



CNI

Bishop encouraged by Stormont Executive stand on teacher training college

Statement by Bishop Noel Treanor, Chairman of the Board of Governors of St Mary's University College -

As chairman of the Board of Governors, I am strongly encouraged by the decision today to retain the small and specialist premia in the funding model for St Mary's University College.

This decision recognises the distinctive and high-quality contribution of service and excellence made by this autonomous Catholic institution to higher education in Northern Ireland.

The College's model of faith-based teacher education, in the Catholic tradition, is consistent with the principle of choice which is the hallmark of our school system.

More at -

Farry slapped down by DUP and SF over college funding

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/farry-slapped-down-by-dup-and-sf-over-college-funding-1-6578241>

Belfast Cathedral Course On Christian Ethics

The Revd Brendan McCarthy will return to St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, to deliver a five week course on Christian Ethics starting on 4 March.

This course – 'How do we do the right thing? A five week course in practical ethics,' is a follow up to the very successful God Enquiry which Brendan facilitated in St Anne's last Autumn.

The God Enquiry was a 10 week course examining issues of philosophy, theology, science, history, intuition and experience.



The course was well attended every week by a broad mix of people including those of faith and people of no faith, and each session was conducted in an atmosphere

of graciousness and laughter. It was very well received and those who participated stressed how helpful they had found it, as the comments below indicate.

While the Christian Ethics course will follow on from the God Enquiry, there is no requirement to have attended the first course, and everyone is welcome to sign up for this next course which will run in the Cathedral halls from 7.30pm–9.30pm on consecutive Wednesday nights. The course fee is £50. Please contact the Cathedral on 028 0932 8332 or visit the website www.belfastcathedral.org for a registration form.

Meet the bees that are pollinating Limerick city from their church tower home

Limerick is often described as the 'City of Churches' and with numerous old and unused places of worship around the city it's great to see innovative new ideas occupying them.

St Munchin's Church of Ireland chapel on King's Island is a Limerick landmark and a group of bee keepers from the city are now using its towers to house beehives and help pollinate the city's flowers.



This short film by bee keeping group Lubs features great aerial views and shows the old historic building being put to great use.

Video at -

<http://www.breakingnews.ie/discover/meet-the-bees-that-are-pollinating-limerick-city-from-their-church-tower-home-66183>

Lottery Fund boost for world's oldest Methodist chapel



The interior of the New Room.

The oldest Methodist chapel in the world is to embark on a major building programme to bring it into the 21st century thanks to a massive grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The 276-year-old New Room in Bristol, founded by John Wesley, has been awarded a grant of £2.5 million. The money will be used alongside a grant of £1.4 million from the Bristol Methodist District to enable the existing facilities to be

updated and the erection of a new three-storey building in its courtyard.

The ground floor of the new building will feature a shop and a café for visitors. On levels 2 and 3 there will be a large multi-media lecture and education room for up to 60 people, an extensive resource library on Methodist history, an archives room and offices.

A lift will connect the floors and the existing museum will be completely revamped to reflect John Wesley's work in Bristol, in 18th century Britain, and around the world. The interior of the chapel, an architectural gem, will not be changed.

Rev Ward Jones, Chair of the New Room Trustees and the Bristol Methodist District, said: "We are delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded us this significant grant.

The New Room has been situated in the heart of Bristol for over 275 years and we now have the chance to look to the future in a very exciting way.

"We will be able to upgrade our current facilities so that we can properly welcome and inform

visitors from the local area, from schools and colleges, and from all over the world."

The New Room, as Wesley called it, was the starting point for the growth of the Methodist Church, which currently has 75 million members around the world.

Rev Mandy Briggs, Education and Outreach Officer, said: "Wesley's original focus was on education and we want to develop our work in this area, as well as being a place of history and faith that the people of Bristol and beyond can explore, enjoy and treasure.

"We will be able to offer tours, workshops and talks to schools and colleges as well as events for all ages in our new education room."

C of E resources on shared conversations on scripture, mission and sexuality published

The Church of England has published a set of resources this week called 'Grace and Disagreement' for the Shared Conversations on Scripture, Mission and Sexuality.

The first booklet outlines the thinking behind the conversations, the process and their place in the life of the church. The second booklet comprises four essays, with varying views, which participants in the conversations are asked to read prior to taking part in the conversations.

The resources are available [here](#).

Mothers' Union is working with local Dioceses to provide for 15,000 displaced people in Iraq

In November 2014 the Mothers' Union's Relief Fund was able to contribute to the coordinated efforts of the network of Kurdish churches in Iraq to bring refuge and safety to displaced families and refugees from towns that have become war-zones due to IS aggression – Mosul, Qaraqash, and more.

The money and resources MU have given through The Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf have helped the local church make a huge difference to these families, restoring some sense of stability and community. Without the presence of international relief agencies in the most desperate of areas, the Church network

has enabled families to have shelter, fresh water, food, clothing and medicine.

Bishop Michael, and Father Faiz, from Mothers' Union's home in Iraq, St George's Baghdad, have written to thank all who contributed, the support shown by MU members around the world has made life on the ground more bearable for these struggling communities.



Support for these refugees has enabled the church network to establish complexes across the city of Erbil, each of which house 650 refugees. In total nearly 15,000 have to date been sheltered.. Thirty enormous water tanks

provide the fresh water and over 1,000 blankets have also been distributed.

The pictures shared with MU demonstrate that, whilst not ideal, families are today being cared for. However the situation is still critical – keeping the water clean is a major problem, and the electricity supply is often interrupted as the price of fuel soars out of reach.

The need to help these displaced communities rebuild their lives remains – the need for housing, schooling and of course employment. Rather than simply continue to provide relief, therefore, Mothers' Union will continue to build a close relationship with Iraq through the Diocese in order to do all members can to contribute to the rebuilding of safe communities in Iraq.

Media digest

Irish Times - Non-religious patrons to run four new primary schools. Despite divestment plan Catholic Church still controls more than 90% of primary schools

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/non-religious-patrons-to-run-four-new-primary-schools-1.2102032>

Irish Times - Gay teacher pixelated face for wedding contest to protect career

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/gay-teacher-pixelated-face-for-wedding-contest-to-protect-career-1.2099984>

Independent - Catholic school teacher forced to hide identity to enter wedding competition with partner of eight years

<http://www.independent.ie/entertainment/trending/news/catholic-school-teacher-forced-to-hide-identity-to-enter-wedding-competition-with-partner-of-eight-years-30983358.html>

Times

Article on commemorations in Dresden, 70 years on from the bombing that devastated the city. It says the Archbishop of Canterbury will be among speakers at a ceremony today to mark the firebombing of the eastern German city, which claimed 25,000 lives and came to symbolise the wanton destruction of modern warfare. It states his message of reconciliation remains relevant in a city that has long struggled with extremism and recently spawned a protest movement against "Islamisation" that proved to be a cover for racist opponents of immigration.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/europe/article4352388.ece>

Professional Pensions

Report that F&C Investments has appointed a council of six experts on responsible investment (RI), ethics and sustainability to advise the firm on these issues, including the Archbishop of Canterbury. The council's members include Justin Welby who joins as president, as well as two former pension scheme managers. The council will help maintain the integrity of the standards by which F&C's ethically-screened funds are run. It says Justin Welby was chairman of the former committee of reference, which advised the F&C's responsible funds range until the end of 2014, and previously spent 11 years in the oil industry.

<http://www.professionalpensions.com/professional-pensions/news/2395067/archbishop-of-canterbury-to-lead-f-c-s-responsible-investment-council>

BBC/ Christian Today/Mail

Reports that General Synod passed a motion calling for people who take their own life to be allowed a "normal" service. Reports note that Synod members also heard that many clergy do give burial services to suicides and have done so for years despite the letter of Church law. The motion was brought by the Rev Canon Dr Michael Parsons from Gloucester who said the

church wanted to offer hope whatever the circumstances of a person's death.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-gloucestershire-31437383>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2951586/Church-England-allow-funerals-suicides-General-Synod-votes-sweep-away-ban-signal-compassion-vulnerable.html>

Guard

Article on new GCSEs unveiled by the government yesterday. It states Religious Studies was one of the four new qualifications and that the content of the new RS GCSE has been contentious because of concerns that it would not include a non-religious world view. It has now been confirmed that pupils will study two religions out of Buddhism, Christianity, Catholic Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism and Sikhism in the first half of their course. They can then choose whether to go on to study one or both of those faiths in greater depth through a variety of themes.

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/feb/12/tough-new-food-gcse-culinary-techniques-nutrition>

Guard

Further article on the YouGov/Times poll on more young Britons being atheists. It states in recent polling just 16% of Anglicans and Methodists said they had "no doubts" about the

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existence of God and states even the Archbishop of Canterbury admitted to doubts. It states the poll is another benchmark in the decline of religious belief in the UK, but much more study is needed to understand all that is driving this, and where religion may still be resurgent.

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/feb/12/religion-atheism-britons-god>

BBC

Report that the government is being urged to extend the scope of the child sexual abuse inquiry to cover the whole of the UK - rather than just England and Wales. The investigation should cover Scotland, and Northern Ireland, including claims of abuse at Kincora Boys' Home in Belfast in the 1970s, a Home Affairs Committee report said. The Home Office said the report had been noted and was being considered.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-31449341>

Express

Further report that vicars across the south-west of England are getting comedy tips at a workshop, run as part of the South West Christian Resources Exhibition in Exeter. It states it is hoped that the 'Stand Up For Jesus' course will attract more worshippers in churches across

the South-West of England and help to reverse falling attendances.

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/557847/Stand-Up-For-Jesus-is-Church-of-England-comedian-course>

Guard & Mail

Further reports on the identity of the three men who were killed when a 32-tonne tipper truck careered out of control down a hill in Bath. They state around 400 residents attended an hour-long prayer service for the victims at All Saints Church Weston, led by Rector Patrick Whitworth, on Tuesday. Children, parents and grandparents lit candles and used colourful pens to write messages of condolence on white fabric. Books of condolences have been opened in libraries at Bath and Weston, while tribute flowers have been left at a nearby church.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/12/men-killed-in-truck-tragedy-identified>

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2951302/Final-victim-Bath-tipper-truck-crash-named-59-year-old-businessman-grandmother-four-year-old-fights-life.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490