



***Leaders of the Igbo community with Archbishop Michael Jackson, the Revd Elaine Dunne and the Revd Obinna Ulogwara following the opening of a new Igbo Praise Centre - See report this issue***

## **Parochial concern at C of I boundary changes**

The Blessington Union of Parishes is holding an open parish meeting this evening, April 7, at 8.00

pm in St Kevin's Community Centre, Blessington. The proposed transfer of the parish from Dublin and Glendalough to Meath and Kildare will be discussed at the meeting and the Archbishop will attend. The Revd Leonard Ruddock has urged as many as possible to come along.

The Commission on Episcopal Ministry and Structures has lodged its Boundaries Bill with the Honorary Secretaries of General Synod. This Bill includes changes to the United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough and will be brought before the General Synod of the Church of Ireland which meets in the Royal Hotel in Dun Laoghaire from May 12 to 14.

The Bill contains proposals to transfer six parishes from Dublin and Glendalough to Meath and Kildare. The affected parishes are: Leixlip and Lucan; Celbridge and Straffan with Newcastle–Lyons; Blessington and Manor Kilbride with Ballymore–Eustace and Hollywood; Donoughmore and Donard with Dunlavin; Narraghmore and Timolin with Castledermot and Kinneigh; and Athy, Kilberry and Fontstown with Kilkea.

The Archbishop has called an Extraordinary Diocesan Synods meeting on Wednesday April 20 2016 in Athy Parish Centre, Carlow Road,

Athy, to discuss proposed changes. The meeting will begin at 7.45 pm following a celebration of Holy Communion in St Michael's Church, Athy at 7.00 pm.

To read the Boundaries Bill which will be brought before this year's General Synod see:

<http://dublin.anglican.org/cmsfiles/files/CEMS-Boundaries-Bill.pdf>

## **Diocese appeals for calm at troubled West Belfast church school**

The trustees of a West Belfast school have appealed for a “stable and supportive” environment within the troubled school.

The trustees of De La Salle College, who own the school on behalf of the Catholic Church, have appealed for calm despite ongoing industrial problems at West Belfast's largest post-primary school, over the past few months which has seen a number of parental protests.

The dispute centres on a number of disagreements between staff and management.



In a statement this week, Fr Timothy Bartlett, episcopal vicar for education in the diocese of Down and Connor said, “On behalf of the diocesan trustees, I encourage everyone associated with the school to work collaboratively to ensure a stable and supportive teaching and learning environment both within and around the school as young people prepare for their examinations.”

Fr Bartlett added, “This includes dealing with any recently publicised issues regarding the school in a calm, constructive manner that does not impinge on the operation of the school or distract pupils, families, staff and management from providing the best possible support to pupils in this critical final term.”

A range of meetings have been held involving school staff, governors, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) and the teaching unions.

In January 2016, a strategic plan for renewal was drawn up and a strategy group was established “to address a range of issues raised by staff relating to the operation of the school”.

The plan had a number of action areas, including a review of staff structure and line management, a review of pastoral care including safeguarding/pupil discipline procedures and serious incident processes, a review of “staff welfare policy” and mechanisms for “raising and resolving staff concerns”.

The plan also said that “there should be no ultimatums, threats or vetoes to any part of the process” and that there should be no communication with the media except with the authority of the strategy group.

It is believed that there have been delays in the implementation of that action plan.

In an effort to address the issue, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools appointed an associate principal to help address problems which have affected the school, and this led to

its head boy issuing an open letter to the board of governors about the impact the disruption was having on him.

Speaking about the appointment, Fr Bartlett said the new associate principal “will support and advise the leadership and management of the college, including the governors, on the day-to-day operation of the school and in addressing any issues giving rise to concern”.

A group representing parents of some pupils has held a number of demonstrations outside the school in recent weeks.

The Concerned Parents Committee of De La Salle has called for some of the management team at the school to be stood down.

They also called for a “thorough independent and transparent investigation” of events at the school.

They plan to hold further meetings for parents and a public rally to highlight their concerns associated with the running of this school and direct impact on the education and well-being of the pupils.

The Irish National Teachers’ Organisation (INTO), which represents the majority of teaching staff in

the school, said they were attempting to address a number of ongoing issues.

The union's northern secretary, Gerry Murphy, said, "INTO is increasingly concerned with the slow progress towards a resolution, and is now considering further targeted industrial action within the school."

## **Moderator joins Ballymena's Ballee congregation to celebrate forty years**

The new congregation came into being on Saturday, 3rd April 1976, when the then Moderator, Rt. Rev. Dr. Temple Lundie, officially opened what was known at the time as the Ballee Presbyterian Church Extension. Today it would be known as a church plant.

Situated at the southern tip of Ballymena in a residential area that includes Ballee estate, 220 families from across the local community attend the Church. The Rev. Joseph Andrews, who has been Minister of Ballee since 1987, said: "For 40 years the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been proclaimed in Ballee and many people have come to faith in Jesus as Saviour.



***Pictured at the event are (Left to Right) are Rev. Joseph Andrews, Minister of Ballee Presbyterian Church, Anne McNie and her husband, Dr. Ian McNie, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, John Quigley, Ballee Clerk of Session and Rev. John McCullough who was Ballee's minister from 1977-1986.***

“We are extremely grateful to all those people who, over the past 40 years, have been a part of Ballee congregation at the different stages in its history. As we offer to Almighty God our thanks and praise for His blessing on our congregation over that time, we look forward with excited anticipation to what plans He has for us in the future,” he said.



While celebrating what has gone before, Mr. Andrews said that the Church was particularly excited about its special week of Gospel outreach in September, when it plans to present the Gospel to people of all ages. "No matter where you are from you are welcome and as we celebrate 40 years, it will not be a case of looking back to the past, but rather 'Forty – looking forward'," he said.

During the service, Dr. McNie preached from the Book of Nehemiah on the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls. Speaking before he said, "I was told that when laying the foundation stone at Ballee, Rev. Tom Simpson, Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly, said at the time, 'In this place may true faith flourish, the fear of God, the love of brethren. Here may the voice of prayer continually be heard, the voice of rejoicing and salvation, the voice of praise and invocation of Thy most glorious and honourable name, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit henceforth and for evermore.'

"I am very glad to say, that by God's Grace, this is exactly what has happened. I am very pleased to be in Ballee today celebrating 40 years of Christian witness and the impact it continues to

make in the local area. I am also looking forward to talking part in September's Gospel outreach," Dr. McNie said.

Rev. Brian Savage, retired Minister of Ballykeel – who was be in charge of Ballee in 1976 until a minister could be appointed – was unable to attend the special service. However, he sent his greetings via video, which was played during the service. His successor, Rev. John McCullough, who was minister from 1977-1986, took part in person.

## **Belfast cathedral service will mark 75th anniversary of the blitz of the city**

St Anne's Cathedral is hosting a special service on Sunday April 17 as part of a weekend of events to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Belfast Blitz.

On the night of Tuesday April 15 1941, almost 200 Luftwaffe bombers undertook the second, and biggest, of four raids on the city. More than 900 people were killed, in the biggest loss of life in any night raid outside London, with a further



***Buildings around Belfast Cathedral smoulder in the aftermath of the air raids (Photo: Belfast Telegraph)***

1,500 injured. Another 150 people were killed in a subsequent raid on the night of May 4–5 1941.

The ecumenical service of commemoration on April 17 will be held at 3.30pm. It has been organised by St Anne's in conjunction with St Patrick's Church, Donegall Street. The service will be led by the Dean, the Very Rev John Mann, and Fr Michael Sheehan, Administrator of St Patrick's.

During the service candles will be lit to offer symbolic reflection for those who lost their lives in the Blitz.

The service, which is open to the public, will mark the end of a weekend of commemorations, beginning with the unveiling of the first in a series of memorial plaques at St George's Market – which was used as a temporary mortuary during the Blitz – at 10.30am on Friday April 15.

On Friday, 15th April at 7pm, Requiem Mass will be offered in St. Patrick's... <http://fb.me/2aYWS49Ue>

Other events over the weekend will include:

- A lecture by Dr Brian Barton, author of 'The Belfast Blitz: The City in the War Years', in the Bobbin coffee shop in Belfast City Hall (Friday from 6.30pm to 8pm);
- A 'sound and light' presentation in the City Hall grounds, accompanied by the names of all who lost their lives being listed on the Big Screen (Friday 8pm);
- A Blitz-themed family open day in the Northern Ireland War Memorial gallery in Talbot Street (Saturday 10.30am to 2.30pm);

- A special Blitz commemorative exhibition in the City Hall;

A 1940's-themed tea dance will also be held at the Ulster Hall on May 2.

For further information on the Belfast Blitz commemorations, visit <http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/events/Events.aspx>

## **New Igbo Praise Centre opened in Dublin**

The Igbo speaking community in Dublin now has a centre where members can worship in their own language. The inaugural service of the Dublin Igbo Praise Centre took place in St George and St Thomas's Church on Cathal Brugha Street on Sunday April 3. The service was led by the Revd Obinna Ulogwara, Rector and Chaplain to the International Community. Archbishop Michael Jackson preached and during the service Igbo leaders from a number of different denominations were blessed and commissioned for their work to come. The Revd Elaine Dunne, who leads services in Irish in Christ Church Cathedral was also present.

The Igbo, some pronounce it Ibo, people live in south eastern Nigeria, generally in the area of the

Niger delta. Over 17 million people in Nigeria and around the world speak Igbo. The story of Igbo Anglicanism begins in the Niger Delta in 1870 and the first prayer Book – a version of the 1662 Prayer Book – stems from that time.

St George and St Thomas's Church is located just a short distance from the GPO and in his sermon Archbishop Jackson referred to the words of prayer spoken on Easter Sunday 2016 in O'Connell Street by the Head Chaplain to the Armed Forces, Fr Sean Madigan, at the 1916 commemoration: "a new song of compassion, inclusion and engagement, a song of listening, social justice and respect for all, a song of unity, diversity, equality and peace, a song of cead mile failte and of care for our environment." His prayer also was for: *"all the courageous people of Ireland who dared to hope and dream of a brighter tomorrow for our country and all its citizens"*.

The Archbishop said that mission, service and proclamation lay at the heart of this vision and prayer for tomorrow's Ireland. "There is idealism at the core of it and still there is also a great deal of inclusion and of engagement and of practicality," he added. Easter 2016 was about a future lived in the hope of community and change and compassion and courage,

Archbishop Jackson said. He added that the Easter Sunday prayer of principle and hope embodied new life and a redefinition of the old political understanding.

“What are we, as Christian people, going to do about it? What are we going to do with people of World Faiths? My plea to you who are people of today here in this church: please do not pick up our inherited and well-polished Irish negativities! This ‘Resurrection Now’ needs work, this needs witness, this needs willingness combined with that coming together of service and leadership, authority and power shown by Jesus Christ for others in life, death and resurrection. This is the deepest and richest hospitality in the public arena to which we as followers of Jesus Christ are called. We need to breathe new life into inherited language; we need to draw new songs out of inherited words; we need to witness to the Resurrection in our own hearts and in the lives of others,” he concluded.

At the end of the service several speakers thanked the Archbishop for enabling the establishment of the Igbo Praise Centre. Greg Umeh thanked him on behalf of the Igbo community in Ireland for listening to their needs. “We so much appreciate this gesture because this is the first time that we Christians

[regardless of our background] feel at home religiously, that we can have this service in Igbo,” he stated. Chinwe Obasi said she was glad they were able to worship in the way she did at home. Mari Thomas, who had worked and lived in Nigeria, said she was delighted to be present to community wish the community well.

Revd Obinna also thanked the Archbishop and presented him with a copy of the Book of Common Prayer in Igbo. The Revd Elaine Dunne, organist David Maxwell and church warden Keith Nolan were also presented with copies of the book in Igbo.

## **Washington and Derry choirs to join in concert**

On Monday 18 April at First Derry Presbyterian Church the Washington & Lee University Singers along with our local choir Allegri will perform in a joint concert. The music will be a mixture of Choral, Spirituals, Folk & American and other favourites.

The concert will start at 8 pm and entrance is free. There will be a closing collection for the Pantry Project the local food bank project run by



the Churches Trust to which the Washington & Lee University Singers will make a donation.

## Sun-Up Easter Service in West Cork



### ***‘Sun-Up’ – Easter Celebration at the Warren, Rosscarbery, County Cork***

Despite a very poor weather forecast, Sun Up – the Cork Diocesan Youth Council annual celebration of Easter at the Warren, Rosscarbery, County Cork – proved as popular as ever this year.

Nearly 40 young people stayed overnight in the parish hall in Rosscarbery before joining more parishioners and friends for the Eucharist on the [churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)

Warren Beach at 6.30 am on Easter Day. It was dark as the Service began but gradually the light dawned. Fortunately the rain stayed away and afterwards everyone enjoyed a wonderful outdoor Easter breakfast.

## **Church in Wales bishops stall on gay marriage but issue prayers for after civil service**

The Church in Wales has decided not to proceed with proposals to allow gay marriages in its churches.

In a letter the bishops of the Church said it would not be wise to bring the plans before the governing body because there was not a clear majority in favour of it.

The bishops apologised for past treatment of LGBT people and promised to ensure they are “fully affirmed as equal disciples”.

Debates on whether to have same sex weddings in churches would continue, the letter added.

It accepted that “a majority of members supported change” but stated that “there was certainly no consensus, and any move to



introduce changes in canon law would not meet the required two thirds majority of Governing Body”.

A series of prayers which may be said with a couple following the celebration of a civil partnership or civil marriage have also been published.

The Archbishop of Wales, Dr Barry Morgan, said: “We are not ready, as a Church, to take the step of authorising same-sex marriage.

“There is no point in bringing forward a Bill for it to fail. That I know will be a disappointment to those who voted for change and will be a deep disappointment to same sex couples within the

Church in Wales who long for the opportunity to make their vows in one of our churches.

"We, as bishops, feel that this is the right thing to do at this time. I realise that some people will regard these prayers as too little too late and others will regard them as a step too far.

"No one is compelled to use them, but they are provided for those who would like to do so. These prayers do not constitute a service of blessing."

## **Pope Francis to visit Lesbos next week in show of support for migrants, says Greek government**

Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual leader of the world's Orthodox Christians, will visit the Greek island of Lesbos next week to highlight the plight of refugees, the Greek government said, as refugees and other migrants are being deported back to Turkey under the European Union's controversial program to ease Europe's migrant problem.

Under the EU's deal with Turkey reached last month, those arriving on Greek islands from March 20 onwards who do not apply for asylum in Greece or whose application is rejected or deemed inadmissible will be deported back to Turkey. For every Syrian returned to Turkey, another Syrian there will be relocated to a European country.

But after the initial return of 202 people Monday from the islands of Lesbos and Chios, most of the roughly 4,000 people earmarked for deportation were submitting asylum applications, leading to delays in the system.

No deportations were carried out Tuesday, and a Turkish interior ministry official said no further returns were expected until Friday. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak on the record.

Francis, the son of Italian immigrants to Argentina, has been outspoken about Europe's moral obligation to welcome refugees and his visit to Greece will likely embarrass EU leaders already under fire from human rights groups over the deportations.

The Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, the decision-making body of the Greek church, said Francis had asked to come to highlight the plight of refugees. It said the request had been accepted and the island of Lesbos suggested, adding it had also extended an invitation to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual leader of the world's Orthodox Christians, to visit the island on the same day.

The Istanbul-based Ecumenical Patriarchate confirmed Bartholomew would visit the island.

Vatican spokesman Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi said Tuesday that no decision had been made but in an email to The Associated Press he said "I don't deny that there are contacts about a possible trip."

The Greek government issued a note saying the Pope and Patriarch would be visiting Lesbos on April 14-15 along with Athens Archbishop Ieronymos, and that Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras would join them.

Francis has made the plight of migrants a priority of his three-year pontificate, insisting in particular that Europe and other countries open their doors

and hearts to people fleeing persecution and poverty.

He told the Vatican's diplomatic corps in January that Europe had the means to welcome refugees without compromising its security or culture and that the continent bore the "moral responsibility" to care for others who have fled their homes to seek a better life.

Europe's deal with Turkey has come under fierce criticism from human rights groups and aid organisations, who accuse European countries of ignoring their commitments to protect vulnerable refugees.

## **News links to reports on faith, politics and education**

### **Northern Ireland woman who bought drugs on internet to induce miscarriage given suspended prison sentence**

Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/northern-ireland-woman-who-bought-drugs-on-internet-to-induce-miscarriage-given-suspended-prison-sentence-34597487.html>

## **Abortion pills: Housemate speaks of guilt over 'baby in bin'**

[BBC News](#)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-35976228>

## **150-year-old law used to prosecute woman who bought abortion drugs online**

[Irish Examiner](#)

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/150-year-old-law-used-to-prosecute-woman-who-bought-abortion-drugs-online-728240.html>

## **76 of 158 TDs back poll for abortion law reform but not part of current talks**

[Irish Examiner](#)

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/76-of-158-tds-back-poll-for-abortion-law-reform-but-not-part-of-current-talks-391343.html>

## **Priest who had child and decade-long secret relationship with woman 42 years his junior passes away**

[Irish Independent](#)

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/priest-who-had-child-and-decadelong-secret-relationship-with-woman-42-years-his-junior-passes-away-34603893.html>

## **Priest lines up office job for Irish drugs mule**

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Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/michaella-mccollum-from-drugs-mule-to-clerical-worker-priest-lines-up-office-job-34599032.html>

### **Jewish News**

Report that the Archbishop of Canterbury has honoured a British-born rabbi for his interfaith work. Ireland's former Chief Rabbi David Rosen, who is the international director of interreligious affairs at the American Jewish Committee, was presented with the Hubert Walter Award for Reconciliation and Interfaith Cooperation during a ceremony at Lambeth Palace.

<http://www.jewishnews.co.uk/archbishop-of-canterbury-honours-british-rabbi-for-interfaith-work/>

### **Sky News**

Reports that the Church Commissioners are in line for a payout of more than £60m if Royal Bank of Scotland succeeds in selling its network of more than 300 Williams & Glyn branches. The news service say that the Commissioners hold a 10% stake in a £600m bond issued in 2013 to raise funds to aid the separation of Williams & Glyn from the taxpayer-backed lender. Sources said the bond would be redeemed in the event of a sale of W&G, which RBS is pursuing while continuing to seek a stock market flotation of the business.

<http://news.sky.com/story/1673055/church-to-make-millions-from-rbs-branch-sale>

### **Mirror**

Reports that the Chancellor of the Diocese of Bristol has refused a request from parents to have an engraving of  
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Thomas the Tank Engine on their three-year-old son's gravestone. Justin Gau, declined a request by the parents of Max Gainard, who died last February after developing a rare complications when he caught mumps. In his judgment, the Chancellor said churchyards were consecrated ground and memorials had to be consistent with that status.

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/senior-churchman-refuses-parents-put-7693750#ICID=nsm>

### [Christian Today](#)

Further coverage of the decision by the University of Oxford to no longer require its undergraduate theology students to enroll in a course in Christianity after their first year.

### **Mail**

An agency report that an ancient church or cathedral dating from the 7<sup>th</sup> century has been discovered on a building site in Gaza. Archaeologists have called for its preservation. But with different ministries in the Hamas-run Palestinian enclave at loggerheads over the use of the land, the fate of the remains is unclear.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3525101/Ancient-church-unearthed-Gaza-building-site.html>

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