



# CNI

## **C of I group's view on Brexit in response to Conference of European Churches**

The Church of Ireland's European Affairs Working Group of the Church of Ireland said yesterday that "The Church of Ireland would hope that any changes brought about because of Brexit, and the border issue in particular, will reflect the desire for reconciliation and the strengthening of peace."

The Working Group was responding to an Open Letter to the Member Churches of the Conference of European Churches in advance of its next assembly in Novi Sad, Serbia (30 May to 6 June 2018).

The Working Group said that "since the Open Letter was sent out to the Member States, the context for the Church of Ireland has changed dramatically, both for the Church and for its members. Most notably, the recent referendum in the United Kingdom on membership of the

European Union ('Brexit') raises many questions for the churches and citizens on this island and poses many challenges.”

The statement continues, “The principal challenge posed by the referendum result is the possibility of a new ‘hard border’ being imposed between the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom, which would have serious implications for all aspects of life on this island. The return of a ‘hard border’ would restrict the free movement of people, possibly bring a loss of income for farmers North and South of the border, generate greater difficulties for businesses exporting from the Republic of Ireland to the UK, see a drop-off in British tourists visiting the Republic of Ireland, and even see a future spill-over of rising racism and anti-immigrant feelings.

“The Church of Ireland would hope that any changes brought about because of Brexit, and the border issue in particular, will reflect the desire for reconciliation and the strengthening of peace. “

Addressing the challenge of refugees and migrants, the Working Group comments, “The response to refugees and migrants has been mixed in Ireland. The Church of Ireland has two working groups to monitor and respond to

related issues, but the variation in responses at community level raise questions about Ireland's reputation as the land of 'Cead Mile Failte' ('A Hundred Thousand Welcomes').

“On the one hand the Government in Dublin and the Assembly in Belfast have yet to meet the commitments given on the number of refugees who would be accepted into the respective jurisdictions. On the other hand, however, the Irish Naval Service has played a particularly exemplary role in rescue operations in the Mediterranean and Irish aid agencies have contributed to varying degrees to work with the churches and refugees in Greece.

“Many local communities feel they are confronted with a dilemma of offering a welcome for refugees but knowing there is a major housing crisis in Ireland or being aware of tensions surrounding the housing of members of the Travelling Community.

“Providing a welcome space for refugees may be both a challenge and an opportunity for parishes, and one suggestion involves each parish or group of parishes doing something tangible, such as offering a practical welcome for one family.”

The Working Group states, "The Open Letter raises questions about conflicts on the fringes of Europe, and we note that peacekeeping operations are a major part of Irish foreign policy and have popular support throughout the Republic of Ireland. Indeed, there has been a notable expressions of support for Irish naval operations with refugees in the Mediterranean."

### **CNI Comment -**

The Working Group however totally ignores the current efforts of the three British forces in this area . These forces draw members from both sides of the Irish border and involve laity of the C of I as well as clergy of the Church of Ireland serving as chaplains to the three services. As the Working Group itself comments, "Ireland north and south faces tensions between the desires to maintain cultural identity and the need to embrace diversity." The group needs to reflect on its ecclesial all-Ireland responsibilities and demonstrate the sensitivity it advocates.

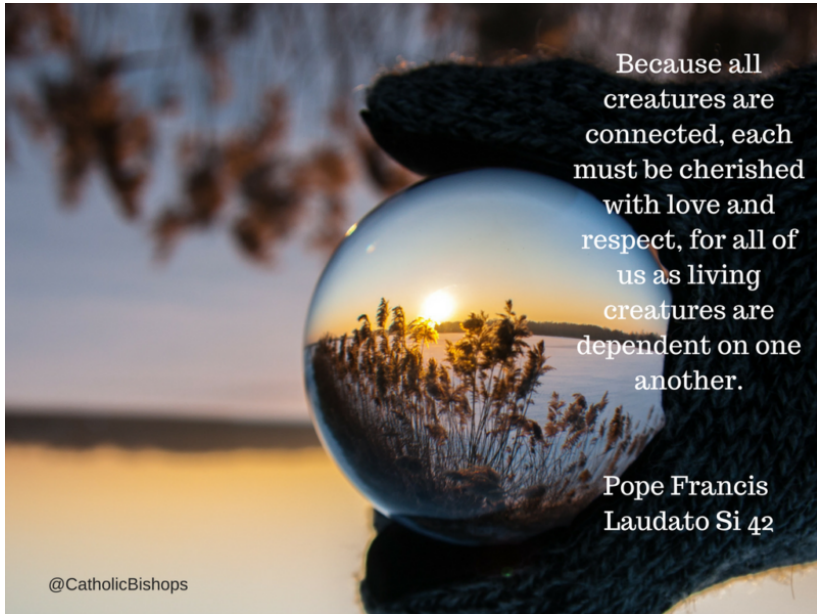
## **Caring for our common home theme of Catholic Schools Week 2017**

Catholic Schools Week 2017 will be celebrated from Sunday 29 January until Saturday 4 February on the theme 'Catholic schools: Learning with Pope Francis to care for our common home'. Father Tom Deenihan from the Council for Education of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference shares his thoughts on the importance of Catholic Schools Week and this year's theme.

Catholic Schools Week has now become a well-established feature on the diaries of both the Catholic school and the local parish. It has, over the years, provided an opportunity to strengthen links between school and parish and provided an opportunity for the pupils of both primary and post-primary schools to contribute to the Sunday liturgy in the Parish.

Catholic Schools Week 2017 begins on Sunday, 29 January. Mass to launch the week will be celebrated by Bishop Denis Nulty from the Church of Ss Peter and Paul in Portlaoise and will broadcast on RTÉ.

Portlaoise is a fine example of the contribution that Catholic schools make to both parish and society. The parish currently has five primary schools with a combined enrolment of 2,567 pupils from 46 nationalities. In addition, the



parish has two Catholic secondary schools sharing a campus, one operated by the Christian Brothers (ERST), the other by the Presentation Sisters (Ceist), and two special schools under the patronage of the Diocesan Bishop with an enrolment of 125 pupils.

It is evident then that this parish has a vibrant, inclusive and Catholic education structure. This vibrancy and inclusivity is replicated in so many other parishes and must be continually proclaimed during Catholic Schools Week and throughout the year.

This year's theme, 'learning with Pope Francis to care for our common home', is very much rooted in the papacy of Pope Francis and *Laudato Si'*.

The theme is one that has endless possibilities within both the parish and the school itself. For example, many of our schools have been engaging on projects such as the Green School Flag. This year's theme also supports the 'cross-curricular' approach, touching as it does the curriculum areas of biology, science, CSPE, SPHE and religion and, in many ways, makes it easier to bridge the gap between school and parish. However, from those viewpoints, the celebration does afford an opportunity to highlight some passages from *Laudato Si'*.

The themes are also practical. In terms of the week itself, a separate theme has been allocated to each day and corresponding resources prepared.

Monday: *Seeing the beauty of our common home*;

Tuesday: *Caring for our common home*;

Wednesday: *Grandparents: Watching over our common home*;

Thursday: *Protecting our common home*;

Friday: *Sharing our common home*.

For more see [www.intercommagazine.ie](http://www.intercommagazine.ie).



## **Saturday's Presbyterian Youth Assembly will enable young peoples' voices to be heard**

The Youth Assembly on Saturday, 28th January 2017 is designed to help young people and young adults have their voice heard within their church.

From 10am – 4pm, 15-25 year olds from right across the Presbyterian Church in Ireland will gather in Assembly Buildings, Belfast, to speak into major issues, including social media, mental health and young people's involvement in the church.



Cost is only £8 which includes lunch and a booking form can be obtained from Clerks of Session, or by emailing [clw@presbyterianireland.org](mailto:clw@presbyterianireland.org) or download from the link below:



Click to download the [Youth Assembly booking form](#)

## **Young people sought for “Living & Leading in Contested Spaces” in West Bank, Ireland and Israel**

Following two successful years The Chaplaincy at TCD is inviting young people to become involved in the “Space to Breathe” programme which is a leadership programme for young adults who are living in contested spaces.

The challenge is, “How can we, as young people from Ireland, Palestine and Israel, build on connections already created through the Space To Breathe program, inspire and equip youth responsibility and leadership in an increasingly fragmented and violent world.”

The response the chaplains state rests with, “Young adults from the Middle East (Jewish & Arab Israeli/Palestinian Christian & Muslim) and Ireland (Protestant, RC, Muslim & Jewish), dialoguing and exploring together questions of participatory leadership in contested spaces.” The 2016 stage of the project envisions Irish and Northern Irish young adults from Christian, Muslim and Jewish backgrounds being in dialogue and learning, in Palestine, in Israel, and in Ireland.

Facilitated workshops and discussions will include issues of conflict / community transformation / contested histories / religious roots & violence conflict / religious texts & conflict / youth leadership / participatory & collaborative leadership

The program is intentionally multi-faith and multi-national, for young adults.

It is fully recognised that it will be hard for some participants to enter such a dialogue – especially given the current circumstances in the Middle East. Valuable lessons have come from Northern Ireland in conflict management and leadership, and have centred around dialogue, empathetic

understanding and clarity of issues. It is this belief in human encounter that drives the continuing program. As a sign of the participants personal buy-in, they will be asked to contribute a donation to the program costs themselves, roughly 1/3 of the total cost. The programme will be held 3rd- 10th September & 6th-10th November Ireland 2017 in the West Bank, Israel and Ireland.

To apply to be part of this exciting and life-changing opportunity ... [Download the application form](#) & email to [julian.hamilton@tcd.ie](mailto:julian.hamilton@tcd.ie) Applications to be received by 15th February 2017.

<https://www.tcd.ie/Chaplaincy/news/2017-01-03-space-to-breathe.php>

## **Catalyst Group cancels summer festival**

In a Facebook posting the Catalyst Group announced that it has cancelled this year's summer festival and outlines where its areas of involvement and hoped for growth will focus.

Catalyst states, "Thank you for joining in with us at Catalyst over the last 3 years. We have loved

seeing how God has built relationships and gathered young adults from across church backgrounds throughout the island.

“2016 was a year of expansion for us at Summer Madness and this is set to continue into 2017! We have launched the Global Outreach Day initiative, trying to mobilise thousands of people across Ireland to share their faith across the island of Ireland.

“We have also embarked on a partnership with an American organisation called Christ in Youth (CIY), to commit serving within the Republic of Ireland with a new ministry to help raise up young people to be Kingdom Workers in all spheres of influence.

“All of this along with continuing to grow the Summer Madness Festival in Glenarm as we celebrate our 30th anniversary.

“This is all really exciting and we are looking forward to seeing how God moves as we step out in faith with these new endeavours. However, it is with real sadness that our priorities and resources, will not enable us to also run the Catalyst festival this summer in 2017.

“We still have a strong heart to serve young adults across the island and as this year unfolds,

we hope to find new ways to continue this. For now, we expect to run a Day Gathering at Summer Madness 2017 designed for young adults; we will be announcing details of the gathering in the next few months.”

<http://catalystireland.com/festival/>

## **Lisburn’s Christ Church parish team to revisit Ugandan school**

A team from Christ Church Parish, Lisburn, will be travelling to Uganda in February to visit St Apollo School, Kasizi, in the Diocese of Luwero.

This will be the third time a team from the parish has been out to the school with the charity [Fields of Life](#).

The team is made up of the rector of Christ Church, the Rev Paul Dundas, along with Audrey Knowles, Jane Marks, Beth Harris, Beverley Ringland, Roberta Thompson, Janice Thompson, Richard Thompson, Raymond Geddis, Gary Knowles and Johnston Boyle.

They will leave Dublin for Uganda on Saturday February 11, travelling via Addis Ababa in



***The team from Christ Church, Lisburn, which leaves for Uganda on February 11.***

Ethiopia and arriving on the Sunday afternoon to continue their journey to Luwero.

They will be based in the Diocesan Guesthouse and will be at St Apollo School from Monday February 13 until Friday February 24.

St Apollo School was established in 2007, but had only one small building and held many classes under trees. Christ Church Parish raised £75,000 and in partnership with Fields of Life two new blocks of classrooms were built. A team visited in 2012 to work on the classrooms. The

parish continued to support the school and raised more than £24,000 for a staff residence which they helped complete on their last trip in 2015 (see [Connor Connections report](#)).

During their visit next month, the team will be doing practical work as well as RE lessons on the life of Jesus, sport's days and women's work.

They will attend a diocesan seminar for 60 leaders on Saturday February 18, when Paul will speak on the book of Ephesians. The Bishop of Luwero, the Rt Revd Eridard Kironde Nsubuga, will be at the seminar.

Sunday worship on February 19 will be with the Church Community at St Apollo where Paul will preach, and on Wednesdays the 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, the women in the Christ Church team will have fellowship with the Esther group that meets at the Cathedral – at 7am!

During its time in Luwero, the team is hoping to meet up with James and Charles, theological students who are supported by the parish

After a celebration at St Apollo School on Friday February 24, the team leaves the following day for the flights back to Dublin, again via Ethiopia.

## Contemplative Prayer retreats

The Fellowship of Contemplative Prayer, Ireland, has organised two Retreats at The Church of Ireland Theological Institute, Braemor Park, Churchtown, Dublin 14, next June. The Witness will be Carol Casey.

The first Retreat will be the weekend Friday 16th.– Sunday 18th. June '17. This usually begins at approx. 6.00 P.M. on Friday and concludes at approx. 3.00 P.M. Sunday.

The second Retreat will be Monday 19th.– Wednesday 21st. June '17. This usually begins at approx. 6.00 P.M. on Monday and concludes after Lunch on Wednesday.

Members of all Churches , lay and Ordained ,are welcome to attend these Retreats. Silence is observed throughout most of the Retreats.

The Purpose of The Fellowship of Contemplative Prayer is to encourage silent and contemplative prayer according to the method and pattern which has been learnt from the writings and example of it's founder, Robert Coulson.



Where two or three are gathered together, the Lord is in their midst, and the work is to hear, to receive and to do the Word of God; in this way the Word is incarnated in us.

The important attitude is that of Listening to God or to Jesus speaking.

Anyone who is interested in attending one of the Retreats should contact The Revd. J. Leslie Crampton, Tel: 053-9232589. or Email : [cramptonjl41@gmail.com](mailto:cramptonjl41@gmail.com) Or 41 Beech Ave. The Paddock, Enniscorthy, Co. WEXFORD. Y21 Y6H9 Eire.

## **Knights of Malta chief resigns in condoms row with Pope**

The head of the Knights of Malta has resigned on the request of Pope Francis, the ancient Catholic order has said.

The resignation of Grand Master Matthew Festing ends a bitter month-long dispute linked to the use of condoms that had become a test of the reforming pope's authority over conservatives in the Church.

Pope Francis asked him to step down at a meeting yesterday. Grand masters of the



***Grand Master Matthew Festing resigned after a meeting with Pope Francis***

institution, which was founded in the 11th century, usually keep their positions for life.

"The pope asked him to resign and he agreed," the spokesperson said, adding that the next step was a formality in which the group's Sovereign Council would have to sign off on the highly unusual resignation.

The order would be run by its number two, or grand commander, until a new head is elected.

Mr Festing and the Vatican have been locked in a bitter dispute since one of the order's top knights, Grand Chancellor Albrecht Freiherr von

Boeselager, was sacked in December in the chivalric equivalent of a boardroom showdown - ostensibly because he allowed the use of condoms in a medical project for the poor.

Mr Von Boeselager appealed to the pope, who appointed a five-member commission to look into the unusual circumstances of the sacking, but Mr Festing refused to co-operate and called the commission illegitimate.

Mr Festing's resignation was the latest twist in a battle of wills between the heads of two of the world's oldest institutions.

Mr Festing, a Briton, had denounced the papal commission as intervention in the order's sovereign affairs, accused member shaving a conflict of interest and defiantly set up his own internal commission.

The Vatican, in turn, rejected what it said was an attempt to discredit members of the commission and ordered the leaders of the institution to cooperate with the inquiry. The papal commission was due to deliver its findings to the pope at the end of the month.

The all-male top leaders of the Knights of Malta are not clerics, but they take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience to the pope.

The institution has 13,500 members, 25,000 employees and 80,000 volunteers worldwide.

The order, formed in the 11th century to provide protection and medical care for pilgrims to the Holy Land, has the status of a sovereign entity.

It maintains diplomatic relations with over 100 states and the European Union and permanent observer status at the United Nations.

When Mr Festing fired Mr Von Boeselager, he accused the German of hiding the fact that he allowed the use of condoms when he ran Malteser International, the order's humanitarian aid agency.

Mr Von Boeselager and his supporters say the condom issue was an excuse by Mr Festing and Cardinal Raymond Leo Burke, an arch-conservative who has accused the pope of being too liberal, to increase their power.

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

### **Catholic schools might use parish boundaries for admissions**

Irish Times

“On the other hand, a **Church of Ireland** school will serve a much larger area. There are two existing Muslim schools in Dublin who potentially would ...

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/catholic-schools-might-use-parish-boundaries-for-admissions-1.2949882>

**'It would be great if our politicians were more trusting of each other and worked together for the ...**

Belfast Telegraph - Interview with the Dean of Belfast

Life in Northern Ireland in 1973 was very different. The accommodation I got was at the **Church of Ireland** student centre and was part of a Christian ...

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/life/features/it-would-be-great-if-our-politicians-were-more-trusting-of-each-other-and-worked-together-for-the-common-good-of-our-community-35384904.html>

**The Irish Girl Guides is to start allowing transgender children into their ranks**

The Journal

Children who are male on their birth cert but who self-identify as female will be allowed to join.

<http://www.thejournal.ie/irish-girl-guides-3201958-Jan2017/>

## **£25,000 grant for Ulster Scots hall that 'does not exist'**

Irish News - A community hall which does not appear to exist has been offered a £25,000 grant as part of a controversial government scheme. Randalstown Ulster Scots Cultural Society was named earlier this month as one of the recipients of a controversial 'community halls' grants scheme run by the Department for Communities.

<http://www.irishnews.com/news/2017/01/25/news/mystery-surrounds-ulster-scots-community-hall-grant-application-903735/?param=ds441rif44T#>

## **Trump revives ban on foreign aid to groups that give abortion counseling**

NY Times

U.S. law already prohibits the use of American taxpayer dollars for abortion services anywhere, but Trump's order takes the prohibition further. More from [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

[Church of England to consider dropping celibacy question for gay clergy](#)

PinkNews

The **Church of England** has been urged to turn a “blind eye” to gay clergy members sex lives as part of a push to eradicate homophobia in the church.

**Church of England may turn blind eye to gay clergy sex** - Daily Mail

**Gay Clergy To No Longer Swear Celibacy** - ChristianToday

**Bishops to consider dropping celibacy question for gay clergy** - Premier

## **Why is the Church of England backing fracking?**

Left Foot Forward

The **Church of England** owns 100,000 acres of land and fracking companies are already eyeing it up following today's **news** – meaning fracking could ...

<https://leftfootforward.org/2017/01/why-is-the-church-of-england-backing-fracking/>

## **Church of England Gives Blessing to Fracking in the UK**

Energy In Depth

A report released last week by the **Church of England** endorses shale development in the

United Kingdom, lauding fracking as a “morally acceptable ...

<https://energyindepth.org/national/church-england-gives-blessing-fracking-in-uk/>

### **Guard/Christian Today**

Coverage of the Supreme Court ruling that MPs and peers must give their consent before the Government can trigger Article 50 and formally start the Brexit process. The Guardian live blog includes coverage on social media of comments in the House of Lords by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Christian Today reports the views of Christian MPs on both sides of the debate.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/blog/live/2017/jan/24/supreme-court-article-50-judgement-announces-its-article-50-judgment-politics-live>

### **Ind**

Reports that members of South London Liberal Synagogue in Streatham are hoping to raise £50,000 to convert a former religious studies teaching room into a two-bedroom flat for a family of refugees. The article includes a reference to a refugee family housed in a cottage in the grounds of Lambeth Palace as part of the community sponsorship scheme launched last



year by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Home Secretary.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/south-london-liberal-synagogue-to-house-syrian-muslim-refugee-family-refugees-islamophobia-islam-a7543761.html>

### **BBC/Nothern Echo**

Reports that a man who sent hundreds of abusive and “highly offensive” letters to pop stars, sporting personalities and MPs has been jailed for four and a half years at Birmingham Crown Court. Mark Graham, 46, of Everdon Road, Holbrooks, Coventry, was caught after a racially offensive letter he sent to the Archbishop of York in 2013 was sent for forensic tests. Graham was convicted of nine counts of racially aggravated harassment and one count of attempted racially aggravated harassment at an earlier court hearing.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-coventry-warwickshire-38737290>

### **Letters**

#### **Times/Ind (Scroll down)**

Various letters including comment on the Koran reading at St Mary’s Episcopal Church in Glasgow at an Epiphany service earlier this

month and the resignation of Rev Gavin Ashenden as a Chaplain to the Queen.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/civil-servants-and-the-rehashing-of-old-ideas-0v3nrx20h>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/letters/brexit-supreme-court-article-50-judgment-donald-trump-president-us-alternative-facts-trident-test-a7544216.html>