



C of I Archbishop of Dublin, Michael Jackson, was among those present at Dublin Castle on Saturday

C of I archbishop of Dublin responds to referendum after criticism

Michael Jackson, archbishop of Dublin in an interview on the Dublin and Glendalough web site commented on the referendum vote.

This interview was posted following comments made by a significant number of clergy and laity on social media which were highly critical of the tone and timing of a statement issued by their church's House of Bishops.

The archbishop attempted to outline various processes in the church's governance and discussions. He referred to the agenda of The Hard Gospel Project and commented, "Voices excluded for whatever reason deserve attentive listening and respectful response. It is for this reason that we are deeply grateful that an initiative that at one point may have seemed particularly pertinent to Northern Ireland, the Six Counties, now makes a fresh contribution to the self-understanding of the Church of Ireland in the Twenty-six Counties. It is for this reason that I would suggest that the Referendum in fact facilitates the Church of Ireland in exploring at its deepest level the Resolution of the General Synod of 2012 in its entirety.

"Many people remember only the fact that this Resolution asserted afresh, by the most comprehensive Synodical agreement, Canon 31 of the Church of Ireland, to the effect that marriage is between a man and a woman. It is important to remember, in light of the recent

Referendum, that we are pledged and honour-bound to do justice to the totality of the scope of the full Resolution:

“The Church of Ireland welcomes all people to be members of the Church. It is acknowledged, however, that members of the Church have at times hurt and wounded people by words and actions, in relation to human sexuality.

“Therefore, in order that the Church of Ireland is experienced as a ‘safe place’ and enabled in its reflection, the Church of Ireland affirms:

- *A continuing commitment to love our neighbour, and opposition to all unbiblical and uncharitable actions and attitudes in respect of human sexuality from whatever perspective, including bigotry, hurtful words or actions, and demeaning or damaging language;*
- *A willingness to increase our awareness of the complex issues regarding human sexuality;*
- *A determination to welcome and to make disciples of all people.*

“The Church of Ireland is mindful that for all who believe ‘there is no distinction’ and that ‘all have sinned and come short of the glory of God’ (Romans 3:22 – 23) and are in need of

God's grace and mercy. We seek to be a community modelled on God's love for the world as revealed in Jesus Christ. We wish that all members of the Church, through the teaching of the scriptures, the nourishment of the sacraments, and the prayerful and pastoral support of a Christian community will fulfill their unique contribution to God's purposes for our world.

"The General Synod requests the Standing Committee to progress work on the issue of Human Sexuality in the Context of Christian Belief and also to bring a proposal to General Synod 2013 for the formation of a Select Committee with terms of reference including reporting procedures."

"The Church of Ireland, through a Committee of its General Synod, is already engaged in an in-depth process of listening and reflection inspired by the Resolution of General Synod 2012 and following through on The Hard Gospel and its findings to date. What is now incumbent upon us is to take fresh cognisance of part 2 of that Resolution. As members of the Church of Ireland who have spoken in a personal capacity ahead of the outcome of the Referendum have suggested, this is now a matter of pressing urgency if we in the Church of Ireland are to fulfill

our responsibility of care to all those who look to us in hope of a fresh expression of the love of God in the Season of Pentecost.”

More at -

<http://dublin.anglican.org/news/2015/05/-The-referendum-result-is-now-out-What-is-your-response-Interview-with-the-Archbishop-of-Dublin-on-Whit-Sunday>

New York view of a changing Ireland

The shift didn't happen overnight. After Ireland broke from Britain in 1922, it was a virtual colony to the [Vatican](#), a theocracy in all but name - writes Danny Hakim in the New York Times.

John Charles McQuaid, the longtime archbishop of Dublin, played a [central role](#) in drafting Ireland's Constitution before he became archbishop, hewing to conservative church doctrine and closely involving himself in details as small as the placement of commas in the document. That kind of unchecked dominance by the church continued for decades.

In 1979, more than one million people turned out for Pope John Paul II's visit to Dublin, a staggering crowd in a country with a population

of about 3.4 million at the time. In 1983, by a two-thirds majority, Ireland hewed to church teachings and passed a referendum outlawing abortion except in cases where a mother's life was at risk, after a divisive campaign.

But signs of resistance had already been showing. In 1971, women's rights activists organized a "condom train," going over the border to Belfast and bringing back condoms to a country that outlawed contraception.

[Tony Flannery](#), a priest who was suspended in 2012 because of his criticism of the church's views on women and homosexuality, said contraception was a seminal issue for a generation that became the parents of today's youngest voters.

And it "was the first time that Irish Catholics first questioned church teaching," Mr. Flannery said. "That opened the door, and after that they increasingly began to question

a whole raft of Catholic sexual teaching, and then the child sexual abuse scandal came along which destroyed church credibility in the whole area of sexuality."

Even the reputation of Archbishop McQuaid, who died in 1973 after more than three decades

at the helm of the Dublin archdiocese, crumbled in the tide of child sex scandals. In 2009, his role in covering up abuse was excoriated [in a report](#) commissioned by the Irish government and the headline of a [commentary](#) in The Irish Times likened him to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. By 2011, [abuse allegations](#) surfaced involving him.

“The people have changed their relationship with the Catholic Church because they’ve been disappointed and let down,” said Christina Breen, 54, who visited Dublin Castle on Saturday to see the results of the vote, a show of support because one of her sons is gay.

Or, as Mr. Flannery put it, “The day when the church had the power to influence social debate in Ireland, or to swing it, is gone.”

The legal system began to chip away at the laws restricting homosexuals. In 1988, a lawyer named Mary Robinson successfully argued a case in the European court system challenging Ireland’s law that made homosexuality a crime. Five years later, after Ms. Robinson became Ireland’s first female president in 1990, she signed a law decriminalizing homosexuality.

At the same time that the church’s moral authority was flagging, the Irish were finding a

new identity within the [European Union](#). They share the euro, and are more willing to take advantage of low-cost airfares for weekend jaunts to the Continent and beyond, broadening an outlook that for their parents and grandparents had been molded by the church and Britain.

More at -

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/25/world/europe/church-faces-murky-future-as-irish-support-same-sex-marriage.html?_r=0

See also -

Ireland no longer so Catholic

In less than three decades, the Catholic Church has lost its grip on the Irish.

Paul Valley writes in The Independent - From being one of Europe's most socially conservative societies, Ireland has become the first country in the world to approve same-sex marriage - one of the modern world's defining issues - not from the legislation of a parliamentary elite, but through a poll of the whole people.

The self-destruction of the institutional church has been spectacular. Revelations over the extent of sexual abuse by predatory priests have undermined the moral authority of the Catholic hierarchy and overturned the nearest thing Europe had to a theocracy. It was not just paedophile priests. Scandals involving regimes of physical and psychological cruelty have been laid bare involving nuns and religious brothers in schools, care homes and the infamous Magdalene laundries set up by the church for single mothers and “fallen women”.

Worse still was the evidence that bishops had sheltered these abusers for decades. The regimens of the abusive institutions were approved by the church hierarchy. They were often endorsed by government inspectors but, revealingly, the secular state has largely avoided the opprobrium which has attached to the church. That suggests that something more has been going on in Ireland than disillusion with Catholicism over abuse nurtured in the hothouse of clerical culture.

More at -

<http://www.iol.co.za/news/ireland-no-longer-so-catholic-1.1862951#.VWNhUufTN-U>

Ireland celebrates Africa Day

The Irish Government has been urged to address the concerns of African families living in Ireland.

On Africa Day, the Immigrant Council of Ireland warned that family rights, access to work and education as well as citizenship are issues needing to be addressed by the State.

“We should be proud that Ireland is one of the few countries outside of the continent to publicly celebrate Africa Day. It is an occasion we can reflect on the strong relationship we have with many countries,” said Brian Killoran, Chief Executive of the Immigrant Council of Ireland.

“However, it is also an opportunity for the Government to recognise the many challenges and difficulties faced by people and families of an African background who have chosen to make Ireland their home and have made a commitment to this country.”

Celebrating Africa Day 2015 on Sunday (24 May) the Council called for commitments from politicians to re-unite families torn apart by red tape, to ensure full access to work and education, and to reduce the huge cost for families seeking Irish citizenship.



The Immigrant Council stated that failure to address these issues could lead to divided communities and unintended segregation. The Council listed issues it would like to see addressed:

- introduction of a modern, efficient and fair immigration system with the protection of the Office of the Ombudsman
- National Action Plan to combat racism and a National Integration Strategy
- right of family reunification – to reunite those families torn apart by red tape
- school admissions bill to ensure equal access for all
- reduction in our Citizen Application Fees which are currently amongst the highest in the World

Last year the Immigrant Council of Ireland responded to more than 5,000 calls for help from migrants and their families.

rish Aid hosted the flagship ‘Africa Day Dublin’ on Sunday in the grounds of Farmleigh House.

Dublin Bus offered free transport for the event.

Speaking at the launch, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Charlie Flanagan stated, “2015 is the European Year for Development, aimed at demonstrating Europe’s commitment to eradicating poverty worldwide and inspiring more Europeans to get engaged and involved in development.”

He added, “Our annual Africa Day celebrations in Ireland present an ideal opportunity to show how Ireland’s commitment to international development has helped to forge strong links between our country and a wide range of African nations. The celebrations also showcase the important contribution made by the African diaspora in Ireland – to our economy, our society and our evolving culture.”

First Minister in Moderator’s thoughts and prayers

The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Right Reverend Dr. Michael Barry said he had heard

with concern that the First Minister, Peter Robinson MLA, has been taken to hospital.

“I am very sorry to hear this news. It will be a worrying time for the family and our thoughts and prayers are with the First Minister, his wife Iris and their family.”

Michael Palin on the place of church in community

Church Times has an [essay from former Monty Python member Michael Palin](#) describing the role that churches (the buildings) have played in his life.

“...wherever else there has been a tumult to escape from. I’ve also listened to sublime music and wonderful choirs in churches around the world, and I still find that a special treat.

But there are seven churches that have meant more to me than most.

In the article he recalls the churches that have touched his life or been memorable in important ways, such as; where he was baptized and

attended as a child, the churches visited on summer holidays (somewhat reluctantly) with his father, where he was married, and where his great-grandfather was vicar and his local parish church. He is especially struck by a tiny chapel on Cape Horn.

What light there is falls from two small windows, one on each side, both of them murky with sea salt.

Out of one window is the Pacific Ocean, and out of the other the Atlantic. Nowhere else do the coastlines of the world's two greatest oceans come so close that by a simple turn of the head you can see them both.

And though, Palin does not consider himself a Christian ("Agnostic with doubts" still remains an accurate description of the state of my faith [he says,]. But I still visit churches whenever I can, and find great comfort in them), he does see the local church as an important marker of community;

FOR my part, I feel very strongly that, if the idea of a community is to mean anything at all, then we must value the churches that are at their centre. Not just because so many are beautiful

buildings in themselves, but for what they can still offer – as they used to offer – as havens, shelters, places of protection, places that it doesn't cost a penny to enter, and which won't cost you a penny to stay all day.

We must not be afraid to try and use our churches, open them for believers and non-believers, and even “agnostics with doubts” to enjoy. They are an archive of hopes, dreams, fears, skills, talent, and troubles, which should surely be available to as many people as possible. They are a precious expression of our past. And it is the duty of our present generation to deliver them intact for the future.

Francis: Beatification of Oscar Romero is a cause for great joy

On the occasion of the beatification of El Salvador's Archbishop Oscar Romero, Pope Francis sent a note that was read to those present for the [May 23 ceremony](#). The beatification is reason for great joy, he said, especially “for those of us who find joy in the example of the best sons of the Church.”

Archbishop Romero “constructed peace with the force of love, gave testimony of his faith his life,” the Pope wrote.

He reminded others that God never abandons us in our difficulties.

“He sees oppression, hears the cries of pain of his children, helps to free them from oppression and takes them to a new and fertile land,” the Pope continued.

In difficult times, Archbishop Romero “guided, defended and protected his flock, remaining loyal to the Gospel, in communion with the Church,” he said.

His ministry, the Pope added, was distinguished for particular attention to the poorest and marginalised.

Those who have Archbishop Romero “as a friend in faith, who invoke him in as protector and intercessor, who admire him, should find in him strength and energy to build the kingdom of God,” and should work for a more equitable and dignified social order, the Pope said.

“This is the moment for favourable and proper national reconciliation. The Pope participates in this hope, is united in prayer, so the seed of martyrdom is entrenched in the true paths of the sons and daughters of this nation, which prides itself on carrying the name of the divine Saviour of the world.”

US President Barack Obama also sent his congratulations to El Salvador.

“Archbishop Romero was an inspiration for people in El Salvador and across the Americas,” he said. “He was a wise pastor and a courageous man who persevered in the face of opposition from extremes on both sides. He fearlessly confronted the evils he saw, guided by the needs of his beloved pueblo, the poor and oppressed people of El Salvador.”

Obama said that “El Salvador has come a long way in the last 35 years. Those who once fought on the battlefield now compete for votes and negotiate in the National Assembly. But we, and the Salvadoran people, recognise there is much more to do.”

He said the United States is “guided by the vision of Archbishop Romero. We partner with communities to promote economic opportunity, strengthen the rule of law and create safer neighbourhoods.”

He also thanked Pope Francis for “his leadership in reminding us of our obligation to help those most in need, and for his decision to beatify Blessed Oscar Arnulfo Romero. Let us hope that Archbishop Romero’s vision can inspire all of us to respect the dignity of all human beings, and to work for justice and peace in our hemisphere and beyond.”

Media digest

Pressure mounts for gay marriage in NI - UTV

Pressure is mounting to legalise same-sex marriage in Northern Ireland, following the Republic of Ireland’s historic vote granting gay and lesbian couples the right to marry.

<http://www.u.tv/News/2015/05/25/Pressure-mounts-for-gay-marriage-in-NI-37842>

Poll: Should same sex marriage be allowed in Northern Ireland? Pressure grows for referendum - Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/poll-should-same-sex-marriage-be-allowed-in-northern-ireland-pressure-grows-for-referendum-31250598.html>

Same-sex marriage is coming to Northern Ireland - Ben Lowry - Deputy Editor, Belfast News Letter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/same-sex-marriage-is-coming-to-northern-ireland-1-6761385>

Sinn Fein vows to continue gay marriage campaign in Northern Ireland - News Letter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/sinn-fein-vows-to-continue-gay-marriage-campaign-in-northern-ireland-1-6760997>

Same sex marriage vote shows Churches have lost hold of nation's conscience in Republic of Ireland - Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/same-sex-marriage-vote-shows-churches-have-lost-hold-of-nations-conscience-in-republic-of-ireland-31250274.html>

Catholic Church Ponders Future After Same-Sex Marriage Vote in Ireland - NY Times

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/25/world/europe/church-faces-murky-future-as-irish-support-same-sex-marriage.html?_r=0

The next goal for liberals will be referendum on abortion - David Quinn - Independent

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/referendum/the-next-goal-for-liberals-will-be-referendum-on-abortion-31250555.html>

Spare a thought for those who voted No in Ireland - Ruth Dudley Edwards - Telegraph

The views of the 38 per cent in Ireland opposed to gay marriage should be treated with respect

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ireland/11627612/Spare-a-thought-for-those-who-voted-No-in-Ireland.html>

An inconvenient truth about the same-sex marriage referendum - Breda O'Brien - Irish Times

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/breda-o-brien-an-inconvenient-truth-about-the-same-sex-marriage-referendum-1.2224422>