



Prayers for HM The Queen's 90th Birthday published

Her Majesty The Queen has approved prayers written for the celebration of her 90th Birthday later this year. Two prayers (or Collects) have been published in traditional and modern forms. The prayers are primarily intended for use in services marking the national celebrations in April and June. In addition two graces have

been published for use as thanksgivings at the start of other celebrations such as street parties.

The Bishop of Exeter, Robert Atwell, who chairs the Liturgical Commission which prepares liturgy for the Church said: "The Queen has steered Britain through some challenging and difficult times over the past seven decades, providing the country with stability and wisdom. She is an inspiration to many people, young and old. The Queen's 90th birthday gives an opportunity not only to thank God for her service, but to celebrate the gifts of all older people in our society."

Dr Matthew Salisbury, National Liturgy and Worship Adviser for the Church of England said, 'The prayers offer thanksgiving and praise for the long service of the Queen. They ask that through God's grace and inspired by her example of faith and service for others we may all receive strength and wisdom in our own lives.'

One of the graces reflects the words used in The Queen's first Christmas broadcast in 1952, a year in which her father, George VI died and at the end of which she was looking forward to her Coronation, the following year.

Churches are being encouraged to share their plans to mark Her Majesty's birthday through the [Church Care website](#), which also offers tips and advice on planning events and services and will promote initiatives on a dedicated celebration map and on Twitter through [@CofE_ChurchCare](#) using #HMQ90.

Full text of the prayers

Collects:

Heavenly Father, who hast brought our gracious sovereign Queen Elizabeth to the completion of her ninetieth year, and dost gather her people in celebration of the same: grant that we, rejoicing before thee with thankful hearts, may ever be united in love and service to one another, and her kingdom flourish in prosperity and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Heavenly Father,
as we celebrate the ninetieth birthday of Her Majesty the Queen,
receive our heartfelt thanks
for all that you have given her in these ninety years
and for all that she has given to her people.
Continue, we pray, your loving purposes in her,
and as you gather us together in celebration,
unite us also in love and service to one another;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Graces:

Bountiful God, giver of all good gifts,
we give thanks for the many years and long reign
of our Queen;

Bless our food, our neighbourhood,
and our enjoyment of each other's company.

Help us to learn from Queen Elizabeth's
commitment to her people,
so that our community may be strengthened
and all may flourish.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, the King of
love.

Gracious God, give our Queen continued wisdom and
strength
to carry out the promises she has made;
and bless (this food, and) those who are gathered here,
that, sustained by service for others,
we may faithfully serve you, all the days of our life.

[With words from The Queen's First Christmas Broadcast,
1952]

Website for celebration planners - [http://
www.churchcare.co.uk/about-us/campaigns/our-
campaigns/queen-s-90th-birthday](http://www.churchcare.co.uk/about-us/campaigns/our-campaigns/queen-s-90th-birthday)

The national celebrations are on 10-12 June:
[http://www.royal.gov.uk/LatestNewsandDiary/
Pressreleases/2015/
EventstomarkTheQueens90thbirthday.aspx](http://www.royal.gov.uk/LatestNewsandDiary/Pressreleases/2015/EventstomarkTheQueens90thbirthday.aspx)

churchnewsireland@gmail.com

The Faithful Underground: 40 Years of Christian and Gay witness in Northern Ireland

“The Faithful Underground: 40 Years of Christian and Gay witness in Northern Ireland” is the title of a talk being given by Richard O’Leary of Changing Attitude Ireland at the School of Politics at Queen’s University, Belfast.

Commenting to CNI, Richard said, “This hidden history serves as a reminder that the call for LGBT inclusion in the Churches in Northern Ireland is not a recent one but part of a four decades long, struggle for inclusion and equality.

“1976 saw the setting up of the Northern Ireland Council on Religion and Homosexuality (NICRH). In that same year at the General Synod of the Church of Ireland there was a groundbreaking statement on homosexuality.

“2016 marks the 40th anniversary of these landmark events. The talk will cover the forty years 1976-2016.”

The talk will be at the School of Politics, 22 University square, (just below the QFT cinema),

Room 01/005. at 7.30pm on Wednesday 10th February.

New Presbyterian Church Moderator Rev Frank Sellar: Some of clergy I admire most are gay

Rev Frank Sellar won a landslide victory in the vote to be the next leader of the Presbyterian Church here, with the support of 18 out of the Church's 19 presbyteries across Ireland.

In a report by Angela Rainey in the Belfast Telegraph, he referred to two clerics - Ed Shaw and Vaugh Roberts, who both preach in England - the Moderator-Designate said those who are "same-sex attracted" and Christian can still live within the teachings of the Bible.

"It might sound surprising, but some of the people in the clergy I admire, and indeed some of the people within Christian ministry that I respect most, are same-sex attracted and it's vital that people hear that," said Rev Sellar.

"I believe there is no place in society for homophobia; in the cases of these two members, they have chosen to place their

sexuality under the authority of the Lord and decided to live within the parameters the Bible sets."

Rev Roberts, who is based at St Ebbes Church in Oxford, is "same-sex attracted" and celibate, though does not define himself as gay.

Rev Sellar says he also takes a balanced view in the case of Ashers bakery, which has appealed against a judgment that it discriminated against a gay man who placed an order with the Christian-run firm for a cake bearing the slogan 'Support gay marriage'. Though confirming his belief that marriage should be between a man and a woman, he said: "It is a very important issue, not just for Christians but an appeal that is important to everybody.

"Certainly, a business should not discriminate against customers because of their ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation - that would be quite wrong. But it is a much wider issue.

"If a customer were to request a Muslim printer to print a cartoon of Mohammed, it would not be right, and there would be ramifications.

"But that's quite different to coercion to participate in political campaigning, which is what I think is happening at the moment."

More at -

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/new-presbyterian-church-moderator-rev-frank-sellar-some-of-clergy-i-admire-most-are-gay-34422440.html>

Belvedere College pays tribute to former student Terry Wogan

The headmaster of Belvedere College and some of Terry Wogan's former classmates at the Jesuit school have been paying tribute to the much loved broadcaster.

On the website of the Jesuits in Ireland, the order highlighted that Wogan was Jesuit-educated, attending Crescent College Comprehensive in Limerick, his native city, and Belvedere College SJ in Dublin.

Describing the recently deceased Irish entertainer as "always supportive of Belvedere" it recounts how he made his last visit to the college for the Past Pupils Union dinner in November 2009 where he gave a memorable address to past pupils.



Terry Wogan with his former teacher Fr Kevin Laheen SJ.

Gerry Foley, the present principal of Belvedere College, paid tribute to him on his own behalf and on behalf of his alma mater.

He offered condolences to Terry Wogan's beloved wife of 50 years, Helen, their children and the extended family including his brother Brian.

“The flood of international tributes naturally focuses on his amazing broadcasting career but here in Belvedere – and particularly amongst his mates in the ‘Class of ‘56’ – we remember a great friend, a great wit and a unique member of our past pupils.”

“His last visit to the school was when he memorably addressed the past pupil’s Union Dinner in November 2009. Again, he entertained us all with his humour and mischievous wit. He remained interested in how Belvedere College SJ was developing. Even as a young man, when he was well known in RTE, he helped the Belvedere Ladies Committee when they were fundraising in the 1960s by acting as the presenter for the event.”

“Recently he supported the college bursary programme, which assists 10% of the students, who come from a socially disadvantaged background and he introduced the video promoting the fundraising for the Social Diversity Programme.”

“Like many Irish who lived in England during the IRA bombing campaign, I appreciated Terry’s role as an Irishman who was proud to be Irish in very difficult circumstances.”

Sleep out tonight for Dromore charity

From 8.00 pm tonight Friday 5 February, until 8.00 am tomorrow morning, 10 staff members from the Dromore charity Via Wings will be sleeping rough in the town’s square.

The #VWintheirshoes Staff Sleepout will raise awareness, not just of homelessness but also the appalling living conditions the charity witnesses every week. Other volunteers will be part of 24 hours of prayer in the Hope & Soul upcycling store.

Via Wings founder, Gail Redmond, will be one of those out on the streets. She explained: “We want to raise awareness of the awful conditions some of the people in our community live in inside their houses. These homes can be colder inside than the temperature outside because there’s no heating and no way to stay warm – not even beds or sheets. They’re effectively homeless within four walls.”

“We’re going to go out in the clothes we stand in and challenge the community to bring us sleeping bags, blankets, warm coats, tea and coffee and any food that someone living on the street could eat. And because our ethos is to give away what we’re given, we’ll be donating all those items to a charity in Belfast.”

The sleepout will raise funds for the Via Wings home refurbishment team which works to transform houses into homes and supplying comforts that most of us would take for granted.

If you can support in any way, please visit the [Just Giving](#) page to donate or come along on the night to encourage the team or to bring drinks/ food, coats or sleeping bags.

Distribution of record breaking Dublin Black Santa Sit Out

The 2015 Black Santa Sit Out at St Ann's Church, Dawson Street, has yielded a record breaking sum for charity. A total of €41,400, the largest amount in the Dublin appeal's 15 year history, was collected during the sit out which took place on the street outside the Dublin city centre church in the days running up to Christmas.

Every cent donated goes directly to the charities involved. Cheques will be distributed at a special service in St Ann's on Sunday February 7 at 11.00 am. The preacher will be the Archdeacon of Dublin, the Ven David Pierpoint.

Among the charities that will benefit from the appeal are Trust, the Salvation Army, the Simon Community, the Peter McVerry Trust, Protestant Aid, Barnardos, St Vincent De Paul, the Laura Lynn Foundation and Solas Project.

Catholic schools are unfairly criticised over their admissions policies Bishop argues

The chairman of the Council for Education of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference has suggested that Catholic schools are unfairly criticised over their admissions policies.

Writing in the Irish Times' Rite & Reason column, Bishop Brendan Kelly referred to the comment on catholic school admissions in recent months.

Highlighting that the vast majority of Catholic primary schools are not oversubscribed, Bishop Kelly said this means that they accept all students whose parents apply for admission.

In a small minority of schools there are more applicants than there are places available. These schools, the Bishop underlined, publish an enrolment policy which must list the criteria used in determining school places.

“These criteria usually include having siblings in the school or belonging to a specific geographic area,” he stated.



Some schools also use the criterion of belonging to a particular faith community, such as the Catholic Church.

However, the Bishop said, “In general, baptism is not a requirement for entry to a Catholic school, but rather it is a criterion used when there are more applicants than places available.”

He underlined that the number of such schools in the archdiocese of Dublin is very small, involving 17 bottlenecks when it comes to school admissions.

“This equals 5 per cent of schools in the greater Dublin area. The obvious solution would be to

provide more school places in these areas,” he challenged.

Elsewhere in his article, the Bishop of Achonry said the highest number of births in Ireland since independence was in the period 2008-2011, and this has caused significant pressure on school entry numbers in recent years.

“On the whole, schools have demonstrated a capacity to adapt to this increased demand.”

He also noted that the number of births has been falling year on year since 2011, which will decrease the future pressure on admissions to schools. The number of children born in 2014 was 11 percent less than in 2009.

To those suggesting changes to admissions policies should prioritise geographic proximity as the main criterion in determining school entry, the Bishop said the evidence from England demonstrates that such an approach has many problems and challenges.

Syrians need more than financial aid says Christian Aid

Christian Aid has welcomed the commitments that were made yesterday by the UK, Germany,

France and others to increase humanitarian support for Syrians and the region. However the charity added that real relief will only happen when the bombs stop.

Frances Guy, Christian Aid's Head of Middle East Region said: "For Syrian refugees who rely on food baskets and vouchers from the World Food Programme it will be a relief to know that Germany has already pledged to fund half of the money that is needed for these distributions for this year.

"It will be a relief to Syrian parents who are living in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey to know that their children should now have the opportunity to be in education. Some Syrians in those countries can now hope that they may be able to work legally and earn a living which will support their families. We must now work with these countries to ensure that these pledges are acted upon.

"However, for those who live under the daily threat of bombardment from all sides inside Syria and for those Syrians who are besieged and relying on very infrequent aid distributions, there will be no relief.

"As we heard from Syrian colleagues over the past two days, unless political will to end the

violence inside Syria is put into action, the numbers of the dead will rise as will the numbers seeking refuge in the neighbouring countries and in Europe.

“More food and blankets will not stop the bombs. The [plea from the International Red Cross](#) should be answered: Find a political solution, urgently. Lift all sieges immediately. Start putting Syrians first.”

In Lebanon and Iraq, Christian Aid partners continue to support Syrian refugee communities, as well as working with ACT Alliance agencies to support humanitarian efforts taking place in Greece and Serbia. For more info on Christian Aids work in the region, please visit www.christian-aid.org/Syria

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Interview with new Moderator of Irish Presbyterian Church

News Letter

New Presbyterian Moderator the Rev Frank Sellar may be a conservative evangelical in church terms, but as a minister who has served on both sides of the Irish border

he has shown the capacity to reach out across the religious divide.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/new-presbyterian-moderator-has-capacity-to-reach-out-1-7196613>

A legal battle to halt the amalgamation of two grammar schools in Co Fermanagh has failed

News Letter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/grammar-schools-face-closure-after-legal-challenge-to-o-dowd-fails-1-7195720>

Stitching together the torn fabric of church and society

Irish News

Rev Dr John Dunlop speaking in St Patrick's Church, Donaghmore during the ... Much of the conflict in Ireland has resulted in understandable fear and ...

<http://www.irishnews.com/lifestyle/faithmatters/2016/02/04/news/stitching-together-the-torn-fabric-of-church-and-society-397395/>

Catholicism had strong hold during the Rising

Irish Independent

The **Church of Ireland** also campaigned on alcohol use. In 1900 the Irish Women's Temperance Union was set up expanding to 87 branches ...

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/1916/catholicism-had-strong-hold-during-the-rising-34413647.html>

[Brighton & Hove Argus/Guardian/Premier/Christian Today](#)

Interview in the *Argus* with the survivor of abuse by Bishop George Bell, former Bishop of Chichester. Last October, the Bishop of Chichester, Martin Warner, issued a formal apology following the settlement of a legal civil claim regarding sexual abuse against Bishop Bell. At the time the survivor expressed the desire to remain anonymous. *Guardian*, *Premier* and *Christian Today* report on the interview

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/03/bishop-george-bell-victim-tells-how-she-was-abused>
<https://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Victim-of-George-Bell-He-said-it-was-our-little-secret-because-God-loved-me>

Brighton Hove & Argus

Reports that the Bishop of Chichester, Martin Warner has issued a statement of support for the survivor (of abuse by Bishop George Bell) interviewed by the paper (see *News from CofE* above). Bishop Martin writes, "It is testimony to her courage and integrity that the survivor who brought the allegations against George Bell has been prompted to speak out."

Mail

Columnist Peter Hitchens responds to the interview in the *Argus* saying that an allegation remains an allegation, however much detail it contains.

<http://hitchensblog.mailonsunday.co.uk/2016/02/a-major-new-development-in-the-george-bell-affair.html>

BBC

Attitudes towards allowing refugees into Great Britain have hardened, a survey for BBC Local Radio suggests. Two in five (41%) of the 2,204 people interviewed say

Britain should accept fewer refugees from Syria and Libya. The figure was 31% in September 2015.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-35470723>

[Int Business Times/Christian Today/Mirror](#)

Further reports of Business Secretary's Sajid Javid's announcement in the Commons of proposals, which would allow councils to extend Sunday trading hours.

Christian Today suggest that there is a mounting rebellion among Conservative MPs against the proposal. The *Mirror* debates the plan from four different perspectives; a small shop owner, a retail worker, shopping centre and a consumer.

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/should-open-up-day-sunday-7304682#ICID=nsm>

Ind

Gucci is to hold a fashion show in Westminster Abbey. In June, the Italian label will show off its cruise collection in the Abbey's cloisters. A spokesperson for the Abbey pointed out that the cloisters have been available for corporate hire for some time, if not until now for a fashion show.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/news/gucci-to-hold-fashion-show-at-westminster-abbey-a6851906.html>

[Christian Today](#)

Reports that the latest Office for National Statistics survey seems to confirm what similar ones have already shown: religious people are happier. Over four years, religious people scored their life satisfaction at 7.53 out of 10 and their happiness at 7.38. People with no religion scored their happiness at only 7.22. Compared with other

faiths, Christians are mid-table at 7.47; Muslims are only 7.33, while Hindus are a cheerful 7.57.

Tel

Report on research conducted by the University of Sussex and the London School of Economics about what make Britons, happy. They have produced a list of 33 things which make us happy and seven that don't. Going to church, meditating, fishing, watching the match and exercising all make people happier than spending time with our children.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/science/science-news/12138679/The-33-things-that-will-make-you-happy...and-the-seven-that-definitely-wont.html>

BBC

Campaigners want a war memorial to be moved from a town churchyard to its original home on the High Street.

It was installed in Andover, Hampshire, in the 1920s outside the Guildhall, but was relocated in 1956 following complaints it was being desecrated. Campaigners suggest the cenotaph's location outside St Mary's Church is "out of mind, out of sight". Test Valley Borough Council said moving it a second time "risks disappointing as many people as it pleases".

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-35487902>

BBC

Further coverage of a vicar who has fitted iron gates to a church to stop people defecating in a side entrance. Anti-social behaviour has been caught on CCTV outside St David's church on the outskirts of Exeter. The Revd Tom

February 5

Honey said this included couples having sex, people defecating and drug use.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-35483568>

