



***At a reception held at the Star of the Sea Parish Centre in Portstewart a special dual celebration with Bishop Anthony Farquhar celebrating the Golden Jubilee of his Ordination and parishioner Sheila Conway who received a Papal Award (Bene Merende) for good works.***

## **Papal honour for Portstewart woman**

A Portstewart woman has been honoured with one of the highest accolades you can receive from the Vatican.

Coleraine Times - Sheila Conway, a parishioner of Star of Sea, was presented with the Benemerenti Medal during a special mass on Friday night.

The Benemerenti Medal is an honour awarded by the Pope to members of the clergy and laity for services to the Catholic Church.

Sheila received the medal in recognition of her services to the Star of the Sea Parish, and to local charities.

She is only the fourth person to be given the prestigious award by Pope Francis.

It was a special night for the Portstewart Parish, as they welcomed back Bishop Anthony Farquhar.

The Bishop returned to his former Parish to mark a special anniversary - fifty years since he was ordained.

Speaking to The Times yesterday, Sheila said she was 'shocked' but 'delighted' by the honour:

“It happened on Friday when there was a celebration to mark Bishop Farquhar’s Golden Jubilee...

... Although retired from the Promenade shop, Sheila is still a busy woman and is a member of the Legion of Mary in Star of the Sea Parish and is also in the Marian Club and works in the church shop. She also visits the sick and elderly of the parish.

The well-known Portstewart woman also received a letter from Pope Francis thanking her for her services to the church.

Father Edward Magee, spokesman for the Diocese praised Sheila, in statement he said: “This is recognition for the tremendous work and service that Sheila has given to both the church and the local community.”

More at -

<http://www.colerainetimes.co.uk/news/your-community/papal-honour-for-portstewart-woman-1-6810909>

## **Dublin parish’s 1 million euro goal**

Parishioners of St Bartholomew’s on Clyde Road in Ballsbridge have launched an ambitious appeal for the restoration of their church. The

parish aims to raise €1 million over the next two years to carry out extensive work on the historic building.

The St Bartholomew's Renovation Project 2015 – 2017 was launched yesterday evening (Sunday June 22) at a service of Choral Evensong. The service was attended by Archbishop Michael Jackson, who preached, along with members of the local community, public representatives and representatives of local residents' associations.

Introducing the service, the Revd Andrew McCroskery, said the project was a considerable undertaking. The fundraising had been kick started by a generous anonymous donation but the parish still had a considerable way to go if they were to complete the work which would enable St Bartholomew's to continue to be an architectural jewel and place of worship for many years to come. The Vicar thanked all the volunteers for their sterling work on the project to date.

In his sermon Archbishop Jackson said that St Bartholomew's had always "pointed us in the direction of worship as something of value and vitality, whether there be three or three hundred gathered in church".



***Programme architect, Silvia Mambriani of Howley Hayes Architects, Pdraig O'Rourke, Barbara Bergin, the Revd Andrew McCroskery, John Slattery, Archbishop Michael Jackson, Mary Hefferenan, Alistair Rowan and Margaret Considine at the launch of the St Bartholomew's Restoration Appeal.***

He said three essential features of the life of any church were community, beauty and service. Community was central, he said, as a church gathered people and sent them out again equipped and refreshed.

The Archbishop said that society was dominated by visual images, not all over them beautiful. But beauty and worship went together and fed from one another, he said. “For generations, people across Ireland and across the world have enjoyed the splendour of this church and its almost Byzantine character set, somewhat surprisingly, within the Church of Ireland. They have found themselves entering a space where, once their eyes adjust to the darker light within, they see opening before them beauty and colour that it is hard to find in another church in this concentration and in this style,” he stated.

The positive challenge to every church, Archbishop Jackson said, was an invitation to share with the community around it the beauty of Jesus Christ. He added that the character of the church was to be one of service and hospitality to be welcoming and inclusive to all.

“The needs of this church are clear. For a long time now it has needed significant work to be done to its fabric and to its decoration. Both of

these are part of its continuing survival and of its true beauty. It is very important that it should continue to be attractive and attracting both on the outside and on the inside and in this way be a coherent whole,” he said commending the appeal and the work ahead.

St Bartholomew’s has been used continuously as a place of worship since 1867. The historic building is architecturally significant. Stone carving, figurative painted murals, stencilled decoration, mosaic pavements, decorative ironwork and wood work combine with an excellent collection of stained glass to make the church unique.

The first phase of the project, to secure the structural shell of the building to make the church weatherproof, is underway. Other works which have been identified include renovation of the pinnacles, replacing and repairing mouldings, conservation and repair of the stonework and refurbishment of the stained glass windows.

Information on the restoration project and details of how to donate are available on the St Bartholomew’s website – [http://stbartholomews.ie/?page\\_id=1181](http://stbartholomews.ie/?page_id=1181)

## **£12.000 funding boost for Ballykelly Church**

A much loved Ballykelly church is to get a £12.000 funding boost from a £607,000 payout by the National Churches Trust.

Londonderry Sentinel - Tamlaghtfinlagan Parish Church is among a total of 36 churches and chapels in Northern Ireland, England, Wales, and Scotland to benefit from the latest grants from the National Churches Trust, the charity supporting church buildings of all Christian denominations across the UK.

Founded in 1953, the Trust has helped over 10,000 churches, chapels and meeting houses with funding for urgent repairs and to pay for the installation of kitchens and toilets to enable more places of worship to become community hubs.

Overall, 13 of the churches receiving funding are on Historic England's heritage at risk register.

Broadcaster and journalist Huw Edwards, Vice President of The National Churches Trust, said: "The UK's churches and chapels are a treasure trove of architecture, history and faith. But these buildings don't belong to the past. They play a vital role in our present and future too, acting as



places of worship, community centres or simply somewhere to go for quiet contemplation.

“The cost of keeping churches and chapels wind and watertight and paying for the installation of modern facilities is far beyond the means of congregations.

“That’s why I’m delighted that the National Churches Trust has been able to provide a £12,000 grant to Tamlaghtfinlagan Parish Church. This funding will help ensure that this historic and much loved church will continue to serve local people for many years to come.”

Also known as St Findlughanus Church, Tamlaghtfinlagan Parish Church is a Grade B+ (II\*) building belonging to the Church of Ireland in the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe.

The National Churches Trust Repair Grant is to help fund a project to make the church structurally sound and weather-tight, including urgent repairs to the tower and spire and to the rainwater disposal system.

The original church at Ballykelly was reported to be in ruins in 1622, it was restored and enlarged by the Fishmongers and known as the Garrison Church. It was destroyed in 1641, restored in

1644, destroyed again in 1689 but again restored by order of King William III in 1692.

The present church was built by the Earl of Bristol (Bishop) in 1795, the chancel, vestry and gallery were added in 1851 and the north aisle in 1859.

In 1934 the parish church was completely renovated, choir stalls made, the east window taken out and remade, new louvres placed on the north west side of the tower, much pointing done to the tower and walls of the church. In 1935 the vestry was enlarged and coalhouse placed under it.

As well as Sunday services, the church is used during the week by the Roe Valley Community Choir. The Church also hosts annual Shackleton Association service. This association was established when RAF Ballykelly ceased to exist in 1971. This group of men and women served at this base at some point in their service and they return with their families every year for a Church service and are served a meal.

## **C of I Standing Committee changes**

Archbishop Richard Clarke welcomed 20 new members to their first meeting of the Standing

Committee along with newly co-opted members; he also welcomed Dr Catherine Smith as Synod Officer and thanked Mr Garrett Casey, the outgoing Synod Officer who was attending his last Standing Committee meeting, commending him for his patience and work over recent years.

The following have been elected as co-opted members of Standing Committee: the Venerable Andrew Forster; the Revd Canon Maurice Elliott; the Revd Alison Calvin; the Very Revd Bryan Kerr; the Revd Gary McMurray; the Revd Stephen Neill and the Venerable Gary Hastings.

A number of appointments were made, including: the Revd Canon Patrick Comerford and Mr Gerrard O'Callaghan MBE to United Society Council (Us.) for the next three years; the Very Revd John Bond to attend the Inauguration Eucharist and Inaugural Session of the new General Synod of the Church of England in Westminster Abbey on 24th November 2015; and Bishop Trevor Williams to attend the AGM of Christian Aid in London on 13th October 2015.

At the close of the meeting Archbishop Richard Clarke conveyed that Mrs Ethne Harkness had decided to step down as an Honorary Secretary of the General Synod after five years' service.

Archbishop Clarke expressed very many thanks for all Mrs Harkness's work, with thanks echoed by Mr Sam Harper on behalf of the Honorary Secretaries. Mrs Harkness said that it had been a real joy working with the Honorary Secretaries and she had been glad to do it and valued the friendships she had made.

## **C of I Committee on Human Sexuality to launch study guide**

A brief report was received at the C of I Standing Committee. (It was held over from the cancelled April Standing Committee meeting). It was noted that a Guide to the Conversation and a Study Guide are to be launched in Belfast and Dublin in January 2016 which will then enable facilitated conversations to take place across the Church of Ireland at local level.

A casual vacancy on the committee had arisen due to the retirement of Mr David Bird. It was agreed that Mr Leo Kilroy (Dublin & Glendalough) be elected to fill the vacancy.

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## **Archbishop of York upholds right to have different views on sexuality**

The Archbishop of York has defended the right of Anglican clergy and laity to hold "varying" views on the contentious issue of homosexuality. He called for disputes to be resolved in a "Christianly" matter.

Dr John Sentamu was speaking as evangelical protests grew about links between York Minster and last weekend's gay pride march. Conservative evangelicals are also angry over remarks made by a bishop during an employment tribunal of a gay clergyman denied promotion after he married his partner.

Some are calling on Bishop of Buckingham Alan Wilson to resign after he defended the gay marriage of Rev Jeremy Pemberton. They are also threatening to switch allegiance from the Church of England to the new conservative Gafcon fellowship.

The escalating war of words is a sign that the "conversations" currently taking place over human sexuality in the Church of England come amid a time of intensifying crisis.



In a joint statement, Reform and the Oxford Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship called for the Church of England to "uphold the gospel of Jesus Christ".

Criticising Canon Michael Smith of York Minster for blessing the York Gay Pride march last weekend and Bishop Wilson for describing traditional Christian doctrine on homosexuality as "lousy", Reform and the Oxford evangelicals said the majority of the world's Anglicans already look to the primates of the Global Anglican Future Conference for leadership.

"The only question is whether after weeks like this one, those in the Church of England who wish to proclaim this Gospel will be forced to

follow the same path," they said in what is being interpreted in senior Church circles as a clear warning of possible schism.

"Christianity is based on revealed doctrine, enabling individuals to live rightly before a Holy God as followers of Jesus Christ. He tells us how to live in all areas of life, including in areas of sexual behaviour.

"No denomination is at liberty to invent its own doctrine or to sacrifice revealed doctrine on the altars of contemporary fashion. We cannot be authentically Christian whilst simultaneously rejecting the teaching of the one we claim to follow."

Rev Simon Austen, Rector of St Leonard's Church in the Exeter Diocese said: "York Minster's leading the way in the Gay Pride march is symbolic of what the Church of England's leadership is doing generally on this issue – leading people away from the clear teaching of the Bible and the Gospel. It exposes the sham of the consultation process for what it is – a means by which the church can validate homosexual activity.

"One would hope that the Archbishop of York would do his duty and speak clearly, upholding the Bible's position."

Rev Melvin Tinker, of St John's Church, Newland in the York Diocese said: "I am deeply disappointed that Alan Wilson persists in undermining the teaching of the Church by his overt support of those who have gone against the clear rules governing clergy discipline."

"Describing the Church's teaching and doctrine as lousy is quite breathtakingly arrogant and not language that one would expect from a senior leader in the Church. Were I in secular employment and so at odds with the leadership and core values of the company that employed me, I would resign forthwith as a matter of conscience."

Rev Will Pearson-Gee, Rector of Buckingham in the Oxford Diocese, said: "The Bishop of Buckingham courts publicity for his revisionist agenda and gets it. He has sadly become a figure of disunity in the Oxford Diocese and a cause of grief to many faithful Anglican Christians. The version of marriage he espouses is incompatible with Biblical Christianity."



The Dean of York, Very Rev Vivienne Faull, defended York Minster's support for a section of the community that frequently experiences discrimination and hostility.

"York Minster's invitation to everyone to discover God's love through our welcome, worship, learning and work is extended to the entire community both inside and outside of the Minster. The Church of England is actively encouraging conversations around human sexuality and it is better to have those conversations with friends," she said.

Canon Smith said: "Here at York Minster we are always open to having conversations with anyone who wants to come and talk with us and we are always ready to pray with and to pray for people at important times in their lives. Please do not hesitate to come and talk to us."

In a letter to friends and colleagues in response to the calls for his resignation, seen by Christian Today, Bishop Wilson says he has had hundreds of messages of support of his views on sexuality.

He admits however that not everyone feels the same way about gay marriage. "The great social upheaval this represents, along with the articulation of my own personal viewpoint, is causing them profound distress and anger."

He acknowledges that many colleagues find real difficulty in using the word "marriage" for gay relationships.

"One of the key messages I have been communicating in the media is that local Churches usually welcome all people as Christ did, regardless of gender or sexual orientation. Any stereotype that denies this needs to be challenged."

He also says a growing number of Christians, including many Evangelicals, now fully affirm present realities about same-sex marriage.

"At the same time, a sizeable minority of our own LGBT clergy and lay people feel increasingly unsafe, and that the Church has rejected them. Many of these contact me, sometimes in great distress and pain, and have come to see me as a safe bishop with whom to talk through their stories. It is a great joy to minister reconciliation to people who had lost all hope that they could be part of the Church at all.

"Meanwhile most of the people we serve, especially young people, are baffled as to why this is an issue for us."

He also defends his appearance in Nottingham at Jeremy Pemberton's employment tribunal.

"I was called as an expert witness on the way faith, doctrine and law relate to one another in Church, a subject on which I once spent eight years writing a doctoral thesis." The case relates also to his recent book and in addition he is an expert on clergy tenure. He also says he is "baffled" by any suggestion that he is somehow living outside canon law. "I have been happily married for over 30 years and am entirely compliant."

He explains he was merely criticising the shortcomings of Canon B30's definition of marriage, not its substance. "I don't, of course, deny marriage is between a man and a woman. I merely wish to see access to it expanded." He said his argument in the tribunal was that the canon should be applied equally and consistently to gay and straight people.

## **Church of Scotland welcomes 19 new recruits to ministry**

Nineteen new recruits to Church of Scotland ministry have been accepted following the first round of this year's assessment conferences. A

further 34 candidates are eligible to be considered this autumn and hopes are high this year's intake of trainees could prove be the largest for some time.

The latest recruits include 29 year old David Nicolson from Stornoway. The married father of one joins the Church following a career making television programmes for BBC Alba. He's confident working in the media has been a good training ground for full time ministry. "Now I have discerned my call to serve God, I cannot imagine a more exciting prospect. Getting to satisfy that itch, that inner voice that asks: 'What was I put on earth to do?' is thrilling. My hope is to get alongside fellow leaders in the Church and work as a team - utilising everyone's strengths, gifts and callings within the Church to maximum potential."

A large number of the Church's 800 ministers are due to retire over the next 10 years and the Church is actively seeking candidates for ministry through its new 'Tomorrow's Calling campaign. The initial response has been very positive, with a video promoting parish ministry viewed by more than 55,000 people in the first three weeks since it went online. A Vocations Conference at Aberdeen's Queen's Cross Church on June 27th is now full, with almost 60



***Twenty nine year old David Nicolson from Stornoway with family.***

people registered to find out more about taking forward their call to ministry.

Rev Neil Glover, the Convener of the Church of Scotland's Ministries Council, said: "We have been hugely encouraged by the numbers of people signing up for our Vocations Conferences, and also entering our discernment process. Being a minister is a remarkable job, indeed more than a job, a remarkable calling. We believe there are many people, including many young people, in Scotland who are eager to give the best of themselves for the good of others,

and Ministry is something which allows them to do exactly that."

The recent assessment conferences saw thirteen candidates accepted to full time Ministry, five to Ordained Local Ministry (OLMs), and a single applicant to the Diaconate, who was also successful. OLMs are ordained ministers who work in unpaid roles in local areas, the Diaconate are ordained ministers who work in professional supportive roles in a parish or elsewhere.

## **Papal envoy visits displaced Christians in Iraq**

Cardinal Angelo Scola of Milan, representing Pope Francis, and Cardinal Bechara Rai, the Maronite Catholic patriarch, traveled to Irbil, Iraq, to meet with Christians who had fled from ISIS forces.

Walking between rows of tents and prefabricated containers serving as living areas for the displaced Christians, the cardinals were surrounded by crowds. Children eagerly approached them for a



***Iraqi children play outside a tent in Ainkawa, near Irbil***

blessing. Outdoors, they stopped at a Marian shrine and prayed.

The cardinals visited families in makeshift dwellings and toured a portable medical clinic. They also met with displaced nuns, priests and seminarians who are living among and serving the uprooted Christians.

“Our main demand is that they return to their homes and lands in dignity,” Cardinal Rai said on June 19 of expelled Christians

who fled to the Kurdistan region of Iraq. His remarks were reported in a statement from the Maronite Patriarchate. “We have trusted the international coalition in that. But, unfortunately, the terrorist groups are still growing and advancing.”

Cardinal Rai, who has called for an end to the supply of weapons and financing of the ISIS, denounced the silence of the international community.

“Here we should ask: Where are they receiving this strength from? Why is ISIS being treated as a state and not a terrorist group? We don’t speak the language of killing, but that of rights. The international community should not remain silent toward the violation of the rights of a whole people,” he said during the one-day visit.

Prior to leaving Beirut, Cardinal Scola told Voice of Lebanon radio, “Our trip to Irbil carries a message of solidarity with the Christians.”



In Irbil, he stressed the importance of conveying “the truth about the current situation with transparency, accuracy and objectivity.”

Cardinal Scola is president of Oasis, an international foundation that acts as a forum for dialogue and a bridge of support for Catholics in the Middle East.

## Media digest

### **Smyth ‘denied damaging church in angry letter’ - UTV**

Paedophile priest Brendan Smyth wrote an angry letter denying he had damaged the Catholic church, an inquiry has heard.

<http://www.u.tv/News/2015/06/23/Smyth-denied-damaging-church-in-angry-letter-39643>

### **Holy See reiterates stance on same-sex marriage - Irish Times**

The “Yes” result of Ireland's same-sex marriage referendum does not cut a lot of ice in ... entitled, The vocation and mission of the family in the Church and in the ... The news conference also touched on the ban on divorced Catholics ...

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/holy-see-reiterates-stance-on-same-sex-marriage-1.2260671>

## **Mirror**

Report that Mr Bean actor, Rowan Atkinson and the Archbishop of York attended the final speech day for 400 year-old St Bee's Independent School, which is shutting despite a history of producing bishops, VC Medal heroes, cabinet ministers and governors of the British Empire. It states John Sentamu spoke about the school's founder Edmund Grindal, and added: "Now we have another Edmund to hand out tonight's prizes - Edmund Blackadder!"

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/mr-bean-actor-rowan-atkinson-5935798>

## **Express/Mail/Tel/BBC**

Further reports on the fire at Grade II listed All Saints Church in Fleet, Hants, which gutted the building and destroyed the roof. It states police have arrested a 17-year-old boy on suspicion of arson. Church officials have said many of the original stained

glass windows were destroyed and the damage is estimated to reach millions of pounds. The Revd Mark Hayton is quoted, and some reports have a statement from Guildford Diocese. The church has set up a page on its website for people to add their memories of the building as well as hopes and prayers for the future.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3136665/Teenager-arrested-suspicion-arson-200-year-old-church-completely-gutted-fire-causing-1m-damage.html#ixzz3dx2GXENp>

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/586491/All-Saints-Church-fire-boy-arrested>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/video/news/video-1194237/Amateur-video-shows-Fleet-church-flames.html>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/11694095/Boy-arrested-on-suspicion-of-burning-down-a-200-year-old-church.html>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-hampshire-33235430>

## **Tel**

Article on rise in stone theft which policing minister, Mike Penning says is reaching "epidemic" levels in parts of Britain and should be treated as a "serious organised crime". It cites an example of 200-year-old paving slabs have been "ripped up" from a church and says thieves have been switching to stealing stone and slate from pavements, roads, schools and churches after a government crackdown on scrap metal.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/11694827/Stone-theft-hits-epidemic-levels.html>

## **Ind**

Article on The Crown Estate, which runs the monarch's land and property empire, and has posted record profits of £285.1m. It mentions that last year it bought the Church Commissioners 64.2 per cent holding in the Pollen Estate in London for £381m.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/analysis-and-features/the->

[crown-estate-long-to-reign-over-the-property-market-10340876.html](http://crown-estate-long-to-reign-over-the-property-market-10340876.html)

## **Guard**

Article described as a comprehensive guide to the basics of divestment and how it impacts climate change. It states the Church of England has divested from the most heavily polluting fossil fuels, while the World Council of Churches, which represents half a billion Christians worldwide, has ruled out all fossil fuel investments.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jun/23/a-beginners-guide-to-fossil-fuel-divestment>

## **Mail**

Article on a working document for the Roman Catholic church's 'Synod on the Family' to take place this autumn, which says gay people must be 'welcomed' and 'treated with respect'. It states hundreds of bishops from all over the world will meet in Rome in October to assess church teaching on controversial subjects -

although it continues to shy from recognising gay marriage.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3136435/Gay-people-treated-respect-says-Vatican-no-sign-recognising-gay-marriage.html#ixzz3dx93M9z7>

## **And finally...**

### **Tel**

An article on new facial recognition technology and its implications says one company, **Churchix**, uses facial recognition technology to track congregation church attendance.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/11693965/Facial-recognition-technology-Is-Orwells-fiction-our-reality.html>

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