

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Titanic code

Image of the day

The message of the Titanic benches

Ever noticed the different sized benches that surround the Belfast building?

The benches are actually spaced in Morse code sequence. Moving clockwise around the plaza they read “DE (this is) MGY MGY MGY (Titanic’s call sign) CQD CQD SOS SOS CQD”. This was the distress message that Titanic sent after hitting the iceberg.

Find out more interesting facts just like this on the guided Discovery Tour <https://bit.ly/3roIKH5>

People and places

Church seeks advice after Belfast paper refuses to publish advert

Archbishop Eamon Martin writes on behalf of Northern Bishops to the Northern Ireland Equality Commission over treatment by the Belfast Telegraph

The Archbishop of Armagh, Archbishop Eamon Martin, has written to the Northern Ireland Equality Commission seeking its advice and comment over the refusal of the Belfast Telegraph newspaper to publish, as a paid advertisement,



CUE Choral Ambassadors at St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin

YouthCUE present the CUE Choral Ambassadors in a stunning FREE performance on Sunday 31 July at 8pm! Your tickets are on the house, but do make sure you arrive early for doors at 7.30pm to avoid disappointment.

the recent statement of the Catholic Northern Bishops in advance of the NI Assembly elections on 2 May 2022. Despite having accepted full payment for the requested statement to be published as an advertisement, the newspaper would not publish the statement unless the bishops made changes to their comments on abortion. The bishops refused to accept this, withdrew their request and asked for their money back. The bishops are now seeking advice over the implications of the newspaper's decision for the right to religious freedom and equality of treatment for

people of faith when accessing services from a commercial organisation.

As details of the letter to the Equality Commission were made public, Archbishop Martin commented, “A commercial newspaper, the Belfast Telegraph, accepted full payment for a service it is obliged to make available to all, on the basis of equal access and equal respect for their religious view. Our advertisement contained the established and widely published position of the Catholic Church on a range of issues. But the paper subsequently refused to publish the advertisement unless the bishops changed what they said about abortion, to the satisfaction of the editor. The refusal to carry the advertisement raises fundamental questions about the equal access of religious groups and people of faith to such commercial services.”

Noting that that another newspaper, The Irish News, carried the advertisement without amendment, Archbishop Martin continued, “From our point of view the situation is a fairly straightforward case of a religious organisation having been refused a commercial service, after payment had been taken, unless the religious organisation was willing to change how its religious message was expressed. We believe it would be helpful for all parties, as well as for other faith groups who may wish to seek a similar commercial service in the future, for us to seek clarification and advice from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and others about the situation that has arisen. We will consider our next steps when we have received this advice.”

On 2nd May Archbishop Eamon aired his frustration about the issue on Twitter.

July 30, 2022

Organ Recitals - appreciation from St Columb's Cathedral, Derry

Thanks to all for the wonderful support for our inaugural Organ Recital series. Over 350 people came to hear great performances from Tristan Russcher, Jack Wilson, Nicky Morton and Derek Collins. Great to see so much interest in the organ. Looking forward to seeing you all in July 2023.



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The Belfast Telegraph responded in an article saying it stands by its decision and did not attempt to change the Church's stance on abortion.

It said in a statement on 2nd May: "All advertising containing uncontested opinion and views, especially ahead of an election, is subject to review before publishing. We are subject to regulation by the Advertising Standards Authority.

July 30, 2022

"We are surprised that Archbishop Martin took to Twitter to highlight this rather than speak directly to us.

"The suggested edits did not alter the Church's core anti-abortion message."

The Belfast Telegraph told Premier it has nothing to add to its 2nd May statement.

The full text of the letter from Archbishop Martin to Dr Evelyn Collins, Chief Executive of the Equality Commission NI, is provided below.

Dear Dr Collins,

I am writing to you on behalf of my colleagues, the Northern Catholic Bishops, inviting the comment and advice of the Equality Commission on issues we believe are of fundamental importance to equality of treatment and respect for religious freedom, arising from a request we made to the Belfast Telegraph to carry, as a paid advertisement, our widely published pre-NI Assembly election pastoral reflection, Make Your Voices Heard.

As you will see from the attached correspondence, the Belfast Telegraph initially accepted full payment for the requested advertisement, only to subsequently refuse to carry it unless a number of amendments to the long-established religious opinion held by the Catholic Church, in the statement, were made to the satisfaction of the newspaper's editor. When we refused to make the requested changes to our religious opinion, to accommodate the opinion of the editor, our payment was



Ordinand experiencing church life in Egypt

Timothy Eldon, a second-year Ordinand studying at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute (CITI) in Dublin is presently in Egypt. He is originally from Drumcree Parish in the Diocese of Armagh. Timothy is spending around 6 weeks with CMSI partners in the Province of Alexandria (Egypt) from mid-July through to the end of August. He is based in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria and will gain a variety of experience under the direction of Dean David Aziz at the Cathedral there.

returned. It is important to note that another newspaper, The Irish News, did accept and publish the advertisement, without amendment.

We understand that it is not within the remit of the Equality Commission to pursue legal cases on behalf of groups, as opposed to individuals, and we wish to make it clear that, while we are seeking our own legal advice on the issues concerned, this is not our purpose in writing to you.

Rather, given the fundamental nature of the human rights and equality issues this case has given rise to, as well as its wider implications for the participation of faith-based groups in public life and the right of faith-based groups to fair and equal access to commercial services, we would ask if the Equality Commission could offer its comment and/or advice on the following questions specifically:

1. Do you agree that commercial organisations providing paid advertising services have an obligation to offer those services to individuals, and groups, on the basis of equality and without discrimination on the basis of the religious views of the individual or group seeking these services?
2. What guidance does, or can the Equality Commission offer, to commercial organisations providing advertising services in respect to refusing to carry such advertisements on the basis of the religious opinion expressed, where such an advertisement satisfies all other statutory advertising requirements?

We believe there are many in the Catholic community, and in other faith-based communities, who are deeply concerned about the decision of the Belfast Telegraph to refuse to carry our paid-for advertisement without amendment. On the face of it, it would appear we were refused a commercial service on the basis of our well-established, and widely published, religious opinion. For this reason, we believe it is important

July 30, 2022

that we engage the various statutory agencies with a responsibility for providing guidance to commercial and public bodies on such matters, in a public discussion on the principles and rights involved. To that end, it is our intention to make it public that we are seeking the comment and advice of the Equality Commission on the situation that has arisen.

If you believe it would be helpful at any point to meet with me and some of our representatives to discuss the issues and circumstances giving rise to them, in more detail, please do not hesitate to let me know.

With every good wish,
Yours sincerely,

+Eamon Martin
Archbishop of Armagh

Lambeth focus

Australia - Lambeth a joy, but heat of disagreement expected

As Anglican bishops from around the world gather at Lambeth Conference, each of Melbourne's Assistant Bishops will be providing reflections on the event. Here Bishop Paul Barker writing in The Melbourne Anglican reflects on his experience a few days into the conference.



Bishops gather at Canterbury for an opening retreat. The Archbishop of Armagh meets a colleague

A friend said that for me, Lambeth is all my friends in the same place. Not quite true, but I delighted catching up over dinner with Bishop

Evariste of Burundi, whom I met a few years ago, whose poor, rural diocese is quite new and who labours without many resources and very little in theological education.

He's a wonderful person and a joy to be with. The joy continued with the next day's dinner with a gentle and courageous friend of several years, Humphrey Peters, bishop of Peshawar in Pakistan where extremist attacks against Christians and churches continue. In between, there was lunch with some of my Myanmar episcopal friends



where I have taught so many times and whose country is being terrorised by a ghastly military junta. There's joy renewing friendships with Sabahan bishops, John and Melter, Danald from Sarawak, and meeting Bishop Jun from North Luzon, Philippines, with whom we are considering a formal link diocese. So far, Lambeth is like a great party, so many friends from my past ministry in Asia.

I came to Lambeth not quite knowing what to expect, but determined to make the most of the occasion. And that means people, encouraging and being encouraged by godly, humble people, serving in tougher places than the Jumbunna Episcopate. It means people who have been friends already and people whom I am meeting for the first time. At the same time, it is tiring and daunting for introverts like me. There are people everywhere, queues of people at every meal.

July 30, 2022

Lambeth is starting slowly and gently. Tuesday was arrivals, and that was all, apart from trying to make sense of campus maps, dining options and uncertainty over times and venues. Wednesday eased into a midday welcome session in a massive marquee, and an afternoon in the small groups that bishops were on zoom in last year. Meeting face to face was good, though it felt not much was happening.

Thursday – today as I write – the retreat began. It takes a long time to bus 650 bishops in to Canterbury cathedral. We stay at the University of Kent, roughly half an hour's walk from the city centre. The retreat addresses are from 1 Peter, with three different presenters, two female, one from India, another from Kenya and the first is in the Church of England but delivered in French. The retreat continues Friday through to lunchtime, and personally has been worthwhile to reflect and pray.

The gentle start to Lambeth has ominous clouds, not for rain, but for the inevitable crunch point on the Lambeth “Call” regarding human dignity. I fear that a poor process will not aid us, as the Call was published for participants only a few days ago, and the topic of sexuality generated an outcry and a rewritten call only written this week. This contested space and poor process are already focusing minds and conversations. I doubt and fear a helpful outcome.

I arrived in England on its hottest day in history. The impending heat of disagreement next week may match that.

For more faith news, follow The Melbourne Anglican on Facebook, Twitter, or subscribe to its weekly emails.

United States+ Episcopal bishops reject conservative Anglicans' same-sex marriage ultimatum; 'huge distraction' for Lambeth

Over one hundred Episcopal bishops are heading to Canterbury, England, this week for the Lambeth Conference, where their professed goal of listening to and learning from the diverse global experiences of fellow Anglican bishops has been complicated by conservative Anglican bishops' efforts to turn the conversations more narrowly toward disputed positions on same-sex marriage - David Paulsen of Episcopal News Service writes.

The Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops typically is held once a decade at the invitation of the archbishop of Canterbury. This Lambeth Conference had been scheduled for 2020 but was delayed by two years because of the pandemic. It is the first to be called by Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, who assumed that role in 2013. Bishops from all 42 provinces in the Anglican Communion were invited, and more than 650 bishops and 480 spouses were registered to attend as of last month.

Welby has sought to ease tensions over the Anglican provinces' differing stances on human sexuality while focusing more broadly on the conference's theme of "God's Church for God's World." Welby also instituted a "Lambeth Calls" process for this conference in lieu of resolutions – partly in recognition that the Lambeth Conference is not

legislative body and has no jurisdiction over The Episcopal Church and the other autonomous Anglican provinces. Lambeth planners have described the calls as “short written statements that include declarations, affirmations and common ‘calls’ to the church and the world that the bishops want to make.”

Each call was developed by a drafting group that included bishops “representing Anglican churches from around the Anglican Communion,” according the Lambeth study guide. The 10 subject areas include discipleship, the environment, reconciliation and “safe church” principles.

When the study guide and drafts were released on July 18, the Lambeth Call on Human Dignity ignited a firestorm of criticism from Episcopal bishops over language that seeks to affirm a 1998 Lambeth Conference resolution opposing same-sex marriage. The bishops were further incensed to learn of an electronic voting process intended to help finalize the document.

Voting “will be a chance for each bishop to indicate their view,” the study guide explains, but with only two choices: “This Call speaks for me,” or “This Call requires further discernment.” A third option expressing disagreement was later added.

When ENS asked the Lambeth Conference for clarification about the process for developing and approving the Lambeth Calls, a spokeswoman said the study guide was intended to “help bishops prepare for discussions at the conference.”

She also noted that the in-person meeting was one of three phases of the Lambeth Conference. All Anglican bishops were encouraged to participate in pre-conference online conversations on many of the issues that would be included in the Lambeth Calls, and further discussions will be scheduled after the in-person meeting.

Then, late in the afternoon on July 25, the Lambeth Conference issued a public statement acknowledging to concerns raised by the Human Dignity Call and said the drafting group “will be making some revisions.” The statement also said bishops will be given a third option in registering their views on each call: “This Call does not speak for me.”

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, who will be attending his first Lambeth Conference as presiding bishop, alluded to the “rapidly changing” situation in a July 25 news release. In the release, Curry said the House of Bishops will gather in person on July 27 in Canterbury “to discern its way forward” before the conference begins. He also shared the text of an earlier message he sent to bishops offering specific guidance.

It will be Curry’s second Lambeth Conference, after he attended the 2008 as bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina. Curry told Episcopal News Service in a phone interview last week that he was hopeful this gathering would focus on common ground, following a model set within The Episcopal Church’s House of Bishops.

“We worked hard in our house and in our church on what has come to be called ‘communion across differences,’

where we seek to be in relationship with those we agree with and those we disagree with,” Curry said.

The focus on common ground was thrown into question by the draft of the Human Dignity Call. Jamaican Archbishop Howard Gregory is listed as the lead author. The call states in its introductory paragraph that it seeks “a reaffirmation of Lambeth I.10 that upholds marriage as between a man and a woman and requires deeper work to uphold the dignity and witness of LGBTQ Anglicans.” The Human Dignity Call also references the 1998 resolution among the draft “affirmations,” asserting it is “the mind of the Communion” to reaffirm a belief in the “faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union” while advising against “legitimizing or blessing of same sex unions.”

Those provisions, which echo the demands of conservative Anglican bishops, make up only a small part of the Lambeth Call on Human Dignity, which also references the need for the Anglican Communion to confront its history of colonialism while addressing “the ongoing climate emergency,” working toward more just economic systems, alleviating poverty and standing “in witness against injustice.”

Before last week’s release of the draft calls, Welby already had faced a backlash from Episcopal bishops for his decision to exclude the spouses and partners of gay and lesbian bishops from his invitation list to this Lambeth Conference, a policy that affects the spouses of four Episcopal bishops: Maine Bishop Thomas Brown, New York Assistant Bishop Mary Glasspool, Missouri Bishop Deon Johnson and Michigan Bishop Bonnie Perry.

“I am very disappointed that the planners of Lambeth have chosen to include in the Call for Human Dignity a divisive and exclusionary clause that will cause not just spiritual pain, but further fracture within the Anglican Communion,” Johnson told ENS in a written statement. “We have worked hard to build relationships across differences and forge Christ-centered mission partnerships in the years since Lambeth 1998. My prayer is that we will be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit and move past division into true communion with compassion and hope.”

Johnson’s husband is not traveling to Canterbury, though Brown’s husband, Glasspool’s wife and Perry’s wife plan to be there. They will be excluded from Bible studies and other official spouse events but can attend public events, such as worship services.

It remains unclear why the reference to Lambeth’s 1998 Resolution I.10 was included in the Lambeth Call on Human Dignity. It was not part of the drafting group’s conversations, according to Toronto Bishop Kevin Robertson of the Anglican Church of Canada. Robertson, one of the gay, partnered bishops attending Lambeth, issued a statement July 24 disavowing that language in the Human Dignity Call.

“At no point in our meetings did we discuss the reaffirmation of Lambeth I.10 at the Conference, and it never appeared in any of the early drafts of our work together,” Robertson said in his statement, posted to Facebook. “I can confidently say that the Human Dignity Call in its current form does not represent the mind of the drafting group.”

The additional language, however, is closely aligned with the views voiced by a group of conservative Anglican bishops who are members of the orthodox Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches. Rather than downplaying human sexuality as too divisive, they have stated that reaffirming the 1998 resolution is one of their top priorities while attending this Lambeth Conference.

South Sudan Archbishop Justin Badi, chairman of the group, underscored this in a July 5 written message and a July 7 video message. He called for reaffirmation of Resolution I.10 as “the official teaching of the Anglican Church on marriage and to call on provinces to align their faith and order accordingly.” An accompanying Global South Fellowship news release on July 7 states that such an action “will directly challenge the Episcopal Church of America” and other provinces that have authorized blessings and marriage rites for same-sex couples.

Connecticut Bishop Ian Douglas, in an interview with ENS on July 25, said he was dismayed by what appears to have been a late change to the draft of the Human Dignity Call. Douglas, formerly an Episcopal Divinity School professor, reported on the 1998 Lambeth Conference for the Episcopal journal “The Witness,” and in 2008 he was a member of the design team of that year’s conference before his own consecration as bishop in 2010.

In Anglican Communion reports, it’s not unusual to see “11th-hour additions after drafting committees have called it a day,” Douglas said.

“I’m chagrined that it’s happened, and now suddenly, as a result, so much of the discussion and the focus and the energy is on human sexuality.” Douglas also was a member of the 2022 drafting group for the Lambeth Call on Reconciliation and said he was never informed there would be an in-person voting process.

Los Angeles Bishop John Harvey Talyor, in a widely shared July 20 Facebook post, accused Welby and his planners of staging a “bait-and-switch Lambeth, with moderate and progressive Anglicans and Episcopalians about to arrive in Canterbury as credulous props for what is likely to be a majority vote against marriage equity.”

The Presiding Bishop also released a written statement on July 22 amid the growing uproar over the Lambeth Calls document.

“Our church is on record – both officially and in practice – with our commitment to the full inclusion of all who seek to follow Jesus and his way of love,” Curry said. “As we head to the Lambeth Conference, the same dedication leading us to the full welcome, embrace, and inclusion of LGBTQ+ children of God likewise commits us to communion with one another across our differences. We will be true to who we are while upholding our relationships and engaging in real and open conversation.”

Since 1998, The Episcopal Church has approved rites for blessing same-sex unions, and in 2015, its General Convention endorsed trial rites that could be used at wedding ceremonies for same-sex couples. A follow-up measure approved in 2018 sought to make those rites

available to Episcopalians in every diocese where same-sex marriage is legal, regardless of the stance of the bishop.

The Episcopal Church “found a way through a gracious compromise on the issue of marriage equity,” Taylor said in a phone interview with ENS. He was consecrated as bishop in 2017, and this will be his first Lambeth Conference. Looking ahead to Canterbury, he and other Episcopal bishops have stressed the importance of building relationships with Anglican bishops, including those who may disagree on issues of human sexuality.

Episcopal bishops, however, are wary of appearing to endorse any anti-LGBTQ+ measure, Taylor said.

“I think on this question, views are largely fixed, and when views are largely fixed, the helpful thing to do is move to common ground,” Taylor said. “And there’s so much common ground in Lambeth Calls.” He cited references in the drafts to supporting Christians facing persecution, working to slow climate change and improving ecumenical and interfaith dialogue.

Episcopal bishops have joined Welby in stressing that the Lambeth Conference isn’t a legislative body. Its purpose is to bring together bishops from across the Anglican Communion to build relationships.

“This is an instrument of unity, and the reason to get together is to fortify that unity,” San Joaquin Bishop David Rice told ENS in an interview. He attended his first Lambeth Conference in 2008, when he was a newly consecrated bishop in New Zealand. The conference is “not about

everyone agreeing,” he added. It’s about acknowledging differences while finding “some semblance of common ground.”

“My anticipation with regard to my colleagues in this [Episcopal House of Bishops] is we will engage graciously and honestly, and I can assure you that there will be no reaffirmation of 1998,” said Rice. Even so, “this conference has to be bigger than human sexuality. There are many other issues to discuss.”

Douglas agreed. “There are so many important conversations we need to and still will have to have,” he said. “This becomes a huge distraction from the important work we were planning to do. And frankly, that’s disappointing. It didn’t have to happen this way.”

– David Paulsen is an editor and reporter for Episcopal News Service.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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