



**Bishop Alan
Wilson “people
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marry”**

The Anglican Bishop, the Right Revd Dr Alan Wilson, said in Dublin this week that “people need have nothing to fear from allowing gay people to marry”.

He was addressing a mixed audience of lay people and clergy at a signing in Books Upstairs of his new book, “More Perfect Union: Understanding Same-Sex Marriage”. The Bishop, who, since 2003, has been the Bishop of Buckingham in the Church of England added:

EILE Magazine - Bishop Wilson talked about how: 'I asked myself "what does God want for gay people?". After re-revisiting the Bible, and more importantly getting to know gay people of all types and varying backgrounds, he decided the answer was that God wants for them the same as everyone else – flourishing faith, hope and love, involvement and inclusion.

Bishop Wilson described how the vast majority of people he encountered on his journey toward being in favour of same-sex marriage were not anti-gay, were 'just trying to love their neighbour as themselves', even if, in some cases, their heads lagged behind their hearts on the issue of marriage for same sex couples. The ultimate aim of his book is to help Christians unite head and heart in a fully positive response to gay people marrying.

He observed that "the debate on same sex marriage has been male-dominated and preoccupied by sex". He said that "in my book I have tried to show that marriage is about the relationship, not the sex". He told the audience that his publishers had automatically put two men on the cover of his book, but that he requested instead the picture of two women at their wedding. He added "many of the

arguments against equality for gay people felt like the arguments against women driving in Saudi Arabia”.

He concluded by saying that he had a very positive response to his book and was delighted to be able to share it with an Irish readership. The Bishop assured those present that “in England marriage has been available to same -sex couples for a year and the frogs have not come out of the water”.

The book signing was arranged by Faith in Marriage Equality, which is itself supported by the Catholic groups ‘We are Church Ireland’ and ‘Gay Catholic Voice Ireland’, and the Anglican Church of Ireland group ‘Changing Attitude Ireland’. [Faith In Marriage Equality](#) (FIME) is a voluntary group of persons from a range of faith backgrounds, who have come together under the Charter of Faith in Marriage Equality.

Irish tour by University College Oxford Chapel Choir

The Chapel Choir of University College, Oxford, will begin a tour of Ireland at a service in Belfast Cathedral on Sunday March 22 at 7pm.

This will be a joint service with the St Anne's Cathedral Choir, and will include a performance of St Mark's Passion by Wood. The choir tour also features music from Schutz, Haydn, Brahms and Walton and among the singers are Choral Scholars Chris Breeze and Peter Shepherd.

On March 23 the Chapel Choir will perform in St Thomas's Parish Church, Belfast, at 7.30pm (tickets £6/£4). It will sing Evensong in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, at 5.30pm on Tuesday March 24, and will sing again in St Patrick's at 1pm on March 25 (free entry).

Carrickfergus schools feature in the BBC Radio Ulster Choir of the Year competition.

Presented by John Toal and Kerry McLean and recorded at six venues across Northern Ireland, the first programme is this Sunday on BBC Radio Ulster at 2.00pm with the event culminating in a live final from the Ulster Hall on April 26.

Competing for a place in the final in the first round recorded at the Whitla Hall, Methodist College, Belfast, are primary and secondary schools from Belfast and County Antrim.

Model Primary School is in the junior category while Carrickfergus Grammar is competing in the senior section of the competition produced in association with the Ulster Youth Choir, supported by the Arts Council for Northern Ireland (ACNI) and part of the BBC Music NI initiative.

The winning choirs will help BBC Radio Ulster celebrate its 40th anniversary throughout this year and feature across a range of the station's programming and events.

Seize the Day! Holy Week panel discussion in Lisburn

St Mark's Church, Ballymacash, Lisburn, is hosting its annual Seize the Day! Discussion Forum on 'putting faith into practice' on March 31.

The Forum, which has been taking place during Holy Week for a number of years, gets underway in the Canon Jones Hall at 8pm, following the 7.30pm service.

This year's Forum is chaired by Richard McReynolds. The Panel comprises:

Mrs Rosamund Bennett, Chief Executive of Christian Aid Ireland; Mr Alban Maginness, MLA for North Belfast; Mr Jeffrey Donaldson, MP for Lagan Valley; Mr Barkley Campbell, former Head of Sixth Form, Laurelhill College; the Rev Dr Bert Tosh , Cleric and Broadcaster; and Mr Trevor Douglas, Development Officer, Diocese of Connor.

The Forum takes the format of the BBC's Question Time, and the Panel will consider the following questions:

1. It is 70 years since Christian Aid was established in response to the issue of refugees and immigrants at the end of the Second World War. There still remains a huge refugee / immigrant problem. What measures or strategies should be adopted to alleviate this problem today?
2. With regard to education, Northern Ireland has a high percentage of non-qualified school leavers relative to other regions of the United Kingdom. What remedial action needs to be implemented?
3. Statistical evidence suggests a steady exodus of young people from Northern Ireland to Great Britain and further afield. Are we educating our young people for export?

4. What is your vision for Northern Ireland in 2020.

Once the members of the Panel have had an opportunity to respond to each question, the audience will be invited to make comments and ask supplementary questions.

The Seize the Day Discussion Forum is open to all.

Vatican Cardinal praises Church role in NI peace process

The head of the Holy See's peace council has praised the Church in Northern Ireland for its work to bring peace to the North.

Irish Catholic - Speaking at Belfast's annual St Brigid's lecture, Cardinal Peter Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, said after many years in which "images of violent conflict have flashed across the world from this divided city", it was "a great joy to witness at first hand the enormous efforts being made in the search for reconciliation and peace among the

people of this city and between the islands of Great Britain and Ireland”.



The cardinal cited his experience in presiding over his native Ghana's National Peace in recognising that “the journey to peace rarely travels along a fast road” and “much requires God's help”.

He acknowledged the huge effort involved in working towards a reconciled and peaceful future, recalling how in *Evangelii Gaudium* Pope Francis said “the new evangelisation calls on every baptised person to be a peacemaker”.

“Churches, community groups, business leaders and entrepreneurs all have vital sources of experience, wisdom and influence that can assist and contribute to the political effort to build a cohesive and reconciled society,” he said.

Highlighting tensions over symbols of identity and parades, the cardinal asked how we could “accommodate for differences while we pursue the greater common good” and said he was glad to have the opportunity to learn from the North.

“The rest of the world,” he said, “particularly those parts that continue to wrestle with long-running conflict, look at your journey towards peace with great interest and hope.”

Speaking to *The Irish Catholic*, Cardinal Turkson said in the lecture he had wanted “to commend the Irish Church in Northern Ireland and other Christian groups for the initiatives they’ve taken and for how they’ve helped to bring the experience of Northern Ireland to where we are now, on the doorstep of peace, though there is still a lot of work left to be done.”

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Service of institution in Derryvolgie



Family and clergy at the institution of the Rev Stephen McElhinney in Derryvolgie

A Service of the Institution of the Rev Stephen McElhinney as incumbent of Derryvolgie Parish took place at St Columba's, Derryvolgie, on February 25.

Stephen has been Priest-in-Charge of Derryvolgie under the licence of the Bishop of Connor since September 2011. After a change in the status of the Parish and subsequent Board of Nomination, Stephen was appointed and instituted as rector.

The Bishop, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, was present at the service along with other representatives of Connor Diocese.

Stephen, who is married to Cathy, was born in Manchester, but moved to Lurgan in 1973. He

graduated in Optometry from Aston University and after two years working in the north of England he returned to Ireland.

Stephen was ordained in Christ Church Cathedral Dublin in June 2005 – this was the first time a son was ordained in the Church of Ireland whose mother was also an ordained Church of Ireland minister – the Rev Liz McElhinney was ordained in 1997 and was curate at Magheralin Parish (1997–2001) and rector of Calry Parish, Sligo (2001–2007).

Following his ordination Stephen served as a member of the staff team of Kill O' the Grange Parish Church, Dublin, moving in May 2008 to Drumglass Parish, Dungannon, before his appointment as Priest-in Charge of Derryvolgie.

Sermon preached by Archbishop Justin Welby at a service at St Paul's Cathedral to mark the end of combat operations in Afghanistan

Lamentations 3:22-33; Matthew 5:1-12

‘Great is your faithfulness,’ says the prophet Jeremiah, turning to God in a time of deep distress.

As our nation honours at this service all of you who have served in Afghanistan – forces personnel and many others, alongside so many of other nations – I ask you to hear those same words today, reverberating around our land: great is **your** faithfulness. You know about faithfulness.

Today is a moment for us to say thank you: thank you to all who served, whatever your role.

We thank you for your faithfulness: you who left family behind, you who trained hard, you who did not turn from danger, you who suffered injury and you who risked yourselves to care for the injured. I'm told that each wounded person was supported by up to 80 others by the time they got home. Great is your faithfulness.

We also thank those of you who stayed behind, who let your loved ones go: you who worried for their safety each day and took your phone to your bedside each night, you who lived with the pining of children, as well as your own fears. Great is your faithfulness.

And we honour the faithfulness of all those who gave up their lives to give peace and security for others. We will remember them and we recognise them, not only by saying thank you but by showing our thanks – with words and also

in action: as we strive to imitate their self-giving, as we seek to be as courageous in living as they were in dying. As we seek to fulfill the words of Jesus in the beatitudes: where the promise of blessing is not something warm and fuzzy to keep to ourselves but something that is found in our giving and our sharing – in comforting those who mourn, in thirsting for righteousness, in peace-making.

It is no light matter to say ‘Great is your faithfulness’, if we realise what faithfulness costs, and dare to commit ourselves, for decades to come, to the same faithfulness. Jeremiah voiced these words to God after seeing his country devastated, his people killed or exiled, his city and livelihood destroyed. He who wrote those words knew suffering, he knew grief and loss: yet he spoke not of blame but hope, not of recrimination but of faith, not of anger but of love.

As Jesus died, he didn’t know whether his suffering had been in vain. In sorrow, pain and agony – yet in hope – he said ‘it is finished’. And because of his faithfulness, we can anticipate God’s opening to us the gates of eternal life.

One day we will all, each one of us, stand before God. These are the only words we long to hear

from him. They are the gold standard for all of us. "Great is your faithfulness, good and faithful servant".

Amen.

English RC Priests drum up support to resist any change to Church's 'unchanging' teaching at this year's synod

Priests in England and Wales are being urged to sign a letter calling on the next Synod on the Family to proclaim the Church's "unchanging" moral teaching and resist any move allowing Communion for the divorced and remarried.

The Tablet - They have been sent two letters, which have been seen by *The Tablet*, by a group of a dozen conservative-minded clergy. The first letter is a draft that is to be submitted for publication in the press, while the second, signed by the 12 clergy, sets out the reasons for agreeing to the first.

The first letter, which priests are urged to sign and send to a "support of marriage co-ordinator", states fidelity to the Church's traditional doctrines of marriage and sexuality,

and affirms the traditional discipline of the reception of the sacraments (which currently bars communion for the divorced and remarried).

It urges those who participate in this year's synod of bishops to end confusion that was caused at last year's gathering, as well as pledging help to those struggling with the demands of the Gospel in an increasingly secular society.

Last year's Synod on the Family put forward ways for the Church to be more welcoming to gay Catholics as well as for remarried divorcees to receive Communion. Cardinal Vincent Nichols, who attended the last synod and will be at the next one in October, has said divorced and remarried could be readmitted to Communion after a "long and demanding penitential pathway".

The dozen priests' second letter, however, contends that the media's reporting of the 2014 synod had left a "distorted sense" that the Church's moral teaching could be changed and Catholic practice altered "regardless of doctrine".

It states: "Even some committed Catholics are making statements that do not appear to reflect

the settled teaching of the Church nor the clear message of the New Testament.”

The 12 priests – who include the Dominican theologian Fr Aidan Nichols, Fr Daniel Seward, Provost of the Oxford Oratory and Canon Luiz Ruscillo, head of the Diocese of Lancaster’s Education Service – said they are committed to serve all who struggle to live out the demands of the Gospel in modern life. More at -

<http://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/1857/0/priests-drum-up-support-to-resist-any-change-to-church-s-unchanging-teaching-at-this-year-s-synod->

Media digest

Independent

Teachers' union says Church proposals for religious inclusion 'disappointing'

The Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) said it was "disappointed that the document does not address many of the key concerns".

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/education/teachers-union-says-church-proposals-for-religious-inclusion-disappointing-31063007.html>

No amount of Sinn Féin spin can undermine these victims' stories

How much does Gerry Adams know? How much information is he willing to reveal? And how much is he keeping back - and why?

<http://www.independent.ie/opinion/columnists/martina-devlin/no-amount-of-sinn-fin-spin-can-undermine-these-victims-stories-31060164.html>

1916 centenary can involve no 'hierarchy of victims'

www.independent.ie/opinion/1916-centenary-can-involve-no-hierarchy-of-victims-31053804.html

News Letter

Sinn Fein 'shameless' for backing massive anti-austerity protests

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/sinn-fein-shameless-for-backing-massive-anti-austerity-protests-1-6631074>

Paedophile priest to be sentenced on new charges

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/paedophile-priest-to-be-sentenced-on-new-charges-1-6629658>

Christian Aid and Bishops Appeal - Giving a voice to South Africa's voiceless

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/faith-focus-giving-a-voice-to-south-africa-s-voiceless-1-6626844>

Irish Times

Paudie McGahon: More abuse victims to come forward - Man who alleges rape by IRA man expects another victim of same attacker to go public

http://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/paudie-mcgahon-more-abuse-victims-to-come-forward-1.2137784?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter

Fintan O'Toole: How Ireland is dis-integrating
www.irishtimes.com/opinion/fintan-o-toole-how-ireland-is-dis-integrating-1.2132345#utm_sgqid=117072,d0cb7024-40e9-b8f8-5c6b-2addf2634454

RE - fairy stories have no place in the classroom

<http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/jennifer-o-connell-fairy-stories-have-no-place-in-the-classroom-1.2127665>

Belfast Telegraph

Maud Kells: The woman who took a bullet for the Lord

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/life/features/maud-kells-the-woman-who-took-a-bullet-for-the-lord-31059772.html>

FT

Item on the Archbishop of Canterbury speaking at the Worshipful Company of International Bankers' banquet. It says Justin Welby's speech was the highlight of the evening when he said "we all inherit baggage from our predecessors" and reassured the audience: "We [the Church] know more about losing the plot than any of you". Banks should "change the way they operate and interact."

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/2b625628-c8a9-11e4-b43b-00144feab7de.html?siteedition=uk#axzz3UExDKilX>

Ind

Further report on comments in a radio interview by the Reverend Canon Gavin Ashenden, who said The Koran has "over 100 verses inviting people to violence" although many Muslims describe their faith as "entirely peaceful". He was speaking following the Archbishop's comments on countering extremism.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/islam-invites-people-to-violence-queens-chaplain-reverend-gavin-ashenden-claims-10104445.html>

Times

Article on how the boundaries of Africa's oldest national park could be redrawn to allow oil drilling after a British company (Soco) carried out tests inside the world heritage site, according to a leaked letter from the prime minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo. It states millions of barrels of oil are believed to lie under Virunga National Park, which is home to 200 endangered mountain gorillas. It mentions that the Church of England said it was considering withdrawing £3 million invested in Soco in response to a documentary on the issue.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/environment/article4380333.ece>

Mail

Article on a service of commemoration at St Paul's Cathedral to mark the end of combat operations in Afghanistan, to honour veterans of the campaign and remember the servicemen and women who lost their lives. It states the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London will make addresses of remembrance and families of some of those killed will also take part.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-2991694/Royal-honour-Afghan-war-veterans.html#ixzz3UFBPKUrm>

Mail/Tel

Reports on how a London priest has come under fire from traditionalist Anglicans after holding an 'Inclusive Mosque' event in his church, when he also addressed prayers to 'God' and 'Allah'. It states the Reverend Giles Goddard, vicar of St John's in Waterloo, said he was simply offering people a 'place to pray'. The event sparked criticism from some clergy who said it was against Canon Law.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2992645/Under-fire-vicar-said-love-Allah-Liberal-clergyman-attacked-traditional-Anglicans-allowing-Muslim-prayer-service-Church.html#ixzz3UEznHhDJ>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11468013/Muslim-prayers-in-Church-of-England-parish.html>]

Mirror/Ind

Reports that Church of England academy, Grey Coat Hospital School in Westminster, chosen by David Cameron for his daughter, could face an investigation over asking parents for cash. It states parents complained after receiving letters asking for £96 when their children joined and £120 when they received a sixth form place. Official guidelines bar schools from requesting financial contributions as part of the admissions process.

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/school-david-cameron-chosen-daughter-5324022>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/school-chosen-by-camerons-may-have-broken-rules-on-requests-for-cash-10104914.html>

BBC

Report over lack of burial space across the world. Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management chief executive Tim Morris says a crisis is looming, even though most British people choose cremation. A 2013 survey indicated nearly half of England's cemeteries could run out of space within the next 20 years. It states one solution is to recycle plots.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-31837964>

Letters

Times

Letter from faith leaders including the Archbishop of Wales, Dr Barry Morgan, calling for the international community to develop a robust plan of action that will rid the world of nuclear weapons.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/letters/article4380266.ece>