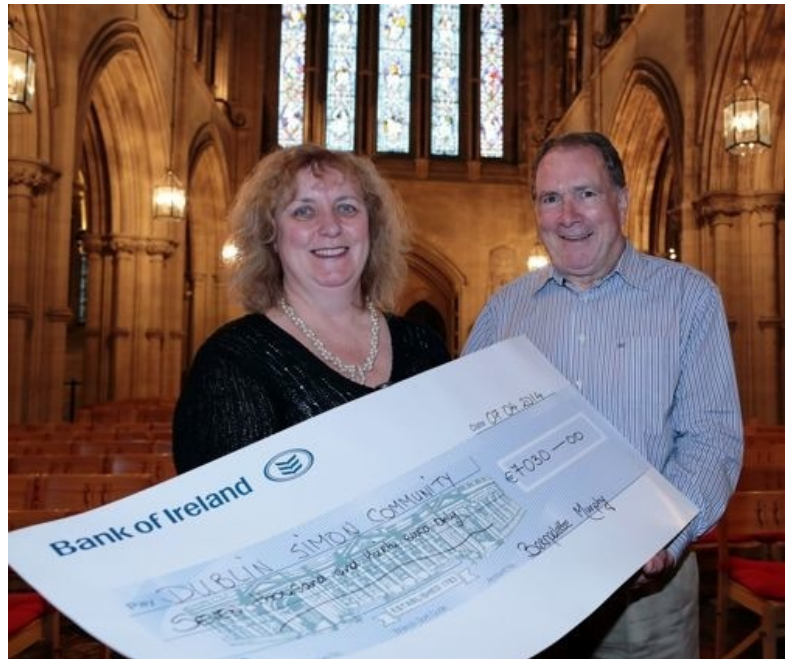




The essential daily brief on the Irish churches

Christ Church Cathedral Dublin Raises over €7,000 for Dublin Simon Community

Christ Church Cathedral in association with Young Hearts Run Free have donated over €7,000 to the Dublin Simon Community through its Dublin Outreach 2014 campaign to help alleviate difficulties faced by those experiencing homelessness, as part of its commitment to the organisation.



Managing Director of Christ Church Cathedral, Bernie Murphy and Chief Executive of Dublin Simon Community, Sam McGuinness.

The donation is a result of a concert organised by Christ Church Cathedral, in association with Young Hearts Run Free and Note Productions, featuring a host of Irish and international musicians. It featured a stellar line-up including the great folk singer from Glasgow, Alasdair Roberts (Drag City), the legendary Dónal Lunny, Iarla Ó'Lionáird and emerging artists ANDERSON, NiamhMcCormackSings and Matthew Nolan (3Epikano). The special guest for the evening was the Canadian singer/songwriter, Spencer Krug.

“We were delighted to be able to support such a worthwhile cause,” Bernie Murphy, Managing Director of Christ Church Cathedral, said. “The Dublin Simon community are a very important charity and do such fantastic work in

the homeless sector. It was a privilege to be a vital part of Simon fundraising endeavours for 2014.”

Sam McGuinness, from Dublin Simon Community, thanked everyone who attended, organised and participated in the concert, which took place on in the cathedral on New Year’s Eve. “Your support not only raises critical funds, it brings us together to help people who are homeless or at risk. With your help we can continue to provide services to those most in need and enable them to move to a place they can call home,” he said.

Armagh churches join in unprecedented and exciting outreach

In what is being described as both unprecedented and exciting, 15 churches in the greater Armagh area are coming together to proclaim Christ’s passion for the life of the world at a series of evening events to be held in Armagh City Hotel next week from the 6th to 11th April.

Presbyterian, Methodist, Church of Ireland, Baptist, Elim, Pentecostal and Community Church congregations have invited a star studded guest list that includes Ulster Rugby Chief Executive Shane Logan, former Irish cricket captain Kyle McCallan, fashion stylist Jude Law, local doctor Gilly Carson and singer Steve Parsons to join visiting speaker Craig Dyer in presenting *A Passion for Life*.

“As local churches we are all committed to share the good news of Jesus with the people of Armagh,” says Tony Davidson, minister of First Armagh Presbyterian and one of the organisers.

“Over the years and for all sorts of reasons we have done this in our own way and in our own time,” he adds. “However, it’s the same story we have to tell and it’s really exciting, and also unprecedented in Armagh, that we have come together to proclaim our shared faith in Jesus to all the people of our city.”

The main speaker for the first four nights, from Sunday to Wednesday is Craig Dyer, the Training Director of Christianity Explored. Previously he was pastor of Harper Memorial Church in south Glasgow and also chaplain at Glasgow University.

Craig’s subjects will include “Why should I listen to Jesus?”, “How good is the good news?”, “How do I deal with life’s unfairness”, and “Could I be religious and lost?”.

On Monday evening Craig will be joined by Shane Logan, the Chief Executive of Ulster Rugby who will be speaking about his journey of faith. On Tuesday night local doctor Gilly Carson will be Craig's guest while on Wednesday Kyle McCallan, former captain of the Irish cricket team, will be joining Craig .

Music will be provided by Steve Parsons who describes himself as "a singer-songwriter, a speaker, a pastor, a husband and a dad." Equipped with a soulfully expressive voice, a guitar, and a piano, Parsons writes songs that bridge the gap between society and the Church. Always rooted in his own journey of faith, he encourages others to look at the world with new eyes, and consider the impact of the gospel in their own life.

For the last two nights of *A Passion for Life* the tone changes with Thursday devoted to the ladies and Friday being planned especially for a younger audience.

The speaker on Thursday is fashion stylist Jude Law who, along with singer Rosnah Anderson, addresses the topic of 'A Passion for fashion?'. Then on Friday Dave Spence poses the question 'Jesus is...Who do you think he is?' with music supplied by local singer Jon Bartholomew and his band.

"Local people are really catching the vision for this just as the local churches have done," says Tony Davidson. "It has generated huge interest and all the churches look forward to welcoming the whole community to *A Passion for Life*."

A Passion for Life runs for six nights from Sunday, 6th April until Friday, 11th April at 8pm in the City Hotel, Armagh. Entrance is free and no tickets are required with more information available at www.apassionforlifearmagh.org

'Bless me Father' - Dublin diocesan confession initiative

The Archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin, is asking city centre shoppers and commuters to consider receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation before Easter, even if it has been many years since their last Confession.

This Saturday and the following Saturday, priests will be available in twelve city Churches, north and south of the Liffey, for over eight hours allowing

ample time for anyone considering it to come back to Confession. Dublin Churches taking part in the “*Light is on for You*” initiative have helpful leaflets aimed at people returning to Confession after a long time, to assist them to prepare and reflect on the Sacrament

In a letter to priests and parishes all over the Archdiocese encouraging as many as possible to take part in this initiative, Archbishop Martin said “Lent is the season of conversion and return to God. It is a time also in which we can rediscover the joy of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. He said the “*The Light is Still on for You*” initiative was inspired by a call from Pope Francis who earlier this year set out a challenge: “*I would like to ask you — but don’t say it aloud, everyone respond in his or her own heart: when was the last time you made your confession? Two days, two weeks, two years, twenty years, forty years? And if much time has passed, do not lose another day. Be courageous and go to Confession! Jesus will receive you; he will receive you with so much love*”. (Pope Francis)

The Dublin city churches taking part will provide Confessions continually this Saturday, 12th and again on 19th April, from 9.30am until 6pm. There will be a number of confessors available throughout the day so that sufficient time will be available for people to have a conversation about their life. Churches taking part at -

<http://www.catholicbishops.ie/2014/04/07/bless-father-dublin-diocesan-confession-initiative/>

Draw Aside to Hear the Voice of God – Revd Dr Heather Morris Tells Trinity Monday Service

Hearing the voice of God amongst the multitude of other voices vying for our attention was the focus of this year’s Trinity Monday sermon. The preacher at the service in the Trinity College Chapel was the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Revd Dr Heather Morris.

The annual service of commemoration and thanksgiving follows the announcement of the new scholars and fellows of Trinity College Dublin at the beginning of Trinity Week.

Drawing on the New Testament reading from John 12: 9–19, Dr Morris recalled how the chapel formed the backdrop to her time at Trinity but said it moved to the foreground during exam time when she would go to it “to pray



The President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Revd Dr Heather Morris, was the preacher at this year's Trinity Monday Service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving in the college chapel this morning (Monday April 7). She is pictured (centre) with the college chaplains The Revd Paddy Gleeson, the Revd Darren McCallig, the Revd Peter Sexton and the Revd Julian Hamilton.

and listen for the one voice which amid all the other pressures and all the other voices I needed to hear”.

When Jesus was on his way into Jerusalem there were so many voices vying for his attention, she said. They ranged from those who liked him to those who wanted to satisfy their curiosity to those more dangerous ones, in the background for now, who wanted him dead.

She said that in today's world people were bombarded with many voices, expectations, opportunities and pressures. “Expectations, pressures and opportunities are real, they are part of life, and in the midst of them all there is another voice which we are invited to hear. And not all the time, but

sometimes it helps to draw aside to places like this to hear it. It is the voice of God, Creator of heaven and earth and all that is, seen and unseen; it is the voice of God whose name “Emmanuel” means God is with us. The voice of God who still loves the world and everyone in it.” Dr Morris said.

“My experience, and its true not just on exam days, is that it helps to remember that. My experience and belief is that life is changed, and changed utterly when we remember that no matter how great our strength or how profound our weaknesses that One stands with us who knows us, loves us, enables us and challenges us to love more than ourselves,” she added

She said that Jesus, with all the voices and pressures, did not disengage. He found a donkey and sat on it because he knew what the disciples did not yet realise, that he was fulfilling an Old Testament prophecy. This, she suggested was a subversive signal and a sign of another Kingdom to come.

Dr Morris said our lives could also become signs of that other Kingdom. “When we act on behalf of those who are conveniently forgotten; when we show unexpected kindness; when we develop policies so that no one is excluded from excellent education because of social deprivation we are pointing to another Kingdom. Our lives point to a different set of values, and to the God to whom all are significant, the God who desires justice and who loves mercy,” she stated.

Archbishop Richard Clarke visits the Southern Area Hospice, Newry

Last week the Southern Area Hospice hosted a visit from the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh, The Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke.

The Archbishop toured the Hospice facilities at St John’s House Newry, where he met with several patients, staff and



volunteers. The Archbishop's visit was arranged by the Revd Matthew Hagan, a member of the Hospice's Chaplaincy Team.

In the Day Therapy Centre the Archbishop met with patients and volunteers where he chatted to them about their experiences and the activities available to them in the facility. Whilst there Archbishop Clarke led a short reflection. The Archbishop also met with patients and staff from the Inpatient Unit where he spent time listening to them, and was impressed at the level of care and dignity afforded to each one.

Mrs Ann Cooney, Chief Executive of the Southern Area Hospice said, 'We are delighted that Archbishop Clarke has taken time in his schedule to visit our Hospice. The Archbishop is a Patron of the Hospice and it is good that he is able to see first-hand the level and range of care services we provide.'

Archbishop Clarke was shown around the Hospice by Mrs Carmel Campbell Nursing Director at the Hospice and Mrs Fiona Robinson Senior Social Worker (see above with the Revd Matthew Hagan and Chief Executive, Mrs Cooney). The Archbishop's visit culminated in a meeting with members of the Hospice Senior Management Team, and at this meeting he was presented with a Southern Area Hospice History Booklet and Strategy Document.

Shankill celebrates World Water Day

Over 800 people gathered in Shankill Parish Church to celebrate World Water Day recently.

Lurgan Mail - They received a little help from the amazing Belfast Community Gospel Choir. Led by their charismatic Director, Marie Lacey, BCGC are one of Northern Ireland's most sought-after musical groups. They have performed for the Queen, at the Titanic opening, as well as at scores of festivals, weddings and charitable events.

And they also heard from Coleraine Olympic Silver medallist Richard Chambers who arrived into the church carrying 20 litres of water in a huge jerry can. He was highlighting the plight of many children in developing countries who spend a lot of their days fetching the water for their families. Earlier in the year Richard and his brother Peter had travelled to Uganda with Tearfund to meet Doreen and Jouvilet, who face a gruelling walk up a 3km mountain every day, just to get the water their family needs to survive.

Richard described it as the hardest training session he had ever done.

He said: “We get up at 6.15am and we train five hours each day. Doreen and Jouvillet get up at 6am and their two walks to collect water take four hours in total. We choose to do what we do; to row every day and compete at the Olympics. These girls need to do what they do every day just to stay alive. It’s wrong.”

And yet just £14 would stop that walk and give Doreen and Jouvillet access to clean water. They can also attend school full time and have the chance of a better future.

During the concert, Marie Lacey, local journalist Will Leitch and Richard Chambers shared inspiring stories of the remarkable change they saw in the lives of people who were able to access clean water for the first time. Tearfund Vice President Bishop Harold Miller joined Rev Geoff Wilson from Shankill Parish and over £7000 was raised.

Rev Geoff Wilson said: “It was a genuine privilege to host the BCGC in Shankill Parish in aid of World Water Day through Tearfund. On the night, over 800 folk gathered for an evening of entertainment and worship centred on and grounded in the joy of knowing Jesus. Our collective efforts will mean that at least 1000 people will receive fresh water through wells and tanks in Uganda; so good to be part of this life-saving work.”

Organist In Lunchtime Concert At Dromore Cathedral

The international organ recitalist Mark Duley will be playing in Dromore Cathedral on Saturday 24 May at 1.30 pm.

The concert is part of an organ playing marathon in 20 Irish Cathedrals, 3 of which are in Northern Ireland, over the space of a week in May.

The recital is to raise funds for “Pipeworks” which promotes organ playing in Ireland and internationally and holds a regular International Organ Playing Competition every three years in Dublin.



Mark (who is Director of Pipeworks) is originally from New Zealand and was formerly organist in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin. As well as his organ playing career he is a renowned choral conductor.

A donation of £5.00 is requested from those attending and all proceeds will go to Pipeworks. The concert will last about one hour.

Car parking will be available in the Cathedral car park.

Bishop of Derry installed

Former auxiliary bishop of Down and Connor, Donal McKeown has been formally installed as new bishop of Derry.

Irish News - Parishioners from every corner of the Derry diocese were joined by church leaders and clergy from all over Ireland at Sunday's installation ceremony at St eugene's Cathedral.

Church leader Cardinal Sean Brady presided over the rite of Installation assisted by the Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland, Archbishop Charles Brown.

Coadjutor Archbishop of Armagh, eamon martin also took part.

An estimated 200 Catholic clergy took part in the ceremony which was also attended by the Church of Ireland bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Ken Good, and the leaders of the other main Churches in the diocese.

Bishop McKeown's installation follows the retirement on health grounds of the diocese's former bishop Seamus Hegarty in 2011.

Political leaders at yesterday's ceremony included deputy first minister, Martin McGuinness and SDLP MP mark Durkan. Environment minister mark H Durkan also attended as did assembly members, Pat ramsey and Raymond McCartney and Donegal north east Fianna Fail TD Charlie McConalogue.

President Michael D Higgins and Taoiseach Enda Kenny were represented by their aides de camp, Lieutenant David Lyons and Commandant Kieran Carey respectively.

Queen Elizabeth was represented by Derry's Lord Lieutenant, Angela Garvey. Earlier yesterday, Bishop McKeown extended an ecumenical hand of friendship to the Church of Ireland in Derry when he visited the neighbouring Church of Ireland Christ Church.

A diocesan spokesman said Bishop McKeown was given a warm welcome by Christ Church rector, Rev Robert miller.

The spokesman said: "rev miller presented a Book of Psalms and extended his heartfelt good wishes to Bishop mcKeown on this special day."

In his homily at the mass of Installation, Bishop mcKeown said the Catholic Church needed to work hard to ensure it bore fruit for future generations.

He said Christians of all traditions also had a role to play at a time when "sclerosis" appeared to have beset politics in Northern Ireland.

Bishop mcKeown said: "I know that many politicians are embarrassed at the failure of the Northern Ireland assembly to focus on delivering the reforms that people need.

"But, as Churches, we cannot merely criticise them.

"We have the chance to play the part of critical friends, speaking on behalf of the many who feel that human needs are being neglected in the service of political priorities.

There is no more room in society for self referential politics than there is for a Church that falls prey to ecclesial introversion."

Following yesterday's rite of Installation, Bishop McKeown braved the often stormy - if sunny - weather to greet each of his new congregation as they left St eugene's Cathedral.

Concern charity worker revisits Rwanda 20 years after genocide

For me, this anniversary is particularly significant as I worked with Concern in Rwanda 20 years ago, in the immediate aftermath of the genocide - Dominic MacSorley CEO Concern Worldwide writes in News Letter. Without doubt, it was

one of the toughest assignments in my 30 years with Concern. One hundred days, 800,000 people killed, two million displaced – the scale of it was unlike anything we had dealt with before.



Rachelle Nyirancando, 30, a mother of-four, meets with Concern CEO Dominic MacSorley.

At the time, Concern mounted its largest ever emergency response with over 1,000 staff working around the clock to set up transit centres to care for 32,000 children, rebuilding thousands of houses, and supporting those who had lost everything so they could begin restoring their lives.



Clergy including the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and other participants in the service in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast marking the Rwandan conflict

Last month, I returned to Rwanda.

Going back filled me with mixed emotions, and again raised the difficulty of resolving the contradictions between the wonderful, inherently peaceful landscapes and the kind and hospitable people on the one hand, and the merciless savagery of the genocide on the other.

Even now, 20 years later, that feeling of disconnect remains between what you see around you and what you know once took place.

During my recent trip, I travelled a short distance outside the capital Kigali to a small church at Nyamata, one of many chilling genocide sites across the country.

In the three years I had worked in Rwanda, I had visited this place many times.

Nyamata had lost none of its resonance - it still felt like yesterday.

Hung on the walls of the church were the blood stained clothes of the 5,000 people who been murdered as they vainly sought sanctuary in the small church.

Nearby, human remains, skulls and bones were arranged in neat displays, poignant reminders of the horrors of genocide.

On another wall at the back of the church, were the scrawled words of a young student who had visited some time before me.

It was a tribute to the lost generation and a promise from the next to 'stand tall, in the gap you have left'.

Amidst the worst and most challenging times in Rwanda, there are a thousand stories of hope and humanity.

Stories of children reunited with parents, schools re-opening, women standing proud again as they pay-off small business loans, children being successfully treated for malnutrition, communities coming together, lives being rebuilt, a country carving out a new, stronger future.

Back in 1994, I could not have envisaged the success story the country would become in such a relatively short period of time.

Rwanda is one of the strongest growing economies in Africa. But, with 40 per cent living in extreme poverty, much remains to be done.

On this important anniversary, we have the obligation not only to look back and pay tribute to the victims and survivors of the genocide, but also to consider the progress that has been made in the past two decades.

For Rwanda is not only the story of one of the gravest and most inhumane acts in recent history, it is also a story of recovery, resilience and the ability of humanity to overcome extraordinary adversity.

Easter Sonrise Service on Killiney Hill

A Sonrise service will take place on Killiney Hill on Easter Sunday morning, April 20, at 6.15 am.

A light breakfast will be served afterwards in the Carry Hall on Killiney Hill Road. All are welcome to attend. Dog owners are asked to keep their pets on leads at all times - presumably using dog collars!

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