



Catholic bishops identify issues for Northern Ireland elections

The Catholic bishops in Northern Ireland have issued what is described as “A Pastoral Reflection” entitled ‘A better future: towards a culture of life, care and hope for all’. The bishops provided the following summary -

- •Voting for those who will govern our society is a moral act. Each vote cast, or not cast, potentially influences the values that will shape future law and policy
- We appeal for a new and more constructive political culture, one based on a shared commitment to the common good and the priorities of citizens rather than on traditional constitutional issues
- We call on all parties to address, in the next *Programme for Government*, the disturbing levels of childhood poverty and the systemic issues of social need ... One practical appeal is for funding to schools so that no pupil begins the day without a nutritional breakfast
- The social and moral teaching of the Church is clear, that it is never morally acceptable to support any policy that undermines the sacred inviolability of the right to life of an innocent person in any circumstances
- As Pope Francis has recently said, there are “no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way

similar or even remotely analogous to God's plan for marriage and family”

- We call on all politicians to respect the positive contribution to peace and good relations made by all school sectors and to ensure that all school sectors are treated equally in terms of funding and policy
- Ten questions which Catholics are encouraged to ask candidates who are standing in the Assembly elections

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- Building a pervasive culture of life, care and hope (n.15-19)
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- Respect for the Right to Faith-based Education in a genuinely pluralist society (n.31-37)
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- Conclusion: A culture of life, care and hope for all (n.45-46)
- Appendix for Parishes: 'Ten questions based on Catholic Social Teaching for Catholics to ask candidates standing in the Assembly elections'

Ten questions based on Catholic Social Teaching for Catholics to ask candidates standing in the Assembly elections are listed in the document -

- 1 What will you do to address the unacceptable levels of childhood poverty in Northern Ireland and the widening gap between rich and poor?
- 2 What will you do to uphold the right to life of unborn children and adults with severe life-limiting disabilities, as well as children conceived through sexual crime, if the next Assembly seeks to introduce legislation that removes the fundamental right to life from them?
- 3 Do you support abortion, the direct and intentional taking of an innocent human life in any circumstances?
- 4 What will you do to protect and support family and marriage and in particular the natural institution of marriage between one

- man and one woman as the fundamental building block of society?
- 5 Will you support the right of religious organisations to provide services in a manner consistent with their religious ethos and beliefs?
 - 6 Will you support the right of parents to have Catholic schools as part of a diverse system of educational provision, based on parental choice?
 - 7 What will you do to highlight the persecution of Christians and other persecuted groups across the world?
 - 8 What will you do to address human trafficking in Northern Ireland and to help improve services for refugees, asylum seekers and the homeless?
 - 9 What will you do to help achieve those UN Sustainable Development goals that are ethically consistent and ensure proper care and respect for the natural environment?
 - 10 What will you do to create a more constructive and inclusive political culture in the next Assembly, one that gives hope to all in our society for a better future?

Full text of document available at -

<http://www.catholicbishops.ie/2016/04/27/a-better-future-towards-a-culture-of-life-care-and-hope-for-all-a-pastoral->

[reflection-by-the-catholic-bishops-in-northern-ireland-on-5-may-elections-to-the-legislative-assembly/](#)

Irish Council of Churches appoints new General Secretary

The Irish Council of Churches has announced the appointment of Dr Nicola Brady to the position of General Secretary.

The ICC states that Dr Brady comes to the role with a wealth of ecumenical experience and a commitment to social justice, having served as Research Coordinator for the Council for Justice and Peace of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Northern Ireland Catholic Council on Social Affairs. As part of this role she has coordinated inter-church engagement in a wide range of social policy areas, including poverty, migration, mental health, and peace and reconciliation. She was also a member of the Management Committee of the Irish Churches' Peace Project, 2013–2015.

Commenting on her appointment, Dr Brady noted that 'churches bring a unique and valuable perspective to the major challenges facing our

society. Most importantly, they bring the Christian message of hope to those who are struggling. I look forward to building on the significant work that has been done to date by the Irish Council of Churches and the Irish Inter–Church Meeting to respond to the many different needs in our local communities, united by a shared commitment to Gospel values’.

Congratulating Dr Brady, ICC President Rt Rev John McDowell said, ‘on behalf of the ICC and IICM, we are delighted to have someone of Dr Brady’s calibre and experience to build on the excellent work of Mervyn McCullagh and the team at the Inter–Church Centre.’

Dr Brady has a PhD in Church history, examining the response of the Catholic hierarchy to political violence in Northern Ireland and the Basque Country (1921–1975).

Church leaders meet paramilitary panel

Church leaders met members of the Panel on Disbanding Paramilitary Groups in Belfast yesterday (27th April), the body set up under last November’s Fresh Start Agreement to develop

recommendations for a strategy to end paramilitarism and disband paramilitary groups.

In a joint statement, the Church leaders said after the meeting:

“Nearly 20 years on from the Good Friday Agreement, paramilitary violence and criminality remains an oppressive reality that pervades everyday life in many of our communities, particularly those in some of the most disadvantaged parts of Northern Ireland.

“Today we welcomed the opportunity to meet with the Panel on Disbanding Paramilitary Groups and encouraged them in the very difficult, but vital task, they have been given. We also discussed the many challenges that any strategy would need to address. We pray for openness, co-operation and engagement on all sides.

“We also stressed that any strategy for dealing with this issue has to have its focus on people, because it is ultimately people that matter to God. There genuinely needs to be a fresh start – bringing a sense of hope to those who have suffered through paramilitary activity in their communities and also pointing to a better way for

those who have been involved in paramilitary organisations.”

The leaders were : Rev. Brian Anderson, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland; Archbishop Richard Clarke, Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh; Rt. Rev. Dr. Ian McNie, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and Bishop Noel Treanor, (representing the Catholic Archbishop of Armagh)

Irish Methodist minister to monitor in Israel

Yesterday Rev John Parkin travelled to Yanoun, in the hill country of the West Bank in Israel. He goes for three months as part of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel, known as EAPPI.

The programme places accompanists at places where the State of Israel Policies may bring Palestinians and Israelis together in tense, sometimes violent situations.

Yanoun is under pressure from aggressive settlers and governments policy of taking

agricultural land away from Palestinians and making it Jewish settler land. John's role, with others, is to monitor this situation and try and reduce the level of settler violence and enable the people to cling onto their homes and way of life.

Rev Brian Anderson, President of the Methodist Church said, "This work is very difficult as being a peacekeeper for both Israeli and Palestinian is regularly hugely complicated. John reminded me that the Gospel message compels him to seek "let justice flow down like waters and righteousness as an ever flowing stream"

He continued, "Also remember Liz at home in Dublin, who will be as busy as ever but I am sure praying, as we all will for John's safe return. God bless you John, go in the confidence of the prayers of the Methodist Church in Ireland."

Pope paves the way for beatification of Jesuit Irish priest

A miracle attributed to an Irish Jesuit priest has been recognised by the Vatican. Fr John Sullivan SJ was declared Venerable by Pope Francis in

November 2014 and the Pope has now officially recognised a miracle attributed to the priest, paving the way for his beatification.

Fr John Sullivan's is believed to have cured Michael Collins, nephew of Michael Collins, founder of the Irish Free State in 1928, who was paralysed as a young boy but suddenly walked after Fr John touched his leg and prayed over him. He is associated with a number of miraculous cures throughout his lifetime.

Fr Sullivan was born in Dublin in 1861 to a wealthy Protestant father and Catholic mother. At the turn of the century he converted to Catholicism and entered the Jesuit novitiate. He died on February 19, 1933, at St Vincent's Nursing Home, Dublin.

C of I urged to adopt Anglican Communion Sunday

The provinces of the Anglican Communion have been invited to set aside the Sunday closest to the feast of Saint Augustine of Canterbury (26 May) as Anglican Communion Sunday, with a special focus of prayer for the Communion.

The invitation came in a resolution passed by assent at the recent Anglican Consultative Council meeting in Lusaka (ACC-16). Similar requests have been made by previous ACC meetings but little progress has been made in designating a single day of focused prayer on the Communion from around the provinces.

The Sunday closest to the feast of Saint Augustine of Canterbury has been chosen as the suggested date for Anglican Communion Sunday; because it was Saint Augustine who was sent by Pope Gregory to undertake the conversion of England. The conversion of England had already begun, of course, and there was Celtic Christianity in the British Isles before Augustine arrived; but it was Augustine who is recognised as the first Archbishop of Canterbury and who established his seat at what is now Canterbury Cathedral – the mother church of the Anglican Communion.

New York experience for winner of Northern Ireland International Organ Competition

The 6th Northern Ireland International Organ Competition will take place in Armagh between

Monday 22 and Wednesday 24 August 2016 As part of the organisers continuing commitment to provide young organists, aged 21 and under, with world-class opportunities, NIIOC has announced that this year the winner of the Senior Competition will be on their way to New York for a prize recital at St Thomas church 5th Ave NYC. The package includes a £650 flight subsidy, in addition to the £1,000 first prize sum, with accommodation provided by St. Thomas'.

Add Westminster Abbey, Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge, Christ Church Cathedral Dublin, St Columba's Cathedral Londonderry and a recital with the Royal College of Organists to the mix, and it's the prize package of the year for all aspiring professionals.

The Chair of this year's jury will be the international concert organist Professor Martin Jean (Professor of Organ, Yale). He will be joined by Dr David Adams (Royal Irish Academy, Dublin), and Dr David Hill. Martin Jean is one of the world's finest concert organists. He has performed widely throughout the US and Europe and is known for his wide repertoire interests. He was awarded first place at the international Grand Prix de Chartres in 1986, and in 1992 at the The American Guild of Organists National Young Artists' Competition.

In 2001 he presented a cycle of the complete organ works of Bach at Yale, and his compact discs of The Seven Last Words of Christ by Charles Tournemire and the complete Six Symphonies of Louis Vierne, have been released by Loft Recordings. Recordings of the organ symphonies and Stations of the Cross of Marcel Dupré are forthcoming on the Delos label.

The schedule of the event is : Monday 22 - Senior Competition 2pm & 7pm; Tuesday 23 - Junior Competition 10am; Tuesday 23 - Intermediate Competition 2.30pm; Tuesday 23 - Masterclass 7pm; Wednesday 24 - Workshop 2pm.

Dunleath organ workshop key part of NI International organ competition

A workshop with Dr David Adams (Royal Irish Academy of Music) will be held on Tuesday, 23rd August 2016, 10:30am - 1.00pm in St Malachy's Church, Armagh

The 2016 organ workshop is being run as part of the Northern Ireland International Organ Competition programme. The event, which will use the two-manual and pedal organ by Wells

Kennedy in St Malachy's Church, will provide a valuable opportunity for performance and discussion in a non-competitive atmosphere.

Whilst the workshop is being held on the same day as the Junior and Intermediate Competitions, it is open also to young organists at a relatively-early stage in their organ studies who may not wish to enter for the competitions. Those interested are encouraged to prepare 17th/18th-century repertoire. To reserve a place, please email info@niioc.com

Participants in the workshop will each receive a copy of Bach's Orgelbüchlein. A bursary of £100 may be awarded to the student who displays most promise.

The Dunleath Organ Scholarship Trust was established in 1995 in memory of the late Charles Edward Henry John Baron Dunleath (1933-1993) who exercised a valuable influence on organ design and construction in Ireland. The Trust provides support for young organists, resident in Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland, to enable them to pursue their interest in the organ.

Variety in May's Presbyterian Herald

On the front cover of the Herald this month is a photograph taken on the streets of Belfast, highlighting the work of Nightlight. In her article 'Glimpses of God', Sarah Harding reports on her experience of joining the Nightlight team one Saturday evening and seeing first hand the valuable work they are involved in every weekend.

Reflecting on the evening Sarah said, "If ever there was a time when we need to encourage one another to rise up and pray passionately, then that time is now. Men and women of all ages need to pray that God will touch the hearts of people."

'Captured by a vision' is the title of the newly published memoirs of former Moderator, Dr. Ken Newell. Alan Meban speaks to Dr. Newell about what has shaped and influenced his life and how this is reflected in his memoirs. Ken also hopes that his story will inspire readers, 'To make more inclusive choices about their lifestyle and ...the



need to give something to this country that will help move it forward.'

How we worship God through music can be quite a divisive issue within congregations. In 'Singing from the same hymn sheet', Betsy Cameron tackles this subject and looks at why we need to re-engage our passion for uniting together in praise. She reminds us of this, saying, "Music is a gift from God, but it is also a gift we bring to God."

At the beginning of April, a new event for young adults took place in the Cathedral Quarter in

Belfast. Mark Johnston reports on 'Transform', a two-night residential conference which aimed to connect a generation of young adults from across the Presbyterian Church in Ireland – and to equip them to be disciples of Jesus.

“God is at work. The green shoots of kingdom hope are growing in the lives of an emerging generation of Christ’s disciples,” Mark said as he reflected on what he experienced at Transform.

In the second part of his series exploring the Westminster Confession of Faith, Andrew Conway focuses on living as children of God and asks what this means for us as believers.

Throughout this decade Northern Ireland has been marking significant centenaries, and in particular that of 2016. In 'Healing, honour and hope', Peter Lynas tells the story of a new publication produced by Evangelical Alliance. 100 days, 100 years is a single edition magazine reflecting on the century since the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme.

The Presbyterian Church celebrates its own significant anniversary this year, as it records 150 years since the formation of the Presbyterian

Children's Society (formerly Presbyterian Orphan and Children's Society). In 'Generations of generosity', Stephen Lynas highlights the vast amount of work achieved and the lives changed through generations of Presbyterian generosity.

For those who come into Assembly Buildings they will undoubtedly have met Joan Cubitt at reception; in this issue of the Herald Joan provides her 'life lessons'. While Mervyn McCullagh, Mission partner of the Methodist Church and former PCI missionary in Indonesia, writes for the 'As I see it...' page.

Also to be enjoyed are the ever-popular letters, reviews and around the churches pages, as well as reflections by Rose McCullagh, Betsy Cameron and Arthur Clarke.

To download this edition or to subscribe, [visit the Presbyterian Herald section](#) of the church's website. Single copies may be purchased at the reception desk in Assembly Buildings, Fisherwick Place, Belfast.

Prayer for the EU referendum campaign

God of truth,
give us grace to debate the issues in this
referendum
with honesty and openness.
Give generosity to those who seek to form
opinion
and discernment to those who vote,
that our nation may prosper
and that with all the peoples of Europe
we may work for peace and the common good;
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

**Northern Ireland families have the least cash
left over once essentials are paid for, a UK-
wide survey said.**

News Letter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/families-in-northern-ireland-have-least-spare-cash-after-paying-for-essentials-1-7350252>

**Call to Stormont Assembly to overturn
Northern Ireland's same sex marriage ban**

News Letter

Prominent gay human rights activist Peter Tatchell has called on the next Stormont Assembly to overturn Northern Ireland's ban on same sex marriage.

churchnewsireland@gmail.com

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/peter-tatchell-urges-next-stormont-assembly-to-overturn-same-sex-marriage-ban-1-7350524>

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin calls for end to murders in Dublin

News Letter

The leader of the Catholic Church in Dublin has called on the city's people to break the chain of hate and evil which has led to another two gun murders. He said, Dublin needs a courageous coalition of strong people who are not afraid to call violence what it is: evil. Dublin needs a coalition of strong people who are not afraid to call the sponsors of this violence what they are: despicable and evil.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/archbishop-diarmuid-martin-seeks-end-to-evil-violence-in-dublin-1-7350561>

<http://www.catholicbishops.ie/2016/04/26/statement-of-archbishop-diarmuid-martin-on-further-violence-in-dublin/>

Almost 60 Syrian refugees due to arrive in Northern Ireland

News Letter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/northern-ireland-news/almost-60-syrian-refugees-due-to-arrive-in-northern-ireland-1-7351807>

Buncrana pier tragedy generous response

Belfast Telegraph

More than £90k raised for family following huge support for fundraising appeals

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/buncrana-pier-tragedy-more-than-90k-raised-for-family->

[following-huge-support-for-fundraising-appeals-34660967.html](http://www.churchnewsireland.com/2016/04/28/following-huge-support-for-fundraising-appeals-34660967.html)

New York Times/FT/Tel/Guard/BBC/[Christian Today](#)/Mail/Premier

Reports that the CofE has released a [Prayer for the European Referendum Campaign](#) (see above) as a "prayer for everyone" which has been welcomed by Christians on both sides. The articles recall last month's intervention by the Archbishop of Canterbury who called for a "visionary debate" on the EU referendum and said there was no "correct Christian view" on it. *Tel* notes Bishop of Guildford's tweet (Feb) about 'nightmare scenario' of leaving the EU and *Mail* reports comment by Tory MP Peter Bone who says the prayer is 'outrageous'.
http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/27/world/europe/brexit-church-of-england.html?_r=0
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/ef0d6d20-0bcd-11e6-b0f1-61f222853ff3.html#axzz47051z9WF>
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/04/26/church-of-englands-referendum-prayer-for-close-ties-with-all-the/>
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/26/church-of-england-issues-eu-referendum-prayer-european-union>
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3559577/First-pro-EU-campaign-drafts-President-Obama-GOD-wants-vote-against-Brexit-referendum.html>
<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Church-of-England-releases-prayer-ahead-of-EU-referendum>

[Christian Today](#)/Yorkshire Post

Reports comments by the Bishop of Liverpool, Paul Bayes, following the Hillsborough jury's verdict that ruled the 96 who died in a stadium crush in 1989 were

unlawfully killed. Bishop Paul said, "Together with my colleagues from all the churches, I commit myself to support those who hurt, help those who grieve and show God's love and compassion for all." The Bishop of Leeds, Nick Baines, writing in the *Yorkshire Post* reflects on the past 27 years and praises the former Bishop of Liverpool James Jones who chaired the independent panel into the disaster.

<http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/opinion/nick-baines-long-fight-for-truth-and-dignity-gave-a-voice-to-those-who-could-not-speak-1-7876205>

BBC/Guard

Reports that the Government has been defeated again in the House of Lords over calls to take in child refugees from Europe. A new amendment to the Immigration Bill from Labour's Lord Dubs was backed by 279 votes to 172. The Government has warned against encouraging people to place children in the hands of traffickers. It announced last week it would take in as many as 3,000 refugees, mostly vulnerable children, from the war-torn Syria region by 2020. The Bishop of Leeds, Nick Baines, is quoted in the *Guardian*.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-36146116>

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/26/lords-tries-again-to-overturn-tory-refusal-to-help-child-refugees-in-europe>

Metro

Further coverage of Westminster city council's refusal to allow a lifesized bronze statue of Homeless Jesus by Canadian artist Timothy Schmalz to be erected in front of Methodist Central Hall, close to Westminster Abbey and Parliament Square.

<http://metro.co.uk/2016/04/26/westminster-council-blocks-homeless-jesus-statue-5843019/>

Mail

Reports that chorister David Smith has been banned from climbing up a 20ft ladder in St Michael's church, Macclesfield to light candles, after insurers informed him he is not allowed to climb higher than nine foot. Church members have now launched an appeal to raise £7,000 for an electronic winch and pulley system which would mean the candles can be lit from the ground.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3560617/Church-candles-snuffed-elf-safety-Chorister-barred-lighting-chandelier-using-20ft-ladder-insurer-s-rules.html>

BBC

Reports that vandals have cut off the head of a statue in a church. The attack on the 17th Century Thomas Wendy memorial at All Saints in Haslingfield (Cambridgeshire), was reported on Sunday. The head of his son Sir William Wendy, who commissioned the monument, had been chopped off and stolen. Archaeologist Prof Norman Hammond, who photographed the damage said it was a "hate crime directed at the church".

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-36141878>

Christian Today

Reports that the Revd Kate Bottley has suggested that her appearances on Gogglebox might be more effective at evangelisation than the traditional Sunday sermon. In an interview in the *Radio Times* Ms Bottley said that good television, like good radio, offers a reflection of the

human story, and part of the human story is faith, religion and belief.

BBC

Report that as part of BBCs *Music Day* on June 3, a UK-wide bell-ringing event is planned for 7pm, with more than 50 church towers ringing simultaneously. They include Bristol and Manchester Cathedrals and smaller parish churches.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-36144005>

Comment

Guardian: Patrick Kingsley writes Europe's failure on refugees echoes the moral collapse of the 1930s.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/commentisfree/2016/apr/26/europe-stance-refugees-ethical-failure-historic-proportions>

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