

**The essential daily
brief on the Irish
churches**



The Chapel Choir of Oriel College, Oxford which will be singing in Belfast Cathedral - report below

Annual gathering of Focolare is taking place in Ballycastle

The Focolare is a movement established in the midst of war-torn Italy in 1943 by a group of young women who formed a pact of mutual love and an agreement to live out the Gospel in unity and mercy, being the ‘first to love’ in any situation of potential discord.

Originally existing solely within the Roman Catholic Church in Italy, it is now worldwide and ecumenical. There are several Focolare houses in Ireland, including one in Belfast, formed 10 years ago.

This is the first time the movement has held its annual gathering in Northern Ireland.

The Church of Ireland Parish of Ramoan is accommodating the gathering for a Church of Ireland communion service, attended by delegates of all church traditions, each day of the conference at 9am.



From there the gathering moves to the Roman Catholic Church for 10am. The same readings are used at each service and the same intercessions.

On Friday evening (July 4) at 8pm there is to be an ecumenical service in the Presbyterian Church at which the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, will deliver a message of greeting by video as he is in Geneva for a Central Committee meeting of the World Council of Churches.

The organisers of the Focolare event in Ballycastle are very grateful to the Rev David Ferguson, rector of Ramoan and for members of the parish who have supported this whole gathering.

The Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev John Mann, shared a platform on Friday morning with the Roman Catholic Bishop of Limerick at which the meaning of pact or covenant was explored in theory and practice. This evoked memories of the occasion, two years ago, when the current President of the Focolare, Maria Voce, addressed an ecumenical gathering in St Anne's Cathedral, and Bishop Noel Trainor, Bishop Alan Abernethy, the Rev Ken Lindsay and Dr John Dunlop, representing their church traditions, made a pact of mutual love that was a powerful moment of unity in a discordant world.

PCI Team help lead English Camp in Romania

The PCI Ignite Team to Romania departed yesterday for Cluj, Romania.

The eight members of the team aged between 18 and 25 years will help lead an English language camp for young people from all over **Transylvania** in the 9-14 age range, at the [IKE](#) Youth Centre in the town of **Algyogy**.

The team will be working alongside [Csaba and Ilona Veres](#), and is being led by **Vicky Logan** from First Omagh Presbyterian Church, with **Chris Emo** from Lisnaskea Presbyterian Church serving as Assistant Leader.



The normal activities of a youth camp will be interspersed with English lessons and conversation times in which the team will be playing a full part as well as working alongside and encouraging local Christians serving as volunteers with IKE, the youth ministry department of the Hungarian Reformed Church.

Team members will have opportunities to share their Christian faith in a number of ways including through music, drama and discussion groups as well as spending time talking informally in English with the campers.

The team are due to return home on 14th July.

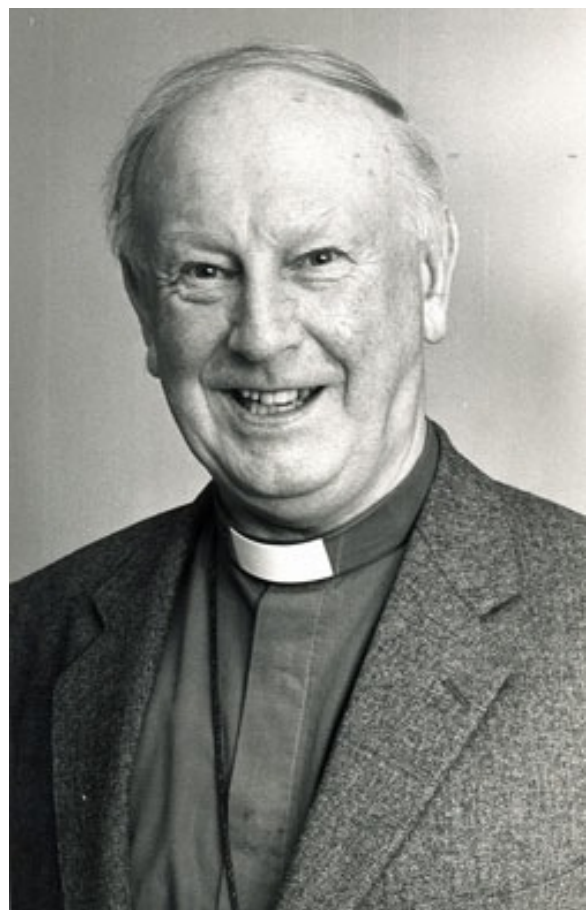
[Presbyterian Mission Overseas](#) encourages people to remember the team in prayer over the next ten days, and to pray for the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of each of the children and young people attending the camp.

Biography of Former Archbishop of Dublin to be Launched This Month

A biography of the former Archbishop of Dublin, the Rt Rev Donald Caird, will be launched in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, on Saturday July 26.

The biography has been written by Aonghus Dwane and it is published by Columba Press. The speaker at the launch will be Mrs Justice Catherine McGuinness.

The evening will begin with a service of Urnaí na Nóna (Evensong in Irish) at 5.00 pm. The book launch will take place at 6.00 pm and will be followed by



a reception.

There will be an opportunity to view a new exhibition marking the centenary of Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise (founded in 1914). Beidh céad míle fáilte romhat.

Tewkesbury Abbey Schola at CCCD today

Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum will be performing at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, today at 1.15pm.

What better way to spend your lunch time!

St Paul's Parish Choir, Glenageary, in CCCD tomorrow

St Paul's parish choir, directed by Derek Verso has been invited to sing in Christ Church Cathedral Dublin on Sunday July 6 at 11.00 am, as one of the visiting choirs during the cathedral choir's holidays.

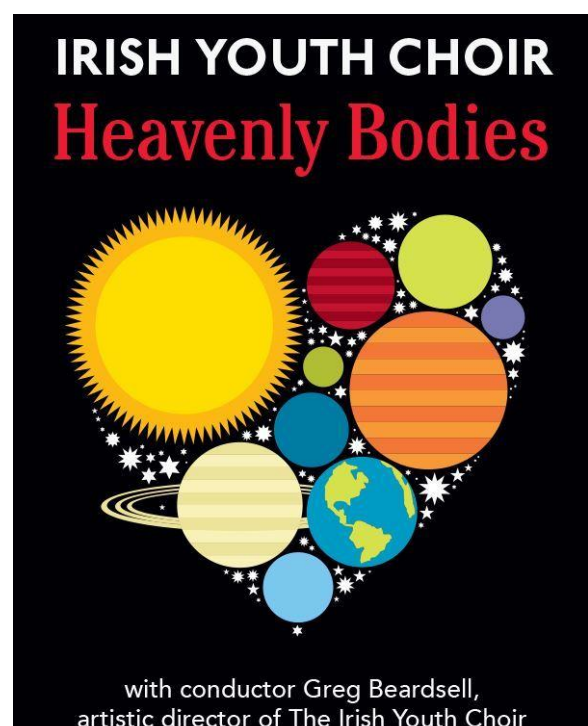
This will be St Paul's first time to sing at the Sunday Eucharist in the Diocesan cathedral and the choir is greatly looking forward to this opportunity. It will also be the first time for St Paul's 17 year old organ scholar Matthew Breen to play a service on the cathedral organ.

Music includes William Matthias *Communion Service*, Faure *Cantique de Jean Racine*, Farrant *Lord for thy tender mercies sake* concluding with William Matthias *Processional for organ*.

Irish Youth Choir presents "Heavenly Bodies"

Our lives are governed by the rhythm of the solar system and the pulse of our hearts. This programme explores the motion of the stars, planets and sun as they move above our earthbound adoration of each other, combining the texts of great poets and the Song of Songs with the finest choral writers; Gabriel Jackson, Peteris Vasks, Eric Whitacre and Ēriks Ešņvalds.

"Love is a portion of the soul itself, and it



is of the same nature as the celestial breathing of the atmosphere of paradise." Victor Hugo

Sunday 6th July, 8pm - St. Mary's Cathedral, Limerick

Monday 7th July, 8pm - Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin

Programme and admissions at -

http://www.uch.ie/events/070614_iyc_bodies.html

Chapel Choir Of Oriel College, Oxford In Belfast

The Chapel Choir of Oriel College, Oxford, will sing at a number of services in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, when they visit the city from 9–13 July.

The choir of around 20 will sing at 5.30pm Evensong on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and will return for the 11am and 3.30pm services on Sunday July 13.

Belfast Cathedral's Master of the Choristers, David Stevens, was conductor of the Chapel Choir of Oriel College for three years when he was a student there from 2003–2006 – the position of conductor was then called organ scholar.

The visiting choir will be conducted by Dr David Maw, who was David's tutor when he studied at Oxford. Two of today's organ scholars, Maks Adach and Tiffany Vong, will play the organ in St Anne's during the Choir's visit.

The Choir is coming to Northern Ireland purely to sing in St Anne's. David said: 'This is a great boost for both the Cathedral and for Belfast. Most choirs when they travel tend to tour around, but the Chapel Choir of Oriel College is making Belfast its home from home for this visit.'

There is no admission charge to services at St Anne's and everyone is welcome to hear this wonderful choir sing.

Cathedrals' Farewell To Lord Lieutenant

In recognition of the support given by Dame Mary Peters, Lord Lieutenant of Belfast, to St Anne's and St Peter's Cathedrals, a special Service of Vespers was held in St Peter's on Sunday 29 June.

Dame Mary, who will soon complete her term of office as Lord Lieutenant of Belfast, was special guest at the service, and a number of Deputy Lord Lieutenants were also present.

The Dean of Belfast, the Very Revd John Mann, said: 'In recognition of the support that Dame Mary has given both Cathedrals and their choirs, Father Hugh Kennedy, administrator of St Peter's, invited her to this special Service of Vespers for St Peter's Day to say thank you.'

'Dame Mary has been in St Anne's Cathedral many times during the years she was Lord Lieutenant, including the occasion of the very important launch of our Choir School Project.'

Friar Alessandro & Guests in Derry

St Eugene's Cathedral Londonderry, and Christ Church present Friar Alessandro and other local guests in concert on Thursday 17th July at 7.30pm in Christ Church, Infirmary Road, Derry.

Admission payable at door £10.00. Children accompanied by adult(s) free. Proceeds in aid of both Church funds.



Day of Prayer for a peaceful July 12

Divine Healing Ministries have organised prayer events for a peaceful July 12 this year.

These will be held on Friday July 11 from 10 am to 4pm in three locations – St Finnian's Church, Cregagh; Shankill Methodist Church; and Lowe Memorial Presbyterian Church, Finaghy.

Someone will lead each hour, but most of the time will be spent in silent prayer. There will also be hospitality throughout the day.

Brother David Jardine of Divine Healing Ministries said: "There is often tension in our province at this time of year, but prayer calms tension. We would really appreciate it if you could encourage your people to join us in prayer on July 11 at one of those three churches, even for just a short time. Thank you for any support you are able to offer."

Christian Aid's Laganside walk

You are invited to enjoy this beautiful part of the Lagan Valley Regional Park and help Christian Aid fight poverty step by step.

You can make it a day out with family and friends, and have fun whilst supporting people in poverty across the world.

The annual Christian Aid Laganside Walk welcomes walkers of all ages and abilities. The route is suitable for buggies and wheelchairs, and this year we would especially like to encourage supporters with four-legged friends to bring them along too!

Registration will be in the foyer of the Ramada Hotel at Shaw's Bridge from 3pm - 4pm on 21st September.

Suggested donation: £5 per person, £10 per family.

For more details call 028 9064 8133 or visit christianaid.ie/walking.

'Ethics Of War' - Dublin Event

Leading speakers on the subject of War in history will be taking part in an open event on the theme of 'The Ethics of War' as a distinctive Church of Ireland contribution to the commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War.

Professor Nigel Biggar of the University of Oxford will speak on the theme based on his recent book *In Defence of War*, to which Professor Keith Jeffrey of Queen's University, Belfast will respond referring to his recent historical research. The event will be chaired by Dr John Bowman who will open up debate and discussion to the audience. Organised by the Church of Ireland's Historical Centenaries Working Group, the event will take place in the Music Room of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin at 7.30pm on Wednesday 19 November 2014.

C of I school closes through lack of space after 171

years - On Wednesday, 25th June, 2014 past-pupils, past principals, past parents, past board members, parishioners, together with the school patron, the Right Reverend Dr Paul Colton, joined the current school community (all 18 nationalities from many religious groupings

and none) at Mallow (No. 1) National School for the closure of the school.

It is the oldest school in the town of Mallow and had grown to 63 pupils in recent years.

The tiny school site (one-third of an acre) could no longer

accommodate a

school community of that size safely or creatively. Under the programme of diversification of patronages, the Department of Education and Skills had allocated a new community national school in Mallow to the Cork Education and Training Board and had also, therefore, indicated that it would not be possible to give the Church of Ireland community a new school building. The school and parish community, therefore, took the courageous and visionary step of investing its future in the new CETB school.

The last day at the school was one of looking back with thanksgiving as well as naturally some sadness, but also looking forward to the new beginning in the new school.



Sixth Class with school principal Mary O'Riordain

The WCC: Seventy-five years in Geneva, 1939-2014

When the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) convenes in plenary sessions during the course of its current meeting, the 150 representatives of member churches and assorted observers gather in the W.A. Visser 't Hooft Hall, the main meeting room of the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, Switzerland. The room is named for a theologian from the Netherlands who served as the first general secretary of the WCC from 1948 to 1966.

Theodore Gill writes - Plans for the establishment of a global council of churches had been in progress for more than a decade prior to its First Assembly at Amsterdam in the summer of 1948. The WCC presence in Geneva dates to the beginning of 1939 when Visser 't Hooft opened the original office of "the World Council of Churches in Process of Formation."

The WCC Central Committee meets in 2014 during the 75th anniversary year of this institutional precursor to the WCC. Today's committee follows in the footsteps of the Provisional Committee of the WCC in Process of Formation, which held its first two full meetings during 1939. Key questions addressed in those sessions were the organizational future of the WCC, the deteriorating international situation as Europe moved toward war, and the role of youth in the leadership of the ecumenical movement.

Until the end of 1938, Visser 't Hooft had been general secretary of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF). Even before that, he had been known as a Christian youth leader through involvement in the Student Christian Movement in the Netherlands and in Europe. His memoirs report that his youthful reputation threatened to become an obstacle when he was nominated to become the first general secretary of the nascent WCC:

It was only many years later that I heard that serious question had been raised about my age. Was I not too young for the responsible post of General Secretary? According to William Temple's biographer, it was Temple who insisted that this was not an insuperable obstacle.

At that same time William Temple, then the Archbishop of York in the Church of England and shortly to become the Archbishop of Canterbury, also formulated a classic explanation to concern over whether a "World Council" would exercise administrative authority or control over the lives of its member churches:

It is not a federation as commonly understood, and its Assembly and Central Committee will have no constitutional authority whatever over its constituent churches. Any authority that it may have will consist in the weight it carries with the churches by its wisdom.

Tentative plans were made by the Provisional Committee for an inaugural WCC Assembly in 1941, but events later in 1939 would require that this date be postponed until the restoration of peace.

At the turn of 1938-39, Visser 't Hooft was with a delegation of the WSCF to the world conference of the International Missionary Council (IMC) in

Tambaram, Madras, India. The IMC, eventually to merge with the WCC in the 1950s, had invited this delegation of young people to ensure the engagement of youth in planning for Christian mission and evangelism.

Ecumenical leaders were well aware of global injustice and the imminent threat of war. Many were especially concerned with the church struggle in Germany. While still serving the WSCF, Visser 't Hooft had been visiting colleagues and friends in Tübingen and Stuttgart on Kristallnacht in November 1938 when he saw synagogues in flames. He pushed the WSCF, and later the WCC, to speak out against such Nazi atrocities and to collaborate in Geneva with the World Jewish Congress.

Seventy-five years ago this month in Geneva, an ecumenical consultation on the international situation was co-sponsored by the WCC and its partner the World Alliance for Peace through Friendship among the Churches.

Visser 't Hooft recorded that the international consultation submitted a report to the WCC administrative committee, which in turn “decided to send the report to the churches, again calling special attention to the section on the tasks of the Church in time of war – true Christian prayer and preaching centred on the righteousness of the Kingdom; maintenance of brotherly relations between the churches in spite of propaganda; preparation of a just and lasting peace; counteracting hatred; ministry to prisoners of war and refugees.”

Visser 't Hooft commented: “A cynic might well have asked if there were any chance that in case of total war the churches would remember these good intentions.” But he added that this was quite a different tone from that employed in most church statements during the build-up to the previous war, just 25 years before: “A comparison of the attitude of the churches in the first world war with their message in the second shows that ecumenical intercourse had made a real difference.”

The last major conference of the churches prior to World War II was the World Conference of Christian Youth, held at Amsterdam in late July and early August 1939. The event was sponsored by the WSCF, the ecumenical youth commission of both the WCC and World Alliance for Peace through Friendship among the Churches, and the World Alliance of YMCAs and YWCAs. Visser 't Hooft recalled: “On the basis of what Dietrich Bonhoeffer had told me in March and what I heard from other German friends, I told...the organizing secretary that we would probably have to cancel the meeting. But I was wrong by one month.”

When the war came in September 1939, there was talk that Germany might invade Switzerland. WCC leaders seriously discussed moving the offices to New York City, as the USA was still a neutral nation at that time. But Visser 't Hooft committed himself and the WCC in Process of Formation to a witness of presence in Geneva, at the heart of war-torn Europe, come what may.

[All quotations come from W.A. Visser 't Hooft, *Memoirs*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1973]

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