



Metropolitan Silouan, Archbishop of the Diocese of the British Isles and Ireland, Antiochian Orthodox Church with Bishop John McDowell, Chairman of the Irish Council of Churches

Irish churches in solidarity with the suffering Christian community in Syria

“The Christians of Syria need their fellow Christians throughout the world to pray for them, to listen to them and to feel their pain.” Said

Metropolitan Silouan, Archbishop of the Diocese of the British Isles and Ireland, Antiochian Orthodox Church.

Last Friday 22nd July 2016, representatives of the Irish Council of Churches (ICC) and the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference welcomed His Eminence Metropolitan Silouan on the occasion of his first pastoral visit to the Antiochian Orthodox community in Belfast.

In his opening address Metropolitan Silouan emphasised the importance of cooperation and dialogue between Christians of different traditions, illustrated by the positive experiences of the Antiochian Orthodox Church in Britain and Ireland.

Born in Syria and recently returned from a visit to the exiled Syrian community in Lebanon, the Archbishop gave a moving account of the challenges facing the Syrian church. He said:

“The Christians of Syria are frightened for their future, and particularly for their children’s future. Families are facing very difficult choices: whether they leave or stay, their lives may be at risk, and they face a real struggle to earn a living. The

international community needs to prioritise conflict resolution to address the root causes of this suffering and protect the future of this community.

“Solidarity and cooperation between Christian churches is vital because we have a common mission to defend the dignity of the human person and live out the Christian faith of our communities.

“At this time, the Christians of Syria need their fellow Christians to pray for them, to listen to them and feel their pain.”

Thanking Metropolitan Silouan on behalf of the representatives of the Irish Churches, Bishop John McDowell, Church of Ireland Bishop of Clogher and President of the Irish Council of Churches, said:

“It was a great privilege for us to hear from Metropolitan Silouan today about the experiences of the Syrian Orthodox community, both in Ireland, where this community is growing, and in Syria, where they are experiencing unimaginable suffering. We are very grateful to the Archbishop for coming to speak to us and we

assure him of our prayers and solidarity with the Christian communities of Syria and the Middle East.”

New documentary on Knock to open in cinemas in August

A new Irish feature documentary on Knock shrine is set to open in Irish cinemas at the end of August.

‘Strange Occurrences in a small Irish village’ is the work of Underground Films, the company behind the award-winning ‘One Million Dubliners’ which focused on Glasnevin cemetery.

The film is directed by Aoife Kelleher who explained that the film’s title is derived from the international press coverage at the time of the apparition.

In August 1879, fifteen people in the small Co Mayo village of Knock claimed to witness an apparition of the Virgin Mary.

After two official inquiries, the village was declared a Marian shrine.

Today, Knock's 2,000 residents welcome over one million pilgrims annually.

The film develops a fascinating, vibrant portrait of the phenomenon by examining the vast patchwork of individuals and groups involved.

These include invalids seeking miraculous cures; the sibling owners of rival religious merchandise shops; Knock local, Mildred who is determined to secure a more prominent role for the shrine's Handmaids; the intriguing staff of the Knock Marriage Bureau, a throwback to old matchmaking days that still rings true today; and Fr Richard Gibbons, charming and ambitious parish priest, committed to enticing new US visitors via Knock Airport.

The film allows believers celebrate the phenomenon of the apparition and those who facilitate its ongoing popularity, while providing sceptics with a fascinating insight into the thriving world, and business, of Ireland's Marian shrine.

"It's very important that every generation interrogate the stories that are passed down to them, and look at them afresh, and decide for themselves whether they should be embraced

and preserved or discarded,” director Aoife Kelleher commented.

“The story itself is so fantastic that you completely want to get to the bottom of it. You want to know what it is that they saw and how it was spoken about at the time.”

Kelleher added, “It’s a documentary about religion rather than a religious documentary. At the very heart of Knock is this story about an apparition, but in making the documentary we wanted to look at the apparition in its social context and its historical context.”

‘Strange Occurrences in a small Irish village’ is an Underground Films production in association with RTÉ and the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland in association with Shoot for the Moon and Bord Scannán na hÉireann /The Irish Film Board.

The film is released in Irish cinemas on 26 August. For more information: Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/knockfilm/> and Twitter: @ugfilms#knockfilm



Kirk minister bags all 282 Munros in charity climb

A Church of Scotland minister has raised thousands of pounds to help tackle violence against women by climbing all of the country's 282 Munro mountains.

The Rev Dr Valerie Allen's ambition to conquer every peak of more than 3,000ft has been 19 years in the making.

The minister followed in the footsteps of fellow Church of Scotland minister the Rev Archibald Eneas Robertson who is on record as the first

person to complete all the Munros in September 1901.

Dr Allen of Doune, Stirlingshire, convener of the Church of Scotland's Violence Against Women Task Group, climbed her final Munro - Ben Lomond - on July 2.

She has been officially recorded as a "Munro compleatist" by the Scottish Mountaineering Club. It is believed she is the first Church of Scotland woman minister to accomplish the feat.

"When I was standing on top of Ben Lomond I felt a real sense of unreality that something that has been such a focus in my life for so long had come to an end," she said.

"I had a quiet sense of accomplishment and a real feeling of joy."

As passionate about gender justice as she is about climbing, Dr Allen used the challenge to raise money for four organisations who share her vision - Christian Aid, The Iona Community and WEvolution in Scotland, and Capacitar in the United States.

"At the heart of the Gospel is Jesus' promise of fullness of life," she said.

"Violence against women prevents women from flourishing - it robs them of fullness of life.

"I am committed to working for a world in which there is true equality and in which all forms of violence against women - from sexual innuendoes to rape or domestic abuse - are eradicated.

"These organisations are helping to empower women as they reach for fullness of life.

"The money raised will help a variety of projects from micro finance programmes in Dundee and Glasgow to teaching wellness and healing practices to women living with post-traumatic stress disorder in Afghanistan, the legacy of terrible violence."

So far Dr Allen has raised more than £2,500 tantalisingly close to her target of £3,000."I have been bowled over by the generosity of people on both sides of the Atlantic," she said.

Cathedral and choral

+++ St Mary's cathedral, Limerick - On Tuesday at 4pm Nicole Robinson will give a

recital of 'Songs from the Musicals' in **St Mary's cathedral, Limerick**, in aid of the cathedral and the cathedral's vibrant music programme.

+++ In St Ann's church, Killult, Falcarragh, Co. Donegal - where the rector is the Revd David MacDonnell, a service of Choral Evensong will be held to celebrate Feast of St Ann. During the service eleven children will be admitted into the choir and presented with their choir robes. The children have been following the RSCM Voice for Life programme.

+++ 'Summer Music at Sandford' - continues on Friday at lunchtime with a guitar duet recital by Luke Tobin and Gerard Boyle.

+++ Christ Church cathedral, Dublin - recently the cathedral's voluntary choir, which is celebrating its third year in existence, sang a new setting of the Eucharist, the *Little Organ Mass*, which had been specially composed by the cathedral's assistant organist, Dr David Bremner.

+++ Jazz in the Nave in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin - on 22, 23, 24, 25, & 26 August at 18.15. Concerts every evening during Heritage Week feature a variety of performers including Natalia

McGough and Barbara Dunne, David Leigh, and Suzanne Savage.

+++ Organist David Gedge - David died on 2 July 2016 aged 77. He made a huge impact on church music, choral training and encouraging young talent, with a particular interest in helping disadvantaged youths.

Born in London, Gedge sang in Southwark Cathedral Choir from 1947 to 1962. He sang the part of Nicholas in Britten's *St Nicholas* at its first London performance and, as a treble, sang at the coronation of the Queen at Westminster Abbey. After graduating from the Royal Academy of Music, he embarked on a career in church music and choral conducting.

He was appointed organist and choirmaster at Selby Abbey in 1962, and was awarded the Turpin Prize in the same year upon achieving his FRCO. He became organist and choirmaster of Brecon Cathedral in 1966, a position he held for more than 40 years. Gedge and his wife Hazel Davies were the longest serving husband-and-wife cathedral organists in the UK to stay in one place.

He wrote two autobiographies: *A Country Cathedral Organist Looks Back* and *More From a Country Cathedral Organist*. His honours included an MBE, a fellowship of the Royal Academy of Music, a fellowship of the Royal Schools of Church Music and a RWCMD fellowship.

News briefs



+++ Doctorate for Cork Hospital chaplain -
The Reverend Canon Dr Daniel Nuzum, who is

whole-time chaplain at Cork University Hospital, Marymount Hospice and the Bon Secours Hospital in the United Dioceses of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, successfully defended his doctoral thesis at University College Cork earlier this year.

At the summer conferrings last month, at the University, he was conferred with his doctorate.

Dr Nuzum's research was in the field of pregnancy loss and stillbirth; the title of his thesis is: 'The spiritual and professional impact of stillbirth.'

+++ Enniskillen Healing service - Thursday
28th July – **Healing Service** in St Macartin's Cathedral, Enniskillen at 1.05pm.

+++ Clogher diocesan reader - on Sunday 31st
July there will be a **Commissioning Service** for Colin Brownsmith as Diocesan Reader in Inishmacsaint at 10.30am.

+++ Review of RE in GB - A high-powered Independent Commission on Religious Education is to undertake a root-and-branch investigation of religious education over two years. Commissioned by the Religious Education Council, every aspect of RE, including the legal,

educational, and policy frameworks, is to be reviewed.

The Dean of Westminster, the Very Revd John Hall, is to chair the commission of 14 educational, legal, and religious experts. It is expected to report by 2018

+++ Cumbrian church on site of first African settlement in UK - Researchers from the BBC's history unit have identified a north Cumbrian church – in the extreme north west of England – as being on the site of the first ever recorded settlement of African people in Britain. St Michael's Church in Burgh-by-Sands, near Carlisle, was built on the site of the third century roman fort of Aballava. The BBC team connected this with the 1934 discover of a stone in the nearby village of Beaumont, with an inscription recording North African troops as part of the garrison at Aballava.

+++ Indian Christians step up protests - Churches throughout India are stepping up protests against the country's discriminatory caste system which disadvantages Dalit Christians and Muslims.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Listen to what the Leave side was saying - Baroness O' Loane

News Letter

An Ulster peer who supported a Remain vote in the EU referendum has said that those on her side of the debate need to listen to what the Leave side was saying.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/remain-peer-s-plea-to-listen-to-leave-side-of-eu-debate-1-7486952>

Two arson attacks in 48 hours on Belfast church

Belfast Telegraph

Saintfield Road Presbyterian Church had to cancel its Sunday services after suffering two arson attacks in 48 hours. However youth activities have been re-arranged to take place at Breda Academy and Newtownbreda Baptist Church today as the local community rallies around the church congregation. Saintfield Road Presbyterian Church, at Myrtledene Road, in south Belfast was attacked overnight between Thursday and Friday, and again in the early hours of Sunday morning.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/south-belfast-church-devastated-by-two-arson-attacks-in-48-hours-34907487.html>

GET CNI HEADLINES EACH DAY

Facebook and Twitter

Click on logo at CNI Home page

www.churchnewsireland.org

+ Please share CNI with your friends

www.churchnewsireland.org