



*Ethiopian woman Loko carrying wood*

## Christian Aid helping the plight of Ethiopian women

**In the Borena community, girls are expected to fetch and carry wood and water to provide for their family. Denied a good education and the respect of their community, women are**

**trapped in a life of poverty. We hear how Christian Aid is working to give women the means to earn a decent living**

Adrian Horsman in News Letter - "This is something you need to see with your own eyes." The blunt words of Kaye Steele on her return from Ethiopia.

Kaye, from Bushmills in Co Antrim, is an intern with Christian Aid. As part of her internship Kaye travelled to Ethiopia a few months ago to see for herself some of the overseas work carried out by Christian Aid and its partners.

Kaye and the other interns visited the Borena community. The Borena are pastoralists and they move their livestock around to find fresh pasture when necessary.

Kaye was particularly moved by one young mother she met called Loko.

"Meeting Loko was an eye opening experience because Loko isn't that much older than me and yet we couldn't live any more completely different lives."

Loko was abandoned by her husband, leaving her to bring up six children by herself. When Kaye met her, Loko did not own anything.

As she told Kaye, “Now I have no resources and therefore no social status. In this community if you are poor, you have no voice.”

To feed her children, Loko goes on long journeys on foot to the mountains in search of firewood to gather and sell. She has to walk for eight hours at a time in thin plastic shoes that cannot withstand the long vicious thorns of the African bush.

Loko earns only just enough money to feed her children one small meal a day.

Loko told Kaye, “I am just surviving, I am not living. Living is someone who doesn’t worry about tomorrow. I only know about today, I do not know about tomorrow.”

Kaye says that she asked Loko what it was like to be a woman in the Borena community. Loko said: “It is very tough to be a woman...”

...As it so happens, a short time ago Kaye told Christian Aid’s office in Belfast, ‘I have good news - I have just been told that Loko has received a heifer and two goats!’

The livestock was given to Loko by a Christian Aid partner in Ethiopia called HUNDEE, a name which translates as Oromo Grassroots

Development Initiative. The first calf the heifer gives birth to will be passed on to the next woman on the waiting list.

“When we met Loko she told us that she was longing for a better life,’ said Kaye. ‘Now HUNDEE have given her these animals. This is very exciting news.”

\*This year’s Christian Aid Week, 10-16 May 2015, is asking the Northern Irish public to support women living in poverty around the world who are discriminated against from birth.

You can help to change the lives of women in places like Ethiopia by donating online at [www.caweeek.org](http://www.caweeek.org), calling (028) 9592 2015 or texting ‘WEEK’ to 70040 to give £5.

\*Adrian Horsman is head of Media & Communications, Christian Aid Ireland  
More at -

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/faith-focus-charity-helping-the-plight-of-ethiopian-women-1-6728474>

## **PW - Presbyterian Women - elects new President at Annual Meeting**

On Thursday ast week Sandra Stokes was installed as President of PW - Presbyterian

Women at the Annual Meeting in Assembly's Buildings in Belfast. Originally from Donaghmore, County Down, Sandra now lives in Ballynahinch and attends Edengrove Presbyterian Church.



Involved in PW for nearly 18 years, on taking up office she said, “Many years ago I was a founding member of a Young Women’s Group in the late 1990s which subsequently joined forces with Presbyterian Women’s Association, which became Presbyterian Women in 2008. To find myself President of PW is an honour and I am looking forward to meeting and visiting our PW Groups in churches across Ireland.

“What I love about PW is the fellowship we share together and how we support one another in

times of difficulty, as well as sharing in moments of joy. Supporting the important work of the mission of our Church and our Deaconesses at home is another aspect of PW that I value greatly.

Speaking about the Annual Meeting, which was also repeated on Friday evening, Charlotte Stevenson, Acting PW General Secretary said, "At this year's meetings we heard from guest speaker, the writer and award-winning Christian blogger Emma Scrivener. She spoke at both meetings and gave a seminar on Friday afternoon.

Born in Belfast, Emma lives with her husband and baby daughter in England and writes and speaks about her experiences as a child and as an adult with anorexia and how the grace of Christ speaks into the darkest places. "In sharing about my own experiences I wanted to convey that God loves us first, no matter what, and that simple fact was life changing for me and can be for anyone," Emma said.

Visiting speaker Anne Cairns from Ballymena, led a seminar entitled 'Here is Love', which focused on the fact that God is Love and how this truth

impacts every aspect of our lives, even during life's ups and downs.

## **St Patrick's Cathedral Exhibition on 15th anniversary of Guinness restoration**

Next Tuesday evening an important exhibition to mark the 150th anniversary of the restoration, by Benjamin Lee Guinness, of St Patrick's cathedral, Dublin, will be opened in the Irish Architectural Archive by the Hon. Rory Guinness. Curated by the architectural historian, Dr Michael O'Neill, the exhibition will feature architectural drawings from the St Patrick's archives, which Dr O'Neill has catalogued in the Representative Church Body Library, and illustrative material from the cathedral.

A major restoration of St Patrick's had been instigated by Dean Henry Pakenham in the mid 1840s and drawings by the English architect, Richard Cromwell Carpenter, survive in the cathedral's archives. However, this was a most ambitious scheme which was hampered by funding issues and while the Lady Chapel was re-built and work was done to the choir and the

south nave in the 1850s, it was the munificence of Benjamin Lee Guinness which ensured the completion of the restoration between 1860 and 1865.

Benjamin Lee Guinness was the grandson the founder of the famous brewery and took sole control of the company in 1858. He greatly expanded the business making Guinness's one of the biggest brewers in the world and himself the richest man in Ireland.

The exhibition, which has been sponsored by Ecclesiastical Insurance, will be open to the public from next Wednesday in the Irish Architectural Archive, 45 Merrion Square, Dublin. The exhibition will run until 1 September and will be open each week, Tuesday to Friday, from 10am until 5pm.

## **Bishops divided on same-sex marriage, say C of I Archbishops**

The Church of Ireland's two Archbishops have agreed fellow bishops are divided on the same-sex marriage referendum.



Patsy McGarry in Irish Times - The Church has not taken a public stand on the referendum.

Speaking at the [Church of Ireland](#) General Synod, Archbishop of Armagh Richard Clarke said he could not think of an occasion when the House of Bishops “ever said vote in such and such a way or not in such and such a way”.

Separately and speaking to the media, the Church of Ireland’s two Archbishops agreed fellow bishops were divided on the same-sex marriage referendum.

Archbishop of Armagh Richard Clarke said: “I can’t think of an occasion when the House of Bishops has ever said vote in such and such a way or not in such and such a way.”

He would not regard divergence of opinion among the bishops “as particularly unhealthy in the slightest. We need to remember two things; that this is about a civil matter. It does not in any way affect the teaching of the Church of Ireland and therefore people, perhaps inevitably, take different views on it.”

Archbishop of Dublin Michael Jackson said: “It is not our way of working. It’s not like the Church to be prescriptive...But I wouldn’t in any way go as far as to say that the absence of a public

statement (on the referendum) betokens internal division.”

The General Synod agreed to extend time for a final report from its select committee on human sexuality by another two years. It will address same-sex marriage as well as ministry by gay clergy in the church.

The committee was set up by General Synod in 2013 for a two-year term. Its Guide to the Conversation on Human Sexuality in the Context of [Christian Belief](#) is to be published later this year.

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/bishops-divided-on-same-sex-marriage-say-coi-archbishops-1.2205532>

## **Call on Churches to learn from Ireland's embrace of equality for gay people**

Canon Charles Kenny of the Church of Ireland group Changing Attitude Ireland (CAI) who took part in manning their display stand at the General Synod in Armagh today has commented on the issue of the Churches and equality for gay people.

Canon Kenny said “The Irish referendum on same sex civil marriage has opened up public discussion about our attitudes to gay people. We had a courteous discussion at the Synod this morning about sexuality during which several speakers referred to the forthcoming referendum on same sex civil marriage. As society changes to embrace equality and sets an example of love and compassion towards gay people, I hope that the Churches can learn from this”

Canon Kenny added “I am particularly encouraged this year at the General Synod by the number of delegates who have approached our display stand to share with us they have family members who are gay. There was a strong demand at our stand for the leaflets of Gay Byrne endorsing same sex civil marriage and we have run out of Yes Equality badges”.

[www.changingattitudeireland.org](http://www.changingattitudeireland.org)

## **Why same-sex marriage is not about issue of equality**

Several years ago, the American Episcopal Church unilaterally ordained a practising gay bishop, which sent shock waves throughout the worldwide Anglican Communion.

Alf McCreary in Belfast Telegraph - A powerful committee chaired by the then Church of Ireland Primate, Archbishop Robin Eames, [delivered](#) the Windsor Report that failed to produce a solution, though not for the want of trying.

Now the Irish Anglicans are facing a ban on same-sex marriage in the north, while a referendum in the Republic later this month will decide if this will be legalised across the border or not.

Feelings are high on both sides of the argument, and I noticed in this week's Church of Ireland Gazette a number of evangelicals complaining that those who oppose same-sex marriage are sometimes dismissed as "unintelligent, un-Anglican, and likely to be oppressive, racist, sexist, and homophobic", among other things.

They have my sympathy. I believe that marriage should retain its traditional concept of a union between a man and a woman. A same-sex marriage is therefore a contradiction in terms, and the homosexual and lesbian community needs to invent a term adequate to describe a union between people of the same sexual inclination.

This is not a question of equality. Gays are equal to non-gays, and rightly so. They are given full

legal protection within a civil partnership, and therefore many non-gays wonder what the fuss about same-sex marriage is all about.

This controversy is not **going to** go away, but I respect the Church of Ireland for having the courage to bring it into the open, and to try to give a hearing to both sides. I wonder how the Presbyterian Church will handle this divisive issue, and some people think that it is only a matter of time before it comes to the floor of the General Assembly.

More at -

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/columnists/alf-mccreary/why-samesex-marriage-is-not-about-issue-of-equality-31207640.html>

### **Priest goes against his bishop to back 'Yes' campaign**

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/priest-goes-against-his-bishop-to-back-yes-campaign-31208250.html>

### **As a man of faith and a proud dad to a gay son, I urge all Catholics to do the right thing – and vote 'Yes'**

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/as-a-man-of-faith-and-a-proud-dad-to-a-gay-son-i-urge-all-catholics-to-do-the-right-thing-and-vote-yes-31208271.html>

## **Bishop of Limerick says changes to marriage will effect role of family**

[http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/bishop-of-limerick-says-changes-to-marriage-will-effect-role-of-family-1.2206799?utm\\_source=dlvr.it&utm\\_medium=twitter](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/bishop-of-limerick-says-changes-to-marriage-will-effect-role-of-family-1.2206799?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter)

## **Here's how the Catholic Church in Britain has responded to same-sex marriage**

[http://www.thejournal.ie/civil-marriages-scotland-england-gay-2086926-May2015/?utm\\_source=twitter\\_self](http://www.thejournal.ie/civil-marriages-scotland-england-gay-2086926-May2015/?utm_source=twitter_self)

## **C of I Clergy Encouraged to use services of Marriage Council**

The report of the Marriage Council was presented to the General Synod. Proposed by the Revd Stephen Farrell (Dublin), Synod heard that marriage was more popular than ever despite the talk about marriage being under threat from changed realities.

Mr Farrell said that numbers of people getting married were on the rise. "As we know, when it comes to marriage, the wedding ceremony is the easy bit. Getting married has never been easier. Couples have a range of options, secular and religious, when it comes to tying the knot. However, maintaining a strong, loving, nurturing

marriage is the same blessing and challenge that it has always been,” he stated.

He said that the reality for many couples at present was living with negative equity in accommodation that is too small, working long hours, struggling to pay mortgages and childcare or who are unemployed or working reduced hours.

The Marriage Council can provide professional counselling for couples under pressure they also provide marriage preparation courses on request. Mr Farrell encouraged his colleagues in the Republic to avail of the service.

He thanked the Priorities Fund for its support and added that this year it is hoped to extend its support for separated and divorced people.

## **Mission is exercised in the ordinary things - General Synod Mission Breakfast**

Bishop Harold Miller spoke about Down and Dromore's Year of Mission at the General Synod Mission Breakfast in Armagh this morning. This is an annual event hosted by the Church of Ireland Council for Mission.

After sharing the gospel reading for the day, the bishop set the scene saying that, “Mission is exercised in the ordinary things. It’s everything God is sending us to do in our particular context.” He continued: “The church will ultimately be built by ordinary people carrying the presence of Jesus Christ into their everyday lives and if we are are willing to do that, he will bring us into all sorts of interesting situations.”

In 2012 the Down and Dromore Diocesan Synod unanimously passed a motion to designate 2015 a ‘Year of Mission’ and Bishop Miller shared three images that encapsulated his vision for the year.

Firstly, he said that he wanted the diocese to be “turned inside–out,” meaning that, together, we should face outwards, rather than being consumed by our own parochial needs and preoccupations. Secondly, he urged parishes to begin to see everything through a “missional filter” – questioning all our activities, our use of money, our worship and welcome. Thirdly, the bishop had issued a challenge to the diocese to move from plateau to growth and, indeed, to believe that growth was possible.



Bishop Miller emphasised that, even though this was a diocesan initiative, mission had to happen at local, parish level. “Our job,” he said, “is to pass on the faith to the next generation.”

## **Youth Fellowship fundraises to support Diocese in South Sudan**

The Youth Fellowship of St John’s Parish, Moira, recently organised a Fundraising Quiz and Promise Auction Night in support of Ibba Diocese in South Sudan and for youth funds. People bid for “promises” that the young people will carry out, such as lawn mowing, music lessons, babysitting, car washing, etc.

There were also generous prizes donated by local businesses in Moira together with items from members of the congregation, on which people could bid. The auction was managed by parishioner David Johnston who made sure that folk dug deep into their pockets so that everything was sold!

St John’s Parish works in partnership with Bishop Wilson Kamani and Ibba Diocese in South Sudan through CMS Ireland, and there have been exchange visits since 2010. Currently funds are being raised to provide Bishop Wilson

with a vehicle for transport in the Diocese which is approximately the same size as Northern Ireland. With dirt roads that often are flooded it is a tremendous challenge for the Bishop to minister to his people living in remote areas.

Simon Henry, Youth Ministry Coordinator, said, "It was a wonderful event and great to see the hall filled with people of all ages, everyone enjoyed a great night's craic! I was amazed at how much we raised – over £1500. People were very generous.

"A big thank you to all the young people, youth fellowship leaders and others who worked incredibly hard behind the scenes to make the evening such a success in every way. Bishop Wilson knew that the event was happening and was delighted to hear that the young people he had spoken with during his visit in May 2014 had come together to help his diocese in such a practical way."

## **Archbishop of Canterbury's Sermon at VE Day Thanksgiving Service**

Sermon preached by Archbishop Justin Welby yesterday at the Service of Thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey marking the 70th anniversary of Victory in Europe.

The service was attended by veterans and their families, representatives of Allied nations and Commonwealth countries who fought alongside Britain in the conflict, and senior government and military representatives.

### **'Nothing will separate us from the love of Christ'**

*Isaiah 56:6-9a, 11-12; Psalm 107:1-16; Romans 8:31-39*

On the 26 May 1940, with the Government here in this very Abbey, like those in the Psalm, across the country we cried to God in our trouble. Churchill wrote of the campaign in May-June 1940:

"Now at last the slowly-gathered, long pent-up fury of the storm broke upon us. Four or five millions of men met each other in the first shock of the most merciless of all the wars of which record has been kept. ... Within six weeks we were to find ourselves alone, almost disarmed...

with the whole of Europe open to Hitler's power..."

And he went on to speak of the situation in 1945: "The contrast was certainly remarkable. The road across these five years was long, hard and perilous. Those who perished upon it did not give their lives in vain. Those who marched forward to the end will always be proud to have trodden it with honour."

And now we gather again, 70 years on, thankful for victory over the greatest darkness of the twentieth century, perhaps of all history. Our gratitude is not simply for victory-in-Europe, but also reconciliation-in-Europe that followed, neither obviously nor automatically. Peace is more than the end of war: reconciliation dismantles the hostilities which previously separated and alienated us from one another and from God.

In November 1940 Coventry was terribly bombed. The fires lit the skies for miles, so many people died or were wounded, and amongst much else, the Cathedral burned.

Yet from the next day the Provost of Coventry, the Very Reverend Richard Howard, set a course towards reconciliation and the dismantling of

hostility. On Christmas Day 1940, on the BBC he preached, saying, "we want to tell the world... that with Christ born again in our hearts today, we are trying, hard as it may be, to banish all thoughts of revenge... We are going to try to make a kinder, simpler - a more Christ-child-like sort of world in the days beyond this strife."

The peace for which we give thanks today - 70 years of the greatest peace in Western Europe since the departure of the Roman legions – remains an ongoing project of reconciliation in that world of which he spoke, not only for us but as a gift to the world, where conflict and extremism destroy hope, devastate prosperity, vanquish aspiration to a better life.

Isaiah speaks of how we meet that challenge to build a more Christchild like world of peace and hope. He gives a great and inspiring call to all of us who have received much to be those who give much. He calls us by sacrifice and determination to be those who raise up the foundations of many generations, who repair the breach and restore paths of peace and justice so that, as he says, "our light shall spring up like the dawn and our healing shall spring up quickly".

Paul, in words of fire and hope, reveals the foundations of our call to transform a world of

war, to share the deliverance that we have received. Yes, there will be struggle and sacrifice, they have been there before and how gratefully we remember today those who gave everything in those years.

But in the struggle against the darkness of cruelty and conflict, in the struggle for reconciliation, nothing can separate us from the love of Jesus Christ. Firmly held by his love we will overcome all fear, prevail over all discouragement, live our vocation to be still a nation of inspiration and generosity, of reconciliation, of blessing to our world.

## **Anglican-Catholic Commission to hold 2016 meeting in Canada**

The fifth session of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission concluded this week with a decision to hold next year's meeting near the southern Canadian city of Toronto.

The group, known as ARCIC III, met at a retreat house south of Rome from April 28th to May 4th to discuss relations between local, regional and Universal Churches and how moral or ethical decisions are made within each tradition. The

Anglican and Catholic scholars have also been reviewing the substantial progress made by earlier ARCIC groups and are preparing to publish commentary on five jointly agreed statements from the previous phases of the dialogue.

During an audience with the group on Thursday, Pope Francis said these discussions remind us that ecumenism is not a secondary element in the life of the Church and that the differences which divide us must never be seen as inevitable.

[Read the full story and listen to the broadcast.](#)  
[Read the full text of the communiqué from the meeting.](#)

## Media digest

### SOCIETY

**Adams ignores mother's plea on IRA threat to son**

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/politics/adams-ignores-mothers-plea-on-ira-threat-to-son-31209867.html>

## **Shock figures show 900 homeless children need beds in Dublin every night**

A shocking 900 children a night have been accommodated by the Dublin Regional Homeless Executive (DRHE) in the first three months of the year.

<http://www.herald.ie/news/shock-figures-show-900-homeless-children-need-beds-in-city-every-night-31207886.html>

## **Homeless tour guides show tourists what Drogheda has to offer**

[http://www.thejournal.ie/drogheda-homeless-tour-guide-2092176-May2015/?utm\\_source=twitter\\_self](http://www.thejournal.ie/drogheda-homeless-tour-guide-2092176-May2015/?utm_source=twitter_self)

[http://www.irishtimes.com/news/environment/tour-guide-project-provides-leg-up-for-homeless-citizens-1.2205744?utm\\_source=dlvr.it&utm\\_medium=twitter](http://www.irishtimes.com/news/environment/tour-guide-project-provides-leg-up-for-homeless-citizens-1.2205744?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter)

## **CHURCH LIFE**

### **Why we're left feeling low by these spiritual highs**

Fionola Meredith in Belfast Telegraph -Manifestations of gold dust? Raising the dead? That doesn't sound much like the good old Church of Ireland I know. While there have been no reports of any mysterious glitter falling on the pews of St Matthias' parish church, in Knocknamuckley, Co Armagh - or indeed any attempts

[churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)



at spontaneous resurrection - I feel sure that it can only be a matter of time...

... After backing his man - affirming Rev Alan's "spiritual authority" over the parish - the Right Rev Harold Miller, Bishop of Down and Dromore, has now stepped in to try to calm the whole thing down. Bishop Harold, although a hardline conservative on issues like homosexuality and abortion, is no stranger to the giddy delights of happy-clappy worship himself - but at least he generally keeps his robes on.

I can see why many church-goers are horrified by the prospect of getting involved with the Bethel School of Supernatural Ministries and its followers. Some of their antics - particularly the attempts to raise people from the dead - sound bonkers. One of the Bethel leaders, Kris Vallotton, explains that students from the school, inspired by a Bible verse, "decided to go down to the morgue and 'practise' raising the dead", something that he, Vallotton, had already tried himself twice, but with no luck as yet.

More at -

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/columnists/fionola-meredith/why-were-left-feeling-low-by-these-spiritual-highs-31204430.html>

## **Camcorders, limos and helicopters - my red carpet First Communion hell**

<http://www.herald.ie/news/camcorders-limos-and-helicopters-my-red-carpet-first-communion-hell-31207892.html>

## **Go ahead for Church of England plans for 'Bishop of Church Plants'**

Plans to create a new "Bishop for Church Plants" are to go ahead following approval of the revival of the See of Islington. The Dioceses Commission has told the London diocese that it can revive the century-old Islington see to allow the Bishop, Dr Richard Chartres, to appoint an episcopal leader for church planting.

The London diocese, home to evangelical flagship churches such as Holy Trinity Brompton and St Helen's Bishopsgate, has led the world in modelling church planting, and seen consistent growth in congregations as a result.

[http://www.christiantoday.com/article/church.of.england.plans.to.create.bishop.for.church.plants.get.the.go.ahead/53486.htm?utm\\_source=Daily+Media+Digest&utm\\_campaign=c21c0c322f-&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_296e14724b-c21c0c322f-248611893&ct=t%28%29](http://www.christiantoday.com/article/church.of.england.plans.to.create.bishop.for.church.plants.get.the.go.ahead/53486.htm?utm_source=Daily+Media+Digest&utm_campaign=c21c0c322f-&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_296e14724b-c21c0c322f-248611893&ct=t%28%29)

## **HERITAGE**

### **Iconic portrait of Irish chaplain in First World War: Absolution and 'the perfect death' on the Rue du Bois**

[http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/portrait-of-war-absolution-and-the-perfect-death-on-the-rue-du-bois-1.2197293?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=Sendible&utm\\_campaign=RSS](http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/portrait-of-war-absolution-and-the-perfect-death-on-the-rue-du-bois-1.2197293?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=Sendible&utm_campaign=RSS)

May 11