

Work Together for the Ireland You Deserve C of I Second Level Schools' Service told



Minister for Education, Mr Richard Bruton TD arriving in St Patrick's Cathedral with Dr Ken Fennelly and Andrew Forrest of the Board of Education

“Enjoy your life, be enthusiastic, follow your dreams and strive for equality.” This was the message from inspirational youth advocate and ability rights campaigner, Joanne O’Riordan, to almost 600 second level students from all over Ireland who gathered in St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin, yesterday (Thursday October 28).

Joanne was speaking at the annual Second Level Schools’ Service, organised by the General Synod Board of Education to mark the beginning of the academic year. Archbishop Michael Jackson presided at the Service of Choral Evensong which was led by Dean William Morton. The service was attended by the Minister for Education and Skills, Mr Richard Bruton, TD.

A new awards scheme for Transition Year students, *The Deans Award for Social Justice in Action* was launched at the service. The scheme is designed to encourage students to reflect on what they heard during the service and experienced during worship and to carry that forward into their lives and relate it to the wider world. Students were asked in particular to pay attention to the two readings Isaiah 53: 1–5 and Luke 18: 1–8.



Students of the King's Hospital School and their Chaplain and teachers with Joanne O'Riordan, Dean William Morton and Archbishop Michael Jackson.

Joanne is one of seven people in the world living with Tetra-amelia syndrome. But the 21 year old told the packed cathedral that she has not allowed this to hold her back.

She strives to campaign for people of all abilities. "I hate the word disability. I, like everybody else, have the ability to achieve anything in my life. Just because I have no limbs doesn't mean that I don't have a voice. Just because we are young people doesn't mean we don't have a voice," she said.

On her 16th birthday Joanne addressed the United Nations on the use of technology. She got a standing ovation and challenged them to build a robot for her, a project which has been undertaken by Trinity College Dublin. She is a strong advocate of technology and says it has helped her to unlock her true independence.

“I have never shied away from the challenges I face. Every day I try to challenge myself to push forward... Remember to achieve the impossible you must first believe in the possible,” she stated. “Technology has played an enormous part in my life and opened up so many opportunities... Every day there are new developments in technology and I recommend that we do get excited about this because it will push our abilities further.”

Joanne admitted that she does get down in the dumps from time to time but then she reminds herself how important it is to be in her position and thinks of her great family and friends. She told the students that it was important to let go of stresses, enjoy the precious moments of their lives, be enthusiastic and keep their dreams alive no matter what.

“Each one of you is strong and smart and talented and together you will be unstoppable

and achieve great things. You have before you a wealth of knowledge and ideas but most importantly you have each other to work for the Ireland that you deserve,” she concluded.

Currently Joanne is a columnist for the Irish Times while also studying criminology in University College Cork. She hopes to be a crime or sports journalist.

Pope expected to attend two events in Ireland next year

The Irish-born Cardinal who is coordinating arrangements for Pope Francis' planned visit to Ireland next year has said he expects the Pontiff will attend at least two of the events surrounding the World Meeting of Families in Ireland next year.

The World Meeting of Families is due to be held here between 21-26 August 2018.

Cardinal Kevin Farrell, speaking at a Down and Connor Diocesan meeting in Belfast, said he expected that Pope Francis would attend the Festival of Families event and a mass to conclude the World Meeting of Families on Sunday 26 August next year.



Cardinal Farrell said he expects Pope Francis to attend events at the World Meeting of Families next August

On the issue of whether Pope Francis would visit Northern Ireland on his trip, Cardinal Farrell said he did not think that had been discussed yet.

He said the Pope usually decides on his schedule six months in advance.

Ministers tell Church leave debate on HPV vaccine to the experts

Ministers have urged the Church to leave clinical debates to the experts after one bishop claimed

that the HPV cervical cancer vaccine is only “70%” safe, the Irish Examiner reports

Independent Alliance Minister of State John Halligan has followed Health Minister Simon Harris who has previously warned that unless people are medically qualified to give advice, they should “butt out”.

Mr Halligan said he finds it “incredible” that the Bishop of Waterford and Lismore, Phonsie Cullinan, had attempted to conflate the clinical value of the vaccine with the Church’s views on the need to “help young people stay chaste”.

Mr Harris said yesterday: “I don’t want to get into a spat with anybody, bishop or no bishop, but at the end of the day the people qualified to give medical advice on vaccinations are doctors and, funnily enough, not bishops.”

The HSE recently launched a campaign to encourage parents to get their teenage daughters HPV vaccinated after levels of uptake dropped.

While Mr Halligan described the bishop as a “man of great integrity”, he said his comments on the vaccine are “fundamentally wrong”.



“His attempts to weigh in on a medical argument are ill-advised, to say the least. Religion has no place in medical debate and the Catholic Church’s track record on the medical welfare of Irish women speaks for itself. Our health and health education policies need to be evidence-based, with faith and morals left firmly at the door. I would urge Bishop Phonsie to leave the clinical debates to the clinical experts.” .

Meanwhile the National Cervical Screening Programme has recorded its most successful year in 2016 since the programme began in 2008. Each year in Ireland, almost 300 women are diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer and almost 90 women die from the disease. Some 79.7% of the target population of almost 1.2m eligible women, aged 25 to 60, have now been screened in the last five years.

Professor Gráinne Flannelly, clinical director of CervicalCheck, said in the course of its first eight years, CervicalCheck has identified and treated more than 50,000 women with precancerous abnormalities which has significantly reduced their risk of developing cervical cancer.

The programme's latest report shows that 90% of the 263,481 women with a satisfactory screening test received a normal result. Within the same period, 17,909 attended a colposcopy for the first time — an increase of 1,360 in comparison to the previous year — and 7,131 treatments were carried out to reduce the risk of cancer .

Pro-life group raises more than €1m in donations in a year

The anti-abortion organisation Family & Life raised more than €1m in donations in one year. the Irish News reports

Records for Family & Life Movement Ltd show that the organisation which promotes "the welfare and sanctity of life from conception onwards" received €1,052,255 in donations in 2015. The organisation was left with revenue of €333,000 after costs.



George Soros gave 25K dollars to one campaign

The level of donations was a significant increase on the €822,173 it raised in 2014. A related company, Family & Life Campaign Company, was registered with the Companies Office last December and has not yet filed accounts.

The anti-abortion group also registered with the Standards in Public Offices Commission in December, which it is required to do if it plans on receiving donations of more than €100 for a political purpose.

The organisation ran into controversy for taking a number of TDs and senators to New York and Washington on a "fact-finding" visit in 2013.

A year later, Jim Daly, who is now Minister of State for Older People, used Dail privilege to criticise the group for seeking funds from a "targeted audience of primarily vulnerable, elderly people."

Organisations on both sides of the abortion referendum have registered with the ethics watchdog ahead of the forthcoming referendum on abortion since 2015.

Cherish all the Children Equally, which describes its members as left-wing republicans who are pro-life, registered with Sipo seven months ago.

Other pro-life organisations which have registered for fund-raising in the last two years include Coir, the Iona Institute and the Pro-Life Campaign, which filed accounts in July showing that it had cash amounting to €74,898.

Choice Ireland, which is campaigning to repeal the Eighth Amendment, has also registered with Sipo.

However, one of the larger organisations, Abortion Rights Campaign, which was behind

last week's rally in Dublin, has told Sipo it does not have to register.

It emerged in April that Abortion Rights Campaign returned a grant of US\$25,000 it received from an organisation funded by the American billionaire George Soros.

It returned the money after the Standards in Public Offices Commission warned that the donation would breach ethics guidelines and would be reported to gardai if it wasn't returned.

Soros's Open Society Foundation has also provided funding to the Irish Family Planning Clinic and Amnesty International, according to leaked documents that have been widely reported.

The Coalition to Repeal the Eighth Amendment incorporates dozens of organisations and charities under its umbrella. The group is encouraging online donations of amounts from €8 to €128.

Sipo rules prohibit political donations from organisations based overseas.

In a report earlier this year, the ethics watchdog called for legislation to ensure more transparency around funding of referendum

campaigns. While they must register, third party organisations do not have to disclose details of actual donations received.

Salvation Army launches new resource to engage the elderly

“WHO am I?” That is the question being posed in a new resource pack for the elderly, published last week by the Salvation Army to coincide with the international day for older people, on 1 October.

The pack includes games and activities to be used as part of a Sunday service or a midweek fellowship gathering, such as an over-sixties or cameo group. The activities include participants’ thinking about and discussing what they mean to themselves, to others, and to God.

The assistant director of older people’s ministries at the Salvation Army, Andrew Wileman, explained: “Retirement can bring a sense of isolation and helplessness as people consider all that they have been in the past, feeling that they don’t have a sense of calling in their later years. This special day is a wonderful opportunity to engage with our older people and allow them time to consider their calling by God, which is for all people, all ages, at all times.”



Smiles: a Salvation Army officer offers a helping hand to a senior citizen

In one game, participants have to guess the name of famous Christians, after being given three facts about them. Another activity involves discussing identity and relationship to others, such as being a friend, parent, grandparent, or colleague; how participants spend their time; and what they love about their church.

The resource pack also includes a “prayer journal” on which to write thoughts and prayers throughout the week, and ideas for topics of prayer, such as: “Who am I to others?” “Who am I to Christ?” “Who was I?” “And who am I to be?”

“Many older people achieve incredible things during retirement,” Mr Wileman said. “These resources aim to help people consider their identity, and reflect on the truth that everyone has a calling and a purpose to fulfil, no matter their age.”

To download the resource pack, visit www.salvationarmy.org.uk/retirement.

A Kurd Anglican priest backs independence referendum result

A Kurdish Anglican priest described this week how his memories of growing up under Saddam Hussein’s rule had influenced his decision to vote in favour of Kurdish independence.

An overwhelming majority — more than 90 per cent — voted “Yes” in the referendum held on Monday.

The Vicar of St Richard of Chichester, Langney, the Revd Timothy Ezat, left Iraq, aged 16. As a child, he heard “whispers on the streets” about Halabja, the Kurdish town where thousands of people were killed in chemical attacks in 1988.

He can remember learning of the discovery of bodies of people killed in the al-Anfal campaign,

and also fleeing towards Halabja during the 1991 Kurdish revolution. He was ten when his father, a civil servant, was killed, after being ordered by the Iraqi government to defend the city against the Peshmerga. He arrived in the UK as a refugee in 1999.

“People say, ‘Can’t you just make this work, and live together?’” he said on Tuesday. “The reality is, no, because the scars are still fresh.”

Both he and his wife, a Chaldean Christian, voted in favour of independence. “I can hardly think of a Kurd who is not supporting this,” he said.

Iraq was a new country, he said, “a new experiment; and the reality is that you have put groupings of people together who are very dissimilar. . . We were always a persecuted minority.” The situation was even worse for Kurds in Turkey and Syria, he said, and the Iraqi government had consistently refused to deliver on promises to hold referendums. There was also a sense, he said, that the Kurds had been “betrayed” by the international community during decades of persecution.

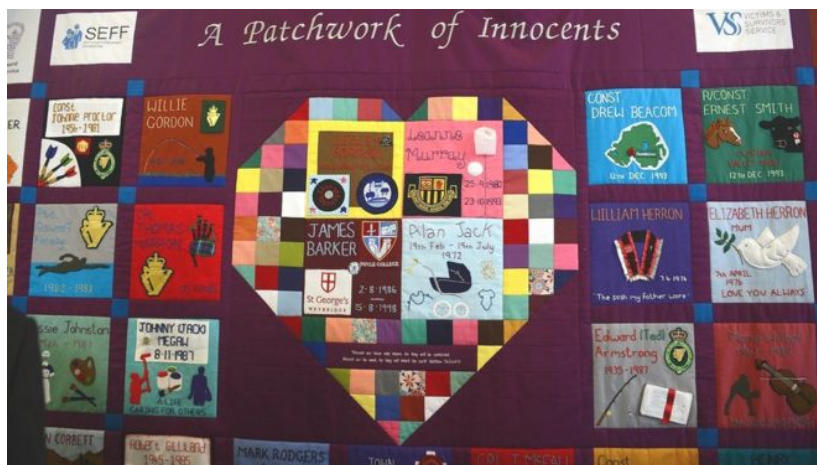
Brought up as a “nominal Muslim”, and an atheist as a teenager, he became a Christian at 16, after watching a film about Jesus. It would

be “misleading” to suggest that there was one Christian voice on the referendum, he said. But Christians had been able to live and practise their religion freely in Kurdistan. Life was better than in the rest of Iraq, he said, “but all this progress is hampered by instability in the rest of Iraq. . . It is time to realise our dream for governing our own affairs, and, as President Barzani says, if we cannot live with each other, we can be good neighbours.”

The *Washington Post*'s Baghdad bureau chief, Tamer El-Ghobashy, tweeted on Monday that the Chaldean Archbishop of Erbil, Mar Bashar Warda, had voted in favour of independence. But Open Doors reported that Christians “feared fresh violence” in the wake of the referendum, which is fiercely opposed in the region. The Prime Minister of Iraq, Haider el-Abadi, has rejected it as “unconstitutional”.

One source of conflict is the inclusion in the referendum of the “disputed areas”: places captured by Kurdish forces during the anti-IS campaign, including the Nineveh plains, where many Christians lived. The United States has described this decision as “particularly provocative and destabilising”.

Quilt at church service remembers 62 children killed during Troubles



The patchwork quilt was dedicated at service in Fivemiletown

Some of the youngest victims of the Troubles have been remembered in a memorial quilt unveiled in County Tyrone.

It includes a patch with the name of Alan Jack, who was just five months old when he was killed by an IRA car bomb in Strabane in 1972.

The quilt was created by the South East Fermanagh Foundation (SEFF).

It was dedicated at a service at Fivemiletown Methodist Church on Sunday.

Alan Jack's aunt, Elizabeth Hamilton, was among those at the event.

"The day before he was killed, they had come out to see granny and granda," she said.

"He was so bubbly, he just smiled all the time. You just think about him every day. It never goes away."

Kenny Donaldson, director of service at SEFF, said this was the third quilt the group had produced.

"There's different symbolism attached today, in that the centrepiece is for children aged under sixteen."

A patch in memory of Leanne Murray, who was 13 when she died in the Shankill bomb in 1993, forms part of that centrepiece.

"It's been a privilege, an honour to be asked down here," said Gina Murray, Leanne's mother.

"Leanne was a bright, bubbly girl, very fussy about her hair. She was into netball, so there's a ball and a net on the quilt, which means Leanne to us."

The use of a sporting symbol was the idea of Leanne's brother Gary.

"Listening to Leanne's name being read out was hard to hear," he said.

"But it was nice to hear at the same time."

Another who attended the service was [Donna-Maria Barker, whose son, James, died in the 1998 Omagh bomb](#). She and her family had returned to England after the atrocity.

"I swore I would never be in this country again, because I brought the children over for a better quality of life and it didn't work out that way," she said.

She visited Omagh as part of her return this weekend.

"It was so strange to see people going about their daily routine," she said.

"Going over to the memorial (garden), I had a bouquet of flowers, and it just looked so quiet and desolate. I got a little bit upset about that.

"Then suddenly I turned around and there were three ladies there, looking at all those names.

"And I felt a little bit better, because there's always going to be someone there."

The quilt will be available from SEFF for talks and displays.

See also - The family of a 16-year-old boy who was killed in the IRA attack on the village of Claudy threw their arms around each other and wept when they got the news, his brother has said.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/we-folded-into-each-other-s-arms-and-cried-after-william-died-1-8174742>

Ireland in crisis – new Dialogue of Hope group calls for radical rethink

Methodist Lay Leader, Dr Fergus O’Ferrall, is pictured (next page below) with Professor Linda Hogan of Trinity College Dublin, at the launch of *A Dialogue of Hope – Critical Thinking for Critical Times*.

The book, to which Dr O’Ferrall has contributed a chapter on ‘key areas for constructive engagement, community, solidarity and active citizenship’, calls for the creation of a new narrative for 21st- century Ireland based on input



**Methodist Lay Leader, Dr Fergus O'Ferrall,
with Professor Linda Hogan of Trinity College
Dublin**

from a representative and inclusive range of Irish people.

Gerry O’Hanlon SJ, convenor of the Dialogue of Hope group notes: “We have a housing crisis; we have serious systemic problems in our health service and policing structures, and we see villages dying on their feet in rural Ireland, yet all we hear talk of is of economic growth and increasing stability. But the reality is that the economic model is patently failing and we need a new narrative that is much broader and deeper than the neo-liberal economic model can provide.”

The group, which came together in March 2016, is calling on people of all views in Irish society – poor and rich, secularists, atheists, believers, scientists, artists, poets, and philosophers – to come together and work out an alternative vision for Ireland based on common values and not on the single economic model that they see as underpinning thinking today.

They say that they take hope from the signs of social activism, courageous witness and some creative responses to the crisis but that more is needed.

In the newly launched publication, they analyse the roots of the current crises, outline a vision

that could help mobilise a broad coalition of those willing to work for change and suggest possible approaches for developing a platform for this coalition. They also propose lines of action that demonstrate the potential for Christian engagement with secular society in tackling specific common concerns.

CNI

Help CNI grow

Please commend

**CNI daily news to your
friends**

www.churchnewsireland.org

CNI

