

Christian Brothers' Grammar sticking to selection

York Minster to host historic consecration of England's first woman bishop

Archbishop Justin Welby welcomed the announcement of the Revd Libby Lane, currently Vicar of St Peter's, Hale, and St Elizabeth's, Ashley, as the new Bishop of Stockport.



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The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby, said:

“I am absolutely delighted that Libby has been appointed to succeed Bishop Robert Atwell as Bishop of Stockport. Her Christ-centred life, calmness and clear determination to serve the church and the community make her a wonderful choice.

“She will be bishop in a diocese that has been outstanding in its development of people, and she will make a major contribution. She and her family will be in my prayers during the initial excitement, and the pressures of moving.”



The Revd Libby Lane.

The Church of England's first woman bishop will be consecrated in a historic service at York Minster next month.

Rev Lane was ordained as a priest in 1994 and has served a number of parish and chaplaincy roles in the North of England, including in the Diocese of York from 1996 to 1999.

The [Archbishop of York](#), Dr John Sentamu, said yesterday: "It is with great joy that on January 26, 2015 - the feast of Timothy and Titus, companions of Paul - I will be in York Minster, presiding over the consecration of the Revd Libby Lane as Bishop Suffragan of Stockport.

"Libby brings a wealth of experience in parish ministry, in hospital and FE chaplaincy, in vocations work and the nurture of ordinands. I am delighted that she will exercise her episcopal ministry with joy, prayerfulness, and trust in God.

"When the General Synod rejected the previous proposals in November 2012, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, wrote to 'pour some balm on (my) wounded heart'. That year, he encouraged me, his province was finally celebrating the election of two women bishops. 'Be comforted', he said, 'it will come.'

"When I wrote to him last weekend to offer my prayers for his battle with prostate cancer, he replied with these words: 'Wonderful that you over there will soon have women bishops. Yippee! I know you have pushed for this for a long time. Yippee again!'

"Praise be to God in the highest heaven, and peace to all in England!"

The Dean of York, the Very Reverend Vivienne Faull, who had herself been tipped by some to become the first woman bishop, today welcomed the appointment of Rev Lane.

She said: "The announcement of the appointment of Reverend Libby Lane as the first female bishop in the Church of England is the wonderful culmination of a long and difficult journey for women in the church.

"This is a new and exciting beginning for the Church as men and women of faith join together in the work of worship, ministry and mission.

"I know Reverend Libby Lane and I know that the people of the Diocese of Chester will be getting a capable, vibrant and extraordinary woman to support the ministry of the people of Stockport.

"I am delighted that Reverend Libby Lane has been appointed to a diocese in the Northern Province and the consecration will be held here at York Minster. We look forward to hosting this momentous and historic occasion."

Speaking at Stockport town hall, where today's announcement was made, Rev Lane said: "I am grateful for, though somewhat daunted by, the confidence placed in me by the Diocese of Chester. This is unexpected and very exciting. On this historic day as the Church of England announces the first woman nominated to be Bishop, I am very conscious of all those who have gone before me, women and men, who for decades have looked forward to this moment. But most of all I am thankful to God.

"The church faces wonderful opportunities, to proclaim afresh, in this generation, the Good News of Jesus and to build His Kingdom. The Church of England is called to serve all the people of this country, and being present in every community, we communicate our faith best when our lives build up the lives of others, especially the most vulnerable. I am excited by the possibilities and challenges ahead."

Watch a video with Revd Libby Lane, the new Bishop of Stockport and also listen to an interview with her here: <http://bit.ly/13unZ0w>

Cork Bishops Bless students' crib at Start of Annual Collection

SHARE (Students Harness Aid for the Relief of the Elderly), the organisation for the care

Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr. Mary Shields., Bishop Paul Colton and Fiacra (Deputy Chairperson of SHARE) at the Blessing of the SHARE Crib 2014



of Cork's elderly, launched its traditional fast and fundraising campaign at the SHARE Crib, Daunt's

Square, Cork, (near Grand Parade) on Sunday, 14th December. The event saw an impressive turnout for its 45th year, in which almost 1,800 fourth and fifth-year students from 20 Cork schools rally round to raise funds for SHARE.



The Blessing of the SHARE Crib 2014

Special Guests, including The Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr. Mary Shields, Bishop John Buckley and Bishop Paul Colton, and Minister for State, Kathleen Lynch TD, joined the young students of SHARE at the opening ceremony at the specially erected Christmas Crib at Daunt's Square, Cork. Bishop Buckley and Bishop Colton joined this year, as most years, in an ecumenical blessing of the crib. The Army band of the First Southern Brigade played Christmas seasonal carols to add to the already festive atmosphere around the Crib.

Evan O'Brien (17), a 5th year student at Presentation College Cork who is Chairman of the SHARE Executive (a group of 54 young students tasked with steering the initiative) said:

Our theme has been consistent over the last few years – it's Dignity, Respect and Compassion – it's what SHARE is all about. We also want people to know that our efforts are not just at Christmas, SHARE boys and girls and volunteers from several school classes visit residents in their homes and at the Day Care Centre throughout the year, where we learn to understand the realities of growing old and the joys and challenges they bring first hand for ourselves, and we help in an way we can.

The SHARE boys and girls will collect in the city centre up until Christmas Eve, as many of their parents and brothers and sisters have done before them. The general public will also have an opportunity to give donations at SHARE cribs in specific shopping centres around the city and suburbs or at the Brother Jerome Kelly Day Care Centre on Sheare's Street, Cork.

Belfast Christian Brothers' Grammar sticking to selection as it rejects merger

A Catholic grammar school has insisted it will maintain its use of academic selection despite vehement opposition to the policy by both Education Minister John O'Dowd and the Church.



St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar in west Belfast is one of a few Catholic schools to retain academic selection.

A Belfast Catholic grammar school has insisted it will maintain its use of academic selection despite vehement opposition to the policy by both Education Minister John O'Dowd and the Church

Yesterday it announced that it had rejected a plan to expand. It is understood that this would have involved ending its use of academic selection.

The Edmund Rice Trust initiated plans two years ago to create a Catholic 'super school' on the Glen Road by merging St Mary's with the Christian Brothers' (Secondary) School (CBS), which is located across the road from it.

The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) drafted a development proposal last year to close the CBS - which has around 500 pupils.

CCMS does not run St Mary's, which is a voluntary grammar school.

However, in line with the Edmund Rice Trust vision, it is understood that a second development proposal had been drafted to increase enrolment at St Mary's to ensure places for the children from the CBS.

There are currently 1,200 boys enrolled at St Mary's and part of the deal is believed to have been the ending of academic selection.

On Monday evening the board of governors at St Mary's voted in favour of maintaining "100% academic selection".

As a result of the board's decision, the proposed consolidation with the CBS will not proceed.

St Mary's principal John Martin said there was a strong parental demand to retain the status quo at his school, rejecting what he termed as a move away from academic selection in Belfast.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/education/st-marys-christian-brothers-grammar-sticking-to-selection-as-it-rejects-merger-30843285.html>

Christmas in full swing in Christchurch, Dublin

A spokesperson for the Cathedral comments - "Christmas celebrations are in full swing here in Christ Church and we have a host of beautiful services and fun festive activities for all ages in the next few weeks.

"On **Friday 19th and Saturday 20th December** we are having a special Christmas Festival here in the cathedral: Santa will be in residence in his atmospheric crypt grotto and you will be able to finish off those last bits of Christmas shopping at our craft market, all while munching on some tasty festive treats from our food stalls or listening to live Christmas music. Best of all - **admission to everything, including the cathedral itself is absolutely free!** See our [website](#) for further details,

"As usual we will be hosting beautiful **sung services** in the cathedral, featuring our wonderful cathedral choir. As well as their scheduled Thursday and Sunday services don't miss the annual **Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols** on Monday 22nd December at 8pm, the **Christmas Eve Eucharist at 11pm on the or the Christmas Day Eucharist at 11am** - full details are available [here](#).

Guardian on Irish referendum on gay marriage in May

Henry McDonald writes in The Guardian - A referendum on legalising gay marriage in Ireland will be held in May, the Republic's deputy prime minister announced on Tuesday evening.

Tánaiste and Irish Labour leader Joan Burton confirmed that the cabinet in Dublin had agreed to hold the vote then.

“The fact that this referendum is now to take place is a mark of the progress that has taken place in this country in recent years and decades, and indicates the extent to which attitudes to lesbian and gay people have changed,” Burton said in Government Buildings.

A gay Christian group was among the first to welcome the announcement. Dr Richard O’Leary, chair of the Church of Ireland group Changing Attitude Ireland, said: “In the forthcoming referendum on marriage Christians will be campaigning on both sides.”

He added: “Although Catholic bishops have expressed opposition, Christians can still use their freedom of conscience to vote yes to civil marriage equality, like they did 20 years ago in favour of the availability of civil divorce.”

The latest opinion poll in the Irish Times found that 71% of the Republic’s electorate would vote yes and allow for legal gay marriages in the state.

The hierarchy of the Catholic church last week came out against gay marriage in the Republic.

A yes vote would mark another defeat for the temporal power of the Catholic church in a country it once dominated.

More at -

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/16/ireland-gay-marriage-referendum-may>

Faith schools in England top latest primary league tables

Close to two-thirds of the nation’s best performing primary schools have a religious ethos, according to the latest league table results.

The tables showed that out of the 693 schools in which all pupils achieved the Government’s expected standards, 62 per cent (427 schools) had a religious ethos.

That is despite faith schools making up just a third of all primary schools in England.

The faith schools include 330 Church of England and 88 Roman Catholic primaries.

Nigel Genders, the C of E’s Chief Education Officer, said: “I’m delighted that Church of England primary schools are leading some of the outstanding practice going on in schools across the country, and congratulate the pupils,

teachers, support staff, parents and communities who have worked together to secure success.”

He added: “I am particularly pleased that our highest performing school, Hampden Gurney Church of England Primary School, has secured fantastic outcomes with a significant number of disadvantaged pupils in Year Six – demonstrating once again that a child’s success should never be limited by their background.”

Catholic midwives lose abortion case

The UK's highest court has told two Catholic midwives they do not have the right to avoid supervising other nurses involved in abortion procedures.

Read more:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-30514054>

Canterbury course moves Anglican Communion from the head to the heart

If you're able to watch BBC2 TV at 9pm on December 19th (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04vw8xl>) you'll see these fine Anglicans/Episcopalians feature in a programme on Canterbury <http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2014/06/canterbury-course-moves-anglican-communion-from-the-head-to-the-heart.aspx>