



## Dean Victor Griffin, a voice of open-hearted Anglicanism

The death took place yesterday of the Very Revd Victor Griffin, former Dean of Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.

Born in Carnew, County Wicklow, in 1924, Dean Griffin was educated at Kilkenny College and Trinity College Dublin. He was ordained in 1948 for curacy at St Augustine's in Derry. He served a second curacy at Christ Church in Derry where he became Rector in 1957 until 1968 when he was appointed Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral. He retired in 1991 and was living in Limavady.

Victor Griffin married Daphne Mitchell of Londonderry at All Saints', Londonderry in May 1958; a teacher, she died of Multiple Sclerosis in 1998. The couple had twin sons, Kevin and Timothy, born in 1959.

Recalling Dean Griffin, The Very Reverend William Morton, Dean of Saint Patrick's Cathedral, said "Dean Victor Griffin will long be remembered as the most faithful and dedicated priest of the Cathedral, and in that regard, especially for his courageous and enterprising leadership as Dean of Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. He was a man who spoke out fearlessly on many issues—in the Church, in politics, education, and ethics—and did so with the strongest conviction to the Christian Gospel and with the promotion of a more inclusive and pluralist society, both north and south, always in

mind. On behalf of Saint Patrick's Cathedral, I extend deepest sympathy to Dean Griffin's family and wider circle."

Paying tribute to Dean Griffin, the Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, said he learnt of the Dean's death with sadness and regret. "While Dean of St Patrick's his courage, friendliness and preaching were an inspiration to many. He remained fearless in voicing an open-hearted Anglicanism through the worship and witness of the Church of Ireland for all the people of Ireland. Equally at home in both parts of Ireland, his passing will evoke memories of his conviction and commitment to the causes of people ordinary and extraordinary in church and state. Our prayers are with his family in these times," he stated. Dean Griffin's remains will be removed to Christ Church Limavady at 16.00 on Sunday 15 January. The funeral service will take place at 11.00 on Monday 16, and afterwards to the crematorium in Belfast for 16.00.

## **Dublin, Belfast and Clogher Christian Unity services**

The Inaugural Service for **Dublin** for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will take place in Christ

Church, Taney, on Wednesday January 18 at 8.00 pm, by kind permission. This service is organised by the Dublin Council of Churches, as per tradition, and all are welcome.

A service jointly organised by the Cathedrals in **Belfast** to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will take place in St Peter's Roman Catholic Cathedral on Tuesday January 17 at 7pm. The Preacher will be the Rt Rev John McDowell, Bishop of Clogher.

**Clogher** Diocese are holding the following two services to celebrate this important season: ✚ St Macartan's Cathedral, Clogher, Monday 16th January at 7.30pm. Preacher: The Rt Rev John McDowell, Bishop of Clogher. ✚ St Macartin's Cathedral, Enniskillen. Thursday 19th January at 7.30pm. Preacher: The Revd Chris Mac Bruithin, Curate Assistant.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed from the 18th to the 25th January – the octave of St. Peter and St. Paul. However, some areas observe it at Pentecost or some other time.

'Crossing Barriers' is the theme, especially relevant to us, of this year's Week of Prayer for

Christian Unity. The material for this year's celebration has been prepared by Christians in Germany, based on the words in 2 Corinthians reminding us of how we share in God's love and in a commitment to his message of reconciliation.

The material is dedicated to the memories of the Revd Stephen Brown who passed away in February 2016 and the Revd Canon Gwynn ap Gwilym in July 2016. Both Stephen and Gwynn had served as dedicated members of the CTBI Writers Group for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity for many years, making enormous contributions through their creativity and collegueship which will be greatly missed but never forgotten.

Materials for this year's WPCU are available at <https://ctbi.org.uk/resources-for-week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2017/> (there are materials in both English and Irish to download).

## **Hospital support from Broughshane Mothers' Union**

Members of St Patrick's, Broughshane, Mothers' Union Branch have had a busy few months. Members put together 45 wash bags for



***Members of St Patrick's, Broughshane, Mothers' Union handing over their hand knit cardigans, blankets and hats to the staff of Antrim Area Hospital Neonatal Unit***

adults and 80 colouring packs for young people and these were distributed between The Rowan Centre, Paediatric A&E, A2 Paediatric Ward, Adult A&E and the Short Stay Ward in Antrim Area Hospital.

Some talented ladies knitted nine blankets, 16 cardigans and 35 hats for the Premature Baby Unit also in Antrim Area Hospital. Just before Christmas four members, Wendy Halligan (Branch Chair), Geraldine Ramsey (Branch

Secretary), Mina Lynn and Alison Campbell distributed the gifts to the various units and wards.

Wendy said: "Despite all the staff being very obviously under pressure working with the patients in their care they took a few minutes to speak to the representatives from our branch to express their deep appreciation for gifts which will go a long way to helping make the patients stay in hospital a little bit easier.

"This was a tremendous effort from all the ladies and as it was such a success we are planning to have another Projects Evening later this year. We look forward to another evening of fun and fellowship."

## **Parish development conference**

Rev Ian Coffey, Director of Leadership Training at Moorlands College, and internationally renowned speaker, will be the facilitator at The Conference which is being held in the Emmaus Retreat Centre, Swords, Dublin on Saturday March 25 from 10:00am to 4:00pm

Churches that have embarked on their own journeys of development in very different contexts will share their stories.

The organisers state : All that we ask is that, in addition to the ordained leader, at least 4 people will attend from each parish and that, ideally, one will be under 45 and one under 25. The subsidised cost is £15 / €18 per person including coffee and lunch. For further information see the CHURCH21 website: [www.church21.ie](http://www.church21.ie)

To book please sign up on the website or contact the CHURCH21 Administrator Tessa Marsden on 071 9147007 by Friday 24 February 2017.

The Parish Development Working Group is a sub-committee of the Standing Committee of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland. The members are all volunteers rooted in the life the church and with a wide variety of experience and a commitment to keep learning and growing through the Church21 process.

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## **New Rural Youth Ministry Course for Donegal**

Derry and Raphoe Youth (DRY) is joining forces with Exodus to provide a six-week course for people in Donegal who are interested in youth ministry.

The courses will take place every Wednesday evening from 18th January until 22nd February in the Mill Park Hotel in Donegal, beginning at 7.30. They will cover topics such as engaging with the Bible, everyday ministry, vision, following, making our events count, the power of relationships and investing in young people.

The Youth Officer for the Derry and Raphoe Diocese, Martin Montgomery, hopes the course will address the sense of isolation which affects many rural parishes. "Support and investment in our leaders is essential for reaching out to young people," Martin says. "Parishioners in rural areas can often feel isolated and forgotten, which is why this 6-week course is an excellent opportunity for leaders, clergy and anyone aged over 18.

“We hope friendships will spring up among participants, that the Christian community in Donegal will be emboldened, that leaders will be upskilled, that the young people of Raphoe Diocese will benefit as a result and, most importantly, that all of this is a blessing to God and goes towards expanding His Kingdom in this place.”

Andy Lamberton, who has been a member of the Exodus staff since 2014, said he was delighted to be partnering the course with Martin. “I remember in my interview for Exodus mentioning a dream for building rural youth ministry and at the same time wondering how I would ever go about it. I now feel like we have something to say to begin the conversation on discipling in the unique culture of modern rural Ireland.

“Though traditionally full of quaint villages, it's fairly numb ground community-wise,” Andy says. “While rural Donegal has beautiful scenery that inspires wonder in many, it also has the highest recorded rates of self-harm in Ireland. While family ties are tighter, parents usually wave goodbye to their children once they've been educated. Yet the Gospel is still glorious, Jesus is

always mighty to save and the Spirit of God will blow where He pleases.

“I’m delighted to be partnering this course with Martin and the COI. These six sessions in Donegal Town are open to anyone interested or involved in youth ministry.”

The course costs €10. For further information, or to book a place, email [martin@derryandraphoe.org](mailto:martin@derryandraphoe.org) or call him on 0044 7812 050920. You can also email [andy@exodusonline.org.uk](mailto:andy@exodusonline.org.uk) or phone him on 00353 86 3718300.

## **Almost 10,000 sign Edmund Rice schools’ petition to end homelessness**

Edmund Rice Schools Trust students have called for an end to homelessness. They started their first day this term by presenting a petition, signed by almost 10,000, to Minister Simon Coveney TD.

The secondary students handed the Minister for Housing the petition signed by fellow students

from schools in Waterford and East Cork on Monday 9 January at The Carrigaline Court Hotel, Cork. High Hopes Choirs (choirs for people who are homeless) from Cork, Waterford and Dublin joined them at the presentation.

“We want to be, and believe we can be, the first generation that ends homelessness in



***Sr. Stan & Principal Padraig Cawley at Ardscoil Na Mara***

Ireland. We don't want to grow up in an Ireland that can't provide homes for people. That is not the Ireland that represents us," said Mark Hartery, a 16-year-old 5th year student at Ardscoil na Mara, Tramore.

"We were delighted to be able to meet with Minister Coveney to tell him what the next generation of voters hopes for," he added.

The students involved are from Ardscoil na Mara Secondary School in Tramore, Abbey Community College, Ferrybank, (both in Co. Waterford), Midleton CBS Secondary School, Edmund Rice College, Carrigaline in Cork, and other schools.

They stated that their resolution for 2017 is to keep homelessness in the public eye so that "the government has pressure put on it to continue to do everything it can to make homelessness history."

Students had been learning more about social justice issues and set up the 'One Campaign for Change'. As part of this they gathered the petition signatures to make known their concern about growing up in a country that cannot provide basic housing for so many people, in particular children.

They were spurred on when the number of homeless children climbed above 2,400 in the autumn. They also became aware that students in each of their schools are living in families at risk of losing their homes.

“One of the things we are trying to raise awareness about is the reality that homelessness is present in all communities throughout the country,” said Mark Hartery, who is one of the initiators of the campaign. “It is something that is affecting families within our own communities, and in towns way beyond the larger cities.”

The students have been working to raise awareness about homelessness for over a year. On 15 May 2016 an article by Mark Hartery on their work to help alleviate homelessness was published in The Journal.ie.

In it he wrote that he had not taken much notice of homelessness until he took part in a sleep-out for Focus Ireland and it completely changed his perspective. Walking in the shoes of homeless people gave him a great motivation to help make a difference.

The Peace and Justice group at school met with members of the High Hopes choir in Waterford,

and on awareness days they have heard from experts such as Sr Stan of Focus Ireland and Fr Peter McVerry of the Peter McVerry Trust.

When they were asked to write a Proclamation for a New Generation to celebrate the centenary of 1916, they based it around homelessness.

The petition is still open on [www.onecampaignforchange.weebly.com](http://www.onecampaignforchange.weebly.com), as the students want to collect 50,000 signatures.

To read student Mark Hartery's article, see [www.thejournal.ie/readme/homelessness-2-2765125-May2016](http://www.thejournal.ie/readme/homelessness-2-2765125-May2016).

## **UK Government integration advisor: 'Catholic schools cannot oppose gay marriage'**

The UK Government's top advisor on community integration has said it is "not OK" for Catholic schools to oppose gay marriage.

During a parliamentary oral evidence session on integration on Monday, Dame Louise Casey, the Government's 'integration tsar', referred to the [Trojan Horse case](#) of 2014, when a number of

individuals tried to introduce Islamic extremism into schools in Birmingham.

When asked by an MP whether she thought it was a “one-off” or the “tip of the iceberg, Dame Louise answered: “Yes, it is happening elsewhere. Michael Wilshaw and others have talked about this, but we are asking teachers, day in, day out, essentially to be on the frontline of trying to work out when one community leader’s request is reasonable and when another community leader’s request is not reasonable. We ask them to manage that constantly.

“Should a secular school close at 1 o’clock on a Friday for religious reasons? I know what my view is on that, but I know that that head teacher has to have a very difficult set of conversations with the community, which often turns out not to be the parents. That is not everywhere, in every bit of the country, but it is in some communities in some areas and, yes, we found it.”

But she then went on to single out Catholic schools saying: “When does a teacher running a secular school say, ‘No, it’s fine for you not to do theatre,’ or music or those sorts of thing? When is that OK? I do not really have any view on



which religion it is that it is promoting those sorts of views, but they are not OK, in the same way that it is not OK for Catholic schools to be homophobic and anti-gay marriage. That is not OK either—it is not how we bring children up in this country.”

She continued: “It is often veiled as religious conservatism, and I have a problem with the expression ‘religious conservatism’, because often it can be anti-equalities. We have got to be careful that people can choose, obviously, to live the lives that they want to live, but that they cannot condemn others for living differently. That is a grey line, and the more we can talk about it the better. That is the most important thing: that people are able to talk about it, and that these head teachers are not left feeling isolated and alone when they are having those conversations.”

Dame Louise has worked in a number of governmental roles throughout her career including director of the national Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (ASBU) in 2003 and director general of the Government scheme, Troubled Families.

Following her comments, Edward Leigh MP for Gainsborough [tweeted](#): “Equalities czar says we ‘can’t condemn others for living differently’ then condemns Catholics for living differently.”

## **House of Commons stats on civil partnerships**

Research briefing to Parliament - In England, Wales and Scotland, same sex couples have the option to marry or to register a civil partnership if they wish to gain legal recognition for their relationship. In Northern Ireland, same sex couples may register a civil partnership but may not marry. Across the UK, opposite sex couples may marry but they may not register a civil partnership.

When consulting on the introduction of marriage for same sex couples, the Coalition Government considered that it was unnecessary to extend civil partnership to opposite sex couples, given the availability of both civil and religious marriage.

### **Statistics on civil partnerships and marriage of same sex couples**

Following the introduction of marriage for same sex couples in England and Wales in March 2014, and in Scotland in December 2014, the number of civil partnerships fell. There were just over a thousand civil partnerships formed in the UK in 2015. Between 29 March 2014 and 30 June 2015, there were 7,366 marriages formed between same sex couples in England and Wales. Couples in civil partnerships in England and Wales have been able to convert their civil partnership into a marriage since 10 December 2014. Between that date, and 30 June 2015, 7,732 couples converted their civil partnership into a marriage in England and Wales. In 2015, there were 1,671 marriages formed between same sex couples in Scotland, of which 936 were between couples who were already in a civil partnership.

Read more at -

<http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7856>

## News Briefs

**+++ Connor institution** - The Institution of the Rev Jonny Campbell-Smyth as Incumbent of the

United Parish of Ballynure and Ballyeaston will take place on Tuesday January 17 2017. The rector-elect is currently Curate Assistant in the Parish of Jordanstown.

**+++ Volunteer with Craigavon Samaritans -** their next Information event is on Tuesday 17 January 7.30pm @ 162 Thomas Street, Portadown. Find out what its all about.

**+++ Volunteer with Christ Church Cathedral -** “We currently have spaces in the shop, located in our stunning...” <http://fb.me/10msSxW8X> or email [jonathan@christchurch.ie](mailto:jonathan@christchurch.ie)

**+++ Kenmore’s Annual Plough Service** - was held in St Patrick’s Church on the first Sunday after Epiphany. A plough was brought into church and decorated; the whole congregation stood together, asking for God’s Blessing on all those who work in agriculture in the year to come. This traditional service, with its wonderful poetic liturgy, is the ‘Please’ that balances the ‘Thank You’ of the Autumnal Harvest Celebrations. We remember that food doesn’t just arrive in SuperValu of its own accord – if a farmer doesn’t grow it, we don’t eat it. “This year, we also asked a special blessing on those who ‘plough, plant,

feed and nurture' our children – in a time when it seems that the world seems more interested in being clothed with self rather than clothed with Christ, we have a grave responsibility to keep Jesus' little ones from being choked with the weeds of consumerism and prejudice, so that they will blossom as a harvest that knows justice, service and love.”

### **+++ C of I Board Church and Society**

**Commission members search** - The current membership of the Church and Society Commission (CASC) reaches the end of its term in June 2017. The Honorary Secretaries of the General Synod are inviting members of the Church of Ireland who have relevant experience and who are willing to be considered for membership to submit expressions of interest, accompanied by an outline of particular skills or experience. The range of interest of CASC includes, but is not limited to, matters of social, political, environmental, economic, and medical significance where the Church of Ireland seeks to speak to contemporary issues from a Christian perspective.

Members of CASC should be prepared to work proactively to produce comment, briefings, and

statements, working in small teams, or to promote activity related to these headings within the life of the Church. CASC normally meets 4 times a year in either Belfast or Dublin; however, if there is significant legislative activity, a particular group may find that its time commitment may be considerably increased while the issue remains current.

Please send expressions of interest to Mrs Janet Maxwell, Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6, by 20th February 2017, or by email to [janet.maxwell@rcbdub.org](mailto:janet.maxwell@rcbdub.org). More information about CASC may be obtained from Janet (Tel: +353 1 4125 621) or from the outgoing chair, Rev Adrian Dorrian ([adriandorrian@gmail.com](mailto:adriandorrian@gmail.com)).

## **News links to reports on faith, politics and education**

### **Oldest Church of Ireland clergyman passes away aged 100 years old**

Impartial Reporter

The oldest living clergyman in the **Church of Ireland**, the Rev. Canon Herbert Aubrey Hamilton Northridge, who celebrated his 100th birthday in June ...

[http://www.impartialreporter.com/news/15013566.Oldest\\_Church\\_of\\_Ireland\\_clergyman\\_passes\\_away\\_aged\\_100\\_years\\_old/](http://www.impartialreporter.com/news/15013566.Oldest_Church_of_Ireland_clergyman_passes_away_aged_100_years_old/)

## **NI school caretaker imposed pictures of children on to abuse images**

Belfast Telegraph

A primary school caretaker who abused his position of trust by superimposing pictures of children from his Co Down school onto those depicting youngsters being sexually abused has been jailed for a year. However, given the time he served while awaiting trial, he is set to be released from jail.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/northern-ireland-primary-school-caretaker-imposed-pictures-of-pupils-onto-children-being-sexually-abused-35360283.html>

## **The Irish language hasn't gone away you know**

Sluggie O'Toole web site

<http://sluggerotoole.com/2017/01/11/the-irish-language-hasnt-gone-away-you-know/>

## **Knights of Malta refuse to assist in Vatican investigation over condom scandal**

The Journal

A top official was sacked over revelations that the order's charity branch distributed tens of thousands of condoms in Myanmar under his watch.

<http://www.thejournal.ie/knights-of-malta-investigation-condom-scandal-3180447-Jan2017/>

## **Times**

Reports that Britain's longest serving priest has celebrated his 100th birthday, having ministered for 75 years. The Revd William Tavernor was ordained at Ledbury parish church in December 1941 and has been a village vicar across the diocese of Hereford ever since. Mr Tavernor celebrated his birthday on New Year's Eve surrounded by friends and family, including his seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. There was also a special service in his parish church, St Michael and All Angels in Ledbury.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/long-serving-priest-gives-thanks-for-100-years-6j27stz62>

## **BBC/Mail/Sun**

Reports that more than 100 people attended the funeral of a Second World War veteran who died with no living family. Reginald Watson, who served in the King's Royal Rifle Corps, died on 23 November aged 90. The Revd Mandy Bishop, of Ormesby St Margaret, Norfolk, made a social media plea for mourners to attend his funeral after learning that he faced a pauper's service. She said she was "overwhelmed" by the response.



<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-norfolk-38576432>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4106352/You-t-let-old-soldier-100-people-turn-funeral-WWII-veteran-died-aged-90-no-living-family.html>

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2580587/more-than-100-mourners-attend-funeral-of-world-war-2-hero-who-died-at-the-age-of-90-with-no-surviving-friends-or-relatives/>

## **Premier**

Reports that a Christian MP has suggested charities and churches could have less money because of Jeremy Corbyn's maximum wage proposal. Rob Ffello, who represents Stoke on Trent South, was speaking after the Labour leader said a maximum wage was something the party would look at. The MP hinted the move could punish high-earning Christians who give significant amounts of their income to Christian and non-Christian charities.

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Christian-charities-could-lose-out-over-Jeremy-Corbyn-s-maximum-wage-idea>