



***Dean John Mann gets into the beat to promote the WelcomeFest taking place in St Anne's on June 23.***

## **Welcomefest of World Music to fill St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast**

St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, will host a special concert on Thursday June 23 organised by the Red Cross, Belfast Friendship Club and NI Council for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS) to mark Refugee Week (20–26 June).

The free musical event, #WelcomeFest, is set to feature a diverse line-up of local artists including Fiona O’Kane and Frances Mitchell, together with Ugandan drummer Donna Namusake, Sri Lankan beatboxer ‘Julius,’ Mauricio Velezsierra and Heidi Heidelberg, with a number of other musicians and singers from the local refugee and asylum seeker community.

Organisers hope to showcase and celebrate Northern Ireland’s growing musical and cultural diversity, which they say has been enriched by new refugee arrivals from more than 50 different countries.

The Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev John Mann, said: “WelcomeFest is a great title for what the evening is all about – celebrating talent, experiencing diversity, promoting the richness of the wide range of Northern Ireland’s society today.

“Things are not always easy, individuals and families may be isolated, integration takes time and effort, but may this night open our eyes and ears to fresh sights and sounds, help us make new friends and bring a smile and raise spirits all round. Do come. You will be very welcome.”

Melanie Holmes from the Red Cross’ refugee support team in Belfast said: “We wanted to



***Getting into the rhythm of WelcomeFest, taking place on June 23, are, from left, Vicky Sinton, Red Cross volunteer; Ugandan drummer Donna Namusake; the Dean of Belfast the Very Rev John Mann; Gail Mazongo, Red Cross volunteer and Stephanie Mitchell, Belfast Friendship Club.***

show people the positive side of our work. We see a lot of hardship and sadness in our jobs supporting vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers, but each person we meet is an individual with their own story, talents and contribution to make to our society.”

Melanie added: “We’re very grateful to Beyond Skin who have shared some amazing artists with us, and enabled us to put on what promises to be a great night of music.”

Stephanie Mitchell of Belfast Friendship Club, which welcomes new arrivals from across the world at its base in Common Grounds Café on University Avenue, said: “Belfast Friendship Club is delighted to be working in partnership with Red Cross, NICRAS and St Anne’s to celebrate the new face of Belfast in this way.

“We have been overwhelmed with offers of help and support from many organisations and individuals for what promises to be a great, family-friendly night. It’s a wonderful example of what true partnership working can achieve.”

WelcomeFest will take place on Thursday 23 June at 7pm in St Anne’s Cathedral. It is free, family-friendly event with activities and entertainment for all ages and is open to all.

## **Drogheda Mass for the Festival of Saint Oliver Plunkett**

The Festival Day of Saint Oliver Plunkett is celebrated in Saint Peter’s Church, Drogheda, this Sunday 3 July. This year the organisers are pleased to welcome as homilist Father Sean Henry PP Trim, Diocese of Meath.

The 2016 procession, culminating in the celebration of the Festival Mass, will commemorate the 96<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beatification of Saint Oliver Plunkett by Pope Benedict XV on 23 May 1920, as well as the 41<sup>st</sup> anniversary of his canonisation as a martyr by Blessed Pope Paul VI on 12 October 1975.

One of the features of the Festival Day on Sunday is the colourful 'Procession of the Relics' of Saint Oliver Plunkett. Starting at 3.00pm at the Holy Family Church, Ballsgrove, pilgrims will process to Saint Peter's Church (The Memorial Church of Saint Oliver), Drogheda, where the Festival Mass will be celebrated at 4.00pm by Cardinal Seán Brady, Archbishop Emeritus of Armagh.

Pilgrims will have the opportunity to enter through the Holy Door of Mercy of Saint Peter's, which is a designated Jubilee Church during this Holy Year of Mercy. Music will be provided by Saint Peter's Male Voice Choir directed by Mr Edward Holly.

**Whitehead's new Methodist church hall is a 'truly local enterprise'**



***Greg Power of THP Construction hands over the keys for the new hall at Whitehead Methodist Church to Vera Girvan, one of the main benefactors of the project.***

The development of a new hall at Whitehead Methodist Church was a “truly local enterprise”, a local minister has said.

The keys to the building were officially handed over at the Balmoral Avenue premises last week.

It follows four years of intensive fundraising efforts by church members and the local community, ranging from soup lunches to sponsored abseils.

The annual Victorian Fair in the town also generated thousands towards the project.

To be known as the Dobson-Girvan Hall, the extension pays tribute to two of its main benefactors, Peggy Dobson and Vera Girvan.

“A truly local enterprise, the architect was Whitehead native Martin Walkington, whose elegant design almost seamlessly blends the exciting new hall complex with the Arts and Crafts style original church building, completed in 1900,” said Rev Gary Millar of Whitehead Methodist.

“Comprising a main hall, state-of-the-art kitchen, several meeting rooms and the requisite facilities for a 21st century congregation, the hall will be an asset to our work for generations to come.

## **New LGBTI congregation in Lichfield Diocese**

A new congregation to provide an opportunity for worship, mutual support and encouragement for Christians in the LGBTI community is being launched this summer.

“There has been a need for something like this for some while” says Revd Monica Arnold.

The image shows the phrase "be true to who you are" written in a bold, expressive, handwritten style using black ink. The letters are thick and slightly blurred, giving it a personal and authentic feel. The text is arranged in three lines: "be true" on the top line, "to who" on the middle line, and "you are" on the bottom line. A small, vertical signature or mark is visible at the end of the bottom line.

***From Lichfield Diocesan website.***

“While debate rages on, passionately, at the highest levels of the Church of England, LGBT people continue to live with the realities of their daily life and the mixed reception many receive in parishes. An opportunity to worship and enjoy fellowship without hiding or denying a fundamental aspect of their identity is so important to all aspects of healthy life.

“Our intention with True North is to supplement and support LGBTI Christians to go out and serve the Lord in their own parishes and communities, knowing they are loved by God.



We do not see this as a stand-alone event but one that is truly part of the body of Christ within Lichfield Diocese.”

The events will be held monthly, initially at St Matthew’s Walsall, where most of the church leaders oppose gay marriage.

“It is absolutely right that we recognise and welcome this community. While I and many of the leadership of St Matthews hold a traditional view on human sexuality, LGBT Christians are first and foremost children of God and made in his image.” says the vicar of St Matthew’s, Revd Jim Trood.

The Bishop of Wolverhampton, Rt Revd Clive Gregory warmly welcomed the initiative

## **C of E sponsors play highlighting plight of Calais refugee**

A play highlighting the plight of a refugee in the Calais 'Jungle' is heading to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe this summer, sponsored by the Church of England.

Spearheaded by Rachel Partington, Artistic Director of Theatre for Justice and a student at

the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, Still Here will be performed in the grounds of St Mary's Cathedral in Edinburgh. It is the first time the Church of England has sponsored a performance at the Fringe.

The play is based on the experiences of an Eritrean refugee who Rachel spent time with when she visited the Calais 'Jungle' refugee camp in December 2015. It tells the story of his journey from Eritrea to Calais, fleeing persecution for his Christian faith, as well as Rachel's journey to Calais and meeting with him. The production draws on the talent of both cast and creatives from the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.

The play explains how the man Rachel met walked for nine days to leave his country, how the churches in his country were shut down, how worshipping Jesus was declared illegal and his mother and sister were imprisoned for their faith, and how even in his darkest hours he says that God had never left his side.

Speaking about her hopes for the play, Rachel said "After my visit to Calais I was determined that this man's story must be heard and that these people must not be forgotten. Our vision for the show is to take to places where it could

have real influence and we believe that Edinburgh is one of them.

"We hope that the Fringe will open doors to take the piece beyond, where it has the potential to move the hearts of those in power to further action."

Rev Arun Arora, Director of Communications for the Church of England, said "It can be difficult to imagine the plight of those who find themselves persecuted for their faith and fleeing from their homes.

"As Christians we have a responsibility to speak up for the poor and the marginalised - this play is a powerful and creative away of doing just that, and we are privileged to sponsor it."

The play previews on August 3 and August 4 and starts its full run on August 5, showing until August 24 at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe at ZOO @ St Mary's South Lawn.

Tickets are available at <https://tickets.edfringe.com/whats-on/still-here>, and more information about the play can be found at <http://www.theatreforjustice.com/>.

## **Vatican marks 'Laudato Si' anniversary with new website**

Marking the first anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace launched a new website dedicated to the document and efforts around the world to put its teaching into practice.

The site — [www.laudatosi.va](http://www.laudatosi.va) — “witnesses not only to the impact of the encyclical, but also the creativity and generosity of the people of God everywhere in the world,” said Cardinal Peter Turkson, council president.

The council celebrated the first anniversary of the document, 'Laudato Si' on June 20 with a small conference at Rome's Basilica of St. Mary in Montesanto.

Christiana Figueres, executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, in a video message, said that as scientists, governments, economists and concerned citizens were pushing for an international agreement to combat climate change, Pope Francis's encyclical provided the “moral imperative to take bold action.”

Published six months before the Paris summit on climate change, she said, the Pope's document raised the issue in "the hearts and minds of hundreds of millions of people who may not otherwise have considered climate in their daily lives."

The science and economics of change to protect the environment are essential, Figueres said, but "the guidance of our moral compass" is what will make a difference.

Archimandrite Athenagoras Fasiolo, an Orthodox pastor in Treviso, presented the Italian edition of the book, "Cosmic Grace, Humble Prayer: The Ecological Vision of the Green Patriarch Bartholomew I."

Pope Francis's encyclical and the collected environmental reflections of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, he said, show that "the Holy Spirit does not cease to work without interruption in his Church," inspiring leaders to teach care for "all the work of God."

Jesuit Father Michael Czerny, an official at the justice and peace council, told Catholic News Service, *Laudato Si'* does not tell people what to think, but guides them through the complexities

of the issue of climate change and care for creation, and calls them to reflect on their response.

“The variety and intensity of debate” within and outside the Church, he said, “is a very healthy response” because the Pope wrote the encyclical to contribute to the debate and dialogue.

## News briefs

The **Churches of the Lecale Area Mission Partnership (LAMP)** came together on Saturday 18 June, for a **Summer Family Fun Day at Downpatrick Racecourse**. This was the second LAMP Fun Day – the first last year was one of the first events under the banner of LAMP after its inception in January 2015.

A team of organisers from across LAMP’s fourteen churches came together to plan and deliver the event, which was attended by members of those churches and their friends and families. This year, LAMP also welcomed guests from the local CAP Centre to be part of the day.

Lots of games, crafts and other activities were on offer including facepainting, bouncy castle and the old favourite – the wet sponges, with clergy proving most popular targets! Burgers and hot dogs were available throughout the day.

Musical entertainment was provided by members of the Praise Group from St Mark's Newtownards, where both Revd John Scott and Revd Adrian Dorrian from the LAMP clergy team served curacies. A special treat at the end of the afternoon was an appearance by Hollymount Praise Band.

Speaking about the day, Dean Henry Hull, LAMP Team Leader, said: "This fun day grew out of a local event in one of our parishes but the LAMP Project has allowed us to make it something much bigger. Over 150 people were part of the day and it was a real celebration of the shared ministry and mission our churches are growing into. Plans are already well underway for our next LAMP event – our Holiday Bible Club in August."

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On Sunday 20th June, the **Annual Down and Connor Diocesan Pilgrimage** to [Parish of Saul](#)

[& Ballee](#) took place. Below is an Extract from the Homily delivered by Bishop Noel Treanor.

"In the aftermath of the wars of the late nineteenth century and the horrific World Wars of the last century, an impulse of God's grace steeled Christians, citizens of erstwhile enemy nations, to forge, as Pope Francis put it in his acceptance address on receipt of the Charlemagne Prize last month, "something completely new" in human history.

That "something completely new" was the European project, what became the European Communities and in turn the European Union with their new institutions and their institutional architecture that has forged the new pathway of peace, the consolidation of peace, economic development, workers' rights and the enhancement of standards of safety, security and well-being in our countries over the past six decades and more."

Read more: <http://www.downandconnor.org/blog/2016/06/20/extract-homily-delivered-bishop-treanor-annual-connor-diocesan-pilgrimage-saul/From Lichfield Diocesan website>.

**+++ New Roscommon school** - As announced last September, Scoil Mhuire NS and Abbey NS



are to amalgamate following a recommendation made by the two school boards to Bishop Kevin Doran, and with the support of the vast majority of parents. Today, Bishop Doran has announced that the **New Primary School that will be formed in Roscommon Town** following the amalgamation of Scoil Mhuire NS and the Abbey NS in September 2017 will be called Saint Coman's Wood Primary School.

The announcement follows consultation with all the stakeholders involved by the Amalgamation Steering Committee which was put in place by the Diocese of Elphin last year to oversee the development on the two existing school sites in Roscommon Town of the new co-educational primary school.

Saint Coman mac Faelchon studied with Saint Finnian at the monastic school of Clonard in County Meath. Around 550, after completing his education, he founded a monastery on the bank of the River Suck, at a wood (Ross) which was called after him – Ros Comain. It is from Coman's monastery that the current town and county take their name. Coman was linked with other foundations in Ireland and the rule for monks attributed to him influenced many religious houses throughout the region.

St Coman's Wood Primary school will be, in the tradition of its patron, Saint Coman, a welcoming centre of learning where every student will be cared for as they develop physically, spiritually and intellectually during the early years of life.

The new co-educational school, under the patronage of the Diocese of Elphin, will open its doors on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017.

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

### **'Abortion drone' delivers pills to Northern Ireland**

Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/abortion-drone-delivers-pills-to-northern-ireland-34819010.html>

### **Church went too far in its apologies, says Bishop Doran**

Irish Independent

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/church-went-too-far-in-its-apologies-says-bishop-doran-34815455.html>

### **Sectarian graffiti daubed on church and homes in west Belfast**

the Irish News

"This is a disgraceful sectarian attack which has damaged the local **Church of Ireland**, residents' homes and sheltered accommodation," he said.

<http://www.irishnews.com/news/2016/06/21/news/sectarian-graffiti-daubed-on-church-and-homes-in-west-belfast-572665/>

## **'Bible backs Brexit,' Free Presbyterian preacher claims**

Irish News

Rev David McMillan claims the Bible 'deals extensively' with the European Union and its role in the rise of the Anti-Christ

<http://www.irishnews.com/news/2016/06/21/news/bible-backs-brexit-says-free-p-preacher-david-mcmillan-572073/?>

[param=ds12rif76F&mc\\_cid=31d6551a0f&mc\\_eid=23f2f80c40](http://www.irishnews.com/news/2016/06/21/news/bible-backs-brexit-says-free-p-preacher-david-mcmillan-572073/?param=ds12rif76F&mc_cid=31d6551a0f&mc_eid=23f2f80c40)

## **Guard/Tel/FT/Ind/Mail/Even Stand/Metro/Mirror/ [Christian Today](#)/Exp/York Post/Premier**

Report the tributes paid to the murdered MP Jo Cox at a recalled Parliamentary session. For an hour MPs paid tribute to their former colleague before filing out to attend a service of thanksgiving in St Margaret's church led by the Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin, chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby.

<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/20/jo-cox-tributes-serve-as-a-reminder-of-mps-intrinsic-humanity>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/06/20/tears-flowers-love-and-anger-mps-pay-tribute-to-jo-cox-in-front/>  
<https://next.ft.com/content/8a59b311-f5d7-340e-be37-a384b2c87817>

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

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/eu-referendum-jo-cox-disgusted-ukip-refugee-poster-stephen-kinnock-a7091881.html>  
[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-3651488/Jo-Coxs-widower-thanks-public-charity-fundraiser-passes-1m-mark.html?](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-3651488/Jo-Coxs-widower-thanks-public-charity-fundraiser-passes-1m-mark.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)  
<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/parents-of-murdered-jo-cox-join-mps-to-pay-tribute-at-remembrance-service-a3276661.html>  
<http://metro.co.uk/2016/06/20/jo-coxs-parents-embrace-as-they-join-mps-for-special-memorial-church-service-5956669/>  
<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/jo-cox-tributes-mps-gather-8236923#ICID=nsm>  
<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/681632/Moment-MPs-Westminster-clap-honour-murdered-Jo-Cox-family>  
<http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/jo-cox-tributes-more-united-than-divided-1-7973622>  
<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Hundreds-of-MPs-attend-prayers-for-Jo-Cox>

### **BBC/Star/Metro/Mail**

Reports that a man has been charged with racially or religiously aggravated criminal damage after a pentagram and the numbers 666 were spray-painted on a church lawn. The incident at All Saints church, in Burstwick, East Yorkshire, is believed to have taken place some time overnight on Saturday, Humberside Police said. Neil Adamson, of Burstwick, will appear at Hull Magistrates' Court in July.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-humber-36578856>

<http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/524280/Hull-church-graveyard-branded-with-sick-satanic-symbols-East-Yorkshire>

<http://metro.co.uk/2016/06/20/mourners-shocked-after-discovering-huge-666-symbols-in-graveyard-5955398/>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3650348/Vandal-paints-satanic-pentagram-666-symbols-church-graveyard.html>

### **Salisbury Journal**

Reports that the Bishop of Salisbury has criticised the "tone and style" of the referendum debate as being "deeply damaging". Bishop Nicholas was critical of the "exaggerated claims and scaremongering on both sides" which he claimed had begun to feel "dangerous" even before the killing of MP Jo Cox last week.

### **Ind/Premier**

Further coverage of the decision by University of Cambridge not to divest from oil and gas companies, despite pressure from students academics and the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Williams, to do so.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/student/news/cambridge-university-fossil-fuels-oil-coal-gas-climate-change-oxbridge-global-warming-a7091236.html>

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/University-of-Cambridge-defies-former-archbishop-on-fossil-fuel-investments>

### **Guard**

Reports that C of E is sponsoring a play at the Edinburgh festival fringe about the experiences of an Eritrean refugee in the Calais camp known as "the Jungle" (see

above). *Still Here* charts the nine-day journey of a man who fled Eritrea after being persecuted for his Christian faith, and his encounter in the camp with the play's author, Rachel Partington. The play was developed with the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, where Partington is a student, and will be staged inside a specially constructed tent-like shelter in the grounds of St Mary's cathedral in Edinburgh. Arun Arora, Director of Communications at the Archbishops' Council is quoted.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/20/church-of-england-sponsors-play-refugee-edinburgh-festival-fringe>

### **Premier**

Reports that Carlisle Cathedral has unveiled plans for a new £3 million teaching centre. The Dean of Carlisle, Mark Boyling said, "We have some really exciting plans and drawings prepared which demonstrate how the new building would link into the Fraternity."

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Carlisle-Cathedral-unveils-plans-for-3m-teaching-centre>

### **Even Stand**

Diary item about the C of E recruiting a Head of Digital Communications (scroll down)

<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/londoners-diary/the-caring-way-with-dining-get-a-dragon-in-a3276086.html>

### **Mail**

Further coverage of "Kynren", billed as the UK's most spectacular open-air live action night show since the opening of the London 2012 Olympics. Staged at Auckland castle, this "epic tale of England" depicts key moments of 2,000 years of English history, and is funded

by Jonathan Ruffer, a Christian and chairman of Ruffer LLP, who bought the property from the Church Commissioners in 2010.

[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/news/article-3651062/Meet-philanthropic-fund-guru-splashed-30m-cash-bonkers-Britain.html?ITO=1490&ns\\_mchannel=rss&ns\\_campaign=1490](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/news/article-3651062/Meet-philanthropic-fund-guru-splashed-30m-cash-bonkers-Britain.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

### **Guide & Gazette**

Reports an interview given to the *Radio Times* by the Revd Richard Coles ahead of his appearance of *Celebrity Master Chef*. Richard jokes that church catering wars have prepared him for his appearance. "I remember in one parish a terrible row over the ideal size of mince pies, and in another two great ladies dashing trays of pancakes to the vicarage floor in a controversy over whether to roll or to fold."

<http://www.guideandgazette.co.uk/news/showbiz/church-tea-parties-have-prepared-me-for-celebrity-masterchef-rev-richard-coles-1-4159930>

### **Comment**

Guardian: Looking ahead to next month's Synod meeting, Andrew Brown writes, "Church of England agrees to disagree over homosexuality."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/20/church-of-england-aims-to-agree-to-disagree-over-homosexuality>

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