



Archbishop Charles J Brown

American bishop is a surprise hit as the pope's man in Ireland

In November 2011, Ireland announced it was shutting down its embassy to the Vatican. It was the absolute low point in a crossfire between Dublin and Rome over clerical sexual abuse, one

that saw Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny directly accuse the Vatican of covering up the crimes of abuser-priests.

Michael Kelly editor of the Irish Catholic writes in Crux, a US Catholic journal - Kenny declared in a now-famous speech in parliament that a government report on the scandal “excavates the dysfunction, disconnection, elitism, the narcissism that dominate the culture of the Vatican to this day.”

It was the most bristling attack ever delivered on the Vatican by the head of a democratic government, and one that many observers took as the definitive end of Ireland’s traditional role as a bulwark of the faith.

Last month, however, in a startling reversal of form, a senior government minister named Simon Coveney traveled to the eternal city to ceremonially [open a new Irish Embassy](#) to the Holy See, complete with a new resident ambassador. Less than four years later, it’s as if the rift never happened.

What accounts for the about-face?

For one thing, government officials privately concede today that closing the embassy was a mistake, one that diminished Ireland’s standing

internationally. After the election of Pope Francis, they seized on the new pontiff's appeal to provide cover for rolling it back.

Yet equally instrumental, Irish officials and politicians agree, has been the impact of [Archbishop Charles J. Brown](#), a charming and hardworking Irish-American chosen by Pope Benedict XVI as his ambassador to Ireland at the height of the sex abuse row in 2011, and confirmed in that role by Francis.

“There's no doubt Brown's positive engagement both with politicians and the wider community had a huge influence on convincing the government that it was wrong to close the embassy, and that [it] should be restored,” said David Quinn, director of an Irish religious think-tank called the [Iona Institute](#).

Since he's been on the job, Brown, a 55-year-old New York native, has not only established strong working relationships with the political establishment, he's also put a positive public face back on the Catholic Church following an historic nadir.

If the Irish saved civilization, in other words, many Irishmen say this American is helping to save their Church.

At first glance, Brown seems an unlikely candidate for the role.

As an official from 1994 to 2011 at the [Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith](#), the Vatican's doctrinal watchdog agency, he worked closely with Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the future Benedict XVI. Though Brown earned a reputation for theological acumen and a strong work ethic, it wasn't exactly a job that put a premium on winning friends and influencing people.

Traditionally speaking, there's a steep cultural gap in the Vatican between theologians and diplomats: Those who police doctrine internally, and those who try to express it positively for the outside world. Theologians worry about clarity; diplomats seek consensus.

For most of his career, Brown clearly belonged to the former camp, leaving some to see his posting to Dublin amid an unprecedented crisis as a prescription for disaster.

More at -

<http://www.cruxnow.com/church/2015/04/27/american-bishop-is-a-surprise-hit-as-the-popes-man-in-ireland/>

Annual Anzac Service in Christ Church Cathedral



Deputy Ambassador of New Zealand, Mr Rob Taylor

The 26th annual Anzac Service took place at Choral Evensong on Sunday past (April 26) in Christ Church Cathedral, sung by the cathedral choir. The service marked Anzac Day and the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli Landings. It was organised by the New Zealand Ireland Association with the assistance of the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church Cathedral.

The address was delivered by the Deputy Ambassador of New Zealand, Mr Rob Taylor (pictured courtesy of Patrick Hugh Lynch), and

others taking part in the service included the Australian Ambassador, Dr Ruth Adler, and the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys, TD. A reception after the Service of Remembrance was held in Dublin Castle, hosted by the Minister Humphreys.

The President was represented by his Aide de Camp and there were representatives of the Defence Forces of Ireland, the UK, New Zealand and the United States. Members of the diplomatic community were in attendance along with many New Zealanders living in Ireland, including Irish rugby head coach, Joe Schmidt.

Anzac Day has been marked in Ireland since 1990 when the New Zealand and Australian communities first gathered on April 25 to honour the memories of Anzac soldiers. There has been an Anzac ceremony every year since then with the focus gradually extending to include Irish, Turkish and other nations' soldiers who fought and died at Gallipoli.

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Royal Black Preceptory confirms church service block



The Right Reverend Harold Miller, Bishop of Down and Dromore, with Rev Alan Kilpatrick

Uncertainty persists as to why the Royal Black Preceptory has been blocked from holding a service in a church outside Portadown.

News Letter - The district grouping of the loyal order holds an annual church service which rotates around a number of churches – and

every 12 years it comes back to St Matthias Church of Ireland at Knocknamuckley.

However, the new rector there, Rev Alan Kilpatrick, who has reportedly shaken some of the congregation with his modern approach to worship, has blocked the order from the using the church building for the service.

In the first official statement on the matter, the Royal Black Preceptory (RBP) confirmed to the News Letter: “The church was not available but the church hall was offered and the district accepted this. The service will go ahead on May 10.”

The News Letter understands that no explanation has been given for the block.

“The RBP is a Christian organisation,” the order spokesman said. “Every single parade the RBP organises is either going to or coming from a religious service.”

It is understood some 200 people signed a petition to Bishop Harold Miller appealing for the church service to be reinstated.

The denomination confirmed that the bishop replied that he is “minded to consider setting up a theological commission to report to me on this matter if it remains contentious”.

Rev Kilpatrick, a Scotsman who has ministered in South Africa, has prompted some controversy in the church since he was installed 18 months ago, with reports of the congregation being split on his modern methods.

A Church of Ireland spokesman confirmed that the rector declined to hold the church service but agreed to provide the church hall, which was accepted by the RBP.

The spokesman confirmed the bishop’s receipt of the letter and petition, adding that the bishop had replied that “any special service [in the church] should only take place with the agreement of the rector”.

With regards to concerns over the rector’s methods, Bishop Miller has invited the congregation to a “listening” meeting with diocesan representatives this week, which will be followed by a similar meeting with the rector.

www.newsletter.co.uk/news/regional/royal-black-preceptory-confirms-church-service-block-1-6712288

First Messy Church service in St Patrick's Ballymena

St Patrick's Parish, Ballymena, held its first Messy Church family service in the Church Hall on April 19, with 104 people attending.

The theme was 'Eating and Drinking together' and the service was based on the story of Jesus feeding the 5000.

Lucy McLoughlan, one of Ballymena Parish's part time Children's and Youth workers said: "We were happy to see some newcomers and some faces that hadn't been with us for a while. It all went very well and we received very good feedback. We now hope to take it to St. Columba's, our sister church, and also hold another one in October at St Patricks."

St Patrick's Youth Committee had explored the concept of Messy Church, seeing it as a way to support families in the parish and to reach out to unchurched families in the locality. The monthly family service took place in the church hall and had an informal, relaxed atmosphere and ended with tea and activities. The team felt it was important to build on this momentum.

The Youth Committee set about acquiring training. One of the Sunday School teachers completed a one day workshop in Bangor on Messy Church and five of the team attended the Building Blocks conference in November 2014 which had Lucy Moore the founder of Messy Church as the keynote speaker. (Building Blocks is an annual training event for Christian children's ministry leaders.)

Lucy also went to see Messy Church at Christmas in Ahoghill Parish and was very impressed. She organised a Messy Church taster evening for leaders and volunteers and Jill Hamilton, Children's Project Development Officer for Connor Diocese, led the evening and shared some ideas. Jill is the Messy Church regional co-ordinator for Northern Ireland.

The team also carried out a leaflet drop in local housing estates to inform people and encourage them to come along to Messy Church and this proved successful with some newcomers coming along on the day.

Rugby Great Lionized in Garvagh

The ex-British and Irish Lion, Trevor Ringland, has been praised for his work to promote peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland.



The former rugby international, who was capped more than 30 times for Ireland, was the guest speaker at a traditional, cross-community St Patrick's Eve supper in Garvagh, hosted by John Mitchel's GAC, Glenullin.

The Rector of St Paul's Parish in Garvagh, Rev. Paul Whittaker, praised Ringland for his work to promote peace: "Trevor is not just a celebrated rugby international; he has committed his life to using sport as a conduit for peace and reconciliation in our community."

Mr Whittaker singled out the former Lion's work with PeacePlayers International – a charity which unites and educates young Catholics and Protestants through sport – as an example of

model practice. “His message was both an encouragement for what we have achieved,” the rector said, “and a challenge to go further”.

The cross-community event has become a fixture in the Garvagh social calendar and Rev. Whittaker described this year’s as “the best celebration to date”. The evening’s entertainment featured Irish dancers from Glenullin, traditional musicians and St Paul’s COI Music Group. The highlight was a performance by the internationally-acclaimed Pipes of Peace.

Mr Whittaker acknowledged the support of the Church of Ireland Priorities Fund and the former Coleraine Borough Council. “In sharing a celebration of our patron saint,” the churchman said, “we can send a clear message that we intend to share the future together.”

Irish Methodist concern for Nepal

The Methodist Church in Ireland’s World Development and Relief Department (WDR) partner Kopila-Nepal based in the Western Development Region has so far reported that staff and their families are well.

However, they are trying to respond to the obvious need around them. They are desperately trying to access their project areas in the hills



around Pokhara to check on people who access their help.

Kopila has specialist skills around psychosocial welfare including trauma counselling. Kopila will be offering these skills in their own area and also in hospitals in Kathmandu.

Kopila Nepal is a non-profit making, non-sectarian, non-governmental social organization based in Western Development Region. Kopila Nepal is currently active in 5 district of Gandaki development region having its head office in Bulaudi, Pokhara-6, Kaski. After its establishment in 2001, Kopila Nepal's founders raised money locally, from friends and from their

own pockets to open two schools in remote areas. WDR of the Methodist Church in Ireland has been supporting these programmes since 2003.

For more information on Kopila-Nepal visit <http://www.kopilanepal.org.np/>

For more information on WDR visit <http://www.irishmethodist.org/wdr>

Irish Presbyterian Prayer Points for Nepal

<http://pcimissionoverseas.org/news/item/9111/#.VT4bQ9j8UHg.twitter>

Black Santa Fund Donates £6,000 For Relief Work In Nepal

Belfast Cathedral's Black Santa Fund is making a donation of £6,000 for relief work following the devastating earthquake in Nepal.

£5,000 will be sent via Christian Aid, and the other £1,000 will be channelled through Habitat for Humanity NI to help specifically with that organisation's work on the ground in Nepal.

Announcing the grants, The Dean of Belfast the Very Revd John Mann, said: *'This relatively small*

amount of money may seem like a drop in the ocean when we consider the scale of the natural disaster that is affecting this remote area that has many very inaccessible regions, and where resources are inadequate. However, it is symbolic of our concern, and reflects our prayers for all who have been affected in any way.'

Contributions to the annual Black Santa Sit-Out at Christmas on the steps of St Anne's are collected throughout the year and so the Cathedral is in a position to respond to crisis situations such as that in Nepal

PCI Call for Action on Mediterranean Migrant Crisis

In 2014, it is estimated 3,279 people died trying to cross the Mediterranean in this way. So far this year, it is believed that 1,754 have died, 800 of whom have died since Sunday, 19th April, as more attempts are made at the crossing due to improved weather conditions. It is believed that most people are fleeing to escape fighting or hunger.

Rev. Richard Kerr said, "Presbyterians are rightly appalled at the tragedy unfolding in the

Mediterranean Sea where an estimated 1,700 migrants have lost their lives this year. People, precious to God, are desperate to escape conflicts in Syria, violence in Sub-Saharan Africa or oppressive poverty. They are prepared to pay exorbitant fares and risk their lives in a perilous journey to what they perceive will be a better life for them and their families.

“European leaders and the international community need to make humanitarian action a priority. Adequate resources must be made available to not simply police borders, but to ensure the rescue of those who make these perilous journeys.”

Mr. Kerr continued, “Agreement reached last week by European Union leaders at their emergency meeting to increase search and rescue facilities and provide limited resettlement is only but a first step. It is important that they work together to address the underlying causes that drive people to take such incredible risks.”

He encouraged people to pray for all those people who find themselves with little choice, but to risk their lives – and also at times the lives of their children – in attempting the crossing.

He also asked that people pray for:

- Swift positive international action and solidarity in dealing with this issue.
- Concerted international diplomatic efforts to find peaceful and just solutions to the problems in the countries which are causing so many migrants to flee.
- For Christians to remember that people matter to God, and that we are called to protect the vulnerable across the world, and not just those in our own families and countries.

Media digest

Same sex

Same-sex marriage in Northern Ireland blocked for fourth time

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/same-sex-marriage-in-northern-ireland-blocked-for-fourth-time-1-6712770>

Children's rights groups urge Yes vote in same-sex marriage referendum - Irish Times

http://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/asia-pacific/children-s-rights-groups-urge-yes-vote-in-same-sex-marriage-referendum-1.2190832?utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=dlvr.it

“The No side seem fixated on the notion of the ‘ideal family’ – whatever that means” -
Journal.ie

http://www.thejournal.ie/no-side-joan-burton-2069920-Apr2015/?utm_source=twitter_self

Ukip offers Christians who object to gay marriage special legal protection - Telegraph

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/general-election-2015/11566605/Ukip-offers-Christians-who-object-to-gay-marriage-special-legal-protection.html>

Defence of marriage leaders speak up for mothers, fathers, children - Catholic World Report

<http://www.catholicworldreport.com/NewsBriefs/Default.aspx?rssGuid=irelands-defense-of-marriage-leaders-speak-up-for-mothers-fathers-children-52587/>

How America learned to love gay marriage - Telegraph

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/11154321/How-America-learned-to-love-gay-marriage.html>

Heritage

New home for centuries-old Downpatrick cross

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/new-home-for-centuries-old-downpatrick-cross-1-6712087>

War diaries of Fr Francis Gleeson go online -
Irish Times

http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/war-diaries-of-fr-francis-gleeson-go-online-1.2191271?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter

The Irish in Gallipoli: new online platform
launched - Irish Genealogy News

<http://www.irishgenealogynews.com/2015/04/the-irish-in-gallipoli-new-online.html>

Westminster Abbey's secrets to go on display -
Guardian

<http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2015/apr/28/westminster-abbey-secrets-to-go-on-display>

Comment

Do not be taken in by Sinn Fein's project 'to
rewrite history to justify their deeds' - Martin -
Irish Independent

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/politics/do-not-be-taken-in-by-sinn-feins-project-to-rewrite-history-to-justify-their-deeds-martin-31172288.html>

ITV

Report that a national service run by the Church of England to help people with debt problems is opening a Liverpool project today. The Church Credit Champions Network (CCCN), to be opened by the Bishop of Liverpool, Paul Bayes, has been set up to help churches to

engage faithfully and effectively with issues of money, debt and credit in their communities.

<http://www.itv.com/news/granada/update/2015-04-27/church-offers-alternative-to-payday-loans/>

Tel

Article questioning the call for an end to inequality mentions the Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, saying that income inequality is a "giant that must be slayed".

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/11564705/Why-you-should-stop-worrying-and-learn-to-love-inequality.html>

Tel/Mail

Further articles on St Luke's Primary School in Kingston (Southwark diocese) dropping its faith selection criteria. *Telegraph* columnist argues that going to church to get your child into a good school isn't automatically a bad thing and what may start out as a cynical move by parents can lead to genuine faith. She quotes former Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, who said that the Church is the only organisation that does not exist for itself but for those who live outside of it.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11566517/Dont-demonise-the-pushy-parents-in-the-pews.html>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3058234/Vicar-won-t-pick-pupils-based-religion-Church-England-school-dropped-faith-selection.html#ixzz3YZgjeRJI>

BBC

Report that a fundraising appeal to meet the costs of reburying Richard III has reached its £2.5m target. Leicester Cathedral officials said the money had been raised through grants, local businesses and individual donors. They said £1.6m was spent on the tomb and changes to the cathedral, with the rest going on displays and staff to handle increased visitor numbers. The Dean, David Monteith is quoted.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-leicestershire-32485873>

BBC

Item by presenter Ed Stourton on how church leaders are taking a strong stand on migration in response to the death of migrants on overcrowded boats off Italy.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-32477795>

Mail

Report that a council worker on a sit on mower accidentally cut down the start of a wild flower meadow project in the area around St Cuthbert's church in Darlington. It states the project, led by the Friends of the Earth group in the town, had won a £5,000 grant from the Royal Botanic Gardens, to transform the grounds.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3058301/Bungling-council-worker-destroys-blooming-meadow.html#ixzz3YZo9nKYW>

Eve Standard/Huff Post

Reports that The Northern Ireland Assembly has thrown out a proposal to introduce gay marriage, after DUP health minister Jim Wells resigned amid controversy over remarks about same sex relationships. It states Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK that has not introduced equal marriage for gay couples.

<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/northern-ireland-rejects-proposal-to-allow-gay-marriage-10208345.html>

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/04/27/gay-marriage-once-again-blocked-in-northern-ireland-by-socially-conservative-democratic-unionist-party_n_7152810.html?utm_hp_ref=uk-politics&ir=UK+Politics