradwell said the theme of the pilgrimage to the Corbett mountain is sanctuary and refugees.

“As we walk we will be encouraged to think and talk about our hopes and what we are doing, as a church and as individuals, with people who have been forced to flee from their homes,” he added.

Mr Bradwell said the pilgrimage is part of Refugee Festival Scotland, which is taking place between June 20-July 2

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