



***The Duchess of Cambridge has presented shamrocks to soldiers from the Irish Guards to mark St Patrick's Day. A senior female member of the Royal Family has carried out the St Patrick's Day ceremony since 1901- Report and link below***

## **Archbishop of Canterbury launches Anglican/Methodist report at Downpatrick pilgrimage**

The Most Revd Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, joined with The Rt Revd Harold Miller, Bishop of Down & Dromore, The Most Revd Richard Clarke, Archbishop of Armagh, and other pilgrims from across the world and

various Christian traditions at today's traditional St Patrick's Day pilgrimage walk from St Patrick's Church, Saul to Down Cathedral, Downpatrick.

The pilgrimage got underway after an early morning service of Holy Communion at Saul at which the preacher was Dom Mark–Ephrem of Holy Cross Monastery, Rostrevor. Along the pilgrimage route, walkers stopped to pray for reconciliation in our broken world, in this land and between churches.

The third pilgrimage stop was outside Downpatrick Methodist Church at which the Archbishop of Canterbury launched a report to the Anglican Consultative Council and the World Methodist Council by AMICUM, 'Into All the World: Being and Becoming Apostolic Churches'.

At Down Cathedral, Archbishop Justin Welby preached on a theme of Reconciliation at a festival service with contributions from Sullivan Irish Music Group, the cathedral choir, the McCartney School of Irish Dance and the Down & Dromore Year of Mission choir Kerygma.

Archbishop Welby based his sermon on the reading from Ephesians ch.2: 'So then you are

no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.'



Drawing on contemporary concerns over human trafficking and the parallels with St Patrick's life story, as well as recent events in Lahore, in Sudan and in the history of Northern Ireland, he said that 'the best choice any person or society can make is to be a disciple of Jesus Christ'. He went on to say that God reached out and made us one with him, putting hostility to death so that

those who are reconciled to God 'light up the world by the radicality of the Gospel ... [so that] gripped with Jesus the Church speaks of peace and reconciliation'. He continued by saying that 'the world needs the witness of those who've made the journey from enemy to friend ... reconciled to reconcilers from whom reconciliation flows lavishly'.

While acknowledging that there remain many challenges in Northern Ireland, the Archbishop praised the work of reconciliation 'embarked upon with courage – a gift of God to you for the world [to be] held in your hands as a treasure'.

Finally, the Archbishop called for Christian people to proclaim peace politically – 'full of energy to change our world', changing it 'not by power but by vulnerability and love' – and to be 'at peace with God, at peace with each other and at peace with the world,' continuing 'to call for peace till the Lord returns, as Patrick did'.

Following the service, Archbishop Welby, accompanied by an ecumenical gathering of local clergy, as well as civic and political representatives, laid a wreath on the grave of St Patrick in the grounds of the cathedral before joining with 800 people for a lunch of Irish stew and apple pie.

The Archbishop of Canterbury continued his St Patrick's Day visit to Northern Ireland with participation in a Peace Party for young people and young adults at Belfast's Waterfront Hall, concluding with prayers at Belfast City Hall, organised by Summer Madness and Church Army.

### **St Patrick's Day celebrations take place across Northern Ireland**

BBC - Thousands of people have been attending St Patrick's Day parades in towns and cities across Northern Ireland on Tuesday.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-31909129>

### **Duchess of Cambridge presents St Patrick's Day shamrocks to Irish Guards**

BBC - The Duchess of Cambridge presents shamrocks to soldiers from the Irish Guards to mark St Patrick's Day.

## **Big debates need to be grounded - Bishop Colton**

Addressing the congregation at the annual Civic Service in Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork, the Church of Ireland Bishop of Cork, the Right Reverend Dr Paul Colton, said that big debates

in society, in communities and in institutions, such as that currently being had in Ireland in the run-up to the marriage referendum, ‘cannot be had in the abstract; they must be grounded in the real experience of the lives of our fellow human beings.’

He said that ‘Big concepts such as marriage, relationship, love, commitment, family, parenting are all rooted in, and given expression, in the lives of real people, made in the image of God. When we participate in the debate, formally or informally, publicly or privately, we are walking on the holy ground of other people’s lives.’

Bishop Colton said:

Big debates about big ideas cannot be had in the abstract; they must be grounded in the real experience of the lives of our fellow human beings. One of the risks of any big debate in any community, society or institution, is that we take to ourselves the luxury and relative safety – or we even draw the battle lines – by having the discussion without putting names, faces and human experience on the idea. Such is a risk as we approach the marriage referendum next May; we already are seeing too much of this in the public space.

When we allow ourselves to dislocate the people from ideas, we can all too easily dehumanise them, and objectify them, people who, like ourselves, are also children of God. And that's not only a risk in this debate. Labels and categories, for example, are convenient ways of removing the faces and human experience from what is being said: 'the unemployed', 'the sick', 'the disabled', 'the immigrants', 'the gays', 'the single mothers,' 'the homeless', 'the poor', 'the traditionalists', 'the liberals', ... the list is endless of the ways that we risk removing people and their experiences from our reflection about big ideas.

If the simple demands of a radically challenging Christianity – Love God; Love your neighbour as yourself – are to mean anything, then we ought to discuss big ideas by putting ourselves in other people's – our neighbour's – shoes. The words of the Catechism come to mind: 'My duty towards my neighbour, is to love *him* as myself, and to do to all *men* as I would they should do unto me ...

Full text of sermon at -

<http://churchofirelandcork.com/2015/03/17/saint-patricks-day-sermon-preached-by-bishop-paul-colton-bishop-of-cork/>

## Church of Ireland Bishop Ferran Glenfield declares for NO

According to this Friday's edition of the Church of Ireland Gazette Bishop Ferran Glenfield has declared for No in the marriage referendum. He added his signature to a document called *"Same-sex marriage Referendum May 2015: A Cross Denominational Response"*. According to the Gazette, the document signed by Bishop Glenfield, and also by the Catholic Bishop of Elphin the Most Revd Kevin Doran, claims that *"freedom of conscience will be challenged by a 'Yes' vote. Service providers such as caterers and photographers would be acting illegally if, on grounds of conscience, they were to decline services for same sex weddings"*

Bishop Glenfield's view has been criticized by the Church of Ireland group Changing Attitude Ireland which is calling on people to vote 'Yes'. It's Chair, Dr Richard O'Leary said that *"Bishop Glenfield should be mindful of how in the past the Catholic and Protestant churches opposed mixed marriages"*. Dr O'Leary added he was *"disappointed that Bishops should now be seeking to introduce the right of businesses to discriminate against customers on the basis of sexual orientation"*.



Last May the Bishop of Cork Dr Paul Colton announced that “*I certainly support civil same-sex marriage*”.

<http://www.thejournal.ie/bishop-paul-colton-same-sex-marriage-1471245-May2014/>

## **Skainos launch for ground - breaking book on youth ministry**

Thursday 12 March saw the launch of a significant new book on youth ministry. Hosted by the Skainos Centre at East Belfast Mission, the launch of *Together: Life-changing perspectives to inspire youth ministry* attracted youth leaders from many churches and para-church organisations.

The impetus for the project came from Pete Waugh, a youth worker and writer, who had the initial vision of gathering and sharing stories from people involved in youth ministry across Northern Ireland. He envisaged a book that would help readers reflect on the past and speak into the future direction of youth ministry.

The aim was to make it accessible to both volunteers and those involved as youth ministry staff and also to inspire others to engage in

youth ministry.



***Editors of Together (L-R) Jose Cummings (Exodus), Helen Warnock (Scripture Union NI) and Pete Waugh (Damask)***

Some weeks earlier Pete was the keynote speaker at the Irish Methodist ‘Overflow’ weekend which provides leadership training for young people.

Reports both of the content of *Together* and of the Overflow weekend feature in the April *Methodist Newsletter* – out next week.

## **‘Start of Something Special’ as Discovery Mothers’ Union Inaugurated**



***Members of Discovery Mothers’ Union with Dublin Diocesan President, Joy Gordon.***

Motherhood and Mothers’ Union were at the centre of a very special celebration service in St George and St Thomas’s Church in Dublin on Mothering Sunday. Yesterday’s vivacious service saw the inauguration of Discovery Mothers’

Union and it was addressed by Diocesan President, Joy Gordon, who was joined by her family.

Discovery is Dublin and Glendalough's Ministry to the International Community and it is based in St George and St Thomas's Church on Cathal Brugha Street. The congregation was welcomed to the church, which was festooned with blue and white balloons for the occasion, by the Rector, the Revd Obinna Ulogwara who said the inauguration was just the start of something special. The service was led by Stella Obe.



***The offering during the service inaugurating Discovery Mothers' Union.***

Many of the members were wearing beautiful Mothers' Union uniforms and Mrs Gordon complimented them and urged the women to wear them with pride. In her address she highlighted the work of Mothers' Union – a worldwide Christian charity with four million members in 81 countries. “We are a Christian organisation made up of inspirational members who respond to the needs of families and communities. We are committed to demonstrating our Christian faith in action through nurturing family in its many forms. Put very simply, Mothers' Union is centred on supporting families and family life,” she explained.

Mrs Gordon outlined Mothers' Union's aims and objectives, among them being to promote and support marriage, to encourage parents to develop the faith of their children, to maintain a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer, to promote conditions in society favourable to a stable family life and the protection of children and helping those whose family life has met with difficulty.

She spoke of the work of Mothers' Union worldwide and at home from supporting literacy and finance programmes for women in Burundi,

Sudan and Ethiopia to knitting for maternity and children's hospitals in Dublin.

he theme for 2015 of Mothers' Union worldwide is 'United in Prayer'. Mrs Gordon said that, for her, prayer was two fold: words and action. "There are the words of prayer, which can be heartfelt and meaningful. But what use are words without action! As Christians we are called to 'act' and not sit back. This is what Mothers' Union is so good at... our practical acts," she stated.

The service was filled with singing and dancing with traditional hymns interspersed by the Discovery Children's Voices and choruses led by the Discovery Mothers. Fathers paid tribute to mothers and even the Rector broke into song.

At the end of the service the Discovery Mothers' Union presented Joy Gordon with her very own wraparound skirt which is worn by many members in African countries when they are attending meetings. Members also cut a celebratory cake to mark the occasion.

Discovery Mothers' Union will meet once every three months and Revd Obinna concluded the service by saying everyone is welcome to join. Contact [discovery@dublin.anglican.org](mailto:discovery@dublin.anglican.org) for details.

There are lots of photographs from the service on the Dublin and Glendalough Facebook page – [facebook.com/DublinandGlendalough](https://facebook.com/DublinandGlendalough)

## **Pope Francis should pay a visit to Ireland**

If Pope Francis were to visit to Ireland, it would not be his first time there. In 1980, when the Pope was in his 40s, he spent two months in the country learning English.

[Catholic Herald - According to comments made by the Papal Nuncio](#), Archbishop Charles Brown, Pope Francis has a love for Ireland. The nuncio also said that a brief trip in 2016 is “possible”.

I fear that if planning a papal visit is not prioritised now, it may never happen. Pope Francis has [a foreboding that his pontificate will only last four or five years](#). He is not a travelling pope, being very certain that he is the Bishop of Rome. But owing to his unassuming personality and his popularity, he has a golden opportunity to change hearts and minds during a visit to Ireland.

Pope Francis has an unpretentious manner and the Irish would take very well to him. There has already been a sea-change in Irish attitudes to the papacy.

Today is St Patrick's day, and [it was revealed in the Irish Times](#) that poet, Paul Durcan has written a poem in honour of Pope Francis in his new book of poems, entitled The Days of Surprise. In the times of Benedict's

papacy, had a poet paid tribute to Benedict with a poem, he would surely have been excoriated in the press.

If Francis visits Ireland, then it musn't just be a charming social occasion. Pope Francis could do as Benedict XVI did, and meet privately with some abuse victims. Relying on his popularity to lend greater influence, it would be a daring move if Pope Francis were to invite the Irish nation to forgive the clergy and nuns who brought the name of Ireland into disrepute by their actions. As the Vicar of Christ, Pope Francis could recite the Gospel passage where Jesus urges us "to forgive seventy times seven".

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/commentandblogs/2015/03/17/pope-francis-should-pay-a-visit-to-ireland/>

## **World Council of Churches: Visit to churches in Ukraine**

A World Council of Churches (WCC) delegation led by general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit is visiting Ukraine from 17 to 20 March to explore how the international ecumenical community may best support churches there so that they can contribute to the search for peace in this country.

"We hope that this visit can be seen as an expression of how the whole ecumenical family prays and acts together for justice and peace for the people of Ukraine," said Tveit. "We go



together to see, to listen and to discern what our future steps together can be,” he added.

The programme of the delegation visit includes meetings and discussions with the leadership of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) which is the WCC member church in Ukraine, as well as with other churches and religious communities in Ukraine, and encounters with high-ranking Ukrainian political leaders.

## **Archbishop Welby addresses funeral for Pakistani Christians via mobile phone**

The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke via mobile phone today to mourners at the funeral of Christians killed two days ago in church bombings in the Pakistani city of Lahore.

Twin attacks on Sunday outside Christ Church and St John’s Catholic Church in the eastern city killed 17 people and left many more injured.

Archbishop Justin Welby, who is currently on a St Patrick’s Day pilgrimage to Northern Ireland, had been trying to make phone contact with the

Right Revd Irfan Jamil, Bishop of Lahore Dioceses, since the attacks on Sunday.

He succeeded this morning when Bishop Jamil answered his phone during the funeral service in Lahore.

Bishop Jamil held his phone up to a microphone so that those gathered could hear directly from the Archbishop. He translated as Archbishop Welby spoke to the mourners and prayed for them.

Directly after the attacks, Archbishop Welby and the Interim General Secretary of the Anglican Communion, Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan, sent condolences to Bishop Jamil and assured him of the support and prayers of the Anglican Communion.

## **Christian Aid supports Vanuatu relief effort**

Christian Aid is to make an initial £25,000 available to partner organisations providing emergency supplies to the Pacific island of Vanuatu in the aftermath of Cyclone Pam.

Christian Aid, the churches' global development agency, is to make an initial £25,000 available to partner organisations providing emergency

supplies in the aftermath of Cyclone Pam which hit the Pacific island chain of Vanuatu on Friday, killing at least eight people, injuring many more, and reducing many houses and shops to matchwood.

The money will go to sister organisations in the ACT Alliance that are best placed to provide immediate assistance to the islands' 270,000 strong population. The alliance is a global coalition of more than 140 churches and affiliated organisations working together to fight acute poverty.

As well as making money available, Christian Aid says the ferocity of Cyclone Pam must be seen as a stark warning of the kind of disasters that will become more commonplace if the global community fails to take significant measures to combat climate change.

“While it is difficult to attribute any one event to climate change, scientists are clear that it makes extreme events like Cyclone Pam more likely,” said Mohamed Adow, Christian Aid’s Senior Climate Change Advisor.

“The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction revealed earlier this month that 87 per cent of all natural disasters over the past 10 years have

been climate-related. That means a significant proportion of the 700,000 people that have died over that period through disasters, together with the 155,000 that were displaced and the \$1.4 trillion of economic losses that have piled up, are all down to global warming.

“This is a crucial year for tackling climate change, with a UN summit in December supposed to produce an international climate deal to come into force in 2020. Rich countries must put forward in advance their own carbon cutting targets and set out their support for the poorer countries which are already bearing the brunt of climate change to help them cope with further inevitable impacts.

“But all we have seen so far is a deeply worrying lack of ambition on the part of rich countries. Short-term emergency measures are no longer sufficient. Massive adaptation programmes commensurate with the projected level of warming are needed.

“At the same time, Governments have got to slash their carbon budgets, undertaking to move speedily away from fossil fuels for energy generation and investing instead in renewables if the global temperature rise is to be kept below

2oC, the point beyond which scientists predict climate chaos.”

Speaking (16 March 2015) at a UN conference on disaster risk reduction in Sendai, Japan, Vanuatu’s president, Baldwin Lonsdale, said the storm, which virtually wiped out Vanuatu’s development, was directly linked to climate change.

“We see the level of sea rise ...The cyclone seasons, the warm, the rain, all this is affected. This year we have more than in any year ... Yes, climate change is contributing to this,” he said.

As well as making extreme weather events such as cyclones more powerful, climate change has also triggered rising sea levels which means the tidal surges that accompany storms are stronger, deeper and more lethal.

\* Christian Aid <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/index.aspx>

## Media digest

### **Eve Standard**

Item on a new report on religion in the workplace from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, which refers to comments on the report from the former Archbishop of

Canterbury, Lord Carey. The article questions the way the Commission's findings have been reported, saying it could be evidence that the well-organised evangelical groups are attempting to put across their view that Christians feel intimidated and this is actually an urban myth.

<http://www.standard.co.uk/comment/comment/sam-leith-dont-believe-the-urban-myths-about-christians-10110921.html>

## **Times**

Report on inequality in housing wealth following analysis by the National Housing Federation. It states representatives from 300 housing organisations will join a rally outside the Houses of Parliament and will press all parties to commit themselves to a long term plan to build more homes. The Bishop of Rochester, James Langstaff and CBI director general, John Cridland will be among speakers at the rally.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/life/property/londonhomes/article4384046.ece>

## **BBC**

Report that a former choirmaster at Bradford Cathedral who sexually assaulted two teenage boys has been jailed for three years after sentencing at St Albans crown court. It states Andrew Teague, who has performed with cathedral choirs across England, committed the offences as a freelance music teacher in his early 20s, while living in Hereford.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-31909592>

## **Tel & Mail**

Items on the burial of Richard III at Leicester Cathedral. *Telegraph* says he is fortunate in being reburied with [such ceremony next week](#), because bits and pieces of several British monarchs remain scattered in odd places, at home and abroad. It states the whole interior of Leicester cathedral has been rebuilt in order to make his tomb its focus, with an ambulatory constructed so that pilgrims can come en masse and pay their respects. *Mail* states his remains have been sealed inside a lead-lined coffin ahead of his reburial next week - 530 years after he died

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/11475578/Richard-III-will-be-buried-with-the-rites-of-tourism.html>

[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2996377/Richard-III-reburial-cathedral.html?](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2996377/Richard-III-reburial-cathedral.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

[ITO=1490&ns\\_mchannel=rss&ns\\_campaign=1490](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2996377/Richard-III-reburial-cathedral.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

### **Mail/Guard/Tel**

Stories on Louis, the stray cat at Wells Cathedral, who was adopted to get rid of mice and has become the feline hero of a children's book, and even has his own merchandise stall in the cathedral shop. It says he has been accused of attacking dogs in the town, but cathedral staff say it is a case of mistaken identity.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2997653/Louis-cathedral-cat-merchandise-stall-accused-turning-nasty-attacking-dogs-like-wild-lion-spate-fights.html#ixzz3UcZ6yQ6U>

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/mar/16/cathedral-cat-under-suspicion-following-dog-attacks-in-wells>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/11476100/Saint-or-sinner-Louis-the-Wells-Cathedral-cat-accused-of-a-string-of-savage-attacks-on-dogs.html>

## **Guard**

Further article that the Democratic Republic of Congo's prime minister has said that his government wants to find a way to explore for oil in the Virunga national park, a Unesco world heritage site, and will engage in negotiations with the UN body to "explore judiciously". It states the [Church of England threatened to sell its £3m share in Soco](#), over concerns relating to the company's behaviour in DRC.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/16/democratic-republic-of-congo-wants-to-explore-for-oil-in-virunga-national-park>

## **Guard**

Extract from Sophie Ward's *A Marriage Proposal* as part of Guardian Shorts series. The book is described as moving argument that looked forward to equal marriage in the UK that came into effect in March that year. It looks at the Church of England response to gay marriage, including their local vicar.

<http://www.theguardian.com/news/2015/mar/16/guardian-shorts-a-marriage-proposal-by-sophie-ward-chapter-4>

## **Mail**

Report on new images released today showing ISIS terrorists toppling crosses, smashing Christian relics with hammers and erecting the black flag of ISIS on churches in Iraq. The latest photos show the militants vandalising churches in Nineveh, the ancient capital of the Assyrian empire.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2997577/Replacing-Christian-crosses-black-flag-ISIS-Chilling->



[photographs-reveal-Islamic-State-thugs-ravaged-religious-sites-Nineveh.html#ixzz3UcaQZGYx](http://photographs-reveal-Islamic-State-thugs-ravaged-religious-sites-Nineveh.html#ixzz3UcaQZGYx)

## **BBC**

Report that protests in Lahore by members of Pakistan's Christian minority have turned violent, with police using tear gas and water cannon on the crowds. Demonstrators smashed cars and threw stones in response to the bombing of two churches by a Taliban splinter group on Sunday. The protests came as the death toll in Sunday's attacks rose to 17.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-31904690>

## **Times**

Report on the Exclusive Plymouth Brethren church which it says has 17,000 followers in Britain and enjoys charitable tax relief worth up to £13 million a year. It claims the church has strict disciplinary practices, described by some as a cult, and that some followers have been ostracised or thrown out for minor transgressions. The Brethren denied that they are a cult and said they are a "force for good".

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article4384092.ece>