



Last year's Walk of Witness as Archbishop Martin and Archbishop Jackson prepare to leave Christ Church Cathedral.

Archbishops of Dublin to Lead Good Friday Walk of Witness and dedicate new sculpture

The Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic Archbishops of Dublin will once again lead a procession of the cross through the streets of Dublin city centre on Good Friday, April 3 2015.

The Ecumenical Walk of Witness, now in its fourth year, sees Archbishop Michael Jackson and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin carry a cross from Christ Church Cathedral to St Mary's Pro Cathedral in an act of visible witness on this highly significant day in the Christian calendar.

People of all Christian traditions are invited to come together to pray and join the Archbishops as they journey across the city presenting a public sign of the churches' work and witness together in the wider community.

The evening will begin with a prayer service in Christ Church Cathedral on Good Friday evening. People will gather at 7.00 pm for a short service at 7.15 pm before departing at 7.30 pm. Led by the two Archbishops who will jointly carry the Taizé Cross, they will walk to St Mary's Pro Cathedral on Marlborough Street where they will join a Taizé prayer service around the cross.

The walk covers a distance of approximately two kilometres.

In Christ Church cathedral, Dublin, the Archbishops of Dublin will, in the context of the annual Good Friday Walk of Faith, dedicate a sculpture, 'Homeless Jesus' by the Canadian artist, Tim Schmalz. The sculpture has been donated to Dublin by an anonymous North

American episcopalian benefactor and Mr Schmalz has chosen Christ Church as the location because he said it was 'the spiritual heart of Dublin'.

Stations of the Cross - Limerick recital

In St Mary's cathedral, Limerick, on Wednesday at lunchtime there will be a special recital for Holy Week by organist Peter Barley who will play Alan Ridout's *Stations of the Cross*.

The greening of gay marriage in Ireland - The Boston Globe

Strategists on both sides of the question say that the "Yes" vote — establishing civil marriages regardless of the couple's gender — is favored to win.

The battle lines appear lopsided. The Roman Catholic Church, still a force in Ireland despite widespread disaffection, is officially opposed, although small numbers of priests have broken ranks to support the measure. But business groups, unions, and all the major political parties have lined up in favor. Early polling shows the

question passing with ease; an Irish Times survey published on Friday found 74 percent felt gay people should be permitted to marry, a decline of 6 points since December.

There is also a substantial undercurrent of quiet opposition, people who profess public support or neutrality, but privately say they plan to cast their secret ballot against.

David Quinn, a journalist who founded the Iona Institute, a leading Christian organization that is helping spearhead the opposition, said his side could still win, but it would be “against the odds.”

“If we were to win, it’d be a narrow victory,” Quinn said. “The ‘yes’ side could also win by a landslide.”

Gay marriage critics in Ireland call it a corruption of the time-honored family unit and an affront to religious freedom, part of a growing pattern of governmental intrusion. Proponents say it is an overdue extension of the equality the revolutionary leaders envisioned on the steps of the General Post Office a century ago and say it is time to declare that Ireland, as Justice and Equality Minister Frances Fitzgerald put it Wednesday in an address to the Irish Senate, is

“embedded in the modernity of the 21st century.”

Convulsed by rapid social, economic, and demographic change over the past few decades, Ireland, where homosexuality was outlawed outright until 1993, may be approaching another turning point. And, as the nation draws near the Easter Rising’s centennial and considers where it has been and where it’s headed, the referendum’s outcome will serve as a key indicator of the new Ireland’s path.

The Irish have something of a love affair with the governing tool known as referenda. Since 1992, they’ve voted on legalizing abortion and divorce, on several questions related to the country’s entry into the European Union, and to endorse the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, hailed as a major milestone in the peace process in Northern Ireland.

But the same-sex marriage question comes at sensitive time in Irish politics, when a wave of antigovernment feeling is swelling over austerity programs imposed over the last several years — higher taxes, layoffs, reduced benefits, and, most recently, new water fees. Widespread demonstrations have protested those measures.

Strategists on both sides think that unrest may prompt antireferendum votes.

More at - www.bostonglobe.com/2015/03/28/ireland-gay-marriage-referendum-favored-win/6XKtXqn8hFOsnXjekt1bUJ/story.html

Candlelit Vigil In Support Of Fr Dallat

Parishioners gathered in west Belfast last night for a second time this week to show their support for a priest who is alleged to have had an affair.

Irish News 28/03/2015 - Around 70 people attended a candlelit vigil inside the grounds of St Peter's Cathedral to give their backing to Fr Ciaran Dallat.

It is still unclear whether Fr Dallat (52), an assistant priest at St Peter's, remains in active ministry.

More than a week after allegations first emerged that he had had a two-year relationship with a 49-year-old businesswoman, the Diocese of Down and Connor again declined yesterday to comment on whether he had been suspended.

The woman claimed the affair began in Belfast in 2012 after the pair went on a group pilgrimage.

She also claimed she miscarried his child and said the priest told her he would leave the Church for her.

A diocesan spokesman last week said it was "a private matter between two persons who are adults", adding the following day that the diocese was taking the allegations "seriously".

No further comment has been issued by the diocese. More at -

<http://www.irishnews.com/news/candlelit-vigil-in-support-of-fr-dallat-1422733>

Easter Message from the C of I Archbishop of Dublin

Most Rev Dr Michael Jackson writes -
Throughout the Season of Lent, we ourselves, as individuals and as communities, have carried the cross with Jesus Christ and we have also been carried forward by the same cross throughout those Forty Days.

We have taken the opportunity given us to overlap and to identify our priorities with those of the child of Bethlehem, baptized in the River Jordan and emboldened by the Holy Spirit. We have also moved from the wilderness back into the streets of Jerusalem. We are soon to move from Jerusalem out into Galilee, at all points following this same divine and human person Jesus Christ who, as we are assured in Scripture, has gone before us. There will be new points of knowing and new points of meeting and new revelations of God with us.

On Easter Day we are held in the moment of resurrection. We are invited to let ourselves be carried forward by God in God's fullness through that fragile, yet essential, link between loss and hope, death and life, today and tomorrow. The God of compassion, the God of transformation and the God of time meets us on Easter Day itself when a time of faithfulness becomes a time of glory.

Across the heartlands of Christianity, followers of Jesus Christ endure and sustain unspeakable human suffering and degradation, intimidation and displacement. They carry the cross of Jesus Christ in tangible and tactile ways that are unimaginable to us. They continue to witness in suffering on the Day of Resurrection by their

presence. On their witness in life and martyrdom in death we are reliant for the faith that is ours to enjoy and in which we delight. As we pray for the peace of Jerusalem, we pray for the life of all peoples of the Middle East and the Near East, foe and friend alike. We pray for resurrection, for recognition, for healing and for humanity.

Scenes from the Easter Trail at Finaghy



An intrepid reporter led his band of Jesus-seekers from the newsroom in the foyer of

Finaghy Methodist Church to the gates of Jerusalem where a street seller told them about the events of Palm Sunday.

Methodist Newsletter - Then it was up the road to Lowe Memorial Church Hall to interview the owner of the Upper Room. Next stop was the outdoor Garden of Gethsemane and an encounter with a representative of the religious authorities who announced that Jesus had been arrested in the interests of Law and Order. Then it was on to the Chief Priest's courtyard to stand by the glowing embers of a brazier, witness Peter's denial of Christ and the bitter tears that followed. On we went to listen in on an interview with Pontius Pilate. Gathered between discarded signs saying 'Free Barabbas' and 'Crucify him', the group heard this plausible ruler do his best to justify the condemnation of an innocent man. Jesus' subsequent crucifixion had clearly unsettled the Centurion we encountered back down the road on the hill of Calvary (in Bethany Youth Centre). Had he just killed the Son of God? And then it was on to the final scene – the empty tomb – where two women were in no doubt that Jesus had risen from the dead.

All in all this was a first-class experience. Christian drama at its best – biblical, natural,

engaging and moving. As the 7.30 pm tour came to an end (with tea, coffee and chat), another intrepid reporter was leading a large group of young people up the street to the newsroom.

One can only imagine the amount of organisation and inter-church cooperation that has gone on to allow this weekend of drama to happen to such a high standard. The six participating churches are to be congratulated on creatively bringing the Easter story out into the public square.

Photographs at -

[https://
methodistnewsletterireland.wordpress.com/
2015/03/27/scenes-from-the-easter-trail/](https://methodistnewsletterireland.wordpress.com/2015/03/27/scenes-from-the-easter-trail/)

C of I Lay Training Department Launches Pentecost Theological Lecture Series

The Church of Ireland Theological Institute Lay Training Department has announced details of a series of Theological Lectures focussing on the work of the Holy Spirit as a preparation to Pentecost 2015.

Facilitated by Revd Dr William Olhausen, Rector of Killiney, Ballybrack, Dublin, the four week series is open to those wishing to explore the work of the Holy Spirit. Entitled 'The Promise of the Spirit!' this series will run on the following dates at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute...

- *Tuesday 28 April, Creation, practice and Prophecy: The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament.*
- *Tuesday 5 May, The Spirit of Jesus: The Holy Spirit in the Gospels.*
- *Tuesday 12 May, Power and Witness: The Holy Spirit in Acts.*
- *Tuesday 19 May, Life in the Spirit: The Holy Spirit in Paul.*

All lectures in the series will begin at 11am, followed by lunch at 12.30pm. To book in for the "Promise of the Pentecost Series!" please email davidbrown@theologicalinstitute.ie

Each lecture (including lunch) costs €10.00 (Waged) or €5.00 (Unwaged).

For information please contact: David Brown, Lay Training Co-ordinator. Church of Ireland Theological Institute +44 (0) 7919016079.



The judge said the education minister faced the possibility of saving an "educationally successful and obviously much-loved school" but had relied on incorrect information

Primary school: NI Minister's closure quashed by High Court

The High Court has quashed a decision to shut the first Catholic school in Northern Ireland that was trying to change to integrated status.

BBC News - It ruled that the education minister's approval to close Clintyclay Primary was "infected" by incorrect information that the school had financial problems.

It means minister John O'Dowd must take a fresh decision on the future of the school in Dungannon, County Tyrone.

The legal action against the closure was brought by the parents of a pupil.

The couple claimed the court verdict would inject new confidence into the entire community.

Clintyclay had been the first Catholic school in Northern Ireland to attempt a switch to integrated status, where children of different faiths would be educated together.

Delivering his ruling at the High Court in Belfast, the judge focused on how the mistaken belief that the school was facing cash problems had featured in the move towards closure.

The judge at the High Court in Belfast said that not only was it incorrect to claim the school was in financial difficulties, but in fact it had a budget surplus

He said the mistake may have originated from a Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) parish review which was fiercely disputed by the school and parents.

"In fact, not only was it not in financial difficulties, it had a budget surplus," the judge said.

However the error occurred, it made its way into the decision-making process, the judge concluded.

The CCMS had proposed that that school should close after its enrolment dropped below 30 pupils.

An alternative proposal advanced by the school's Board of Governors to change its management to grant-maintained integrated status was rejected.

At the time of his announcement last October, the education minister said enrolment numbers meant it was no longer sustainable.

Due to this long-term situation transformation to integrated status was not regarded as a feasible option.

But seeking to judicially review the minister's announcement, a barrister for the parents said the decision should have been deferred until a full assessment of the transformation option was carried out.

The judge said Clintyclay's attempt to transform its status could have "a galvanising impact" on the integrated sector.

"The minister was faced with the possibility of saving an educationally successful and obviously much-loved school at the epicentre of its (local community)," he told the court.

Such an outcome would also have been a "groundbreaking" boost for integrated education.

"The minister clearly and mistakenly made both important decisions on the basis the school was under financial stress," he said.

"It's also clear that the advice given to the minister was infected by the erroneous CCMS report and by this material financial inaccuracy."

Quashing the closure decision, the judge added: "The problem for the respondent in this case is there never was any financial or budgetary difficulties."

Outside court Gerard Cunningham, who brought the legal challenge with his wife Breda, described the verdict as a fantastic boost in their efforts to keep Clintyclay open.

Mr Cunningham, whose daughter attends the school, said: "We're delighted. This is going to put new confidence back into the school and the whole community."

Their lawyer, Setanta Marley of KRW Law, said: "We are pleased that the minister for education's decision was quashed on the basis that he relied on erroneous information.

"He missed an opportunity to transform the first ever Catholic school in Northern Ireland (to integrated status)."

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-32093222>

See also Belfast Telegraph -

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/clintyclay-primary-school-top-judge-quashes-john-odowds-infected-decision-to-halt-integrated-school-31100403.html>

A second judicial review finds against Sinn Fein's NI Minister for Education

A decision by Education Minister John O'Dowd to prevent an integrated school expanding -

despite the ruling of a judicial review - has sparked anger.

Belfast Telegraph - Drumragh Integrated College first applied in 2012 to expand from 580 pupils to 750.

This was turned down by Mr O'Dowd who said he felt it would have a negative impact on other schools in the area.

Omagh is set to be the location of the first major shared education campus project, with six schools preparing to move on to the Lisanelly site. A parent of a child at Drumragh Integrated College took a judicial review of the minister's decision in 2013.

Last May, Mr Justice Treacy said the department had failed in its legal duty to "facilitate and encourage" integrated education.

He also criticised the department's 'area-based' planning policy that has been used to determine which schools will remain open, expand, close or amalgamate to meet future demand.

Handing down his 13-page judgment - the first legal challenge of its kind by the integrated sector - the judge described the department's approach as "inflexible" and the "opposite of

encouraging and facilitating" integrated education.

Following this judgment in September 2014, Drumragh again applied to expand to 750 pupils.

But Tina Merron, the chief executive of the Integrated Education Fund, said the matter will not be allowed to rest, and that they will be seeking further legal advice.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/sector-wins-its-first-legal-challenge-31100404.html>

President says homelessness is starkest sign of Ireland's inequality

President Michael D Higgins has said homelessness is the starkest sign of Ireland's inequality today.

Independent - Speaking at the beginning of his National Ethics Seminar at Aras an Uachtarain, the President said the current levels of inequality in Ireland "pose nothing less than a fundamental challenge to the legitimacy of institutions and the morality of the State."

The one-day seminar is the culmination of President Higgins' initiative which he launched in September 2013 which he hoped would spark a national conversation about ethics.

He said the financial crisis starkly requires us as a society to interrogate our vision of social bonds and human relations, and our conceptions of prosperity and the good life.

In his key-note address, the President said: "We cannot effectively, or even meaningfully, address poverty in our communities without reflecting on the ethical questions that are posed to all of us and to our institutions, by the unacceptable current levels of inequality – inequalities that threaten to be transmitted from generation to generation, with very serious consequences for our peaceful co-existence."

He added: "Homelessness is just one of the manifestations of this inequality – perhaps the most pressing of all in Ireland today."

He said ethical dimensions of such a social plight as homelessness are complex. "They call for, at both individual and collective level, not just the impulse for charity as an immediate response, but also a recognition of the requirements of social justice in terms of policy design and political choices," he said.

In his address, he posed the question as to how property ownership and the individualism on which it is based influence our views on the ethical quality or the social equity of policy.

More at -

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/politics/president-says-homelessness-is-starkest-sign-of-irelands-inequality-31101531.html>

Scottish Episcopal Lent Appeal 2015 to support training for ministry

For this year's Bishops' Lent Appeals, all seven diocesan bishops have agreed to support the training and formation of those entering ministerial training in the Scottish Episcopal Church.

2014 saw the creation of the new Scottish Episcopal Institute (SEI), which replaced the former Theological Institute of the Scottish Episcopal Church (TISEC).

The ethos of the Scottish Episcopal Institute (SEI) has a very intentional emphasis on formation – the shaping of a person for ministerial functions and ensuring that the

person has sufficient maturity in Christ to carry those functions.

The Rt Rev Kevin Pearson, Bishop of Argyll & The Isles and Convener of the transitional Institute Council says “We recognise the importance of investing substantially in a candidate’s training and formation, and to equip them as best we can for the wide and varied tasks that they will encounter as they develop their ministry.

“We are already very encouraged by the numbers of potential younger candidates exploring vocation, and funds permitting, we hope to be able to offer full-time training as a possible pathway for some in the future.

“Please give what you can to the Bishops’ Lent Appeal so that we can equip the Church for its future ministry.”

- See more at: <http://www.scotland.anglican.org/bishops-lent-appeal-2015-scottish-episcopal-institute-4/#sthash.fZ6XpTw0.dpuf>

Pope approves synod participants from nearly 40 nations

Pope Francis has ratified the names of participants chosen by nearly 40 episcopal

conferences to take part in the upcoming Synod of Bishops on the family.

Among the more prominent members of the synod announced on March 25 are Cardinal Reinhard Marx of Munich, Cardinal Jorge Urosa Savino of Caracas, the Latin patriarchs of Jerusalem and Lisbon, and Archbishop Philip Tartaglia of Glasgow.

In January, the Pope ratified the representatives of nearly 30 episcopal conferences.

See also - <http://cnstopstories.com/2015/03/25/pope-says-prayers-not-gossip-needed-for-successful-synod-on-family/>

English cardinal urges debate in family synod stay out of the press

Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster urged priests to end debating the upcoming synod on the family in the press after more than 450 priests published a letter calling on the Catholic Church to retain the prohibition on divorced and remarried Catholics receiving holy Communion.

CNS - "Every priest in England and Wales has been asked to reflect on the synod discussion. It is my understanding that this has been taken up in every diocese, and that channels of

communication have been established,” Cardinal Nichols, president of the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, said in a statement March 25.



Cardinal Nichols at last October’s extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the family.

“The pastoral experience and concern of all priests in these matters are of great importance and are welcomed by the Bishops. Pope Francis has asked for a period of spiritual discernment. This dialogue, between a priest and his bishop, is not best conducted through the press,” the statement said.

Set to appear in the March 27 edition of the London-based Catholic Herald, the priests' letter explained that it was written partly to counter "confusion" over the moral teaching of the Catholic Church as a result of some synod fathers pushing for a relaxation of the ban on divorced and remarried Catholics receiving Communion.

It was signed by 461 priests and also appeared on the website of the weekly magazine March 24. More at -

<http://cnstopstories.com/2015/03/25/english-cardinal-urges-debate-on-family-synod-stay-out-of-the-press/>

Episcopal Presiding Bishop, A Former Oceanographer, Makes Religious Case Against Climate Denial

Climate denial is a rejection of God's gift of knowledge, says Episcopal leader. The highest ranking woman in the Anglican Communion has said climate denial is a "blind" and immoral position which rejects God's gift of knowledge. She is also opposed to disinvestment in fossil fuels.

Guardian - Katharine Jefferts Schori, presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church and one of the most powerful women in Christianity, said that climate change was a moral imperative akin to that of the civil rights movement. She said it was already a threat to the livelihoods and survival of people in the developing world.



“It is, in that sense, much like the civil rights movement in this country where we are attending to the rights of all people and the rights of the earth to continue to be a flourishing place,” Bishop Jefferts Schori said in an interview with the *Guardian*. “It is certainly a moral issue in terms of the impacts on the poorest and most vulnerable around the world already.”

In the same context, Jefferts Schori attached moral implications to climate denial, suggesting that those who reject the underlying science of climate change are turning their backs on God's gift of knowledge.

“Episcopalians understand the life of the mind is a gift of God, and to deny the best of current knowledge is not using the gifts God has given you,” she said. “In that sense, yes, it could be understood as a moral issue.”

She went on: “I think it is a very blind position. I think it is a refusal to use the best of human knowledge, which is ultimately a gift of God.”

The sense of urgency around the issue has been deepened by Pope Francis' [forceful statements on global warming](#), which he is expected to amplify in a papal encyclical in June and during an address to the U.S. Congress in September.

The Episcopal Church hosted a [webcast](#) on March 24 to kick off a month-long action campaign designed to encourage church members to reduce their own carbon footprints and lobby government and international corporations to fight climate change.

An oceanographer before she was ordained at the age of 40, Bishop Jefferts Schori said she

hoped to use her visibility as a church leader to help drive action on climate change.

As presiding bishop, she oversees 2.5 million members of the Episcopal Church in 17 countries, and is arguably one of the most prominent women in Christianity. The two largest denominations in the U.S., Roman Catholics and Southern Baptists, do not ordain women.

“I really hope to motivate average Episcopalians to see the severity of this issue, the morality of this issue,” she said. “Turning the ship in another direction requires the consolidated efforts of many people who are moving in the same direction.”

She acknowledged that the challenge was deepened by the strain of climate denial in American politics, and by continued resistance to science in American classrooms.

“It’s hard work when you have a climate denier who will not see the reality of scientific truth,” she said.

However, she, like a number of church leaders, said they had seen an uptick in climate activism in recent months, spurred by the Pope’s comments last January, and the conjunction

later this year of United Nations conferences on development and climate change.

Evangelical churches — once seen as a conservative force — were now taking up the climate cause, largely because of growing awareness of its threat to the poor.

“One of the significant changes in particular has been the growing awareness and activism among the evangelical community who at least somewhat in the more distant past refused to encounter this issue, refused to deal with it,” Jefferts Schori said. “The major evangelical groups in this country have been much more forward in addressing this issue because they understand that it impacts the poor.”

A number of denominations have also joined the [growing fossil fuel divestment movement](#) which is encouraging organizations to [move their investments out of coal, oil, and gas companies](#). The United Methodist Church, the third largest denomination, dumped coal companies from its pension fund.

The Unitarian Church and the United Church of Christ have also voted to divest, according to Rev. Fletcher Harper of [Green Faith](#). And the [World Council of Churches has pledged](#) not to invest in fossil fuels. A number of individual

congregations have also divested from fossil fuels.

The *Guardian* launched a campaign to encourage the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Wellcome Trust to divest from fossil fuels.

The Episcopal Church has also come under pressure to withdraw its fossil fuel holdings. A number of dioceses are pressing for divestment, and will bring the issue to a vote at the church's annual convention this summer.

Jefferts Schori opposes fossil fuel divestment. "If you divest you lose any direct ability to influence the course of a corporation's behavior," she said. "I think most pragmatists realize that we can't close the spigot on the oil wells and close the coal mines immediately without some other energy source to shift to."

The Most Revd Katharine Jefferts Schori is Presiding Bishop of [The Episcopal Church](#). She gave the following keynote address at the [Climate Change Crisis forum](#) on March 24.

See -

<http://www.anglicannews.org/comment/2015/03/life-or-death-which-will-we-choose.aspx>

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