



***Rev Dr Michael Berry greets Rev Dr Ian McNie, his successor as Moderator***

## **New Presbyterian Moderator: ‘We need to be there for people’**

Rev Dr Ian McNie, addressing the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in Ireland after his installation said, “The theme entrusted to me this year is that of ‘A Caring Fellowship’, a theme that has its roots both in the teaching of

Jesus and the practice of the early church. This theme includes welcoming the stranger, learning from one another and valuing the gifts of each individual while offering pastoral support to all in need”.

The 64-year-old Minister of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Ballymoney reminded Members of the Assembly and civic guests, who were gathered from across Ireland, that if the church was to continue to make an impact “stepping outside our comfort zone will not only be an option but a necessity.

“To retreat into the corner, keep our hands clean and backs covered is not the policy established by Jesus Christ. Today, as a church, we need to be there for people who do not expect us to be there. There for people who have no meaningful connection with the church but who face the everyday challenges of living...The church must go in particularly when the world has gone out. And the church must show the Grace of God.

Dr. McNie also spoke of an increasing intolerance to the Church’s worldview on a range of issues from the beginning and ending of life, the family dynamic, freedom of conscience and the sanctity of marriage.

In reaffirming the Church's commitment to "the biblical and historical position of marriage," he also recognised society's right to express its opinion saying "as a church we must defend the right of society to freely express their opinions". At the same time he said that the Church had "...the right to expect the same level and proportion of tolerance afforded to us that other groups expect afforded to them. Tolerance is a two-way street.

"By definition tolerance accepts there are different opinions and that we should agree to disagree in an agreeable manner, not the definition that is currently postulated – that tolerance is the acceptance of different opinions and that all opinions are equally correct and should be endorsed as correct. This leads to a position where Christians are required to promote ideas and deliver services that are contrary to their beliefs. True tolerance can only flourish in an atmosphere of mutual respect in disagreement.

"And why mutual respect – because God's Word affirms the unique dignity of every individual, each of us being created by God with value, purpose and destiny, and that equality should not be seen simply as the result of governmental

legislation but the result of birth as each person is individually created in the image of God.”

## **Priest calls for structured conversation in the Church**

A prominent Jesuit priest has called on the bishops to fulfil a promise they made five years ago to begin “a structured conversation” within the Irish Church.

Fr Gerry O’Hanlon SJ said that by listening, having conversations, setting up systems and structures like assemblies and synods the church could tap into the faith of the baptised including the young and the disaffected.

Writing in Monday’s Irish Times, the Jesuit said this is what Pope Francis has called the imperative of “real and not just token consultation”, “the introduction of a culture of dialogue within the church, a synodal approach at all levels of church life, including the local church”.

Fr O’Hanlon said this included a dialogue with wider, secular society, since, as Vatican II taught, “we can both teach and learn from this wider society”.



***Fr Gerry O'Hanlon***

“We were promised by the Irish Episcopal Conference the beginnings of “a structured conversation” back in 2010. Where is it?” he asked.

He criticised the Irish bishops for not providing leadership on this and said “this glaring failure of leadership” came at a time when the Vatican itself is imaging a more collegial approach, encouraging local bishops and national conferences to mobilise consultation on the very sexual issues that are such a bone of contention.

The former Jesuit provincial said the Irish Church needs a church leadership which empowers the laity – the “sleeping giant”.

He urged the bishops to “invite us all into this conversation urgently” or risk allowing Catholicism to become “a culturally irrelevant minority” as Archbishop Diarmuid Martin warned in 2011.

Elsewhere in his Irish Times article, Fr Hanlon said Archbishop Martin had argued very reasonably during the referendum debate that the distinction and complementarity between male and female was important.

However, he said the Archbishop “was speaking as a representative of a church that has used the argument from complementarity, in a way that many people find unacceptable, to support its teaching against the advancement of women to office within the church”.

The author of books such as ‘Theology in the Irish Public Square’ and ‘A New Vision for the Catholic Church’, said that though the Archbishop raised reasonable concerns about the need in the Constitution to honour the particular value of a man and a woman as foundational to family life, “this implicit appeal to natural law conjures up the application of a rigid notion of natural law in church teaching about contraception and the intrinsically disordered

nature of homosexual acts, which many people do not find persuasive”.

He warned that despite his skilful and measured tones Archbishop Martin’s argument was always waging an uphill battle because “so many in our culture – and particularly those who are young – simply do not accept the credibility of church teaching on sexual and gender issues.”

“This is not primarily a question of better communication: this bears on the message itself, the content of the teaching”, he stated.

The article can be read here: <http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/catholic-church-needs-to-empower-the-laity-1.2232747>

## **Clergyman who doused Belfast Telegraph man in water admits he overreacted**

A clergyman who threw a basin of water over a Belfast Telegraph photographer and threatened to sue this newspaper for publishing his picture has apologised for his behaviour.

Belfast Telegraph - Rev Tom Conway, who has taken over at the troubled St Matthias Church at

Knocknamuckley, near Portadown, lashed out at Telegraph lensman Kevin Scott, after conducting his first Sunday service at the church.

In a shocking series of photographs, the former Ulster Hospital chaplain can be seen shouting at our photographer and hurling a basin of water at the young snapper. Kevin was accompanying reporter Una Brankin as she covered both the service at St Matthias Church of Ireland, and the church's breakaway "missional congregation" led by Rev Alan Kilpatrick in Craigavon.

The furious minister then took a grip of soaked Kevin's right arm and refused to let go until the photographer gave him three warnings and pointed out he was on public ground.

After the Belfast Telegraph made several attempts to contact the elderly clergyman yesterday, Rev Conway issued a one-sentence apology via the Church of Ireland Press office. "On reflection, I would like to express my regret for over-reacting to Press attention after the service in Knocknamuckley Parish yesterday, and to apologise to the photographer and journalist involved," said Rev Conway.

Following his statement, this paper tried to contact the minister to see if he would be willing



to make a face-to-face apology. He had not replied at time of going to press.

More at -

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/clergyman-tom-conway-who-doused-belfast-telegraph-man-in-water-admits-he-overreacted-31271219.html>

## **Bishop And Archdeacon Go Head-To-Head in MU Bake-off**

The Bishop of Connor and the Archdeacon of Connor donned their pinnies and dusted off their rolling pins to compete in the Mothers' Union Great Connor Bake-off.

More than 250 members of the Mothers' Union from across the diocese were in the Parish Hall at St Patrick's, Ballymena, to see the Rt Revd Alan Abernethy and the Ven Dr Stephen McBride demonstrate their baking skills.

The Bake Off was organised by Roslyn Graham, the diocesan young members' rep, along with the Young Members' Committee, to raise funds for the MU Mums in May project.



***The Bishop and Archdeacon of Connor at the Bake-off***

The two clerics were kitted out in tartan aprons and chef hats for the occasion. They were ably assisted by Ida (aka Roslyn Graham, Ballymoney, Finvoy and Rasharkin) and Mary Doll (aka Beth Hayes, Armoy and Drumtullagh), under the expert eye of Adele Elder from Armoy and Drumtullagh.

Bishop Alan and Archdeacon Stephen had to decorate six cupcakes with a variety of designs. At the end of stage one, Stephen surged into the

lead when the audience voted in favour of his creations.

The second challenge was to build and decorate a gingerbread house. Although the Archdeacon studied architecture, his efforts as a builder were 'rather pathetic' (his own words!) and Bishop Alan was the unanimous winner of stage two. The Bishop's house and garden managed to stand up while the Archdeacon's effort collapsed into a sorry heap. One challenge all was a very fair result.

Roslyn was delighted that the evening raised £921 towards a literacy project in Ethiopia which is being supported by the Mothers' Union across the 12 dioceses in Ireland. Individuals and communities will be transformed through the development of literacy and numeracy skills.

## **Volunteer Week at Belfast Central Mission**

This week is National Volunteer Week and the Belfast Central Mission (BCM) is saying a massive thank you to all their volunteers for their hard work and dedication.



Volunteers have always played a vital role in the life of the Methodist BCM: from befriending older people in their own homes or supporting children with autism, to helping with fundraising or organising weekly lunch club for older people. Many of BCM's services could not take place without crucial input from volunteers.

Janet Sewell, BCM's Community Services Manager said, "The volunteers make my work special. They humble you with their positive attitude and how they give of their time so freely. They make such a difference to so many peoples' lives."

There are many flexible volunteering roles at BCM, most only require a few hours a month and full training is provided. Volunteer Linda Brooker (above left with Rhoda Henderson) said, "I love the social aspect of volunteering, it makes you feel good. Everyone here is so welcoming and I love to see all the older people enjoying themselves."

BCM is holding its Annual Volunteer Forum on 12 June and it'll be a chance for everyone to get together and celebrate their valuable work throughout the year.

## **Day of Prayer for our land in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast**

There will be a Day of Prayer for the Revival and Renewal of the Faith in this Land on Saturday 20 June from 10.30am to 3.30pm. It will be held in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast and will mark the end of six years of a seven year cycle of prayer.

The theme this year will be 'Healing through Forgiveness', Brother David Jardine says: "There is no better way to deal with past hurts than through forgiveness. When I forgive it restores my peace and helps to bring reconciliation."

Although there will be Officiants for each half hour, a good percentage of the time will be spent in silence. There will be an opportunity both to learn about forgiveness and to practice it.

People will be free to come and go as they wish.

## **Dublin Garden Festival at Christ Church Cathedral**

The second Dublin Garden Festival, takes place from Friday 19th to Sunday 21st June 2015 in Christ Church Cathedral. The building's wonderful architecture, its vast spaces and detailed craftsmanship provide a unique and striking backdrop. Against the stone walls of the Cathedral and illuminated by sunlight pouring through the stained glass windows, the flower installations promise to be a sight to behold and a reason to rejoice.

The theme of this year's festival is all about fairy tales and the cathedral will be adorned with floral installations and props so that it is transformed into a magical wonderland. For information on bookings, opening times and the programme of special speakers see <http://dublingardenfestival.ie/>

## Mary Berry plainchant book republished

A major and authoritative guide first published in the 1970s on the performance of ancient plainchant has just been revised, re-published and expanded by the Royal School of ChurchMusic(RSCM).

The new *RSCM Guide to Plainchant* contains a revision by John Rowlands-Pritchard of a seminal work on plainchant by Dr Mary Berry CBE, to which he has added an extensive anthology of liturgical material. Plainchant is the earliest surviving music of the Western Christian Church, and is still sung in monasteries, churches and cathedrals.

The new publication is in two parts, and begins with a revision of Dr Berry's approachable best-selling work *Plainchant for everyone* which was first published in 1979. The second part, subtitled *An Anthology of Plainchant*, has been compiled by John Rowlands-Pritchard, who researched early chant with Dr Berry and worked later as one of her professional group of cantors, the Schola Gregoriana of Cambridge. The book has been typeset by Andrew Parker, using notation software he has developed himself for

the purpose, and is clearer on the page than the original, and easier to read.

Dr Berry was an Anglican nun who died in 2008. In her book she explains that plainchant – or plainsong – “is the unique music of Western Christianity and our closest living link with the Church of the first centuries”. Her style is accessible, and provides a basic guide on how to read plainsong notation which was written on musical staves with four leger lines rather than the usual five. The Anthology compiled by John Rowlands-Pritchard contains a selection of chants for performance in church services, whereby singers can put into practice the advice and guidance provided in the first part of the book. These materials range from chants for the singing of psalms to sung settings of parts of the mass, and include Gregorian chant dating from as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> century, and music in honour of St Thomas a Becket of Canterbury written in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

The Director of the RSCM, Andrew Reid, has welcomed the new publication. “It is high time that Dr Berry’s work is reissued,” he said. “What is learnt in the first half of the book can now be put into practice in the second. I hope this publication will encourage many to explore this



rich repertory which is a great gift to the Christian Church.”

Copies may be ordered by email, phone or online through RSCM Music Direct: [www.rscm.com/shop](http://www.rscm.com/shop) or email [musicdirect@rscm.com](mailto:musicdirect@rscm.com), telephone 0845 021 7726. Significant discounts are available for RSCM affiliated churches and individual members.

## **Moderator expresses sadness at death of Charles Kennedy**

Rt Rev Dr Angus Morrison, Moderator of the Church of Scotland, issued this statement Tuesday on the sad occasion of the death of Charles Kennedy:

Charles was until recently the long serving Member of Parliament for Ross, Cromarty and Skye. He will undoubtedly be remembered as one of the most talented politicians of his generation. But he was much more than that. With his impish smile, distinct Highland voice and quick sense of humour, he was able to communicate effectively with people far beyond the circle of politics. His down-to-earth humanity ensured that he was held in affection by people of all political persuasions, and none.



***Charles Kennedy was the first Roman Catholic to lead a modern British political party***

Raised a Roman Catholic in the strongly ecumenical community of Fort William, where his family is well known and loved, there is no doubt that this early experience continued to shape the political values which Charles expressed so well throughout his career. He will be remembered as one of the strongest voices opposing the UK's entry to the Iraq War.

Despite moving away from Fort William many years ago, as their local MP Charles continued to play a central role in the community, as well as more widely in the Highlands which he loved.

As a Church we wish to express our sincere sympathy to his former wife Sarah, to their son Donald, and to all in the wider family circle in this great loss. We assure them of our thoughts and prayers for God's presence and peace at this difficult time.

## **Media digest**

### **Tel**

Report that a parish in Lincoln diocese has utilised the new free digital tool Periscope to live broadcast a service on social media. Report quotes from a blog by Tallie Proud - the Communications Office Digital Officer - encouraging churches to make use of social media tools. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11643612/Church-of-England-to-live-stream-services-for-those-who-find-it-scary-to-sit-in-pews.html>

Tallie's original blog post can be read here: <http://cofecomms.tumblr.com/post/120020272302/latest-on-livestreaming>

### **Guard/Mail**

Rev. Kate Bottley writes in the Guardian suggesting "Is God a woman? To ask the question is to miss the point"

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jun/01/is-god-a-woman-miss-point-language-gender>

The Guardian also provides "pass notes" on the same issue

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/shortcuts/2015/jun/01/praise-her-god-woman-church-her>

In the Mail an opinion piece by Damian

Thompson fulminates over referring to God as "She"

[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3106661/DAMIAN-THOMPSON-No-God-Isn-T-male-calling-unholy-twaddle.html?](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3106661/DAMIAN-THOMPSON-No-God-Isn-T-male-calling-unholy-twaddle.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

[ITO=1490&ns\\_mchannel=rss&ns\\_campaign=1490](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3106661/DAMIAN-THOMPSON-No-God-Isn-T-male-calling-unholy-twaddle.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

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## **Tel**

Report on the Archbishop of Canterbury's visit to China where "he has urged Chinese Christians not to be afraid to speak openly about their faith despite the country's officially atheist stance." Speaking in Shanghai "he issued an unashamedly evangelical message, urging Christians to be "martyrs" - or witnesses in the original Greek meaning of the word - and to attempt to make new converts, even practising what to say in advance."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11643217/Welby-urges-Chinese-Christians-to-share-their-faith-...-but-be-respectful.html>

### **BBC Online**

Report that a village church has had £50,000 worth of lead stripped from its roof by thieves. St Peter's Church in Swepstone, Leicestershire, was targeted some time between Sunday evening and Monday morning. Canon Vivien Elphick said everyone felt "gutted" as they had recently raised £25,000 for general repairs to the church.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-derbyshire-32963820>

### **Tel**

Report that Shell and BP are calling for international carbon pricing scheme to limit emissions. Report states "oil majors have been targeted in a growing campaign by activists to force institutions such as the Church of England and large university endowments to disinvest from fossil fuel producers in order to limit global warming."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/energy/oilandgas/11644177/Shell-and-BP-call-for-international-carbon-pricing-deal.html>

### **Huff Post:**

Review of the play "Temple" based around the occupy movement at St Paul's Cathedral

[http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/jessie-thompson/temple-donmar-warehouse\\_b\\_7479800.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/jessie-thompson/temple-donmar-warehouse_b_7479800.html)

### **Guard:**

Report that Lord Falconer will be attempting once more to bring forth legislation on assisted suicide this week. Report mentions that last week similar legislation was defeated in the Scottish assembly by a majority of 82 to 36.

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/jun/01/lord-falconer-government-assisted-dying-legal-mess>

### **Mirror**

Preview of returning series of reality television show "love Island" includes brief profile of one of the contestants fashion model Zoe Basia Brown who says "I'm a Christian and that is the number one thing in my life, so I can turn the other cheek. I started going to church two years ago. It's the opposite to fashion and I love it because everyone is so nice. I'm not going to start giving sermons on the island, but it's a big part of me."

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/tv/tv-news/who-love-island-contestants-zayn-5805563>

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