



Clergy urge faithful to give blood in spirit of Holy Week

In a campaign dubbed “Flesh and Blood”, priests and pastors from a variety of denominations are urging their congregations to get in the spirit of Easter Week and donate blood as part of the Christian tradition of giving.

Examiner - Pastor Paul Carley of Celbridge Christian Independent Penetcostal Church said



Canon Stephen Neill and colleagues prepare to donate blood.

that, instead of taking up the weekly offering last Sunday, he encouraged his congregation to give blood.

His Catholic counterpart Fr Paul Taylor of St Patrick's Celbridge & St Bridgid's Straffan, as well as Church of Ireland Rev Stephen Neil (who was instrumental in tracking US President Barack Obama's Irish ancestors) of the parish of Celbridge & Straffan, also decided to give blood donation "a push" this week to tie in with the Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS) clinics currently under way in Co Kildare.

Pastor Carley said that while the churches have their own distinctive doctrines, they shared the ethos of giving to those in need.

“This is a campaign where we could all join together even though we have very distinct differences of faith,” said Pastor Carley.

“It’s also a way of making the Church more relevant.”

The pastor, who last donated blood in 1982, attended the IBTS Celbridge clinic on Wednesday and described his experience as “a dream” thanks to a nurse called Rose. “There was no pain. I didn’t faint,” he said, adding that, instead of Guinness, he had “a nice Pepsi and two Mars bars”.

“It was great, very impressive, so my advice is if you’ve never given blood, it’s a great time to start,” he said.

Donor recruitment manager at the IBTS, Aisling O’Brien, said that the IBTS was delighted to have the support of the churches “to bring real awareness of the constant need for blood donations and enable us to reach in to communities to help maintain supply to all our hospitals”.

For further details of IBTS clinics, visit www.ibts.ie and check the clinic calendar. Only 3% of the Irish population gives blood and 3,000 blood donors are needed each week.

The Flesh and Blood campaign (fleshandblood.org) began in the UK to increase the number of blood and organ donors and is now being promoted in Ireland.

‘Homeless Jesus’ sculpture delayed on way to Dublin



Sculptor Tim Schmalz with a model of his ‘Homeless Jesus’ bronze.

The “Homeless Jesus” sculpture was due to arrive in [Dublin](#) on Good Friday and, following clearance by customs, is expected to be installed on the grounds of [Christ Church Cathedral](#) a week later on April 10th.

Patsy McGarry in Irish Times - It was originally intended that the sculpture would be blessed by Catholic Archbishop of Dublin [Diarmuid Martin](#) and his [Church of Ireland](#) counterpart Archbishop [Michael Jackson](#) at Christ Church on Good Friday evening, but its journey from Rotterdam is understood to have been delayed by heavy seas.

The 7ft-wide bronze by Canadian sculptor [Tim Schmalz](#) depicts a park bench with a faceless cloaked figure lying on it, with holes in its feet.

“Homeless Jesus” has been presented to Dublin by an anonymous North American Episcopalian benefactor, who is also giving copies to 11 other European cities, including [Vatican](#) City in Rome.

A competition for the most appropriate location for “Homeless Jesus” was launched by The Irish Times in December 2014, when readers were asked to nominate preferences.

Readers voted for it to be placed on Molesworth Street or on the plinth at Leinster House, near where homeless man [Jonathan Corrie](#) died.

However, Tim Schmalz, a devout Catholic, visited locations on a trip to Dublin in January and decided on Christ Church Cathedral as “it is the spiritual heart of Dublin”.

Café Church at Kill O' the Grange Offers Informal Setting for Worship



Café Church is a new initiative launched by Kill O'The Grange Parish Church (Dublin diocese) on Sunday evening, January 25 2015. Meeting at 8.00 p.m. on the last Sunday of each month, it provides an informal and relaxed setting for worship, and it is hoped that it will appeal to a wide spectrum of people. The events are held in the main hall of the Parish Centre, with a setting less formal than in a church service. Tables and chairs are laid out and refreshments are provided.

So far, the parish has held three of these monthly events. In addition to praise songs and an address, there have been testimonies from people who have found faith in Jesus. For example, in January those gathered heard from a number of people who have been through the Tiglin experience, and in February some friends from Betel in Shankill addressed them.

The latest Café Church was held on Sunday March 29 and was attended by Archbishop Michael Jackson. During an evening of song and prayer, several parishioners spoke.

Louis Hemmings read two of his poems and there were testimonies from Hilda Shepherd and Averil Brennan. Finally the Archbishop gave an account of his own journey of faith.

Café Church is open to all age groups – from 0 to over 100! It is the prayer of parishioners that those who come along will leave feeling enriched by the Holy Spirit, and enabled to serve the Lord more faithfully in their daily lives.

Eucharistic Congress will be held in Knock in September

On Holy Thursday, the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference announced that a National



Eucharistic Congress will be held in Knock on Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 September 2015.

The National Congress will be an opportunity to reflect on the fruits of the 50th International Eucharistic Congress, which was held in Dublin in 2012, and a spiritual preparation for the next International Congress, scheduled to take place in Cebu, Philippines, in January 2016. The context in which our National Congress will be celebrated includes the Synod of Bishops on the “Vocation and Mission of the Family” which will take place in the Vatican during October, as well as the Year of Consecrated Life.

It is hoped that a pilgrim group from Ireland will participate in the 51st International Eucharistic Congress in Cebu. Details will be published after Easter.

The last National Eucharistic Congress in Ireland was celebrated at the Marian Shrine in Knock during June 2011 and it marked the one year countdown to the '50th International Congress 2012' in Dublin.

Knock Shrine: The story of Knock began on the 21 August 1879 when Our Lady, Saint Joseph and Saint John the Evangelist appeared at the south gable of Knock Parish Church. This miraculous apparition was witnessed by fifteen people, young and old. Knock is an internationally recognised Marian Shrine and was visited by Saint John Paul II as part of his 1979 papal pilgrimage to Ireland. During his visit, which coincided with the Shrine's centenary year, the late pope celebrated Mass at the Shrine and addressed the sick, their helpers and pilgrimage directors. Archbishop Michael Neary, Archbishop of Tuam, is the custodian of the Marian Shrine and Father Richard Gibbons is parish priest of Knock and rector of the shrine. Please see: www.knock-shrine.ie

Christ's willing sacrifice - Presbyterian Moderator's Easter message

In his Easter Message, Presbyterian Moderator Dr. Michael Barry reflects on the fact that while some may consider Jesus as a 'victim', the Bible never portrays Him as such. Dr Barry writes that His crucifixion 'was clearly within His control', undertaken willingly and done out of love for us.

One of the many important topics discussed in recent years has been the definition of a victim. It is a discussion that often divides, and a debate that will undoubtedly continue and will require much sensitivity and wisdom.

At Easter, as we think of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, there are some who refer to Him as a 'victim'. In an otherwise fine hymn by Charles Wesley, he begins with the line 'Victim Divine, thy grace we claim,' yet the Bible never portrays Jesus as a victim. In fact Christ makes it very clear that no one takes His life from Him. He lays it down Himself: "The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord." (John 10:17).

Jesus was not a victim. His crucifixion was clearly within His control. He was not forced onto the cross, but lay on it willingly. He offered his hands and feet to the nails. He gave His side to the spear.

But why would He do it? Not because we are His friends - it was 'while we were still sinners Christ died for us.' (Romans 5:8) it was 'when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him' (5:10). That is what makes God's love - in the words of Isaac Watt's great hymn 'When I Survey the Wondrous Cross' - 'so amazing, so divine, demands my life, my soul, my all.'

And because Christ showed such love to us while we are His enemies, He has the right to demand of His followers that they in turn show love to their enemies. That is something that we cannot do in our own strength, it only comes when we share in Christ's resurrection life, which is open to all who come to Him.

May you know that new and abundant life this Easter as you celebrate the greatest event in the history of the world.

Presbyterians to reflect on Christ's Resurrection at Dawn

On Easter Sunday, 5th April, thousands of Irish Presbyterians will gather at various locations to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Many of these gatherings won't take place in church or

at traditional church service times – but at dawn.

The dawn service has grown to become a popular way of marking Christ's Resurrection in a more visible way, highlighting the importance of this day in the Christian calendar and people's personal faith.

Once again many scenic locations have been chosen as places to meet together, with the earliest being at 6am. In addition, the offer of a tasty breakfast after some of the services allows a special time of fellowship together.

C of I paper's archives highlight Gallipoli campaign and clergy families war service

The RCB Library has now released in full the weekly editions of the 1915 *The Church of Ireland Gazette* online, highlights from which are presented via a digital exhibition as the April 2015 Archive of the Month.

The 1915 editions add to those already available for the years 1913 and 1914, enabling further analysis of various aspects of the momentous

changes that occurred in Ireland and now being marked in the Decade of Commemorations.

The contents of the Church of Ireland Gazette provide an invaluable resource about the opinions and attitudes of members of the Church of Ireland through changing times. Written and read by lay and clerical members of the Church, north and south, access via the online search engine brings to life at the touch of a button how unfolding political events in Ireland and abroad were communicated to and received by members of this significant minority community on the island one hundred years ago.

Last year the Library (which is the principal repository for Church of Ireland records) launched a sponsorship appeal to continue the work of digitization of this important resource. These efforts have come to the attention of the Irish government, and financial support from the National Commemorations Programme (managed by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht) has made possible the work presented online for the first time covering the 1915 editions. It is hoped that further support from other individuals will enable the work to continue over the next few years, and sponsorship details are available on the presentation page.

The online exhibition highlights the Gallipoli Campaign by the Allied forces which began on 25 April 1915, and would continue for over 8 months until 9 January 1916. The paper's weekly war column "The War Week by Week" carried interesting analysis of the operation to secure the Dardanelles and indeed all the other theatres of war. By 1915, the initials "W.B.W." under the column reveal that the editor himself, Warre B. Wells, was author of their texts which drew on the latest bulletins issued by the War Office. As we have previously noted, Wells served as *Gazette* editor during the entire period of the First World War. A layman and Redmondite he clearly supported Irish involvement in the military effort by endorsing and publicising active recruitment at every opportunity in his editorials and columns.

A significant new feature introduced to the weekly *Gazette* from the 24 September 1915 was the "Roll of Honour of Clergy" which sought to illustrate the military service of clerical families, through publication of a series of portraits with accompanying biographical sketches of the sons, or near relations of Irish clergy who were either 'bearing arms', or had already 'laid down their lives in their country's cause'.

The new feature began with the eldest son of the Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Revd John Baptist Crozier – Major Baptist Crozier – who served with the Royal Artillery. Alongside Crozier, and more poignantly appeared the picture of Robert Bernard, the younger son of the Rt Revd J.H. Bernard, Bishop of Ossory, who, having served with the Royal Fusiliers in India, is reported as being killed in action on 26th April 1915 at Sedd-el-Bahr on the Gallipoli Peninsula, the day after the Fusiliers effected a landing on this beach at the beginning of the Gallipoli campaign.

Further background about the history of the Gazette (including a full list of its editors) produced in conjunction with the digital release of the 1913 editions as the Archive of the Month for August 2013 is permanently available here: <http://ireland.anglican.org/about/175>

The online release of 1915 will be on Wednesday 1st April 2015 at www.ireland.anglican.org/library/archive

Concerns regarding new head of Anglican Communion Office views on homosexuality and Gafcon links



Episcopal Cafe, a major Anglican magazine blog has carried on April 2 an article expressing doubts about the suitability of the recently appointed Secretary General, Bishop Idowu-Fearon (See CNI report on appointment in yesterday's issue). He succeeds the Rt Revd Kenneth Kearon, now the Bishop of Limerick & Killaloe.

The Episcopal Cafe article states - The newly-named Secretary General of the Anglican Communion Office said in 2014, "The government has criminalised homosexuality which is good, our battle is not against human beings, it is against the devil." In the job description for the position of Secretary General, reconciliation was a primary consideration.

Reconciliation within the Anglican Communion is a primary goal of Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Bishop Idowu-Fearon is a long and vocal opponent of the acceptance of LGBT persons in the church. Some examples:

In an [interview in 2007](#) he told the *Dallas Morning News*,

[W]e feel we are deceived, we have been cheated by the people the Lord Jesus Christ used to introduce us to the Scriptures, to bring us to a new faith in the Lord Jesus. They are telling us that it's not wrong after all, that it's a natural way. But we say: You are wrong; the Bible is right. So it's not just a question of human sexuality. It's about the authority of Scripture. For us, Scripture judges every culture. What I hear in the Western world is that culture judges Scripture. That's the basic difference. It's not a question of sex or no sex.

From "[No going back on stand against gay marriage – Anglican Communion](#)," March 2014, in the Nigerian newspaper *New Telegraph*:

The Church of Nigeria, (Anglican Communion) said yesterday that there was no going back on

its 1998 stand against promoters of homosexuality and bi-sexual tendencies. Leadership of the communion lauded the Federal Government for the decisive step it took banning the ugly practices.

Bishop of Kaduna Diocese of the Anglican Communion, Most Rev (Dr) Josiah Idowu-Fearon, who spoke at the induction/investiture of knights and dames, held in Benin, Edo State capital, stated that legalising gay marriage or such acts amounted to making God's good creatures and standards to look imperfect.

Rev. Idowu-Fearon said, "Our battle today is not against homosexuals, our battle today is against those who say God's standards are not good enough for us.

The government has criminalised homosexuality which is good, our battle is not against human beings, it is against the devil." He urged all those already initiated to reestablish the family system that is Anglican oriented.

"You knights should go back and re-establish the family system and that is the Anglican position. Our resolution of 1998 on homosexuality has not changed and will not change by the grace of God.

Updates:

Idowu-Fearon preached at the consecration of Welby as Bishop of Durham. The biography [*Archbishop Justin Welby: The Road to Canterbury*](#), contains the following passage,

The consecration sermon was preached by Bishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon of Kaduna, a significant choice. Idowu-Fearon was one of Welby's close friends, bringing a reminder of global Anglicanism to a quintessentially English event. Like his fellow Nigerian bishops, Idowu-Fearon had boycotted the Lambeth Conference in 2008 and attended GAFCON in Jerusalem instead. He had once been talked of as a possible successor to Peter Akinola as Archbishop of Nigeria, and was not afraid to criticise the Western church for its departure from Scripture. For example, as a guest at the Episcopal Church's general convention in Minneapolis in August 2003, he warned that the consecration of Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire would be a departure from Scripture and damage Anglicanism's global witness. Yet Idowu-Fearon was also seen to be more friendly towards the Western provinces than many of his fellow bishops within the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans because of his emphasis on maintaining dialogue at all costs. He was a member of the Lambeth Commission which produced the *The Windsor Report* and was honoured by Archbishop Williams in 2007 as one the 'Six Preachers' at Canterbury Cathedral. When the FCA primates

In 2011 he pleaded with Gafcon Primates [not to boycott Lambeth](#). He took a [similar stance](#) in 2007.

In 2008 he was [demoted from archbishop to bishop](#) by then Archbishop of Nigeria, Peter Akinola.

A range of reactions and comments have been carried by the Thinking Anglicans web site -

<http://www.thinkinganglicans.org.uk/archives/006927.html>

WCC condemns terror attack in Kenya

The World Council of Churches (WCC) has strongly condemned the terror attack yesterday on the campus of Garissa University in North East Kenya. A statement issued on 3 April from the WCC headquarters in Geneva has expressed grave concern over the recent reports from Kenya with nearly 150 people massacred – including the guards protecting the campus – and almost 80 others left wounded by al-Shabaab extremists, who reportedly explicitly targeted Christian students on the basis of their faith.

“The World Council of Churches calls for the Kenyan authorities and the international community to ensure criminal accountability for those who conceived this unconscionable act, and to prevent future attacks, especially those intended to provoke inter-religious confrontation and conflict,” said Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the WCC.

“I grieve deeply at the loss of so many young people, bright hopes for Kenya’s future. I offer

my commiserations to the families of the dead, my prayers for healing to the wounded, and my solidarity and accompaniment to our sisters and brothers in our member churches in Kenya,”said Tveit.

“The message of Easter is clear: ultimately, death and evil do not and will not triumph. As millions of Christians throughout the world unite today to remember the suffering and death of Jesus Christ on the cross, this year we also remember the lives of so many young women and men in Kenya, so full of promise and hope, so brutally extinguished.” added Tveit.

Islam is world's fastest-growing religion, will equal Christianity by 2050

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world and if present rates continue, soon after 2050 the number of Muslims will equal the number of Christians for the first time in history.

A new study from Pew Research says that differences in fertility rates, numbers of young people and numbers converting from one faith to another mean that over the next four decades, Islam will grow faster than any other major religion.

If current demographic trends continue, by 2050 the number of Muslims around the world, 2.8 billion, or 30 per cent of the population, will nearly equal the number of Christians, 2.9 billion, or 31 per cent.

The study shows that all of the world's major religious groups are poised for at least some growth in the coming decades with one exception - Buddhism. Surprisingly, given the trend towards secularisation in the UK at least, atheists, agnostics and other people who do not affiliate with any religion, will make up a declining share of the world's total population.

However, non-believers will increase in absolute numbers. It will merely appear as a proportionate decline because the growth among religious believers will be so much greater.

Some of the demographic changes will be particularly noticeable **in the UK**, where the report puts the numbers of Christians in 2010 at 64.3 per cent, Muslims at 4.8 per cent and unaffiliated at 28.8 per cent.

By 2050, it predicts, the numbers of Christians will have plummeted to below half, to 45.4 per cent of the population. More than one in ten, 11.3 per cent, of the UK's population will be

Muslim and nearly four in ten, 38.9 per cent, will not be affiliated to any religion at all.

Pew Research's research, report and interactive **website** are part of the Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures project, jointly funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts and the John Templeton Foundation to analyse religious change and its impact on society.

The new report explores changes from 2010 to 2050 in size and distribution of Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, folk religions, other religions and the unaffiliated.

While many people have offered predictions about the future of religion, these are the first formal demographic projections using data on age, fertility, mortality, migration and religious switching for multiple religious groups around the world.

The projections find that, if current trends continue, one in ten people living in Europe will be Muslim by 2050. India will retain a Hindu majority but also will have the largest Muslim population of any country in the world, surpassing Indonesia.

In the United States, Christians will decline from more than three-quarters of the population in 2010 to two-thirds in 2050, and Judaism will no longer be the largest non-Christian religion. Muslims will be more numerous in the US than people who identify as Jewish on the basis of religion.

Four out of every 10 Christians in the world will live in sub-Saharan Africa. The global Buddhist population, while not growing massively, will remain fairly stable because of low fertility rates and aging populations in countries such as China, Thailand and Japan.

Jews, the smallest religious group for which separate projections were made, are expected to grow 16 per cent, from a little less than 14 million in 2010 to 16.1 million worldwide in 2050.

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