

A Shared Pilgrimage to the Great War Battlefields

A cross-community group has recently returned from a unique visit to the battlefields of the Great War 1914 – 18. It was led by the Revd Canon Dr Jonathan Barry of St Mary's Church of Ireland Comber and Revd Father Martin O'Hagan Parish Priest of St Patrick's Newtownards and Comber.

The trip, organized by local man Tom Quinn, numbered forty eight Protestants and Catholics.



affected many within the group. The expedition followed the paths of the 36th (Ulster) and the 16th (Irish) Divisions and several individuals were able to identify the last resting place of relatives they had never known.



Canon Barry (left) and Father O'Hagan with the Buglers at the Menin Gate, Ypres.

Staying in the Peace Village Hostel in the Belgium town of Messines the party toured the main sites of the terrible battles on the Somme and those around Ypres in Belgium. The experience of seeing endless military Cemeteries and relics of the terrible struggles deeply

Two inter-denominational religious services were held; one in the Catholic Church

in the village of Guillemont on the Somme and another in St George's Anglican Church in Ypres, Belgium. Ypres was totally destroyed in the course of the fighting but is now beautifully restored.

For many this town provided the most poignant experience of the whole expedition. Preceded by two Belgian

Prayer for Today

Gracious father, revive your Church in our day, and make her holy, strong and faithful, for your glory's sake in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Common Worship Shorter Collect.

policemen and a piper Fr O'Hagan and Canon Barry led the group through the main street to the Menin Gate. This ceremonial arch bears the names of fifty five thousand soldiers who were killed around Ypres and whose bodies were never found. Each evening for the past eighty five years the buglers of the local Fire Brigade have sounded the last post.

Beneath the gate Canon Barry led the prayers and Fr O'Hagan sang Abide with Me – beautifully. Several hundred spectators listened in rapt and respectful silence.

This was a moving and fitting finale to a truly memorable experience which would not have been possible without the support of Ards Borough Council and the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

Magical Narnia comes to St Mark's

As Belfast remembers one of its famous sons on the fiftieth anniversary of his death, St Mark's Dundela has been celebrating its strong C S Lewis connections.

This week, The Heyn Hall has been transformed into the magical land of Narnia and by the weekend about 500 children (from Strandtown Primary) will have enjoyed 'The Narnia Schools Experience' with Revd Adrian Dorrian and Julie Currie.

Entering through the wardrobe, past the fur coats and into a snowy world where it's 'Always winter but never Christmas', the interactive Narnia experience walks the schoolchildren through C S Lewis' 'The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe'. They visit Mr and Mrs Beaver's home, meet Mr Tumnus and Aslan and, passing the stone table, end their journey in Cair Paravel. The children also have a chance to see the model of Narnia made by the

Hollywood Dolls House and Miniatures Enthusiasts (represented by parishioner Marion Young) and to crown the 90 minutes, everyone gets some juice, a specially made lion-shaped biscuit and as they leave, a piece of Turkish Delight.

'It has taken a lot of work to put together,' says Adrian, 'but we're specially grateful for the help given by both Ashfield Boys' and Ashfield Girls' High Schools. The boys made the stone t



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and some of the girls have made us a beautiful wall hanging which we get to keep. We're really enjoying walking the children through the story and in a small way, sharing the Gospel message through it.'

The Narnia Experience is open to the public today Saturday 16 November and we believe that The White Witch will make an appearance!

Earlier, on Sunday evening 10 November, over 200 people gathered in the church to hear the guest speaker and C S Lewis biographer, Professor Alister McGrath. Professor McGrath, also from Belfast, is an eminent theologian, intellectual historian, priest and Christian apologist.

He spoke for about half an hour on the Irish character of C S Lewis, and made a point of saying that we should claim Lewis as an Irish writer (since many assume he's English) especially as he always regarded Belfast as his home.



Professor McGrath also gave two excellent lectures at 'The Hub' at Queens University Belfast.

Two more events complete the celebrations:

He's the King, I tell you: CS Lewis Celebration Service

Sunday 24 November at 6.30 pm in St Mark's Church

On the Feast of Christ the King, a Service with selected readings from the works of CS Lewis, interspersed with hymns and prayers. St Mark's Choir will sing the specially commissioned piece 'From Darkness to Light', a musical setting of words from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Representatives from the local community will take part in this service.

Space, Science and CS Lewis

Monday 25 November at 8.00 pm in St Mark's Church

Professor Stephen Williams, Union Theological College Belfast, presents a Lecture on CS Lewis' Cosmic Trilogy, in which the author forays into science fiction.

Being with Christians from all over the world 'inspirational'



The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, has arrived home from Busan, Republic of Korea, where he was attending the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

The Bishop was one of 3,000 delegates. He was asked to attend by the Standing Committee of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland, as nominated by the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue.

During the Assembly, Bishop Alan was elected to the WCC Central Committee to represent the Church of Ireland.

Following a rest after his arrival back in Belfast, **Bishop Alan writes:**

The journey home was long but every flight was on time. Busan to Japan, Japan to Paris, Paris to Dublin and then home. It was wonderful to be home again after the long journey and so far from home. Thank

you for your prayers and for journeying mercies.

It was a privilege to have been in Busan for the 10th WCC Assembly. The inspiration of being with Christians from all over the world, to worship, study and share friendship together was very special. To be disturbed by some of their stories living the faith in some very difficult circumstances. To be challenged to recommit myself to work and pray for the unity of Christ's church for which he prayed.

I had my first WCC Central Committee meeting on the last evening of the Assembly and it took a few hours to elect the new executive committee. We meet again in July in Geneva and it will be intriguing to discuss this conference and see how they want to live out the faith.

Student Ordinands Licensed

Eight student ordinands were commissioned as student readers in the Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough by Archbishop Michael Jackson in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute on Wednesday evening this week.

Jim Cheshire (Down and Dromore), Denis Christie (Down and Dromore), David Compton (Cork, Cloyne and Ross), Suzanne Cousins (Down and Dromore), Raymond Kettle (Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh), Chris McBruthin (Derry and Raphoe), Scott McDonald (Connor) and Peter Smith (Down and Dromore) were presented for licensing by the Director of the Institute, Revd Dr Maurice Elliott and Lecturer in Missiology, the Revd Dr Patrick McGlinchey.

In his sermon the Archbishop said there were three things at the heart of the evening's commissioning: God, the individual and the community.



Student ordinands were commissioned as student readers

He said: "God is the sender and the sent. There is no mission which is not the mission of God and there is no ministry which is not the ministry of God". The individual, he said, received and carried responsibility and opportunity – a "double gifting" which flowed directly from discipleship.

The Archbishop described the community as the place where the individual lived and served.

"Too much of our understanding of community, particularly in places of theological formation and training, is comfortably settled and potentially static.

"The community of which Jesus was a part seems fluid and constantly to have been changing. The danger of settled community is that it might just prepare us insufficiently for versatile and fluid community; we might get the shock of our lives on the other side of the barrier down by the entrance!," he said.

Archbishop launches appeal as food banks struggle to meet demand

For the first time since he became Archbishop of Dublin almost 10 years ago, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin has launched a food appeal for Dublin families who are struggling to cope this winter. The Dublin Diocesan-Crosscare food appeal will take place over the four weeks of Advent, beginning on 1 December.

Archbishop Martin launched the appeal today, on the feast day of St Laurence O'Toole, one of Dublin's first archbishops, in response to a request from Crosscare. The Crosscare food bank is struggling to cope with demand for basic food items, from families and charities around the city.

At Mass in the Pro-Cathedral on Thursday morning, Archbishop Martin said: "None of us should be satisfied that we really see the poverty around us." He added: "We can so easily get caught up in our own concerns, placing them first, that we do not notice that our sight has become blurred towards poverty and suffering. The poor rarely clamour. They just try to survive. When they cry out, the ears of the mainstream may well be too distracted to hear them."

Last week, the Food Bank had requests for food from 120 individuals and families in one community. They were only in a position to give parcels to 40.

At the current rate, Crosscare will distribute 750 tonnes of food by the end of this year. The figure for 2012 was 500 tonnes.

They need urgent help sourcing food supplies or more people could be turned away in the coming weeks.

Crosscare supplies food directly to those who need it, and also to 10 charities working to help people who are marginalised, excluded or living in poverty, including the St Vincent de Paul.

In response to this need, Archbishop Martin said he was asking all Dublin parishes to help collect food for the food bank over the four weeks of Advent. Parishioners will be able to bring food supplies to their local parish at weekend Mass times. Crosscare will collect and redistribute the food every Monday and Tuesday.

Types of food urgently needed include pasta/rice, fruit juice, tea/coffee, soup, sugar, powdered milk, tinned meat/fish, tinned veg/fruit, packaged dessert, biscuits, and hygiene products.

For more information see:
www.crosscare.ie

A full copy of the homily is available here:
www.dublindiocese.ie

Church mourns renowned Bible scholar Fr Jerome Murphy-O'Connor

Dominican Fr Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, acknowledged as one of the world's foremost scholars of the New Testament, particularly the writings of St Paul, died in the early hours of Monday in Jerusalem, a city where he had spent more than 45 years of his life. He was 78.

Catholic Herald - Fr Gregory Carroll, provincial of the Irish Dominicans, described Fr Murphy-O'Connor – a cousin of Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor – as a man who "never forgot his roots" and as "a colossus" in the world of Scripture study. "He loved nothing more than coming back to West Cork to spend time with his family and always made sure to visit his

Dominican brothers while he was in Ireland, too,” Fr Carroll said.

Born in Cork, Ireland, in 1935, he entered the Irish province of the Dominican order in September 1953 and was ordained a priest July 10, 1960. Born James, he chose “Jerome” as his name in religious life – an apt choice since St Jerome is the patron of students of the Bible.

Fr Murphy-O'Connor received his doctorate from the University of Fribourg, Switzerland in 1962, and a year later began doing research on the Dead Sea Scrolls at the universities of Heidelberg and Tübingen, Germany.

From there, he went to Jerusalem to the Dominican-run Ecole Biblique, the French Biblical and Archaeological School of Jerusalem, which was to become his religious, scholarly and personal home for the rest of his life. He was appointed professor of the New Testament there in 1972.

He wrote a highly acclaimed guide to the Holy Land, which was published in 1980 and translated into numerous languages; and he was as comfortable leading pilgrims around the Holy Land as he was in the lecture hall.

Fellow biblical scholars paid tribute to Fr Murphy-O'Connor. “Not only was he a fine scholar, but he was also a kind-spirited, sweet-natured and generous human being, who always had time for people,” said Mark Goodacre, professor of New Testament and Christian origins at Duke University, Durham, NC.

He was a “gifted writer, whose prose was always lucid and lively,” Goodacre added. “His scholarly insights were fascinating, even surprising, like his suggestion that St Paul’s wife died in a house fire, or that the Galatians may well have had extraordinarily large moustaches.”

James F McGrath, the Clarence L Goodwin chair in New Testament language and literature at Butler University, Indianapolis, described Father Murphy-O'Connor as “a remarkably insightful scholar, capable of being very traditional and/or very creative in trying to make the best possible sense of the evidence.”

Fr Murphy-O'Connor was frequently in demand as a guest lecturer at universities around the world. However, he never lost the sense that the Scriptures should be accessible to all, and he revelled in contributing articles to newspapers and magazines as well as being a panelist on radio and television programmes. Fr Murphy-O'Connor was buried in the Holy Land on Wednesday and a service was held for his family and friends in Cork.

Organ restoration marks 150th anniversary of Lurgan church

The newly refurbished organ at Shankill Parish Church was back in use for a special service on Friday, November 15 to mark the 150th anniversary of the church.

Lurgan Mail - Together with the church the Walker organ dates back to 1863 when the present building replaced the original church which first occupied the site in 1725.

The organ has been restored at a cost of just over £170,000. A comparable new organ would cost over £1million.

Commenting before the service, Rev Geoff Wilson told the ‘MAIL’: “The work on the organ will be finished this Friday, but the organ still has to be tuned and voiced.

“The service on Friday, November 15 will be the first time the organ has been played since Easter.”

The service will celebrate the church's 150th anniversary as well as a significant restoration.

"To have the organ filling the church with sound as it leads people in worship is just the most wonderful feeling," said Rev Wilson.

Bishop Right Rev Harold Millar will rededicate the organ at the beginning of the service before it is played.

He will also unveil a memorial to parishioners who have passed away, the

appointed to the Andreas Idreos Professorship of Science and Religion in the Faculty of Theology and Religion with effect from 1 April 2014.

Belfastman, Professor McGrath is currently Professor of Theology, Ministry and Education, and Head, Centre for Theology, Religion and Culture, Department of Education and Professional Studies, King's College, London, as well as Senior Research Fellow, Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford. Professor McGrath will be a fellow of Harris Manchester College.



creation of which helped raise £100,000 towards the organ restoration.

At the opening of the 'new' church in 1863, James Malcolm, ancestor of the church historian Sammy Malcolm, presented the Walker organ to the church.

It was a night of celebration in the town with the Christmas lights being switched on earlier in the evening followed by the service in Shankill Parish.

Oxford post for Belfast academic

The Faculty of Theology at Oxford has announced that Alister E. McGrath (BA BA BD MA DPhil DD DLitt Oxf) has been

Churchnewsireland@gmail.com

Link with Philipino Church 'hosting 2000 survivors'

At Belfast City Hall this week when a book of condolences was opened was Father Eddie Creamer, a west Belfast priest who spent 18 years in the Philippines.

The 74-year-old priest said that he had previously worked for a week in a Redemptorist church in Tacloban, and had been in touch with it since the storm. During the typhoon the community centre had been used as a shelter, but he said its roof had blown off.

At present, the church – which he said was about the size of St Anne's Cathedral – is hosting about 2,000 survivors of the disaster. Yesterday he was trying to find out details of Belfast Filipinos' family members back in Tacloban.

He said: "For the authorities, a main problem is finding the dead and burying them." He added that, in the [Philippines](#), burial often occurs the same day as death due to the high temperature, which he said would be about 30 degrees Celsius at the moment.

