



Portrait of Martin Luther by 16th-century German Renaissance painter Lucas Cranach the Elder

Martin Luther was a ‘teacher of the faith’, say German Catholic bishops

Germany’s Catholic bishops have praised Martin Luther as a “Gospel witness and teacher of the faith” and called for closer ties with Protestants.

In a 206-page report, “The Reformation in Ecumenical Perspective”, Bishop Gerhard Feige of Magdeburg, chairman of the German bishops’ ecumenical commission, said the “history of the Reformation has encountered a changeable reception in the Catholic Church, where its events and protagonists were long seen in a negative, derogatory light”.

“While the wounds are still felt to the present day, it is gratifying that Catholic theology has succeeded, in the meantime, in soberly reconsidering the events of the 16th century,” he said in the report, published this week by Germany’s Bonn-based bishops’ conference.

Bishop Feige said the “history and consequences” of the Reformation would be debated during its upcoming 500th anniversary, but added that there was consensus that previous mutual condemnations were invalid.

“Memories of the Reformation and the subsequent separation of Western Christianity are not free from pain,” Bishop Feige said. “But through lengthy ecumenical dialogue, the theological differences rooted in the period have

been re-evaluated – as is documented in the work presented by our ecumenical commission.”

Martin Lazar, the Magdeburg diocesan spokesman, told Catholic News Service on Wednesday that the Reformation still caused tensions in Germany, especially “in religiously separated families.”

The bishops’ report said the “Catholic Church may recognise today what was important in the Reformation – namely, that Sacred Scripture is the centre and standard for all Christian life.

“Connected with this is Martin Luther’s fundamental insight that God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ for the salvation of the people is proclaimed in the Gospel – that Jesus Christ is the centre of Scripture and the only mediator.”

The Reformation is traditionally dated from the October 1517 publication of Luther’s 95 Theses, questioning the sale of indulgences and the Gospel foundations of papal authority.

Luther was excommunicated by Pope Leo X in January 1521 and outlawed by Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.

The German bishops describe Luther as “a religious pathfinder, Gospel witness and teacher of the faith,” whose “concern for renewal in repentance and conversion” had not received an “adequate hearing” in Rome.

They said the reformer’s work still posed a “theological and spiritual challenge” and had “ecclesial and political implications for understanding the Church and the Magisterium.”

The report said a joint Catholic-Lutheran statement in 1980 commemorating the Augsburg Confession, which set out the new Lutheran faith, had been crucial in bringing churches closer, while another ecumenical statement in 1983, on the 500th anniversary of Luther’s birth, had started an “intensive engagement” with the reformer’s work.

A historic 1999 joint declaration on the doctrine of justification was a “milestone in ecumenical dialogue,” the report said, by recognising that remaining differences should “no longer have a church-dividing effect.”

The bishops’ report includes June 2015 conciliatory letters between the German bishops’ conference president, Cardinal Reinhard Marx,

and Lutheran Bishop Heinrich Stroh, president of the Evangelical Church of Germany, outlining plans for a 2017 ecumenical pilgrimage to the Holy Land and a Lent service devoted to “healing memories.”

US Evangelical Lutheran Church votes in favour of move to unity between Roman Catholics and Lutherans

The 2016 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Churchwide Assembly took several significant steps Aug. 10 moving forward the mission of this church as a church for the sake of the world.

By a vote of 931 to 9, the assembly overwhelmingly accepted the “Declaration on the Way,” a unique ecumenical document that marks a path toward greater unity between Roman Catholics and Lutherans. Following the vote, an emotional assembly stood to applaud the momentous decision.

At the heart of the document are 32 “Statements of Agreement” that state where Lutherans and

Roman Catholics do not have church-dividing differences on topics about church, ministry and the Eucharist. More tentatively, the document also explores differences that remain.

“Dear sisters and brothers, let us pause to honor this historic moment,” said ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton, addressing the assembly following the vote. “Though we have not yet arrived, we have claimed that we are, in fact, on the way to unity. After 500 years of division and 50 years of dialogue, this action must be understood in the context of other significant agreements we have reached, most notably the ‘Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification’ in 1999.”

Full document at -
<http://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/7848>

Heritage Week : 1916 tales from St John's Sandymount

The dissonant narratives of Dr Charles de Burgh Daly of the Royal Army Medical Corps who was fired upon by Countess Markievicz in Dublin in

April 1916, and of rebel organist Cecil Grange MacDowell, will feature in a Heritage Week exhibition at St John's Church, Park Avenue, Sandymount from Thursday 25th August to Sunday 28th August. The event will close on Sunday 28th August with a recital by St John's organist, Eoghan Ward, and uileann piper Fionn Ó hAlmhain, featuring music from both narratives, including pieces by MacDowell.

The exhibition is part of the commemorative programme 1916–2016 and reflects the connections of St. John's and its people with the events of 1916 both at home and abroad. Principally it focuses on the lives of both Dr De Burgh Daly, his immediate family and the loss of his son Charlie during the Battle of the Somme, and that of Cecil Grange MacDowell, who had been organist at St John's, who changed his name to Cathal Mac Dubhghaill, forsook his unionist background, joined the rebellion and wrote the first arrangement of the National Anthem.

The exhibition will recall other elements in the life of St John's as they occurred during 1916 including the launch of a book by Emily French De Burgh Daly, wife of Dr De Burgh Daly and

sister of the songwriter Percy French, titled *An Irishwoman in China* describing the period when the Dalys lived there. It will include *Portals of Unpreparedness*, a display told through words, maps and watercolours of the arrival of the Sherwood Foresters in Kingstown (Dun Laoghaire), and their march to Dublin and the Battle of Mount Street Bridge. It is the work of artist Peter Derbyshire and writer Leo Cullen.

This event is organized by St John the Evangelist Church with funding from Dublin City Council 1916 Commemoration Fund for Communities, and sponsors Charles U. Daly, Charles Lysaght and Peggy O'Driscoll.

Admission to all events is free and everyone is welcome. Opening hours are: Thursday 25th, Friday 26th and Saturday 27th August:
Exhibition: 10am to 4pm

Sunday 28th August: Exhibition: 12noon to 3pm.
Recital: 3pm to 4pm

St John's Church is located on Park Avenue, Sandymount. Sydney Parade is the nearest DART Station. Buses 1 and 47 stop at the church. Buses 4, 7, and 8 stop nearby (Ailesbury Road stop).



Down & Dromore diocesan Bible Week

10 years after the first Bible Week in Dollingstown, hundreds from around the diocese will gather in Willowfield Church at the end of August for worship, Bible teaching and fellowship.

“I’m still amazed and deeply impressed by people’s desire to be rooted in the Word of God as the new season begins,” said Bishop Harold Miller. “There is nothing more important in our generation than the knowledge of God’s word

and living it out in our churches so that they become incarnational models for people to see the life and reality of Christ.”

From 2 Samuel to 1 & 2 Timothy, and from Habakkuk to Revelation, we have explored different books and themes over the years and our speakers have come from The Antipodes, England, Nigeria, North America and Northern Ireland.

In 2016 we welcome our first Scot and Presbyterian, Revd Dr Iain Provan, Marshall Sheppard Professor of Biblical Studies at Regent College, Vancouver, and an ordained minister in the Church of Scotland. He has a distinguished academic career and is the author of numerous essays, articles and several books.

Iain will take as his theme: *The Big Picture: Reading the Bible for All That's There*. He said: “I’ll be sharing with you one of my passions – to get all of God’s people reading all of God’s Word (Old *and* New Testaments) and understanding it as one Great Story in which we are supposed to live our lives.”

A diocesan spokesperson said - “It promises to be an excellent Bible Week. Please join us in Belfast each evening at 7.45 pm from Tuesday 30 August –Friday 2 September. Although the event is organised by the diocese, anyone is welcome to come along and there is no charge.”

Pope Francis mourns death of Bishop Edward Daly

Pope Francis sent a special message expressing his condolences for the death of Bishop Edward Kevin Daly on Thursday, recalling his generous ministry in the service of peace and justice. The message was read by Msgr. Amaury Medina Blanco – Secretary of the Apostolic Nunziature to Ireland – at the funeral Mass celebrated for Bishop Daly in Saint Eugene’s Cathedral in the Diocese of Derry.

Bishop Daly became one of the symbols of the “Troubles” in Northern Ireland after being photographed holding up a blood-stained handkerchief as he helped a fatally injured protester during the 1972 Bloody Sunday killings in Derry when 14 people were shot dead.



The special message of condolence from Pope Francis is below:

The Holy Father was saddened to learn of the death of the Most Reverend Edward Kevin Daly, Bishop Emeritus of Derry, and he sends heartfelt condolences to his family and to the clergy, religious and lay faithful of the Diocese.

Recalling Bishop Daly's generous and dedicated episcopal ministry in the service of peace and justice, His Holiness joins you in prayerful thanksgiving for his life and in commending his soul to the merciful love of God Our Father. To all who mourn the late Bishop's passing, Pope Francis cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of hope and consolation in our Lord Jesus Christ.

WCC Jerusalem vacancy

The WCC seeks a suitably qualified person as the full-time EAPPI Local Programme Coordinator (LPC) to begin as soon as possible. The post is based in Jerusalem.

The LPC shall report to the Associate General Secretary for Public Witness and Diakonia through the EAPPI International Programme Coordinator and will have overall responsibility, in coordination with the International Programme Coordinator, for development, planning, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and reporting on EAPPI's work. He or she shall provide strategic leadership to EAPPI by influencing, contextualising and implementing EAPPI's overall priorities and strategies for change.

For further details see <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/get-involved/job-openings/vacancy-local-programme-coordinator/view>

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

BBC/Christian Today

Reports that Professor Alexis Jay, who led the Rotherham abuse inquiry, is to be the new chairwoman of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) in England and Wales (*see above*). The appointment was announced yesterday by the Home Secretary, Amber Rudd after the resignation last week of Justice Goddard. Prof Jay was already among the panel of advisers taking part in the independent investigation into claims made against public and private institutions including the Church of England. She becomes the fourth head after the three previous chairwomen stood down.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-37043545>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/08/11/child-sex-abuse-inquiry-social-worker-prof-alexis-jay-who-helped/>

Christian Today

Reports that both Westminster Abbey and Westminster Cathedral are to be flood-lit in red by the charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) in November to highlight the plight of persecuted Christians in the Middle East. The move was announced by Lord Alton who said, "If every parish in the country did the same it might at last wake up our political classes to the scale of the suffering."

Inspire

Reports the appointment of Jimmy Dale as the C of E's first National Youth Evangelism Officer in response to the Archbishop of Canterbury's focus on evangelism. Jimmy will take up the role in October. He will hold a national remit to develop and disseminate models of evangelism among 11 - 18 year olds.

<http://www.inspiremagazine.org.uk/Stories/Personal?storyaction=view&storyid=2272>

Comment

Guardian: Giles Fraser describes visiting a parishioner at the Verne immigration removal centre in Dorset.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2016/aug/11/despair-high-above-the-glittering-waters-of-weymouth-bay>

Economist: This sceptic isle. Britain is unusually irreligious, and becoming more so. That calls for a national debate.

<http://www.economist.com/news/britain/21704836-britain-unusually-irreligious-and-becoming-more-so-calls-national-debate?fsrc=rss%7Cbtn>

Mail online: Peter Hitchens on Bishop George Bell
<http://hitchensblog.mailonsunday.co.uk/2016/08/send-not-to-ask-for-whom-the-bell-tolls-it-tolls-for-thee-thoughts-on-a-injustice.html>

Blogs

Law and Religion UK

Pew, perceptions and practicalities:

<http://www.lawandreligionuk.com/2016/08/11/pews-perceptions-and-practicalities/>

Professor Alexis Jay to chair independent inquiry into child sexual abuse:

<http://www.lawandreligionuk.com/2016/08/11/professor-alexis-jay-to-chair-independent-inquiry-into-child-sexual-abuse/>

Psephizo: Is grace opposed to law?

<http://www.psephizo.com/biblical-studies/is-grace-opposed-to-law/>

GET CNI HEADLINES EACH DAY

Facebook and Twitter

Click on logo at CNI Home page

www.churchnewsireland.org

+ Please share CNI with your friends

www.churchnewsireland.org