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Launching the 2018 European Heritage Open Days programme at The Middle Church, Ballinderry (Report below).

***Le chéile le Críost* liturgy and all-Ireland bell-ringing start World Meeting of Families**

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Today, all of Ireland's 26 dioceses will open the 9th World Meeting of Families simultaneously with a special liturgical ceremony and with the ringing of bells in each of the 26 diocesan cathedrals across the island. Family-friendly festivals are also taking place.

The WMOF Pastoral Congress will take place in the Royal Dublin Society over Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of this week while the Festival of Families will be celebrated in Croke Park on Saturday afternoon. The Holy Father Pope Francis will join the WMOF celebrations when he visits Ireland on Saturday 25 August. WMOF will culminate with the closing Papal Mass in the Phoenix Park, Dublin, on Sunday next, 26 August.

Today's opening liturgy in each cathedral will be a full celebration of Evening Prayer. Entitled *Le chéile le Críost (Together with Christ)*, it will gather the Church as the family of families as we set out on the path of celebration for the entire World Meeting of Families.

Representatives from each parish will attend their respective cathedral along with international pilgrims.

"These liturgical celebrations will remind us that we walk in the footsteps of the saints and those who have handed on the faith to us.

"The ceremonies will involve singing and praying hymns, psalms and canticles, burning incense and praying for the entire human family before our God and Father. All are welcome!"

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Priesthood 'a hiding place for men who don't want to deal with their sexuality'

Misogyny pervades every aspect of Catholic church life and it needs to come to an end, a leading Irish theologian has said.

Trinity College Dublin (TCD) professor Siobhan Garrigan said it was fundamentally unjust that women could not join the priesthood.

Prof Garrigan made the comments ahead of the visit by Pope Francis to Ireland this week to attend the World Meeting of Families (WMOF).

"The priesthood has become a hiding place for men who don't want to deal with their sexuality," she said.

"That's just one of the problems caused by the fact that women are not allowed to be priests.

"Only men are allowed to be priests and they are required to be celibate. Both those rules are terrible."

She added: "You have to be identified as a man to even begin training for priesthood. That is just fundamentally unjust.

"We should be pushing for women priests."

Prof Garrigan said the Church changing its rules to allow women to become priests would not solve the misogyny

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problem overnight but it would be an important milestone for the institution.

"It's only one step on the road to where we need to get to," she said.

"Where we need to get to is an end to misogyny.

"Misogyny pervades every aspect of church life."

The Loyola chair of Catholic theology and head of the school of religion at TCD said she would be a lot happier about the pontiff's visit if it was not tied to the WMOF.

The WMOF, which gets under way in Dublin today, has faced criticism from LGBT+ groups, who have complained about being left out.

"He's coming to celebrate an incredibly exclusive and outdated model and retrograde notion of family life and of Catholicism," Prof Garrigan said.

She added: "The Church's views on sexuality and gender have just done untold and immense harm.

"There are numerous examples of that - from mother and baby homes and Magdalene Laundries on the one hand,
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and also the hurt caused by the clerical sexual abuse horror, but by the Church's ongoing attempts to cover it up, to minimise it and to perpetuate a culture of secrecy around it."

The professor described the WMOF event as "a jingoistic propaganda machine for some very outdated ideas, ideas that have done a lot of harm".

"If he was coming to an event that was championing the combating of poverty or the end of consumer capitalism I would be looking to meet him," she said.

Despite her criticisms, Prof Garrigan acknowledged that tens of thousands of people would turn out to see Pope Francis even if they did not agree with all of the Church's teachings.

"People will go to see him because he's a mega superstar," she said.

"If we have A-list celebrities, then he is A star, star ... that's why people will go and see him.

"He's the biggest celebrity it gets."

Pope to meet victims of Irish clerical sex abuse

Pope Francis will meet clerical sex abuse victims when he visits Ireland this weekend, the Vatican has confirmed. He is due to arrive in Dublin on Saturday for two days of meetings

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with families and political authorities as well as a trip to a shrine revered by Roman Catholics.

Earlier this week the leader condemned the “atrocities” of child sex abuse and clerical cover-ups in a strongly worded letter to members of the church. The Catholic Church in Ireland has been rocked by revelations of wrongdoing by members of the religious orders stretching back decades.

A spokeswoman for the Vatican, when asked about the Pope’s meeting with Irish survivors, confirmed it would take place.

Protesters have arranged a series of rallies coinciding with the pontiff’s trip to the Republic to highlight what they believe has been the church’s failure to properly address wrongdoing.

Last week a grand jury report outlined seven decades of abuse in Pennsylvania. The investigation found more than 1,000 children had been abused by 300 priests.

Ballinderry Middle Church holds bus tours to mark 350th anniversary

As part of its 350th anniversary celebrations, The Middle Church, Ballinderry, will host bus tours focused on the historic church during the weekend of [European Heritage Open Days](#).

The tours, on Saturday September 8, will start at Ballinderry Church Hall from where visitors will be taken to Laa Loo graveyard at Portmore to see the ruins of the original

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church which the Middle Church replaced in 1668. Then it is on to The Middle Church for a short talk on the church itself.

The tour continues at Ballinderry Parish Church which was built in 1824 to replace The Middle Church, and which holds the coat of arms of Charles II, said to have hung in Lord Conway's Castle at Portmore.

There will be refreshments in the Church Hall at the end, and visitors can view an exhibition of photographs and memorabilia showing parish life through the years, along with other items of interest.

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Tours begin at 10am on September 9 and will continue through the day with the last tour departing at 3pm. Each tour will last approximately one hour.

The following afternoon, Sunday September 9, there will be a special service at 3.30pm in The Middle Church to mark the 350th anniversary and to look with hope to the future. This will be followed by afternoon tea in the Church Hall.

Services are held in The Middle Church during July and August at 7pm. The last evening service will be this Sunday, August 26. The church is exactly as it was in 1668, with no lighting or toilets. After the 350th anniversary service, it will only hold services on the Sunday before Christmas (a carol service) and on Good Friday, with regular Sunday evening services resuming next summer.

The historic church was selected to promote the launch of this year's European Heritage Open Days. The launch was attended by the Director of Historic Environment Division at the Department for Communities, Iain Greenway, and Rosemarie McHugh, Director of Product Development, Tourism NI.

Follow the link at the top of the page to see other churches in Connor Diocese taking part in this year's European Heritage Open Days.

History of The Middle Church

Jeremy Taylor's Church, known as The Middle Church, is situated between the ruins of the pre-Reformation Church at Portmore (also known as Laa Lou) and the Parish Church at Upper Ballinderry. Building commenced in 1664 and the church was completed and consecrated in 1668.

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Jeremy Taylor, after the execution of Charles I to whom he was chaplain, was brought to Ulster and resided in Portmore near Lough Neagh. At the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, he proceeded to reinstate Prayer Book worship by restoring the church at Portmore, but the local people did not attend. He therefore conceived the idea of building a church in a more central position in the Parish. The roof timbers, three-decker pulpit and pews from the church at Portmore were used in the Middle Church.

Bishop Taylor did not live to see the Middle Church consecrated. He died in 1667 aged 54 and is buried in Dromore Cathedral. On the erection of the new Parish Church in 1824, the Middle Church fell into disuse and became dilapidated. In 1902 Mrs Samuel Walkington restored the church as a memorial to her late husband.

The Middle Church is regarded as one of the finest examples of a plantation church in Ulster and illustrates the conditions under which worship was held 350 years ago. It has featured in many television programmes including the BBC television series Dan Cruikshanks' Written in Stone.

Further information can be obtained through the website www.ballinderryparish.org or by e-mail to info@ballinderryparish.org

Methodist minister and peacemaker calls for DUP and Sinn Fein leaders to restore power-sharing

Methodist minister and peacemaker Rev Harold Good has called on the leadership of the DUP and Sinn Fein to “come

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Rev Harold Good addresses a rally to celebrate the announcement of disarmament by Eta in Bayonne on Saturday

together” and restore power-sharing in Northern Ireland following the 20th anniversary of the Omagh bombing.

Rev Good played a vital role in the peace process and was one of two independent witnesses who oversaw the decommissioning of IRA arms following the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. He has also worked on peace processes in Spain and Colombia.

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[In an open letter](#) addressed to the leadership of both the DUP and Sinn Fein, published by journalist Eamonn Mallie on his website, Rev Good appealed for Arlene Foster and Michelle O'Neill to "come together and do whatever it takes" to restore the Assembly.

He said that he had been moved to write to the party leaders after the ceremony marking the 20th anniversary of the Omagh bombing, saying he was inspired by the "courage" shown by the families of the 29 victims who died in the Real IRA bombing.

He said: "Personal stories of 'moving on' contrast so sharply with the murderous intent of those who planted the bomb and of the political intransigence which prevents us from leaving our dark past where it belongs and moving forward together.

"I suggest that passive admiration of the spirit of others is not enough, however sincere. You will know that I am not alone in asking – if the stories and voices of the victims of Omagh are not enough, what will it take to lift us out of the sodden trenches of our political impasse?

"Surely we owe it to these yet quietly grieving people of incredible courage – and to those for whom they grieve – to come together and do whatever it will take to restore OUR Assembly and our confidence in normal effective governance?"

Rev Good, who is a former Methodist president and was awarded the World Methodist Peace Prize, said he feared that people in Northern Ireland "are learning to live with political inactivity" and that many did not realise the "very

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serious short and long-term consequences" if the Assembly is not restored.

Rise in the number of young C of E people wanting to join the priesthood

The Church of England has reported a rise in the number of young people wanting to be ordained into the priesthood.

According to [latest figures](#), the number of people under 32-years-old seeking ordination rose this year by around a third (32 per cent) to 169, compared to 128 in 2016.

There has been a 7 per cent rise in the total number of people recommended for ordination this year, up from 541 to 580.

Among those entering training this year is 21-year-old Ben Brady, who will start a three-year residential course at Ridley Hall in Cambridge, in September. His training follows a year-long placement with the Church of England's Ministry Experience Scheme working as a pastoral assistant in Moss Side and Whalley Range in Manchester.

He said: 'The experience I gained working as a pastoral assistant, leading services, preaching and helping with occasional offices such baptisms and funerals as well as visiting people in hospital has helped confirm my calling to the priesthood. The growing number of younger people entering training is a sign of hope for the future.'

Over half (54 per cent) of those entering ordination training this year are women - marking the second year in a row that



they have made up the majority of recommended candidates.

Katharine Tingle, 25, from South Devon, also took part in the Church's Ministry Experience Scheme and will begin training for the priesthood at Queen's Foundation in Birmingham in September.

'The Church of England has made serious moves both at a national and a local diocesan level to take young vocations seriously,' she said.

The Church of England has made it a priority to double the number of candidates for ordination by 2020 and is taking the latest figures as a sign of progress.

Director of the Church of England's Ministry Division, Julian Hubbard, said: 'I am delighted that the Church of England

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has seen a rise in the number of vocations to the priesthood for the second year running. We are particularly pleased to see the increase in the number of young women and men entering training.

'We give heartfelt thanks for the prayers and the hard work of all in the churches and dioceses who have been involved in guiding these candidates along their journey and pray that God will continue to bless and guide them to build a growing Church for all people in all places.'



More inclusive churches in Wales

More and more churches in Wales are joining the Inclusive Church register to pledge that they welcome everyone, whatever their age, sexuality, gender, race or physical ability. Fr John Connell describes the #inclusionis campaign at one of those hoping to join soon, St Augustine's Church in Rumney, Cardiff.

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News briefs

+++Eucharist service on RTE1 - On Sunday, 2nd September, at 11.10am on RTÉ 1 television, a Eucharist Service will be broadcast. The celebrant will be the Rector of Powerscourt, Archdeacon Ricky Rountree, with a choir and parishioners from the parish.

+++All age worship video - In a new video from the Church of Ireland Children's Ministry Network, the Revd Rob Clements explores ideas for All Age Worship, including how to keep familiarity and rhythm in the service, prayers of thanksgiving, gathering songs and an all-age creed. Filmed in Rathfarnham Parish Church, Dublin.
www.cm.ireland.anglican.org

+++C of I Children's Ministry Harvest newsletter - This new resource from the Children's Ministry is out in time to help parishes plan ahead for a Harvest thanksgiving. Seeds of Faith, Seeds of the Kingdom, and Seeds of Blessing are among the ideas for use in all-age services, Sunday clubs and other Children's Ministry settings.

+++Roses of Tralee attend local churches - Thirteen Roses and their escorts and entourage participated in the Sunday service in St. John's on the 19th August. A long



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tradition in Tralee, for years a civic service in conjunction with the Festival of Kerry was held at which all the participants and the Rose committee attended. However, recently a different format has been followed with Roses attending services in the various churches in the town. “It was lovely to welcome them to Church and to meet them during refreshments in Teach an TSolais afterwards, many thanks to all who contributed to the service”.

