



Four school children read from the Dublin City Interfaith Charter.

Faith Leaders Pledge to Promote Tolerance and Respect as Dublin City Adopts Interfaith Charter

A groundbreaking new charter promoting religious freedom, interfaith dialogue and religious diversity in the city of Dublin was officially launched by the Lord Mayor Brendan Carr on Tuesday (December 20). Coming as it did the day after the attack on a Christmas

market in Berlin, the Lord Mayor passed on his condolences to the people of the German city and said he and Dublin's faith leaders were "standing shoulder to shoulder to ensure that this doesn't happen in our city".

The Dublin City Interfaith Charter has been agreed and signed by representatives of Dublin City Interfaith Forum, including Archbishop Michael Jackson. Having committed to the Charter, the Forum plans to agree a schedule of projects and programmes in partnership with Dublin City Council to further its aims.

The Lord Mayor spoke this morning of the rise of racism, xenophobia and intolerance across the world. "This intolerance is happening more and more. But in Dublin the interfaith forum has said it is not happening here. We're going to be a focus and a guiding light for tolerance," he said.

He urged the faith leaders to ensure that their signing of the Charter was not an empty gesture. "What we do here needs to be brought back to our communities and we need to tell everyone about this Charter. This is the start of something... This is the start of people living together and supporting each other."



Dublin's faith leaders with the Lord Mayor Brendan Carr outside the Mansion House.

Mr Carr thanked the faith leaders for their commitment to the Charter saying: “You’re going to change people’s lives here today. You’re going to make this city a better place to live and a better place for our children to grow up while at the same time allowing people the freedom to practice our beliefs. In this Charter I truly believe we are putting Dublin at the forefront of preventing what happened in Berlin happening here”.

Opening proceedings in the Mansion House, Archbishop Michael Jackson, paid tribute to the Lord Mayor’s “instinctive commitment” to the charter and his sense of belonging to the city of

which he is First Citizen. He said 2016 had widened our understanding of Dublin and Ireland without diminishing our identity.

“We have marked through commemoration people and events, history and myth which have framed decisions and perspectives on what it is to live through one hundred years of history and to live ahead for the future and to commit together to a different society of diversity of expression and respect for others in a changed and a changing Ireland. In this way, the Interfaith Charter for Dublin is part of this generosity and part of this journey. It gives voice to who we are for each other in Dublin from a civic perspective; and to who we are yet to become as people of culture and people of Faith. This is reflected in the verbs, the words of doing and of action, that form the spine of the Charter: Commit, Dedicate, Promote, Share, Encourage, Focus, Develop, Create and which give voice to the courage and leadership shown by our Lord Mayor in this life-giving area of encounter, friendship and movement in a true expression of civic leadership,” he stated.

Speaking at the launch, Imam Dr Ali Al Saleh of Ahlul Bayt Islamic Centre in Milltown commended

the Charter and said he and the other Imams present appreciated being part of Dublin City Interfaith Forum. He said they had decided to spread the message of peace and the real message of their Prophet and their religion which had been hijacked by those who committed atrocities. “We have tasted what it means to live in harmony and peace with each other, especially from a society which has suffered. We have learned a lot from Ireland. I think we can do a lot,” he said.

You can read the Dublin City Interfaith Charter [here](#).

A new place of mission and evangelisation in Waterford

A new place of mission and evangelisation for young people in Ireland has been officially opened in the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore.

The Papal Nuncio to Ireland, Archbishop Charles Brown, formally opened Holy Family Mission at Co. Waterford’s Glencomeragh House on Friday, December 2, saying it was an honour officially to launch such a new and exciting initiative for the Church in Ireland, and that “Youth evangelisation



Holy Family Mission community members with Bishop Emeritus William Lee, Bishop Phonsie Cullinan of Waterford and Lismore, and papal nuncio Archbishop Charles Brown.

is the most important task of the Catholic Church”. He described Holy Family Mission as “one of the green shoots in the Church in Ireland”.

Holy Family Mission is a residential community for young people where the primary focus is academic and practical formation in the Catholic faith. Ten young people have been living there since October 23, nine of these being from Ireland with one from the USA.

The mission aims to help young people between 18 and 30 to discover and deepen their knowledge of the Catholic faith, with the aim of

then sharing and helping nurture the Faith in parishes and schools across the country.

300 attend Light Festival at Holy Trinity Woodburn



300 people took part in the lantern parade, pictured leaving Holy Trinity Woodburn.

Holy Trinity Parish, Woodburn, Carrickfergus, held its first ever Community Christmas Lantern Light Festival in conjunction with Jordan Victory Church (JVC).



Santa Claus joins the Nativity

The parade started at Holy Trinity and then proceeded to JVC where the community sang some carols and watched a 'Nativity with a difference: Away with the Manger.'

The Rev Alan McCann, rector of Holy Trinity Woodburn spoke on the meaning of Christmas – on the presents that Christ received from the Wise Men – Gold, because He is the King of kings, Frankincense because He is our Great High Priest and Myrrh because He came to die as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

All the families were then invited to visit Santa who gave them a gift each and a booklet for the children explaining Christmas and a similar one

for the adults. The event finished with everyone tucking into Irish stew, soup, and lots of lovely Christmas food.

Alan said: "We were so delighted that around 300 people joined us for this first venture and we hope that this will now become an established part of the Christmas celebrations for the community in this area."

East Antrim Borough Council supported the event with a grant.

Holy Trinity Woodburn had another visit from Santa recently – he came to church to receive gifts from the congregation for distribution by the Board of Social Responsibility.

Mothers' Union tell UN "for too long women have been judged by wealth" and change is needed

Mothers' Union is calling on the United Nations and national governments worldwide to reimagine the current global economic system to ensure women have equal access and rights to economic resources . In a statement to the United Nations Commission on the Status of

Women [UNCSW], timed to coincide with International Human Rights Day on 10th December and marking the culmination of 16 Days of Activism to highlight gender-based violence [GBV], Mothers' Union said that a radical change in approach is required if sustainable progress is to be made.

Bev Jullien, CEO of Mothers' Union, which represents 4 million members in 83 countries worldwide, said; "Too often women have been valued according to the economic wealth they can generate rather than their intrinsic value. We must reimagine the current global economic system to ensure that no one – especially women - is left behind."

A delegation of Mothers' Union representatives from across the world, will travel to the UN's global forum on gender equality in New York next March to lobby on women's economic empowerment. They will call for governments to prohibit any form of discrimination against women and enshrine in law equal rights in the workplace, including the right to employment, equal pay and freedom from discrimination which prevents the appointment of women to senior positions.

Mothers' Union will also call on governments to recognise, under law, that financial control is a form of abuse, and for increased training and sensitisation around this issue. The charity is also calling for efforts to be made to improve understanding of the impact of gender-based violence on women's economic empowerment and a commitment to ensure that women are included in peace and reconciliation initiatives.

Mothers' Union will also take time to stress that wealth does not protect against gender-based violence. Bev Jullien said, "Despite some progress, economic empowerment is not simply wealth accumulation – rather economic empowerment is the freedom, choice and ability to obtain and control economic resources."

Speaking of her experiences at the grassroots, a Mothers' Union Community Development Coordinator in Madagascar, highlighted that despite the key role that faith, civil and community leaders have in addressing these issues, governments need to do more to enforce change. "Women sometimes lack self-esteem, or have been educated to obey men. Sometimes there is no follow up or monitoring of the law implementation. Awareness raising with women about their rights is not enough: more advocacy and sensitisation is required."

Throughout 16 Days of Activism, a major Mothers' Union campaign focussed light on gender-based violence with the clear message that 'It's Not OK' [#itsnotok]. The campaign highlighted the many forms that GBV takes, from controlling behaviour by a partner to rape as a weapon of war.

Globally, the campaign called on governments and leaders to ensure that national, local and customary laws prohibit all forms of violence against women. The campaign also called for survivors to have access to justice and support services, and that perpetrators are prosecuted and rehabilitated.

News briefs

+++ Nigerian to be the next Bishop of Woolwich - The Church of England has selected a Nigerian to be the next Bishop of Woolwich in the Diocese of Southwark, it was announced today. The Revd Prebendary Dr Woyin Karowe Dorgu will be the first Nigerian to be a stipendiary bishop in the Church of England when he is consecrated in Southwark Cathedral on St Patrick's Day, 17 March 2017; and the first black

person to be appointed bishop in the province for 20 years. The announcement follows the appointment of the Revd Yaqoob Khushi as the first Pakistani priest in Wales, and the Very Revd Miguelina Howell as the first Hispanic Dean in the US-based Episcopal Church; and highlights the wide cultural diversity in the Anglican Communion. While Dr Dorgu will be the first Nigerian to be a stipendiary full time bishop in the Church of England, he isn't the C of E's first Nigerian bishop - the secretary general of the Anglican Communion, Dr Josiah Idowu-Fearon, is an honorary assistant bishop in the diocese of London.

+++ Pope frees media leaks priest - Pope Francis on Tuesday freed a Vatican monsignor convicted of leaking confidential documents to journalists, granting him a Christmas-time clemency. Francis granted "conditional freedom" to Spanish Monsignor Lucio Vallejo Balda after he served half of his 18-month sentence, the Vatican said late on Tuesday. Fired from his job as a high-ranking Vatican financial official, Mgr Vallejo now falls under the authority of his local bishop in Astorga, Spain. In July, a Vatican court convicted Mgr Vallejo of conspiring to pass documents onto two journalists, although it

cleared him and a co-defendant of forming a criminal organisation to do so.

+++ Child injured in Egyptian church attack

dies - Egypt's state news agency says a 10-year-old girl who was critically wounded in the suicide bombing at a Cairo church earlier this month, has died of her wounds. The fatality raises the death toll from the attack to 27. Egypt's ISIS affiliate has claimed responsibility for the bombing, though authorities blamed the banned Muslim Brotherhood group. The little girl, Maggie Mamoun, became the face of the Coptic community's grief in the days following the horrific bombing, with photos of the smiling child circulating on social media, along with prayer requests. The MENA news agency said on Tuesday that her funeral will be held at the church that was bombed. The attack was the worst in living memory on Egypt's Christians, who make up nearly 10 per cent of the population.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Watch: Northern Ireland school choir impresses world with Hallelujah cover

Belfast Telegraph

A Northern **Ireland** school **choir's** stunning cover of the Leonard Cohen classic Hallelujah has impressed audiences around the world. Kayleigh ...

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/entertainment/watch-very-shy-northern-ireland-schoolgirl-impresses-world-with-hallelujah-cover-35311330.html>

Suicide among Priests?

Religion News Service

She quoted a leader of **Ireland's** Association of Catholic Priests. ... who published seven huge volumes on the modern Irish **Church**, which, he showed, ...

<http://religionnews.com/2016/12/21/suicide-among-priests/>

President sees 'stuff of a real republic' at Capuchin centre

Irish Times

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/president-sees-stuff-of-a-real-republic-at-capuchin-centre-1.2913285>

Contributions to Black Santa charity fall 50% due to Luas works

Irish Times

http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/contributions-to-black-santa-charity-fall-50-due-to-luas-works-1.2913527#.WFmL_-l1ysw.twitter

Guard/Times/Christian Today/Premier

Reports that the C of E has chosen its first black bishop in 20 years (see above). Born and brought up in Nigeria, Dr Woyin Karowei Dorgu worked as a medical doctor before ordination and has served all his ministry in the Diocese of London. He will be consecrated as the 13th Bishop of Woolwich in March. The Guardian reports that Dr Dorgu said one of his priorities as bishop would be to celebrate the racial diversity of the Woolwich area. The Christian Today article focuses on his experiences working as a doctor in a hospital in northern Nigeria.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/20/church-of-england-appoints-first-black-bishop-20-years-woyin-karowei-dorgu>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/love-conquers-all-for-widow-getting-married-again-at-95-r6ct8f3f5> (scroll down)

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/Church/Church-of-England-names-first-black-bishop-in-over-20-years>

Third Sector

Reports that the Church Commissioners are listed as the 13th largest grant-maker in the world last year in the *City AM World Charity Index* giving away £219m. The Gates Foundation which

has nearly 1,400 employees, gave away £3.6bn last year across the world, an increase from just over £2bn the year before. The UK's largest donor was the Wellcome Trust which donated £606m, a rise of £50m on the year before.

<http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/wellcome-trust-second-biggest-grant-maker-world-again/fundraising/article/1419326>

Times

Reports that university leaders have been accused of giving in to student campaigners by removing a picture of a former Archbishop of Canterbury from the front of a campus building. An image of Lord Carey of Clifton has been taken down from the "wall of fame" of King's College London alumni at the entrance to its campus in The Strand, central London. The action comes after a five-year campaign by a small group of students who objected to his opposition to same-sex marriage.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/anti-gay-archbishop-removed-from-college-68bjpvtdj>

Mail/Christian Today

The *Mail* reports on heightened security around the UK following the Berlin Christmas market attack. The article features pictures of armed

police on patrol in front of the nativity scene in the grounds of Canterbury Cathedral yesterday.
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4053198/So-peace-goodwill-men-Machine-gun-police-guard-Canterbury-cathedral-nativity-scene-security-stepped-UK-wake-attack-Berlin.html>

Christian Today

Report that church volunteering at homeless shelters has more than doubled in the last year, according to a [report](#) published by the Christian homelessness charity Housing Justice (see blog below). Almost 2,000 people were given food and a bed in church-led winter night shelters last winter, with 490,063 hours of volunteer time given at the shelters, a rise of 11% on the year before. The Bishop of Rochester, chair of Housing Justice Trustees, is quoted.
<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/church.volunteering.for.homeless.shelters.rocket/s/103166.htm>

BBC

Reports that a cross-party group of peers has been set up to find ways to reduce the size of the House of Lords. Earlier this month peers voted to reduce the size of the Upper House, which currently has 809 members. The new committee

will "explore methods by which the size of the House can be reduced, commensurate with its current role and functions". Most of the members of the Lords have been appointed as life peers, but 91 are hereditary peers and 26 are C of E bishops.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-38384269>

Comment

Even Stand: Simon Jenkins: Our cathedrals lift the spirit, standing proud amid the chaos below.

<http://www.standard.co.uk/comment/comment/simon-jenkins-our-cathedrals-lift-the-spirit-standing-proud-amid-the-chaos-below-a3424711.html>

Times Higher Education

King's College London 'wrong' to erase George Carey from wall of fame

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/kings-college-london-wrong-erase-george-carey-wall-fame>