



Representative of Cork Churches joined in the Iftar Meal which mark the end of Ramadan. See report this issue. (l-r) Mr Charles Payne (representing the Rev Geraldine Gracie from Cork Methodist Church), Imam Ihab Ahmed (Cork Muslim Foundation), Canon Daniel Nuzum (Church of Ireland), Ms Valerie Fletcher (Cork Presbyterian Church) and Fr Christy Fitzgerald (Roman Catholic Church).

Making sense of Ireland 1912 - 2012

The religious beliefs that underpinned the events of Ireland's crucial decade, 1912–1922, will be critically examined by Rev Dr Johnston McMaster at a lecture in Dublin on July 12. Through a theological and an ethical lens, the question will be asked whether the theology of a century ago is any longer believable: Can we make God–Sense of 1912–1922 a century later?

The public lecture and conversation in the Lutherhaus, 24 Adelaide Road, Dublin 2, on Tuesday July 12 at 8.00 pm, is organised by Dublin Council of Churches which continues its aim to provide ecumenical perspectives on the centenary commemorations with

Dr Johnston McMaster of the Ethical and Shared Remembering Project @ The Junction, Derry; Irish School of Ecumenics, Belfast Campus; and author of *Overcoming Violence*, 2012, and Co–author of *Ethics and the Easter Rising – Remembering 1916*, 2015 will be the main speaker with a response by Patsy McGarry, Religious and Social Affairs Correspondent with The Irish Times.

Dr McMaster will speak on the topic: 'Making God–Sense of 1912–1922 a Century Later – Faith in a Different World'. The presentation will explore the place of churches in Ireland a century ago and the impact of the Great War that is believed to have killed Christendom. The effect of this on Irish churches will be analysed, especially over the last fifty years.

Irish Presbyterian Moderator in England and Wales

Dr. Sellar will attend URC's biennial General Assembly from 8th to 11th July in Southport, Merseyside, where the Assembly's first task will be the installation of its new Moderators. Since 2008 the Church has elected a minister and an elder, serving for two years alongside one another.

The United Reformed Church (URC) is a relatively new Church that brought together older traditions when in 1972, English Presbyterians merged with English and Welsh Congregationalists. The Churches of Christ joined the URC in 1981, followed by Scottish Congregationalists in the year 2000 to form a

Church of some 50,000 people attending 1,400 churches.

From 11th to 13th July, Dr. Sellar will attend the General Assembly of Eglwys Bresbyteraidd Cymru – the Presbyterian Church of Wales - in Llandudno, Clwyd, which includes the installation of their new Moderator.

Born out of the Methodist revival of the 18th century, the Presbyterian Church of Wales, is one of the largest Christian denominations in the Principality with some 24,000 members and 620 churches. Around two-thirds of congregations worship and work through the Welsh language. The General Assembly will also be conducted in Welsh.

Looking forward to both Assemblies, Dr. Sellar said, “It was a pleasure to meet the URC Moderator, Rev. David Grosch-Miller and the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, Rev. Dr. Elwyn Richards, at our own General Assembly last month.

“The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has long standing fraternal relationships with both Churches and we value the presence of their Moderators and guests at our General Assembly

each year, and their warm invitation to attend theirs.

“As they share in worship and discuss issues not dissimilar to our own, it will be good to both learn from and hopefully encourage them in our common calling to share the Good News of Jesus to peoples of all backgrounds, especially in these uncertain and fractious times.”

Brexit ‘won’t affect pilgrimages to Lourdes’

A pilgrimage director has dismissed [claims](#) that pilgrimages to Lourdes will be detrimentally affected by Britain’s withdrawal from the European Union.

Catholic Herald - John Tangney, director of Tangney Tours, has said Brexit would have “no discernible effect on sick pilgrims or indeed any pilgrims travelling to Lourdes”.

He was responding to a [blog post](#) on the Catholic Herald site by Dr Michael Moran, chief medical officer for Down and Connor diocesan pilgrimages to Lourdes and a member of the International Medical Committee of Lourdes.

Dr Moran wrote: “Although not as high impact as millions of pounds dropping from the FTSE, the care of the sick in Lourdes is nonetheless important for those who need it most, and for whom many other foreign holidays are not possible. Pilgrimages to Lourdes are currently dependent on the European Health Insurance Card, which we could stand to lose if we leave the EEA as part of Brexit. If full costs are to be borne for healthcare abroad, Lourdes, for UK pilgrims, is likely to become a domain for the fit, well and wealthy.”

But John Tangney argued that the comments were mistaken.

He said: “The possible withdrawal of the EHIC facility following a Brexit will have no discernible effect on sick pilgrims or indeed any pilgrims travelling to Lourdes.”

Mr Tangney said that his company’s travel insurance policy for pilgrims, which thousands of sick pilgrims took up per year “may increase in cost by £1 or £2 to about £30”.

But he pointed out that the deal includes “almost every pre-existing condition, and also covers

those with a terminal diagnosis, with a short prognosis.”

Dr Moran, responding to Mr Tangney, said he “remained concerned”.

He said: “Whilst I appreciate Mr Tangney’s comments in regard to the arrangements that are in place for his own company, I remain concerned that an exit from the EEA and the potential loss of the EHIC arrangement would leave us in a state of uncertainty in regard to health care costs.

“From personal experience, I know the importance of the EHIC arrangements for pilgrims who become acutely unwell in Lourdes, and have had difficult negotiations with insurance companies who were reluctant to pay even the 20 per cent of costs that remained beyond EHIC cover. Health care in France is excellent, but it can be expensive; air ambulances even more so.”

He continued: “I am encouraged by Mr Tangney’s impression that insurance costs will not rise significantly, but would worry about the sustainability of this situation if health care costs to be borne are to rise. I think it is simply too early to judge the situation, but would not be

confident that there would be a price freeze if the EHIC privileges are lost.”

Archbishop Welby speaks of "traumatic and dynamic changes" following Brexit vote

The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby has described the campaign leading up to the UK's Brexit vote as “unacceptable”. And he said that events in the United Kingdom since the country voted in a referendum to leave the European Union, had led to “some of the most traumatic and dynamic changes that we have known.”

Speaking in a debate in the House of Lords – the upper house of the British Parliament – Archbishop Welby described the campaign leading up to last month's referendum as “robust” but said that, “at times [it] veered over the line on both sides.”

“It was not merely robust, but unacceptable,” he said. “Through such comments were created cracks in the thin crust of the politeness and tolerance of our society, through which, since the referendum, we have seen an out-welling of

poison and hatred that I cannot remember in this country for very many years.

“It is essential, not only for this House [of Lords] but for the leaders of both sides and throughout our society, to challenge the attacks, xenophobia and racism that seem to have been felt acceptable, at least for a while.”

He urged Britain’s politicians to tackle inequality and to invest in public health. “Last week we saw horrifying figures on the levels of child poverty in this country. We have seen a widening of the unfairness in our society, and with that it is no surprise that some shocking things have emerged in the last few days. . . We need a renewal of a commitment to the common good and of solidarity. We need a sense of generosity, hospitality and gratuity, of the overflowing of the riches and flourishing that we possess, not only into our society but across the world.”

The Archbishop explained that he was trying to organise a debate in the House of Lords on Friday on the nature of British values.

- [Click here](#) to read the full text of Archbishop Welby’s speech

Cork churches reps join end of Ramadan meal

The members of the Cork Ecumenical Standing Committee - representatives appointed by their respective bishops or church authorities - recently accepted the invitation of Imam Ihab Ahmed to attend the Iftar Meal with his Muslim community at the end of Ramadan, and they took the opportunity to also to condemn the attack on him. Afterwards they issued the following statement:

“The ecumenical secretaries in Cork (representing the Catholic Church, the Church of Ireland the Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church) were horrified to hear of and deplore the recent most dreadful attack on Imam Ihab Ahmed in Cork city this week. As Christians we firmly believe there is no justification for any act of violence carried out for sectarian or any other reason.

“We believe that mutual respect is at the core of our faith and indeed these are shared values between our two faiths. We welcome and cherish the openness of Imam Ihab and his welcome to us to share in the Iftar Meal with his Muslim community to celebrate the end of

Ramadan each year. We hope and pray that the continuing developing relationship between our two faiths will foster a growing respect, mutual understanding and flourishing as fellow people of faith and citizens of our city of Cork.

“As the holy season of Ramadan comes to a close this week we extend our prayerful good wishes and God’s blessing to Ihab and his community over these days.”

The Cork Ecumenical Standing Committee has been in existence for a number of years as a support and resource for ecumenical activity, advice and civic engagement on behalf of the Catholic Church, the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church in Cork city and county. For further information please contact Fr Christy Fitzgerald at liturgy@corkandross.org

Special day of prayer at Maze - Long Kesh

Interdenominational Divine Healing Ministries has organised a special “day of prayer for our land” to help people find God’s peace. This will be held on Saturday 17 September 2016 at

Balmoral Park, Maze Long Kesh and is open to everyone.

Brother David Jardine of DHM said, “We are encouraging people to come as individuals before God on that day – to lay down their own personal burdens from the past, to forgive those who have hurt them, to say sorry where they may have hurt other people, and to pray for the future of our country.

“At Maze Long Kesh the prayer will take place in the Show Jumping Arena which is about 150 yards long. It has a beautiful grassy surface. In the very centre there will be a large plain wooden Cross. People will enter through one gate, spend time with God for as long as they wish, and then go out through another gate at the far end of the arena. We trust that through the time that people spend in prayer they will be helped to find the Peace of God. We hear a lot of talk about dealing with the past; seldom do we hear any talk about God or Forgiveness, yet this dimension is absolutely vital.

“Having recently completed seven years of prayer for the renewal and revival of the faith in this land we see this event on September 17 as a natural continuation of all those years of prayer.

“This day of prayer is an attempt to help everyone to find the peace of God. People may come and go they please. The hours of prayer will be 9.00 am to 6.00 pm. “

C of I praying for persecuted churches

The Church of Ireland Council for Mission has launched a prayer appeal to support persecuted Christians around the world. The appeal follows a resolution by the General Synod in May which expressed solidarity with brothers and sisters in Christ who are persecuted for their faith and committed to supporting them in prayer.

The Honorary Secretary of the Council for Mission, the Revd Patrick Burke, said: ‘The time has come for Christians in the safety and comfort of the West to speak out about what their brothers and sisters are facing in other parts of the world – and to speak out strongly and keep speaking out until the violence ends. The suffering of Christians around the world is truly shocking. The Open Doors watch list for 2016 says that over 100 million Christians are being persecuted globally. Open Doors estimates the “very minimum” killed in 2015 at

7,100 and that over 2,000 churches were attacked, burned, bombed, or confiscated. Given that these crimes take place in countries either ravaged by war or under the control of an oppressive regime, the true figure could be much higher.'

Explaining the Council's approach, he explained: 'We want to begin with prayer. We are God's people and it is only right that all we do has its beginning by calling upon Almighty God. We are asking all clergy to include this issue in their intercession at public worship every Sunday, and all Christian people to include it in their private devotions every day. We plan to launch other initiatives to bring this issue more into the public eye in the coming months.' The Council is also encouraging Christians to become more informed about the persecuted Church. Helpful resources can be found through the work of the Church of Ireland's associated missionary societies and on the Open Doors website:

www.opendoorsuk.org

UK Methodists review marriage understanding

The **Methodist Church in Britain** has taken a further step towards changing its understanding of marriage. This press release has been issued:

Methodist Church to review its understanding of marriage and relationships

A task group established to consider whether the Methodist Church's understanding of marriage and relationships should be revisited has reported back to this year's Methodist Conference.

Following a decision at the Conference in 2014, people from across the Methodist Connexion have been considering marriage and relationships as part of a process overseen by the task group. The discussions show that there is a broad range of opinions held by Methodists on these matters.

The Church is to reconsider how its understanding of marriage should be expressed. This does not necessarily mean that there will be a change of definition, but that the Church wishes to re-examine the definition through a period of theological and scriptural reflection.

The task group prepared guidance and other resources to help members of the Methodist Church in their discussions on marriage and relationships.

The task group was established at the Methodist Conference in 2014 to consider whether or not the Methodist Church should revisit its definition of marriage and its understanding of family life, marriage and the single person. Its report, received by the Methodist Conference earlier today, 5 July 2016, is the result of two years consideration by the task group, along with reflection and conversation within the Methodist Church. So far, at least 8,000 members have taken the opportunity to participate in conversations across the Methodist Church, where a wide range of views were expressed.

The Church's definition of marriage was one of those subjects discussed. The task group considered the existing 1992 "Statement on Christian Understanding of Family Life, The Single Person and Marriage". In the Statement the Methodist Church reiterates its view that marriage is "the lifelong union of one man and one woman". However, whilst many Methodists support this definition as it stands, there is a range of reasons to revisit it. For example, some people feel the Church's definition should be extended to include the marriage of same sex couples. Some people feel that the definition only describes the status of marriage, not its purpose and responsibilities and revisiting the definition is important part of the process even if

it remains unchanged. The Conference directed that a new Statement on marriage and relationships should now be prepared and that, as part of that process, the definition of marriage should be revisited....

Media reports on this:

Christian Today **Mark Woods** [Britain's Methodist Church to consider same-sex marriage](#)

Premier **Alex Williams** [Methodist Conference votes to re-examine definition of marriage](#)

Ekklesia **Savi Hensman** [Methodists welcome LGBT people and review understanding of marriage](#)

News briefs

On Sunday 3rd July, **Cloonclare Parish Church, Manorhamilton**, Co. Leitrim, hosted an **Ecumenical Service of Commemoration** to mark the centenary of both the Easter Rising of 1916 and the Battle of the Somme. The Service was led by Rev. Brendan McCarty assisted by Albert Dawson and was attended by Bishop Leo O'Reilly of the Roman Catholic Church, Bishop Ferran Glenfield of the Church of Ireland, local Parish Priest Fr. Oliver Kelly and Rev. Jeremy Nicholl of the Methodist Church. Members of the Organisation of National Ex-servicemen (ONE) and British Legion were also among the

congregation. The guest speaker was Professor Eunan O'Halpin, Professor of Contemporary Irish History at Trinity College Dublin who shared some interesting reflections on the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme and how these events have been incorporated into the narrative of Irish History. He reminded the congregation of how groups and individuals can attach different meanings to such events. The task of contemporary society is, therefore, to appreciate that there are completely different ways to remember and commemorate them. The service ended with the Grace led by Bishop Ferran Glenfield and Bishop Leo O'Reilly

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The annual five day **Clogher Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes** is currently taking place. It lasts until Monday 11 July. The 350 pilgrims include 50 assisted pilgrims, 80 young people from the Clogher don Óige youth ministry and 50 staff of nurses, brancardiers, helpers and priests. The programme for the diocesan pilgrimage includes participation in the traditional torchlight procession, the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, Mass at the Grotto where the apparitions took place in 1858, and a Eucharistic procession. Other features include baths for the assisted pilgrims and a visit

to the nearby village of Bartres where Saint Bernadette spent much of her youth. Bishop Liam MacDaid, Bishop of Clogher, speaking yesterday at the 8.00am Mass at the Marian Shrine in Lourdes, France, said, “This morning we are privileged to be drawn here, to be apart and in a quiet place, a place where the pace of life is different and where our care and attention is offered especially to those amongst us who are sick and vulnerable. As pilgrims, we are all reminded of the need for a quiet space and place in our lives to introduce us to a new world. As we leave the bustle of our world behind us, just for a few days, it is important for our spiritual health that we allow ourselves to be drawn apart to this quiet place where the pace of life is different. This is an opportunity for each one of us – and also as a faith community – to be much more reflective, and prayerful.” The Diocese of Clogher includes all of County Monaghan, most of County Fermanagh and portions of Counties Tyrone, Donegal, Louth and Cavan. Saint Macartan is the patron saint of the diocese and the diocesan cathedral is in Monaghan.

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Revd Rosie Diffin was instituted as Rector of the Parishes of **Kilmore & Dobbin** in the

Diocese of Armagh on Monday 27th June 2016
by Archbishop Richard Clarke.

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The Revd Brian Cruise who has been instituted as the new rector of **Tullylish**. Bishop Harold Miller conducted the service on Wednesday 6 July 2016 and Revd David Bell, one of Brian's colleagues from Cookstown, gave the address. Ordained in 1988, Brian served his curacy in Shankill Lurgan under two rectors – Dean Norman Lockhart and (Bishop) Ken Good. He has just completed almost 24 happy years as rector in Kildress and Altedesert enjoying ministry to a farming community. Brian is married

to Charlene and they have 3 grown up children and one grandchild.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Fatal foetal abnormalities Bill defeated in Dáil vote

Irish Times

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/fatal-foetal-abnormalities-bill-defeated-in-d%C3%A1il-vote-1.2713700>

First ever Irish university taught course on sexuality and sexual health education

Irish Examiner

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/lifestyle/features/first-ever-irish-university-taught-course-on-sexuality-and-sexual-health-education-will-begin-in-september-408860.html>

Education Authority's handling of nursery provision for disabled children 'a disaster', MLAs told

BBC News

The Education Authority's (EA) handling of nursery provision for disabled children is called an 'unmitigated disaster' during a Stormont committee hearing.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-36725856>

Students at NI universities owe £2.7bn

BBC News

churchnewsireland@gmail.com

Students who have studied at Northern Ireland's universities owe £2.7bn in tuition fee and maintenance loan debt.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-36730520>

Admission fees, waiting lists and explicit discrimination to be banned in schools, says Minister for Education

The Journal

The new laws have been given a guarded welcome.

<http://www.thejournal.ie/school-admissions-law-2864038-Jul2016/>

US archbishop says divorced Catholics should avoid sex, live 'as brother and sister'

The Journal

Archbishop Charles Chaput issued a new set of pastoral guidelines for clergy and other leaders of the archdiocese.

<http://www.thejournal.ie/archbishop-divorce-2865750-Jul2016/>

Ind/Politics Home/Mail/[Christian Today](#)/Times

Reports a speech made by the Archbishop of Canterbury in the House of Lords in which he highlighted the "poison and hatred" brought about by the EU referendum (see above). Archbishop Justin urged political leaders on both sides of the Brexit debate to take on the "xenophobia and racism" that has been prevalent seen since the decision to leave the EU.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-archbishop-of-canterbury-speech-post-eu-referendum-racist-attacks-racism-xenophobia-polish-a7121466.html>

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/europe/eu-policy-agenda/brexit/news/76966/archbishop-canterbury-eu-referendum-has-created>
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3675652/Archbishop-Canterbury-slams-spreading-poison-hatred-Brexit-aftermath.html>
<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/universities-move-to-protect-academics-from-racist-abuse-x6vwgwj2w>

Christian Today

Previews the debates agenda at this weekend's General Synod. Secretary General, William Nye, described *Renewal and Reform* as the "main theme" of the meeting. Synod will debate what the vision for this initiative is. Mr Nye said the Archbishops' Council was "inviting the synod to endorse a vision" that was both "hopeful" but also "realistic".

Exp/Mail

Reports that with the help of crowdfunding, archaeologists have been digging on Lindisfarne, off the Northumberland coast, trying to find evidence of the earliest monastery on the island where the Lindisfarne Gospels were written. Founded by King Oswald in 635 AD, it was attacked and destroyed by the Vikings a century later. Although the monastery was replaced, the site of the original has long eluded experts but the excavators have discovered a very rare Anglo-Saxon grave marker dating from the mid-7th to 8th century AD.
<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/686577/Living-prayer-location-early-Lindisfarne-monastery-unearthed>
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-3675027/Stunning-grave-marker-reveal-lost-monastery-1-200->

year-old-stone-lie-close-site-treasured-Lindisfarne-Gospels-written.html

Guard

Reports that for centuries, cathedral and college choirs across Britain have been exclusively populated by school-age boys - but with the admission of girls, that outdated practice is finally breaking down. Edward Wickham, director of music and a fellow of St Catharine's College, Cambridge writes that in the world of choral music - specifically, music written for what is called the English cathedral tradition - "we still working out how gender-fluid we are or want to be."

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2016/jul/05/girls-choirs-male-dominated-english-tradition-boys-changing>

Comment

Christian Today: Shared conversations: Can the Church of England prevent a split over gay marriage?

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