



Nuncio examines relationship between Catholic Church and Irish society

Speaking to a large crowd in the Mendoza College of Business's Jordan Auditorium on Thursday, Archbishop Charles J. Brown reflected on his mission in serving as the apostolic nuncio

to Ireland and the intersection between modern Ireland and the Catholic Church.

Notre Dame Observer - Titled, "The Catholic Church in Ireland and Pope Francis: Legacy and Transformation," the lecture was part of the annual Keeley Vatican Lecture series sponsored by the Nanovic Institute for European Studies.

Brown, a 1981 Notre Dame graduate, addressed the cultural and spiritual challenges in the Vatican's relationship with Ireland and his job as the Holy See's official diplomat to Ireland.

"The apostolic nuncio has two roles: to be the pope's representative to the local Catholic community and to be the pope's representative to the sovereign government," he said.

Brown said when he arrived in Ireland and assumed his official position in January 2012, he made it his mission to be involved in Ireland's Catholic community, accepting as many invitations as possible to visit local churches, schools and other important community institutions.

“I made it my priority to be open and accessible so that I could learn about the needs of the Church in Ireland,” he said.

Brown said the Church’s historical role in Ireland is “daunting in its complexity.”

He noted the dichotomy among Christendom, the cultural and social dominance of Christian values and Christianity itself, which he defined as faith in the person of Jesus Christ and his Church.

He referenced a famous homily by Archbishop Michael Neary of Tuam, which bemoaned the death of Christendom in modern-day secular Ireland.

Brown said the collapse of Christendom, however, is distinct from the state of Christianity in 20th-century Ireland. From the 1930s to the 1960s, he said Mass attendance was high, large numbers of men and women entered religious life and “a Catholic ethos dominated Ireland.”

“Ireland’s traditionally rural and agrarian culture with a conservative outlook and widespread opposition to British dominance were both major factors in this,” Brown said.

Brown said by the the 1970s, Irish society became more secular. Causes of this transformation included immigration of American-born Irish back to Ireland and the introduction of their more secular lifestyles, as well as the advent of increased electrical usage, which brought the secular values of the media industry to the entire nation.

Brown said that the emergence of abuses among the clergy, particularly pedophilia, damaged the Church's cultural influence.

"No matter what the issue is, when a Catholic voice is raised, the inevitable response is that they're trying to bring back the era of clerical dominance," he said.

Brown said Pope Francis's messages of freedom and humility in Christ has a broad appeal. He said he has hope for the future of the Church, particularly in Ireland.

"There is a palpable desire in the Irish people for meaning beyond the merely material and the physical," he said

<http://ndsmcobserver.com/2015/01/keely-vatican-lecture/>

'Time is not right for the Pope to visit Ireland' - founder of Association of Catholic priests

A founding member of a body representing over 1,000 Catholic priests has said the time is not right for the Pope to visit Ireland, as there are too many existing problems in the Irish Church.

Herald.ie - Speculation has been growing that a historic papal visit could take place in the near future, following recent comments from the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Charles Brown.

Fr Brendan Hoban, one of the founders of the Association of Catholic Priests (ACP), said he believes a high-profile visit by Pope Francis (inset) would hamper their efforts to bring about reforms and changes in the Church.

"A papal visit is exactly what the Irish Church doesn't need at the moment, because it would distract us from tackling the issues which we need to put right," he said.

"Problems which need to be resolved, like the vocations crisis, would be camouflaged by a papal visit. And all the time, effort and expense

involved in organising the visit would set us back from doing what needs to be done.

"I've certainly no objection to the Pope visiting at some stage in the future, but the timing isn't right at the moment."

Fr Hoban said he believes Pope Francis himself would prefer that the huge sums of money involved in funding an elaborate papal visit to this country would be spent on helping those in need.

More at -

<http://www.herald.ie/news/time-is-not-right-for-the-pope-to-visit-ireland-reveals-top-papal-envoy-30911852.html>

Archbishop of Wales to preach at C of I bishop's consecration

The Service of Ordination and Consecration of the Revd Canon Kenneth Kearon as Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe, which will take place at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin on Saturday, 24th January 2015 (Eve of the Conversion of St Paul) at 2.30pm.

The service will be led by the Archbishop of Dublin, The Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, and

the preacher will be The Most Revd Barry Morgan, Archbishop of Wales.

For those unable to attend, the service will be streamed by the cathedral : <http://christchurchcathedral.ie/worship/live-webcast/>

Journey Through Healing: Seminar on Sectarianism



Journey Towards Healing has organised a seminar on 'Sectarianism,' set for 22 January from 7.00 - 90 pm at the Balmoral Hotel (Blacks Road, Dunmurry) in Belfast.

The seminar will feature a panel discussion led by Jim Gibney, of Sinn Féin; Father Gary Donegan; and Media Commentator & Journalist, Alex Kane. Reverend Dr. Gary Mason will facilitate civic engagement and response.

Please confirm attendance at the seminar by e-mail to: Sarah Caldwell at s.caldwell@niamhwellbeing.org

Launch service for ICON Community - a new church plant in Dublin

The official launch service for ICON Community will take place on Saturday February 28 at 4.00 pm in the Centenary Methodist Church, Leeson Park, Dublin 6. The service will celebrate the new church plant and during it the Revd Eoghan Heaslip will be licensed by Archbishop Michael Jackson.

ICON now meets in the Methodist Centenary Church, Leeson Park, on the first and third Sundays of every month from 1.00 pm to 3.00 pm. Their gatherings always start with a bring and share lunch which is an important way to connect with God and each other.



Revd Eoghan Heaslip (pictured) will be licensed by Archbishop Michael Jackson.

Led by Eoghan and Becky Heaslip, ICON Community's mission is to bring people in their 20s and 30s to know God. ICON's vision is to be a community of communities all over the city.

They believe that the Christian life is best experienced by being part of a family – family with the unique purpose and mission of engaging in the adventure of following Jesus and living for him.

They gather on Sundays as well as throughout the week, to pray, eat, live and learn together.

Space at the launch service will be limited so anyone planning to attend should email info@iconcommunity.ie as soon as possible.

To learn more about ICON Community see their website: www.iconcommunity.ie. You can also follow them on Twitter @icon_community or like them on [facebook.com/iconcommunitydublin](https://www.facebook.com/iconcommunitydublin). All are welcome to attend their Sunday gatherings.

Faith in the City 2015 – An Introduction to Faith Communities in Dublin

Dublin City Interfaith Forum has announced details of its 2015 Faith In City programme. The programme consists of series of interfaith awareness raising sessions held at places of worship across Dublin City.



It aims to give people the opportunity to experience a place of worship first hand and learn about its spiritual significance and meaning.

The series will take place on successive Monday nights starting on Monday January 19. People are welcome to go to one or all of the sessions.

Participants are welcome to ask questions freely and discussion is encouraged and welcomed to enhance people's understanding of each others' faiths. Different faiths are chosen each year and this year's programme focuses on Hindu, Sikh and Islam.

The programme will open with the Hindu Eire Vedanta Society on Monday January 19 at Ashram to the rear of 18 and 19 Blessington Street, Dublin 7. On Monday January 26 the Sikh faith will host a session at Gurdwara Guru Nanak Darbar, 78 Serpentine Avenue, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. On February 2, Islam will be the subject of the session in the Islamic Foundation of Ireland, 163 South Circular Road, Dublin 8.

Further details are available from
www.dublincityinterfaithforum.org.

Connor Team attends church in Leprosy colony

The team from Connor Diocese, currently in Nepal, have attended church in a Leprosy colony. They trekked from Kathmandu into the countryside to reach the church, crossing a terrifying suspension foot bridge with great trepidation, only to witness an older man on a motorbike following them across 'at a good speed!'

The people, sights and sounds of Nepal, and the atmosphere during worship at the church in the Leprosy colony, are brought to life by Alan

Robinson, a parishioner of St Patrick's, Coleraine, in his [second blog](#) on the CMS Ireland website.

[This trip](#), by the Rev Bill Boyce, Nevin Kidd, Eleanor Boyce, Peter Kirch (all St Brigid's, Glengormley) and Canon John McCammon and Alan, both from St Patrick's, Coleraine, is facilitated by CMSI.

Alan also talks about Maoist strikes which are impacting on some aspects of the team's programme in Nepal, and reflects on restaurants and rush hour in Kathmandu!

Charity seeks unused sewing machines and hand tools

Belfast based charity, Tools for Solidarity, is again appealing for the support of Connor parishes in collecting old or unused sewing machines which it will send to Africa.

The charity has been working in Belfast for 30 years. It works with local, international and supported volunteers, collecting old hand tools and sewing machines which are refurbished and sent to centres in Tanzania and Uganda.



A spokesperson for the charity said: “These refurbished tools and sewing machines help to improve the lives of the local people and their communities in the areas we serve in Africa. The current focus is on Tanzania and Uganda and these are amongst the poorest countries in the world.”

Tools for Solidarity is running a project to collect 300 old/unused sewing machines in the next three months as well as old hand tools.

Items can be left at the charity’s office at 55a Sunnyside Street off the Ormeau Road (postcode BT7 3EX) or collection can be arranged. Please telephone 028 9542 5972.

The spokesperson added: “The benefit of the project to some of the poorest people in the world cannot be overstated.”

Enniskillen Collegiate principal 'astonished' at closure review decision



Collegiate Grammar is due to be closed and a new school created after a merger with Portora Royal

The principal of a Co Fermanagh grammar school which is to be closed has hit out at the newly elected Assembly Speaker's decision to block the matter from coming before the Stormont Executive.

News Letter - The proposed closure of Enniskillen Collegiate caused a major public debate in Co Fermanagh and resulted in the Assembly passing a motion against it in September.

However, shortly afterwards Education Minister John O'Dowd decided to go ahead with the move; he intends that Portora Royal should also be closed and that a new school should be created in their place, a move supported by Portora.

On Monday, in his first major ruling as Speaker, Mitchel McLaughlin refused to accept a petition from 30 DUP MLAs asking for Mr O'Dowd's decision to be referred to the Executive; the Speaker ruled that it was not a "matter of public importance".

But yesterday Collegiate principal Elizabeth Armstrong told the News Letter that his decision was "a matter of astonishment and deep concern".

She added: "It is clearly a matter of great public importance for the many people from right across the community in our local area who expressed their vigorous opposition to the development

proposals. It is clearly a matter of great public importance across Northern Ireland, given the Assembly vote of September 22 when the motion was tabled by Arlene Foster and Lord Morrow and supported by Tom Elliott and many other MLAs from parties across Northern Ireland.”

She noted that a clear majority of the Assembly called for Mr O’Dowd to reject the closures.

The school is considering all political and legal options to challenge the decision, she added.
More at -

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/enniskillen-collegiate-principal-astonished-at-closure-review-decision-1-6521916>

Walking and praying with Christians of the Middle East - Lenten course

CTBI - Churches together in Britain and Ireland - have prepared a study guide for Lent 2015, on the theme *Walking and praying with Christians of the Middle East*

What is the theme about and why is it important?



The Christian churches of the Middle East are facing a crisis unparalleled in recent history. As a result of a set of complex religious and political factors, the number of Christians in the region has fallen dramatically as many have sought refuge in other parts of the world, especially the West. However these are ancient communities that trace their origins back to the very beginnings of Christianity. The present conflicts

and political instabilities in countries such as Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and the Palestinian Territories have had a profound impact upon these Christian communities. Many Church leaders in the region believe that without a Christian presence, the future of the Middle East looks bleak indeed.

Yet at the same time knowledge in the Western churches of these Christian communities remains minimal and often we are unaware of who Middle Eastern Christians are and what issues they face in today's world. In popular perceptions of the Middle East, Arab equals Muslim and rarely Christian. Our knowledge of our Christian sisters and brothers in the region is an important factor in their survival.

A CTBI spokesperson said, "During this season of Lent we are inviting you to join with us in walking with them and to pray for and with them. Lent is a crucial time to remember the lands in which Christianity has its roots - Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Israel, Palestine and above all Jerusalem are names that remind us of crucial events in the Bible, but also names that dominate our news today. "

Who is this Lenten Resource for?

This Lenten Resource is intended for ecumenical groups, church groups and individuals. It attempts to offer a traditional course that picks up on Lenten themes whilst at the same time praying with Christians of the Middle East.

Availability

All weeks except for Week 4 are currently available [below](#). Week 4 should be available shortly.

What does each study contain?

1. Factual information about Christians in the Middle East and the issues they face today
 2. Stories of Christians in the Middle East
 3. Biblical Reflections
 4. Points for discussion and further action
 5. A 'call' from a Christian from the region in each week
 6. Prayers from Christians living in the region
- The resources for each week follow the readings of the 3 year Revised Common Lectionary so they can also be a resource for Sunday worship and preaching.

Link to downloadable resources -

<http://www.ctbi.org.uk/CGC/688>

churchnewsireland@gmail.com

Indian faithful save church in England's Catholic heartland

A historic church in Preston that was closed two months ago will re-open after the Bishop of Lancaster offered it to Syro-Malabar Catholics.

St Ignatius' Church, opened in 1836, was due to be merged with the nearby English Martyrs Church because of a shortage of priests. Parishioners said they were stunned by the decision.

But on New Year's Eve Bishop Michael Campbell received a letter from Cardinal George Alencherry requesting a church and presbytery for Syro-Malabar Catholics under the charge of Fr Mathew Jacob Choorapoikayil.

There are an estimated 17,000 Syro-Malabar Catholics in England, with four million worldwide. The Church traces its origins to the Apostle Thomas, who according to tradition travelled to Kerala in AD52. The Church has had a chaplaincy in Lancaster since 2004, and there are more than 100 Syro-Malabar families in Preston. Bishop Campbell said: "I readily

welcomed this request from Cardinal Alencherry, Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, as I believe that St Ignatius church and presbytery will be a wonderful and vibrant centre for the St Thomas (Syro-Malabar) Catholics in Preston.”

Appealing to the Catholics of Preston, the bishop said: “I am hopeful that local Catholics will genuinely rejoice in what is both an imaginative – and surprising – decision and will be proactive in their support of our brother and sister Syro-Malabar Catholics going forward.”

St Ignatius is a Grade II* listed building with an interior designed by Augustus Pugin. An estimated 140 people attended its last Mass in November. Parishioner Ralph Cooper had said the decision to close the church had come as a “bolt from the blue”.

New parish priest Fr Mathew Jacob Choorapoikayil said: “We’re very pleased to have our first church in England.”

The community has grown out of the local hospital which employed migrants. Fr Matthew added that Bishop Campbell and his predecessor Bishop Patrick O’Donoghue “have been very

good to us, have welcomed us and given us our opportunity". He also said that there would be an official opening Mass announced shortly.

Malawi floods - Third of country declared Disaster Zone

Irish Presbyterian Mission Overseas reports - In the past few days, heavy rain and flooding in Malawi has killed at least 48 people and forced around 45,000 people from their homes.

The President of Malawi has declared a third of the country a disaster zone and has urgently appealed for foreign aid. Many homes and crops, roads and railways have been destroyed.

Neil Kennedy reports that the Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Blantyre where he works, has had multiple children brought in after houses fell on them – sadly several died.

At the beginning of January, a number of PCI mission personnel in Malawi had reported that the rains had been good this season, that crops were beginning to grow well, and that many people were looking forward to a good harvest in

the coming months. Sadly, in the past few days, many people have seen these hopes – their livelihood and food supply for the coming months - washed away!

The districts worst affected include Blantyre, Zomba, Mulanje, Rumphu and Karonga.

Rev. Alex Benson Maulana. General Secretary of the Blantyre Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), writes,

"I write this mail to you with sorrow in my heart for our beloved Christians/Malawians who have lost their lives or been displaced due to sporadic flooding in the country.

Beloved our humble request to you all is that the blessings of rains have become dangerous to the people of Malawi themselves and members of CCAP Blantyre Synod in particular hence need for unceasing prayer.

CCAP Blantyre Synod's catchment area is more affected when you consider the impact nationally..

Areas like Mulanje, Phalombe, Chikwawa, Nsanje, Blantyre etc are badly hit by floods hence more displaced people than any other regions.

The critical need now for the displaced people is food, then shelter and many other things.

Your prayers morally, spiritually and materially will be of paramount importance."