



Archbishop Justin with the First Minister, Arlene Foster MLA, and the Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Revd Richard Clarke

Archbishop of Canterbury met with First Minister during Belfast visit

The Archbishop of Canterbury met with the First Minister, Mrs. Arlene Foster MLA, during a visit to Belfast for the annual Church of Ireland

Theological lecture at Queen's University (See report below). He was accompanied by the Most Reverend Richard Clarke, Archbishop of Armagh.

Mrs Foster, a member of the Church of Ireland, became First Minister at the start of January, having been elected as leader of the Democratic Unionist Party at the end of 2015. She is the first woman to be a leader of a political party in Northern Ireland.

Following this meeting the Archbishops also met with Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness.

The Archbishops were welcomed to Parliament buildings by the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, Mitchel McLaughlin MLA.

Generational Struggle focus of Archbishop's lecture

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Justin Welby, delivered the annual Church of Ireland Theological Lecture at The Queen's University of Belfast this week. The lecture had to be moved to the Elmwood Hall due to a major increase in attendees.



The Archbishop reflected on the nature of religiously-justified violence, and as a case study, on the nature, particularly, of the conflict posed by Daesh, or ISIS.

The full text of the Archbishop's address is available on CNI today - See Faith Focus. See also News Letter report at - <http://www.newsletter.co.uk/welby-tells-belfast-audience-we-must-go-to-the-cross-for-reconciliation-1-7204505>

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1916 Commemoration, "hope and history rhyming" says Irish Methodist President

The President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Reverend Brian Anderson has commented on the 1916 Commemoration. His statement follows -

This year we will celebrate the centenary of two iconic and historical events which shaped the two parts of this island - the 1916 Rising and the Battle of the Somme.

In the past they divided our two communities but in recent years families in the Irish Republic who had relatives who served in the British Army during the Battle of the Somme, now feel free to speak of these men and their exploits.

Perhaps this aspiration is expressed well by our Nobel Laureate, Seamus Heaney when he spoke of "hope and history rhyming"

In the past each community lived out of their own historical narrative but perhaps a bridge was built between both nations when Queen Elizabeth II visited the Irish Republic and said

"being able to bow to the past but not bound by it" and a matching remark by the then Irish President Mary McAleese "while we cannot change the past we have chosen to change the present" The warmth of exchange and the mutual hopeful future would be a good one for us all to follow.

We are now an island that has been enriched by those who have come to live and work among us and so in keeping with one of the planks of the Easter Proclamation i.e. to cherish all children equally we should be a welcoming hospitable, generous and tolerant people and part of building this hope we spoke of is about restoring broken relationships and viewing the future inclusively.

I spoke of the two separate narratives out of which the peoples on this Island have lived out of along with the former Presbyterian Moderator, the Rev.Dr.Trevor Morrow there is a bridge narrative which can join both of these which the church can help to shape. This is a story of justice for all and a land that respects all.

The season of Lent has begun and it is my prayer that as we journey through this 40 day period of inward and spiritual reflection that we look at commemorating our past that shapes the

future. Let us be optimistic about the future we can, under God, build. To again quote from Seamus Heaney

"so hope for a great sea-change on the far side of revenge. Believe that further shore is reasonable from here. Believe in miracle and cures and healing wells"

Irish Girl Guides members are 'torch bearers for a better future'

Irish Girl Guides (IGG) launched its strategic plan this week emphasising its focus over the next four years on supporting girls and young women to develop life skills that will see them become "torch bearers for a better future".

IGG's blueprint for action, which is underpinned by the organisation's tagline 'giving girls confidence', is to empower girls and women to develop to their full potential and become active and responsible citizens, IGG Chief Commissioner Helen Concannon said at the launch in the Carlton Hotel Dublin Airport.

"We are focused on helping girls and young women develop teamwork and leadership skills in a nurturing, non-competitive environment where they are encouraged to learn by doing

and to be the best that they can. This is achieved through a range of indoor and outdoor activities and challenges, which see girls grow in confidence while having lots of fun,” said Helen.

“We believe young people should be recognized for what they are – agents of change who are the torch bearers of a better future. Our progressive new Journey Programme, which caters for girls from age five to 30, will equip our 10,000 youth members to be positive change-makers in their local communities and beyond. When we set ourselves a challenge and work together, we can achieve great things.”

IGG Assistant Chief Commissioner Jenna Goodwin, a 25-year-old Guide leader from Lucan who headed up the team that devised the IGG 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, said: "This long-term vision we set out here today is aimed at giving girls and young women the opportunity to develop and enhance a range of essential life skills that encourage personal growth and independence and, as they mature, to be agents of change and to inspire change in others too.

“Our Strategic Plan focuses on four key areas: Belong, Support, Impact and Journey. By focusing on these key areas, we hope to build on our strengths while also setting ourselves

targets for the future, allowing us to continue growing and evolving as a relevant organisation for the girls and young women of today. For our members, it's about real engagement and the opening of hearts and minds and discovering that our actions can have a real impact on the lives of others," said Jenna.

“Being involved in Guiding helps girls and young women to develop not only confidence, self-motivation and emotional well-being – all essential tools for life in the 21st century - but it also helps them develop a social conscience through active engagement in real communities. It is essential to give young people opportunities to contribute to society in ways that will fire them up to change the world for the better.”

To find out more about Irish Girl Guides see www.irishgirlguides.ie or telephone 01-6683898.

Irish Girl Guides has approximately 12,000 members. Guiding started in Ireland in 1911 and operates throughout the 26 counties with 1,800 volunteer leaders providing an informal educational programme of fun and challenging activities that foster confidence and leadership skills in girls and young women, enabling them to develop to their full potential and to become responsible citizens. Girls from age 5+ can choose to earn a wide range of badges, including Community Action, Cultural Diversity, Disability Awareness, Drug

Awareness, Online Surfer, Science Investigator and
Global Traveller.

Oxford theologian pays tribute to Fr Gabriel Daly

“An excellent and immensely timely book” is how the Master of St Benet’s Hall in Oxford University described Irish theologian Fr Gabriel Daly’s new book ‘The Church always in need of reform’.

Professor Werner G Jeanrond officially launched Dominican Publications latest title at Trinity College Dublin last week.

In his address to family, confreres, colleagues and friends gathered at the Irish School of Ecumenics, Professor Jeanrond stated, “Theoretically, nobody of sane mind would ever deny the need for church reform. However, given the ambiguity of all human institutions, the church means different things to different people.”

He said that to conservatives and progressives alike, Gabriel Daly’s book presents a challenge because in it he destroys any expectation of comfort emerging from our different images of church.



Theologian Fr Gabriel Daly OSA with his fellow theologian Dr Gina Menzies.

“Instead Gabriel asks all of us to consider what it means that the church is an organism at once enabled and limited by space, time and language. The church is a historical phenomenon which at best proclaims God’s eternal presence in our universe and at worst proclaims its own imagined past glories,” he said.

Thanking the Irish Augustinian priest for “a wonderful and beautifully written book” and for all who joined in celebrating Fr Daly’s theological and literary achievement, he mulled what this manifesto on church reform might mean for us today.

Fr Gabriel Daly's book tries to present a way forward by reminding us that we do not actually believe in the church, but in God and Christ with – and at times – even against the church, he said.

Elsewhere in his address, Professor Jeanron described the book as very much in line with the present Pope's thinking and acting.

Both Gabriel and the pope redefine the meaning of orthodoxy. Questioning failing structures and policies in the church does not only not amount to disloyalty, but may well be the most promising form of loyalty," he suggested.

Refurbished parish centre opens in Londonderry

A former rector and a veteran civil rights activist were among members of the public who joined clergy and worshippers from the Christ Church, Culmore, Muff and St Peter's Group of Parishes on Saturday afternoon for the Celebration and Dedication of their recently refurbished parish centre on Londonderry's Culmore Road.

More than £100,000 was raised over the past nine months to finance the work, which brings the centre up to the necessary health and safety

standards. Among the improvements are a new kitchen, toilets, heating system and internal doors, and new flooring has been laid throughout. The building has also been painted inside and out, and has had new insulation fitted. The money for the refurbishment was raised through donations from parishioners and groups who use the centre, and the parishes got funding from the Garfield Weston Foundation and Awards for All.

Former Rector, Rev Matt Moore and his wife Audrey – who left 10 years ago and now live in Tennessee, in the United States – were there to hear the current incumbent, Archdeacon Robert Miller, tell worshippers that the project didn't mean the parishes' work had ended. With 2016 having been designated a Year of Opportunity in the Diocese, Archdeacon Miller said the new-look centre would allow them to reach out in mission and friendship to the whole community in the city.

The Rector thanked those who had helped raise funds for the improvements, as well as those who had carried out the work.

Veteran civil rights activist Ivan Cooper, who is a parishioner of St Peter's, was among those who visited the centre and attended the Service. Also

present were local SDLP Councillor Angela Dobbins and members of the North West's business community (including some who had worked on the refurbishment project).

Throughout the afternoon, existing user groups provided information about classes and activities in the parish centre, and young members of the McLaughlin-Leppard School of Irish Dancing provided entertainment.

Evening to reflect on Arctic sabbatical

Last summer, the Rev Mike McCann, rector of Kilroot and Templecorran Parish (Connor diocese), spent a three month sabbatical in the Canadian Arctic. His wife Sarah was with him for the first two months.

They were based in Iqaluit, the main city of the territory of Nunavut, Baffin Island, with 6,000 inhabitants. Their stay was arranged by the Rt Rev Darren McCartney, Suffragan Bishop of the Arctic, who formerly served in the Diocese of Connor as curate in St Nicholas Church in Carrickfergus.



Mike and Sarah McCann at work in the soup kitchen in Iqaluit, Baffin Island.

Mike worked at the Cathedral Church of St Jude, and he and Sarah also helped out in a daily soup kitchen.

On Friday February 26, Mike and Sarah will be giving an illustrated talk about their trip to the Canadian Arctic. This will take place at 8a Governors' Place, Carrickfergus, at 7.30pm and Mike and Sarah hope to speak to Bishop Darren McCartney live during the evening.

This evening is open to all. Refreshments will be served.



The Rev Mike McCann, Sarah McCann and Bishop Darren McCartney enjoy a riverbank picnic in the Canadian Arctic.

Presiding Bishop addresses National Press Club on creating a more inclusive society

Episcopalians won't see changes stemming from limits on the church's participation in the



worldwide Anglican Communion put in place by the Anglican Primates conference, according to the U.S.-based church's Presiding Bishop Michael Curry.

“We’re not changing – so there shouldn’t be an expectation that in the next three years the Episcopal Church is going to change,” declared Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Curry about the denomination’s approval of new [gender-neutral marriage rites](#) this past July. “This is who we are.”

Bishop Curry spoke on Monday, February 8 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Where he was invited to “discuss the Church’s role in creating a more inclusive society.”

“My sense is that the overwhelming majority of the primates voted as a way of saying ‘we disagree with you, we can’t support your decision because we believe you have changed core doctrine and we disagree with that’ but they did not vote us off the island,” Bishop Curry shared. “They did not do that – and could have.”

Instead, the leader of 1.8 million U.S. Episcopalians said that overseas Anglicans had opted for a “moderated response that recognized we are still a part of the Anglican family.”

“There was clarity on our part, both about who we are as a church and about our love and commitment to the Communion, and there was clarity on their part that they disagreed with us,” Curry reported.

For longer report and address see - <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens/2016/02/08/presiding-bishop-addresses-national-press-club-on-creating-a-more-inclusive-society/>

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Complacency gap about Protestant underachievement in education.

News Letter

A “blind eye” is being turned to problems faced by the Protestant community when it comes to higher education, an MLA has said.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/mla-condemns-complacency-over-protestant-education-gap-1-7202305>

Christian Today

Nearly three years ago, the Archbishop of Canterbury pledged to challenge payday lenders by using the Church to build up credit unions as an alternative, cheaper source of finance (see above). Archbishop Justin's task group on responsible credit and savings has published its final report giving evidence of a "sea change" in public and political thought. Figures show that since it was set up, payday lending declined by 68 per cent and membership of credit unions grew by 13 per cent. A new charitable company is planned to oversee the Task Group's continuing work.

FT

Article on Government plans to give councils the right to remove the remaining restrictions on Sunday trading from this autumn. The extension of Sunday opening hours is being billed as an attempt to allow "bricks and mortar" retailers to compete with their internet rivals, who are taking a rapidly increasing share of the market. The CofE

is opposed to the relaxation of the current law, claiming there is little proof that further liberalisation would bring tangible economic benefit.

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/0a8d9d8e-ce8b-11e5-92a1-c5e23ef99c77.html?FTCamp=engage/CAP1/webapp/Channel_Moreover//B2B#axzz3zeCqdHgf

Ind

Abortion should be decriminalised and women trusted to make their own decisions over pregnancies without fear of arrest, a new campaign is urging. The British Pregnancy Advisory Service (Bpas) is calling for an end to "cruel, archaic abortion laws" from the Victorian era used to enable prosecutions in the 21st century.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/abortion-should-be-decriminalised-in-britain-campaign-urges-a6861836.html>

Guard

Protesters have gathered in cities across Australia to call on the government to allow a group of asylum seekers facing removal to Nauru to remain in Australia. The protests come after the high court last Wednesday validated Australia's offshore processing regime, which means 267 asylum seekers - including children - who are in the country for medical treatment could be sent to Nauru. At least 10 Anglican churches led by the Anglican Dean of Brisbane, Peter Catt, have offered sanctuary to the 267 people.

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/feb/09/asylum-seekers-let-them-stay-protests-draw-thousands-in-cities-across-australia>

Metro

Ukip has selected Alan Craig as its party's candidate for the South West constituency of the London Assembly. Mr Craig was the leader of the Christian Peoples Alliance party, but he defected to Ukip last year. He has written in the *Church of England Newspaper* on the issue of gay rights and same sex marriage.

<http://metro.co.uk/2016/02/08/ukips-selects-candidate-that-called-lgbt-activists-the-gaystapo-5669528/>

Mirror

Further coverage of the 70th annual clown service held over the weekend at All Saints in Haggerston, East London, to commemorate the life of English clown, Joseph Grimaldi.

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/clowns-gather-remember-spiritual-father-7334506#ICID=nsm>

Exp

Publishes a list of ten facts about Shrove Tuesday or Pancake Day. Among them, the word 'shrove' is the past tense of 'shrive', meaning to hear a confession, impose a penance or give absolution and "Short shrift" comes from the same verb: it was a quick confession before a criminal's execution.

<http://www.express.co.uk/life-style/top10facts/642138/Ten-things-pancake-day-shrove-tuesday>

Comment

Guardian: Michael White writes about child abuse claims and why due process is important. He cites the case of former bishop George Bell.

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/blog/2016/feb/08/child-abuse-claims-why-due-process-and-a-fair-hearing-matter>

February 10

Spectator: In the case of Bishop Bell, the Church has shown real compassion writes Theo Hobson.

<http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2016/02/in-the-case-of-bishop-bell-the-church-has-shown-real-compassion/>

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