



Pilgrims gather from far and wide to celebrate 70 years of WCC

Hundreds of people gathered from across the world for an ecumenical prayer service at the Nieuwe Kerk, a 15th-century church in Amsterdam, to celebrate the 70th

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anniversary of the World Council of Churches (WCC) at the very spot in which the organization was founded.

Under the theme “Walking, Praying and Working Together,” the service featured special music, greetings from the Council of Churches in the Netherlands, and a procession of pilgrims from all over the world. WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit offered a sermon, and Dr Agnes Abuom, moderator of the WCC Central Committee, led the congregation in prayer.

A “Walk of Peace” through Amsterdam was also held beginning in the Hoftuin of the Protestant Church in Amsterdam and ending at Dam Square. During the week preceding the service, a Youth Pilgrimage gathered Dutch as well as international youth for an ecumenical experience.

Looking back - and forward

In his sermon, titled “The Love of Christ Compels Us,” Tveit looked back on the first WCC assembly in 1948 in Amsterdam, reflecting on the difficult questions the delegates were asking at the time.

“The assembly message from Amsterdam shows that the delegates were bold in speaking to the reality of the world,” he said. “Their faith was a hope, against the realities of many of their recent experiences.”

They believed together that God still loved the world, Tveit reflected. “We give thanks for contributions the churches could make together to peace,” he said. “They saw that they—themselves— were called to be a sign of the fulfilment of God’s promise.”

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They knew that the need for reconciliation was urgent but difficult, he continued. “They knew they were called to be peacemakers,” he said.

“They were convinced that overcoming the forces dividing humanity and also threatening relationships within and among the churches would require that they themselves had to be united in love.”

Opening hearts and doors

In a prayer, Abuom lamented the situation in much of the world today yet expressed confidence in the ability of the WCC fellowship to unite people in peace. “My eyes hurt when the creation you so love and cherish is abused and misused,” she prayed. “I hear the cries of the men and women; boys and girls in the slave markets, on the run from violence; shouting: ‘Where is God?’”

She asked for forgiveness for our refusal to see strangers as our neighbors. “Almighty God, help us to open our hearts and doors to share your love with the poor materially, to speak truth in humility to the poor rich; to be present with the elderly and lonely people,” she prayed. “God our creator, hear our prayer and have mercy.”

[“The Love of Christ Compels Us”: Sermon of the WCC General Secretary in Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam](#)
[Relevance and Importance of WCC today: Reflection by Dr Agnes Abuom, moderator of the WCC central committee](#)
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Irish churches pray and collect for Kerala

Churches prayed and collected funds yesterday as the scale and extent of the impact of Kerala's exceptionally destructive and deadly floods become apparent.

Christian Aid is on the scene working through its well-established partners to provide life-saving assistance for around 20,000 people who have lost their homes. The charity, which launched an appeal last week, is targeting some of the southern Indian state's poorest and most vulnerable villages after devastating floods forced around 1 million people into 4,000 relief camps across the southern Indian state.

Households will be given sanitation supplies and access to safe drinking water, hygiene essentials such as soap, and shelter materials including tarpaulin, rope and blankets. The aid will help people survive the worst monsoon rains in a century which have reportedly claimed the lives of almost 400 people, contaminated water supplies and destroyed livelihoods.

"Many people are currently sheltering in government-run camps and one major worry is how they're going to recover their lives when they try to go home," said Christian Aid's Emergency Programme Officer Shivani Rana, who is in Kerala. "For some families, everything they had has been washed away or ruined."

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She added: “The rains have caused flooding and also landslides – and we still don’t know how bad the damage is because many areas remain impossible to reach.

”Christian Aid’s relief work in Kerala has been kick-started with a £77,000 grant from the UK government-backed Start Fund, which releases money quickly after disasters, to enable rapid responses. The charity has also released £30,000/ €33,000 from its own funds and hopes to scale up its emergency response, working through its local partners in the region.

Churches can order emergency envelopes for collections via dublin@christian-aid.org or belfast@christian-aid.org.

So far, Christian Aid plans to focus its response on the hard-hit Wayanad district in the north of Kerala and Idukki district in the centre of the state. It will support 10,000 people in each of the two districts, targeting areas where many people are considered to be Dalits and ‘Tribals’ – among the most deprived and excluded in society.

Christian Aid and its local partner organisations – including IGSSS (Indo-Global Social Service Society) and CASA (Church’s Auxiliary for Social Action) – responded immediately to the floods, buying relief materials and hiring people to deliver these emergency supplies to deluged communities.

For more information on the appeal visit christianaid.ie

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Presiding Bishop's statement on the death of Senator John McCain

The Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has issued the following statement:

The life of Senator John Sidney McCain has been a witness to the nobility of living not for self alone but for the ideals and values that make for a better world.

With countless others, we of the Episcopal Church give God thanks for his life and service and pray likewise for his wife, children and family.

May his soul and the souls of all the departed Rest in Peace and rise in glory. Amen.

See News Extra on CNI today

West Cork town's tributes to son Sam Maguire get RTÉ airing

The pride of a West Cork town, through one of its most famous sons, is to feature early in September in an episode of the RTÉ series Nationwide, Ailin Quinn writes in the Irish Examiner.

Dunmanway's tributes to sportsman and patriot Sam Maguire, who lies buried in a local churchyard and after whom the All-Ireland senior football championship cup is named, have led to two books about his life, the installation of some €60,000 worth of bells in a local church, and a

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Sound recordist Amanda Mumane, filmmaker Brendan Hayes and Rev Cliff Jeffers of St Mary's C of I

video about their installation, The Sam Maguire Community Bells.

Added to that, Maguire's statue stands in the town square while his life was the focus of a recent summer drama workshop for local children.

After the 30-minute video, by local filmmaker Brendan Hayes, was launched in June, and screened at the recent West Cork History Festival, it was submitted for consideration to RTÉ.

In mid-August, a crew from Nationwide arrived in the town to film a programme around the town's many tributes to Maguire. The episode is expected to be aired in early September.

"The Nationwide crew came down on Tuesday, August 14, and did a full day's filming," he said, pointing out that the

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RTÉ team interviewed a variety of people involved in ensuring the town never forgets its famous son.

These included authors Margaret Walsh and Kieran Connolly who have written about Maguire, as well as Brendan Hayes and Church of Ireland cleric Rev Cliff Jeffers, in whose church the bells were installed.

Along with local expert Martin Hough, Rev Jeffers holds tutorials between 7.30pm and 9pm every Wednesday on how to harmoniously ring the eight bells at the historic St Mary's bell-tower in the town.

The bells were specially installed in St Mary's Church last year at a cost of around €58,000, under a project which was funded through a mix of local fundraising and donations from organisations like the GAA, Cork County Council, and church charities.

"The theme of the Nationwide episode is the many tributes that have been paid locally to Sam Maguire," said Mr Hayes.

Pope vows to study government memo on Irish mother and baby home

The Pope has pledged to study an Irish Government memo about a mass grave at a former home for unmarried mothers and their babies.

Remains were discovered in underground chambers in Tuam in Co Galway in western Ireland.

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Hundreds of people took part in a vigil there during the pontiff's two-day visit to the Republic over the weekend.

On his flight back to Rome, the Pope told reporters: "It touched my heart, that is why I wanted to repeat it during my speech."

Survivors who met the Pope have expressed shock he knew nothing of Magdalene laundries and mother-and-baby homes. Irish Children's Minister Katherine Zappone gave him a memo about Tuam.

Francis told reporters including Irish broadcaster RTE on Sunday evening: "I had never heard of these mothers, they call it the laundromat of women where an unwed woman is pregnant and goes into these hospitals, I don't know what they call them, schools, run by the nuns and then they gave children to the people in adoption."

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The Pope vowed to pursue justice for victims of church abuse in Ireland as he ended his historic visit to the country by seeking forgiveness for its dark litany of clerical crimes.

Addressing a large crowd of pilgrims at an open air Mass in Dublin's Phoenix Park, Francis laid bare the many forms of abuse and mistreatment meted out to children and vulnerable adults in past decades.

On Sunday, around 500 people gathered for the silent vigil in Tuam to coincide with the papal mass.

They walked from Tuam Town Hall for 30 minutes to the former site of the mother and baby home while stopping at poignant spots along the way, including the local graveyard.

Baby shoes, toys and teddy bears were tied to the railings along the route. They gathered at the site where remains of infant bones have been found, which was managed by the Sisters of the Bon Secours between 1925 and 1961.

In 2013, local historian Catherine Corless discovered official records showing that around 800 children died at the home in Tuam. In March, a commission of investigation announced it had found "a significant number of human remains" at the site.

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News briefs

+++New Dean of Ossory - On Thursday evening in St Canice's cathedral, Kilkenny, the Bishop of Ossory, Ferns &

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Leighlin, the Rt Revd Michael Burrows, will institute the Revd David McDonnell to the incumbency of the Kilkenny union of parishes which is comprised of St Canices's and St John's, Kilkenny, and Aghour and Freshford. He will then be installed as Dean of Ossory. The new Dean is 37 years old and originally from Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan. He trained initially as a primary school teacher and taught for five years in Gaelscoil Cnoc Liamhna in Dublin. He was ordained in 2009 for the curacy of the Christ Church cathedral group of parishes, Dublin, where he served from 2009 to 2014, and where he was particularly active in developing the ministry of the historic St Werburgh's church. While in Dublin he was also Treasurer's Vicar of St Patrick's cathedral from 2011 to 2014 and Assistant Chaplain to St James' Hospital. Since 2014 he has been Rector of the Dunfanaghy group of parishes in Co. Donegal. He has a keen interest in the music and liturgy of the Church and enjoys the arts, history and the great outdoors.

+++Discovery Gospel choir's famous visitors - Their home Church of St Thomas Cathal Brugha Street can boast quite a line up of special guests. 2005 - Archbishop Desmond Tutu. 2011 - Rev Dr Jesse Jackson. 2018 - Pope Francis

+++Connor Mothers' Union celebrate Mary Sumner Day - a service was held in Craig's Parish Church on Thursday August 9. The service was organised by Connor Mothers' Union Faith & Policy Unit, and was led by the Rev Adrian Halligan, Curate-in-Charge. Adrian gave a thought-provoking sermon about Mary Sumner and all her work, and spoke about the principles of MULO (Mothers' Union Listening, Observing, Acting). Items featured at the service

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ncluded a trauma teddy, a MULOA booklet, a ribbon for the campaign for 16 days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, and a Mary Sumner booklet.

Following Holy Communion the large crowd retired to the church hall for supper.

+++Divine Healing Ministries - will recommence again on Monday 3rd September at St Anne's Cathedral at 8pm. St Georges has been ongoing throughout the summer and will continue. St Finnian's will restart on Tuesday 4th September at 8pm. Prayer and the anointing of oil will be available to everyone as usual at the end of the services.

+++Down & Dromore Bible Week - begins on Tuesday and continues until Friday beginning each evening at 7.45pm in Willowfield parish church, Belfast. This year the guest speaker is the Rt Revd Grant LeMarquand who will

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+++Council tribute to GB NI - Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Council was pleased to create a commemorative flowerbed at Hillsborough, to mark the 125th Anniversary of the GB NI. Ald Paul Porter, Chair of the Leisure & Comm Dev Cmte met Myla, Ellie and Rosie from Dundonald Presbyterian GB at the new flowerbed.

speaking on the Book of Revelation. Formerly Area Bishop for the Horn of Africa, Bishop LeMarquand is a Canadian missionary and a gifted Bible teacher. He and his wife Wendy most recently served in Gambella, Ethiopia.

+++Clogher Institution - Next Friday evening in Killeevan parish church the Bishop of Clogher, the Rt Revd John McDowell, will institute the Revd Roy Taylor as Rector of the grouped parishes of Clones, Killeevan, Currin and Newbliss. Mr Taylor was ordained in the Diocese of Blackburn and has served in the Church of England, as well

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as the Diocese in Europe and in the Diocese of Meath & Kildare. He is a graduate of Oxford, York University and the University of Wales and served as a Vicar near Lancaster and then had spells as Chaplain in Switzerland and Tenerife, and a translator and student in Krakow in Poland. Most recently he has served as Rector of the Julianstown union of parishes in the Diocese of Meath and Kildare.

+++Crosslinks Dublin event - The international mission society Crosslinks, which works principally within the worldwide Anglican Communion, will host an event in Dublin on Saturday 1 September. In the Irish Church Missions, Bachelors Walk, at 2pm, the Revd Trevor Cleland will speak on 'Adversity and Faith'. Mr Cleland is a native of Belfast and for the past seven years he has served as a trustee on General Council/Board of Trustees. He also coordinates the Crosslinks Belfast Prayer Meeting. Further details are available at www.crosslinks.org/get-involved/events/adversity-and-faith

