

BCM, SVP and M&S launch Giving Tree

Belfast's Lord Mayor, Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, joined representatives from Belfast Central Mission (BCM) and St Vincent De Paul (SVP) at Marks & Spencer, Belfast to launch the 14th year of the Giving Tree, a long-running cross-community event run by the two charities supported by M & S.



The 'Giving Tree' gives members of the public an opportunity to donate a toy or gift for local children with the gifts being divided equally between SVP and BCM before being distributed to families in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

The two charities have been involved in giving toy and food parcels to local disadvantaged children, families and older people for many years. Thirteen years ago they joined together to approach Marks & Spencer with the idea of having a "Giving

Tree" in the store. M&S agreed to support it and continue to do so today. If you want to take part just pop into Marks & Spencer, Donegall Place between 2 – 14 December, 2nd Floor.

US Vatican embassy to close

The U.S. State department is planning to close its embassy to the Holy See, citing security concerns without

naming a specific threat. Ireland announced its decision to [shut its embassy](#) to the [Vatican](#) in 2011.

The U.S. embassy, which has been in operation since 1984, will be swallowed up by the larger U.S. embassy to Italy, The [Daily Beast](#) reports.

Most countries have two embassies in Italy – one to the country of Italy and another to the Holy See, a sovereign nation within Rome. Some, including the U.S., have a third embassy to the United Nations Organization headquartered in the city. The U.S. embassy to the Holy See is scheduled to move to the American embassy to Italy in January 2015 and will inhabit a small annex with a separate entrance.

Conservative [Catholics](#) in the U.S. oppose the move. James Nicholson, a former American ambassador to the Holy See from 2001 to 2005, told Vatican expert John Allen that the move was "a massive downgrade."

Speaking to Allen for the [National Catholic Reporter](#), Nicholson said: "It's turning this embassy into a stepchild of the embassy to Italy."

"The Holy See is a pivot point for international affairs and a major listening post for the United States," he said, "and to shoehorn [the U.S. delegation] into an office annex inside another embassy is an Churchnewsireland@gmail.com

insult to American Catholics and to the Vatican."

Former Bush envoys Francis Rooney and Mary Ann Glendon as well as Raymond Flynn, the first Clinton ambassador, and Thomas Melady, who served the first President Bush, also object to the move.

The Vatican has long insisted that countries with diplomatic missions to both Italy and the Holy See maintain

autonomous embassies.

[Separate functions](#)

Sources inside the American embassy in Rome have said the embassies will maintain separate functions, reports The Daily Beast. While the U.S. embassy to Italy has a strategic role in American activities in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, its embassy to the Holy See has a distinct role in church affairs.

The action of the embassy to the Holy See follows a similar move by the U.S. embassy to the United Nations Organization, which was moved to the embassy grounds in 2012. Other major countries have also consolidated their embassies, including Israel, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. Ireland, which closed its embassy to the Holy See entirely, relies on visiting envoys to maintain diplomatic relations.

The Vatican has not commented on the reports of the American embassy closure, but reports say it is unlikely to protest the relocation.



Audio Recording: Professor Alister McGrath on CS Lewis

Christians in Parliament held an event in the State Rooms of Speaker's House in the Palace of Westminster last month, with Professor Alister McGrath speaking on the topic of 'A Reasonable Faith: CS Lewis on why Christianity makes sense of life'.

There is an audio recording of the talk now available on the Christians in Parliament website: <http://www.christiansinparliament.org.uk/events/past-events/a-reasonable-faith-cs-lewis-on-why-christianity-makes-so-much-sense/>

The transcript of a talk given by Professor McGrath at the Westminster Abbey Institute's 'Telling the Truth' event on Thursday 21 November is also available here: <http://www.christiansinparliament.org.uk/uploads/Telling-the-Truth-through-Rational-Argument.pdf>

Henry Blair, Revd Alan Irwin and Revd Ngozi Njoku. The parishes of the Rural Deanery include Belleek, Castle Archdale, Colaghty, Derryvullen North, Drumkeeran, Garrison, Kiltyclogher, Magheraculmoney, Muckcross, Slavin and Templecarne.

The Rural Dean, the Revd Canon Glenn West, opened the evening with a word of welcome, and introduced the praise band 'Committed' from Colaghty Parish, who led the worship. Comprising of eight talented young musicians, including vocals, keyboard, accordion, violins, guitars, bass and drums, the band's lively music provided a great opportunity for those present to join together in praise and worship. The prayers were led by Jason Blair and Rachel Crawford of Magheraculmoney parish, and the Revd Ngozi Njoku, Rector of the Garrison Group of Parishes, read a lesson from John 10 about the Good Shepherd, and preached an inspiring address on the subject. Revd Ngozi also gave her own personal testimony and spoke about the abundant joy which Jesus gives when we live a life devoted to him, removing the mask of our own dignity, and living instead in the integrity of Jesus.

Clogher Praise Service

A large crowd of young, and the young-at-heart, from Kesh Rural Deanery and beyond gathered in the Fountain Centre, Kesh for a praise service on the evening of Sunday 24th November.

The service was organised by the clergy of Kesh Rural Deanery, namely Archdeacon Cecil Pringle, Canon Glenn West, Revd

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A retiring collection of £396.90 was raised for Bishops' Appeal going to support the Philippines disaster.

Photos at - <http://clogher.anglican.org/News/newsevent.php?id=280>

Music for the seasons

The Music list at St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin -

Sunday 1 December at 15.15: A Sequence of Music & Readings for Advent (Sung by the Girls & Gentlemen of the Cathedral Choir)

Sunday 15 December at 15.15: Carols for All
(Come and sing Carols with the Cathedral Choir)

Sunday 22 December at 15.15: A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols (Sung by the Cathedral Choir)

Tuesday 24 December at 16.00: A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols (Admission to the Christmas Eve Carol Service by ticket only)

Christmas Day at 9.15:
Eucharist (said in the Lady Chapel) Christmas Day at 11.15: Festal Choral Eucharist
Sunday 5 January at 15.15: Epiphany Carol Service (Sung by the Cathedral Choir)

Sunday 5 January at 16.30: La Nativité Du Seigneur (Music by Olivier Messiaen. David Leigh, organ)
Sunday 2 February at 11.15: Candlemas Eucharist (Sung by the Cathedral Choir)

Sunday 2 February at 15.15: A Ceremony of Carols: Benjamin Britten (Sung by the Cathedral Choristers)

Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology

The result of ten years' research, the *Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology* is an extensive new web-based resource for anyone with an

interest in hymns and church music with over 4000 articles on:

- hymns from many countries and languages
- historical and contemporary hymn writers
- traditions from a wide range of denominations

"The new Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology is a tremendous resource... The articles are well written and accessible to both the scholar and the church musician alike. This webpage should be bookmarked by worship leaders and all those who simply want to deepen their enjoyment and understanding of the hymns they love."

*Bruce Hindmarsh, James M. Houston
Professor of Spiritual Theology, Regent*

Cork University Hospital

Carol Service

Chapel of Christ our Saviour

Thursday 19 December
7pm

Come and sing your favourite carols...

*Music will be led by CUMH Choir
'ULTRASOUNDS'*

runner up RTE Lyric FM Workplace Choir of the Year 2013

Followed by seasonal refreshments.
Retiring collection in aid of
The Typhoon Haiyan Relief, Cork Penny Dinners & St Vincent de Paul

CUH
Cork University Hospital
Diocesan Choral Council

College (President, American Society of Church History)

"...neither a researcher nor casual reader should be intimidated. The online interface is navigated easily, allowing all to access the most wonderfully comprehensive compendium on the church's musical life available."

Lester Ruth (President, The Charles Wesley Society)

Explore the dictionary at
www.hymnology.co.uk

Irish ordinations

Priestly vocations in Ireland received a boost with the ordination of three priests and a deacon in ceremonies in different corners of the country.

Last Friday Fr Ultan Naughton SSCC (38), a member of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, was ordained to the priesthood in his hometown of Roscommon by Bishop Patrick Lynch in a ceremony presided by retired Bishop Brendan Comiskey.

The congregation is involved in parish work in Dublin and also provides chaplaincy and pastoral care in the city, with outreach services in Cavan and Monaghan. It is also involved in supporting missionary activities overseas and Fr Naughton has worked in Spain and most recently

in the Philippines.

Last Saturday Cardinal Séan Brady ordained Maciej Zacharek (32) to the diaconate in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh - the first seminarian to be ordained from Redemptoris Mater House of Formation, a new institution of the Archdiocese of Armagh, located in Dundalk.

The House of Formation was founded in 2012 by Cardinal Brady to form priests for the New Evangelisation who are both diocesan and missionary, and these vocations come from the Neocatechumenal Way.

Bishop William Crean of Cloyne ordained Fr Patrick O'Donoghue (35) in St Colman's Cathedral, Cobh, Co. Cork, on the first anniversary of the announcement of his own appointment as bishop.



St Columb's Cathedral, Derry

Fr O'Donoghue is a native of Castlemartyr and worked in the pharmaceutical industry in Dublin and Cork before studying for the priesthood. The Diocese of Cloyne has three other men training for the priesthood at present.

Bishop John Fleming of Killala ordained Fr Thomas Doherty to the priesthood on Sunday in St Muredach's Cathedral, Ballina, Co. Mayo.

Fr Doherty is a native of Shanahee, Belmullett, and entered the national seminary in Maynooth in 2007 after completing a Bachelor of Arts degree in History and Geography in Galway.

Moderator's thoughts and prayers with people of Glasgow

Irish Presbyterian Moderator Dr. Rob Craig issued the following statement following the helicopter crash in Glasgow.

"The news of last night's helicopter crash really shocked me and my thoughts today are with the people of Glasgow and Scotland.

"In the midst of this tragedy the selfless courage of those who rushed to help with no thought for their own safety is an example to us all.

"I would assure the families and friends of those who have died, the people who are injured and the rescue services of my sincere prayers and those of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland."

Salvation Army Band in Chart Battle for Children In Need

The Salvation Army has been helping create some Christmas cheer by recording with world famous singer Aled Jones, Sir Terry Wogan, and New Zealander Hayley Westenra as well as electric string quartet BOND for this

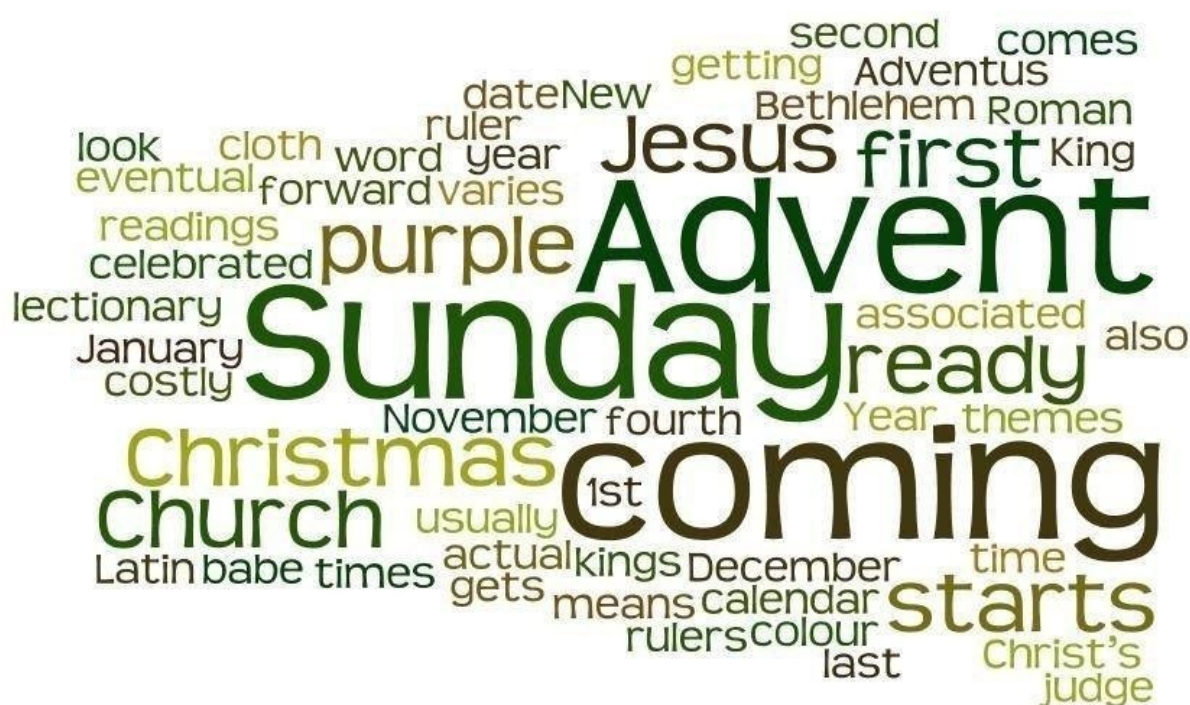


year's Christmas Single, in aid of BBC Children in Need.

"Christmas Dream" will help raise money to support disadvantaged children and young people in the UK with all profits from the single going to the BBC Children in Need charity.

It's the third time Aled Jones and Terry Wogan have produced a Christmas single – with their 2008 version of the Bing Crosby and David Bowie classic Little Drummer Boy/Peace On Earth reaching

Dean Jones, sub-editor in The Salvation Army's Music Ministries Unit put together the musical arrangement for BOND as well as the Portsmouth Citadel band. He said: "It's been a lovely opportunity to get involved with something that brings happiness to children at Christmas. As a Church and charity we're there for people who are isolated or in need in every community and so this is something we felt would be an excellent way of us contributing to those aims by supporting Children in Need through our musical talents."



number three in the UK music charts. Sir Terry's Floral Dance also reached number 21 in 1978, while Jones enjoyed a number Five hit in 1985 with Walking In The Air. Sir Terry Wogan said: "The Salvation Army are generous guys and girls of course, and it always an honour to work with them. The Salvation Army are wonderful – it's been great to work with the band as they're very talented musicians and an inspiration. They do a lot of great work at Christmas time and all year round so it's great to have them on our Christmas single, in aid of BBC Children in Need."

Aled Jones added: "It's been great to work alongside The Salvation Army on this single and meet the talented musicians representing this Church and charity."

"The Salvation Army is a fantastic organisation that works with people who are isolated or in need in every community, which is why it's been fitting to have them on board, to help us raise money for Children in Need this Christmas."

"Christmas Dream' is an excellent, fun track, so go out and buy it and show you care this Christmas."

John Ellwood, The Salvation Army's Southern Divisional Director for Business Administration, said: "People are very generous to The Salvation Army at this time of the year, so, despite the busy season, it was a wonderful opportunity for us to give up some time for another worthwhile cause. It was a pleasure to be playing tuba with so many gifted artists and when we all came together for the video shoot there was a great sense of camaraderie and fun. Terry tried out my tuba, but having heard his efforts it was probably wise to let him sing! However, when Eos from BOND picked up one of the band's trombones, it was clear that not only is she a brilliant violinist but an accomplished trombonist. I really hope and pray that for those children whose lives are not as they should be, that through Children in Need and our Christmas single, their circumstances will change for the better."

Hayley Westenra added: "It's been fun and I am really excited to be a part of this track."

"It is a great team and The Salvation Army are brilliant musicians and as a charity do amazing work. It's been really exciting to hear everything come together to create fantastic music and raise money for Children in Need."

John Hanchett, bandmaster of Portsmouth Citadel band, said: "It's been a wonderful opportunity to be making music together and to be able to support the excellent causes of Children in Need. As a Church and charity we look to support people in need and this has been a lovely way for us to use our musical abilities to help others."

The single will be available for download from iTunes on December 15.

You can pre-order download now for 99p on [iTunes](#) or pre order the CD Christmas single for £5 [online here](#) (price includes postage & packaging). <http://www.charitygoods.com/ChristmasDream.html>

Prayer for Today

Mighty God,
in whom we know the power of redemption,
you stand among us in the shadows of our time.
As we move through every sorrow and trial of this life,
uphold us with knowledge of the final morning
when, in the glorious presence of your risen Son,
we will share in his resurrection,