



Irish Methodist dismay at Stormont impasse

The Belfast Synod of the Methodist Church in Ireland, meeting for their Spring Meeting have issued the following Statement:

"The Belfast District Synod of the Methodist Church in Ireland notes with dismay the current impasse in the Stormont Assembly with regard to the Welfare Reform and the budget. We urge our

representatives to build on the understanding within the Stormont House Agreement to find an appropriate accommodation that will enable the effective functioning of government and public services in Northern Ireland whilst protecting the poor and vulnerable in our society."

Mary McAleese: 'Pope Francis carries a residual element of misogyny'

Former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese has said that Pope Francis is a 'lovely person' but carries a 'residual element of misogyny' that stops him advancing the cause of women in the church.

Journal.ie - In an interview broadcast on [RTÉ radio's Sunday Spirit](#) yesterday, McAleese speaks of her fondness for the Pontiff but says he is 'blind' to improving women's role in the church.

She suggests that some of this may come from his experiences in the priesthood:

"There is a blindness here that comes from a kind of a priestly formation that leaves so many good decent gentlemanly men like Francis still carrying an element, a residual element of

misogyny that closes them off to the dangers of not dealing with these issues.”

McAleese, who moved to Rome to study canon law after leaving the Presidency and published a book on the Second Vatican Council, says the church often makes the mistake of thinking these issues are all about women priests.

“Many of them think that, if they go there, they think its to do with the ordination of women. It’s not. It’s an issue alright but it’s by no means THE issue.”

The two-term former president goes on today to explain that the main problem is that women don’t have a voice in the church.

Specifically, there is no way for women’s views to be transferred up the chain of command in the catholic church.

“Leaving aside the issue of orders or being involved in the work of priesthood,” she cautions.

More at -

http://www.thejournal.ie/mcaleese-pope-francis-1992241-Mar2015/?utm_source=twitter_self

Reconciliation will be St Patrick's Day theme - Bishop Miller

Right Revd Harold Miller, Bishop of Down and Dromore in a message for St Patrick's Day states

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This year's St Patrick's Day Pilgrimage from Saul to Down Cathedral will be a very important occasion. We will be welcoming The Most Revd Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury to the place which is the cradle of Irish Christianity. This is the first time a serving Archbishop of Canterbury has been to the pilgrimage in over 50 years. His theme will be reconciliation - an area in which he has a great deal of experience, not least from his time in Nigeria, and also from his involvement in the reconciliation work based at Coventry Cathedral.

'Reconciliation' can be a difficult concept after what we have suffered here in Northern Ireland. It really means that former enemies become friends, and it can be a very long process. The issues that we constantly face in politics and human relationships remind us powerfully that the journey of reconciliation is far from complete. There can still be mistrust, fear and even hatred in our hearts. There is no better time than the

day of celebration of our common patron saint to remind ourselves of these things, and to remember that it was a man who came from Britain to Ireland more than 1500 years ago who has become our shared example of how a damaged culture can be changed.



Good Friday Passion Walk in Belfast

This Easter, Belfast will host its own ‘Passion Walk,’ an opportunity to journey through the city on foot and reflect on the season. Groups and individuals are invited to take part in the walk on Good Friday, 3 April, or on Easter Saturday, 4 April.

Gladys Ganiel writes - Organisers Joy Gowdy and Rev Jonathan Abernethy-Barkley describe the event this way: "The Passion Walk is an invitation to walk the Easter journey in the streets of central Belfast. Taking place on Good Friday and Easter Saturday, it is an individual reflective journey with an audio guide, pausing at certain key locations which become the backdrop for aspects of the story. It is an invitation to experience the heart of the Easter story in a new way, and perhaps to see the city in a new light."

Gowdy participated in a Passion Walk in Edinburgh in 2013, and was inspired to bring the event to her home city. Local Christians from all denominations have supported her in organising the walk, which is "open to anyone who is drawn to this journey, of any church affiliation or none."

Abernethy-Barkley has also completed the Edinburgh walk and had this to say: Belfast this year will be hosting its first ever Passion Walk – exploring our city, the Easter story and how the two connect. The walk will allow you to take time to reflect, enjoy the city's landscape and ask yourself some challenging questions."

Walkers begin their journey at Grosvenor House, 5 Glengall Street (behind the Opera House) between 10am and 1pm on Friday 3rd April or Saturday 4th April. They walk at their own pace, with a map and audio guide, alone or in small groups, and finish with refreshments and a space for further reflection at The Dock Cafe in Titanic Quarter.

You can watch a video trailer for the walk on [Passion Walk's Facebook page](#). In some ways, the 2 minute video itself could be considered a devotional resource, as it invites reflection tied up with the city's landscape and people.

Please register in advance [HERE](#), by email on info@passionwalk.org or by phone on 07879 014344. The organisers can't guarantee that they will have enough materials for those who don't register. There is a charge of £5 (£3 unwaged) per person, payable at the start of the Walk, to help cover the costs of materials. The Passion Walk is a non-profit project. See more information on how it all works [HERE](#).

<http://www.passionwalk.org/how-it-works.html>

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Archbishop Justin Welby, Dr Jason McElligott, Archbishop Michael Jackson and Caroline Welby examining a book which was pierced by a bullet in the 1916 Rising in Archbishop Marsh's Library during the Dublin leg of the Archbishop of Canterbury's visit to the Church of Ireland last October.

Remembering 1916 – Has Your Parish A Story to Tell?

The Glasnevin Trust has compiled a list of the names of 485 men, women and children who were killed during or as a direct result of the 1916 Rebellion. The list includes many well

known names but the majority of those featured are the names of the unknown dead of 1916.

In many cases, according to the Glasnevin Trust, the names of many of the people had been “lost in the sands of time” until now and their stories tell the true history of the rebellion and what it meant for Ireland.

The Trust is urging people who are related to or who have information on those on the list to get in touch to enable them to expand their stories in advance of their exhibition and events marking the centenary of the 1916 Rising. Those with information can email info@glasnevintrust.ie.

The United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough is also looking for people and parishes who have stories of 1916 to tell. Did your parish have connections to any of those killed in the Rising? Did the events of the rebellion in streets and neighbouring areas impact on your parish or church? Were people in the parish connected, involved or effected?

The dioceses hopes to compile these stories as part of its contribution to the Church of Ireland’s commemoration of 1916. Parishes and people with stories to tell can contact the Diocesan

Communications Officer in the first instance at dco@dublin.anglican.org.

MCI President visits Ballynahinch

Last week the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Rev Peter Murray, spent time in Ballynahinch visiting community organisations and volunteers in the area.

On Friday 6 March he visited a variety of organisations and people including the Mid-Down CAP Debt Centre, the Hub Counselling Centre and The Edge Youth Club. On Saturday he visited The Pantry Foodbank in Newcastle and preached at Ballynahinch Methodist Church on Sunday.

He will be returning to the area on St Patrick's Day to participate in the St Patrick's Day Pilgrimage from Saul to Downpatrick.

New Dublin and Glendalough Ministry of Healing Newsletter

The Dublin and Glendalough committee of the Church's Ministry of Healing has published its first newsletter. Entitled The Wounded Healer, it

aims to inform people of all aspects of the ministry in the dioceses as well as support those in the healing ministry. The newsletter will be published twice a year and contains reflections, prayers and news.

The diocesan chaplain of the Church's Ministry of Healing, the Revd Bruce Hayes, explains that the name of the newsletter is taken from a book by Henri Nouwen. In that book the question is posed: "who can listen to a story of loneliness and despair without taking the risk of experiencing similar pains in his own heart and even losing his precious peace of mind? In short: Who can take away suffering without entering it?"

Mr Hayes adds: "The question itself is a reminder to us on many levels of the task that is set for us in our vocation to the healing ministry. It is a vocation, and like any vocation it can at times weigh heavily upon one's shoulders." The magazine contains opportunity for spiritual refreshment.

The newsletter can be downloaded by [clicking here](#).

Communications Officer for Diocese of Derry and Raphoe



Former BBC Radio Foyle journalist, Paul McFadden, has been appointed Communications Officer for Diocese of Derry and Raphoe. Paul, who is a partner in a local media consultancy, Leapfrog Communications, takes up the post on a part-time basis, succeeding the Revd Earl Storey.

Archdeacon Miller says the new appointment comes at an exciting time for the Church of Ireland locally. “Lent 2015 has marked the start of our ‘Year of Prayer’, while 2016 has been designated by Bishop Ken Good as a ‘Year of Opportunity’. These are important initiatives for the Diocese.

“As one of the North West’s most respected journalists and broadcasters, Paul brings with him a wealth of knowledge and experience. Good communication – both within the Diocese and with the wider community – will be essential for promoting our initiatives and realising our vision of ‘Transforming Community, Radiating Christ’.”

Paul, who began his career with the Derry Journal, says he is honoured and delighted to be appointed and says he is looking forward to working with the Diocesan Communications team.

“During my career I’ve got to know many members of the Derry and Raphoe Diocese – both lay and clergy – in a personal and professional capacity. I’m honoured that they’ve entrusted me with this role and look forward to using my skills and knowledge to the Diocese’s benefit.”

General Election - pray and engage - Mothers Union provide resources

Once again Mothers Union have produced support material for their members in the approach to the General Election in the UK.

A spokesperson for the Mu commented - You may think that the General Election is a long way off but May 7th is fast approaching! It is very easy to get bogged down with all the information that is thrown at us by the parties, or become disengaged by the endless “debating” of the party leaders, or just feel like your vote doesn’t count in the grand scheme of things. However, it really does matter and you really can make a difference when you engage in politics. We are pleased to have produced a **“Get Involved: General Election 2015”** resource to support our members through the General Election period.

Mothers’ Union has always been passionate about advocating policies that support family life and promote social justice. With nearly 140 years experience working with families locally, nationally and globally, we are well placed to contribute to the political debate. While we are not here to influence your voting choice, we are calling our members to use this time in the lead up to the elections to pray and reflect on the issues and to question what type of society do we want to create for future generations?

And it’s not just about the voting! There are many ways in which you can get involved in the General Election. Perhaps your Mothers’ Union

group or church could hold a hustings so you have the opportunity to ask prospective parliamentary candidates (PPC's) about issues that are important to you. If you feel passionately about your community then why not consider standing for election yourself? It certainly is something to think about and you can stand as an individual candidate rather than with a political party if you would prefer.

Our resource covers all of this and more and most importantly it includes a prayer guide with pointers as to what you can specifically pray for at election time. After all, prayer is at the heart of all we do at Mothers' Union.

Church in Wales job club helps people find work

Job-seekers in one of Wales' most economically deprived towns were presented with certificates by the Archbishop of Wales as they completed a new employment course run by churches. They were the first graduates of a free job club set up in a community cafe in the heart of the Pontypridd by a group of churches keen to help people find work in tough economic times.

Fifteen people enrolled on the eight-week course which began in January at Connect Cafe in **St Catherine's Church**. The sessions were led by a team of six volunteers from the churches and included training on CV writing, interview techniques, goal-setting and motivation and being self-employed. Following the training each week, the club ran a drop-in session for anyone else looking for help and advice with access to computers and free wifi.



Emma Musgrave, job club volunteer

The Archbishop, Dr Barry Morgan, joined in the last session at which two local entrepreneurs talked about how they set up their own businesses. He was introduced to the job-seekers and volunteers by the job club manager, Revd Peter Lewis, the vicar of Pontypridd. Mr Lewis was trained by the UK charity **Christians**

Against Poverty (CAP) which promotes job clubs across the UK. He was also runs a debt centre, money management course and community cafe at St Catherine's.

Dr Morgan said, "I am overwhelmingly impressed by what is on offer here. The job club volunteers are not only teaching people how to apply for jobs but are giving them the confidence to do so and are doing it in a very caring and welcoming environment. It is amazing how the personal touch, being made to feel valued as a person, can make such a difference. The job club integrates with the other community services on offer here – the debt group, money management course and the cafe. So all kinds of people drop in and you never know how many lives are touched.

"Lots of people think the church of God should only be involved in people's spiritual lives. But unless you deal with people in their wholeness and unless the Gospel reaches people who are in need or who are marginalised, we are not actually being true to it."

Pope Francis announces Jubilee Year dedicated to mercy

While celebrating his second anniversary in the papacy, Pope Francis announced a Jubilee Year focused on one of the concepts he most often preaches

Former Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio made the revelation during his sermon at a Lenten penitential service on Friday, where the unexpected announcement won the applause of those attending the ceremony at St. Peter's Basilica.

Pope Francis will dedicate the Jubilee Year to the virtue of mercy, to which he has referred on multiple occasions and which is the basis of the episcopal motto that he chose when he became a bishop: "Miserando atque eligendo" (He looked at him with mercy and He chose him).

During his sermon he said that "no one can be excluded from the mercy of god".

The Argentine pontiff acknowledged that "I have thought about how the Church can make clear its mission of being a witness of mercy," and concluded that "it's a journey that starts with a spiritual conversion".

"For this reason I have decided to declare an Extraordinary Jubilee that has the mercy of god

at its centre. It will be a Holy Year of Mercy," he said.

It will begin on December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and will come to an end on November 20, 2016, the date when the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, is celebrated.

The tradition of Jubilee, or Holy Year, goes back to the year 1300, when Pope Boniface VIII decreed that it must be celebrated every century.

However, since the year 1475 it has been called every 25 years to allow each generation to experience at least one ordinary Jubilee, while the extraordinary ones are announced based on some important occurrence.

In the extraordinary Jubilee he has called, Francis will honour the 50th anniversary of the closure of the 1962-1965 Vatican II council and will encourage the church to continue on the path of that turning point in church doctrine and liturgy.

The pope's announcement came as he celebrated the two years since that rainy afternoon when a cardinal "from the end of the world" appeared on the balcony of the central

loggia of the basilica to greet the world as Francis.

Precisely this Friday, in an interview on Mexico's Televisa television, the first Latin American pope made a surprising statement in acknowledging that "I have a feeling my pontificate will be brief. Four or five years, I don't know."

He also said he did not like to travel very much and sometimes longed for home and anonymity.

What he'd really like to do someday, he said, would be to walk out of the Vatican without being noticed and "go and eat a pizza".

See also -

Catholic World Report - Global Church news and views

<http://www.catholicworldreport.com/NewsBriefs/Default.aspx?rssGuid=pope-francis-declares-2016-to-be-a-jubilee-for-mercy-84325%2F>

Media digest

BBC

'Eucharistic famine' fear over future of priesthood in Ireland

In 1994, there were 209 students overall studying for the diocesan priesthood at

churchnewsireland@gmail.com

Maynooth. At the end of September 2014, there were 69. The drop-off has prompted fears of what the Association of Catholic Priests (ACP) has described as a "Eucharistic famine". The ACP represents around 1,000 working clergy.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-31855151>

Church Times

Forces' 'great faithfulness' is keynote of Afghanistan service

The mood in St Paul's Cathedral was not triumphal. Hundreds of immaculately uniformed soldiers, sailors, and airmen and -women, and relatives of the injured and the dead, sat quietly, together with assorted dignitaries, as sombre organ music rumbled around them.

They were there, on a crisp Friday morning, to commemorate the 13-year-war in Afghanistan, and to remember what the conflict had cost.

The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke of the "faithfulness" of those who had fought in Afghanistan, echoing the prophet Jeremiah in the book of Lamentations.

<http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2015/20-march/news/uk/forces-great-faithfulness-is-keynote-of-afghanistan-service>

News Letter

Ashers cake row raised at Strasbourg

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/ashers-cake-row-raised-at-strasbourg-1-6633361>

Alliance would allow a free vote on euthanasia, says Ford

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/alliance-would-allow-a-free-vote-on-euthanasia-says-ford-1-6633188>

Independent

Taoiseach calls on Gerry Adams to go to gardaí on sex abuse claims

Speaking at the beginning of six-day tour of the United States, Mr Kenny launched a blistering attack on Mr Adams and Sinn Féin, over their failure to adequately deal with rape and sex abuse claims within the republican movement.

Mr Kenny accused Mr Adams and the party of having information surrounding kangaroo courts, the use of safe houses by the IRA and the movement of paedophiles down South.

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/politics/taoiseach-calls-on-gerry-adams-to-go-to-garda-on-sex-abuse-claims-31065630.html>

Sinn Féin deputy leader standing by Adams defies logic

There's a fine line between loyalty and blind faith. And Mary Lou has crossed it, and is now marooned in Sinn Féin's sea of eternal ambiguity.

<http://www.independent.ie/opinion/columnists/lise-hand/sinn-fin-deputy-leader-standing-by-adams-defies-logic-31063063.html>

New school inspections turn heat up on teaching

A range of changes to the schools inspection regime has put teaching standards and management under increased scrutiny.

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/education/schools/new-school-inspections-turn-heat-up-on-teaching-31065777.html>

Belfast Telegraph

IRA sex abuse: Enda Kenny calls on Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams to "present himself" to police over party knowledge of IRA sex abuse

Mr Kenny today ridiculed Mr Adams's claims that he does not know whether Louth man Paudie McGahon was interrogated in an IRA "safehouse" in relation to claims he was raped as a teenager. In a blistering attack on Mr Adams, Mr Kenny accused the Sinn Fein leader of being untruthful in relation to his knowledge of the IRA sex abuse scandal. And for the first time since the emergence of the McGahon case, Mr Kenny made a direct appeal to other victims to come forward.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/ira-sex-abuse-enda-kenny-calls-on-sinn-fein-leader-gerry-adams-to-present-himself-to-police-over-party-knowledge-of-ira-sex-abuse-31064927.html>

Like St Patrick, Dr Welby is a leader with great vision

Alf McCreary writes

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/life/like-st-patrick-dr-welby-is-a-leader-with-great-vision-31064780.html>

Private service as Jim Molyneaux leaves his beloved church for the last time

The only guests who joined parishioners were former Church of Ireland Archbishop Most Rev Robin Eames, the present Bishop of Connor, Rt

Rev Alan Abernethy, Rev Martin Smyth, a retired Presbyterian minister, Rev Clyde Irvine, a former rector of St Catherine's and the Rev William Hoey, a retired Col clergyman.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/private-service-as-jim-molyneaux-leaves-his-beloved-church-for-the-last-time-31064914.html>

Daily Mail

New Yorker magazine makes devastating claims about Gerry Adams

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2994221/Is-proof-killer-15-000-word-expose-respected-New-Yorker-magazine-makes-devastating-claims-Gerry-Adams.html>

Irish Times

On a wing and a prayer – how the IRA and the church banished abusers

[http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/fintan-o-toole-on-a-wing-and-a-prayer-how-the-ira-and-the-church-banished-abusers-1.2139100?
utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter](http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/fintan-o-toole-on-a-wing-and-a-prayer-how-the-ira-and-the-church-banished-abusers-1.2139100?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter)

The more bishops say about marriage, the better for a Yes vote

[http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/diarmaid-ferriter-the-more-bishops-say-about-marriage-the-better-for-a-yes-vote-1.2138888?](http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/diarmaid-ferriter-the-more-bishops-say-about-marriage-the-better-for-a-yes-vote-1.2138888?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter)

[utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter](http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/diarmaid-ferriter-the-more-bishops-say-about-marriage-the-better-for-a-yes-vote-1.2138888?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter)

Stephen Collins: Sinn Féin casts a dark shadow over Irish democracy

<http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/stephen-collins-sinn-f%C3%A9in-casts-a-dark-shadow-over-irish-democracy-1.2139092>

Adams accuses Kenny of ‘demeaning’ office of Taoiseach

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/adams-accuses-kenny-of-demeaning-office-of-taoiseach-1.2140349>

RTE News

Vatican - Force may be needed against ISIS

The Vatican's ambassador in Geneva has said the use of force will be necessary to protect minority groups from Islamic State aggression if a political solution cannot be achieved. In an interview with US Catholic website Crux, Archbishop Silvano Tomasi said IS were committing "genocide" and must be stopped.

<http://www.rte.ie/news/2015/0315/687197-islamic-state/>

Guardian

In praise of Jean Vanier

churchnewsireland@gmail.com

March 16

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/mar/13/jean-vanier-philosophers-templeton-prize>