



**The Armenian Patriarch, Archbishop Suheil Dawani, Archbishop Michael Jackson and the Lord Mayor Brendan Carr**

## **Mayor and Archbishop of Dublin return from Israel–Palestine**

The archbishop of Dublin spent two full days in Israel–Palestine at the end of May (May 28th – May 31st) with the Lord Mayor of Dublin,

Brendan Carr, and Ms Fanchea Gibson of The Lord Mayor's Office.

They went at the invitation of Archbishop Suheil

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Dawani with the purpose of observing first hand the interaction of the three World Faiths: Judaism, Christianity and Islam and their contribution to Israeli–Palestinian society. The first person with whom they met formally was Rabbi David Rosen, former Chief Rabbi of Ireland, immediately on their arrival (May 28th).

After a number of meetings with various faith leaders they stated they had gained an in–depth impression of the public expression of the three Faiths in Jerusalem in the period between Ascension Day and Pentecost, during Ramadan and just ahead of Shavuot.



**Part of the Bloom festival at which Trocaire was a medal winner. Report coming up.**

This was followed by a meeting in St George's Cathedral with the Armenian Patriarch. The Armenian Church in Ireland has close links with the Church of Ireland in two Dublin churches, Christ Church Taney and St Stephen's, Mount Street and in Christ Church Cathedral. The afternoon was spent learning about some of the educational and medical outreach projects in Ramallah pioneered by the Anglican Diocese and open to all irrespective of Faith tradition, most notably the Evangelical School (a vocational training centre, specializing in IT and

catering) and the Arab Episcopal Medical Centre (diabetic and cardiovascular). Later in the afternoon, the group met Kids4Peace who draw together for the purpose of shared friendship, cultural understanding and mutual respect children of all three Faith traditions. The Lord Mayor renewed his association with some of the Leadership Team of Kids4Peace whom he had hosted late in 2016 in The Mansion House Dublin. Archbishop Suheil had himself founded Kids4Peace at the turn of the millennium.

On the third day (May 30th) the archbishop, the Lord Mayor and Ms Gibson visited Bethlehem where they met members of religious communities and those who strive to keep afloat economic endeavour and enterprise in the area. Returning to Jerusalem, they spent time in The Princess Basma Centre where the range of services offered to children with disabilities within the Arab community in Jerusalem, The West Bank and Gaza were explained to them by the Director. There is also a primary school in The Princess Basma Centre where children with and children without disabilities learn together in as integrated a manner as is possible. There is a woodcraft workshop for adults with disabilities. The group was moved by the empowering atmosphere and spirit of the Centre, which is under the auspices of the Anglican Diocese, but

also forcibly struck by the hardship and hurdles experienced by the mothers of the children who accompany their children every step of the way throughout their travel to The Centre from The West Bank and Gaza and throughout their treatment.

At midday the archbishop preached in St Paul's Church West Jerusalem as part of the diocesan Come&C project ([read the Archbishop's sermon here](#)). St Paul's, the Arabic Anglican Church, was destroyed by fire in 1948 and is now restored to its beauty and simplicity and serves the spiritual needs of an English-speaking and an Arabic-speaking congregation.

In the afternoon the Lord Mayor was able to bring to bear on a presentation made on behalf of The Jerusalem Three Faiths Forum his own experience in pioneering [The Dublin City Interfaith Charter](#). He did this in response to a presentation by Dr Miriam Feldman-Kaye of The Jerusalem Three Faiths Forum on Scriptural Reasoning in the healthcare sector and in Israeli hospitals. The archbishop, as part of the link between the two dioceses and expressed in The Epiphany Agreement 2016, made a presentation to Mrs Shafiqua Dawani from Dublin & Glendalough to the Empowerment of Women Project in Jerusalem Diocese.

The visit, although short, has strengthened the link between civic and ecclesiastical Dublin and The Three Faiths in Jerusalem and in Israel–Palestine.



## **Trocaire's garden is a medal winner at Bloom festival**

Trócaire has won a Silver Medal for its show garden at this year's Bloom festival in Phoenix Park, Dublin.

Trócaire's show garden highlights its work with communities fighting for their land rights in Central America.



This is Trócaire's first time at Bloom, and its garden with a conscience also features a live art installation. The Bloom mural, designed by Wexford artist Yohan, illustrates loss of land and violence against indigenous communities in Guatemala and brings all the elements of the garden together. The piece of art will be created and completed over the five days of Bloom.

Bloom was launched by Bord Bia in 2007 primarily as a promotional vehicle for horticulture; providing a showcase for garden plants, garden design, construction, horticulture and gardening as a hobby. Based on similar successful formats such as the RHS Chelsea Flower Shows and RHS Hampton Court Palace shows, Bloom has numerous highly creative gardens and plant displays which are used to inspire and excite the public about gardening and garden design.

## **Presbyterian Moderator dismayed at same-sex move by Church of Scotland**

The head of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has expressed his alarm that the Church of Scotland has moved a step closer to allowing

ministers to perform same-sex marriages, The Belfast Telegraph reports.

Dr Frank Sellar was speaking as he prepares to step down on June 5 from his year as Moderator.

Last week the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland backed calls for a study into how same-sex ceremonies in church could be allowed.

It also called for the Church to apologise for its "history of discrimination" against gay people.

Dr Sellar said it was a "disappointment" that it had decided to move away from the understanding that marriage is between a man and a woman.

Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK or Ireland where same-sex marriage has not been legalised.

The DUP was able to block it in the Assembly by using the veto mechanism known as a petition of concern.

However, to do so requires 30 MLAs - and after the March Assembly election the party now has only 28 seats.





Rev Sellar does not believe the petition is the best means of opposing same-sex marriage.

He said he felt that it would be better for Northern Ireland's politicians to "fulfil their mandate... in another way rather than having to use the petition of concern".

"I cannot say that on this issue, which I hold strong views on, that it should be used on that," he added.

Dr Sellar also said his branding of bonfires as "sinful" was not an "attack on culture".

The Moderator faced criticism last year for comments he made during a lecture in Belfast, in which he described bonfires as "a means by

which we pass on to succeeding generations the sins of our fathers".

He told the Belfast Telegraph that many from an Orange background had agreed with him afterwards.

"The bonfires in themselves are neither good nor bad, they're neutral, in the same way a motor car is neither good nor bad," he said. My concern was where bonfires are used not as a positive cultural expression, but as a threatening and intimidatory expression in order to express bigotry and hatred towards other people - then that is sinful.

"One of the things that I was aware of after those comments was that the overwhelming response of many people, especially from an Orange and loyalist background, was to say: 'You're absolutely right - we agree with you but find it very difficult to express that.'"

Rev Sellar's time at the head of the Presbyterian Church has coincided with Northern Ireland's political landscape being reshaped by the UK vote to leave the EU.

He said that as the Presbyterian Church was an all-Ireland organisation "we obviously have concerns".

"What sense you have is just the uncertainty that goes with that," he said.

"It would be wonderful if there was some stability at home, with all the instability that there is going to be with the negotiations."

### **Presbyterians coming to terms with Scottish gay move**

Belfast Newsletter

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland went on record as saying many members would be "deeply saddened" by the developments, adding that a move ...

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/presbyterians-coming-to-terms-with-scottish-gay-move-1-7981357>

### **Irish nuns to surrender three hospitals as secularism encroaches**

Ireland's Sisters of Charity will end their management of three Dublin hospitals, the sisters have announced, saying they will hand over control to a group that will not follow Catholic medical ethics.

"Although the Sisters of Charity no longer have any direct involvement in the provision of healthcare services we remain dedicated to

preserving the legacy of Mary Aikenhead, whose mission in life was to heal and care for the sick and poor," Sister Mary Christian, Congregational Leader of the Religious Sisters of Charity, said Monday.

"We believe that the future continued success of St. Vincent's Healthcare Group can best be ensured by our transferring ownership of the group to a newly formed company with charitable status to be called 'St. Vincent's.' The Religious Sisters of Charity will have no involvement in this new company."

The decision to transfer control of the three Dublin hospitals had been under consideration for more than two years, James Menton, chairman of the healthcare group, told the Irish state broadcaster RT.

Menton said the developments "reflect the wonderful legacy to Irish healthcare of the Sisters of Charity."

"The sisters have always held the highest ambitions for the provision of world class healthcare services in Ireland and have successfully achieved and sustained this," he said.

"They also see the need for the proposed development of the new National Maternity Hospital integrated within the Elm Park campus and want to do everything possible to ensure this vital facility for mothers and babies is developed as quickly as possible."

The health care group's origins date back to 1834, when Mary Aikenhead, the founder of the Religious Sisters of Charity, established St. Vincent's Hospital.

Until this year, the St. Vincent's Healthcare Group included three hospitals. Two sisters who were on the board of the healthcare group's board will resign and the congregation will give up the right to appoint board directors.

The long-considered move to give up the three hospitals follows recent controversy over a reported proposal that the sisters be given ownership of a \$335 million taxpayer-funded National Maternity Hospital because the congregation owned the land on which it would be built, the campus of St. Vincent's University Hospital.

The controversy prompted the Irish Minister for Health Simon Harris to say in April that there

must be "no question of religious interference" in the new hospital.

The National Maternity Hospital's board had said the new facility would be run independently and would provide procedures like sterilization, in-vitro fertilization, and some abortions.

The sisters have now said they will not own or help manage the new hospital.

The controversy over the new hospital often included claims from critics that Catholic ethics were not good medical practice.

The sisters' statement appeared to echo these claims, saying the governing documents of the new health care group so that the Religious Sisters of Charity Health Service Philosophy and Ethical Code would no longer be authoritative.

Rather, it will be "amended and replaced to reflect compliance with national and international best practice guidelines on medical ethics and the laws of the Republic of Ireland," the statement said.

Some observers predicted further ethical problems if Ireland were to instate permissive abortion laws, a possible outcome of current heavy lobbying from pro-abortion advocates.

Fiona Crowley, Amnesty International's research and legal manager, responded to the hospital decision. She said her organization had been concerned "at the proposed involvement in women's health services of a religious congregation whose ethos is inherently antithetical to women's sexual and reproductive rights." Crowley said the group hopes that the government will ensure the new group and the new facility "will be free of any religious ideology prejudicial to women's health."

Crowley linked the move to the push to overturn the Republic of Ireland's strongly pro-life Eighth Amendment.

Amnesty's Irish affiliate is a part of that effort, in part with funding by international groups like the Open Society Foundations. The foundations see Ireland as a possible model to advance permissive abortion laws in Catholic countries.

The Sisters of Charity have committed to paying millions in financial redress to compensate abuse victims who lived the residential institutions they and 18 other religious congregations managed on behalf of the government in previous decades.



## **Bake Sale at Queen's tomorrow for Sri Lanka flood victims**

A Bake Sale will take place at The Hub Chaplaincy at Queen's University on Sunday June 4 in aid of the victims of severe flooding in Sri Lanka.

The event is being hosted by chaplaincy member, Sri Lankan-born Ishani Ratnayake.

Church of Ireland Chaplain at Queen's, the Rev Barry Forde, said: "This has been a difficult week for Ishani as news broke just before last weekend of terrible flooding in her home country.

"Sri Lanka remains in the grips of the worst flooding in 14 years, and the bad weather that has killed more than 194 people is expected to continue. Floods have also left about half a million people displaced, the Red Cross reported on Monday."

Ishani is returning to Sri Lanka early next week, but will host the fundraising Bake Sale this Sunday after church.

Barry said: "She will personally undertake to get any funds raised to the appropriate relief



**Floods in Sri Lanka have killed almost 200 people and left many thousands homeless.**

agencies, with the funds raised being utilised to buy clean drinking water and dry rations for the flood victims.” Anyone unable to make it on Sunday who would like to make a donation is invited to visit a [‘GoFundMe’](#) page opened by Ishani this week where donations can be made.

**Jewish congregation finds new home in Episcopal Church**

An American Jewish congregation who were forced to sell their synagogue after it fell into financial difficulties, has found a new home in a



**A small chapel at Trinity Episcopal Church in Pawtuxet, Rhode Island, is to become home to the Or Chadash Jewish Congregation.**

neighbouring Episcopal Church. On Sunday, the congregation of Or Chadash (New Light) will process from their former Synagogue in Pawtuxet, Rhode Island, to the nearby Trinity Episcopal Church. They will be joined by church members as they carry the Torah scrolls to their new home.

The former synagogue of Am David was sold after going into receivership. It was bought by a Buddhist community and converted into Rhode

Island's first Buddhist temple. Under the sale agreement, the Jewish congregation were able to continue to meet their until they found a new home.

“Our wardens and vestry are excited about this partnering which expresses our commitment to ecumenism and fellowship, while supporting our sisters and brothers in the Jewish faith community,” Trinity’s Priest in Charge, the Revd Mitchell Lindeman, said in a message on the Church’s website. The Bishop of Rhode Island, Nicholas Knisely, will join both congregations as they process the Torah from the old synagogue to their new home in a side chapel at Trinity Episcopal Church.

The housing of the Jewish congregation in the side chapel of Trinity Church came about when Congregation President Beth Veltri called the local Mayor, Scott Avedisian, for advice. Mayor Avedisian is Warden of Trinity and thought that its small chapel, which is only used a few times a year, would be a good possibility, and he set about finding out whether it would be possible.

## **Today in Christian History, June 3**

**June 3, 1098:** After a seven-month siege, the armies of the First Crusade recapture Antioch (now in Turkey) from the Muslims.

**June 3, 1162:** Thomas a Becket is consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury. Nominated by his friend, King Henry II (Becket had previously served as his chancellor), Becket underwent a radical change as archbishop. He became pious and devoted to the church, which Henry found annoying. When knights heard the king grumbling, they killed Becket as he prayed.

**June 3, 1647:** The Puritan British Parliament bans Christmas and other holiDay s.

**June 3, 1905:** Hudson Taylor, English missionary to China and founder of the China Inland Mission, dies. "China is not to be won for Christ by quiet, ease-loving men and women," he once said. "The stamp of men and women we need is such as will put Jesus, China, [and] souls first and foremost in everything and at every time— even life itself must be secondary".

**June 3, 1963:** Pope John XXIII, convener of the Second Vatican Council, dies. Expected to be merely a "caretaker pope," he ushered in some of the Roman Catholic Church's most momentous changes in its history.

**June 3, 1980:** Catholic and Eastern Orthodox representatives meet officially for the first time since the Great Schism of 1054 .

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