



The dogs receive their blessing from Dean Dermot Dunne

Barking intro to cathedral Christmas from therapy dogs

The coming of Christmas was heralded with a bark in Christ Church Cathedral on Tuesday afternoon (December 13). The cathedral was

filled with dogs of all shapes and sizes for the annual Peata Therapy Dog Carol Service.

The majority of the dogs in attendance visit homes and care facilities throughout Dublin with their owners who volunteer with Peata. They made their voices heard during the popular carols, which were led by the Girls' Choir of Christ Church Cathedral under the direction of Ian Keatley, director of music and accompanied by organist, David Bremner.

The service was led by Dean Dermot Dunne who said the annual event was a celebration of the gift of creation and a tribute to the great contribution dogs make to people, in particular the people visited by Peata dogs. All the dogs present were invited up to the screen for a blessing.

The Dean thanked the Girls' Choir for singing and the organisers, in particular Lesley Rue, for bringing the service to the cathedral each year.

A collection was taken up with the proceeds going to Peata and the Friends' of Christ Church Cathedral towards work to be done on their altar frontal.

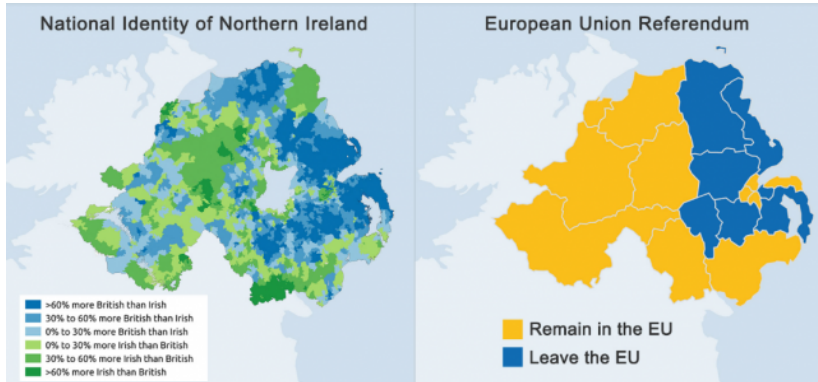
Peata is a voluntary organisation which provides a pet therapy service to caring institutions. Its visiting scheme involves approved volunteers and their dogs who generally pay weekly visits.

New Brexit report on Ireland asks crucial questions – Derry bishop

A House of Lords report that has recommended that questions of freedom of movement across the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic has been welcomed by Derry's Bishop Donal McKeown, in a report by Greg Daly in *The Irish Catholic*

“It’s certainly very encouraging for us here to discover that there are people in significant positions who are concerned about the effect that Brexit might have specifically on Ireland and Northern Ireland as political entities, and on relationships within the island,” Dr McKeown said.

Describing himself as “glad” that the report had addressed the effects of Brexit on Ireland’s economies and on the Peace Process, Dr



McKeown said, “It is important that those questions are faced honestly,” adding, “Whether what the report raises is possible is another question, but at least I am glad that the questions are being asked. There’s a real concern here about the way forward.”

The report, the first of six reports from Britain’s House of Lords on the possible effects of Brexit, was launched in London and Dublin on Monday, December 12. Warning that the departure of Britain from the EU could be even more detrimental to Ireland than for Britain, the report called on the EU to allow the British and Irish governments to find a unique solution to the problems Brexit would cause across Ireland.

“Obviously we’re concerned about the effects it could have on the Republic, we’re concerned

about the effects it could have on the North, and we're concerned about the effects it could have on Derry which could end up being a cul de sac if there's a hard border," Dr McKeown said, adding that it remained to be seen whether the reports proposals could be acceded to, as they would depend on the agreement of all 28 EU countries.

"It depends ultimately on what the negotiations throw up.

"They can raise the issue, but it might turn out not to be possible that Northern Ireland will have a particular relationship," he said.

"On the other hand," he added, "it might be a real changing point in terms of where people in Northern Ireland see their future lying."

C of I Bishops' Appeal supports response to crisis in Yemen

The Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal is partnering with Christian Aid and Tearfund to respond to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Yemen. Already one of the world's poorest nations, it has been devastated by civil war,

leaving 7,000 dead, 35,000 injured and millions without food and shelter.

Bishops' Appeal Chairman, the Rt Revd Patrick Rooke, has called upon congregations across Ireland to respond to this crisis by supporting the efforts of these charities. He stated: 'There has been conflict in Yemen for nearly two years and it has left three-quarters of the population without access to clean water, food and healthcare. Seven million people do not know where their next meal will come from. Flooding and landslides that have happened since July have caused many to lose their homes. At this time of year, there are many worthy causes to give to. Would you consider giving to this crisis appeal? The situation in Yemen is critical and we would ask the Church to respond in prayer and generosity. Please consider holding a collection, or giving individually, as you also pray for peace and relief for the people who are in desperate need of assistance.'

The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) has launched an urgent appeal for Yemen. The DEC works through 13 charities, including Christian Aid and Tearfund, to respond to emergencies. You can give to the appeal through Christian Aid

or Tearfund at the following links:

www.christianaid.ie/emergencies/current/yemen-crisis-2016 and www.tearfund.org/yemen

Blessing and condolence from Pope Francis at Funeral Mass for Bishop Clifford

Archbishop Eamon Martin, the chief celebrant at the Funeral Mass yesterday for Bishop Gerard Clifford RIP, in the Church of Saint Patrick, Dundalk, read out the following message of condolence from Pope Francis:

“The Holy Father was saddened to learn of the death of Bishop Gerard Clifford and he sends heartfelt condolences to the clergy, religious and lay faithful of the Archdiocese of Armagh. United with you in prayerful thanksgiving for his generous and dedicated episcopal ministry in the service of education and ecumenism, His Holiness joins those gathered for the solemn funeral rites in commending the soul of the late Prelate to our Heavenly Father’s merciful love. Upon all who mourn Bishop Clifford’s passing, Pope Francis cordially imparts his Apostolic

Blessing as a pledge of peace and consolation in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Archbishop Justin Welby in London vigil for Coptic bomb victims



Candles and roses at Westminster Abbey in memory of the victims of Sunday's terror attack on St Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church in Cairo

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, took part in a vigil at Westminster Abbey on

wednesday night in honour of the victims of Sunday's bomb attack on the Coptic Cathedral compound in Cairo. He was joined by the general bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the UK, Bishop Angaelos, the Egyptian Ambassador, Mr Nasser Kamel, as well as numerous other faith leaders, diplomats, and members of the UK's Coptic Orthodox community. The vigil took place at the Abbey's Innocent Victims' Memorial.

Sunday's bomb took place in St Peter's Coptic Orthodox Church in Cairo, part of the cathedral compound. Most of the victims were women and children – the bomb was detonated in a chapel used mainly by women. As the names of the victims were read out, red roses were placed on the memorial, in between lit candles, representing the lives of those lost in the attack.

“It is deeply moving for myself and our community that all of you gathered here today have done so at such short notice,” Bishop Angaelos said. “It is a shame that it takes events like these to gather us, but the fact that we do gather means that there is significantly greater good than evil in this world.



“It is tragic that families have been broken apart just before the celebration of the Feast of the Nativity, and I can only begin to imagine their sorrow. While we pray for the families and support them pastorally in whatever way we can, we know that the loss of a loved one is something that only God can truly comfort at this time through His grace.

“I am personally moved that my sisters and brothers continue, despite their suffering, to live with dignity, integrity, resilience, love and forgiveness, which is demonstrated through their genuine Christian witness.”

He continued: “People are indeed surprised when we speak of forgiveness at times like these but we are called to forgive and we must continue to do so. Of course there is a call for

justice but never for vengeance, reconciliation but never carelessness.

“In our unity as the Body of Christ, the family of faith, and the global family, we must continue to advocate for and safeguard the dignity and sanctity of every life, the importance of our mission and our ministry here as God’s children, and to continue, like these candles to be light in darkness.”

News briefs

+++ Goodbody’s choir cathedral charity concert - A choir made up of more than 50 staff members at A&L Goodbody raised cash for charity at its annual Christmas choral concert in Dublin. The choir took to the stage in Christ Church Cathedral on Sunday to raise money for DePaul Ireland, a charity that supports people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Directed by Anna-Marie Curran, partner in the firm’s EU, competition and procurement team, a wide arrangement of carols were performed and accompanied by A&L Goodbody’s talented musicians on organ, piano, guitar and cajón percussion. Over 500 A&L Goodbody staff

members, friends and families attended the performance.

+++ Parish Christmas poem schools

competition - St John's Parish took part in the Switch On of the Christmas Tree Lights in Moira. In the run up to the switching on of the Christmas tree lights St John's Parish Church held their annual poetry competition where they invited pupils from the local primary schools to write a Christmas poem. This year's winner, Jane McCarroll (Moira Primary School) had the honour of switching on the Christmas tree lights in Moira on Wednesday 30th November. Jane read her winning poem entitled, 'It's the most wonderful time of the year'. In her poem Jane records that she wants everyone in Moira to know that the real meaning of this 'most wonderful time of the year' is because God's son Jesus was born. The event was organised by St John's Parish Church; the compere was St John's parishioner Simon Henry (Church of Ireland Youth Officer) and the Rev Joanne Megarrell (Rector) gave a short Christmas address. A choir from Moira Primary School and a choir from Rowandale Primary School each sang a selection of Christmas carols and both choirs joined in singing the closing festive song, 'We wish you a merry Christmas'.

+++ Clogher Blue Christmas - Sunday 18th December – Blue Christmas Holy Communion Rite in Trory Parish Church at 8.00pm. Open to all who are finding the emotions of Christmas hard to enjoy this year, grief, sadness, sickness or hurt may mar the joy.

+++ Sligo Cathedral Carol Service - 18th December 2016. 8:15 pm – 10:00 pm. Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Temple St, Sligo

+++ New member of Canterbury Task Group - The Dean of St Mark's Pro-Cathedral in Alexandria has joined the Archbishop of Canterbury's Task Group, set up in response to the Primates Gathering and Meeting in January. The Very Revd Canon Dr Samy Fawzy Shehata, who is also the principal of Alexandria School of Theology, replaces the Moderator of the Church of South India, Bishop Govada Dyvasirvadam. The Task Group was requested by the Primates, and is tasked with restoring relationships, rebuilding mutual trust, healing the legacy of hurt, and exploring the deep differences that exist within the Anglican Communion. The group [held its first meeting](#) at the Anglican Communion

Offices in September, and agreed to meet in person annually with other meetings via videoconferencing. The [other members of the task group](#) are Archbishop Richard Clarke, *Church of Ireland*; Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, *US-based Episcopal Church*; Archbishop Ian Ernest, *Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean*; Archbishop Philip Freier, *Anglican Church of Australia*; Archbishop Ng Moon Hing, *Province of South East Asia*; Canon Rosemary Mbogo, *Anglican Church of Kenya*; Bishop Linda Nicholls, *Anglican Church of Canada*; Canon Elizabeth Paver, *Church of England*; and Bishop Paul Sarker, *Church of Bangladesh*.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Ireland's Muslims more educated than general population

Irish Times

Muslims in **Ireland** are better educated on average than non-Muslims, ... it found that “Jews are more highly educated than any other major **religious** ...

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/ireland-s-muslims-more-educated-than-general-population-1.2904661>

Slaying the sectarian dragon

The Irish Catholic

The **Church of Ireland** Archbishop of Dublin, Michael Jackson, provoked controversy three years ago when he said that his experience in Dublin has ...

<http://www.irishcatholic.ie/article/slaying-sectarian-dragon>

Christmas in Benildus

Waterford Today

Trinity Gospel Choir: Trinity Gospel Choir Waterford is an Inter- denominational choir serving both the Roman Catholic & **Church of Ireland** twinned ...

www.waterford-today.ie/waterford-entertainment/9417-christmas-in-benildus-9417.html

Premier

Report on the Archbishop of Canterbury's Christmas message in the Radio Times in which he says that Christmas can be "an empty time" for some people, particularly those who don't have a home, a job or someone to love them. In the article, Archbishop Justin highlights the BBC Radio 4 Christmas Appeal with St Martin-in-the-Fields to help the homeless.

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Justin-Welby-highlights-Christmas-plight-of-homeless>

Times/Tel/Guard/FT

Reports that the foundation stone for a new tower at Westminster Abbey was laid down by

the Prince of Wales. An 80ft gothic structure, containing a lift and staircase on the east side of the abbey outside Poets' Corner, will allow visitors to access a new exhibition space in the attic of the abbey that has never been opened to the public. It is the first new tower in the building for 271 years and will be named the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Galleries. The *FT* has a gallery of photographs of restoration work being carried out in the Abbey's Triforium.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/abbey-builds-first-tower-since-1745-lctcwvwqp>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/art/architecture/westminster-abbey-reminds-us-live-land-goths-not-well-mannered/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2016/dec/14/new-tower-will-reveal-hidden-world-westminster-abbey>

[http://blogs.ft.com/photo-diary/2016/12/westminster-abbey-restoration/?](http://blogs.ft.com/photo-diary/2016/12/westminster-abbey-restoration/?FTCamp=engage/CAP/webapp/Channel_Moreover//B2B)

[FTCamp=engage/CAP/webapp/Channel_Moreover//B2B](http://blogs.ft.com/photo-diary/2016/12/westminster-abbey-restoration/?FTCamp=engage/CAP/webapp/Channel_Moreover//B2B)

Huff Post

CofE communications department blog on three churches and a cathedral hosting Christmas Day lunches for rough sleepers, people living in

hostels, refugees and people alone on Christmas Day.

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/martha-linden/christmas-day-church-giving-back_b_13629350.html

Anglican Communion News Service

Reports that the Church of England's National Investing Bodies, along with the Environment Agency Pension Fund and the London School of Economics, will be launching the Transition Pathway Initiative in January, tracking the progress of companies they are invested in on climate change. The initiative has been spearheaded by the Church of England, and comes as a result of commitments made in the NIBs' climate change policy launched in May 2015.

<http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2016/12/churches-step-up-action-on-climate-change.aspx>

York Press

Report that Leeds Minster has turned down an invitation to ring York Minster's bells at its Christmas services, in an 'act of solidarity' with York's ringers. In October the Archbishop of York issued a statement saying it had been necessary for York Minster Chapter to take action

regarding a member of the bell ringing community on safeguarding grounds and that the whole team had been disbanded following 'repeated disregard of the Chapter's attempts to fully implement the Church's national policies for safeguarding, health and safety and security'. A York Minster spokeswoman is quoted.

http://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/14966310.Leeds_ringers_turn_down_Minster_in_vite/

Lincolnshire Live (Tues)

Report that police have confirmed arrests as part of its on-going Operation Redstone, launched after a review of past safeguarding cases in the diocese of Lincoln. Article includes comment from Heather Roach, former Deputy Chief Constable at Lincolnshire police and chairman of the Bishop's safeguarding oversight panel.

<http://www.lincolnshirelive.co.uk/arrests-after-historic-child-sex-abuse-allegations-at-some-lincolnshire-churches/story-29979971-detail/story.html#Axg3dkMh3zLasgL5.99>

Tel

Simon Heffer writes: "Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral is a testament to architectural genius."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/art/architecture/liverpools-anglican-cathedral-testament-architectural-genius/>

Comment

Huff Post: Sara Nathan, Co-Founder of Refugees At Home writes, “Surely there should be some rooms available for refugees in one of the richest countries in the world this Christmas.”

<http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/sara-nathan/surely-there-should-be-some b 13629384.html>