



# CNI

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## **Ballymoney minister to be next moderator**

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has selected Ballymoney-based minister Rev Ian McNie as its next moderator.

The 64-year-old father of two was elected last night with the backing of 12 of the church's 19 governing presbyteries to succeed to the current moderator, Rev Michael Barry.

Now known as the moderator-designate, Rev McNie will officially take up office as moderator at the start of the Church's General Assembly on June 1.

The minister of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Ballymoney said he was humbled by the honour

"I am greatly humbled that so many of my colleagues in the ministry, and many ruling elders, within the various presbyteries have felt

they could entrust me with this important responsibility within the Church," he said.

"Throughout my ministry I have sought to preach the Gospel with clarity and conviction, in such a way that people will be moved by God's Spirit to make a positive response to become Christians.

"With God's help and the prayer support of the Church, I would trust that during my year in office, lives would be impacted with the Gospel."

## **12 Dioceses – 12 Hours: C of I Youth Department's Day of Prayer for Young People**

Tuesday February 17 will be the Church of Ireland Youth Department's Day of Prayer for Young people. People in dioceses across the island will be gathering in their cathedrals to pray for young people and for youth ministry.

In Dublin and Glendalough there will be a service in Christ Church Cathedral on February 17 from 7.00 pm to 9.00 pm sponsored by the United Dioceses, the Dublin and Glendalough Youth Council and CIYD.

As well as prayer for the youth; the service, which will be set in the context of the Eucharist, will showcase some examples of alternative and creative ways of praying with and for young people.

This service is primarily aimed at clergy, however, youth ministers, leaders, volunteers, parents and young people are all encouraged to attend.

Information and resources for the CIYD Day of Prayer for Young People can be found [here](#).

## **Cleric baffled by false gay rumours**

*Cleric hits back at rumour mill: 'I'm not homosexual and I have never been cautioned by police'*

Belfast Telegraph - A Northern Ireland cleric says he is bewildered by false rumours about his sexuality and claims he was arrested by police.

Reverend Peter Thompson told Sunday Life he had no idea why he is being targeted by gossips.

The young Church of Ireland clergyman, who is rector of two churches in rural Tyrone, has been

the subject of village rumours since splitting with his wife Jenni, last year.

The untrue rumours suggested the minister is gay and that the Castlecaulfield and Donaghmore cleric has been subject to a criminal investigation in relation to his estranged wife.

Speaking to Sunday Life last week, Rev Thompson said: "What I want to say is, I haven't been cautioned or arrested by police, and I am not gay - there is no substance to these allegations.

"To be honest I don't know at this time (why I have been targeted)."

It is not the first time the dad-of-three, who runs St Michael's Church, Castlecaulfield, and St Patrick's Church, Donaghmore, has been targeted.

In December last year he told friends he was forced to call in police after his Facebook account had been hacked.

He wrote on Facebook: "Friends, thanks for all the support today, and over the past few weeks. I've been really encouraged by the emails, texts, private messages, comments etc. I've had great

support from the Archbishop and colleagues, and from the PSNI in Dungannon.

“I have already had to report someone impersonating me on the internet some weeks ago, and now have to go back a second time. Please keep me in your prayers, it is a lot to deal with.”

One pal wrote in response: “That was a nasty bit of hacking. God bless you Peter”.

It is understood Armagh Archbishop Most Reverend Richard Lionel Clarke has also been made aware of the false rumours, after an email was purportedly sent on behalf of “concerned parishioners” in the Castlecaulfield area.

Sunday Life also contacted his estranged wife Jenni, who politely declined to comment over the rumours.

## **Government prejudged marriage referendum, says bishop of Elphin**

Government TDs should be asked to account for the coalition’s “arrogance” in seeking to speak for citizens in a way that is contrary to the Constitution, Bishop Kevin Doran has said.



***Bishop Kevin Doran***

Irish Catholic - The Bishop of Elphin, who stressed that he is expressing a personal view as a citizen, also accused the Government of trying to presume the outcome of the forthcoming referendum on same-sex marriage.

Writing on his personal Facebook page, Dr Doran took issue with how Ireland last June was one of 14 countries voting against a proposal on the protection of the family at the UN Human Rights Council.

Bishop Doran told *The Irish Catholic* that the proposal which Ireland voted against recognised

that primary responsibility for the nurturing and protection of children lies with the family.

Describing the family as the natural environment for the growth and well-being of children, it reaffirmed how as the natural and fundamental group unit of society, the family is entitled to state protection.

Pointing out that article 41 of the constitution explicitly recognises the family as founded upon the institution of marriage, as society's "natural primary and fundamental unit group", Dr Doran said the State had a constitutional obligation to protect the family understood in this way, and to guard the institution of marriage. He questioned whether the Government's opposition to the UN proposal was in accord with its constitutional duties.

Bishop Doran said the Government is "putting before the people a proposal to change the meaning of marriage in the Constitution", and, in this context, he has concerns about what it says about the Government that "having decided to put the matter to the people, they already last year made a decision on behalf of the people against the Constitution, and in doing so

prejudged the outcome of the referendum to change the meaning of marriage”.

## **‘Homeless Jesus’ statue gifted to people of Ireland**

On Good Friday, April 3rd, a controversial sculpture known as “Homeless Jesus” will be blessed and consecrated at Christ Church cathedral by the Very Rev Dermot Dunne.

Irish Times - The 7ft-wide bronze by Canadian sculptor [Tim Schmalz](#) is a park bench with a faceless cloaked figure lying on it. Passersby realise they are seeing a statue of Jesus only when they notice the holes in the feet.

“Homeless Jesus” has been presented to the city of Dublin by an anonymous North American Episcopalian benefactor, who is also giving the sculpture to 11 other European cities, including the [Vatican](#) City in Rome, where the sculpture has been blessed by [Pope Francis](#).

Dean Dunne said he was delighted that Schmalz had chosen Christ Church as the location for the sculpture.



The competition for the placement of “Homeless Jesus” was launched by *The Irish Times* in December 2014, when readers were asked to nominate the best locations. [Jonathan Corrie](#), a homeless man, had just died in Molesworth Street, within view of Leinster House.

Readers voted for the statue to be placed on Molesworth Street or on the plinth at Leinster House.

In second place was St Stephen’s Green, a location favoured by Fr [Peter Mc Verry](#).

Schmalz, a devout Catholic, visited many locations on a trip to Dublin in January, including [Trinity College](#), and decided on Christ Church because “it is the spiritual heart of Dublin”.

Within the grounds of Christ Church, an area of the park will be landscaped to complement the sculpture.

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/environment/homeless-jesus-statue-gifted-to-people-of-ireland-1.2088059>

## **Church Human Resources Policies Development**

At a meeting of the Standing Committee of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland, Mr Adrian Clements, Secretary General of the RCB, gave a presentation on the work carried out to date on proposals for presenting enabling legislation at General Synod to take forward policies on dignity in church life as part of the vision for 'Long Term Church' articulated last year at General Synod by the Archbishop of Armagh.

A drafting process on policies relating to bullying and harassment; clergy grievance; clergy long-term illness and a (provisionally termed) 'Dignity in Church Life Charter' has to date involved widespread consultation with the archbishops and bishops, a project team, an expert reference group, the Commission on Ministry, the Honorary Secretaries of the General Synod, and at a number of diocesan consultation meetings held across the island over recent months.

It is envisaged that if the legislation is passed policy documents will be put in place by the RB and Standing Committee for implementation during 2016. Support for the process and a principle of care was indicated.

## **C of I Submission on Abortion Consultation NI**

The Church and Society Commission's submission to the recent Department of Justice consultation on abortion in Northern Ireland relating to fatal foetal abnormality and pregnancy as a result of sexual crime was noted and discussed by the Standing Committee of the General Synod.

The CASC submission is available to view on the Church of Ireland website at:

<http://ireland.anglican.org/information/231>

## **£186,000 distributed from Belfast Cathedral Christmas Sitout**

£186,000 raised by the 2014 Black Santa Sitout was handed over to charities at the annual Good Samaritans Service in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, on Sunday February 1.

Special guest was Claire McCollum, presenter of Songs of Praise and a parishioner of St Patrick's Jordanstown, who kindly agreed to hand over all the cheques – almost 200 of them!



***Dean John Mann and special guest Claire McCollum with two of the charities to receive grants at the Good Samaritans' Service, Karen Dunlop, left, of Habitat for Humanity, and Christopher McFerran, right, representing the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen Families Association.***

Practically every charity to receive an award was present as well as many visitors and guests, and all were welcomed by the Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev John Mann, who staged his fourth Black Santa Sitout on the steps of the Cathedral before Christmas.

“This is an occasion for celebration,” the Dean said. “Throughout the Black Santa Sitout the emphasis is very much on the people who give

the money which comes from lots of sources in small and large amounts.

“Today as we distribute £186,000 there is a sense of moving from recognising the giver to those who use the money and do a huge amount of work in our city and province. I am delighted to see so many people here.”

Cheques were presented to charities working with children and young people, groups serving the community, charities supporting families, international groups and organisations working in medical research and support.

After the presentations, Claire paid tribute to the work of the charities. She said she had last been in the Cathedral at an event the night before Dean Mann began his Sitout in December. “Little did I know I would be back here to see the journey completed,” Claire said.

“In my line of work I get to look in on some very special events, and today is another example of the fantastic good news stories we have here in Northern Ireland. I know the money handed out will be put to good use.”

## **Mothers' Union support for Marriage Week 2015**

This month, as part of Marriage Week Mothers' Union groups across the UK will be celebrating marriage and the benefit it brings to couples, to the wider family and to all of us. Marriage is known to make couples happier, healthier and bring financial stability. But it is romance, rather than research, that brings couples together, a loving relationship that the couple desire to take on to be a life-long flourishing relationship.

In an increasingly “pick and mix” world of free choice and fewer social constraints or judgemental behaviour than in previous generations, Marriage remains a popular life choice in the UK – 262,240 couples married in 2012\* (last published statistics), an increase of 5.3%. And this reflects not just a choice of those couple with faith – only 30% of marriages in the UK are religious, with many couples now choosing to marry in a civil marriage in places such as hotels or historic buildings.

***Why is it that marriage remains so popular, and what is it about that way of expressing relationship that is so beneficial to society?***

Research by relationship experts has demonstrated that the benefits of a supportive marriage (and conversely the costs of an unsupported one) can be very great indeed . A supportive marriage can bring years of satisfying interactions and a sense of personal effectiveness and security; an unsupporting marriage can bring extreme loneliness, resentment and insecurity.

We all love LOVE, the romance, that sense of oneness with another human being that is so celebrated in the marriage service in the Christian Church when two become one, each part of the whole that is the instituted relationship. That love and commitment lay down important foundations for life-long support. The social support within that relationship brings what relationship scientists identify as “basic needs” – approval, esteem, succour. It is through a committed married relationship that we gain a sense of security and safety, which brings well-being. In times of trouble or stress couples benefit from each other’s guidance, affirmation and unconditional support. The liturgists knew what they were about when they devised marriage promises that were to offer support “for better, for worse; for richer for poorer; in sickness

and in health” – because it is in these times that married couples benefit strongly from each other – and in doing so provide a supportive example for those around them.

Weddings are wonderful – if sometimes dauntingly expensive – and rightly celebrate the love and commitment of a couple starting out on their life-time relationship. But as with childbirth, the wedding is simply day one. Marriage is the real gift to couple relationships and it can be in the testing times when couples realise that the wisest decision they ever made was to commit themselves to their partner in marriage.

Mothers' Union promote marriage and support couples setting out on their married life, because we believe that not only is marriage beneficial to the couple, but to all of us. Marriage is not simply a private emotional relationship that has the potential to benefit only the individuals involved. The more happy, health and productive individual are, the more society will flourish too . Marriage – and the social support relationship it models – is good for us all.

Of course marriage is by no means the only relationship to offer unconditional support or



affirmation, trust or a sense of belonging. We all need wider relationships in which we both give and receive these relational qualities. That is why Mothers' Union seeks to support not only marriage has a vision of a world where God's love is shown through loving, respectful or flourishing relationships. But this month we encourage you to celebrate all that marriage brings – to couples and to those who see and value the interdependence of marriage as of benefit to all of us.

## **Bishop Heather Cook was suspected of being drunk at her consecration**

Bishop Heather Cook, who has been charged in connection with the death of a cyclist, was suspected of being drunk at her own consecration, according to an official Church timeline of events.

Cook hit 41-year-old cyclist Tom Palermo after driving her SUV into a bicycle lane in Baltimore on December 27 last year. She then left the scene of the accident, but returned around 20 minutes later.



Testing showed that the bishop was three times over the alcohol limit for drivers in Maryland at the time of the incident and she later confessed in court that she has an alcohol problem.

Now a timeline posted on the website of the Diocese of Maryland shows that a bishop at the lunch before her consecration in September reported her for being drunk. The entry reads: "Bishop Sutton suspects that Cook is inebriated during pre-consecration dinner and conveys concern to Presiding Bishop. Presiding Bishop indicates she will discuss with Cook. Cook consecrated a bishop."

The Presiding Bishop was Rt Rev Katharine Jefferts Schori. The entry for October reads:

"Bishop Clay Matthews from the Office of Pastoral Development for the Episcopal Church, meets with Cook. Details confidential to only the Presiding Bishop's office."

Cook had a previous conviction for drunk-driving in 2010, of which the Church's authorities were aware.

She has been released on bail of \$2.5 million and was asked to resign from her position, with the Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland saying they "agreed unanimously that you are no longer able to function effectively in the position of Bishop Suffragan given recent events".

## **Cuba to get its first Catholic church since Castro**

A remote town in western Cuba is set to be the first parish in the country to build a new church, as official government policy in the Communist nation towards religion makes a major shift.

According to CNN, a new Catholic church is set to be built in the remote town of Sandino. The new church will take two years to build and will have a capacity to accommodate 200 churchgoers.

Rev Fr Cirilo Castro told CNN that Sandino's Catholics have celebrated Mass once a week in a converted garage for many years now. The priest drives to the town every week to officiate as part of his ministerial duties to the province under whose jurisdiction the town falls. However, when the new church is completed, Fr Castro said that he will minister full-time in the town.

The diocese assured Sandino's residents that "everything is ready" for the construction of the new church.

"There is money to start, there is the construction material to start, there are the permissions to start," Bishop Jorge Enrique Serpa Pérez said.

CNN reported that most of the money that was donated for the church's construction came from the St Lawrence Catholic Church in Tampa, Florida.

"Much of Tampa's history and culture comes from Cuba," Rev Tom Morgan, St Lawrence's vicar, told CNN. "It's absolutely fantastic they are building a new church, and I hope to be able to visit one day."

Fr Morgan also hopes that the changes in the US Treasury's policies could make it possible for St Lawrence to contribute materials for the church's construction.

Religious freedom was suppressed after the 1959 revolution that brought the late Fidel Castro to power. However, since 1998, the Cuban government began easing up on its restrictions on the Catholic Church. This year, the government began approving requests for the construction of churches in the country, with the project in Sandino being the first to receive a green light.

## Media Digest

### BBC

Report on the service to consecrate the new Bishop of Burnley, says Philip North's consecration was led by the [Archbishop of York Dr John Sentamu](#) at York Minster. It states in a [churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)

break from tradition, some parts of the service were overseen by the Bishop of Chichester. Dr Sentamu said he had not led those parts of the service to "demonstrate respect" for the new bishop's views. The service saw the Rt Rev Martin Warner lead two other bishops in "laying hands" on the new bishop. The Bishop of Chichester also presided over the service's Communion, at the request of the Archbishop.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-lancashire-31085569>

### **BBC/Guard/Tel/Sun/Mail/FT**

Further reports on proposals to allow treatment to replace defective mitochondrial DNA - an IVF procedure to [stop genetic diseases being passed on to babies](#). *Sun* includes article by the Bishop of Swindon, Lee Rayfield, a member of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority since 2012. He says there are many voices in the Church urging caution - not to put the brakes on progress but to ensure we get this treatment on as sure a foundation as possible. *Telegraph* says the Chief Medical Officer, Professor Dame Sally Davies, defends the so called "three-parent baby" technique and *Guardian* says a senior MP has spoken out against the attempt by church groups to get MPs

to vote against a change in the law. Its editorial says MPs should ignore the church and vote for change.

<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/woman/health/health/6320233/Should-scientists-create-a-baby-with-three-parents.html>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/health-31069173>

<http://www.theguardian.com/science/2015/feb/02/church-groups-irresponsible-pushing-mps-against-ivf-law-change>

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/feb/02/guardian-view-mitochondrial-therapy-mps-should-vote-for-hope>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/science/science-video/11384412/Chief-Medical-Officer-defends-three-parent-baby-technique.html>

[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2937254/Cameron-set-vote-yes-three-parent-babies-Britain-country-world-approve-IVF-technique.html?](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2937254/Cameron-set-vote-yes-three-parent-babies-Britain-country-world-approve-IVF-technique.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

[ITO=1490&ns\\_mchannel=rss&ns\\_campaign=1490](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/e5ae4fb6-aad9-11e4-81bc-00144feab7de.html?siteedition=intl#axzz3Qf2cbBdG)

[http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/e5ae4fb6-aad9-11e4-81bc-00144feab7de.html?](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/e5ae4fb6-aad9-11e4-81bc-00144feab7de.html?siteedition=intl#axzz3Qf2cbBdG)

[siteedition=intl#axzz3Qf2cbBdG](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/e5ae4fb6-aad9-11e4-81bc-00144feab7de.html?siteedition=intl#axzz3Qf2cbBdG)

<http://www.theguardian.com/science/2015/feb/02/three-parent-babies-explained>

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/feb/03/three-parent-babies-families-religious-mps-vote-mitochondrial-replacement>

## **Ind**

Report that Jayne Ozanne, described as one of the Church of England's most influential evangelical campaigners, who for years believed

it was impossible to be both gay and a Christian, has announced she is gay. It states as a former member of the Archbishops' Council, Jayne Ozanne held what she called "extremely black and white" views on sexuality. Yesterday she was announced as the new director of Accepting Evangelicals, a Christian group aiming to promote "acceptance of faithful, loving same-sex partnerships".

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/jayne-ozanne-evangelical-campaigner-comes-out-10019232.html>

## **Exp**

Report that two local churches in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs and local residents joined together to raise funds to convert a run-down pub into a church. It states parishioners believed the new venue would be perfectly located to attract more people. On Sunday Stoke Methodist Church opened its doors to a new set of regulars - including many locals who used to drink in old The West End pub. The pub now consists of an altar, a community cafe, a vestry and a quiet room - where the bar, pool tables and gambling machines once stood.

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/555742/Staffordshire-pub-swaps-booze-for-Bible-by-converting-to-Methodist-church>



## **Guard/BBC**

Reports that Northern Ireland's Human Rights Commission has won its battle for a judicial review on the near outright ban on abortion in the region. A high court judge in Belfast ruled that the commission could seek a review of the abortion law in [Northern Ireland](#). Terminations are only permitted in Northern Irish hospitals if there is a direct threat to the mother's life.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/02/northern-ireland-high-court-hears-abortion-challenge-rape-incest>  
<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-31075128>

## **Guard**

Report that officials in Zhejiang province, south-east China, will reinforce a ban on admitting new Communist party members who practise religion, suggesting that a protracted crackdown on [Christianity](#) in the province will continue.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/02/chinese-communist-party-officials-crack-down-believers>

## **Obituary - Canon Michael Saward**

### **Tel**

Obituary on Canon Michael Saward, who has died aged 82. It states he was a canon of St Paul's Cathedral from 1991 to 2000 and before

that the dynamic incumbent of two London parishes, in Fulham, then Ealing. It describes him as a gifted communicator and at one time a prolific writer and broadcaster. He was also a member of a group of young clergymen who under the leadership of the Reverend John Stott revived the evangelical movement in the Church of England during the 1960s and 1970s. It mentions the media attention he received in March 1986 when he and one of his twin daughters were attacked by robbers and his daughter, Jill was raped.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/11384795/Canon-Michael-Saward-clergyman-obituary.html>