



Service to Mark the 70th Anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz

Northern Catholic bishops end church's adoption service due to state policies contrary to church teaching

"It is unreasonable for legislators to oblige faith based organisations to act against their fundamental and reasonable religious beliefs in the provision of services that contribute to the common good."

In a statement The Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland said they "announce, with regret, that the long established relationship between the Catholic Church and the adoption services provider *The Family Care Society* (NI) will come to an end. The agency has offices in Belfast and Derry:



Korean War Memorial which was dedicated this week

"Our announcement follows the outcome of a judicial review of adoption law in Northern Ireland initiated by the Northern Ireland Human Rights

Commission in 2011. Ruling on the case in October 2012 the High Court determined that couples in Northern Ireland who are not married, those in civil partnerships, and same-sex couples could, for the first time, apply to adopt. This judgement was subsequently upheld by the Court of Appeal in June 2013. An application by the Department of Health to the UK Supreme Court seeking leave to appeal the Court of Appeal judgement was turned down in December 2013. As a result the Family Care Society is now legally obliged to receive and process applications in accordance with the new and wider interpretation of adoption law established by the High Court decision.

“Regrettably, this development leaves us in the same position as that faced by the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales some years ago when, given the legal obligation to apply policies that are contrary to Catholic teaching and ethos, they were left with no option but to disengage from the adoption agencies they had founded and with which they had a long and cherished link. Since the provision of adoption services in Northern Ireland now also involves acting against the Church’s teaching and ethos, we too have no option but to end the long established relationship between the Church and *The Family Care Society (NI)*.

“We believe equality would be best served by support for a diversity of adoption providers, with reasonable accommodation in law for those adoptive parents who value the support of an agency with a particular religious ethos. We lament the fact that the *Family Care Society (NI)* is no longer free to provide adoption services consistent with a Catholic ethos, valued by so many adoptive parents over the years. The law now makes it impossible for this agency to continue with the support it has enjoyed up to now from the Church.

We are concerned that many Christians and others will see this development as a further erosion of their fundamental right to exercise freedom of conscience and religion in the public square. Reasonable accommodation of religious conscience in public policy and legislation ought to be the very hallmark of an authentically diverse, equal and pluralist society. It is unreasonable for legislators to oblige faith based organisations to act against their fundamental and reasonable religious beliefs in the provision of services that contribute to the common good. Religious freedom cannot be restricted to matters of private thought or worship. Pope Francis has spoken about a “false concept of tolerance” that “ends in persecuting those who defend the truth... and its ethical consequences”(1). Many Christians and others believe the pendulum has swung too far, and that a calm, rational debate about rebalancing the rights of citizens in terms of greater respect for freedom of

conscience and religion is urgently needed. We support the call for such a debate.

In conclusion, we wish to commend the professionalism and dedication of the staff of *The Family Care Society* and to thank them for their immense contribution to the good of children and society as the largest specialist adoption agency in Northern Ireland. We will continue to support the *Family Care Society* over the coming months as its Board decides how to respond to the new legal situation, on the understanding that Church funds will be used only for purposes consistent with the Church's doctrine and ethos.

- *Address of Pope Francis to the Conference on 'International Religious Freedom and the Global Clash of Values', 20 June 2014.*

Irish Catholic church: Voting for same-sex marriage will undermine society

The Catholic church has distributed a 16-page document to parishes across Ireland 'briefing' against same-sex marriage ahead of next year's referendum.

The Republic of Ireland, which introduced civil partnerships in 2011, is set to vote next May on extending civil marriage to same-sex couples.

A group launched a 'Yes Equality' campaign last month, urging people to register to vote ahead of the referendum.



No overt 'No' campaign has launched so far – but the Catholic church mobilised this week to state the bishops' belief that marriage should be

between one man and one woman.

The document, distributed to 1,300 parishes, warns: “By introducing any amendment which presents homosexual partnerships as essentially equivalent to marriage, we would be saying that the permanent union of husband and wife and their generation of new life and their nurturing of it together is no longer to be seen as the foundation of society.”

THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE



Marriage is a unique relationship
different from all others

The document outlines Catholic opposition to same-sex marriage in Ireland

It also states: “The debate at the core of the call for ‘same sex marriage’ is not about equality.

“A major challenge arises from any proposal which seeks to redefine the meaning and purpose of marriage on which the family is founded, changing the definition of marriage by enabling the relationship of a same-sex couple to also become a marriage.

“To do this would mean that marriage, under civil law, would no longer be the committed gift of a man and a woman in a relationship ‘until death do us part’, in the kind of union which can bear fruit in new human lives.

“Any such proposal is based on the assumption that the institution of marriage on which the family is founded, which has always been recognised as ‘the natural, primary and fundamental unit group of Society’, has nothing unique about it and on the assumption that marriage can be stripped of that social standing without obscuring its irreplaceable social role.

“To promote and protect the unique nature of marriage as the union of one man and one woman is itself a matter of justice. Same sex relationships by their very nature are different to marriage.

“The Constitution of Ireland regards the family ‘as the necessary basis of social order and as indispensable to the welfare of the Nation and the State’.

“Any attempt to change this protection would be a radical change in the meaning of marriage – the ‘foundation stone’ of society – in the document that expresses the foundational values of the Irish State.”

It also states that marriage should be reserved for relationships in which “the generation and upbringing of children is uniquely possible.”

“Children have a natural right to a mother and a father, and this is the best environment for them where possible. It is therefore deserving of special recognition and promotion by the State.”

See also -

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/irish.catholic.church.mobilises.for.fight.against.gay.marriage/43864.htm>

Dean of Derry appointed HM Deputy Lieutenant

The Very Revd Dr William Morton, Dean of St Columb's Cathedral in Londonderry has been appointed Deputy Lieutenant for the city of Londonderry with effect from 31 Oct 2014. This follows on from Canon Samuel McVeigh, Rector of Limavady being the first cleric to receive the accolade for the county in April 2014.

Deputy Lieutenants are appointed by the Lord–Lieutenant in recognition of significant public service.

Dean Morton responded to his appointment by saying he was both shocked and humbled to have received such an award, however he emphasised that he views it as a great honour, not only for himself but also for St Columb's Cathedral.

Bishop Good congratulated Dean Morton by saying “Dean Morton is well known and respected in the diocese of Derry and Raphoe and particularly in the city where he ministers. His enthusiasm for both city and Cathedral life is unswerving and I am delighted he has received this honour in recognition of his commitment to public life and service.”

C of I student ordinands commissioned as student readers

Twelve student ordinands have been commissioned as student readers at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute by Archbishop Michael Jackson.



They are: Philip Bryson (Connor), Jonathan McFarland (Connor), Peter Munce (Connor), Rebecca Guildea (Dublin and Glendalough), Danielle McCullagh (Connor), Stuart Moles (Connor), Geoff Hamilton (Down and Dromore), Nigel Cairns (Derry and Raphoe), Simon Scott (Dublin and Glendalough), Mark Gallagher (Armagh), Lucy Burden (Connor) and Chris St John (Down and Dromore) were commissioned during the Community Eucharist in the Institute Chapel.

In his sermon, Archbishop Jackson said it was important that people be commissioned to serve, challenge, obey and experiment in and from tradition in a spirit of holiness and dynamic of grace.

He focused on the word 'Commissioning'. *"Commissioning is an interesting word to unpick. Co-Mission-ing seem to me to express the three parts of this word and these parts draw us into the idea of sending and being sent out together with others. Connection and commitment are vital to this understanding of discipleship and ministry. And mission, therefore, forms the core of ministry,"* he said.

He also said that mission had to be aggressive – not in the modern sense of the word but meaning that it had to be active in going towards those who are different from us.

"We have let the word: aggressive fall around our feet; we have used it to divide ourselves from others but this is not the primary or indeed best use of this word. It is for this reason that we need an active and not a passive understanding of mission and it is to this purpose that you are all being missioned together (commissioned) this evening by God, in this community and for the communities in which you will serve and work on any and every part-time basis," Archbishop Jackson stated.

Presentations to former principal of Middleton College

Mr Simon Thompson, who was Principal of Middleton College until last August, returned to the College this week for some formal ceremonies of farewell. Staff and students spoke at a special full assembly of the school (all staff and all students) at midday, when a presentation of an especially commissioned silver scallop shell was made to Mr Thompson. The scallop shell features in the school crest and is the symbol of pilgrimage and journey, as well as of new beginnings in baptism.

In the afternoon the former Principal was entertained by the Parent-Teacher Association and last evening the Board of Governors hosted a dinner for Board members and former Board members as well as Deputy Principals who worked with Mr Thompson. On behalf of the Boards, the Chairperson, Dr Paul Colton, presented Mr Thompson with a carving of bog oak aptly named 'New Horizons' which features a child at its centre.

"Ebola attacks what makes us human": Archbishop of Canterbury on the Ebola crisis

In a video shared with a World Council of Churches (WCC) consultation on the Ebola response,

Archbishop Justin Welby

said the way that churches grapple with caring for communities affected by Ebola "takes us right back to who Jesus is".



The Ebola virus "strikes straight into the heart" of what it is to be human, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said today in a video message.

The Archbishop also stressed the "absolutely crucial" contribution of churches and other faith communities in responding to the crisis.

The Archbishop's message, produced with assistance from the Anglican Alliance, has been shared with a World Council of Churches (WCC) consultation on the Ebola response held in Geneva. The WCC meeting

brought together representatives of Christian health, development and aid organizations and UN agencies to learn from each other and seek ways of collaboration to escalate their efforts.

In the video Archbishop Justin spoke of the "deep sorrow" he encountered on a visit to West Africa last month, where he met with the Chief of Staff of the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) in Accra, Ghana.

You're infected by the people you love most, and grieve for most – they are most dangerous to you when they've died."

"This is a challenge to the very heart of what it is to be human."

The Archbishop said the way that churches grapple with caring for communities affected by Ebola "takes us right back to who Jesus is".

The love of Jesus "goes well beyond anything reasonable and reaches to those who are struggling, who are dying, who are lost, who are in darkness.

"The person of Jesus Christ... goes into the worst of all possible places, in the worst of all possible conditions, and does so through our hands and feet and eyes and ears. But also does so by his Spirit," he added.

Highlighting the need to scale up the international response, the Archbishop reflected on the need to overcome fears: "We must go by the science, not by the fear."

He also emphasised the contribution of faith in partnership with government and other institutions, saying: "The role of the churches and other faith communities is absolutely crucial."

Anglican dioceses, alongside other faith communities, have been active in the Ebola response in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, working closely with government agencies. Church health teams are working to strengthen health systems, while church leaders and volunteers are providing community education, support and pastoral care. Read more below about the work Anglican churches are doing in response to the Ebola outbreak.

Anglicans in West Africa are responding with their own resources and with support from Anglican and Episcopal agencies, such as [Episcopal Relief & Development](#), [Us \(formerly USPG\)](#) and Trinity Wall Street.

The Diocese of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia are working nationally alongside other institutions to educate people, to distribute protection kits, and to equip church clinics with essential materials.

In examples of other activities, the Diocese of Liberia has also supported a feeding programme with technical advice from WHO at a newly opened Ebola Treatment Unit in Monrovia. The provision of a hot-nutritional meal for four weeks led to the full recovery of at least 150 patients.

Meanwhile in Freetown, Sierra Leone, the Anglican church has also provided land for the construction of a 21-bed Ebola isolation centre.

The Anglican Alliance is working to raise awareness of the Ebola response in West Africa and the churches' requests for prayer and support. The Alliance is also assisting the coordination of the partners' response and aiming to share the learning from the local churches to others across the Anglican Communion.

For further information, read: <http://www.anglicanalliance.org/news/19844>

Service to Mark the 70th Anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz

A service to Mark the 70th Anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz will be held at Westminster Abbey at 6.30 pm on Sunday 1st February 2015.

The Auschwitz concentration camp in southwest Poland was first constructed by the Third Reich to hold Polish political prisoners, who began to arrive in May 1940. The first extermination of prisoners took place in September 1941, and the camp became a major site of the Nazi 'Final Solution to the Jewish question'. From early 1942 until late 1944, transport trains delivered Jews to the camp's gas chambers from all over German-occupied Europe, where they were gassed. At least 1.1 million prisoners died at Auschwitz, around 90 percent of them Jewish. Others deported to Auschwitz included 150,000 Poles, 23,000 Romani and Sinti, 15,000 Soviet prisoners of war, 400 Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, and tens of thousands of people of diverse nationalities. The camp was liberated by the 322nd Rifle Division of the Red Army on January 27th 1945. Tickets

<https://wabbey1february.eventbrite.co.uk>