



***Prince Charles was escorted around the 200-year-old church by Fr Michael Sheehan***

## **Royal visit to historic Belfast Catholic church**

Their Royal Highnesses, The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall paid a visit to Saint Patrick's Church, Donegall Street, yesterday. Saint Patrick's celebrated its 200th anniversary in March, and the visit is one of the highlights in the Parish's year-long calendar of celebrations. It was the royal couple's first

engagement in Northern Ireland on their four-day tour of the Island.

Accompanied by the Lord Lieutenant of Belfast, Fionnula Jay-O'Boyle, the royal visitors were warmly welcomed by Parish Administrator, Father Michael Sheehan. Also there to greet them were civic and religious leaders. First Minister, Peter Robinson, and Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness, along with Belfast Lord Mayor, Arder Carson, were in attendance. So too were representatives of the four main Christian denominations, including Bishop of Down and Connor, Dr Noel Treanor.

A guard of honour, provided by the Knights of Saint Columbanus, flanked the couple and their entourage as they entered the Church, whereupon The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall met with a variety of invited guests.

Eminent historian, Professor Eamon Phoenix, gave a brief history of the Parish and its significant contribution to the life of Belfast. Church records and artefacts were on display, including the Parish's 'Penny Bank' logbooks. The 'Penny Bank' was a forerunner to the modern-day Credit Union. The Duchess of Cornwall, a committed supporter of not-for-profit

regulated banking, took particular interest in these exhibits.

The couple also viewed the Church's most treasured artwork, the 'Madonna of the Lakes' altarpiece, painted and gifted to the Parish by one of its renowned sons, Sir John Lavery. Ulster Museum's Curator of Fine Art, Anne Stewart, reminded the Prince that Lavery painted a number of his family members including Queen Victoria and King George V.

Parish Curate, Father Dominic McGrattan, accompanied by Dean Brendan McGee and Sr Mary Carlin CP, introduced the royal couple to pupils from nearby schools as well as parishioners and members of parish groups. These included members of the Parish-supported luncheon club for senior citizens. The club draws its members from across the City's political and religious divides.

The couple also met with the Parish Fundraising Committee, established to raise monies for much-needed restoration of the Church's stonework.

The Prince of Wales, who takes a keen interest in architecture and the conservation of historic buildings, discussed restoration plans with the [churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)

Parish architects, Kriterion, who are set to begin work in the coming months.

The visit concluded with a short service of thanksgiving, led by Father Michael Sheehan, and Dean John Mann of neighbouring Saint Anne's Cathedral. Parish chorister, Bronagh Rafferty, sang 'How Beautiful are the Feet' from Handel's *Messiah*, and was accompanied by Parish organist, Nuala Murray.

Before their departure, Father Michael, on behalf of the priests and people of the Parish, gifted the couple with a specially-commissioned painting by Dublin artist, Eve Parnell. It is a depiction of Saint Brigid from Lavery's altarpiece.

A presentation of traditional Aran knitwear was also made to the royal couple's grandchildren, Prince George and Princess Charlotte.

See also-

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-32821285>

## **New C of I Greystones school celebrates major progress**

The students and staff of Temple Carrig School in Greystones were joined by Archbishop



Michael Jackson on Wednesday for a special service to mark the end of their first year.

The school, which is under Church of Ireland patronage and caters for students from all local primary schools, opened its doors to over 100 pioneering first years last September. They are now looking forward to moving from temporary accommodation into their brand new building in the next academic year.

School Principal, Mr Alan Cox, got proceedings underway and recalled the service of dedication which took place in St Patrick's Church, Greystones, at the beginning of the school year last August.

The service, the theme of which was taken from Psalm 118 [‘This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice in it and be glad.’], was introduced by the school chaplain, Ms Louise Egan. During the service students presented items representing the past year at their school.

These included a Bible reminding students of the importance of God in their lives, flowers representing how they had all grown over the past year and a painting with drawings representing the first year of Temple Carrig School. There was also music from the Temple Carrig Shool choir and orchestra.

Addressing the students, Archbishop Jackson said it was wonderful to gather in celebration at the end of the first year and rejoice in how the school had developed.

He observed that they had spent their first year beside a noisy building site but that had not held students back. “It has connected you to the future which is also the day that the Lord has made and as you move into that space you will bring everything you have become there and share it with future generations of students at Temple Carrig School,” he said.

Speaking of the importance of a sense of memory, the Archbishop said that we carry the present into the present of tomorrow. The past is not forgotten, it is woven into the people we become.

He recalled Paul Maxwell who 35 years ago was blown up while working on a small boat in Mullaghmore. He said he had been struck that morning while watching the news by a picture that showed the boy wearing his school uniform – the uniform of Portora School in Enniskillen where the Archbishop was a student. He said that the boy's father had spoken with no anger, just forgiveness and reconciliation.

“That is what you are called to do. Because the Ireland of today is still a very complicated place where reconciliation is still needed... Next year as we go into 2016 it is people like you who will have a wonderful opportunity to address issues around independence and reconciliation and the shaping of the future Ireland. And you are well placed to do it because you have become a community of respect,” he stated.

The staff and visitors, which included Dr Ken Fennelly, secretary to the Board of Education (RI) and chairman of the board of management, Garrett Fennell, toured the new school building.

## **'Fantastic' Training Event for Children's Leaders in Connor**

Relevant, informative, useful, engaging and fantastic – just some of the words used to describe a training day organised by Connor Children's Project Development Officer Jill Hamilton.

Almost 70 children's ministry leaders took part in the Equipped Training Day held in All Saints' Parish Hall, Antrim, on Saturday 16 May.

There was a great buzz as people arrived with time for refreshments and a chat before the sessions got underway.

Jill said: "We began all together with some child friendly worship – a chance to focus on God and praise him together but also introduce some resources which could be helpful in All Age or children's ministry settings. The dance number 'Shackles' from the Go Fish guys with the karate high kicks had everyone up and moving and we learned some sign language to accompany 'You need not Fear' from the BIG Ministries Unstoppable album."

Participants then split into groups for workshops on Storytelling and Drama, Messy Church,





***Getting stuck in during the Messy Church workshop at the Equipped Training Day organised by Connor Children's Project Development Officer Jill Hamilton.***

Puppets and Creative Prayer. Everyone had a chance to take part in two workshops and these were broken up by brunch in the middle of the morning.

“As important as the training is a chance to have a morning with your team and get chatting to leaders from other churches about what is going on in their groups and how they organise things,” Jill said.

“It’s a chance for us all to realise that there is a Connor family to be connected to. We want leaders to feel part of that family and receive support and encouragement from us in the Diocesan and Children’s council team as well as from each other. There is so much expertise in one place when we all come together.”

Jill extended thanks to workshop leaders, Karen and Amy Webb (puppets); Andrew Neill and Chris Neilands (Storytelling and Drama); and Aimee Jess (Creative Prayer).

Feedback from the evaluation sheets on the Equipped Training Day was very positive.

## **McAleese referendum claims are rejected by ‘No’ campaigners**

‘No’ campaigners in the marriage referendum have rejected claims by Mary McAleese that the referendum is not about the right to have children.

Greg Daly in Irish Catholic - Speaking at an event organised by ‘yes’ campaigners, the former president claimed “the only children affected by this referendum will be Ireland’s gay children. It is their future which is at stake. It is in



***Former President, Mary McAleese***

our hands. They are too few in number to win this referendum on their own.”

Challenging this, The Iona Institute said that while Mrs McAleese’s comments are understandable in light of how her son Justin is gay, they also showed the importance of mothers for children.

The statement quotes a recent article from Iona Institute patron Breda O’Brien, who described the former president as “a terrific role model as a woman who has always worked outside the home while maintaining a strong family life” but warned that if the referendum is passed, “there will be children born in this country who will never experience a mother’s love.”

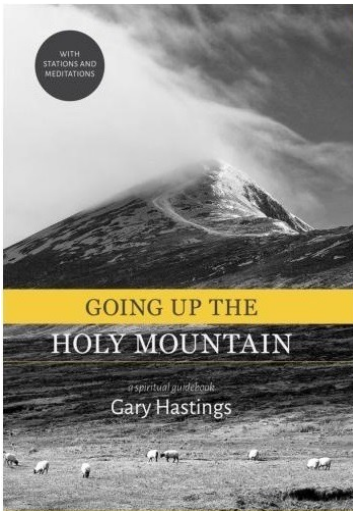
While circumstances can force children to grow up without a mother, the statement acknowledges, if most voters on Friday vote 'yes', this "will happen with the full backing of the Constitution and by deliberate design".

The proposed constitutional amendment aims to change the constitutional vision of the family which recognises the unique character of male/female unions, the statement points out, noting how the Referendum Commissioner has admitted that if the referendum is passed, laws on adoption, surrogacy, and artificial reproduction could only distinguish between male-female couples and same-sex couples in "exceptional" circumstances.

Claiming that this arrangement would rest on the pretence that "mothers are the same as fathers in the lives of children", the statement describes as "wrong and unjust" a situation wherein a child could be brought into the world via a surrogate mother and an egg donor in order to facilitate two men in such a way that the child "by deliberate design" would never know a mother's love.

**Become a Facebook Friend of CNI**  
**Click on logo at CNI Home page**

## Going Up The Holy Mountain - spiritual guide book launch



The Archdeacon of Tuam and rector of Galway and Oughterard, The Venerable Gary Hastings, has written a new book. Entitled 'Going Up The Holy Mountain - A Spiritual Guidebook'. It will be launched by Fr. Pat O'Brien on Friday 29th May at 7.00pm in Matt Molloy's of Westport.

Going Up The Holy Mountain is about prayer and meditation as tools to move closer to God in the silence, the gap between words which allows

them to make sense, the pause between the musical notes which allows the tune to form.

Stations from the Christian tradition are included as guided meditations, in addition to profound meditations on aspects of nature (air, fire, water, stone, soil, light, plants, animals), which walk the user down the many roads towards God.

The book is primarily about a real mountain of rock and scree, Cruach Phádraig, Croagh Patrick, or the Reek, in Co. Mayo in the west of Ireland; a very solid mountain with a long pre-Christian and Christian pilgrimage tradition. The origins of the pilgrimage and how it is traditionally done are explained and other ways you might use the mountain as a spiritual resource are suggested.

It can also be about any other mountain, or hill, or special place we use to do a pilgrimage to, or on; the mountain that stands for our lives, our growing up and maturing, growing old and dying; the mountain that is our spiritual life, growing in spiritual maturity and insight, wisdom and clarity, as we progress towards God. This book is for your own private mountain, the one most accessible to you, even if it's just in your eye, your heart, your mind.

## **Saint Patrick's Cathedral Turns Purple to Highlight World IBD Day**

Saint Patrick's Cathedral has teamed up with Gutsykids, a group of concerned parents campaigning for greater awareness about the challenges facing children and young people suffering with Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD). On Tuesday (May 19) the Cathedral marked World IBD Day by lighting up in purple signifying solidarity with sufferers and their families.

Across the globe there are five million people living with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, conditions known as inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD). In Ireland alone there are an estimated 20,000 sufferers of IBD. IBD is a long-term condition that typically develops in early childhood and adolescence. It causes inflammation of the lining of the digestive tract, and can cause debilitating pain and discomfort and increase the risk of colorectal cancers. In Ireland it is reckoned that 10,000 sufferers have had to leave their jobs due to their debilitating condition.

“Cases of inflammatory bowel diseases are growing at an alarming rate worldwide, including in some of the most impoverished countries in

the world,” says Dr Raymond Cross, Co–Chair of the Crohn’s & Colitis Foundation of America’s Patient Education Committee. “World IBD Day (19 May) gives the IBD medical and patient community an opportunity to join forces in the fight to raise awareness and help find cures.”

## **Derry Diocese MA in Catholic School Leadership**

Working in Partnership with Saint Mary's University, Twickenham, the Derry Diocesan Catechetical Centre will offer the MA in Catholic School Leadership beginning Autumn 2015. This is a post graduate degree dedicated to the professional development and spiritual formation of Catholic school leaders. It is a great opportunity for those who aspire to leadership roles within the Catholic School system.

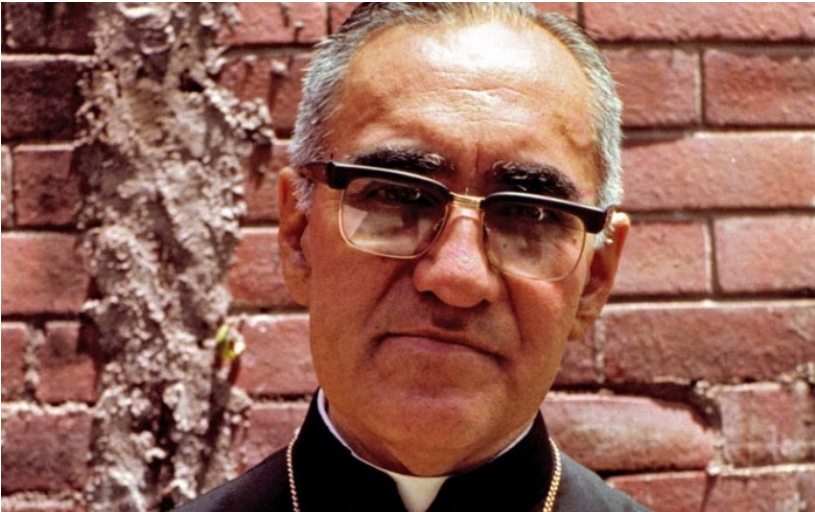
An information session will take place in Saint Mary's College, Derry, on Monday 22nd June, at 4pm. If you would like to attend the session or require any further information please contact The Derry Diocesan Catechetical Centre 02871264087 or email [tferry@derrydiocese.org](mailto:tferry@derrydiocese.org).

**Get CNI headlines on Twitter each day**

**Click on logo at CNI Home page**



## Beatification of Oscar Romero



***“What good are beautiful highways and airports, beautiful buildings full of spacious apartments, if they are only put together with the blood of the poor, who are not going to enjoy them?” – Archbishop Oscar Romero***

Archbishop Oscar Romero will be beatified on Sunday 24 May. The ceremony will take place in San Salvador, at the city’s Divine Savior monument.

Oscar Romero was born on 15 August 1917 in Ciudad Barrios, El Salvador. He was ordained to the priesthood on 4 April 1942 in Rome. In 1974

he was appointed Bishop of Santiago de Maria, El Salvador. He became the fourth Archbishop of San Salvador on 3 February 1977. He spoke out against poverty, social injustice, assassinations and torture. He was assassinated on 24 March 1980 while celebrating Mass in a small chapel in a hospital in San Salvador, El Salvador.

In 1997, Pope John Paul II bestowed upon Oscar Romero the title of Servant of God, and a cause for beatification and canonization was opened for him. The cause stalled, but was reopened by Pope Benedict XVI in 2012. He was declared a martyr by Pope Francis on 3 February 2015, paving the way for his beatification on 23 May 2015. **or**

Speaking ahead of the beatification Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland said: “In this year of the fiftieth anniversary of the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, the universal call to holiness as taught in *Lumen Gentium* is something that we all need to hear again and again. The beatification of Archbishop Oscar Romero by Pope Francis gives us some really important expressions of this ‘call to holiness’. To be holy must also include a concern for the poor and the marginalised. Our care for those who suffer from injustice and rejection is a critical part of the journey to sanctity.

Archbishop Romero's beatification as a martyr also reminds us that we must be prepared to endure opposition if we are to truly live as Jesus called us to live. My prayer is that this declaration of a new Blessed will encourage all of us in Ireland to respond ever more fully to that universal call to holiness."

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin will celebrate Archbishop Romero's beatification at the Festival of Peoples Mass in Saint Mary's Pro Cathedral, Dublin at 6.30 pm on Sunday 24 May. President Michael D. Higgins will attend. The Annual Festival of Peoples Mass celebrates the gifts our local Church has enjoyed from the thousands of people who have come to live in our city and county in recent years from all over the world. The Sunday celebration will include Irish and global music from massed choirs with many ethnic groups attending in traditional dress. Everyone is welcome to attend this special occasion.

"But it is not God's will for some to have everything and others to have nothing. That cannot be of God. God's will is that all his children be happy" – Archbishop Oscar Romero.

[Trócaire and Archbishop Romero](#)

Trócaire, the overseas development agency of the Catholic Church, has long been affiliated with Oscar Romero and worked alongside him in El Salvador in the 1970's. In 1979 they began funding the El Salvador Human Rights Commission, which had been founded by the Archbishop,

in response to the unlawful killing of 8,000 people. In 1980 he wrote to Trócaire thanking them for their support of the Archdiocesan radio station which he used to educate the largely illiterate population about their rights.

“I would like once more to thank your kindness and preoccupation for our country and our Church and the kindness of the Irish Bishop's Conference and Trócaire's” he said.

## **Church of Ireland bishops divided on same-sex marriage**

The Church of Ireland's bishops have conceded they are divided on the same-sex marriage referendum.

RTE - Alone among the major churches in Ireland, the Church of Ireland has not taken a formal position on the vote.

The country's only female bishop, Pat Storey of Meath and Kildare, has announced she is voting No in the same-sex marriage referendum.

In a letter circulated to clergy in her Church of Ireland Diocese last weekend and published today, she states that current civil partnership laws give gay people clear civil rights, which she fully endorses.

But she disagrees with the referendum's proposal to redefine marriage.

"It is my view that, where possible, children benefit most from both genders parenting them."

"That is not to say that single parents who find themselves alone, do not do an immensely great job in raising their children. Yet I believe that it is God's intention that, where feasible, children should have a Mother and a Father" she said.

The church's bishop of Cashel, Ferns & Ossory, Michael Burrows, supports a Yes vote in and has referred to gay rights as "the great justice issue of our time".

Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross Paul Colton also supports a Yes vote.

Last year, he acknowledged that he is part of a religion and institution that has caused deep hurt and damage to gay people over the centuries.

He told an LGBT gathering in Cork that if the referendum passes, it would simply enable the State to make provision for the marriage of people of the same gender within the State's own framework.

"Churches, such as the Church Ireland, will continue to have their internal regulation," he said adding that he hopes the time may come when his church will review this discipline, in the same way that some of its sister churches have done.

## **‘Mervyn and I felt we were in a marriage’**

It is easy to see just why Dr Richard O’Leary adored his partner of 25 years. If circumstances had been kinder, Dr O’Leary would have been the proudest man in the world marrying Mervyn Kingston.

Padraig Hoare write in Evening Echo - Life can deal cruel blows. Even if this week’s referendum



***Dr Richard O'Leary and Rev.Mervyn Kingston on the day of their civil partnership in 2005. Mervyn died in 2013 and Richard insists he is a widower and that is why he is campaigning for a Yes vote today.***

passes, Dr O'Leary won't have the chance to marry the man he loved more than anything in this world. Mervyn Kingston died on August 2, 2013.

Mervyn was a proud Ulsterman and a man of faith who happened to be gay. Despite experiencing homophobia on a daily basis from people who shunned him, the deeply religious Mervyn always urged outraged friends and sympathisers to turn the other cheek.

Dr O’Leary says that when Mervyn died, he lost the man that meant everything to him. The Faith in Marriage Equality campaigner would have given anything to have the chance to celebrate their union in marriage.

Dr O’Leary grew up in Cork in the 1970s, attending one of the most famed educational institutions that Cork has ever produced. St Finbarr’s Seminary, Farranferris produced All-Ireland winners, TDs, captains of industry in Cork and beyond. But for Richard, it was a miserable experience.

“At about the age of 12 I thought I might be gay. It didn’t help that at Farranferris, I was surrounded by homophobic banter. Every day of every week for five miserable years between 1977 and 1982 I overheard the put-downs of ‘homo, fag, queer’. Only after I left school did I discover that three other boys in my class of 36 were also gay. In the year behind me was Jerry Buttimer, now a TD who is gay.

“I never felt I could confide in my friends in Cork that I was gay. It caused even more damage to my relationship with my parents. They had been socialised into traditional Catholic teaching that gay relationships were deeply sinful. Even to mention the subject of being gay was taboo. My



mother wondered why I left home immediately after my Leaving Cert – escaping the homophobia of my hometown was part of the reason.”

Richard felt that he needed to leave Cork to get away from the torment he experienced as a gay man on a daily basis.

“By 1988 I ended up at the other end of the country in Belfast. There I met and fell in love with Mervyn, a local man. He delighted in my Cork accent. I forgave him for being a Protestant! Of course there were challenging times. Living as a mixed ‘Catholic-Protestant’ couple in the loyalist Shankill area wasn’t ideal. So I pretended to be a Protestant. Nor was my Belfast accent ever very convincing. We both pretended to be straight.

“In October 1990 we moved south to live across the border in Dundalk. I had a job as a civil servant in the Department of Social Welfare in Dublin. Under Irish law until 1993 our same sex relationship was criminal. Privately we committed to a permanent, faithful relationship.

We enjoyed 13 years of love and devotion. Then suddenly in autumn 2002 Mervyn was diagnosed with prostate cancer.”

Richard says he found out just what inequality was in the following years.

“Mervyn received Invalidity Pension from the Department of Social Welfare. In early 2005 I took a period of unpaid leave from my job as a university lecturer and became his carer. We were refused by the Department the Qualified Adult Allowance for couples. We took a discrimination case against the Department supported by the Equality Authority and in July 2006 the Government, through a Cabinet decision, conceded and recognised us a couple.

“At that time Mervyn called on the Government to ‘bring in legislation introducing civil marriage without delay’. In the meantime, in the absence of even civil partnership in the Republic, we had entered into UK civil partnership in Northern Ireland on December 23, 2005. This was very important to us as without it Mervyn and I were strangers in law. Eventually, on January 2, 2011, Mervyn and I had our UK civil partnership recognised by the Irish Government, the first couple to achieve this.

“However, our experience of civil partnership is that it is second class compared to marriage.

One time when Mervyn was in hospital a nurse asked him, 'Who is your next of kin?' Mervyn replied, 'Richard, my civil partner'.

The nurse then asked him, 'have you told your family about the new treatment?' Mervyn replied, 'Yes, Richard, my civil partner'. If Mervyn had been able to say, 'Richard, my husband', would the nurse have asked that question?"

That pain can end for others after Friday, according to Richard.

"It is too late for us to benefit from civil marriage. Nevertheless, I am a campaigner for marriage equality and this is why. Is my grief any less than that of a man who has lost his wife or of a woman who has lost her husband? Please do not call me a 'surviving civil partner'. I am a widower."

**Click on FACEBOOK on home page to receive daily headlines**

**Share CNI with your friends**