



The Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Most Reverend David Chillingworth is in Rome at the Anglican Centre. His wife Alison and daughter Anna were brought forward for a personal greeting from Pope Francis. This is the first time this has happened for the family of a visiting Anglican Primate.

Irish clergy family meets Pope Francis

The Anglican Centre is the presence of the Anglican Communion at the Vatican and is about to celebrate its 50th Anniversary. The Most Rev

David Chillingworth is a Patron of the Centre and says “During this brief visit, I shall be meeting Vatican Officials as part of the underlying process by which our churches learn about one another. In my case, obviously, there is a specific focus on the developing story of Scotland and on ecumenical relations in Scotland”

Bishop David was presented to Pope Francis at an Audience in St Peter’s Square. He brought a gift and greetings from the Scottish Episcopal Church. Then, in an exceptional departure from precedent, the Pope also greeted Bishop David’s wife, Alison, and daughter, Anna, and gave them all gifts. They also had the opportunity of visiting St Peter’s Basilica when it was empty of tourists.

Scottish Episcopal and C of I Inter-Church Relations Committees meet in Dublin

The first meeting of the Scottish Episcopal Church’s Inter-Church Relations Committee and the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue (CCUD) of the Church of Ireland took place in Dublin on 11 April 2016.



Members of the Church of Ireland's Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue and the Scottish Episcopal Church's Inter-Church Relations Committee during their visit to Marsh's Library, Dublin.

Elspeth Davey, Church Relations Officer of the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) says "The recent Covenant Agreement of the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland was discussed in some detail and the Inter-Church Relations Committee was delighted to be accompanied by the Rev A Letby, Methodist Superintendent in Edinburgh whose contributions from a Methodist perspective were very helpful.

“The different ecumenical “scene” in Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland was discussed and whilst there were some differences it was clear that a number of familiar challenges were shared. Local ecumenism was healthy but the number of officially recognised Local Ecumenical Partnerships were low in both churches and it was agreed that encouraging ecumenical engagement at all levels of church life was essential for shared mission in our communities.

“The churches’ role in civic society was discussed with an acknowledgement that each society was more diverse than in previous years.

Commenting on the visit the Bishop of Clogher and Chairman of CCUD, the Rt Rev John McDowell, said “We were delighted when the Inter-Church Relations Committee of the SEC suggested that they might visit Ireland to discuss matters of common interest, especially the origin and development of interchangeability arrangements between the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland. Our

discussions were very wide-ranging and we benefited from a first-hand account of developments within the SEC and their relationships with other Christian traditions.”

The meeting ended with Evensong at St Patrick’s Cathedral followed by a guided tour of the Cathedral.

Number of same-sex marriages in Ireland revealed for the first time

New figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) show 91 same-sex marriages took place in Ireland between November and December last year.

The data is the first available since Ireland passed the same-sex marriage referendum.

The numbers also show the average age of grooms in 2015 was 35.3 years, slightly more than the average in 2014.

In the past 50 years, the average age of grooms has fallen from 29.4 - in 1965 - to a low of 26.2 in 1977.

A similar trend is seen for brides, with the average age falling from 26 in 1965 to 24 in 1977.

This has increased to a high of 33.2 in 2015.

This means that last year, the groom was older than bride in just over 63% of marriages.

The number of marriages registered last year was 22,025 - which equates to an unadjusted marriage rate of 4.8 per 1,000 population.

This is just 20 marriages less than in 2014, when 22,045 marriages took place.

In 2015, 88.1% of marriages were also the first marriage for both the groom and bride.

And for the fourth consecutive year, August was the most popular month for marriage.

Religious ceremonies accounted for the highest proportion of marriages, at 66.3%.

There were 12,486 (56.7%) Catholic marriage ceremonies, 393 (1.8%) Church of Ireland, 73 (0.3%) Presbyterian ceremonies - while The Spiritualist Union of Ireland performed 822 (3.7%) marriage ceremonies.

The remaining 831 (3.8%) of couples opted for other religious ceremonies.

While the most recent divorce data available, from 2014, shows there were 2,629 divorces granted by the Circuit Court and High Court.

This was a decrease of 320 on the 2013 figure.



Former BBC journalist to speak at interdenominational healing service

Divine Healing Ministries will be hosting an interdenominational service at Good Shepherd Church, 511 Ormeau Road, Belfast on Tuesday 3rd May at 7.30pm. The former BBC journalist Sr. Martina Purdy will be the main speaker and will share on her journey of faith. Worship will be led by the music group from West Church, Bangor. There will be opportunity to receive personal prayer ministry at this service. Everyone is welcome to this service of hope and healing.

Tipperary C of I parish hosts Reflections on 1916

St Mary's Church of Ireland in Tipperary is an old garrison church and the oldest landmark in Tipperary Town. It is hosting the following events entitled Reflections on 1916

This coming Monday 18th April, Dr. Des Murnane will give a talk entitled: "Reflecting on Co Tipperary in 1916" it commences at 8.00pm
Everyone is welcome – Admission Free

On Sunday 24th April , A special service will take place commemorating the 100th Anniversary of 1916 at 3.30pm in St Mary's. It will feature The Co Tipperary Ryan Youth Orchestra " Salute to 1916" By the late Danny Ryan will be performed for the first time in the county.

In the church there is a splendid east window by AJ Davis of the Birmingham school of art. It is a memorial to 3 members of the Bell family who all died within 6 months of each other in 1916 - Lt Col Lyle and Captain Robert Popham Bell on the Front in WW1 and The Rev Bell, Rector of St Mary's.

Priest dances his way through Newry for charity GAA event

Shoppers in Newry would have been forgiven a double take when they spotted their local priest dancing his way through the streets in bright pink bow-tie, braces and bowler hat.

Irish News - Fr Colum Murphy, curate at Newry Cathedral, was showing off his moves ahead of a GAA charity event he will be waltzing his way into next month.

In a hilarious video posted online, the cleric can be seen leaving the grounds of the cathedral before being stopped in his tracks by the sound of 'Is This The Way To Amarillo'.

Having burst into song and dance on Hill Street, it's not long before crowds begin to join in, waving flags and swaying and clapping to the music around the city.

The video is all in aid of St John Bosco GAC in Newry, who have organised a Strictly Come Dancing fundraising event.

Fr Murphy, who is chaplain to the club, will take part in the competition on May 6 along with almost 50 other eager dancers.



Fr Colum Murphy shows off his dance moves ahead of a GAA charity event in Newry.

They will take to the floor at the Canal Court Hotel in a bid to raise funds for the club as well as two charities close to the hearts of people in Newry.

Paul MacCormaic from the Boscors said money will be donated to the Kevin Bell Repatriation Trust as well as a fund set up following the death of former player Eamonn Morgan in a dune buggy crash in Qatar last year.

"People are coming from over Newry and further afield to support this, there's a great community spirit," he said.

More at - http://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2016/04/14/news/priest-dances-his-way-through-newry---for-charity-gaa-event-485313/?mc_cid=a1ccc826d3&mc_eid=23f2f80c40

Presbyterian Symposium on the First World War

On Thursday 21 April 2016 at 8.00pm Malone Presbyterian Church, Belfast, The Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland will hold a Symposium on the First World War with Dr Paul Gray, Mr Nigel Henderson, Mr Philip Orr and Dr Colin Walker. Amongst the aspects to be addressed is how the 1st World War was commemorated and the effects of the war on society.

Prestigious Award for Connor MU members

Mrs Roberta McKelvey has been jointly awarded the Community and Voluntary Award by the

Northern Ireland Women's Forum, having been nominated by Connor Diocese Mothers' Union.



Donna Traynor of the BBC presents the Community and Voluntary Award to Connor MU nominee Roberta Mckelvey. Also in the picture is Pat Irvine, Chairman of Women's Forum.

Belfast Cathedral member and renowned trauma expert Dr Marion Gibson was presented with the Iris Colvin Lifetime Achievement Award at the same event.

Roberta, a Past Diocesan President, held many Mothers' Union posts, and was a Trustee for World Wide Mothers Union for 12 years, six as a representative of members in Anglican Provinces around the World.

She assisted with the introduction of the Literacy and Development Programme in the Sudan and was a founder member of the Central Belfast Child Contact Centre.

The Award was one of a number presented at the Women's Forum Friendship Lunch held on April 10 in Newforge Country Club.

The inaugural Iris Colvin lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Dr Gibson, a Mother's Union member of Belfast Cathedral branch.

[Iris Colvin](#), a former Chair (1988-1991) and Honorary Life Member of Women's Forum Northern Ireland, was a much loved, highly respected and matriarchal figure in business, professional and women's organisations and the voluntary sector in Northern Ireland.

Marion said she was honoured to receive the award, especially as she had known the late Iris Colvin for many years, having met her at a Flower Festival in St Anne's.

Marion was nominated by the President of Queen's Women's Graduates.

“It was a real honour,” said Marion. “They read a lovely acclamation although I was too dazed to take it all in, but I said a few words about my contact with Iris. I was really overwhelmed.”

You can learn more about Marion's work offering psychosocial support to individuals and communities in the aftermath of traumatic incidents worldwide [here](#).

The awards were presented to the winners by Donna Traynor of the BBC.

BBC Radio Ulster School Choir Of The Year finals weekend

Over the course of the past seven weeks, primary and secondary school choirs from across Northern Ireland have been singing to impress as they battle it out for a place in the final round of the prestigious competition.

Presented by John Toal and Kerry McLean, the series has been recorded at seven venues across Northern Ireland, with the eighth programme - the senior school semi-final - broadcast on April 10 on BBC Radio Ulster. The

series, part of BBC Music NI, will culminate in a live final from the Ulster Hall on Sunday (April 17).

Competing for a place in the final in the eighth round recorded at The Island Arts Centre, Lisburn, were Carrickfergus Grammar; Dalriada, Ballymoney; New Bridge Integrated College, Banbridge; Bloomfield Collegiate, Belfast; St Mary's Grammar, Magherafelt, and Friends' School, Lisburn.

It was Carrick Grammar, Dalriada and New Bridge Integrated who most impressed the judging panel, made up of Richard Yarr, senior producer Classical Music, BBC Radio Ulster; Ciaran Scullion, head of Music with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, and Rebekah Coffey, soprano and coach with the Ulster Youth Choir.

Commenting on the school's success was Edward Craig, head of Music at Carrick Grammar. "Reaching the final three in the competition is such an honour and we wish the other two schools who have reached the final well," he said.

The competition, now in its second year, is produced in association with the Ulster Youth

Choir, and supported by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

News briefs

The Annual **Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance for all babies and children who have died in Craigavon Area Hospital** is on Sunday 17 April 2016 at 3.00 pm

Venue: The Medical Education Centre, Craigavon Area Hospital (main hospital site).

The event is being organized by the Maternity Services and the Chaplaincy Team, who warmly invite anyone who has lost a baby to take time out to reflect and to remember them. There will be an opportunity during the service to create a floral tribute so in light of this some may wish to bring a flower with them in memory of their child or grandchild.

Refreshments will be served afterwards and there will be an opportunity to chat with the chaplaincy team and other support staff.

The Washington and Lee University Singers, conducted by Shane Lynch, will give a **concert in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin** on April 22 at 7.30 pm. Washington and Lee continues to be recognized as one of the finest a cappella choirs

in their home region. Routinely touring both nationally and internationally, the University Singers perform a wide variety of genres as a feature choir in major concert series and prestigious music festivals of groups such as the Virginia Music Educators Association and the American Choral Directors Association. Admission is free and the concert will include music composed by Bach, Christiansen and Michael McGlynn.

The Archbishop of Dublin has called an **Extraordinary Diocesan Synods** meeting on Wednesday April 20 2016 in Athy Parish Centre, Carlow Road, Athy, to discuss proposed changes to Dublin and Glendalough's boundaries. The meeting will begin at 7.45 pm following a celebration of Holy Communion in St Michael's Church, Athy at 7.00 pm.

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.

Pope's visit to Greece today is 'not political' says Vatican

In a “humanitarian and ecumenical gesture,” not a political one, Pope Francis is to join Orthodox leaders in personally meeting with hundreds of refugees and migrants stranded in Greece, the Vatican has said.

Releasing the detailed schedule for the Pope's trip tomorrow to Lesbos, Greece, Fr Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman, said the Pope and the Orthodox leaders wanted to draw attention to “a situation in which many people are suffering” and where a “solution worthy of the human person” still must be found.

Pope Francis is to make the trip with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople and Orthodox Archbishop Ieronymos II of Athens and all Greece.

The three are scheduled to visit the Moria refugee camp, which the European Union has designated as a “hotspot” for registering those seeking asylum in Europe and from where those whose applications are denied are sent back to Turkey, which was their last stop before entering Greece and, therefore, EU territory.

Fr Lombardi said the religious leaders would be welcomed to the camp by 150 children, including orphans and unaccompanied minors. They also were scheduled to greet personally 250 of the roughly 2,500 asylum-seekers currently at Moria.

The visit of the three religious leaders was to culminate with a prayer service on the waterfront in memory of those who have drowned trying to cross to Europe.

According to the International Organisation for Migration, more than 150,000 migrants and refugees arrived in Greece between January 1 and April 7; more than half of them landed on Lesbos.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

The Detail: Inside Northern Ireland's family courts

The Detail

Outdated government policy on family breakdown and child custody has resulted in Northern Ireland “sleepwalking into a culture of litigation” with courts being used to “perpetuate family conflict”, the head of a leading charity has warned.

<http://www.thedetail.tv/articles/inside-northern-ireland-s-family-courts>

<http://www.thedetail.tv/articles/the-children-behind-the-statistics>

Sinn Fein will block any DUP attempt to bring back 11+

Irish News

http://www.irishnews.com/news/2016/04/15/news/sinn-fe-in-will-block-dup-plan-to-bring-back-the-11-plus-486728/mc_cid=89a12380b7&mc_eid=23f2f80c40

Queen's University approves controversial ABB entry grades plan

<http://www.irishnews.com/news/educationnews/2016/04/14/news/queen-s-university-approves->

controversial-abb-entry-grades-plan-485654/?
mc_cid=a1ccc826d3&mc_eid=23f2f80c40

Use of food banks in Northern Ireland hits all-time high, according to research

BBC News

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-36049101>

Ruth Dudley Edwards: It was naive of Dublin to expect unionists to honour Easter Rising

Belfast Newsletter

... though, so I was delighted that Mrs Foster remedied that by going to a Dublin debate on the event organised by the **Church of Ireland**, where she sat ...

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/ruth-dudley-edwards-it-was-naive-of-dublin-to-expect-unionists-to-honour-easter-rising-1-7329087>

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/ruth-dudley-edwards-it-was-naive-of-dublin-to-expect-unionists-to-honour-easter-rising-1-7329087>

Rathkeale community shaping a better image for the town

Irish Examiner

He said both the Catholic and **Church of Ireland** clergy have been enormously important to the development of the new togetherness being forged in ...

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/analysis/rathkeale-community-shaping-a-better-image-for-the-town-392800.html>

Spectator

The Archbishop of Canterbury and the shifting meaning of 'illegitimate'.

<http://www.spectator.co.uk/2016/04/the-archbishop-of-canterbury-and-the-shifting-meaning-of-illegitimate/>

Mail/Times/Guard/Mirror/FT

Reports BP's AGM yesterday and the vote by investors to block a £14m pay deal for the Chief Executive, Bob Dudley. Adam Matthews, Secretary of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group of the CofE, is quoted.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3540983/60-BP-shareholders-vote-against-boss-s-14million-t-stop-huge-pay-deal.html>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/bp-ps25hmn8g>

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/apr/14/bp-pledge-shareholder-anger-ceo-bob-dudleypay-deal>

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/bp-shareholders-revolt-over-14m-7757092#ICID=nsm>

[http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/be44d458-024a-11e6-99cb-83242733f755.html?FTCamp=engage/CAP/webapp/Channel_Moreover//B2B#axzz45rxSBMHR)

[be44d458-024a-11e6-99cb-83242733f755.html?](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/be44d458-024a-11e6-99cb-83242733f755.html?FTCamp=engage/CAP/webapp/Channel_Moreover//B2B#axzz45rxSBMHR)

[FTCamp=engage/CAP/webapp/Channel_Moreover//B2B#axzz45rxSBMHR](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/be44d458-024a-11e6-99cb-83242733f755.html?FTCamp=engage/CAP/webapp/Channel_Moreover//B2B#axzz45rxSBMHR)

Christian Today

Reports that Church leaders are trying to recruit more black and ethnic minority people to become clergy in the CofE in the run-up to Vocation Sunday next week. In a collection of new resources at [Church Support Hub](#), the Church calls for new role models, more minority ethnic vocations, young vocations and more women to take up more leadership roles. The Bishop of Guildford, Andrew Watson, is quoted.

Mail/BBC/Ind

Reports research by the Education charity, the Sutton Trust, which accuses many primary schools of “social segregation”. It found there are 1,576 primary schools in England, which are “highly socially selective”. Article notes the church attendance criteria for admissions when church schools (CofE and Catholic) are oversubscribed, noting CofE schools will include a quota of non-religious families.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3541004/Faith-schools-shunning-poor-pupils-Report-says-middle-classes-tightening-grip-best-primaries.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-36045406>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/primary-schools-social-segregation-rejecting-poorer-pupilschildren-from-higher-income-families-a6984741.html>

Mail

Reports an interview given by Sir Michael Wilshaw, Head of Ofsted, in which he said that schools should consider introducing gender-neutral toilets to help trans children feel more comfortable. The article cites a series of workshops, organised by St Mary the Virgin CofE primary school in Hartfield, East Sussex, which were aimed at helping children to gain a better understanding of the trans community.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3540142/Schools-introduce-gender-neutral-toilets-help-trans-children-feel-comfortable-says-head-Ofsted-Sir-Michael-Wilshaw.html>

Mail

Report on the findings of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Hunger which shows that one in five pupils at some schools arrive ravenous each day. But Frank Field MP, who chairs the group, warned that the "political scrap" over data between foodbank charity the Trussell Trust and ministers was turning attention away from the issue. "The Trust does the most valiant work, but it needs to always register the fact that it probably presents data for less than half of all the organisations helping to feed the hungry."
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-3540923/Too-children-arriving-school-hungry-MPs-warn.html>

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