



Archbishop Micheal Jackson and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin lead the closing prayers during the National Day of Commemoration Ceremony.

All faiths mark National commemoration of Irish service

The annual National Day of Commemoration Ceremony, to honour all those Irishmen and Irishwomen who died in past wars or on service with the United Nations, was held in the Royal

Hospital Kilmainham, Dublin, today. Ceremonies also took place at six locations across Ireland.

The ceremony in Dublin was attended by the President, the Taoiseach, the Government and the Council of State, as well as members of Dáil and Seanad Éireann, the Diplomatic Corps, the Judiciary and Northern Ireland representatives.

The next-of-kin of those who died in past wars or on UN service and a wide cross-section of the community including ex-servicemen's organisations, as well as relatives of the 1916 Leaders, were also invited.

During the ceremony there was a multi faith commemoration involving a representative of the Jewish community in Ireland, Rabbi Zalman Lent; the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Revd Dr Diarmuid Martin ; the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson; the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Revd Brian Anderson; a representative of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ireland, the Revd Fr Mikhail Nasonov; the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Rt Revd Dr Ian McNie; and the Imam at the Islamic Cultural Centre, Imam Sheikh Hussein Halawa.

Rabbi Zalman Lent prayed for the ‘valiant and upright’ men and women, and spoke of the sacrifice of those who served fought for justice freedom and the dignity of the human race.

He prayed: “May God grant peace in the land enjoyed by its inhabitants, spread harmony unity and healing between nations.”

The Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland Archbishops of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin and Michael Jackson, took the podium together.

They remembered and honoured all those Irish men and women who gave their lives in past wars and in service of the UN, and prayed for loved ones.

Archbishop Martin prayed “for peace in our world, for a future where enmity injustice and division are healed and the horrors of war are no more.”

Rev Brian Anderson, President of Methodist Church in Ireland, said that everyone was gathered to remember individuals “and in doing so express a nation’s thankfulness for those who laid down their lives in the service of this nation to give us the freedom we live in today.

Rector of Russian Orthodox Church in Ireland Mikhail Nasonov chanted his prayer that God give rest to the souls who have fallen asleep in a place of peace.

The Right Rev Dr Ian McNie, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland read from Ephesians and referred to putting on the full armour of God and a readiness that comes from gospel of peace.

Sheikh Hussein Halawa, Iman of the Islamic Cultural Centre chanted his prayer and in English prayed: “Our lord wipe away every tear and relieve us every from fear” and “permit your guidance to be revered all over the world” and that this country and its people would be saved from all the evil.

The President laid a wreath on behalf of the people of Ireland in honour of all Irishmen and Irishwomen who died in past wars or on service with the United Nations.

Music was provided by soloist Cara O’Sullivan and the Army No 1 Band.

The ceremony concluded with the National Anthem and a flyover of the quadrangle by the Air Force.

Regional Commemoration Ceremonies also took place in:

Fitzgerald's Park, Mardyke, Cork

Galway's National University of Ireland

Kilkenny Castle, Kilkenny

Limerick City & County Council, Merchants Quay, Limerick

Sligo County Council, City Hall, Quay Street, Sligo

John Condon Memorial, Cathedral Square, Waterford

Rugby World Cup church resources launched

From this September, the UK hosts the Rugby World Cup, which is the world's third-largest sports event behind the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup. The UK will host 20 international rugby teams and matches at 13 locations across the UK, with three in London, at the Olympic Park, and the Wembley and Twickenham stadiums.

As part of Capital Vision, we engage more closely with sport and the Rugby body set up to get churches involved with the World Cup, [Engage 2015](#), has launched resources entitled



‘Game Of Life’. This pack consists of a Luke’s Gospel & Acts Bible, with a DVD of short video testimonies by Christian players including England powerhouse Billy Vunipola and South African legend Ruan Pienaar.

The pack includes a step-by-step guide to organising Rugby-themed events, such as a partnership with a local rugby club, an event based around a live televised game with a rugby-related speaker, and a World Cup Breakfast. Also included is everything for a rugby-focused sports quiz, provided by Christians in Sport, downloads from Scripture Union and a host of other features. The pack is free with users paying postage and is available from the [Game of Life](http://gameofliferesource.co.uk/) website.

[#GameOfLife http://gameofliferesource.co.uk/](http://gameofliferesource.co.uk/)

Bishops' Appeal Allocations

At its recent meeting, Bishops' Appeal, which is the Church of Ireland's principal vehicle for supporting the developing world, was delighted to be able to allocate substantial funding to a Christian Aid project in South Africa that focuses on highlighting the injustices around the mining industry that has caused radiation levels higher than Chernobyl and off the chart toxicities in the water for many poor communities.

Bishops' Appeal also funded a South American Missionary Society project in Paraguay that allows many families in several villages to take up bee keeping and honey making as both a nutritional and income generating initiative, and two more boreholes for Fields of Life in Uganda which allows up to 4,000 people access to fresh, safe drinking water. A further water and sanitation project was supported through Habitat for Humanity Northern Ireland where water harvesting and potable water projects will be instigated in Cambodia, and a donation was made to a School for the Deaf in Beirut.

At the time of the meeting, donations for the Nepal Appeal had reached €42,600 and £11,700. Funds have been released through Christian Aid

and Tearfund for their ongoing relief and rehabilitation work among those most affected by the earthquake.

Diocese criticises political collections at church gates

The Diocese of Elphin has questioned why some political parties are fundraising at local church gates despite advocating policies which undermine marriage and protection of the unborn.

In a statement posted on Elphin's Facebook page, the West of Ireland diocese suggested that those political parties which have "consistently advocated policies and introduced legislation which undermine marriage and the right to life of the unborn" should think again before holding church gate collections.

In the statement, the diocese which is led by Bishop Kevin Doran said, "There is no obligation on any political party to support the Church, and certainly not to legislate in accordance with Church teaching."

The statement continued, "It does seem rather lacking in respect for people's faith, however, that political parties which have consistently

advocated policies and introduced legislation which undermine marriage and the right to life of the unborn, should turn up outside our Church gates, Sunday after Sunday to ask Mass-goers to fund their activities.”

Acknowledging that political parties are legally entitled to do so, the diocese has suggested that “common decency would suggest that they go and collect somewhere else”.

Muslim who praised Islamic State is main witness against pastor James McConnell

A Muslim who claimed Islamic State had been a positive force in Mosul in Iraq is the main prosecution witness against an elderly Christian preacher who said in a sermon that Islam was "heathen" and "satanic".

Dr Raied Al-Wazzan, of the Belfast Islamic Centre, later withdrew the comments he made praising the work of Islamic State in Mosul, where only a few days ago four children were killed when another ancient church was blown up by the jihad terror group.



Pastor James McConnell says he has no regrets about what he said.

Pastor James McConnell, aged 78, has been charged under the 2003 Communications Act with "sending, or causing to be sent, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that was grossly offensive." He faces up to six months in prison if convicted for the sermon preached last year and streamed online, in which he said: "Islam is heathen, Islam is Satanic, Islam is a doctrine spawned in Hell."

In legal documents seen by the Belfast Telegraph, Dr Al-Wazzan says in a statement to

the Police Service of Northern Ireland that the pastor's comments were "terrible", "sweeping" and "offensive and disgusting". He says many Muslims in Northern Ireland are professionals, while by contrast, the pastor's congregation may include "impressionable, uneducated people".

Dr Al-Wazzan did not hear the sermon but became aware of it two days later when the Belfast Telegraph asked him for a comment.

The revelations that he is to be a prosecution witness come months after he defended Islamic State on the BBC.

Speaking about Mosul, Iraq's second city, Dr Al-Wazzan said on Radio Ulster in January: "Since the Islamic State took over, it has become the most peaceful city in the world." He added: "Yes, there are other things going wrong there... they are murdering people, I agree, but you can go from east to west of the city without fear."

After his comments led to widespread outrage, he withdrew them.

"I used the wrong words and I apologise for that," he said. He said he realised he had "offended many people" and added: "I condemn all kinds of violence."

McConnell told the Belfast Telegraph: "A man who praised the rule in Iraq of Isis murderers will be giving evidence against me - it's like a pantomime. I don't know how he will have the nerve to stand in a court and testify against me, and I don't know how the PPS has the nerve to think he is in a position morally to do that."

McConnell's lawyer Joe Rice said: "There are many bizarre features to this prosecution. We have now served our voluntary defence statement upon the court and the PPS. We expect the PPS to release additional and new information which may lead us to lodge an abuse of process application in the near future."

Northern Ireland's Public Prosecution Service had previously offered McConnell an "informed warning" for the offence, which he refused. A PPS spokesman said: "This case is now before the court and it is for the judge to decide on all evidential matters. It would be inappropriate for the PPS to make any further comment at this point."

The case expected to be heard in December.

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Streetreach in north Belfast



The Streetreach team ready for action in north Belfast.

Around 40 young people from Connor Diocese spent three days in the Glencairn and Whiterock areas, sharing God's love through a wide variety of activities.

These included gardening, street cleaning, a community carnival, Victorian tea for the elderly and a community barbecue.

Zara Genoe and Sharon Hamill, co-chairs of Engage Connor Youth, the youth council for the

C of I diocese, said: “Ultimately this opportunity sought to bring God’s love and share his joy on the streets of north Belfast.”

Liberian churches honoured for their services during Ebola outbreak

Prayers and action undertaken by the Liberian Council of Churches (LCC) during the Ebola outbreak of 2014-2015 will be honored by the Liberian government with distinction of “Commander, Order of the Star of Africa.”

The distinction will be conferred upon the LCC in an official ceremony on July 17.

In a congratulatory message, the World Council of Churches (WCC) acting general secretary Georges Lemopoulos called the Liberian churches’ efforts “a sign of hope in the midst of the Ebola crisis.”

The LCC, which includes member churches of the WCC in Liberia, has been actively engaged in providing preventive awareness, contact tracing, food and material relief, medical supplies including personal protective gear to the affected communities during the Ebola crisis. A number of LCC affiliated partners ran health

centers that provided immediate medical relief aid to Ebola victims.

“We are very aware of your advocacy, your coordination of member churches, your practical efforts and your witness of prayer during this deeply traumatic time for your country. We are proud to be a partner through accompaniment and celebrate this distinction being given to you,” said Lemopoulos in his letter addressed to the Rev. Kortu K. Brown, acting president of the LCC.

Lemopoulos added, “Your witness in this crisis has been an inspiration to the ecumenical movement beyond your country, a testimony to what can be accomplished as churches and ecumenical organizations working together in a time of need to serve those who suffer and are in fear.”

Eight major religious groups in US prohibit same-sex marriage

Eight of the largest religious institutions in the United States oppose same-sex marriage, which was recently legalised by the Supreme Court nationwide.



A protester, angry with the US Supreme Court's decision last month that the US Constitution provides same-sex couples the right to wed, carries a sign in front of the court building in Washington on June 29, 2015.

According to a recent study by Pew Research Center, the major religious groups in America that prohibit gay marriages include American Baptist Churches, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon), Islam, and Roman Catholicism.

Other religion institutions that do not allow unions between individuals of the same sexes

are Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Orthodox Jewish Movement, Southern Baptist Convention and the United Methodist Church.

In a statement the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the fourth largest Christian denomination in the US, acknowledged the Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriage but maintained it does not approve of such unions.

"The Court's decision does not alter the Lord's doctrine that marriage is a union between a man and a woman ordained by God," the Christian church said.

It also stressed that families with a mother and a father are the "anchor of society."

"While showing respect for those who think differently, the Church will continue to teach and promote marriage between a man and a woman as a central part of our doctrine and practice," the church said.

For Muslims, meanwhile, marriage is strictly "a contract between a man and a woman in which the man provides the woman with financial support in return for exclusive sexual access."

There were past attempts within the United Methodist Church to change their Book of

Discipline to allow same-sex marriage, but its faithful rejected the move in a General Conference in 2012.

The religious groups that allow same-sex marriage, meanwhile, include the Conservative Jewish Movement, the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Reform Jewish Movement, the Society of Friends, the United Church of Christ, and the Unitarian Universalist Association of Churches.

Media digest

Ind/Mail/ibTimes/Tel/BBC

Further reports on comments made by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, at a private meeting at Lambeth Palace last week with survivors of church-related abuse. They state Justin Welby said he wants the Church to be reviewed first by the independent inquiry led by Justice Lowell Goddard which is expected to last five years. Papers also quote the Bishop of Durham, Paul Butler, and refer to details of a new range safeguarding legislation voted through by Synod this weekend.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-33495726>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/incoming/archbishop-of-canterbury-promises-inquiry-into->

churchnewsireland@gmail.com

[church-sex-abuse-to-survivors-in-private-meeting-this-week-10383234.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3158326/Church-England-brings-powers-defrock-vicars-guilty-sex-abuse-crimes.html#ixzz3fiLkH4GU)

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3158326/Church-England-brings-powers-defrock-vicars-guilty-sex-abuse-crimes.html#ixzz3fiLkH4GU>

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/child-sexual-abuse-archbishop-canterbury-promises-survivors-church-england-will-investigate-1510473>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11735289/Church-of-England-could-return-to-defrocking-rogue-priests-after-child-abuse-scandals.html>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/anglican-church-could-bring-back-the-power-to-defrock-priests-because-of-sexual-abuse-of-children-10384247.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-33495726>

Times

Report on General Synod presentation from Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns and subsequent debate quoting the Bishop of Chelmsford, Stephen Cottrell, who said the Church may not be guilty of racism but there is racism within the church and that there were fewer “minority ethnic” members now than there were 20 to 25 years ago making the church guilty of “complacency and neglect”.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article4496006.ece>

Guard

Report on a survey on Credit Unions says three times as many consumers have turned to payday loans or doorstep lenders rather than credit unions, despite considering the high-cost borrowing rates to be worse value for money. The research showed one in 20 people surveyed said they had taken short-term loans from payday firms, while the same proportion had borrowed from doorstep lenders to make ends meet. In contrast, just 3% had used credit unions. It states borrowing from credit unions is normally far cheaper than from a commercial lender, and in 2013 the Archbishop of Canterbury said he wanted to compete Wonga out of existence by offering loans through a church credit union.

<http://www.theguardian.com/money/2015/jul/13/credit-unions-good-value-money-access-survey>

Ind

Article on how before becoming a Church of England vicar and radio presenter, Rev Richard Coles spent more money than he can remember on drugs. It states in an interview with *The Telegraph*, the Radio 4 presenter spoke about

how much his drug-taking youth cost him. It says he explained how he came to turn his life around after he was on the Tube one morning after being out for three days and not remembering where he'd been.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/news/reverend-richard-coles-admits-to-spending-more-than-a-clergyman-should-on-drugs-10383313.html>

Guard

Article on the former HSBC chairman, [Lord Green](#) being questioned over leaked HSBC files earlier this year. It states Green has so far eluded any serious questioning on money laundering and tax evasion at the bank, but that Labour peer Clive Hollick, chair of the upper house's economic affairs committee, has invited him to speak at a session on banking culture on Tuesday. It quotes Lord Green, stating he is also a Church of England minister and saying he will not comment on the business of HSBC, past or present.

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/jul/12/lord-green-cant-get-out-hsbc-grilling>

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