



## **Pope Francis meets with Irish Bishops on ad limina visit to Rome**

Pope Francis met on Friday with Irish bishops who are in Rome this week on their ad limina visits – the first such visit since 2006.

Following the encounter, which lasted for over two hours, some of the bishops came to Vatican

Radio to share their impressions and to talk about the most significant challenges facing their Church today.

Less than half of the bishops meeting with Pope Francis on Friday had been on an ad limina visit before. Yet all of them were clearly impressed by the level of openness and dialogue they discovered in all the offices of the Roman Curia and particularly in their closed door, informal and unscripted conversation with the Pope.

Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh is president of the Irish bishops conference:

“He said at the beginning, ‘I’ll throw in the ball and let’s see what happens’, so it turned out to be a conversation about the Church in Ireland, about the struggles and challenges we’re having, but also about the importance of a ministry of presence, a ministry of the ear, where we’re listening to the hopes, struggles and fears of our people....”

Featuring high on the agenda were discussions about the family and about the need to reach out to young people, especially those whose faith has been shattered by the numerous sex abuse

scandals. As the bishops were meeting with the Pope in Rome, a new report was being published in Belfast about abuse cases and the bishops pledged their full cooperation in order to support victims and ensure the highest standards of child protection throughout the Church.

During their meetings the bishops said they spoke frankly of problems such as poverty and homelessness, the current political crisis in Northern Ireland, but also concerns about the place of women in the Catholic Church today, as Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin explained:

“No subject was off the agenda....Pope Francis again said to talk about our experiences, our challenges, our criticisms....One theme that came up on numerous occasions was the position of women in the Church, we brought it up in almost every congregation we went to and there was a willingness to listen and a recognition that we were asking a valid question, because the Irish episcopal conference is quite concerned about that theme”

The bishops said they also talked about preparations for the World Meeting of Families which will take place in Dublin next year, adding

that they discussed with Pope Francis the possibility of his visit to Ireland for the occasion, a first papal trip there since Pope John Paul travelled to the country, back in 1979.

## **Pope tells Irish bishops: you are goalkeepers, ready to take the shots**

Irish Times

Also attending the **news** conference were the Archbishop of Dublin, ... The **Irish** Times asked if the **Irish Church** had come to Rome wary of being ...

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/pope-tells-irish-bishops-you-are-goalkeepers-ready-to-take-the-shots-1.2945062>

## **Archbishop Martin asks Pope Francis to pray for Ireland in these 'politically uncertain and delicate ... -**

Derry Journal

<http://www.derryjournal.com/news/archbishop-martin-asks-pope-francis-to-pray-for-ireland-in-these-politically-uncertain-and-delicate-times-1-7783255>

## **Belfast cathedrals' Christian Unity service**

The annual service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity between the two Belfast



### ***United choirs of Belfast cathedrals***

cathedrals was held in St Peter's Cathedral on Tuesday January 17.

As it was the turn of the Roman Catholic Cathedral to host the service, Church of Ireland Primate Archbishop Richard Clarke chose the preacher, the Rt Rev John McDowell, Bishop of Clogher.

Attendance was up on previous years, which the Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev John Mann, said was encouraging. The Choir of St Anne's joined the Choir of St Peter's. St Anne's Master of the Choristers David Stevens played the organ and

Nigel McClintock, St Peter's Director of Music, conducted the joint choirs.

The theme of the Belfast service was: 'Reconciliation - The Love of Christ compels us,' based on the text 2 Corinthians 5: 14-20.

Church leaders who attended included Dr John Dunlop (representing the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church); Rt Rev Harold Miller, (Bishop of Down and Dromore), Bishop Anthony Farquar (Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus Down and Connor) and the Rev Bill Mullalley (Methodist President).

The Dean of Belfast and the new Administrator of St Peter's Cathedral, Fr Martin Graham, took part in the service. Cameron McGaughey, one of the vergers at St Anne's Cathedral, and Conor from the Cathedral choir, took part in the reading of prayers. The service was repeated in Armagh on Wednesday January 18 with the same preacher.

## **Maynooth professor's insight on Luther at Dublin Christian Unity service**

## The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2017 commenced with the inaugural service in Christ



***A cross made from the dismantled wall of division.***

Church, Taney, which was organised by Dublin Council of Churches.

Taking the theme of 'Crossing Barriers', members of the congregation brought 'stones' forward to build a wall, acknowledging our failure to be God's living stones. Each stone bore words reflecting issues which build walls of division: lack of love, hate and contempt, false accusation, discrimination, persecution, broken communion, intolerance, religious wars and conflicts, division and isolation. The wall was dismantled at the end of the service to make the shape of a cross. This year's theme 'Crossing Barriers' is based on 2 Corinthians 5:14–20. It originated in Germany, drawing on the country's experience of reconciliation and integration.

The sermon was delivered by the Revd Professor Declan Marmion SM of St Patrick's College, Maynooth. He noted that this year in Germany Christians would be celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformer Martin Luther in 2017.

Pope Francis speaks often about the 'heart of the Gospel', and Professor Marmion said that this underpinned a pastoral style which was more concerned with the essentials than with a multitude of doctrines. The Pope has called for ecclesial renewal which cannot be deferred and

the preacher suggested that Martin Luther also had a reforming agenda which was focused on the heart of the Gospel, urging people to focus anew on the Gospel and witness more credibly to it.

Professor Marmion recalled Pope emeritus Benedict XVI speaking about Martin Luther saying that Luther asked himself ‘Where do I stand before God?’ He said that this was a question each generation of Christians needed to ask. The Professor said that Catholics could now acknowledge that Luther intended to reform and not divide the church. As western society becomes increasingly multi-cultural, it is imperative that Christian churches present their message in a symphonic manner, he said.

At the end of the service the Rector, Canon Robert Warren, dedicated the tags from the Rotary Club Christmas Tree which had been in Dundrum Town Centre. In the run up to Christmas people wrote on the tags to remember a loved one and donated to the Rotary Club which raised €13,500 in Dublin for St Vincent de Paul.

## **Cork conference on residential care**

Every year in Ireland thousands of older adults are admitted to residential care. Saint Luke's Charity, Cork which has been involved in this type of care since 1872 is hosting an important conference for healthcare professionals, particularly those involved in residential care, on Thursday, 6th April at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Little Island, Cork. The conference is being organised by the charity's education and research centre - [Northridge House](#).

The conference, entitled 'Resident – Staff – Family Relationships' will explore the emotive, challenging and complex relationships that arise when older adults are admitted to residential care. The conference will also focus on how best to achieve positive outcomes for families, staff and particular residents themselves.

The conference focus is on the nursing home and disability sectors with an impressive line-up of speakers representing both of these. The keynote speaker, [Dr. Michael Bauer](#) from Australia has conducted extensive research and published in this area. All at St Luke's are honoured and delighted that he has agreed to deliver the keynote address. This 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference aims to acknowledge and address

the family's emotive journey, and will encourage the conference participants to nurture positive staff-family relationships by providing an insight into how this might occur, discussing and demonstrating strategies which work and pitfalls to avoid at different points in the resident's journey.

Research has shown that building strong trusting relationships in an unfamiliar environment with family members who find themselves in a strange place with new roles to play and complex rules to interpret, is not easy. Family emotions are often prominent in staff-family relationships; and at times such relationships may become divisive rather than one of partnership in the approach to the care and welfare of the resident. Such an environment can produce tension and difficulties for residents, families and staff. This is evidenced by a large number of complaints raised by relatives and seen in the media, in both the nursing home and disability sectors of residential care.

The full conference brochure is available here:  
[conference-brochure](#)

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021 453 6551 [www.northridgehouse.ie](http://www.northridgehouse.ie)



## ‘Good News for the countryside’ in new Presbyterian farming column

A new fortnightly column by Presbyterians who have a heart for the countryside is a new feature in Northern Ireland’s leading bi-weekly agri journal, ‘Farming Life’.

‘Good News for the countryside’, which began earlier this month, offers personal reflections on

faith and rural life with a strong gospel message. Contributors include ministers, retired ministers and others from a rural or farming background and is part of a rural initiative by the Church's [Council for Mission in Ireland](#).

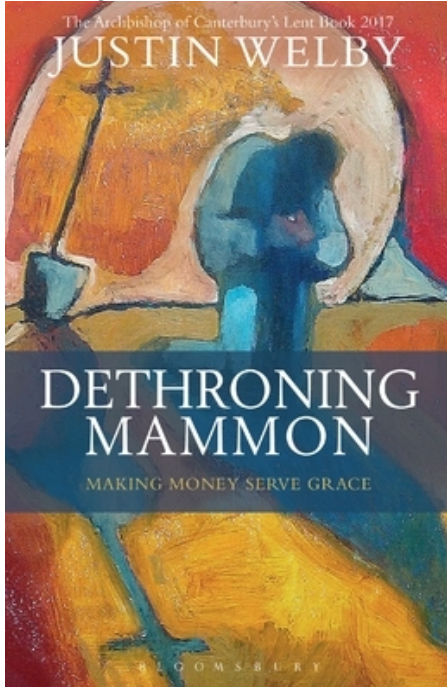
Talking about the column, one of its authors, Rev. Kenny Hanna, of Second Dromara Presbyterian Church said, "This us a wonderful opportunity to proclaim the Gospel and we are so very grateful to Ruth Rogers, the editor of Farming Life, for running with this and being so enthusiastic about it. We all hope people will be encouraged by it and that it bears much fruit."

You can read each column [here as a blog](#). Search for 'Farming and Rural Life'.

- See more at: <http://www.presbyterianireland.org/News/January-2017/New-weekly-column-that-brings-the-Good-News.aspx#sthash.y7LCZ0dF.dpuf>

## **[Dethroning Mammon: The Archbishop of Canterbury's 2017 Lent Book](#)**

In his first full-length book, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby looks at the subject of money and materialism.



Designed for study in the weeks of Lent leading up to Easter, *Dethroning Mammon* reflects on the impact of our own attitudes, and of the pressures that surround us; on how we handle the power of money, called Mammon in this book. Who will be on the throne of our lives? Who will direct our actions and attitudes? Is it Jesus Christ, who brings truth, hope and freedom? Or is it

Mammon, so attractive, so clear, but leading us into paths that tangle, trip and deceive?

Archbishop Justin Welby explores the tensions that arise in a society dominated by Mammon's modern aliases, economics and finance, and by the pressures of our culture to conform to Mammon's expectations. Following the Gospels towards Easter, this book asks the reader what it means to dethrone Mammon in the values and priorities of our civilisation and in our own existence. In *Dethroning Mammon*, Archbishop Justin challenges us to use Lent as a time of learning to trust in the abundance and grace of God.

For more information and to buy the book, go to:  
<http://bloomsbury.com/uk/dethroning-mammon-making-money-serve-grace-9781472929778/>

## **Pope offers prayers for Trump as he is sworn in as US president**

Pope Francis sent best wishes and prayers to incoming President Donald J Trump shortly after he took the oath of office.

“I offer you my cordial good wishes and the assurance of my prayers that almighty God will



***President Donald Trump speaks after his swearing-in as the country's 45th president***

grant you wisdom and strength in the exercise of your high office,” the Pope’s message said.

Saying that the human family faces “grave humanitarian crises” that demand “far-sighted and united political responses,” the Pope said he would pray that Trump’s decisions “will be guided by the rich spiritual and ethical values that have shaped the history of the American people and your nation’s commitment to the advancement of human dignity and freedom worldwide.”

The Pope also said he hoped that America's "stature" continued to be measured by "above all its concern for the poor, the outcast and those in need who, like Lazarus, stand before our door."

The message concluded with the Pope saying he would ask God to grant the new president, his family and all Americans "peace, concord and every material and spiritual prosperity."

## News briefs

**+++ Christian Unity in Castledermott** - Tonight at 8 o'clock the Very Rev. Dr. Philip Knowles will host a service in **St. James' church, Castledermot**, for the week of prayer for Christian Unity. The address will be given by the Very Rev. Fr. Paul O'Driscoll.

**+++ Limerick recital** - In **St Mary's cathedral, Limerick**, there will be a lunchtime recital on Wednesday at 1.15pm by tenor Conor Gibbons accompanied by Peter Barley (piano). Free admission, with a retiring collection for the Companions of St Mary's Cathedral Music

### **+++ Celebrating 50 Years of St Patrick's Academy, Lisburn**

- As part of the celebrations there is a special mass on Sunday, 22 January 2017 at 2.00pm in St Patrick's Church, Lisburn to mark the occasion. Afterwards the school will be open to pupils and friends – past and present – to join in for refreshments and a unique opportunity to stroll down memory lane.

### **+++ Seagoe Parish Antiques and Collectibles Fair**

- Saturday 11th February 10am–4pm. “ Last year we had a great range of stalls, and this year will offer even more variety. Please spread the word and come along.”

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

### **Northern Ireland child abuse inquiry singles out police and church**

The Guardian

Campaigners for alleged victims of historical institutional abuse outside the hotel where Sir Anthony Hart was making his statement.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jan/20/northern-ireland-inquiry-report-outlines-shocking-child-abuse>

## **Northern Ireland child abuse inquiry to publish report in Belfast**

The Guardian

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jan/20/northern-ireland-child-abuse-report-inquiry-published-belfast>

## **'Unspeakable cruelty and vicious abuse' - historical abuse inquiry releases damning report**

[thejournal.ie](http://www.thejournal.ie)

<http://www.thejournal.ie/northern-ireland-childrens-homes-abuse-3196344-Jan2017/>

## **Head of Catholic church in Ireland apologises to child abuse victims**

Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/head-of-catholic-church-in-ireland-apologises-to-child-abuse-victims-35384886.html>

## **Gardaí at 'advanced stage' of 'Kings Hospital school sexual attack' investigation - but 'highly unlikely' students will face action**

Irish Independent

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/garda-at-advanced-stage-of-sexual-attack-investigation-but-highly-unlikely-students-will-face-action-35385694.html>

## **People are divided over whether the Dáil should begin each day with a prayer**

The Journal

Minister Katherine Zappone says it should be replaced with a moment of silence.

<http://www.thejournal.ie/dail-prayer-2-3194437-Jan2017/>

## **NI Teachers urged to end co-operation with school inspections**

BBC News

The NASUWT union tells members to end co-operation with school inspections.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-38699618>

## **Anglican growth and decline**

Church Times

Review of world-wide report

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2017/6-january/features/features/a-story-of-growth-and-decline>

## **Both sides take heart from PM's Brexit speech**

Church Times

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2017/20-january/news/uk/both-sides-take-heart-from-pm-s-brexit-speech>

## **Queen's chaplain resigns over Glasgow cathedral Koran row**

BBC News

One of the Queen's chaplains resigns after a row about reading from the Koran in a Glasgow church.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-38710173>

## **S Times**

Report on proposal which the *Sunday Times* says is to be put to General Synod, that gay clergy would still be expected to be celibate but would no longer be questioned about their private lives. Article says the proposal will be initially considered by bishops this week.

Includes comment from MPs Ben Bradshaw and Frank Field both members of the Ecclesiastical Committee and from Andrea Williams of Christian Concern. A Church spokesperson said: "The House of Bishops meets tomorrow and until [then] any claims as to decisions are pure speculation."

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/church-to-draw-veil-over-sex-lives-of-gayclergy-g9hgnwqxz>

## **Mail**

Report that President Trump and his family attended a national prayer service at Washington National Cathedral, a tradition for new presidents, hosted by the Episcopal parish.

Article says this sparked debate among Episcopalians opposed to his policies but Bishop Mariann Budde of the Diocese of Washington wrote in a blog post that while she shared "a sense of outrage at some of the president-elect's words and actions," she felt an obligation

to welcome all people without qualification, especially those who disagree and need to find a way to work together.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-4142674/Trump-wraps-ceremony-turns-governing.html#ixzz4WToL5XMC>

## **S Times**

Report that Wycliffe Hall theological college has asked students to avoid calling God “He” and to replace “mankind” with “humankind”, in an attempt to counteract gender bias. The move is part of an “inclusive language policy” for staff and students.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/priests-college-sings-praises-to-gender-free-god-rwl8l7hkh>

## **BBC**

Report that the Church in Wales' first female bishop, Joanna Penberthy, was consecrated as Bishop of St Davids at Llandaff Cathedral yesterday. She was elected to the position by members of the Electoral College in November.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-38685268>

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