

Cork University chaplains may be axed

Chaplaincy services at one of the country's largest universities may be axed amid swingeing cuts.

The Irish Catholic reports - University College Cork (UCC) chaplaincy services now face being wiped out if a newly proposed 'hosting' model is approved by university authorities. The move is being

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Almost 2,000 people attended the switching on of the lights on a Christmas tree in the front square at Trinity College, Dublin

seen by some as a sign that the campus is becoming an increasingly hostile place for people of faith.

Bishops from the Cashel province are to seek an urgent meeting with the UCC

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President Dr Michael Murphy and representatives of Protestant, Jewish and Muslim students are also said to be up in arms at the proposal.

Recommendations

Recommendations of a recent internal review, conducted by Dr Ian Pickup, UCC Head of Student Experience, and seen by



University College Cork

The review now proposes that UCC employ only one Catholic chaplain, under the direction of a 'Chaplaincy & Welfare Officer' who is to replace the current Head Chaplain. The report also suggests UCC host the services of chaplains and leaders from other denominations and faiths "where possible, affordable and available".

this newspaper, outline a proposed strategy to downgrade the university's chaplaincy department to a part time service which would see an end to full-time chaplains based on campus.

Under the proposed recommendations, in what one university source labelled as "spiritual apartheid", the current structure of chaplaincy on campus would be dismantled with provision for only limited access to part time chaplains on-call for vulnerable students.

The UCC Chaplaincy Review 2013 was completed following the resignation of two chaplains during the summer of 2013 and was supposed to assist the decision-making process regarding the replacement of staff.

The standing agreement between the university and its chaplaincy department makes provision for three full time Catholic chaplains. However, despite attempts by the Diocese of Cork and Ross to nominate appropriate replacements, the positions have remained vacant pending publication of the review.

The move has been described as "worrying" by a university source who spoke on condition of anonymity. "The university is imposing a hosting model which is spiritual apartheid. Eventually all chaplains will be hosted which means there will be no full time chaplains in the university at all.

"This is a clear attempt by UCC to remove faith of all kinds from university structures. UCC is becoming an increasingly aggressive and hostile place to be for people of faith," the source said.

The Irish Catholic understands that the bishops of the Cashel ecclesiastical province have sent a letter to UCC President Michael Murphy expressing their grave concern at the proposals and seeking an urgent meeting.

UCC is one of the country's largest third-level institutions with more than 16,000 students at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

- See : <http://www.irishcatholic.ie/article/university-chaplains-may-be-axed#sthash.KTLwbQS8.4yBKtm14.dpuf>

Abortion: Justice Minister David Ford to consult on changing NI's laws

Northern Ireland's justice minister has said he is going to consult on changing abortion laws to allow women carrying babies with fatal foetal abnormalities to have a termination.

BBC News - Other grounds, such as abortion in rape or incest cases, are also expected to be covered.

David Ford said he hoped to put out a consultation document for the "potential for change" by next Easter.

He said he anticipated it would only apply to a narrow range of cases.

Fatal foetal abnormality is currently not a ground for abortion under NI law.

David Ford told BBC Radio Ulster's Nolan Show he would review the legislation after two women told their stories earlier this year.

Both women discovered their babies had anencephaly, a severe brain abnormality and would not survive outside the womb.

More at - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-25230152>

Irish rep at Trust anniversary in Westminster

The Archdeacon of Connor, the Venerable Dr Stephen McBride, attended a service to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the National Churches Trust at Westminster Abbey.

Archdeacon McBride's primary degree is in architecture and his doctoral thesis was a study of 19th century ecclesiastical



architecture in the Church of Ireland. He is the clerical representative on the Ulster Historic Churches Trust.

"The occasion was a marvellous celebration of a

very important milestone in the life of the Trust which has made grants to over 12,000 projects worth an estimated £85 million at today's prices," Archdeacon McBride said.

"The funding has helped to secure the fabric of many of the most important historic ecclesiastical buildings in the United Kingdom."



The special preacher at the anniversary service was the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Old Testament was read by Bear Grylls. Actress Geraldine James OBE read a poem by the former Archbishop of

Canterbury, Lord Williams of Oysternouth, entitled: 'Please close the door quietly,' and the broadcaster Huw Edwards, a Vice-President of the Trust, interviewed three people whose parishes had benefited from restoration grants.

Archdeacon McBride, who was seated in the famous Poets' Corner in the south transept of the Abbey, said: "I thoroughly enjoyed the privilege of being present on such an occasion where the pre-service music as well and the joyful singing of a cathedral packed with over 2,000 worshippers combined with the splendour of the architecture of Westminster Abbey made it a day that will last long in my memory."

Remembering Daphne Wormell

A cross which was left as a gift by one of Ireland's foremost campaigners for the ordination of women will be presented to the Bishop of Meath and Kildare, the Most Revd Pat Storey, in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, next Monday, December 9, at 6.00 pm.

Lynn Glanville, United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough - Daphne Wormell left

the cross in her will in 2001 with the request that it be presented to the first woman bishop in the Church of Ireland. Bishop Storey will receive the cross on Monday when she will also launch Daphne's biography *With Dignity and Grace* by Daphne Wormell and her daughter Julia Turner.

Daphne Wormell first made the case for women priests in 1970 when she wrote that "bishops may yet be bringing their husbands to Lambeth". In 1996 she was awarded an honorary MA degree by Dublin University for her work in this area and for her contribution to Trinity College Dublin. In November 2000 she and four other women celebrated the 25th anniversary of their commissioning as the first female lay readers in the Church of Ireland. She was also chair of the Women's Ministry Group.

Daphne Wormell, was born into an Irish family living in Canada. She came to Trinity College Dublin in 1937 where she studied History and Political Science and went on to become a Scholar and Gold Medallist.

She married Donald Wormell, then a Fellow of Trinity College Dublin in 1941 and subsequently they moved to England, where Donald worked on translating



Bishop Pat Storey is congratulated by Evelyn Sloane (Taney) following her consecration as Bishop of Meath and Kildare in Christ Church Cathedral on Saturday November 30.

secret documents from German at Bletchley Park. Returning to Dublin in 1944 Donald resumed his post at Trinity College. In 1949 the Wormells moved to

Sandyford where they were known for their generous hospitality. In the 60s Daphne taught History & Art Appreciation in a number of Dublin schools, including Park

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Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols

Monday 16th December at 8pm

The Celtic Tenors in Concert

Thursday 20th December at 8pm
€25



Vivaldi's Four Seasons by Candlelight

Featuring the Orchestra of St Cecilia
Friday 21st December at 8pm
€22 / €20 conc.



The Nativity of our Lord: Sung Eucharist

Tuesday 24th December at 11pm

Festal Sung Eucharist for Christmas Day

Wednesday 25th December at 11am

New Year's Eve Gala Concert

In aid of the Simon Community
Tuesday 31st December at 9pm
€40



Tickets available from entertainment.ie/tickets or from the cathedral Welcome Desk

House, The High School and Hillcourt School.

Throughout her life spiritual matters were of central importance to her and her interest in the ordination of women increased in the early 1970s when Archbishop Simms asked her to write on the ordination of women as she was familiar with developments in this area in the United States and Canada.

In 1975 she and four other women were invited by Archbishop Buchanan to train as the first female lay readers in the United Dioceses of Dublin & Glendalough. Later she started the Women in Ministry group and was chairperson of the planning group which organised a seminal conference on Women's Ministry in Trinity College in 1986.

She died in November 2001 and is survived by three sons, Richard, Robin and Stephen and her daughter Julia. Her biography, written partly by herself and partly by her daughter, Julia, was published by Hinds in 2013.

In her will she left a silver cross to be presented to the first woman bishop of the Church of Ireland. Bishop Storey was consecrated Bishop of Meath and Kildare on Saturday November 30.

Armagh Memorial Organ Recital

While the programme of organ recitals in memory of Dean Cassidy will continue in 2014, Mr John Dilworth will give the final 2013 recital on Sunday 15 December 2013 at 4.15pm in St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral, Armagh.

John grew up near Dungannon. He started learning the organ in 2007 under the Archbishop Gregg Memorial Scholarship Scheme, receiving tuition from the Cathedral organist, Mr Theo Saunders. He spent a gap year as organ scholar of Chichester Cathedral, where his duties included accompanying services and training choristers and probationers. He went to Magdalene College, Cambridge as an organ scholar and to study music, and was taught the organ by Gordon Stewart.



He was awarded the ARCO diploma (Associate of the Royal College of Organists) in June 2012, winning the Doris Wookey prize.

John is currently studying at King's College, London, taking a Masters course in Music History, with a particular interest in the musical culture of Britain in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Since September, he has also been organist at St Philip's Church, Camberwell, where he has recently started a children's choir.

The programme for the December organ recital will consist of Christmas music from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries, including Bach's chorale preludes on 'In dulci jubilo', one of Louis-Claude Daquin's sets of variations on rustic French Noëls, and other works by Buxtehude, Widor, Messiaen and Ireland.

The Very Revd Gregory Dunstan, the Dean of Armagh, said, "John is one of many talented organists from these parts who are developing careers in music after their early studies here in Armagh. We are delighted to welcome him back to the Cathedral for this recital, whose programme leads us towards Christmas."

Admission is free to the organ recital, which will last approximately 45 minutes. There will be a retiring collection towards the maintenance of the Cathedral's fabric.



Pope Francis greets a young pilgrim in St. Peter's Square. Credit: Marianne Medlin/CNA.

If Pope could perform one miracle, it would be 'to heal children'

During a recent visit to a parish on the outskirts of Rome, Pope Francis revealed that if he had the power to conduct one miracle, it would be to heal suffering children.

The Pope was visiting St. Cyril parish to celebrate the sacrament of confirmation, and afterwards spent several hours visiting with the people there. One of the teenagers who was being confirmed asked him what miracle he would perform if he could.

According to Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano, the Holy Father's answer was: "To heal children, because it pains me to see children suffer."

The Holy Father greeted the sick people at the parish one by one, embracing them with a smile and sharing words of comfort. Some wept for joy at seeing him.

He also spoke with the people present. He asked the children receiving First Communion, "Are you good? Do you know how to pray? Thank you for being here to spend this time together and get to know each other better."



The Prince of piece

Church reveals Lego nativity scene Bessels Green Baptist Church in Sevenoaks boasts an unorthodox nativity scene made from Lego, where seven Biblical scenes are on display. Members of the congregation have been asked to add their own in promptu additions.

To the parents of children baptized during the year, the Pope said, "When they are baptized, we bring home not only our child

but also a seed of divinity that we must help to grow."

Patience towards children is important, he continued, "and talking with them and teaching them is wonderful." Even more wonderful, however, is the awareness that with baptism, "A divine sign comes into the home."

He also told them that he had never imagined becoming Pope, and he was "a little bit" anxious celebrating his first Mass after being elected, because "to face so many people is a little scary."

"But the people were nice," he said, adding that "the Lord has helped me to be a priest, and then a bishop and now Pope."

Questioned about his daily schedule, the Holy Father said, "I pray, then I celebrate Mass and then I begin to work," reading letters, documents and having meetings with cardinals,

bishops, priests and lay people. Lunch is at noon, followed by half an hour of rest. Then he begins working again until night, LOR reported.

The Pope also revealed that he worked as a bouncer at a night club when he was younger. He also taught literature and psychology, and learned from his experience how to help fallen-away Catholics return to the Church.

"We don't have to go door to door proselytizing," he said, quoting Benedict XVI, "because the Church spreads through attraction."

The Pope's final gesture was to bless an unborn child and to bid farewell to the people, encouraging them to use the period of Advent to prepare well for Christmas in order to "encounter Jesus once again."

The lonely virtues of a virtual prayer book

Following prayers on the new Church of England phone app is a bit like drinking alone Christopher Howse writes in The Daily Telegraph

There are times when it's difficult to avoid going to church – someone's funeral or wedding, perhaps. The annoying thing then is knowing when to stand or sit, or possibly kneel.

An acute example of this theatre of embarrassment is Arthur Box-Bender, in Evelyn Waugh's *Unconditional Surrender*, at the funeral of Guy Crouchback's father. He spends his time anxious to fit in with every prompt, even to genuflect – to bend his knee to a God to whom he is indifferent. Guy, brought up to it all, "followed the familiar rite with his thoughts full of his father".

The unease of the worldly Box-Bender is felt by any ordinary fish out of water: a guest at a shoot, a visitor to the Dalai Lama, a new member of a club – even, we are told, people who do not know they are free to wander round the National Gallery.

No water is more unfamiliar than that of organised religion. Non-practitioners stick out like a sore thumb. It's a serious difficulty. Try visiting Mecca without having followed the habits of Islam.

So the launch by the Church of England of a phone app that gives the prayers and Bible readings of the day might short-

circuit the arcana of religious practice. You could say your prayers with the help of your smartphone on the top deck of a bus.

Or it could be doubly alienating: a barrier for those who don't know what worshippers get up to at Evensong, to whom *Mag* and *Nunc* sound like the names of glove-puppets, and a parallel wall excluding those who don't really know what an app is. There are such folk.

I've just test-driven the ordinary online content provided (free) on the Church of England website by clicking on the link "Join us in Daily Prayer". It gives a choice of Traditional or Contemporary. Of course I went for Traditional.

More at -
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/10494646/The-lonely-virtues-of-a-virtual-prayer-book.html>

Media monitor

Guardian

A senior Greek bishop has threatened to excommunicate any lawmakers who vote in favour of legalising same-sex partnerships. The Metropolitan of Piraeus, Seraphim, has warned the country's deputy Prime Minister, that he will be denied the blessing of the Lord if he endorses same sex partnerships.
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/04/greek-bishop-threatens-excommunicate-gay-unions>

BBC

An Aberdeen engineering firm, Optimus, has abandoned plans to move into the Greyfriars John Knox Church, a historic city centre church.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-25202919>

Times

The Vatican has rejected a request from the United Nations to provide case by case details on child abuse by priests, monks

and nuns, prompting an angry response from victims.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article3940101.ece>

Times

Conservative U.S. Talk show host Rush Limbaugh has accused Pope Francis of "preaching Marxism," because of his support for the poor and criticism of Capitalism.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article3940091.ece>

Blogs

On the **God & Politics** blog Gillan Scott writes about the debate in the House of commons earlier this week on the persecuted church

<http://godandpoliticsuk.org/2013/12/04/senior-mps-tell-the-government-to-do-more-to-prevent-the-persecution-of-christians-globally/>

Thinking Anglicans notes that Fulcrum has made a response to the Pilling report
<http://www.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk/articles/fulcrum-response-to-the-pilling-report-2/>

Peter Hitchen reflects on his **Daily Mail** blog on a debate with will Self at Brunel University on the future of Church Schools
<http://hitchensblog.mailonsunday.co.uk/2013/12/an-evening-with-professor-self.html>

Prayer for Today

O God, your Son remained with his disciples after his resurrection,
teaching them to love all people as
As his disciples in this age,
we offer our prayers on behalf of the universe
in which we are privileged to live
and our neighbours with whom we share it.