



Pope Francis offered condolences for the victims of the earthquake in central Italy during his weekly general audience on Wednesday.

Pope leads 11,000 pilgrims praying rosary for Italy earthquake victims

Hearing the mayor of Amatrice in central Italy say his town no longer exists and knowing there were

children who died on August 24 in the earthquake that struck the region, Pope Francis turned his weekly general audience into a prayer service.

Beginning the audience in St Peter's Square, Pope Francis said he had prepared a normal audience talk on how the merciful Jesus is close to people, but given the devastation in central Italy, he decided to lead the recitation of the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary.

Later in the day, the Vatican press office said that as a concrete sign of Pope Francis' concern for the earthquake victims, six Vatican firefighters had been sent to Amatrice. They are working under the direction of the Italian government emergency services in searching for victims and offering them assistance.

As emergency workers began digging people out from under the rubble of collapsed buildings and the number of verified deaths climbed above 20, Pope Francis arrived in St Peter's Square for his general audience.

“Hearing the news of the earthquake that has struck central Italy and devastated entire areas,

leaving many dead and wounded, I cannot fail to express my heartfelt sorrow and my closeness” to everyone in the earthquake zone, especially those who lost loved ones and “those who are still shaken by fear and terror,” the Pope said.

“Having heard the mayor of Amatrice say, ‘The town no longer exists,’ and knowing that there are children among the dead, I am deeply saddened,” Pope Francis said.

The Pope thanked all the volunteers and emergency workers who were trying to rescue victims people trapped under the rubble.

Assuring the people in the region of the prayers and “the embrace of the whole Church,” the Pope asked the estimated 11,000 pilgrims and tourists in St Peter’s Square to join him in praying that “the Lord Jesus, who is always moved by human suffering, would console the broken hearted and give them peace.”

At the Benedictine monastery in Norcia, a community growing in fame because of their prayer life and their brewery, the 15 monks and five guests were already awake when the first earthquake hit, Benedictine Father Benedict

Nivakoff told Catholic News Service. August 24 is the feast of St Bartholomew and “on feast days we get up earlier” to pray, he said.

“All of the monks and the monks’ guests are safe,” he said. But the Basilica of St. Benedict suffered “considerable structural damage” and the monastery will need repairs as well.

Within half an hour of the first earthquake, Fr Nivakoff said, the square outside the monastery was filled with people “because it is the safest place in town — around the statue of St Benedict.”

While no buildings collapsed, it is obvious that many homes are no longer habitable, he said. The monks have set up a reception desk to help meet their neighbours’ needs.

The basilica, he said, is closed pending an inspection by civil engineers, who were to arrive that same afternoon. However, Fr Benedict said, “the facade seems to have detached” from the rest of the building and major repairs are likely.

Assisi is just 45 miles from Norcia and, according to Franciscan Fr Enzo Fortunato, the earthquake was felt strongly at the convent and basilica that

suffered major damage from an earthquake in 1997.

Fr Fortunato told the Italian news agency ANSA that the earthquake woke all the friars, many of whom ran to the Basilica of St Francis. No damage was visible, he said.

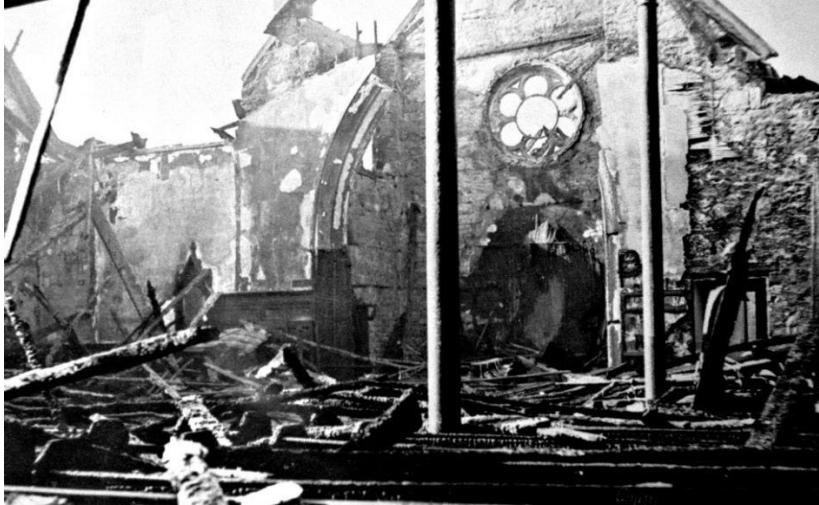
Ledger reveals extent of war damage to Kirk properties

The staggering extent of bomb damage caused to properties owned by the Church of Scotland during the Second World War has been revealed in a unique ledger.

It's prompted one couple to recall how the sky was alight as their local church was completely destroyed 75 years ago.

The Register of War Damaged Properties records in meticulous handwritten detail every incident that befell churches, manses and halls across the country at the hands of the German air force – the Luftwaffe – in the 1940s.

It sets out the date, the extent of damage caused to around 800 properties and the cost of



Bearsden South Church

temporary and permanent repairs in communities including Peterhead, Fraserburgh, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Greenock, Clydebank, Lossiemouth, London, Kirkcudbright and Kirkcaldy.

The ledger, which has been preserved for decades in the basement of the Kirk's offices in Edinburgh, also outlines moveable property damaged in church buildings such as organs, sewing machines, scenery for amateur dramatics, writing desks and pews.

It will soon be deposited in the National Archives of Scotland to enable historians to pour over it for the first time.

Dr Jeremy Crang , a senior lecturer at the University of Edinburgh's School of History, Classics and Archaeology, said the "fascinating" tome casts fresh light on the impact of the war on Scotland.

He added that the black hardback bound ledger, which measures ;18ins by 18 ins and is 1.5inches thick, illustrated that the Kirk was "very much in the front line" and provided an "insight into the great challenges and trauma" that members faced.

Dr Crang, who is married to Dundee University Chaplain Rev Dr Fiona Douglas, said: "The geographical spread of the war damage to churches recorded in the ledger reminds us that the German air force ranged far and wide across Scotland during its bombing campaign.

"There is a sense here of bureaucratic defiance - that order had to maintained in the midst of chaos."

A total of 89 cities and towns were bombed across Scotland by the Luftwaffe during the war and official figures suggest that an estimated 2,298 people were killed, 2,167 seriously injured and 3,558 slightly injured.

Research carried out by Les Taylor, author of a book titled Luftwaffe Over Scotland who said the figures were likely incomplete, revealed that the vast majority of casualties occurred during a two-night raid on Clydebank in March 13-14, 1941 – an incident that left 528 civilians dead and more than 617 severely injured.

The ledger, which is more than 70 years old, shows that many buildings in the Dumbarton Presbytery area were severely damaged during the Blitz.

Bearsden South Church near Glasgow, now known as Bearsden Cross Church, had to be rebuilt after it was hit by an incendiary bomb dropped by a German warplane returning from the bombing raid on Clydebank.

The ledger states: “Totally destroyed – only walls standing.”

The original Cardross Old Church in Dumbarton (pictured) was hit by a bomb on May 6, 1941 and the ledger entry merely states “completely destroyed”. It was never re-built.

St Columba's Church of Scotland in London's Pont Street, built in 1884, was destroyed in a

matter of hours on the night of May 10, 1941 during wartime bombing.

The ledger entry states: "Totally destroyed".

The building was later rebuilt and the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh attended a 60th anniversary celebration at the church last December to mark the re-dedication of the building. The foundation stone was laid by the late Queen Mother in 1950.

Corbyn and Smith to face Jewish leaders in faith hustings

Jeremy Corbyn will face Jewish leaders next month when he takes part in a special Labour leadership hustings focused on religion.

The party leader will go up against his rival Owen Smith and several faith representatives including Jewish leaders in a debate on 6 September. Religious leaders will speak about the role of faith within Labour and the candidates will face questions on how the party can engage with religious communities.



Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn will face his challenger Owen Smith in the faith hustings two weeks before the ballot closes.

The hustings is hosted by The Good Faith Partnership, a consultancy that builds relationships between religious, political and charitable bodies.

One organiser told Christian Today the faith representatives had not yet been agreed but confirmed a Jewish leader would be present and would address the hustings.

Corbyn has faced criticism for an apparent rise in antisemitism in Labour under his leadership and the debate in south London will give faith leaders an opportunity to question him on the issue.

Britain's Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis has accused the party of having a "severe" problem with antisemitism and criticised the "poisonous invective" and "politics of distortion" from some members.

The Jewish Labour Movement (JLM), which is involved in organising the September event, overwhelmingly backed Owen Smith over Corbyn for Labour leader earlier this month. Just four per cent of JLM members voted for Corbyn, with 92 per cent backing his rival.

David Barclay, a partner of the Good Faith Partnership, told Christian Today he was "encouraged" that both Corbyn and Smith will go before religious leaders in a hustings. "They have both agreed to come and not only to speak but to listen to the faith leaders and answer questions from people. It shows they are open to dialogue."

Barclay added: "It is really important that both Jeremy and Owen show a real willingness to engage with faith communities.

"Whoever wins it is going to be important to keep that dialogue open and make sure the voices of the different faith groups affiliated with Labour are recognised and engaged with."

The hustings will take place two weeks before ballots close for the leadership race on 21 September. The result will be announced shortly before the Labour Party conference on 25 September.

Trustees of Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth concerned at anonymous allegations

A statement has been issued by the Trustees of Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth, which this week welcomed fourteen new seminarians to start their training for the priesthood.

The statement reads - The Trustees of the College met on Tuesday in Maynooth to discuss the needs of the students and staff. They

acknowledged the generosity and openness which motivates young men to consider a vocation to the priesthood and to apply themselves to the formation process. The Trustees also paid tribute to the dedication of the staff of the college for their role in formation.

The Trustees offered prayers and encouragement for the seminarians and the college staff asking that this will be a time of grace and blessing.

Acknowledging the recent and extensive media coverage regarding the College, and the disquiet that it has caused amongst the faithful, the Trustees emphasise that the Church has clear instructions on the formation of seminarians. It is essential that these are observed in order to form priests “after the heart of the Good Shepherd” (cf. Jer 3.15). There is no place in a seminary community for any sort of behaviour or attitude which contradicts the teaching and example of Jesus Christ.

The Trustees share the concerns about the unhealthy atmosphere created by anonymous accusations together with some social media comments which can be speculative or even

malicious. Persons with specific concerns are encouraged to report them appropriately as soon as possible.

1 To this end the Trustees will:

- Review current policies and procedures for reporting complaints with a view to adopting best practice procedures for ‘protected disclosures’ (whistle-blowing);
- Request the Seminary authorities to evaluate and review the policy regarding the appropriate use of the internet and social media;
- Assess future personnel and resource needs for the seminary.

2 The Trustees will request the Bishops’ Conference to:

- Commission an independent audit and report of governance and statutes in Irish seminaries;
- Progress urgently a uniform national policy for admissions to Irish seminaries;
- Begin planning for the introduction of a propaedeutic year (pre-seminary) for all applicants for priestly training;
- Establish a subcommittee to examine, with relevant consultors and advisors, the pastoral needs of priestly training in contemporary Ireland noting in particular the recent recommendation of Pope Francis: “The

presence of lay people, families and especially the presence of women in priestly formation, promotes an appreciation of the diversity and complementarity of the different vocations in the Church” (*Joy of Love* 203);

- Conduct the triennial review of Saint Patrick’s College, Maynooth, and of the Pontifical Irish College, Rome, in the Spring of 2017.

The Trustees are satisfied that seminarians are not asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. The Trustees accept their responsibility for ensuring that the national seminary adheres to best practice in all areas of training for priesthood and that college staff are trained to the highest level in accordance with requisite professional standards and the requirements of the Holy See.

- Saint Patrick’s College, Maynooth, is the National Seminary for Ireland and has been forming men for the priesthood since 1795. The Trustees of the college are the governing body of the college. The current Trustees are the four archbishops of Ireland together with thirteen other senior bishops. The college comprises the seminary and the Pontifical University, which offers degrees in philosophy, theology and a combined arts and theology degree.

- This week fourteen new seminarians have begun their 'Introductory Course' for preparing for the priesthood, and after one month four will continue with their studies in Belfast. In recent years the number of new seminarians beginning their studies in Maynooth has been: seventeen in 2015; fourteen in 2014; twenty in 2013; and twelve in 2012.
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- The National Seminary of Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth, expects 41 resident seminarians for the coming academic year. In addition, 23 non-resident seminarians will register for philosophy and theology programmes at the Pontifical University at Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth. Three Presentation Brothers will begin studying for a Bachelor of Arts and Theology degree in the Pontifical University and they will reside in the college for the next three years.
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- At the end of the academic year 2015-16 there were 983 full-time and part-time undergraduate and post-graduate students registered for a wide range of academic programmes at the Pontifical University at Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth. This year, 57 CAO first round offers were made for theology and arts and eight offers have been made to mature applicants.

Methodist Chapel takes leading role in Poldark series 2



The New Room (John Wesley's Chapel) in Broadmead, Bristol, is the location for some of the most dramatic scenes in Poldark series 2. The long awaited second season of the hit show returns to BBC1 on September 4.

Top secret filming took place at the chapel, which is the oldest Methodist building in the world, in October 2015. The eighteenth-century building was transformed into a courtroom, where Ross Poldark goes on trial accused of murder, wrecking and inciting a riot. Series 1, screened last year, ended on a dramatic cliffhanger when he was arrested (actually on the Cornish cliffs) by soldiers. The chapel is expected to feature in the

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first episodes of the series as Ross is brought to trial.

The team from production company Mammoth Screen had to completely hide all modern trappings in the chapel before filming could go ahead. This meant removing electric light fittings and bulbs, covering radiators and removing all modern signage.

The chapel was then transformed into a courtroom complete with dock, tables for the prosecution and the defence, with the pulpit taking the role of the judge's seat.

Stars including Aidan Turner (Ross Poldark), Eleanor Tomlinson (Demelza) and Kyle Soller (Francis) all featured in the dramatic courtroom scenes, as well as Heida Reed (Elizabeth), Phil Davis (Jud) and Beatie Edney (Prudie).

New characters in Series 2, Unwin Trevaunance, played by W1A's Hugh Skinner and Caroline Penvenen, played by Gabriella Wilde, also feature in the scenes.

Manager of the New Room, David Worthington, said: "Poldark is set in the 18th century so even though we are in Bristol rather than in Cornwall,

the building fitted perfectly as the location for Ross's trial.

"All the staff enjoyed meeting the cast and crew and we hope that everyone will enjoy seeing the New Room on screen, especially in such dramatic scenes."

'The Methodies' of Cornwall are often referenced in the Poldark books by Winston Graham. Founder of the New Room, John Wesley, visited to Cornwall thirty-two times between 1743 to 1787 and preached the Christian gospel many times, often to miners, fishermen and their families.

Initially Wesleyan Methodism flourished in Cornwall - but in 1815 a distinctively south-west kind of Methodism emerged, the Bible Christians. When the mining trade in Cornwall collapsed, many miners emigrated taking their skills, Methodism and Cornish pasties to mines worldwide, but especially Australia and Canada.

You can read family histories at www.mybiblechristians.org.uk To find out more about Methodist heritage in general, please visit

www.methodistheritage.org.uk or the Church's website www.methodist.org.uk

Cathedral and choral

+++ Dean of Wells appointed - The Queen has approved the nomination of the Very Reverend John Harverd Davies to the Deanery of the Cathedral Church of St Andrew in Wells. The Queen has approved the nomination of the Very Reverend John Harverd Davies, MA, MPhil, PhD, Dean of Derby, to be appointed to the Deanery of the Cathedral Church of St Andrew in Wells, on the resignation of the Very Reverend John Martin Clarke, BD, MA, on his resignation of 31 December 2015.

The Very Reverend Dr John Davies (aged 58) studied at Keble College, Oxford and then at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge for his MPhil, before doing his Doctorate at Lancaster University. He studied for ordination at Westcott House, Cambridge. His first curacy was at Liverpool Parish Church, from 1984 to 1987 and he then moved to Peterborough Parish Church, from 1987 to 1990 and was also Minor Canon at Peterborough Cathedral from 1988 to 1990. From 1990 to 1994 he was Vicar at St Margaret, Anfield in Liverpool diocese, before taking up the post in 1994 as Chaplain, Fellow and Director of Studies in Theology at Keble College, Oxford where he was until 1999. From 1999 to 2010 he was

Vicar of Melbourne, in Derby diocese whilst also serving as Diocesan Director of Ordinands. From 2007 to 2010 he was also Priest-in-Charge of Ticknall, Smisby and Stanton by Bridge in Derby diocese. Since 2010 he has been Dean of Derby.

+++ A new youth choir is being set up at Salisbury Cathedral - Ian Wicks, its conductor, discusses the importance of engaging with young people through singing.

<http://bit.ly/2bRxteD>

+++ Cathedral Assistant guide wanted at Christ Church Dublin - This is a 12-month contract from a start date on Tuesday, 20th September 2016. The successful candidates will work under the direction of the Operations Manager. The rate of pay is €10.50 per hour with a guaranteed working week of 20 hours, likely to rise during busy periods. Shifts are to be rostered over 7 days between the hours of 8.30 and 19.00. More at -

<http://christchurchcathedral.ie/about/work-us/>

News briefs

+++ Bible Sunday resources now available -
This year's Bible Sunday resources are now

available on the Bible Society NI website. The theme this year is 'Proclaim', taken from Luke 4:16–24 and the pack explores a 'Faith Comes by Hearing' project in Togo. 'Proclaimers' allows people to hear rather than read the word of God. The challenge for us all is to proclaim Jesus, so the material helps us explore this in our own setting while also looking further afield at the needs around the world. [Follow this link to the downloadable resources.](#)

+++ Date set for Asia Bibi's Supreme Court blasphemy appeal - Asia Bibi, a Christian

women sentenced to death after drinking water meant for her Muslim colleagues, will have her appeal heard by Pakistan's Supreme Court in October. Bibi was accused of Blasphemy after the incident and has been held in custody since June 2009. In November the following year she was sentenced to death. There has been international pressure calling for her release, including from the Anglican Consultative Council. At its meeting in Lusaka in April, [the ACC called for a a fresh investigation](#) into her case, leading to her "honourable acquittal." The following month, the Primate of Australia, [Archbishop Philip Freier, described the case](#) as "a disgraceful application of Pakistan's blasphemy law" and

said it brought “tragedy and shame upon . . . the beautiful nation of Pakistan.” Wilson Chowdhry, chairman of the British Pakistani Christian Association, has been closely watching the case. He explained that Asia Bibi’s appeal was originally scheduled for 26 March this year, but was called off amid increased tensions and protests from sections of Pakistan’s Muslim community.

+++ Nigerian Anglicans build trauma centre

for victims of Boko Haram - Many Nigerians are suffering severe trauma as a result of the terror group Boko Haram’s cruelty and depredations. Anglicans in northern Nigeria are building a hospital and trauma centre to help the thousands of victims suffering as a result of the Boko Haram terror group. Bishop Emmanuel Mani, of Maiduguri diocese in Jos province, intends the new clinic to treat people across all faiths, not just Christians. The church-funded clinic is costing 15 million Nigerian Naira, or just over £34,000. [Premium Times](#), which reported the venture, said that although it is an Anglican clinic, the government had asked the diocese to open the clinic to all so that the entire community will benefit. "This is a diocesan hospital for all of us. We are going to use our doctors, nurses, and

all health workers – both retired and serving – to render services for the community, and we hope the services would be free of charge," Bishop Mani said. The foundation stone was laid on Sunday, according to [Sight magazine](#).

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Looney to head DCU education faculty

[RTE.ie](#)

Dr Anne Looney has been appointed as head of Dublin City University's new Faculty of Education. The new faculty is the result of the incorporation into the university of three formerly independent colleges of education: the Catholic St Patrick's and Mater Dei teacher training colleges, and the Church of Ireland College of Education. Dr Looney is currently CEO of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. She is also currently the Acting Chief Executive of the Higher Education Authority. Dr Looney is a graduate of Mater Dei, where she trained as a religion teacher. From September courses run previously by the three colleges will be delivered by DCU through its new faculty. However, although the university will run what is essentially

one primary teacher training course, a separate entry CAO entry route - with a lower points requirement - is being maintained [exclusively for Protestant primary teaching applicants](#). DCU staff were informed of Dr Looney's appointment on Friday. More at -

<http://www.rte.ie/news/2016/0824/811541-dcu/>

Westport's churches celebrated

Mayo News

Exhibitions charting the history, architectural design, interior decoration and conservation of Westport's Holy Trinity and St Mary's churches have been launched to mark Heritage Week. There will also be tours and public lectures on their history and conservation.

Earlier this year both churches successfully applied for funding from the Heritage Council under the Heritage Management Grant Scheme to undertake a Conservation Management Plan. The project will culminate in a five-year plan of works for both churches 'based on a thorough understanding of the significance of the buildings, of past conservation works and of the current condition of their fabric'. More at - <http://www.mayonews.ie/news/28406-westport-s-churches-celebrated>

Citizen's assembly on abortion is crucial, says Simon Harris

Irish Examiner

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/citizens-assembly-on-abortion-is-crucial-says-simon-harris-417408>.

The SNP has played Scotland's Catholic Church for a fool

Spectator.co.uk

<http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2016/08/snp-played-scotlands-catholic-church-fool/>

Premier

Report that the Archbishop of Canterbury has outlined the priorities he'd like to see youth workers make in the UK in an editorial for Premier Youthwork

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Justin-Welby-outlines-vision-for-youth-ministry>

BBC

Report that Archbishop of Wales, Dr Barry Morgan has announced his intention to retire in 2017.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/wales>

Anglican News

Report that a Church-of-England sponsored play about the plight of a refugee stuck in France while trying to reach the UK has been nominated for two prestigious awards.

<http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2016/08/church-sponsored-play-about-a-refugee-in-line-for-national-awards.aspx>

Telegraph

Report/comment by Prince Hassan of Jordan that Christianity has been part of the essential fabric of the Middle East for two thousand years and Muslims and Jews must combine to champion tolerance and stop the Isil-inspired hatred across the Middle East

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/08/23/muslims-and-jews-must-combine-to-champion-tolerance-and-stop-the/>

The Independent

Report that going to church or temple regularly can leave a greater impression than 'more dramatic public ritual acts [that] involve enduring serious pain' People who regularly attend religious services are more likely to be seen as generous and trustworthy.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/religious-attendance-study-effect-trust-generosity-hard-working-upstanding-perception-a7205891.html>

Guardian

Report that support for marriage equality has grown since the last election according to a poll.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/aug/23/support-for-marriage-equality-has-grown-since-election-essential-poll-shows>

Children & Young People Now

Report that a youth worker is to lead efforts within the Church of England to train 11- to 18-year-olds to promote Christianity to their peers.

<http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1158632/church-of-england-to-launch-'youth-evangelism'-push>

Blogs

C of E Communications: The church needs clowns and fools

<http://cofecomms.tumblr.com/post/149362760467/the-church-needs-clowns-and-fools>

The wee flea: The blasphemy of christian voice and an apology to Tom Daley

<https://theweeflea.com/2016/08/22/the-blasphemy-of-christian-voice-and-an-apology-to-tom-daley/>

Paroikos: The church does not have a mission

<http://wynbeynon.blogspot.co.uk/2016/08/the-church-does-not-have-mission.html>

Archbishop Cranmer: Spiritual influence: Bullying voters with threats of hell is no different from threats of physical violence

<http://archbishopcranmer.com/spiritual-influence-bullying-voters-with-threats-of-hell-is-no-different-from-threats-of-physical-violence/>

Law and Religion UK: Tackling Islamist extremism in prisons

<http://www.lawandreligionuk.com/2016/08/23/tackling-islamist-extremism-in-prisons-the-acheson-review/>

Psephizo: Does religious freedom require a secular public sphere?

<http://www.psephizo.com/life-ministry/does-religious-freedom-require-a-secular-public-sphere/>

Threads: Choosing to see the beauty in those around me

<https://www.threadsuk.com/on-getting-attached>

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