



The Church needs more female theologians, says Pope Francis

Catholic Church must be praised for swift response to homeless crisis after Jonathan Corrie's tragic death



Jonathan Corrie's heartbroken family, former partner Catherine McNeill with his son Nathan (16) & Natasha (14) visit the scene where he froze to death in Dublin

Marie Kierans in Irish Mirror - It's not often I find myself in a position of wanting to praise the Catholic Church – but that's exactly what I am doing today.

Not only did Archbishop Diarmuid Martin echo the sentiment of citizens nationwide when he expressed his deep sorrow at the [tragic death of Jonathan Corrie on the streets of Dublin](#).

But he also did the Christian thing by doing something other than just talk the talk.

He made a substantial diocesan property available for emergency homeless accommodation in the capital.

This is what Christianity should be all about – looking after those in need, extending a caring hand and not being immune to the suffering of others many of whom are members of its church.

The Catholic Church has had plenty of bad press in recent years and deservedly so.

The cover-up of child abuse scandals and the horror of what went on in church run institutions has rightly called into question what catholicism is all about.

There is no doubt that Pope Francis has been a breath of fresh air.

He doesn't surround himself with opulence.

Rather than a bulletproof Mercedes limousine he travels on a bus or drives himself around the Vatican in an 1984 Renault.

He refused to live in the Apostolic Palace, instead living in a guest home and dining in the cafeteria.

He has washed the feet of laity (including prisoners) and reached out to the poor and marginalised with genuine compassion.

He is a pontiff who walks the walks as well as talks the talk.

We have many church visionaries and social innovators in Ireland who do tremendous work on the ground for those in need.

Fr Peter McVerry, Sr Stan Kennedy, and Fr Sean Healy are just a few names who spring to mind but there are many others.

And it is wonderful to see some of this empathy and understanding emanating in a meaningful and public way from the church leaders here in Ireland too.

Archbishop Martin could easily just have issued the statement he did expressing concern about a deeply divided Dublin where on the one hand there is rejoicing at increased spending over the Christmas period and on the other where the number of those homeless and hungry is actually increasing.

It was a thought-provoking response to an awful tragedy and he could have left it at that.

But instead he went one step further and took decisive and and loving action.

He did the Christian thing.

And that single act will mean that between 30 and 40 homeless people will now have a roof over their heads before Christmas.

This is what the Church should be all about.

Quality Of Teachers Biggest Influence On Pupils - C of I College graduates hear

The quality of the teaching is the most important factor in a child's education, the 2014 B.Ed graduates of the Church of Ireland College of Education were told last week.



The Class of 2014 – Church of Ireland College of Education's B.Ed graduates.

A total of 28 students graduated. They were conferred

with their degrees at a ceremony in Trinity College Dublin before attending a ceremony in the chapel of Church of Ireland College of Education (CICE) and being presented with their certificates and special awards.

Speaking at the CICE ceremony, Noreen Kavanagh of the Department of Education and Skills said it was a teacher's duty to ensure that every child received the best quality teaching.

Addressing the graduates she said: "You are entering this career at a difficult time but you have learned the principles which will stand you in very good stead as you start this journey and you will continue to learn as you go. We've had to cope with cutbacks and it is a changed landscape. But some of those

changes are for the better". She highlighted the National Literacy and Numeracy Programme and the Whole School Evaluation system.

Brendan O'Sullivan, former President of the Irish National Teachers Organisation, stated that the Irish education curriculum had the child at its centre. He said it focused on the child as well as the academic.

He referred to international league tables which measured academic achievement, the child's experience of school and expenditure on education. He said that while expenditure on education in Ireland lagged behind other countries, children continued to perform well academically and were happy at school. "There is one thing that links all these and that is the quality of our teachers," he stated.

CICE Principal, Dr Anne Lodge, praised the graduates' achievements and said that they couldn't have done it without the support of their families. She added that the college staff were also there for the students. She thanked each one of the graduates for what they had brought to college life and said that they were the last of the old B.Ed group.

The Carlisle and Blake Award for the student who achieves the highest mark in theory and teaching practice was presented to Samuel Ross from Drimoleague, Co Cork by Ms Kavanagh.

The Vere Foster Medal for the student who achieved the highest marks in teaching practice and curriculum areas was presented to Clair Baxter from Letterkenny, Co Donegal, by Mr O'Sullivan.

The Governors' Prize for contribution to the life of the college was presented to Samuel Ross by Archbishop Michael Jackson, chairman of the board. Runner up prizes were presented to Philip Thompson from Portlaoise, Co Laois and Louise Hanbidge from Stratford-on-Slaney, Co Wicklow.

NI corporation tax 'could hit poorest countries'

News Letter - A major Christian charity has warned Stormont ministers that they have not adequately considered what impact slashing corporate taxes in Belfast would have on the developing world.

In an alternative perspective which has been little heard in the many years of debate about cutting corporation tax, Christian Aid said that it wanted to "sound a note of caution" about the unintended consequences of something



David Thomas of Christian Aid

which may be good for the Ulster economy, but bad for those elsewhere who are living in poverty.

On Wednesday, the Chancellor announced that he was prepared to devolve control over corporation tax to Stormont – if there is a deal from the Stormont talks on welfare reform and the budget.

It is not yet clear whether the DUP and Sinn Fein would be able to agree to slash corporation tax in an attempt to compete with the Republic.

For Sinn Fein, a party which sees itself as firmly left wing and which sits with communist parties in the European Parliament, cutting tax for multinational firms would seem incongruous.

Yet until recently, as most people believed that the tax was unlikely to be ever devolved to Stormont, there was mass cross-party support for having it devolved and then reducing the rate of tax from its current 21 per cent.

Christian Aid's campaigns coordinator in Belfast, David Thomas, said: "Many low tax jurisdictions are used by companies to shift profits between subsidiaries around the globe – including in some cases from some of the poorest countries in the world."

Christian Aid estimates that developing countries lose as much as \$160 billion each year as a result of tax dodging.

"Lack of transparency around the activities of multinationals make it difficult to detect these damaging practices. We are concerned that a low corporation tax rate will encourage such behaviour and leave poor countries even poorer."

Aspects of Celtic Spirituality - Cathedral Advent talk

The final speaker in this year's Autumn Talks series at St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, is the Revd Grace Clunie.

Grace is an Anglican Priest and Director of The Centre for Celtic Spirituality, an inter-church organisation based at The Navan Centre, Armagh.

After ordination in 1995, Grace served in Newtownards, Portadown and Belfast and was appointed Director of The Centre for Celtic Spirituality in 2007.

Speaking about her current work she said: “The contemporary spiritual search is leading many to re-examine their Christian faith in relation to urgent issues of our time such as global warming and human responsibility for the future of the planet.

“This has resulted in a revaluing of the practices of the first Christians of these islands, who lived in close relationship with the rest of creation and whose spirituality and prayer perceived the sacramental in nature and the presence of the Sacred in everything.”



In her talk at Belfast Cathedral – ‘Ancient Paths, New Journeys: The Wisdom of Celtic Spirituality’ – Grace will be exploring aspects of Celtic Spirituality that are especially inspiring for the spiritual search of our age, and in particular the theological understanding of our connection with the rest of creation which underpins Celtic Spirituality and prayer.

This year’s Autumn Talks series at Belfast Cathedral has to date featured rugby great Willie John McBride, historian Roger Dixon and trauma expert Marion Gibson.

The talk will begin at 12.45pm on Wednesday 10 December and will last approximately 45 minutes.

Christian and LGBT groups criticise RC Bishops’ “Meaning of marriage” leaflet

Christian and LGBT groups have criticised Bishops’ decision to distribute a 16-page document to over 1,600 parishes countrywide, opposing same-sex marriage.

The new document, released to parishes in the run-up to next year’s referendum states that a Yes vote could effectively “deprive children of the right to a mother and father” and be a “grave injustice” to children.

The document, entitled [*The Meaning of Marriage*](#), says:

“Marriage means the union of a man and woman. A husband is a man who has a wife; a wife is a woman who has a husband. A same-sex couple cannot be husband and wife. A same-sex couple cannot procreate a child through the sexual act which expresses married love.”

Bishop Liam MacDaid of Clogher, chair of the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference council for marriage said at the launch of the document: “The view of marriage as being between man and a woman and for life, that’s not something which is particular to Catholics and Christians. There are people of all kinds of other religious beliefs, and of none, who believe in that.”

Dr. Richard O’Leary of LGBT Christian group [*Changing Attitudes Ireland*](#) has criticised the document. “Many Christians in Ireland support the extension of civil marriage to same-sex couples and disagree with the Catholic Bishops’ view,” he

said. “The Catholic Bishops’ view of marriage as being essentially about reproduction rather than being primarily a loving stable relationship was contrary to how many Christians understood their own marriages. The Catholic Bishops’ definition of marriage in 2014 was as flawed as their view 30 years ago when they also opposed the legal availability of contraception in Ireland.”

Dr O’Leary added: “While as a fellow Christian I respect Catholic Bishops’ right to govern access to religious marriage, they should not seek to discriminate against other Irish citizens’ access to civil marriage.”



Kieran Rose, chair of [GLEN](#), also commented on the document. “Marriage is good for society, good for families and good for loving and committed couples, including lesbian and gay couples, and the Irish Constitution should allow all loving, committed couples who wish to enter a civil marriage the opportunity to do so.

“Allowing lesbian and gay couples to get married will not harm or change any existing marriage, or any future marriage of a man and woman. The desire of loving and committed lesbian and gay couples to marry strengthens marriage and the place and status of marriage in Irish society.”

“Lesbian and gay couples seek the right to civil marriage, not church marriage. Sacramental marriage remains the preserve of religious bodies. No one can or should be able to force a church to marry any couple against their teaching, as for example the Catholic Church cannot be forced to marry couples where one is divorced.

“Irish people, the majority of whom are Catholic, are very welcoming of lesbian and gay people, their loving relationships and families. We see this in the very warm support by families and communities for civil partnerships and in the very widespread support for access to civil marriage and constitutional equality for lesbian and gay people.”

Ireland’s referendum on same-sex marriage is due to take place in spring 2015.

The Church needs more female theologians, says Pope Francis

Pope Francis has said he is pleased that five of the 30 members of the International Theological Commission are women.

But he said that the body that advises the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, as well as the Church in general, need more women theologians.

“They are the strawberries on the cake, but there is need for more,” the Pope said as he met the members, who were named to a five-year term in July.

Two women served on the commission for the past 10 years. In July the Pope named five new female members, coming from the United States, Canada, Australia, Slovenia and Austria.

“The greater presence of women – although they are not many – is a call to reflect on the role women can and must have in the field of theology,” the Pope told the commission.

Quoting his 2013 apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis said: “The Church acknowledges the indispensable contribution which women make to society through the sensitivity, intuition and other distinctive skill sets which they, more than men, tend to possess.’ I am pleased to see how many women are offering new contributions to theological reflection.”

The women theologians, he said, “can reveal, to the benefit of everyone, certain unexplored aspects of the unfathomable mystery of Christ”.

New posts advertised as RSCM expands support role for church music

The Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) is advertising new posts as part of an innovative plan to serve a broader group of worship leaders including ministers and lay people. A full-time Head of Ministerial Training is being sought along with a part-time Head of Congregational and Instrumental music, as well as two Regional Co-ordinators in England. Full details may be found on the RSCM’s website at www.rscm.com/jobs

The new posts will complement the RSCM’s existing services and training for singers, choir directors and church organists. The educational charity is also re-organising the management of its volunteers in England.

In partnership with Praxis, the liturgical resources group, the new **Head of Ministerial Training** will devise and lead new training programmes for ministers. “Those who train ordinands and lay worship leaders have, in recent years, found it increasingly difficult to shoe-horn the study of liturgy and music into their packed timetables,” says Rosemary Field, the RSCM’s Head of Education. “It leaves a potential gap in the knowledge, understanding and skills of many curates, lay readers and lay assistants. This is a gap which the RSCM is attempting to close.” Already the RSCM has started to address the need with a new course called “Strengthen for Service” which has been well-received by those who have participated in it.

The needs of churches with congregational and instrumental traditions are also being addressed with a part-time **Head of Congregational and**

Instrumental Music. The successful candidate will devise and deliver training programmes and courses, including provision for churches with little or no musical resources. This includes the RSCM's current new course for such churches – "Lift up your voice". These two appointments are the first of a series of specialist appointments which will also include the disciplines of organ and choral training.

Two part-time **Regional Co-ordinators** are also being sought in England, following on from a four-year period of mixed-portfolio work by a team of Regional Music Advisers. These posts, which are similar to the provision in Wales, Scotland and Ireland, will provide management and support for the hundreds of volunteers throughout England who devise and run a wide range of events, workshops and training for RSCM awards.

"Back in 1927, our founder Sir Sydney Nicholson identified two principal needs for flourishing church music; not only strong music leaders but also clergy and ministers who understood the value of music in worship, and how to enable it in others," said Rosemary Field. "We already provide a range of support for musicians; we're now seeking to redress the balance as far as congregations and ministers are concerned." More information about the vacancies including job descriptions and how to apply may be found on the RSCM's website at www.rscm.com/jobs.

Archbishop of Canterbury speaks out on reality of hunger in Britain

The Archbishop of Canterbury is heading for a row with the Government over calls for a £150 million State-funded system of food banks to help feed the poorest people in Britain.

Shocked by the suffering of those going hungry in the UK, Archbishop Justin Welby wants the Prime Minister, David Cameron, to accept European funds to support food banks and other measures to help those falling through the net as the austerity measures bite.

Writing in the Mail on Sunday, the Archbishop calls for more to be done to help hungry families.

Today, Archbishop Welby will launch a Parliamentary report that calls for a new public body, Feeding Britain, to be set up and for bigger food banks to distribute more free food and advise people on benefits and home budgets.

The inquiry, set up earlier this year with financial backing from the Archbishop's charitable trust, has taken evidence on the extent and causes of hunger in Britain, the scope of provision to alleviate it and draws comparisons with other Western countries.

It is headed jointly by Labour MP Frank Field and the Bishop of Truro, Tim Thornton, a passionate supporter of food banks. Archbishop Welby has been involved throughout and according to the Mail on Sunday, the report pays tribute to "the support he has given throughout our inquiry."

Writing in the newspaper, Archbishop Welby said food was being wasted at "astonishing" levels across the UK and that hunger stalks large parts of the country.

Families were being forced to turn to food banks to make ends meet even when they were in employment.

He admitted it was less serious but still said the plight of a family who turned to a food bank in Britain shocked him more than terrible suffering in Africa because it was so unexpected.

"In one corner of a refugee camp in the Democratic Republic of Congo was a large marquee. Inside were children, all ill. They had been separated from family, friends, those who looked after them. Perhaps, mostly having disabilities, they had been abandoned in the panic of the militia attack that

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WELBY: STATE MUST BACK FOOD BANKS

Archbishop steps into austerity row with radical report

A NEW row over food banks erupted last night after a report backed by the Archbishop of Canterbury called for a £100million state-backed system to combat hunger in Britain. The Most Reverend Justin Welby appeared to be on course for a clash with David Cameron after calling on the Prime Minister to reverse his decision not to take European funds to boost UK food banks. Writing in today's Mail on Sunday, Turn to Page 6

EXCLUSIVE By Simon Walters and Jonathan Petre

US tycoons pay £500k to dine with Wills and Kate

SEE PAGE 3



drove them from their homes. Now they were hungry.

"It was deeply shocking but, tragically, expected. A few weeks later in England, I was talking to some people – a mum, dad and one child – in a food bank. They were ashamed to be there. The dad talked miserably. He said they

had each been skipping a day's meals once a week in order to have more for the child, but then they needed new tyres for the car so they could get to work at night, and just could not make ends meet.

"So they had to come to a food bank. They were treated with respect, love even, by the volunteers from local churches. But they were hungry, and ashamed to be hungry. I found their plight more shocking. It was less serious, but it was here. And they weren't careless with what they had, they were just up against it. It shocked me that being up against it at the wrong time brought them to this stage. There are many like them. But we can do something about it."

Earlier this year the Government blocked millions of pounds of European funding agreed for British food banks, arguing that food aid was better decided nationally.

Archbishop Welby said: "We need to make it easier for food companies to give edible surplus food to charities and still encourage them to send inedible food for energy production. The big names in the food business have a moral obligation to communities. We need to make sure that the financial incentives in their industry don't act against their moral instincts."

A Cabinet Office spokesman said: "This report is a serious contribution to an important debate, and recognises that the reasons behind demands for emergency food assistance are complex and frequently overlapping. As a country we have enough food to go around, and we agree that it is wrong that anyone should go hungry at the same time as surplus food is going to waste.

"While this report outlines important areas for consideration, we should remember that this country has been through the deepest recession in living memory, and sticking to this government's long-term economic plan is the best way to improve living standards.

"In addition, the UK has a proud tradition of civil society and faith groups providing support for people in need, and it is right that their impressive work is recognised in the report. Under tough circumstances, communities have shown that by pulling together to help each other, we can build a bigger, stronger society."