



***Novena 2016 at Clonard Monastery - report in this issue***

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## **Methodist President calls church to fresh spiritual transformation**

The foundational call for Methodists to a renewed, Spirit-given mindset was the theme of a challenging address from the incoming president of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

Speaking at his installation service in St Marks' parish church, Portadown, on June 15, the Rev Bill Mullally called on the Methodist people to 'be transformed' by the renewing of their minds.

Mr Mullally, who was brought up in Zimbabwe, is presiding over a potentially ground-breaking Conference that will debate, amongst other issues, a major change to Church structures.

The president's focus was on the core experience of spiritual renewal...the president's focus was on the core experience of spiritual renewal that he sees as key to outward progress.

'To fulfil God's mission call, to demonstrate the healing power of the Gospel and to be instruments of his peace, we need to be transformed by the renewing of our minds,' he said.



*The Revd Bill Mullally preaches at the installation service.*

Mr Mullally pointed out how hard it was ‘not to internalise the world’s viewpoints and priorities’ but, drawing on the experience of John Wesley, he emphasised that ‘it is the Holy Spirit that renews our minds from the outside in and from the inside out.... by opening our minds to the glory of God. It is first and decisively the Spirit’s work.’

He went on: ‘When our minds are transformed, we won’t let the world around us squeeze us into its own mould but will be open to God remoulding our minds from within and will experience God’s good plan for us, moving us

towards true maturity as individuals, as local churches and as part of the worldwide community of Christians. We have a powerful DNA as Methodists whose faith expresses itself through love.'

## **Installation of lay Methodist leader**

Along with the installation of the president, the service saw the installation of Dr Fergus O'Ferrall as Lay Leader of Conference, following in the footsteps of Ken Twyble (2013-2016) and Gillian Kingston (2010-2013), to whom he paid tribute in his address.

Dr O'Ferrall remarked on his joy in having Christians from other denominations present at the service, mentioning in particular the Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Rev Richard Clarke, who had been 'a lifelong friend since school and college days', with both of their families having Anglican and Methodist heritages.

'Archbishop Richard guided and led brilliantly under the Covenant that the Methodist Church has with the Church of Ireland to achieve full interchangeability of ministry which took full effect in 2015,' Dr O'Ferrall said, describing the Covenant as 'a mandate to deepen our

relationships, mission and ministry in the challenging years ahead’.

The new Lay Leader went on to highlight the important role of lay people in the Church. ‘Methodism, at its best, is a lay, contagious movement in which each person’s developing discipleship engages them in Christ’s ministry each day wherever they are placed. It is equipped lay people who will, as Christ’s disciples, confront the great public issues of our time in the public square, bringing a Christian mind to bear on their resolution.’

Issues he referred to included the equality of wealth, violence – especially domestic violence, reconciliation, outreach and hospitality to those coming to our shores, climate change and human relationships.

‘Discipleship ends if we do not partner with Jesus and share Christ’s perfect love,’ Dr O’Ferrall said.

## **Thousands flock to Clonard Novena**

As pilgrims flocked to Clonard Monastery yesterday for the Solemn Novena, thousands

more from across the world joined online for the first day of the annual event.

Up to 20,000 people are expected to attend the nine-day festival of faith at the monastery.

The 10 daily sessions, which take place from early morning until late at night, are also being streamed live on the internet.

A woman from Turkey and a man living in Florida were yesterday among the thousands of people abroad who watched online, while a regular Clonard visitor who recently underwent knee surgery was also among those to view the sessions on the internet.

Little Freddie McMullan, just three weeks old, was believed to be the youngest member of the congregation in the packed monastery yesterday for the start of the annual devotion.

Rector of Clonard Monastery, Fr Noel Kehoe opened the first session, which consists of special prayers and services between June 15 and 23.

The theme of this year's Novena is the 'Icon of Mercy'.

It also marks the 150th Jubilee Year of the Redemptorists' special mission of making the Icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help known throughout the world.

This year sees a change of some of the session times of the annual celebration of faith following concerns that the most popular session, held at 8pm, had become overcrowded.

Clonard has now altered the schedule to have one at 7.30pm and another at 9pm.

During weekdays, an early afternoon session will be held at 12.45pm and next will be at 4.30pm.

The new times of the Clonard Solemn Novena are weekdays: 6.45am, 8.15am, 9.30am, 11am, 12.45pm, 4.30pm, 6pm, 7.30pm, 9pm, 10.30pm and weekends: 6.45am, 8.15am, 9.30am, 11am, 12.45pm, 3pm, 4.30pm, 6pm, 7.30pm.

The Novena can be viewed live on [www.clonard.com](http://www.clonard.com)

## **St Anthony's relics in Derry and Armagh**

Thousands turned out in Derry on Wednesday to welcome the arrival of the relics of St Anthony to St Eugene's Cathedral.

The relics of the Italian saint, which include a rib bone and a cheek bone, arrived shortly before lunch time on wednesday.

St Eugene's Cathedral is one of two northern churches selected on the relics' Irish visit.

They have also toured across the Republic visiting Cahir, Killarney, Knock, Sligo, Dublin and Longford.

In a short prayer to welcome the relics, St Eugene's administrator Fr Farren said: "You relic is a sign of your presence among us."

One of the first members of the Franciscan Order of Friars – founded in 1209 by St Francis – St Anthony is often asked by people to intercede to help find things they have lost.

The saint's relics are being accompanied by a number of Franciscan friars from Italy, including Fr Mario Conte, editor of the Messenger of St Anthony magazine.

The relics were moved to St Patrick's Cathedral in Armagh where Mass will be celebrated by Archbishop Eamon Martin.

See also - <http://www.derryjournal.com/news/st-anthony-s-relics-arrived-in-derry-1-7432548>



## Leading evangelical bishops call for Church to change on gays

Two prominent bishops have called for evangelicals in the Church of England to cease their fighting over homosexuality and accept other evangelicals as such, even when they take a pro-gay stance, Ruth Gledhill writes in Christian Today

Bishop of Liverpool Paul Bayes and Bishop of Dorchester Colin Fletcher are among contributors to a new book edited by Jayne Ozanne, a lay member of the General Synod and former member of the Archbishops' Council, who counts herself as evangelical and last year **came out as gay**.

Bishop Fletcher criticises the "immense" damage to "far too many good Christian people" by the Church's attitude to gay people. Bishop Bayes says: "We need to change the Church – to make room and to extend the table."

In the book, **Journeys in Grace and Truth – Revisiting Scripture and Sexuality**, the contributors explain why they have moved towards an "affirming view" of same-sex relationships.



***Jayne Ozanne***

Copies have been posted to all 300 members of the General Synod, who will meet behind closed doors in York next month to discuss the results of the "shared conversations" that have been taking place on sexuality and the Church.

Other contributors include Gavin Collins, Archdeacon of the Meon, Marcus Green, an openly gay evangelical priest, Dr David Ison, Dean of St Paul's and broadcaster Cindy Kent, last week awarded the MBE.

All the contributors are from the evangelical wing of the Church of England, where opposition to same-sex relationships remains strongest. Most evangelical bishops and clergy still take a traditional stance against same-sex relationships.

Ozanne said: "There is a growing number of voices across the Church, including the evangelical wing, that believe that it is possible to hold an affirming biblical view of same-sex relationships, and who want to affirm LGBTI Christians for being who they are in Christ. For too long people have felt silenced for saying what they truly believe for fear of being called unsound by their colleagues. The time for silence is now over."

Bishop Fletcher, former chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, says in the foreword that over the past 15 years as a bishop, he has been asked by a growing number of his clergy colleagues if they can offer "something more substantial" than a few private prayers to mark

the public affirmation by a same-sex couple of their commitment to one another.

Some clergy are increasingly feeling able to be more open about their own same-sex partnerships, whether or not these have been formalised in a civil partnership or even in marriage, he adds.

"Pastorally too I am still saddened and shocked by evangelical churches who exclude gay men and women from holding office, even when they are un-partnered.

"Part of my learning curve has been to listen to their stories – lay and clergy alike – over recent years and to feel, at least to a small extent, the pain they experience. The damage being done to far too many good Christian people is immense."

He questions whether homosexual practice in the context of stable, faithful, and permanent partnerships is universally condemned in the Bible. "And, even if we believe it is, does that mean that we have, of necessity, to refuse to share in the mission of God with those who disagree with us?"

He also argues that evangelicals should accept each other as evangelicals without resorting to the tactic of marginalising or excluding those they disagree with. "I recognise that this will be

difficult to achieve but I think that it is extremely important for the health of evangelicalism, both within the Church of England, and beyond it."

He pleads for an openness among evangelicals "to engage biblically" with pro-gay Christians without writing them off simply as "revisionists".

## **C of E seeks digital evangelist to proclaim the Gospel afresh in the digital space**

The Church of England this week launched a search for its first Head of Digital Communications.

The advertisement for the new post states the Church is seeking someone to "take risks for the Gospel in exploring how digital engagement can lead to spiritual and numerical growth."

The job description for the new role suggests the postholder will be responsible for "leading a team developing and implementing digital evangelism, discipleship and digital communication strategies for the Church of England".

Commenting on the new post the Rev Arun Arora, Director of Communications for the Church of England said: "We are looking for someone who is as confident and comfortable talking about Jesus as they are talking about the latest developments in tech and social media. As a digital evangelist they will utilise the best of digital to proclaim the Gospel.

"Over the past two years the Church of England has been increasing its digital footprint through the production of video, podcasts and an increasing presence on social media. Our "justpray" campaigns over Christmas and Easter have demonstrated the potential reach of digital with millions of people engaging with the materials we have produced.

"The increase of our digital offering has led to a range of digital projects where we have worked directly with both Facebook and Twitter UK. As well as encouraging a network of new vloggers, we produce a weekly podcast and broadcast live services every Sunday - with our last service coming from an Anglican church in Moscow. A live broadcast of a bible study led by the Archbishop of Canterbury on Facebook last month received almost a million views."

The job advert can be seen on the CofE website here:

[churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about-us/vacancies/nci-vacancies/head-of-digital-communications.aspx>

## Cathedral, choral and musical

**St Thomas' Parish Church, Eglantine Avenue, Belfast**, plays host to the **Hopkins Concert Choir** from New Haven, Connecticut, this Sunday, June 19, at 10.30am.

The high school choir, with a tradition going back 350 years, is touring Ireland this month and performing four concerts in Dublin, Galway, Belfast and Lisburn and collaborating with various local choirs including the SONKE! Choir, Trouble Clefs and Wallace High School.

The choir, under Music Director Erika Schroth, hails from a historic American school where renowned composer Charles Ives once studied. The concert in St Thomas' will feature music from Mozart, Haydn, the Beatles and U2 along with World Music. All are welcome.

**Battle of the Somme** - film screening in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, on 1 July at 7.30 pm. See -

<https://stpatrickscathedral.digitickets.co.uk/event/1603155?catID=6441>

## News briefs

On Tuesday 14th June [St Mary's on the Hill Parish, Glengormley](#) celebrated the jubilees of Fr. Brendan Beagon and Fr. John Forsythe. Fr. Beagon celebrated the 60th Anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood. Fr. Forsythe (PP. St Mary's on the Hill) celebrated the 40th Anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood. Many congratulations and blessings to both! Bishop Noel Treanor was the principal celebrant of the Mass, which was followed by refreshments and presentations in the Pastoral Centre.

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There is another 'new face' in the C of I Diocesan office in Londonderry for clergy, parishioners and members of the public to get to know. Mrs Brigid Barrett is taking over as Bishop's Secretary while Mrs Sarah MacBruithin is off on maternity leave. While Brigid is new to the position, she is no stranger to the demands of church life: her husband is the Dean of Raphoe, the Very Rev Arthur Barrett.



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

### **Concern mounts that hundreds of marriages may be invalid**

Irish Times

The validity of hundreds of marriages could be in doubt amid concerns about the “training and accreditation” of some wedding solemnisers. The [Department of Social Protection](#), which maintains the register of solemnisers, is so concerned it says it may require all marriages to be solemnised by a civil registrar in addition to solemnisation by another religious or secular body.

[http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/concern-mounts-that-hundreds-of-marriages-may-be-invalid-1.2686282?utm\\_source=dlvr.it&utm\\_medium=twitter](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/concern-mounts-that-hundreds-of-marriages-may-be-invalid-1.2686282?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter)

### **Education Authority apologises to parents over plans to cut hours**

BBC News

The Education Authority apologises to parents for how it has handled plans to cut hours for pupils in special school nurseries.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-36534305>

### **Northern Ireland suicide study shows anxiety of student life**

BBC News

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A new study of suicides among young people in Northern Ireland highlights how student life can be fraught with loneliness and anxiety.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-36542567>

## **Sixteen cast-iron benches stolen from Co Down church**

Irish News

Police are appealing for information following the theft of 16 benches from a **church** in Co Down. Killinchy Non-Subscribing Presbyterian **Church** was ...

<http://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2016/06/15/news/sixteen-cast-iron-benches-stolen-from-co-down-church-564345/>

## **Mirror/Exp/Christian Today/Mail/ITV**

Reports on *Good Morning Britain* interview yesterday with Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, who was invited on to the programme to talk about his support for Remain in the upcoming EU Referendum but was also challenged by presenter Piers Morgan on the issue of same-sex marriage. The Archbishop responded that not supporting same sex marriage did not equal

homophobia: "I have a lot of gay friends, they see me as someone who wants to protect them from homophobia."

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/tv/tv-news/archbishop-york-not-happy-piers-8194798>

<http://www.express.co.uk/showbiz/tv-radio/679986/Piers-Morgan-Archbishop-York-gay-marriage>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/video/news/video-1299481/Piers-challenges-Archbishop-gay-marriage-heated-debate.html>

<http://www.itv.com/goodmorningbritain/news/the-archbishop-of-york-talks-gay-rights>

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## **Mail**

Reports the shared conversations on same-sex marriage at next month's General Synod will be conducted behind closed doors with the aim of making all its speakers feel welcome and 'encouraging diversity'. Article reports that the discussions on sexuality will take place under 'safe space' rules and that Synod members must promise that "whatever information they hear is not used to disadvantage any participant in situations outside the conversation".

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3643962/Bishops-bar-outsiders-gay-rights-talks-Anger-Church-copies-safe-space-campus-trend.html>

## **Pink News**

Reports that Rev Andrew Foreshow-Cain, vicar of St Mary with All Souls, Kilburn and St James West Hampstead, London, has put a memorial to victims of the Orlando massacre in the heart of his church. Father Foreshow-Cain, a member of General Synod, is quoted.

<http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2016/06/15/gay-vicar-creates-a-moving-tribute-to-orlando-victims/>

## **BBC/Premier**

Reports that a glass coin with the Magna Carta preserved on it "for eternity", has been presented to Salisbury Cathedral. The cathedral holds one of the original documents, signed by King John at Runnymede on 15 June 1215. The disc was created by researchers at the University of Southampton to preserve data for billions of years. Sub Dean Canon Edward Probert, said, "This is an absolutely novel form of storage. Having this really early instance of this completely new form of storage is quite a lively way of invigorating our archives."

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-gloucestershire-36529640>

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Salisbury-Cathedral-receives-special-Magna-Carta>

## **BBC**

Reports that Students at a Hull secondary school will be allowed to take the afternoon off to watch the England v Wales football game. Archbishop Sentamu Academy pupils have been told they can go home to watch the Euro 2016 match, watch it in school, or attend normal classes. Head teacher Andrew Chubb said he understood "how thrilling an occasion this is for so many people."

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-humber-36543220>

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