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New outreach centre opens in Donegal

The Donegal Group of Parishes' new outreach centre, 'The Mustard Seed', has been officially

opened by the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Ken Good.

There was glorious sunshine for Saturday morning's ribbon-cutting ceremony at the premises on New Row, just yards away from Donegal Parish Church and Donegal Castle. Parishioners were doubly blessed as Bishop Good confirmed the awarding of a €14,100 grant for the project from the Church of Ireland's Priority Fund.

The Archdeacon of Raphoe, Ven David Huss, told those present that The Mustard Seed was the brainchild of a number of parishioners who wanted to "take the church out of the church building and into the community". Archdeacon Huss, who is the Rector of Donegal, Killymard, Lough Eske and Laghey, said they decided during last year's Year of Opportunity in the Diocese to open a new outreach centre and create "the kind of place where anyone could come and find love and find care and find friendship".

The premises include a tea-room, a book stall and a prayer space for the whole community, and the centre will open from 10am-2pm each Thursday and Friday. "When you come to The Mustard Seed tea-room it is a bit different,"

Archdeacon Huss said. “There are no prices. You just pay what you want to give – as little or as much as you can afford. And there are no strings attached: anybody and everybody is welcome.”

The Archdeacon thanked the informal committee who had overseen the new centre’s development, the volunteers who had baked scones and cakes for the tea-room or served teas in it, those who had donated equipment or books, and those who had provided financial support.

Archdeacon Huss explained that the centre’s name, The Mustard Seed, came from Matthew 13, in which Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed. ““Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds in the air may come and perch in its branches. So, as from a small beginning, something grows and becomes a place of shelter and belonging, and that’s what we want for this place. In many ways it’s only a very small thing but in other ways it has big potential.”

Bishop Good welcomed parishioners, friends and clergy from other parishes. He had visited the outreach centre in its infancy and said he was delighted to see the progress that had been

made in the interim. “What I see here is faith as a mustard seed in the beginning that has grown, and who knows how big it’s going to become. This had very small beginnings but what the Lord can use this for none of us knows – what it will do with people’s lives none of us knows.” The Bishop commended Archdeacon

Huss for his leadership in the parish, and thanked those who had supported the Rector in bringing The Mustard Seed to fruition. “That faith, as a mustard seed, has already grown considerably and it will grow more.”

Bishop Good told his audience that the Priorities Fund had decided to award The Mustard Seed a grant of €14,100 “because it believes – and I believe – that it [the outreach centre] has a future and a viability. So that’s just one sign of faith, as a mustard seed, growing and growing. I am thankful to God for what he’s going to do here and what he has already done.”

Dignitaries at the weekend event included local Roman Catholic priests Fr William Peoples from Donegal Town and Fr Francis McLoone from Killymard, and the Minister of the local Presbyterian Congregation, Rev Stephen Richmond. Independent County Councillor Tom Conaghan was also in attendance, although the Mayor of Donegal Town, Patricia Callaghan, sent

her apologies for not being able to attend because she was out of the country.



DUP leader Arlene Foster (centre) speaks to the media at Stormont in Belfast on Monday

Politicians need to show a little grace - C of I spokesman

A C of I spokesman has asked Christians to pray for wisdom and grace as negotiations to form a new power-sharing executive collapsed on Sunday.

The comments from Rev Adrian Dorrian came the day after Sinn Fein said that it would not

elect a new deputy first minister by Monday's 4.00pm deadline.

Speaking on Premier News Hour, the chair of the Church of Ireland's Church and Society Commission said the situation is disappointing.

"We've had crises before and we've managed to work our way through them but it's very frustrating when you think there's so much you'd like to see happening in terms of our regional government and yet the parties seem unable to come to a consensus to allow that government to get into operation again."

Northern Ireland Secretary, James Brokenshire, must now decide whether to call a fresh election, allow Westminster to take control or continue to try to work toward finding a compromise between Sinn Fein and the DUP.

Rev Dorrian told the News Hour that cooperation was the best way forward.

"I think there would be a lot of dissatisfaction with another election," he said. "Although I think it's a very real possibility. Likewise, direct rule is a hot potato and while it may begin to get things done it's not a long term solution." He added that it was important for Christians to pray for leaders at this time.

"I think to pray for wisdom for the British and Irish governments and the role that they might play in these on-going conversations and of course the politicians in Northern Ireland. All parties are blaming each other and while there may be truth in that, grace is a very important focus for prayer."

Listen to Marcus Jones speak to Rev Adrian Dorrian here:

<https://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Call-for-prayers-for-wisdom-and-grace-for-Northern-Ireland-politicians>

National Collection this weekend for World Meeting of Families 2018

The second national collection for next year's World Meeting of Families in Ireland will be held at all Masses across the country over 1 and 2 April.

According to Bishop Francis Duffy, Chairman of the National Finance Committee for the 9th World Meeting of Families, almost €800,000 was contributed by parishioners to last year's national collection.

Bishop Duffy highlighted that Pope Francis personally chose Dublin to be the host diocese for the gathering, which takes place from 22 to 26 August 2018.

In a letter to priests around the country, Bishop Duffy emphasises that planning for this national and international celebration of faith is “well under way”.

A dedicated office and support team has been established and later this year a nationwide programme of talking about the family will begin, with an emphasis on Pope Francis’ teaching and reflections.

“The World Meeting of Families promises to be an occasion that will reflect on the faith experience of families from many parts of the world as well as on the challenges and celebrations which characterise the ups and downs of day-to-day family life,” Bishop Duffy emphasises.

But he also highlights to priests that hosting this national and international event requires an enormous amount of planning and funding.

Speaking to iCatholic about WMF2018, Bishop Donal McKeown of Derry said the Irish Church



can really benefit from the preparation leading up to the gathering in August 2018.

“Obviously the World Meeting of Families is going to involve a huge expenditure and an enormous investment by the Irish Church but it is an investment in our future and not just an event over five or six days in August 2018,” he said.

He encouraged people to give “what they can” to the national collection.

Bishop McKeown also said there would be a third national collection and perhaps even a fourth one if Pope Francis comes to Ireland.

“We will need money but this will be an investment not just in the future of the Church, it

is will an investment in the future of families, so that our children's children's children can dream of being heroic and blessed and mature people in the context of committed relationships," he said.

A catechetical programme to guide the journey of preparation for the event is being prepared and will draw from the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love), published by Pope Francis in March 2016, following the Synods on the family held in 2014 and 2015.

The theme chosen by Pope Francis for WMOF2018 is 'The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World'. The WMOF2018 logo, launched in December 2016, reflects on this theme and our journey towards August 2018.

Speaking to iCatholic, the President of WMF2018 Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin said family is central to the ministry of Pope Francis.

He said the Church benefits from families. "This is what we want to celebrate in the World Meeting of Families, to bring a new level of confidence to families. "As Archbishop of Dublin I am very pleased to have been asked to host this meeting," he said, as he invited people to join in preparing for the event and to attend it.



The Very Rev Raymond Stewart with the Bishop of Derry & Raphoe and members of the cathedral chapter

Dean of Derry installed

The Very Rev Raymond Stewart has been installed as the new Dean of Derry at a service in St Columb's Cathedral in Londonderry. Dean Stewart has also been instituted as Rector of Templemore, succeeding Rev Dr William Morton.

More than 400 people attended Tuesday evening's service, which was led by the Bishop

of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Ken Good. The congregation included the Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Alderman Hilary McClintock; the Lord–Lieutenant for the County Borough of Londonderry, Dr Angela Garvey; the Vice–Lord Lieutenant, Mrs Stella Burnside; and representatives of the Honourable the Irish Society (whose predecessors built St Columb’s Cathedral).

The preacher was the Rector of Drumachose (Limavady), Rev Canon Samuel McVeigh – a long–time friend of Dean Stewart’s and a senior Canon of the cathedral. He told the congregation that the pair of them had first met in the mid–seventies when he began his studies for ordination in Trinity College, Dublin. Canon McVeigh said the Dean had first served at All Saints Clooney under the Venerable George Charles Willoughby, “who ran the parish at Clooney like a Regimental Sergeant Major”. In college and in parish life, the new Dean had been seen as “a perfectionist”; his calling to the ministry in the church of the living God and his strong and unwavering faith in Jesus Christ were “solid”.

“After that gruelling training under Archdeacon Willoughby,” the Preacher said, “Raymond moved to rural parishes: first

Dunfanaghey, then Castledawson and finally the Tamlaghts – Upper and Lower. Your new Dean comes to you with a wealth of experience of parish life in town and country, and no doubt will put this vast experience to good effect in this particular church of St Columb.”

Addressing parishioners and well-wishers later, at St Augustine’s Parish Hall, the new Dean thanked the parochial and diocesan nominators who had placed their trust in him, and Bishop Good for appointing him as Dean. He also thanked his wife, Patricia and their daughter Dione.

Dean Stewart said the first time he ever preached in the Cathedral was on Palm Sunday, the 3rd of April 1977. “When I stand in the pulpit as Rector and Dean on Sunday next, the second of April, it’ll be one day short of 40 years since I first preached in the Cathedral.”

The new Dean paid tribute to his predecessor and friend, the Very Rev Dr William Morton. “I know that he was greatly respected in the parish, in the city and the community for all the hard work that he did. But I am me. I am not Dean William Morton. His are big shoes to fill but I can only fill the shoes that I am wearing. Nevertheless, I will continue to honour the

traditions that he has laid, but I ask you new parishioners to accept me the way I am, to accept whatever gifts I may bring and pardon any failings I may have.”

Clogher’s CMS mission partners to speak about project in Kenya

Mission Partners with CMS Ireland, Ronnie and Maggie Briggs, will be speaking about the work they are involved in with the Development Department of the Diocese of Kajiado in Southern Kenya at a special Kajiado Focus Event in the Cathedral Hall, Enniskillen, next Thursday, April 6 at 7.30pm.

Working under the leadership of Bishop Gaddiel Lenini and Development Co-ordinator, Ven Naftaly Lemooke, they are involved with numerous projects such as cattle, goat and sheep-breeding, women's empowerment training and school construction.

These practical works go hand in hand with the spiritual ministries of the church, as the good news of Jesus is shared both in word and deed.

The Diocese covers an area larger than Northern Ireland south of Nairobi reaching to the border of Tanzania and Mount Kilimanjaro.



Clogher's CMS Mission Partners Ronnie and Maggie Briggs.

The population there are predominantly Maasai, who traditionally herd animals for a living and the climate is very arid - with rains only falling for five months of the year. In the long dry season, water becomes scarce and the women are forced to walk long distances to the few places where it can be obtained.

In response to this need, Ronnie is working hard to repair a large number of water conservation

tanks at Oltiasika Maasai Rural Training Centre. These tanks are crucially important for the 3000 people who live in the immediate area. Two other current priorities are the installation of girls' toilets in three primary schools in Oltiasika (part-funded by a donation from Portora Royal School) and the extension of a dormitory at Oloosuyian Girls Secondary School near Kajiado town.

South Sudan bishop appeals to Connor diocese

Bishop Hilary of Yei this week made a direct plea to people in the Diocese of Connor to help alleviate suffering caused by ongoing civil war in South Sudan.

The two dioceses have been in partnership for almost 10 years. Donations can be made directly to Yei via CMS Ireland. Please see link below.

In a document outlining the seriousness of the situation, Bishop Hilary said more than 450,000 people have fled from the Diocese of Yei to refugee camps in northern Uganda alone, while others have gone to DR Congo.

“When I visited the mega refugee camp at Rhino Camp on March 5, I was so overwhelmed by the huge needs of the refugees to be fulfilled in

almost every aspect of their lives,” Bishop Hilary said.

“The range of needs is from lack of poles for constructing their makeshift dwellings of plastic materials to churches.

“The refugees’ complaints range from insufficient rations of dry food to lack of schools at all levels for their children. There are many young people in these camps, all very idle and having nothing to do. Many of them are stressed and traumatized and are in great need for counseling services in trauma and psychosocial disorders.”

The Bishop said the huge numbers of young people in the camps is a worry.

“Their presence in these camps is a potential recruiting grounds for the rebel movements in South Sudan which is a threat to the future of this country,” Bishop Hilary stated. “This in turn will fuel the rebellion and prolong the war in South Sudan which means prolonged suffering of our people in refugee camps.”

The Bishop and his diocese has drawn up a list of priorities, and these include the need for secondary and vocational training. “We are most likely to lose out if some of the young boys and girls that have completed their O and A levels

and are ready to join university do not get any opportunities to continue with their studies. The future for South Sudan will be bleaker than its now,” said the Bishop.

Yei Diocese has drawn up a Relief Emergency Assistance Programme (REAP) which outlines the key issues facing people both trapped within Yei town and in the refugee camps. This can be [downloaded in full here](#).

Pope Francis demands urgent action to protect civilians in Mosul

Pope Francis demanded urgent action on Wednesday to protect civilians in Iraq, saying forces involved in the battle for Mosul have an obligation to protect innocents following a recent spike in civilian casualties.

Francis issued a special appeal for peace in Iraq at the end of his general audience. He greeted an interfaith group of Iraqis in St Peter’s Square, encouraging them in helping Iraq find reconciliation among various ethnic and religious groups.

Pope Francis said that he was particularly concerned about Iraqis trapped by recent fighting to take Mosul back from ISIS militants.

“In expressing profound sadness for the victims of the bloody conflict, I renew my appeal that everyone commit themselves to using all efforts to protect civilians, an imperative and urgent obligation,” he said.

The UN human rights office has called on the US-led coalition conducting airstrikes on Mosul to minimize civilian casualties, saying at least 300 people have been killed since mid-February including 140 from a single March 17 airstrike incident on a house. The UN says ISIS militants are using human shields and setting a trap for the coalition.

Amnesty International has said the rising civilian death toll suggested the US-led coalition wasn't taking adequate precautions as it helps Iraqi forces try to retake the city, though the US has denied any loosening of the rules of combat.

The Iraqi group that met privately with Francis before the audience included Shiite and Sunni Muslims as well as representatives from Iraq's Christian, Yazidi, Sabei and Mandei minorities.

The delegation engages in dialogue with the Vatican's office of interfaith relations.

News briefs & Upcoming events

+++ **Bach's Saint John Passion in St Patrick's**

Dublin - The Choir of St Patrick's Cathedral is giving a liturgical performance of Bach's Saint John Passion on **Passion Sunday (April 2)** at 6.00pm. All are very welcome to attend. Bach's *St John Passion* is one of the towering achievements of western music, and tells in music the story of the arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus. Originally conceived as a liturgical piece in Lutheran Germany, it combines the narrative from St John's gospel with reflective solo arias, dramatic choruses and chorales (hymn tunes), the latter of which are sung by the entire congregation. In this performance directed by David Leigh, the Schola (senior girls) and men of the cathedral choir are joined by an orchestra drawn from Dublin's finest professional players.

All of the solos, including the evangelist, are taken by members of the choir. Tickets are free, but [advance registration is recommended](#).

+++ **North Belfast Prayer Walk** - Connor's Church Army Evangelists at the North Belfast Centre of Mission organise monthly prayer walks

in association with other churches in the area. The next prayer walk takes place on Monday April 3, with participants meeting at St Stephen's Parish Church, Millfield, part of the Lower Shankill Team Ministry led by the Rev Jim Carson and his wife Heather, parish development officer. Pioneer Evangelist Stephen Whitten said: "This is the first time we have revisited the same location and is a great opportunity to once again get alongside Heather and Jim's vision for this parish and the area!" Anyone wanting to join the prayer walk should meet at St Stephen's at 7.30pm.

+++ Raheny Choral sing along for Holy Week -

The choir of All Saints', Raheny, invite choristers to 'Death and Resurrection', a Requiem/Gloria sing-along, on the Monday of Holy Week, April 10. Rehearsal will take place from 6.00 pm to 7.30 pm with the performance at 8.00 pm. A €10 donation, to help defray expenses, will be asked of participants. Singers will gather to take part in a meditation on musical excerpts for Holy Week, to first rehearse, and then experience some of the simpler movements of Fauré's Requiem and Vivaldi's Gloria. Singers who have scores for the works are asked to bring them. This short performance is not a concert, but will include soloists, organ and string quartet, and offer an opportunity for choristers to enjoy singing these

beautiful works at this most beautiful time of the church year in the beautiful setting of All Saints' Church. For more information:

ted.cetto@gmail.com

+++A Service of Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide - will take place on Monday April 24 at 7.00 pm in Christ Church Cathedral. The service will be attended by members of the Armenian community in Ireland, who worship in Christ Church Taney, and their friends including Archbishop Michael Jackson, Dean Dermot Dunne, Prof Maria Bagramian (UCD), Sunniva McDonagh (Barrister) and Hayarpi Drmeyam (the Consul from the Armenian Embassy in London). All are welcome.

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