



On the anniversary of the Canary Wharf bomb the sound of the Kalashnikov rifle has rattled across Dublin's political landscape - See Kevin Meyer's assessment in today's CNI News Focus

Northern Catholic bishops urged MLAs to reject NI abortion amendment

The Northern bishops of the Catholic Church said in a statement on Tuesday that "Both medical professionals and legislators have a
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duty to acknowledge that an unborn child with a life-limiting condition, including anencephaly, continues in every clinical and moral sense to be alive and worthy of continuing life-supporting intervention and care until natural death, “

The bishops were speaking ahead of yesterday's vote on an amendment to Northern Ireland's Justice Bill which would permit the direct and intentional killing of unborn children with life limiting conditions, up to the moment of birth, the bishops appealed to members of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The proposed amendment extends the law on abortion, they warned, and said it cannot be reconciled in any way with a commitment to the universal moral principle of the right to life upon which the very existence and well-being of society is founded.

The amendment, the bishops said, involves members of the Assembly weighing the value of one life against another and radically altering the principles upon which society's approach to the inherent dignity of persons with disability and terminal illness is based.

“If the proposed amendment is passed, some children with a terminal diagnosis would

lose their right to life and medical care while others with the same diagnosis would continue to receive treatment and care based on the choice of their mother.”

The Northern bishops said this radically changes the inherent nature of the right to life, making it contingent on the will of another person.

“This is the fundamental and radical moral shift that is involved in supporting the proposed amendment.”

Statement in full at -

<http://www.catholicbishops.ie/2016/02/09/statement-by-the-catholic-bishops-of-northern-ireland-on-the-proposed-abortion-amendment-to-the-northern-ireland-justice-bill/>

See also -

Abortion vote: Attorney General expresses serious concerns

News Letter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/northern-ireland-news/abortion-vote-attorney-general-expresses-serious-concerns-1-7207665>

First Minister visits Glencairn parish



The Rev Emma Rutherford chats to First Minister Arlene Foster and Alderman Frank McCoubrey, Belfast City Council.

First Minister Arlene Foster visited the Shankill area on February 4, and one of the venues she called into was St Andrew's, Glencairn.

Pupils from Harmony Primary School welcomed Mrs Foster and presented her with flowers.

Community groups from Glencairn, Springmartin and Highfield were all represented, and the First Minister took time to talk to local people, including the Rev Emma Rutherford, Curate with churchnewsireland@gmail.com

Special Responsibilities for Glencairn and Whiterock.

Parishioners were present for the visit, and Evangelists Karen Webb and Stephen Whitten from the Connor / Church Army North Belfast Centre of Mission also attended.

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin's condemnation of violence in Dublin

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin issued the following statement - "I wish to repeat what I said on Saturday last condemning the extraordinary examples of violence which have marked our city again in recent days.

"Violence is to be condemned whatever its roots are. Dismembering bodies as some sort of warning is not sign of prestige or power but of despicable inhumanity. Premeditated shooting in public places even in the presence of terrified children and innocent bystanders only degrades the humanity of those who do it. They fail to see that such inhumanity inevitably rebounds on its own perpetrators and never leaves them with the security they seek".

Now we are witnessing a further escalation of violence and brutal retaliation spurred on by people whom I believe to be “despicable and cynical exploiters who feel they can treat life lightly”

Is there anyone – even among their own ranks – who can speak to these cynical hearts? Are there some persons of wisdom – especially mothers and grandmothers who must fear that their children will be dragged even more deeply into this spiral – who see the madness of such violence and who can appeal to whatever humanity remains in the hearts of those involved? Every victim is some mother’s son and someone’s loved one and is tragically mourned by a family.

The perpetrators are not idols or stars or heroes. They are criminals who threaten not just public order but democracy and the rule of law and who have no care for anything except their own criminal interests.

All of us have to remind them they are not untouchable. I appeal to anyone who has information to co-operate with An Garda Síochána.

Blarney and inspiration for Cork youth leaders



Youth Leaders from Cork, Cloyne and Ross at their annual weekend away

Last weekend, 5th-7th February, the annual weekend away for youth leaders in the United Dioceses of Cork, Cloyne and Ross took place in the Blarney Golf Resort. Attended by leaders from all over the Diocese and visitors from other Dioceses, it was led by Jonny Phenix, Diocesan Youth Officer from Clogher Diocese.

Jonny took the theme `Abide` and led participants through the passage in John 15 in which Jesus encourages his followers to Abide in Him and thus bear much fruit in His name. The

weekend is also an opportunity to plan events for the year ahead, and to learn about what is happening in local parishes and in the schools team.

There was much interest in the Church of Ireland Youth Department's planned trip to Cambodia in August to work with a Tearfund partner. There will also be a visit from the Romanian team again and a visit to Germany.

For more news about what is happening on the youth scene in Cork, Cloyne and Ross visit the [CDYC website](#)

Churches in Lisburn launch 'Relentless Prayer'

Churches in Lisburn launched 'Relentless Prayer' at Trinity Methodist Church on Tuesday evening February 9.

From Wednesday February 10 until Easter Sunday (March 27) churches across the denominations will join together in 40 days and 40 nights of constant prayer for the City of Lisburn and its people and will pray on a wide range of subjects including business, education, health and emergency services.



Rev Paul Dundas (right) and members of Christ Church Parish pictured at the launch of 'Relentless Prayer.' Included are the Rev John Pickering and the Rev Julie Bell (Curate).

The 18 churches taking part are First Lisburn, Railway Street, Harmony Hill, Legacurry, Hillhall and Hillsborough Presbyterian Churches; Lisburn Cathedral, Christ Church, St Paul's and Derryvolgie Parish Churches; Seymour Street and Trinity Methodist Churches; St Patrick's and St Colman's Roman Catholic Churches; Lisburn Christian Fellowship; Lisburn City Church; Mount Zion Community Church, and Lagan Valley Vineyard.

The special guest at the launch was Councillor Thomas Beckett (Mayor of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council).



Rev Simon Genoe (Vicar at Lisburn Cathedral) pictured giving a short address at the launch of 'Relentless Prayer' at Trinity Methodist Church on February 9.

In a challenging address, the Rev Simon Genoe (Vicar at Lisburn Cathedral) spoke of the need for a Vision of Christ, the Church and the City. Simon, who has been instrumental in organising the project said: "This is the most significant gathering of local churches for many years.

“We are hoping people will visit different churches and everyone is welcome to call in at any time to pray for as long or as short a time as they can. Each church will have a prayer room set up and there will be a host of stimuli to help people to focus their attention. along with ‘prayer champions’ who are helping to co-ordinate the prayer time slots in each church to make sure every minute of the 40 days and nights is covered.”

The Chairman of the Lisburn City Centre Ministers’ Fellowship, the Rev Paul Dundas (Rector of Christ Church Parish) said: “Lisburn churches have been working more closely in recent years and ‘RELENTLESS PRAYER’ was the next step in that bond.

“The ‘Christians Against Poverty’ centre and the ‘Foodbank’ at Lisburn City Church have involved a number of churches in Lisburn and we wanted to see how we could be even more of a part of the city. With help from Prayer 24-7, we were inspired to say that we want to see God’s blessings for our city.”

Trinity Methodist Church will be hosting the first three days of prayer, from Wednesday February 10 and Seymour Street Methodist Church will then take the baton from Friday February 12

followed by St Paul's Parish on Tuesday February 16, Derryvolgie Parish on Friday February 19 and First Lisburn Presbyterian Church on Saturday February 20. Other churches and dates will be finalised soon.

1916 Event: Patrick Pearse and modern Irish identity

To mark the centenary of the 1916 Rising, there will be a Padraig Pearse evening in St Matthias' Church, Killiney–Ballybrack on Wednesday March 2 at 8.00 pm.

The theme of the evening is: 'Patrick Pearse and the Making of Modern Irish Identity' and presentations will be given by the Revd Dr William Olhausen and the Revd Dr Paddy McGlinchey.

This event is open to all. The cost of the evening is €5 which will go towards the work of The Dining Room in Dun Laoghaire.

Former homeless & ex drug addicts become faces of latest campaign for CofE's justpray.uk

Men and women who found faith at a homeless centre are to star in a series of short dramatic films for Lent and Easter launched by the Church of England yesterday. The five film stars have all recently come to faith through the Saturday Gathering, a fresh expression of church in Halifax - and most have experienced crime, alcohol, drug addiction, homelessness or violence in their lives.

The "Psalm 22 project" follows on from the Church of England's "Lord's Prayer" campaign which was banned by cinemas before Christmas and promotes the justpray.uk website.

The new justpray.uk campaign will feature short teaser films over the next five weeks concluding with the launch of a two minute film on Easter Sunday which casts the five main characters in their own interpretation of a scene from the Passion of Christ. The film is based on Psalm 22 which includes the words "my God, my God why have you forsaken me ?" said by Jesus Christ on the cross.

The first teaser, launched today, features Emma, 24, who came to faith a year ago and still

struggles with questions and doubt. In a podcast interview accompanying today's film Emma says:

"Having faith is really hard. It's not easy to pray when you think no one is listening, it's not easy to wake up knowing you're going to go through the same stuff every single day.

"Without God, I'd still be drinking, taking drugs. I don't even know if I'd be here, because I was a self harmer, I would have probably taken my own life at some point."

Teaser films to be released over the coming weeks also include Howard, 40, who after eight months clean of drugs, alcohol and crime, got baptized and immediately used drugs again. His story is a battle between walking in faith and having doubts but says that his faith has kept him alive: "Where would I be without faith? I'd be dead a long time ago I believe. Yeah, I'd be dead. Not just spiritually but probably physically dead in a box somewhere. Faith's everything to me. It keeps me going, it gives me hope."

And Rob, 46, who spent years living rough, but now feels resurrected away from a life of drugs, crime and trouble: "When my brother died I got

naughty, I got into drugs, I got into fighting, violence, prison. And when I was in prison I wanted to like, just die. I thought God was forsaking me then. Because I was asking for his help and it didn't happen. About 10 years later, I've turned into a Christian and I've changed my life around, and God hasn't forsaken me."

The Revd Arun Arora, Communications Director for the Church of England said: "Each of the inspirational stories of those who star in the film is a reminder of how faith and prayer can turn life around. They are also a reminder that for many of us faith and doubt co-exist as neighbours and not opposites. The Psalms accompany us through life with their raw honesty, joy and despair at life, love and God. Lent is a time of self-examination and struggle. It's part of the Christian journey that comes as a time of testing and honesty about who we are before God. And it ends with the triumph of Easter day, the sure and certain promise of God triumphant even after the darkest night."

Watch the trailer here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1czltBkhxOM>

Listen to the audio here: <https://soundcloud.com/user-635494734/psalm-22-emma-1>

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

BBC

A "sea change in public and political opinion" about payday lenders has brought falls in use of these loans, a Church of England taskforce has concluded ([see release](#)). The report highlighted that payday lending had fallen by 68% from 2013 when the Archbishop of Canterbury told online lender Wonga that the Church would try to force it out of business by helping credit unions.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-35530882>

BBC

Further report on last week's interview given by survivor of abuse by former Bishop of Chichester, George Bell. The woman, who is anonymous, says he molested her in the cathedral as she sat listening to stories. She said she wanted to speak out about his "awful" treatment of her after several high-profile figures defended the bishop following the announcement of the settlement of a civil claim by the Diocese of Chichester. [In October](#) the Bishop of Chichester, Martin Warner, issued a formal apology to the survivor.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-sussex-35535241>

Tel

Christians should switch to green energy deals to help tackle global warming, the CofE bishop in charge of environmental issues has said. The Bishop of Salisbury, Nicholas Holtam, endorsed a new charity campaign

called the 'Big Church Switch' encouraging Christians to choose renewable energy tariffs. The campaign, launched by Christian Aid and Tearfund on Ash Wednesday, hopes to spur "hundreds of thousands of Christians to switch energy suppliers".

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/energy/12149213/Church-urges-Christians-to-switch-to-green-energy-deals.html>

Christian Today

The decision to censure America's Episcopal Church for consecrating gay bishops and allowing clergy to perform same-sex marriages was "fair", according to its Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. He said he welcomed the decision because it allowed the differing provinces of the Communion to voice their differences while remaining part of one body.

Guard/Tel/Mail/Times

450 years after the Act of Supremacy, which declared Henry VIII as the supreme head of the Church of England and formalised the break with Rome, England's most senior Catholic cleric celebrated Vespers in Hampton Court's Chapel Royal on last night. The Bishop of London, Richard Chartres joined Vincent Nichols, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, which was described as a symbolic gesture of reconciliation. The *Telegraph* reports that both men said the two churches must set aside centuries of division and recognise they have a "common agenda" in a more secular age.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/09/hampton-courts-chapel-royal-stages-first-catholic-service-for-450-years>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12149200/Christians-are-now-a-minority-in-Britain-like-persecuted-Roman-Catholics-during-the-Reformation-say-top-clerics.html>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3439293/Hampton-Court-Palace-chapel-holds-Catholic-service-Henry-VIII-broke-away-Rome-16th-century.html>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article4687133.ece>

Ind

An analysis into whether the Quran is more violent than the Bible found killing and destruction occur more frequently in the Christian texts than the Islamic. Investigating whether the Quran really is more violent than its Judeo-Christian counterparts, software engineer Tom Anderson processed the text of the Holy books to find which contained the most violence. By categorising words into eight emotions - Joy, Anticipation, Anger, Disgust, Sadness, Surprise, Fear/Anxiety and Trust - the analysis found the Bible scored higher for anger and much lower for trust than the Quran.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/violence-more-common-in-bible-than-quran-text-analysis-reveals-a6863381.html>

Exp

The article answers the questions, what is Ash Wednesday and why do we give something up for Lent?

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/642564/Ash-Wednesday-facts-What-is-it-and-where-do-the-ashes-come-from>

Comment

Times: Magnus Linklater - Reform would make the (House of) Lords relevant again.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/article4687145.ece>

Mail online: Peter Hitchens responds to Theo Hobson's Spectator article on former bishop George Bell

<http://hitchensblog.mailonsunday.co.uk/2016/02/a-reply-to-theo-hobson-in-defence-of-george-bell-and-of-his-defenders.html>

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