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C of I delegation input at Irish government's top-level symposium on future of small primary schools



The Board of Education (RI) delegates Eimear Ryan, Archbishop Michael Jackson, Dr Ken Fennelly and the Revd Prof Anne Lodge.

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At the invitation of Mr Joe McHugh, TD, Minister for Education and Skills, representatives of the General Synod Board of Education (RI) attended a top level symposium, involving all stakeholders and partners in education, on the role and future of small primary schools.

Small primary schools are classified as schools of four teachers or less. Nearly 80% of Church of Ireland primary schools, both urban and rural, are four teacher or less and therefore regarded as “small” schools.

Minister McHugh, who is the TD for Donegal which has a significant number of small primary schools, set the tone for symposium in highlighting that small schools are an essential part of the societal and community infrastructure in modern Ireland. The Minister asked participants to reflect on how small schools could be strengthened and supported and to consider also how the allocation of resources to small schools could be done in a more efficient or “smarter” way. Minister Michael Ring, Minister for Rural and Community Affairs, joined the symposium and took the opportunity to emphasise the importance of small primary schools to the delivery of education to communities around the country, both rural and urban.

In his capacity as chairman of the General Synod Board of Education (RI), Archbishop Michael Jackson addressed the symposium. Drawing on international examples of support for smaller schools, specifically in the Scandinavian countries and also in the UK, Archbishop Michael Jackson’s contribution drew on the research co-funded by the GS Board of Education, the Church of Ireland College of Education, the Church of Ireland Primary School Managers’

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The Presbyterian Moderator (right) said he had a “Warm welcome from Connor Diocese as I called to see Presbyterian young people at SummerMadness. Thanks guys! “ The guys with the Moderator are Paul Dundas, the Archdeacon of Dalriada, and David Lockhart, the Rector of Larne.

Association and DCU on small schools in 2016 by Rev Professor Anne Lodge and Rev Dr David Tuohy.

The Archbishop emphasised the importance of smaller primary schools to the Church of Ireland community but also made the wider point that the research shows that small schools are valued by parents; deliver a quality educational experience and welcomed the fact that Government was recognising this important role. He also noted that in other

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There were many services marking the anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. The service at the War Memorial in Ballyclare was conducted by Canon David Humpries, Rector of Kilbride.

jurisdictions small schools have been used as a model to improve teaching and learning in larger schools.

The Archbishop went on to agree with the Minister that now is the time to “reframe thinking” regarding small schools and highlighted that the research found that small primary schools tended to be happy and caring environments where independent and peer learning across various subjects on the curriculum in multi–grade settings is occurring daily. Communities served by small schools expressed great pride in their schools and valued the teaching staff, the Archbishop added.

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New Bishop of Cork and Ross Bishop Fintan Gavin just before the installation ceremony at the Cathedral of St Mary and Anne

While highlighting the positive aspects of life in small schools, the Archbishop advised the symposium that research also clearly showed that principals in small schools were experiencing high levels of stress associated with the expectations and workload that the reality of being a principal in a small school brings.

He also noted that these principals expressed pride in their work and in their schools. Teachers too reported experiencing a greater workload because of the demands of working in multi-level classes. Many noted the lack of initial teacher education or CPD support for this specialist work. They also noted that lack of text books and resources for multi-level classes because publishers of educational materials assume that single-level classes are the norm.



In answering the Minister’s challenge to the symposium to reflect on new or innovative ways to support small schools, the Archbishop suggested a range of specific issues should be explored such as: changing the mind set from single grade classroom resources and curriculum delivery only to creating a more nuanced approach to recognise the multi-grade classroom reality of small schools and to think “spirally” about curriculum.

The Archbishop also suggested that detailed consideration be given to how resources could be shared or clustered between a number of schools, how it could be harnessed to reduce the level of administration on principals, how CPD
Bishop does the rounds at Limerick Synod on Saturday

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focused specifically on teaching in small schools and multi-level classes should be developed and that all ITE providers should prepare their graduates to undertake multi-class teaching. However, he warned about the potentially negative impact on both schools and the impacted personnel if key human resources such as the principal or the board of management was shared across schools.

The afternoon sessions of the symposium were in round table discussion format and this gave the opportunity for the other representatives from the GS Board of Education (RI), Rev Professor Anne Lodge, Dr Ken Fennelly and Ms Eimear Ryan, to join the conversation on the outworking of the suggested supports to small schools.

The reporting back from each of these round tables made it clear that many of the participants were alert to the problems of a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to funding, teacher allocation and resourcing. They were also critical of the rapid-roll-out of additional administrative demands on schools and noted that these increased demands had a particularly negative impact on small schools. At the very least, it was argued that the 2011 austerity cuts need to be reversed to enable small schools to flourish into the future.

Minister McHugh also took an active part in the afternoon sessions and was interested to learn of all the detailed suggestions brought forward by participants in the symposium.

The content and policy decisions to be made arising out of the symposium will be considered further by the Minister and his Department also at the Primary Education Forum which will meet again in the Autumn.

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Down and Dromore team will help at Albany youth camp

Nine young people from Down & Dromore Diocese, and two adult leaders, will fly out to their link diocese of Albany in upstate New York on Friday where they'll spend two weeks helping at Beaver Cross Ministries Summer Camp.

Mark Wells (Youth Worker with Bangor Parish) and his wife Abi will be leading the group this year.

This expression of the link between Down and Dromore and Albany began when a team of young people travelled to Beaver Cross in 2003. Since then a number of groups have travelled in each direction, with Down and Dromore regularly hosting American teams at Summer Madness.

The team will be serving in various ways, from assisting in the kitchen or in the grounds, to helping to lead groups of around 12 – 14 children and young people as they engage in various camp activities. They will also be sharing their faith through a Christian Education programme. The days will be long and hard work, but also a lot of fun. Six of the team come from Banbridge parish plus one each from from

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Donaghcloney and Waringstown, High Street Methodist in Lurgan and Brannockstown Baptist, Kildare.

Pope to canonize Newman and four others on 13 October

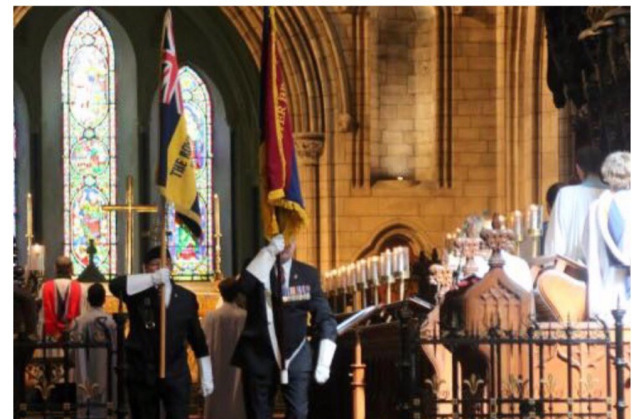


Beatification ceremony of John Henry Newman, presided over by Pope Benedict XVI, on 19 September 2010

The Vatican has announced the date of the canonization of Blessed John Henry Newman along with four others on the third Sunday of October 2019.

At a Consistory of cardinals on Monday, Pope Francis formally approved Blessed John Henry Newman's canonisation along with that of Sister Mariam Theresia, of Giuseppina Vannini, of Dulce Lopes Pontes and of Margarita Bays.

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Canon Sam McVeigh, a former long-serving chaplain to an army reserve Medical Hospital, was the preacher in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, at a service marking the anniversary of the founding of the Royal Army Medical Corps. Members of the Irish Defence Forces joined with veterans. The RAMC memorial in the cathedral is identical to that in Westminster Abbey.

In February, the Pope signed a decree recognising a second miracle attributed to Blessed John Henry Newman, the

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inexplicable healing of a woman with a “life-threatening pregnancy”.

Blessed John Henry Newman was one of the most prominent converts to Catholicism from Anglicanism of the 19th century. He was already an esteemed Anglican theologian when he founded the Oxford Movement to return the Church of England to its Catholic roots, before himself converting to the Catholic faith. He was renowned as a brilliant thinker and was made a cardinal by Pope Leo XIII. He died in Birmingham in 1890, aged 89, after founding the Birmingham Oratory.

Sister Mariam Thresia of India is the founder of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family.

Italian Sister Giuseppina Vannini is the founder of the Daughters of Saint Camillus.

Brazilian Sister Dulce Lopes Pontes of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God.

Marguerite Bays of Switzerland, of the Third Order of Saint Francis of Assisi.

Daredevil minister takes leap of faith

A daredevil minister is taking a leap of faith and doing a SAS-style freefall off the Forth Bridge.

Rev Susan Cord, who leads Killearnan and Knockbain Parish Church on the Black Isle, is participating in the 165ft descent to raise money for one of Scotland’s largest social care charities.

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Rev Susan Cord

The 44-year-old said she was “excited” about the prospect of stepping off the iconic cantilever bridge in South Queensferry on July 7 in aid of [CrossReach](#).

Ms Cord, who has done a 10,00ft tandem skydive and abseiled at an indoor climbing centre before, said: “The Forth Bridge is my favourite bridge and is an icon of Scottish engineering, known the world over.

“To get closer and see it from another angle, while doing something so memorable, seemed like an opportunity too good to miss.”

Practical action

Ms Cord has set up an online [fundraising page](#) and has raised nearly £650 so far to support CrossReach, which provides cradle to the grave services across Scotland.

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“It is an amazing charity which helps the most vulnerable in society,” the minister said.

“Staff and volunteers show Christ's love in practical action.

“Caring with dignity for those living with dementia, providing perinatal counselling services, substance abuse recovery centres, working with families to offer holistic care and providing prison visiting centres to make visiting loved ones easier.

“The list goes on.”

Ms Cord used to work for CrossReach, which is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year, and described it as the second best job she has had.

“The best is being a minister and I hope that through doing something daft, I can raise some money for the charity and promote its great work so more people will know what they do and want to support them,” she added.

Opened in 1890, the 8,094ft long Forth Bridge spans the Firth of Forth, connecting Lothian and Fife. It is a Unesco World Heritage site and considered by many to be Scotland’s greatest man made wonder.

July 02 - Today in Christian history

July 2, 1489: English reformer Thomas Cranmer is born at Aslockton, Nottinghamshire. The archbishop of Canterbury

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wrote the Book of Common Prayer and was burned at the stake in 1556.

July 2, 1505: A rain storm in Germany helps launch the Protestant Reformation. While returning from a trip to visit his parents, Martin Luther (then a law student) was caught in a violent thunderstorm near Stotternheim. Fearing for his life, he cried, "Help me, St. Anne! I will become a monk!" Within two weeks, he made good on his promise.

July 2, 1752: The first English Bible published in America rolls off presses in Boston.

July 2, 1865: William Booth founds The Christian Mission to work among London's poor and unchurched. Later, he changed the mission's name to the Salvation Army.

July 02 - News briefs

+++ New church plant leader in Titanic Parish - "It was a delight to walk around part of the Titanic parish this morning with Ross Munro on his first day as Church Plant leader in the Titanic Parish" said Archdeacon David McClay.



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Ross, a gifted evangelist who has completed the Diocesan Evangelist Course, will be developing a new church plant in the Titanic Parish in the months ahead. Ross will also be joining the interdenominational team of chaplains in the Dock Cafe. “He is the newest church plant leader in the Diocese of Down and Dromore we pray God’s richest blessing on Ross and his family as he begins this new role” Archdeacon McClay remarked.

+++ Archdeacon’s 50th anniversary of ordination - The Ven Gordon Linney, who was Archdeacon of Dublin from 1988 to 2004, celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination on Saturday. The former rector of St Paul’s, Glenageary, took morning services in St Paul’s on Sunday as the rector, the Revd Gary Dowd, was away. During his sermon, he revealed he had initially turned down the job at St Paul’s, not wishing to leave his Dublin inner-city parishes after just five years. “I didn’t know where Glenageary was,” he said. But a meeting with the then archbishop, Henry McAdoo, changed his mind and so started his 24 years as rector of St Paul’s.

At the end of Sunday’s service, Gordon was surprised with a presentation to mark the milestone by the secretary of the Select Vestry, Margaret Woods, on behalf of Gary and the parish.

Gordon was made deacon to serve as curate assistant in the Parish of Agherton (Portstewart), Diocese of Connor on June, 29th, 1969. He also served in Down Cathedral in the Diocese of Down and Dromore before returning to Dublin as incumbent of St Catherine and St James in 1975. He was appointed rector of St Paul’s Glenageary in 1980 and remained there as incumbent until his “retirement” in 2004.

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+++Record number of women bishops elected this year in USA -

While Kathryn McCrossen Ryan was being ordained and consecrated as a bishop suffragan in the Diocese of Texas, many people in attendance were surreptitiously checking on the outcomes of two bishop elections happening that day. In both cases, laity and clergy elected women: the Rev. Bonnie Perry in the Diocese of Michigan and the Rev. Lucinda Ashby in the Diocese of El Camino Real.

Perry and Ashby are the seventh and eighth bishops elected in The Episcopal Church this year, and the fifth and sixth women, the most ever elected in one year in the church's history.

“What a day for the church; what a day for women,” recalled Bishop Todd Ousley, the head of church's Office of Pastoral Development who shepherds diocesan bishop searches. He admitted he was one of those people checking his phone.

Thus far in 2019, in addition to the six women elected as diocesan or suffragan bishops, Episcopalians in two dioceses have elected men to be their diocesan bishops. Four of those eight bishops-elect, all women, identify as people of colour. At least one more woman will be elected bishop this year, on July 26, when the Diocese of Montana chooses from a slate of three women.

+++50th Annual Irish Church Music Association's summer school -

Over 100 singers and musicians from around the country are expected to attend the 50th Annual Irish Church Music Association's summer school in Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth, from Wednesday 3 – Friday 5 July on the theme *Rejoice and Sing*.

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This year the Irish Church Music Association's 50th summer school is preceded by a two-day jubilee conference being held in partnership with the National Centre for Liturgy. This special conference, beginning today in Maynooth, is reflecting on how music in the liturgy has changed over the past fifty years, and how it has evolved in practice within parishes throughout the country since Vatican II.

Immediately following this conference the 50th Irish Church Music Association summer school will open and will run until 5 July in the beautiful surroundings of Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth.

Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh and Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Dromore, will participate in the conference on 2 July as well as celebrating Mass that evening. This Mass will be the closing liturgy of the two day conference, as well as being the opening Mass for the 50th summer school.

+++Food for thought - "We can never know what might have been but what is to come is another matter entirely."
CS Lewis

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