



## Differences in the C of I are an opportunity to model communion

The bishop of Cork, Rt Rev Dr Paul Colton said on Saturday “It is important to acknowledge that there are many dimensions to our differences of outlook throughout the Church of Ireland: sociological, political, economic, historical, demographic, as well as theological reflection and spirituality. I am not an expert in all of these

fields, but it does strike me that the insights of other disciplines – an interdisciplinary approach – to help us to understand ourselves, would be immensely important. What I do observe is that a key element in the divergence of outlook and belief, not only in the Church of Ireland, but throughout the Anglican world, and indeed, Christianity, has its roots substantially, in how we read, engage with and interpret Scripture. This is something I spoke at length about as being the nub of the issue in my address to you at this Synod, nine years ago in 2006; but here we are as a Church of Ireland still in the same place in 2015.”

Dr Colton in his address to the Diocesan Synod, continued asking, “How are we to sustain and nourish our communion with each other while embracing such a spectrum of approaches to God’s Word? The capacity to hold together broad divergence has always been what sustained the appeal of Anglicanism for me:

how two people, with Jesus the living Word of God at the centre of their lives, can be in full communion with each other even though, when gathered around the written Word, seen through the lens of tradition and reason, they see things differently, and reach very different conclusions.

He continued, “Could it be that we in the Church of Ireland might model something here in relation to holding together the breadth of Anglican diversity, something we set out deliberately to value to and preserve, but which some have given up on in other parts of the world by setting up alternative groups of fellowship under a different Anglican umbrella? I think we, as the venerable and ancient Church that we are, catholic and reformed, should work hard to make that possible, and, in so doing, offer it as a pattern to the Anglican world. A vision, an aspiration such as this will be, however, nothing more than a fond hope and a meaningless platitude unless we do indeed actively engage with our differences. Again, as the *Gazette* said, to deny ‘could be a huge mistake.’ It would be.

“Meanwhile, our focus on ministry and mission continues.”

Bishop Colton stressed, “Included in our pastoral ministry are the needs of all people, including LGBT members of our parishes. These are not remote and hypothetical situations. They are real people turning to Christ and his Church for ministry today, this week and next week, already in our Diocese. Only two days ago, we gathered in this very parish with a friend, a man to bury his male partner of 35 years.

Rightly they received the pastoral ministry and care of this Church, in the name of Christ, in illness and in death. But what about when LGBT are alive? Our responsibility in ministry extends primarily to the living; so we must care for and include LGBT people, couples and families as we care for others.”

Looking at the situation in Ireland, He concluded. “Soon, civil marriages of gay couples will start to take place, and, while it is clear that clergy are not permitted to conduct those marriages in Church, clergy and laypeople of the Church will inevitably soon be guests on such occasions, at the civil marriages of friends or of members of their own families, and, no doubt will be asked to say grace or prayers in such family contexts.

Our church cannot shy away from these issues, and how is our rich diversity of believing and belonging to the Church of Ireland to be accommodated?”

*See also CNI Comment today which carries Dr Colton’s personal perspective on the recent marriage referendum.*

## **Arctic sabbatical for Connor cleric**

The Rev Mike McCann, rector of the Parish of Kilroot and Templecorran, will be spending his summer in the Canadian Arctic!



### ***Cathedral Church of St Jude in Iqaluit***

Mike has been granted a sabbatical by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, and he and his wife Sarah are presently heading to the Cathedral Church of St Jude in Iqaluit on Baffin Island on June 7.

This has been arranged by the Rt Rev Darren McCartney, Suffragan Bishop of the Arctic, who formerly served in the Diocese of Connor as curate in St Nicholas Church in Carrickfergus.

Before departing for Baffin Island, Mike spent a few days on retreat at the Benedictine monastery in Rostrevor. Anyone

interested in following his experiences in the Arctic can log into his blog at [arcticinsummer.blogspot.co.uk](http://arcticinsummer.blogspot.co.uk)

## **Queen's Award for Methodist North West Mission**

Clooney Hall Volunteer Group at the North West Methodist Mission (NWMM) in Londonderry has been awarded with the prestigious Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

The Mission has received the Queen's Award 2015 for a weekly luncheon club for the elderly and for a parent and toddler group – both of which have been going for over 30 years.

This is the highest award given to local volunteer groups across the UK to recognise outstanding work in their communities.

May Lappin, one of the groups founders, and Mr Liam Milligan, Director of NWMM, attended a garden party at Buckingham Palace on May 20. The group is one of 187 to receive the prestigious award this year.

Liam Milligan NWMM Director said: *"It was a privilege to nominate the group for this award. They have worked tirelessly over the years*



*providing a much needed and valued service in our community without seeking any recognition for the work they do. This honour celebrates their commitment and hard work and is well deserved."*

The UK's Minister for Civil Society, Rob Wilson, said: *"I would like to congratulate all groups who received this year's Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, in recognition of their fantastic achievements. The hard work and commitment that goes into the work of these organisations is surpassed only by the passion and motivation of the individuals who volunteer. I hope these groups continue to inspire others to get involved*

*and make a positive impact so that we can continue to build a bigger, stronger society.”*

## **West Glendalough School Children Brighten up the Day**

“Let’s be someone’s sunshine today” was the happy message from West Glendalough Children’s Choral Festival which was hosted by Donoughmore NS on Friday June 5. The message worked on the weather resulting in clear skies where there had been torrential rain and enabling the annual sports day to take place after the service in Donoughmore Church.

The annual festival brings together pupils from Blessington No 1 School, Jonathan Swift NS in Dunlavin, Athy Model School and Donoughmore NS for a service and sports day. The pupils of Donoughmore led the service following an introduction by the Revd Leonard Ruddock, Rural Dean.

The address was given by Archbishop Michael Jackson. He observed that while rain had given way to sunshine, we need both rain and sun to survive. He added that the festival is a day of celebration and an opportunity for the children to celebrate through singing and sport.





***Children leading the service in Donoughmore Church.***

The Archbishop pointed out that another cause for celebration was the drawing to a close of the school year with all the wonderful events and opportunities to learn that had taken place over since last September. He said they could thank God that they could enjoy life and for all the people who helped them throughout the year. He thanked everyone who helped put the service together.

During the service prayers were led by children from each school and Donoughmore NS presented a dance routine.

## Belfast Mission fundraiser for Street Soccer NI



The East Belfast Methodist Mission's Hosford House's annual table quiz fundraiser held on Wednesday 3 June made over £1200 for Street Soccer NI.

The funds will support this years Team NI who will compete in the homeless World Cup in Amsterdam this September.

Staff at Hosfords thanks all who supported the fund raising event.

The Homeless World Cup is an annual football tournament for people who have experienced

homelessness. The vision of the Homeless World Cup is to use the power of football to transform the lives of homeless people all over the world. And that vision is becoming a reality in 70 countries involving hundreds of thousands of players since 2003.

Street Soccer NI is a football project set up for the disadvantaged groups of society such as the homeless, drug and alcohol dependant, refugees, asylum seekers and long term unemployed. It aims to bring positive change to people's lives using football as a hook.

Hosford House was set up and is managed by the East Belfast Mission. It is a key scheme in the strategic plans of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and contributes to Northern Ireland's social exclusion, homelessness and drug and alcohol strategies.

## **Ballymoney rector gets a 3,000 pound soaking!**

The Rev Andrew Sweeney, rector of the combined parishes of Ballymoney, Rasharkin and Finvoy, has been put in the stocks and bombarded with wet sponges by his parishioners!

The rector's soaking was no reflection on the quality of his sermons, but was one of the big attractions at the parish fete.

Parishioners showed great willing to pay a fee to pelt the Reverend!

The Fete raised a total of £3,000 for the Old School House Restoration Fund.

## **Person-centred education was Bishop Flynn's passion**

“From the beginning he was a teacher, and a very good one by all accounts. The word most often used by people was kind. Quiet in disposition and very discreet.”

Family, friends, bishops and priests attending the funeral Mass of Bishop Thomas Flynn on Saturday heard his successor pay tribute to his commitment to catholic education and adult faith development.

In his homily at the Cathedral of the Annunciation and Saint Nathy in Ballaghaderreen, Co Roscommon, Bishop Brendan Kelly told the congregation that “Person-centred education, the hallmark always

of the Catholic system, was a passion for Bishop Tom. On this he was very clear.”

The Mass was attended by Bishop Flynn’s nieces and nephews and their families, as well as Cardinal Seán Brady, Commandant Kieran Carey, ADC to An Taoiseach Enda Kenny and other public representatives, bishops, priests and priest classmates his – Fr Michael Goaley, Fr Newell and Fr Laten.

“Bishop Tom was a much loved man of this parish, and a Roscommon man”, Bishop Kelly acknowledged. Apart from the first six years of his priesthood in Tubbercurry, he spent his entire life in his native Ballaghaderreen parish.

“From the beginning he was a teacher, and a very good one by all accounts. The word most often used by people was kind. Quiet in disposition, and very discreet, a man of few words.”

As president of Saint Nathy’s, Bishop Kelly said his predecessor was a reformer and moderniser, a process advanced in firm co-operation with Fr Andy Johnston, who succeeded him as president and who passed away on the very same day as Bishop Flynn (last Tuesday).

“At a time when school amalgamations were seen as the way to go, for wider curriculum and choice purposes, Bishop Tom and Fr Andy insisted that the voluntary and Catholic status of the united Saint Nathy’s here in Ballaghaderreen was the way forward,” said Bishop Kelly.

He added, “Person-centred education, the hallmark always of the Catholic system, was a passion for Bishop Tom. On this he was very clear.”

He recalled that nationally, Bishop Flynn was at the helm for many years in educational matters as chairman of the Bishops’ Council for Education, including at the time of the negotiations around what became the Education Act of 1998.

“Visiting the schools in the diocese and staying in touch with the young was a priority for him, something he instilled by example in the priests of the diocese too,” he said.

Bishop Flynn was also a member for many years also of the Bishops’ Council for the Laity.

“Leading the diocese in the immediate aftermath of the Second Vatican Council, he worked determinedly in the area of adult faith development too.”

He established the pastoral centre at Charlestown, and also the centre at Banada; he encouraged the development of the Father Peyton Centre at Attymass and was particularly involved in his latter years with the Sisters of Mercy in the development of the Hope House Centre for addiction treatment in Foxford.