



*A window depicting the winged lion which is the symbol of St Mark's gospel was dedicated recently in St Mark's, Lisburn.*

## **Lion Window Dedicated At Patronal Festival**

The highlight of the Patronal Festival Service at St Mark's, Ballymacash, Lisburn, (Diocese of Connor), on Sunday past, was the dedication of a new stained glass window depicting the winged lion which is the symbol of St Mark's gospel.

The window also contains a picture of a sword, recalling two New Testament passages –

Ephesians 6:17 and Hebrews 4:12 – where the sword represents the Word of God.

The window, which measures approximately six feet by three feet, was designed by David Esler, Proprietor of Leadlines and David Esler, based in Donegore, Co Antrim.

It was dedicated in memory of Sammy and Peggy Bryson.

The stained glass panel is the centrepiece of an overall artistic design which, when completed, will cover most of the high-level glass screen created in St Mark's as part of the major renovation and redesign of the church carried out in 2010.

In his address during the Patronal Festival Service the rector of St Mark's, Canon George Irwin, made reference to the significance of the winged lion both as a symbol of St Mark the Evangelist and also an ancient symbol of the resurrection.

He also recalled the sterling service rendered to the church and parish over the years by the late Sammy and Peggy Bryson who were foundation members of the Parish of Ballymacash which was created in 1967.

Reflecting on the progress of St Mark's Church over the years Canon Irwin said: *'Thanks to the grace and guidance of God and the unremitting commitment of people down through the generations, the church has maintained its witness.*

*'Sometimes, difficult decisions have had to be taken and courage was required, and each time we have been blessed by God. And if today, on the occasion of our Patronal Festival, we look back it is not because we are sentimental, but in order to remind ourselves that we stand on the shoulders of those wonderful servants of God like Sammy and Peggy Bryson whose love of God and commitment to the extension of his Kingdom in days gone by have to a great extent made us what we are.'*

## **Derry church leaders condemn bomb attack**

Bishop Ken Good, Diocese of Derry and Raphoe; Bishop Donal McKeown, Diocese of Derry; Revd Dr Robert Buick, Clerk of Derry and Donegal Presbytery; Revd Paul Gallucci, Acting Superintendent Minister, North West Methodist Mission Circuit issued a joint statement -

As church leaders in the city we condemn last night's bomb attack in Crawford Square unequivocally. Those responsible showed a complete disregard for human life and for the safety of people living and working in Crawford Square; among them are families with small children, and staff and residents of the North West Methodist Mission.

We are thankful that no one was injured or killed as a result of the attack. We wish to acknowledge the courage of the emergency services as they responded to the explosion and the subsequent security alert.

We will be praying for the residents of Crawford Square, the emergency services and those responsible for the bombing.

We invite everyone in our city to join us in working together peacefully for a better future for all our people.

News report at -

<http://www.derrynow.com/news/derry-church-leaders-visit-crawford-square-bomb-scene/28653>

**Become a Facebook Friend of CNI**

**Click on logo at CNI Home page**

## **Bali Nine: 'The whole place was very upset' - Irish priest describes death row inmates' final moments**

An Irish priest has told of the despair in the hours before eight people were executed in Indonesia for drugs-smuggling charges. Father Charlie Burrows described how a woman set to be executed was forced to say goodbye to her two young sons hours earlier than expected.

Irish Independent - Filipino woman Mary Jane Fiesta Veloso, who was later granted a stay of execution while the Philippines investigates her case, was shocked when she was told to say goodbye to her sons earlier than expected, a priest has told.

The Irish-born priest, who spoke and prayed with the inmates before their executions, said the 'biggest problem' of the day was the inmates' final goodbye to their families.

"The biggest problem of the day is they usually get to talk to the families about 4pm but, because of the executions, they announced at 2pm that we had to go home.

"Mary Jane and her family were there, she has two little boys, she was crying and saying, 'I just want to see these for the last time'...

"I was with the families for the last three days and meeting them.

More at -

<http://www.independent.ie/world-news/asia-pacific/bali-nine-the-whole-place-was-very-upset-irish-priest-describes-death-row-inmates-final-moments-31181053.html>

## **Ireland's religious leaders support call to recognise Armenian Genocide**

A call to recognise the killing of an estimated 1.5 million Armenians as "genocide," was supported by the leaders of the main churches on Sunday, according to [The Irish Times](#).

An ecumenical service of prayer, song and remembrance in Taney Parish Church, Dundrum, Dublin, heard Hayk Khemchyan consul with the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia say it was "time for our friends to recognise the killing as genocide."

On April 24th 1915 the Ottoman Turk authorities arrested the intellectual and spiritual leaders of

the minority Armenian population in Turkey and ultimately executed them.

It was the start of a programme which saw Armenian men rounded up and executed while women and children were sent on death marches, largely in to the Syrian desert where they were frequently robbed, raped and killed or ill-treated to death by their captors.

Roman Catholic auxiliary bishop of Dublin Raymond Field said Turkish authorities had always maintained that what happened was “the inevitable consequences of the war” in Europe at the time. But he said Pope Francis had defended the use of the word “genocide” at a recent mass in Rome to mark what the Roman Catholic Church referred to the martyrdom of the Armenians who died because of their membership of the Christian, Armenian Apostolic Church.

Representing Archbishop Diarmuid Martin he told the Armenians he was there “in solidarity with you, and we share your pain and sadness.” Bishop Field added he knew it was “difficult to forgive when successive governments deny the reality” of what happened.

Canon Patrick Thomas of the Church of Wales who has written a book Remembering the

Armenian Genocide 1915 said women were ripped open by their captors on suspicion they had swallowed gold coins, and sometimes the women were burnt alive so coins might be secured from their ashes.

Yet, he said British and American Governments now resolutely recoil from the term genocide.

President of the Jewish Representative Council Leonard Abrahamson said the “genocide” resonated with Jewish people as it had happened and “happened again 25 years later” in the form of the Holocaust. “It is incomprehensible that human beings can stoop to such evil and it is happening again today, around the world,” he said.

The Rev Ken Lindsay past-president of the Methodist Churches in Ireland read from the Gospel according to Matthew, Christ’s lesson that what you do to the least of his brethren, you do to him.

Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin Dr Michael Jackson also described the killing as a “genocide” which demanded “recognition and response.”

Dr Kristina Begoyan told the congregation her maternal grandfather had been killed and the



family forced into hiding on three occasions in 1915, 1917 and 1918 – the last time being when her grandfather and many of the men did not come back. The women and children made it to what is now Armenia and she was born there, she said.

## **Bishop's tribute to committed C of I rector**

Canon Jack Mercer, who died recently, was rector of the St Columbanus Parish in Ballyholme for 35 years of his 40-year ministry.

Belfast Telegraph - At his funeral service in St Columbanus Church, Bishop Gordon McMullan paid tribute to his service and commitment.

He said: "It is entirely fitting that this church and house of prayer should be Canon Jack Mercer's last resting place before he is taken on his last earthly journey - to the place of his burial - because this church and the parish of Ballyholme were at the heart of his ordained service."

Bishop McMullan added: "The fruit of that much blessed ministry was evidenced in the growth, strength and stability of his rectorship, and in the strong foundations on which his successors

have continued to build and minister in the parish of Ballyholme.



"A number of qualities and characteristics contributed to Canon Mercer's effective ministry.

"One was his openness to people of varying backgrounds.

"Another was his deep love for, and loyalty to, the Church of Ireland as an important instrument of Christ's witness and service in this island and outwards into the wider world from which it had gained and to which it gave."

The Bishop also paid tribute to Canon Mercer's enthusiasm for life.

"He approached the opportunities and challenges with active, positive energy of mind, spirit and body. In his leisure activities, as well as in his parish and wider Church involvements, this was his pattern of life.

"As a young man he was a fine cricketer and hockey player, in addition to his academic progress and preparation for ordination.

"In his later years he much enjoyed his golf, and the companionship of the members of Clandeboye Golf Club Leprechauns group of golfing friends, as well as his rounds with clergy friends."

Bishop McMullan also paid tribute to Canon Mercer's late wife, Jo, who was a former Diocesan President of the Mothers' Union.

## **Trócaire commits initial €100,000 to Nepal emergency response**

Shelter, food and water being distributed to affected communities

Trócaire yesterday committed an initial €100,000 to the Nepal emergency response. The organisation's response is focused on getting shelter, food and water to people left homeless as a result of last Saturday's devastating earthquake.

Trócaire has launched an emergency appeal in response to the earthquake and has requested the support of the public to raise money to deliver aid to those who need it. Donations can be made at [trocaire.org](http://trocaire.org) or by phoning 1850,408 408 (RoI) or 0800 912 1200 (NI).

As a member of the global Caritas network of humanitarian agencies, donations received by Trócaire will go towards the Caritas response. Noreen Gumbo, Trócaire's Head of Humanitarian

Programmes, said that aid is already reaching affected communities:

“Our partner organisations in Nepal have already begun distributing shelter, food and water to people left homeless by the earthquake. Food and water are also desperately needed. We are pledging an initial €100,000 to support their efforts and to ensure that more survivors are reached in these crucial days immediately following the earthquake. Sadly, the death toll in Nepal is likely to rise over the coming days as people are pulled from collapsed buildings and contact is made with more remote areas that have been cut-off due to the phone networks going down and damaged roads. Many thousands of people are homeless as a result of the earthquake. With over 60 aftershocks having hit Nepal since Saturday, people are too scared to go back inside and so an estimated one million people are sleeping in open spaces.”

Fr Pius Perumana, Director of Caritas Nepal, warned that the death toll could be three times as high as currently estimated:

“We are distributing the necessary things – tarpaulin, tents and food. People are in dire need. I have seen a lot of destruction, with so many buildings collapsed. People are still

trapped in buildings and we don't know whether they are dead or alive. Most of the shops and markets are closed so there is reduced availability of food, water and sanitary items. What the people need immediately is shelter. Temperatures are dropping at night and there is also rain. Children are sleeping outside at night. It is really traumatic for them.

Over 3,000 are confirmed dead but I have heard estimates that it will be at least three times higher because we are still getting reports from outlying districts and villages where there are not communications facilities.”

## **Northern Ireland's 'culture war'? Don't believe the hype...**

Progress in the Northern Ireland peace process has been delayed by rows over what is arguably a phoney 'culture war'. In the second of a special three part series using infographics to challenge political stalemate, The Detail's Steven McCaffery illustrates how two of the biggest stumbling blocks to a new future are founded on misunderstanding and political spin.

He writes -

[churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)

When it comes to politics, both unionists and nationalists have long, if selective, memories.

Politicians in particular are happier to pull the historical threads that tie-in with their own electoral needs.

The recurring battles over loyal order parades and around the Irish language are good examples.

Depending on who you ask, parading has been a hot topic since the Drumcree stand-off of 1995, or since the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland warned of the dangers of political parading in 1839.

Today there are repeated disputes over the decisions of the government-appointed Parades Commission.

It has adjudicated over marches since the infamous long-hot-summers of the 1990s when parades became the focus of mass violence between nationalists and unionists.

Many of the most tense episodes in that period centred on the Drumcree stand-off in Portadown, where Orangemen were rerouted away from the nationalist Garvaghy Road.

But, for all the controversy, the Parades Commission is nothing new. In 1857 government commissioners concluded that 'Orange' events led to "violence, outrage,

religious animosities, hatred between the classes and, too often, bloodshed and loss of life".

Even the outbreak of the Troubles was sign-posted by unionist parades, as well as Civil Rights marches.

Parades and opposition to them have routinely been the weapons with which this society battled for political advantage.

But that isn't the whole story either, because for many families the marching tradition is a beloved part of life that links the generations. Such members of the loyal orders are angered to see the reputation of their institutions damaged by incendiary incidents.

The climate around parading has improved hugely over the last 20 years, including at Drumcree, where the heat has gone out of the issue.

The parade flashpoints that do still exist have come to dominate the headlines and have led some unionists to claim that their culture is being stamped out.

But the facts suggest the opposite, pointing to a positive picture for Orangemen and other unionist marchers.

And even for those nationalists who see red when an Orange banner flutters into view, there is evidence that in most areas, the parading tradition continues unhindered.

More at -

<http://www.thedetail.tv/articles/northern-ireland-s-culture-war-don-t-believe-the-hype?>



utm\_source=mailinglist&utm\_medium=email&utm\_campaign=3-northern-ireland-s-culture-war-don-t-bel

## **The close relationship between Scottish catholic bishops and the SNP**

The continuing nationalist surge in Scotland means Britain may face constitutional turmoil that is unparalleled since the unrest that led most of Ireland to depart the Union in 1922 and which engulfed Northern Ireland for a generation after 1969.

Tom Gallagher in The Tablet - Religion is often seen as an accessory of nationalism in Ireland but, in both these crises, the leadership of the Catholic Church – and many of the clergy – usually behaved with caution. However real the grievances of some of their flock, a militant church line was seen as potentially disastrous.

Nowadays, such caution is less in evidence among the leaders of the Catholic Church in Scotland. Last September, shortly after 55 per cent of voters, on an 86 per cent turnout, endorsed the 307-year union in a referendum, the Archbishop of Glasgow, Philip Tartaglia, wrote an adulatory letter to Alex Salmond, the

then leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP) who had just announced he was resigning as First Minister. The letter referred to Salmond's "outstanding career in politics" and to his having been "a wonderful ambassador and champion for Scotland at home and abroad".

Similar stellar praise from the top of the Church greeted the emergence of Nicola Sturgeon last December. The historically-minded Salmond is mindful of the Church's role as an emblem of past independence. Sturgeon is a secular lawyer who, as Minister of Health, was clearly unsympathetic towards Catholic employees in the NHS unwilling to participate in abortions, and who offered very public backing for same-sex marriage.

Archbishop Tartaglia appears to be on the same political journey as the numerous Catholics who have swelled the ranks of the SNP in recent years. At times, priests in his archdiocese have struggled to separate their pro-independence sympathies from discharging their religious duties. For years, several of the leading officials who advise the Scottish hierarchy have also been well known for their pro-SNP views. They include Peter Kearney, director of the Scottish Catholic Media Office, and David Kerr, an

adviser to the Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh, Leo Cushley.

Archbishop Cushley insisted in 2014 that a rowdy referendum campaign, marked at times by open intimidation, had been civil and constructive, turning a deaf ear when presented with evidence to the contrary.

The Church of Scotland is less sanguine. The current Moderator of Scotland's established church, the Rt Revd John Chalmers, felt the need to announce a service of reconciliation on 21 September, one which both Salmond and Sturgeon declined to attend. Almost 70 per cent of voters who defined themselves as Protestants voted against the split, while 57 per cent of Catholics, often claiming Irish ancestry, voted in favour of separation.

More at -

<http://www.thetablet.co.uk/blogs/1/625/the-close-relationship-between-scottish-bishops-and-the-snp>

## **Egypt: Muslims raise funds to build Coptic church in Cairo**

Egypt has in the past been plagued by sectarian violence, but Christians and Muslims have united

in the wake of brutality perpetuated by Islamic State.

Muslims in Egypt have donated money towards the building of a Coptic church in Al Manufiyya, north of Cairo, signalling another step towards solidarity in a country previously divided along sectarian lines.

Coptic Orthodox Bishop Benjamin, of the Diocese of Al Manufiyya, began a collection of donations for the church, which will be dedicated to the Virgin Mary. According to Fides news agency, a number of Islamic leaders in the area encouraged local Muslims to contribute; a suggestion that was taken up most eagerly by young people and children.

Pleased with the success of the initiative, Bishop Benjamin has urged other communities to follow suit, and said there is a message to learn from the way that Christians and Muslims are working together.

Though Egypt has in the past been plagued by sectarian violence, members of both faiths have been making a concerted effort to unite in the

wake of brutality perpetuated by Islamic State in the Middle Eastern region.

Muslim president Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi visited St Mark's Cathedral in Cairo on the Coptic Christmas Eve, becoming the first of the country's leaders ever to attend a Coptic Christian mass.

Standing next to Pope Tawadros II, head of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria and the highest Coptic authority in Egypt, Al-Sisi told the congregation: "Throughout the years, Egypt taught the world civilization and humanity, and the world expects a lot from Egypt during the current circumstances.

"It's important for the world to see this scene, which reflects true Egyptian unity, and to confirm that we're all Egyptians, first and foremost. We truly love each other without discrimination, because this is the Egyptian truth."

There were concerns that these efforts could be undone when ISIS murdered a number of Egyptian Christians earlier this year, however. A video was released by the jihadist group in February, purporting to show 21 men, "people of

the cross, the followers of the hostile Egyptian Church" according to a subtitle, being beheaded by masked militants in Libya.

Ramen Atallah of Bible Society Egypt said that though ISIS may have hoped to capitalise on religious divisions in Egypt, the killings actually served to unite people of different faiths in the country.

"Christians have responded by sorrowfully calling out to God, and Muslims have shown love and care towards them," he said.

Last week, it was announced that priests and Imams in Minya, the home province of those beheaded, are launching an initiative to encourage peaceful co-existence in schools.

Supported by the Grand Imam of Al Azhar, Ahmad al-Tayyeb, and Patriarch Tawadrow II of the Coptic Orthodox Church, religious leaders will meet with students to encourage a culture of tolerance and respect between those of different faiths.

## **Media digest**

## **Karen Buckley**

Hundreds of mourners gather at church for emotional funeral of murdered student - Irish Mirror, BBC, RTE

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/karen-buckley-hundreds-mourners-gather-5597429>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-32479189>

<http://www.rte.ie/news/2015/0428/697220-karen-buckley/>

## **Moral issues**

Gay marriage vote exposes deep divisions within Northern Ireland parties - Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/gay-marriage-vote-exposes-deep-divisions-within-northern-ireland-parties-31176655.html>

Ukip 'would protect same-sex marriage opponents' - News Letter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/ukip-would-protect-same-sex-marriage-opponents-1-6714760>

Analysis: DUP strategy to avoid moral issues in disarray - News Letter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/analysis-dup-strategy-to-avoid-moral-issues-in-disarray-1-6712551>

DUP soft on 'vile sin' of homosexuality: Foster - News Letter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/dup-soft-on-vile-sin-of-homosexuality-foster-1-6712547>

## **Assisted dying**

'Justice done' as jury acquits carer Gail O'Rorke of assisting sick woman's suicide - Irish Independent

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/courts/justice-done-as-jury-acquits-carer-gail-ororke-of-assisting-sick-womans-suicide-31180940.html>

Campaigners win right to challenge assisted dying prosecution policy - Guardian

[http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/apr/28/campaigners-win-right-challenge-assisted-dying-prosecution-policy-suicide-act?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/apr/28/campaigners-win-right-challenge-assisted-dying-prosecution-policy-suicide-act?CMP=share_btn_tw)

## **World**

Nigerian army rescues 200 girls and 93 women during Boko Haram offensive - Guardian

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/28/nigeria-army-rescue-boko-haram-girls-sambisa-forest>



Mediterranean migrants: No one makes this journey just to pick up benefits - Guardian

[http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/apr/26/mediterranean-migrants-journey-benefits-anti-immigration?CMP=share\\_btn\\_link](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/apr/26/mediterranean-migrants-journey-benefits-anti-immigration?CMP=share_btn_link)

## **Guard/Tel**

Report that the Royal Bank of Scotland has appointed one of its own executives to run Williams & Glyn - the branch network being formed from the bailed-out bank. Jim Brown, who currently runs the Ulster Bank bank division, will replace John Maltby, a former executive at Lloyds Banking Group, who led the consortium backed by the Church of England that was selected in September 2013 to take control of the 314 RBS branches being repackaged as W&G.

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/apr/28/rbs-replaces-williams-glyn-chief-john-maltby-with-own-jim-brown>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/banksandfinance/11569277/RBS-drafts-in-Ulster-Bank-boss-to-lead-Williams-and-Glyn.html>

## **Guard**

Article examining BPs resolution on climate change, initiated by a coalition of activists and led by those acting for the Church of England. Helen Wildsmith of [CCLA](#), which manages

[churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)

£1.5bn of funds for the Church of England, is quoted. It states interviews with activist shareholders raises uncomfortable questions about the extent to which leading campaigners collaborated with oil firms behind closed doors to achieve the resolution, backed by 98 per cent of shareholders.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/apr/28/bps-activist-resolution-triumph-for-environmentalists-or-was-it>

## **Guard**

Reports from a summit held by the Vatican on climate change. A senior Roman Catholic leader said that increasing use of fossil fuels is disrupting Earth on an "almost unfathomable scale", as the Vatican welcomed the UN and faith representatives to the summit ahead of the Pope's Encyclical on the environment, which is expected to be released in June.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/apr/28/vatican-climate-change-summit-to-highlight-moral-duty-for-action>

## **Ind**

Further report that Prince Charles has become the latest high profile figure to shun fossil fuel company holdings in both his private investments and charitable trusts. Referring to the original article in the Financial Times, it

mentions other companies and the Church of England which are reviewing their shares in fossil fuel companies.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/prince-charles-shuns-investments-in-fossil-fuel-companies-10210293.html>

**Are you a Twitter user?**

**Please click on TWITTER on home page to receive daily headlines from CNI**