



C of I group's call to "dismantle architecture of homophobia" in NI

The Church of Ireland group Changing Attitude Ireland has called on politicians in Northern Ireland to extend civil marriage to same sex couples as an important step to "dismantle the architecture of homophobia". The call was made in advance of the Northern Ireland Assembly vote on a motion in support of same sex marriage.

CAI spokesperson Canon Charles Kenny said that "it is time for conservative Christians in

Northern Ireland to cease personal attacks on same sex couples".

Canon Charles Kenny was responding to negative comments about same sex couples by the Democratic Unionist Party's Jim Wells MLA and Ian Paisley Junior MP. Canon Kenny said that "he was disappointed that a fellow Christian, Ian Paisley Junior, continues to maintain that same sex relationships are "immoral, offensive and obnoxious"

Canon Kenny said "Mr Paisley's view is increasingly out of step with moderate Christians who had come to understand that same sex relationships can be as loving and committed as heterosexual relationships".

Canon Kenny referred to the statement earlier this month (11th April) by the Church of Ireland bishop of Cashel, Ferns & Ossory Michael Burrows who referred to "gay rights" as "*the great justice issue of our time*" and that "*The call for same sex marriage is a logical and timely development in the march of law reform and equality*".

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/paisley-jnr-urges-gay-unionists-to-vote-for-dup-in-general-election-1.2189780>

Bishop calls crisis meetings in bid to calm storm over controversial rector

A Church of Ireland Bishop has called a total of three crisis meetings next week to discuss the storm over a controversial minister who has divided a congregation in Co Armagh.

Belfast Telegraph - The Rt Rev Harold Miller will also speak at two services in a bid to bring the warring factions together.

A letter from the Bishop of Down and Dromore was read out yesterday at morning worship by the Rev Alan Kilpatrick, the Scots-born earring-wearing cleric at the centre of the row over his ministry at Knocknamuckley Parish Church, which lies between Lurgan and Portadown.

More than 170 parishioners, including a number of Mr Kilpatrick's opponents, attended the service and several of them refused to shake the minister's hand as they filed out of the church at the end of the service.

During the 80-minute service, member of the congregation Ian Morton said prayers for the healing of the rift which has erupted over Mr



Rev Alan Kilpatrick welcomes parishioners to Sunday's service

Kilpatrick's 'happy clappy' services and claims that he has links with an American revivalist group, the Bethel school of Supernatural Ministries.

Rev Kilpatrick has also been criticised for his unconventional style of dress during services and a ban on the Royal Black Preceptory from using the church.

The minister was invited to a meeting of parishioners in nearby Bleary last week, but said that he didn't attend because it was his day off.

It's been reported that up to 70 people have already quit the church and that many more are trying to influence changes from within.

Few people would talk on the record, but one man told me Mr Kilpatrick had "hijacked" the old-style format of church services at Knocknamuckley. He also expressed concern about a group associated with the Bethel church having been hosted at the church in March.

Another said: "I've seen other ministers out in my time here. I'll see him out, too."

A woman who also refused to give her name said Mr Kilpatrick's services or style of ministry were "not the issues" but she wouldn't say what she believed were.

A supporter of the minister said: "We knew what we were getting when we invited him to come here. He always said he wasn't your typical Church of Ireland minister and that he didn't wear clerical robes or preach from the pulpit. We have to back him now."

At the end of his sermon, Mr Kilpatrick referred to the ongoing dispute within the parish and the toll it had taken on him and his wife Jan.

He said: "It's been quite a week.

"In this group there are a lot of emotions, a lot of feelings and Jan and I have been praying all the time and having a lot of conversations

"Physically we are both absolutely shattered, but spiritually we are on fire for God. And whatever happens over the next week, two weeks or whatever, we want God to be honoured and glorified."

Exactly what will happen has been the focus of intense speculation and a number of breakaway members of the parish have said that the only solution will be for the Bishop of Down and Dromore to remove Mr Kilpatrick from office.

More at -

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/bishop-calls-crisis-meetings-in-bid-to-calm-storm-over-controversial-rector-31173073.html>

Related report

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<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/the-road-sign-outside-says-give-way-but-yielding-is-last-thing-on-minds-at-split-church-31173040.html>

Royal Black Preceptory says ban on use of C of I church is breach of its civil liberties

The Royal Black Preceptory has claimed that a ban on its members using St Matthias' Church of Ireland breached their "civil and religious liberties".

Belfast Telegraph - The organisation has been banned from using the Knocknamuckley church for its service on Sunday, May 10, it has been reported.

It is understood that its members have been offered the use of the church hall instead.

The Royal Black was also "furious" over a letter, signed by the Bishop of Down and Dromore, the Right Reverend Harold Miller, which questioned the ethos of the organisation, the Sunday World newspaper reported.

In the correspondence, Bishop Miller wrote that he was "minded to consider setting up a theological commission to report to me on this matter if it remains contentious".

Bishop Miller - who initially refused to intervene in the dispute engulfing the congregation - is to hold a series of crisis meetings over the coming days.

He is also set to speak at two services in a bid to bring together the parish and resolve the differences.

More at -

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/royal-black-preceptory-says-ban-is-breach-of-its-civil-liberties-31173259.html>

Calls for Ireland to recognise Armenian 'genocide'

Armenia has called on Ireland to recognise as 'genocide' - the deaths of 1.5 million Armenians by the Turkish authorities.

The call was made at a service of remembrance in Dublin today, organised by the Irish parish of the Armenian Apostolic Church to mark the beginning of what Armenians call the 'genocide' against their race; perpetrated by the Ottoman authorities between 1915 and 1923.

Clergy from seven Christian denominations and a representative of the Jewish Community were

among those in attendance at the service, which took place in Taney Church of Ireland in Dundrum, Co Dublin.

Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin the Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson gave a sermon at the service.

Turkey has said the killings and forced removals were the result of fighting against neighbouring Russia in World War I and reject the term 'genocide'.

However the European Parliament and the Vatican has been joined this week by Austria and Germany - the Ottoman's main allies in World War I- in branding the violence as 'genocide'.

Similar ceremonies have taken place in independent Armenia and throughout the globe where the Armenian Diaspora is scattered.

The Turkish government has for the first time sent a minister to the Armenian Church's commemoration in Istanbul however it withdrew its ambassadors from the Vatican and Vienna over their use of the term 'genocide'.

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Parish supports Buckley family during painful wait

The Parish Priest of Mourne Abbey has said the community is rallying round the grieving family of Karen Buckley, during the painful wait for the return of her body from Scotland.

Irish Catholic and STV - Fr Joe O’Keeffe said the north Cork parish will “not be found wanting” in offering their support for the slain nursing student’s parents and brothers.

“We will now do everything we can to support the family and help them through this ordeal,” he said.

Karen's burial is expected to be one of the biggest funerals ever seen in Cork.

The parish congregation signed a book of condolence for the family at 10am Mass on Sunday and Cork County Council has opened a book of condolence in Cork County Hall and Cork County Council offices in Mallow.

Hundreds of people also attended memorial events held in Glasgow in a park off Hill Street where Karen was living and in the city's George Square.

Karen's former classmates at the University of Limerick have raised €50,000, more than 10 times the original target, in an online drive to cover the family's travel and accommodation expenses.

Karen vanished from a Glasgow nightclub in the early hours of April 12. Her body was found on the isolated High Craigton Farm on the northwestern outskirts of the city three days later.

Aer Lingus provided a plane to return her body from Scotland to Cork, in the Republic of Ireland with her parents, John and Marian, and brothers also on board.

A funeral mass will be held at the Church of St Michael the Archangel in Analeentha at 2pm, today, Tuesday, before burial at St John's Cemetery in Burnfoot.

A death notice released by the family reads: "Karen, beloved daughter of John and Marian and dear sister of Brendan, Kieran and Damien.

"Sadly missed by her heartbroken parents, brothers, grandmother, uncles, aunts, sister-in-law Niamh, cousins, relatives, neighbours and her many friends. May she rest in peace."

Building bridges of hope in Ballymoney community

The United Parish of Ballymoney, Finvoy and Rasharkin has officially opened the newly restored Old School House in the grounds of St Patricks Church.

It was a significant day in the history of St Patrick's Parish Church and the town of Ballymoney, and it was a nostalgic day, too, for many in the parish who remembered happy times spent there as they grew up and worshipped in St Patricks.



Outside the Old Schoolhouse are, from left: The Rev Brian Howe, curate; the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, Bishop of Connor; Stella Byrne of the Heritage Lottery Fund, and rector, the Rev Andrew Sweeney.

The dream of a few good men in the church, not least among them the late Billy Hunter, ensured the survival of the derelict building for such a time as this.

It is commendable that within one year the church gathered together the £700,000 required to commence and complete the project.

This was an amazing effort, made possible through the generosity of grants from funding

organisations, direct giving from the church family and many fund raising events.

The parish recorded special thanks to The Heritage Lottery Fund, Ulster Garden Villages, Garfield and Weston Trust, All Churches Trust and The Pilgrims Trust. They all believed in the church's vision, 'to build bridges of hope into the community'.

Robinson Associates along with the main contractors, Martin and Hamilton, deserve much credit for completing such a magnificent restoration on time.

The Rev Andrew Sweeney, rector of the United Parish said: "In many ways the easy bit is done! Painting on this blank canvas will require endeavour and commitment to fulfil our vision to 'build bridges of hope into our community.'

"The church is whole-heartedly committed to using the building to reach out to the most vulnerable, isolated and marginalised people in our communities. We want to collaborate with organisations that do just that."

Ballymoney Parish's debt counselling service, Christians Against Poverty, will now operate out of the Old School House and The Caring

Association has been set up to ensure the parish vision becomes a reality.

The Parish Office, relocated to the Old School House, will welcome the local community through its doors so they can learn more about their local heritage and shared history.

Andrew said “It has been a wonderful journey of faith for all of us in the United Parish of Ballymoney, Finvoy and Rasharkin.”

The project was co-ordinated and managed by parish administrator George Field on behalf of the church, and the official opening took place on March 17.

“St Patrick’s Day was such an appropriate day for The Bishop of Connor, The Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, to dedicate the building. We pray that the saint who took a message of love and hope into communities around the north of Ireland will encourage us to do the same,” Andrew said.

Ecumenical service of remembrance for children killed in the Easter Rising

At 11am on Tuesday 5 May 2015 St Patrick’s Church, Ringsend, Dublin 4, will host an

ecumenical service of remembrance and reclamation for approximately 40 children between the ages of two and sixteen who were killed during the Easter Rising of 1916.

The service will be attended by President Michael D. Higgins. Archbishop Michael Jackson will also be present.

Annual 1916 Commemoration Ceremony at Arbour Hill

The Annual 1916 Commemoration Ceremony takes place on Wednesday May 6 at 9.45 am at the Church of the Most Sacred Heart Arbour Hill, Dublin. The ceremony is hosted by the Minister for Defence and consists of Requiem Mass and ceremonies at the Grave for the 1916 Leaders. Archbishop Michael Jackson will say prayers during the service and at the graveside.

Scots Moderator promotes Fresh Expressions Summer School as future of mission

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A Fresh Expressions summer school in Dundee is vital for congregations who want to grow.

The Moderator of the General Assembly says the four day event in June builds on the themes of growth and innovation which he has been exploring and promoting for the past year. Rt Rev John Chalmers is urging those who can to

attend the four day event in June, and for those who can't to at least embrace the ambition behind it.

In his travels, Mr Chalmers says he has experienced many imaginative ways through which the Church, through its congregations, is engaging with society. He says "I've been really excited by some of the projects and new ideas I've seen, and what difference they can make both to the churches and their local communities. I'm encouraging each of us to think about how our congregations can reach out in new ways. I believe this welcome new initiative by the Joint Emerging Church Group will be an essential step for congregations seeking the tools and confidence to bring the church into their community."

Taking place in the Westpark Centre, Dundee, from the 22nd to the 25th June, the 4 day residential summer school will explore what it means to engage in mission in contemporary Scotland. Keynote speakers include Canon Phil Potter, leader of Fresh Expressions UK, Canon Dr George Lings, Director of the Church Army research unit and Rev Dr Doug Gay, Lecturer in Theology and Religious Studies Glasgow University. Together, they bring years of practical experience in the challenges of mission facing

the church today. The summer school will draw on that practical experience to equip people to be the church in the setting of their local communities.

Rev Norman Smith Convenor of the Joint Emerging Church said "this is a great opportunity not to be missed. We have some of the best thinkers on mission in Scotland for 4 days all geared towards giving congregations the tools they need to be effective in mission."

The summer school is open to anyone interested in mission and qualifies as study leave under the ministers study leave scheme. **More details can be found here** or contact Lorraine Orr Lorr@churchofscotland.org.uk in the Mission and Discipleship Council.

Media digest

Marriage equality

Gay marriage rejected by Northern Ireland Stormont Assembly - Belfast Telegraph
<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/general-election-2015/gay-marriage-rejected-by-northern-ireland-stormont-assembly-31175600.html?A=1>

DUP politician Jim Wells quits over gays slur -
Irish Examiner

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/dup-politician-jim-wells-quits-over-gays-slur-674518.html>

Same sex marriage a stunt - political overview -
Belfast Telegraph

A proposal to have gay marriage legalised in Northern Ireland has been branded an electoral stunt.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/samesex-marriage-move-a-stunt-31175083.html>

Health boss Jim Wells joins a long line of senior politicians to be embarrassed in public for showing their blind bigotry - Belfast Telegraph - Malachi O'Doherty

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/debateni/blogs/health-boss-jim-wells-joins-a-long-line-of-senior-politicians-to-be-embarrassed-in-public-for-showing-their-blind-bigotry-31170026.html>

Post-damage-limitation, challenge for DUP is not whether they choose to change, but how they choose to change - Slugger O'Toole

<http://sluggerotoole.com/2015/04/27/post-damage-limitation-challenge-for-dup-is-not-whether-they-choose-to-change-but-how-they-choose-to-change/>

Enda Kenny - Marriage equality will not affect institution of marriage - Independent.ie

<http://www.independent.ie/opinion/comment/marriage-equality-will-not-affect-institution-of-marriage-31173786.html>

Amnesty attacks NI discrimination - Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/amnesty-attacks-ni-discrimination-31172511.html>

Education

Leaving Cert reforms will make it easier to pass higher level exams - Irish Times

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/leaving-cert-reforms-will-make-it-easier-to-pass-higher-level-exams-1.2189969>

Girls thrive in single sex schools because they do not have to impress boys, head says - Telegraph

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/11561711/Girls-thrive-in-single-sex-schools-because-they-do-not-have-to-impress-boys-head-says.html>

Christianity and politics

Demographic shifts force change on NI politicians - Irish Times

http://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/demographic-shifts-force-change-on-ni-politicians-1.2190041?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter

What do we know about the faith of the 2016 presidential candidates (so far)? - Christian Today

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/what.do.we.know.about.the.faith.of.the.2016.presidential.candidates.so.far/51847.htm>

The long read: How America's would-be presidents have found their faith | Irish Examiner

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/analysis/the-long-read-how-americas-would-be-presidents-have-found-their-faith-323339.html>

Tel

Report on how a Church of England school has decided to stop selecting pupils on the basis of faith, says St Luke's primary in Kingston Upon Thames (Southwark Diocese) will admit children who live closest to the school from next year. Quotes chair of governors the Revd Martin Hislop, a spokeswoman for the diocese plus previous comments by Archbishop of Canterbury and Rev Nigel Genders, CofE's Chief Education officer.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/11564793/Church-of-England-school-expels-prayers-for-places.html>

Mirror

Article on poverty interviews the Rev Denise Hayes of St Barnabas Church in Wigan, who is quoted saying the level of poverty in her parish is 'soul destroying'. It states the [Church Urban Fund](#) ranks her parish of Marsh Green as number 12,588 out of 12,660 suffering multiple deprivation. Child poverty runs at 45 per cent. <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/follow-george-orwells-road-wigan-5583390>

BBC

Report that seven statues have been installed to complete work that started more than 665 years ago as part of St Albans Cathedral's 900th anniversary celebrations. It states the sculptures of the martyrs stand in the cathedral's medieval nave screen and it is believed to be the first time painted statues have been restored to a such a screen since the Reformation. <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-32453423>

FT

Report that the Prince of Wales is the most prominent name to emerge from a Financial Times' survey of British individuals and institutions that are shunning coal, oil and gas company holdings. It states the National Trust, the Church of England and the universities of

April 28

Oxford and Edinburgh are reviewing their shares
in such companies.

<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/d6fa0eae-ea73-11e4-a701-00144feab7de.html#axzz3YTnLxxzX>