



Year of mission in Down and Dromore launched at multi-sensory cathedral service

Visitors to St Anne's Cathedral on New Year's Eve had a spectacular multi-sensory experience as the cathedral became a canvas for breathtaking projected images and lighting effects.

The display was part of a Down and Dromore

celebration hosted by Bishop Harold Miller. At midnight the Bishop and congregation were piped out of the cathedral whilst spotlights shone into the night sky, symbolic of the theme, 'Lights to the World'.

The lights were just one element in an evening when the diocese marked the end of a full year of 24-7 Prayer and the start of a Year of Mission. There was something for all ages with good food, live music and worship before bringing in the New Year and stepping out into the Year of Mission 2015 together.

The programme started at 9.00 pm with a gathering over hot food and drinks and live music. There were crafts for children and an opportunity to finish the year with prayer at one of the interactive prayer stations.

At 10.30 pm it was time to look back at an amazing year of continuous prayer and to worship with music both traditional and contemporary. Looking forward to the Year of Mission, Bishop Harold shared a message just ahead of midnight when the congregation brought in 2015 and left the cathedral as 'Lights to the World'.

Retreat in the City 2015 at Christ Church Cathedral

Retreat in the City is back at Christ Church Cathedral for 2015. This year it will be led by Brother John SSF. Brother John was born and raised in London. After gaining a degree in French he spent a couple of years on a church-planting team near Liege, Belgium, before training for the Baptist ministry and serving in two pastorates in England. He has been a Franciscan brother in the Anglican Society of St Francis for 13 years, and is a fan of Van Morrison.

The retreat will take place from February 20 to 22 2015 in Christ Church Cathedral and is non-residential. There are a number of reasonably priced hotels near the cathedral if you wish to travel to the city for the retreat weekend.

The fee for the retreat is €80 (including retreat fee and lunch on Saturday and Sunday) and bookings can be made by ringing the cathedral office on (01) 6778099. A €40 deposit will be required.

Safer Social Networking Master Class

Ineqe Group is holding another half day Safer Social Networking Master Class in Stranmillis University on Friday 30 January 2015.

Jim Gamble (former CEO and founder of the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)) will brief delegates on contemporary child protection issues including child sexual exploitation, technology, and offenders use of the internet followed by a question and answer session.

The second session is workshop based for delegates to learn how to use the Safer Social Networking Activity Pack (SSNAP) cards. Delegates will also leave with a set of the cards to take back to their organisation to use with staff/children. Fee - 129.00 + VAT per person. See -<http://ineqe.com/ssnap-belfast/>

The Shotgun Affair - A Mystery Play in Carrickfergus

The Shotgun Affair - A Mystery Play will be performed in Carrickfergus Methodist Church on



Saturday 3 January 2015 at 7.30 pm. Proceeds towards Carrickfergus Methodist Church Building Fund. Venue: Carrickfergus Methodist Church, Albert Road. Email: carrickmethodist@gmail.com

Forthcoming Irish church events

Sunday 4 January 2015 will be Covenant Sunday in the Diocese of Down and Dromore

The Revd Adrienne Galligan will be instituted as incumbent of Rathfarnham Parish by Archbishop Michael Jackson on Friday January 16 at 8.00 pm.

'The Mission of God's People: Who Are We and What Are We Here For?' With Chris Wright, Friday 23 January and Saturday 24 January 2015 in Magheralin Parish Halls.

The Service of Ordination and Consecration of the Revd Canon Kenneth Kearon as the new Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe will take place in Christ Church Cathedral Dublin on Saturday 24 January 2015 at 2.30 p.m.

A healing service aimed at those in their teens, 20s and 30s will take place in St Anne's Cathedral on Monday 26 January at 8.00 pm.

The speaker will be Jonny Clarke who is the director of YWAM Ireland. He will share how to receive healing and his theme will be 'God heals us, God forgives us, God loves us'.

The Revd Stephen Neill will be instituted as incumbent of Celbridge and Straffan with Newcastle-Lyons by Archbishop Michael Jackson on February 12 at 8.00 pm. The preacher will be the Bishop of Cork.

First same-sex weddings take place in Scotland

Scotland's first same-sex weddings took place at the stroke of midnight on Hogmanay (00.01am,

31 December) as two couples became the first to tie-the-knot in a marriage ceremony following the passage of Scotland's historic equal marriage legislation earlier this year.

The first two weddings both took place at the same time in Glasgow, when Joe Schofield and Malcolm Brown were married in a humanist ceremony at the Trades Hall, and Susan and Gerrie Douglas-Scott, were also married in a civil ceremony at a private venue.

The couples were joined by their families and friends, as well as guests including LGBTI equality campaigners, Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon MSP and Convenor of the Scottish Green Party, Patrick Harvie MSP, who acted as witnesses at the marriage of Susan and Gerrie, while Scots Makar Liz Lochhead and Scottish Government Minister Marco Biagi MSP acted as witnesses for Joe and Malcolm.

The Equality Network, Scotland's national lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) equality charity, who ran the Equal Marriage campaign in Scotland, attended the first weddings and celebrated the occasion as a 'milestone moment for Scotland'.

Tom French, Policy and Public Affairs Coordinator for the Equality Network, commented "In recent years Scotland has become a leading light on LGBTI equality, and we now have one of the most progressive equal marriage laws in the world, helping to create the fair and equal society we all want to see."

Quakers, Liberal Jews, members of the United Reformed Church and the Metropolitan Community Church are among the faith groups who have backed equal marriage, with others in the larger denominations giving personal support in the face of a refusal to allow them on church premises.

This Christmas the Anglican Bishop of Buckingham in Oxford, England, made a video offering blessing and support to same-sex couples marrying over the Holy Season of Christmas.

A New Year's resolution that could change the world - Christian Aid

This New Year, Christian Aid is urging Governments to commit to a resolution that could really make a difference: to collect the taxes

needed to tackle poverty and create a better world.

“Tax pays for the services we all need, like hospitals, schools, roads and policing,” said Toby Quantrill, the charity’s Principal Adviser on Economic Justice.

“Tax revenues can make the difference between dignity and destitution and, especially in developing countries, between life and death. A well-designed, effective, tax system can help to close the widening gap between rich and poor.

“But all over the world, governments are struggling to collect enough tax to fund decent public services, while multinational companies dodge billions of pounds in tax.

“So we’re urging governments to make a New Year’s resolution for 2015 and beyond, to take action to ensure companies are paying their fair share of tax in all the countries where they operate. It is time to rebalance the rules in favour of people everywhere.”

In order to collect more tax from multinationals, Governments should do the following to sweep

away the financial secrecy that sustains tax dodging:

- * Require multinationals to publicly reveal separate economic and financial details (such as numbers of employees, profits made and taxes paid) for every country in which they operate, making tax dodging easier to spot.
- * Require all companies to reveal who really owns and controls them and put the information in national, public registers. This would help track down criminals behind tax evasion, money laundering, corruption, terrorist financing and other problems.
- * Include developing countries as full participants in the OECD-run 'BEPS' project to catch up with multinational tax dodgers. In addition, develop new processes which include poor countries on an equal basis from the start, to tackle the problems of greatest concern to poor countries. "At the moment it seems that multinationals have more influence over the global tax system than developing countries, which is pretty terrifying," said Mr Quantrill.

To find out more about Christian Aid's tax campaign, see -

[http://www.christianaid.org.uk/ActNow/find-out-more/
background-information/tax-justice-background.aspx](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/ActNow/find-out-more/background-information/tax-justice-background.aspx)

More than five million people attended papal events in 2014



More than 5.9 million pilgrims and visitors joined Pope Francis for an audience, liturgy or prayer at the Vatican in 2014, the Vatican has said.

The Prefecture of the Papal Household, the Vatican office coordinating the audiences and distributing the free tickets to papal audiences and liturgies, said a total of 5,916,800 people attended a papal event at the Vatican.

The 2014 total was down by about 680,000 from the 6.6 million visitors Pope Francis received in the first nine and a half months of his pontificate in 2013 – from his election on March 13 to the end of the year. For the 12 months of 2014, at least 1.19 million people attended Pope Francis's 43 weekly general audiences. More than 567,000 participated in special group audiences.

More than 1.1 million participated in papal liturgies in St Peter's Basilica or St Peter's Square, and more than three million joined the pope for the Angelus or the Regina Caeli prayer on Sundays and major feast days in St Peter's Square.

The figures released by the prefecture do not include numbers from papal events in the city of Rome, in Italian dioceses or on the Pope's foreign trips, and the numbers are approximate, based on the number of tickets requested and estimates of crowd size.

Calvary's lost Catholicism - an interview with composer Patrick Cassidy

Patrick Cassidy, the composer for the 2014 film *Calvary*, jokes about the film's grimness: "It's not exactly a date movie." He's right: The film follows

a lonely Irish priest as he shepherds a cold and bitter village. Its harsh realism is profoundly humbling. Heavy as the film is, it is lifted by Cassidy's classical score.

Interview in First Things by Peter Atkinson - Cassidy got his start outside film, composing Irish semi-liturgical pieces. In 1993, he wrote *The Children of Lir*, becoming the first to write a cantata in the Irish language, and in 1996 he wrote *Famine Remembrance*, a setting of Irish prayers and liturgical texts for the 150th commemoration of the Irish Famine. Yet John McDonough, the film's director, didn't want excessive Irishness to rob *Calvary* of its universality, a choice reflected in Cassidy's score. Cassidy recalls, "I remember I did a cue early on and I put in an Irish instrument and he didn't want it. He was very adamant. And he was right."

Cassidy sees *The Children of Lir* as evidence of an historical dynamic in Ireland, where Christianity transformed Paganism but retained much of its symbolism. It retells the Irish legend of children bewitched into swans, the spell only broken when St. Patrick comes nine hundred years later. "It seems to me like the story predates Christianity in Ireland but later became

Christianized. A lot of Irish culture is like that.” His work on *Calvary* bears a similar tone: Ireland, moving past its Catholic identity to modern secularism, lingers in the past through its Catholic symbols and habits.

Throughout, Cassidy’s score bears a deep nostalgia for home - both for Ireland’s past and a lost Catholicism. “When I was growing up, there would have been universal respect and reverence for priests, you know? And, especially in the cities, like Dublin and Limerick, I just don’t see that anymore.”

Now, Cassidy says, priests tend to go out in their “civvies” rather than wearing their collar because they don’t want to be spat upon or cursed. “In one generation, Ireland went from being quite a poor country to being a quite wealthy country, and people with money are not as religious—that’s just a fact, you know? And also the abuse scandal—the two things together caused Ireland to change in a very, very rapid way. What might of taken a few generations in other countries, took one generation in Ireland. That in a sense is what *Calvary* is about.”

Cassidy thinks the Irish who reject the Church do so ambivalently: “People still love this Church,

this culture—yet at the same time they’re rejecting it. *Calvary*’s villagers push Fr. Lavelle constantly, but the last thing they wanted was for him to break. Yet they couldn’t help themselves in trying to break him and mock him. I think that’s kind of accurate to Ireland in a sense, you know?” Though it might signal a loss of faith, John McDonough uses Ireland’s detachment to narrate *Calvary* with black humor and irony. When the prospective murderer meets Fr. Lavelle on the beach, he asks him to reflect on his life, “Do you have any regrets?” Fr. Lavelle cavalierly replies, “I have, yah. Never got to finish Moby Dick.”

Cassidy thinks music can bridge this divide: “The music of the Church is one of the great attractions that the Church still has for people. It’s hard to see that classical music could have happened without the Church. I think it’s a direct result of Church tradition and culture.” Patrick hesitates and then ventures a thought, “Maybe that’s one of the reasons why classical music has been so poor in the twentieth century. This was the century when composers moved away from the liturgical forms.”

For Cassidy, art and faith are inseparable: “It would seem kind of pointless in a sense, you know? The reason I wanted to be a composer was to write pieces like the Mass and the opera. Yes, I love film music but the opportunity and challenge of writing a Mass is just on a different level. For me, it’s a more profound experience, absolutely.” In fact, Cassidy has written such a Mass for Ave Maria University, though it may be some months before it is published.

Traditional Catholic values produced great stresses in Irish society in 1984 - British Ambassador

With a deeply conservative Catholic Church in place, a level of drug addiction reputed to be higher than in New York and frequent urban crime and marital breakdown, Ireland in 1984 appeared a grim place. So grim that the British Ambassador to Dublin, Alan Goodison, said he was "not very surprised" that emigration was increasing.

Irish Independent - Writing about the economic situation he said that any upturn in the Irish

economy was dependant on an upturn in Britain and it was in British interest to encourage this, he said.

Unemployment at the time had reached 16pc and retail sales figures were down, although exports were up albeit "mostly from foreign-owned firms who contribute little to the economy beyond a limited amount of employment and tax at concessionary rates".

In a candid annual review of the year delivered to the British Foreign Minister Geoffrey Howe, Goodison said that while there was a lot to be said for Ireland's way of life, a combination of factors meant it was losing its young.

"The traditional Catholic values, which still have a strong emotional hold, are producing great stresses in contemporary Irish society, which the church is not alleviating. The appointment as Archbishop of Dublin of the deeply conservative Dr [Kevin] McNamara has been greeted with open disappointment by many lay people and clergy alike," wrote Goodison.

"Half of the population of the country are under 25, and a quarter of these as are available for employment have no jobs. There is said to be a higher rate of teenage drug addiction in Dublin than in New York. Urban crime is

frequent. The rate of marital breakdown is now a serious worry. The abortion rate is one of the highest in the British Isles. The Government, meanwhile, faces the probability of serious crises in the face of traditionalist opposition to legislation which it has promised about the status of illegitimacy, the termination of marriage and an increase in the availability of contraceptives."

Bishop in hit-and-run had history of drunken driving and marijuana possession

Court documents show that an Episcopal bishop who was the driver in a hit-and-run crash that killed a bicyclist in Baltimore had been charged four years ago with drunken driving and marijuana possession.



Bishop Suffragan Heather Cook, who is the No. 2 leader for the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland,

was driving a car that hit 41-year-old Tom Palermo on Saturday afternoon, according to diocese spokeswoman Sharon Tillman. Tillman said Cook had disclosed the DUI and marijuana charges from 2010 when she was vetted and ultimately elected as the diocese's first female bishop.

In an email Sunday, Bishop Eugene Sutton told priests in the diocese that Cook left the scene of Saturday's accident, but returned about 20 minutes later "to take responsibility for her actions." Sutton said Cook is now on administrative leave "because the nature of the accident could result in criminal charges."

US megachurch holds final service

As 2014 came to an end, so did Mars Hill Church, whose founding pastor Mark Driscoll resigned two months ago amid controversy over his leadership.

The final sermon to the Seattle-based church and its branches in four states was preached Sunday by the Rev. Rick Warren, pastor of California's Saddleback Church.

In recorded remarks, Warren urged Mars Hill members to trust God as their congregations disband or reorganize as independent churches.

He also urged them not to be bitter about the conflicts that led to Driscoll's resignation.

The church said it found Driscoll had a domineering style with a quick temper and harsh speech, but noted that he was never charged with immorality or heresy.

Attendance at Mars Hill branches had fallen sharply from 12,000 a year ago, but Warren compared Mars Hill Church to a mighty tree that dies and gives birth to new life.

New Year Message From Archbishop Michael Jackson

Most Reverend Dr Michael Jackson, Archbishop of Dublin -

Day follows day and night follows night. This is the simplest pattern of life as we know it and as everyone lives it, the world over. Some of us are asleep by midnight. Some of us find it difficult to get to sleep at all and settle for no more than fitful rest all through the night. But at midnight, whether we are asleep or not, something changes when we move from one day to the next day. At any given point somewhere in the world

there is darkness and somewhere else there is light.

New Year's Eve is one of those special midnights. After the clock has chimed, everything is in a real sense the same and yet time has moved forward. Perhaps one of the most useful things that a New Year can show us is our need to learn to embrace the future. It carries us forward with it. It introduces us to new possibilities, new people, new perspectives. All of these new experiences ahead of us may well frighten us, but an attitude of trust and friendship will go a long way.

For 2015 we remember the same individuals and communities who have suffered terribly throughout 2014 at home and worldwide. We remember the loved ones who are ill and those whom we have lost from our sight in the course of the year past. We ought to remember also the warm summer wind on our faces, the sunglasses to shield our eyes from the brightness, the laughter and the joy of those who matter to us at home and abroad, the ways we have to communicate with them, the positive attitude of children and young people.

We remember the points of celebration that have brought communities together over the past year in the United Dioceses. And we ought to give thanks for the sense of community that is still alive and abroad throughout Irish society.

I wish all of you everything that is best for 2015.

Media digest

TV

Online article about the female NHS volunteer who has been diagnosed with Ebola quotes the Archbishop of Canterbury as asking people to pray for her and of the "courage of those serving in S Leone".

<http://www.itv.com/news/update/2014-12-29/archbishop-of-canterbury-calls-for-prayers-for-ebola-victim/>

Mail/Guard/BBC

Various reports on the death of the "right-to-die" campaigner Debbie Purdy who was 51. They state she won a landmark ruling in 2009 to have guidelines on assisted suicide published by the Government. Ms Purdy had suffered from multiple sclerosis for more than 20 years. Many of the articles mention a letter sent to the Daily Telegraph and signed, among others, by the former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Carey, calling on the Government to allow time to resolve the issue.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2890340/Right-die-campaigner-MS-sufferer-Debbie-Purdy-dies-aged-51.html>

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/dec/29/assisted-suicide-campaigner-debbie-purdy-dies>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leeds-25741005>

Tel/Mirror/Metro

Further reports about the letter to the Daily Telegraph about assisted dying. They quote the letter as saying that an "overwhelming majority" of people support the idea of changing the law.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/11315294/Parliament-needs-to-decide-on-assisted-dying.html>

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/actors-comedians-top-public-figures-4889972>

<http://metro.co.uk/2014/12/29/coalition-of-famous-names-urges-politicians-to-legalise-assisted-dying-5002167/>

Mail

Article about a group of Christians in China who have celebrated Christmas in secret in a 12th storey apartment above a Beijing dental surgery. Despite an increase in the numbers of Christians in the country, it discusses the problems faced by many who are detained because of their faith. One of the worshippers says: "But Christmas is still a happy time. No matter what happens, God is with us,"

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-2889679/No-season-goodwill-Chinas-underground-Christians.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490

Guard

Report about schools in Lancashire that are teaching their children about finances. It mentions All Saints Church of England Primary in Chorley where every pupil has a savings account with a credit union. The headteacher is quoted as saying: "We need people to know how to borrow from somewhere sensible."

<http://www.theguardian.com/money/2014/dec/29/lancashire-st-georges-primary-pupils-spending-lesson-debt>

Guard

Article asks if you got engaged over Christmas, can you afford to get married? Includes details on the cost of a Church of England wedding.

<http://www.theguardian.com/money/2014/dec/21/engaged-when-afford-get-married>

BBC

A selection of photos showing how Christians around the world have celebrated Christmas.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-30601526>

Metro

Article about the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta in 2015 discusses its importance.

<http://metro.co.uk/2014/12/29/what-is-magna-carta-and-why-are-we-celebrating-its-800th-anniversary-in-2015-5002510/>

Sun

An article about what your "selfie" says about you mentions a bridegroom who took a photo of himself as his wife was walking up the aisle of the church they were married in. He describes it as his favourite photo of the day.

<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/woman/health/health/6221331/Psychologist-reveals-what-your-selfies-say-about-you.html>