



Canon highlights plight of Ethiopian women

Canon Stuart Lloyd trekked through the centre of Ballymena on Friday last to raise the profile of Christian Aid Week.

Ballymena Times - he rector of St Patrick's Church, Canon Lloyd has been occupied over

these last days with the situation in Nepal. He has made many mission visits there with parishioners over the years and partnerships have been formed and the parish is seeking to respond to the needs identified by those partners.

Nevertheless, he took time out on Friday to carry a huge load of firewood on his back through the centre of town in a bid to highlight the particular plight of women in Ethiopia.

Quite simply, if they want their children to eat just one small meal a day, they must walk long, back-breaking hours collecting and carrying firewood to sell.

Canon Lloyd is a long-time supporter of Christian Aid and his church, St Patrick's Church of Ireland, is involved in the charity's collection across Ballymena to help fund essential work with the poor overseas.

He said: "I've been moved by the story of a 29-year-old mother called Loko who lives in a remote part of Ethiopia. Four times a week Loko has to make a back-breaking eight-hour trip to find and gather wood. When she sells the

firewood she earns just £1 – barely enough to feed her children.”

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.

Christian Aid want to give Loko, and other women like her, the means to earn a decent living.

“A cow, for example, will mean that Loko can sell the milk and butter to earn enough money to feed her children properly – and send them to school,” says Canon Lloyd.

He is appealing to everyone in Ballymena and in Antrim to show their support this Christian Aid Week, May 10-16.

He says: “Please put what you can into the Christian Aid Week red envelope when it comes through your door. All the envelopes are delivered and collected by volunteers.”

He added: “If we don’t get around to your house, then please still consider giving online at www.caweek.org or phoning in a donation to Christian Aid at (028) 9592 2015. Thank-you”.



51st Glenstal Ecumenical Conference to be in retreat format

A retreat experience for Christians together, discerning service for a fractured world.

Following a sabbatical year in 2014, the Glenstal Ecumenical Conference is taking place once again in 2015. An innovation for this 51st Conference is that the gathering will take the form of a Retreat.

The organisers state - As always, the heart of our concern is growing together in Christ as diverse disciples. But building on the discussion of 2014, this year we are seeking to deepen and renew our vision of and commitment to this call. This is, above all, a spiritual exercise. In shaping our time together in terms of a retreat experience, we will be thinking and praying, talking and listening, in ways which can open us up to the new challenges that the Spirit is calling us to in our search for unity. So, as well as some talks, there will be extended times of prayer, reflection and conversation. Our time together will be a meeting at the well with the Lord, and an exchange across differences, which will lead us to new actions, and a fresh proclamation of the truth we encounter. Date 23.06.2015.

The retreat leaders are -

Clare Watkins:

Dr Clare Watkins is Lecturer in Ministerial Theology at the University of Roehampton, London. A Roman Catholic, lay woman theologian, she is committed to teaching and research in the areas of ecclesiology, sacramental theology and practical theology. She is a member of the Methodist Roman Catholic International Dialogue Commission, and of WCC Holy See Working Group on the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

She currently serves as Chair of the British and Irish Association for Practical Theology.

Colleen Brown

Colleen Brown has been studying and working in the areas of grief, conflict, trauma, spirituality, reconciliation and the arts for over twenty years. Originally from San Francisco, she has been in Ireland, North and South since 1995 and currently lives in Dublin. She is a trained therapist, spiritual director and facilitator. She and her husband are both members of the Corrymeela Community.

Columba McCann OSB:

Fr Columba McCann is a monk of Glenstal Abbey since 2004, having previously been a priest of the Archdiocese of Dublin. A graduate in Music and Liturgy, he has particular interests in organ improvisation and in composing liturgical music. He is one of the abbey organists and currently serves both as Novice Master and Director of Oblates

A booking form and further information is available at the link below

<http://www.irishchurches.org/cmsfiles/events/EventFiles/GEC-2015-Brochure.pdf>

Bishop's plea - pray for healing and reconciliation in divided parish

In a statement issued Saturday afternoon, Bishop Harold Miller of Down and Dromore said - The events of recent weeks have been very difficult for the rector and people of the Parish of Knocknamuckley. It has been particularly difficult to have the contentious issues within a local church publicised by the press, and there has been a great deal of pain and hurt.

In the midst of all of that, I note that there is, on the part of many people, a concern about Christian teaching, and fearfulness about some doctrinal expressions. This has been seen in regard to the teaching of the Black Preceptory and the teaching of Bethel Church in California. I have decided that, where such concerns exist, the groups involved must be treated with respect but must also be open to scrutiny. This is only right. So, I will be setting up, over the next month, a small theological commission to report to me and the diocese.

In light of this I ask for gracious provisional judgements from all parties. The rector, therefore, has agreed on this particular occasion, to give permission to the Tandragee District of churchnewsireland@gmail.com

the Royal Black Preceptory to use St Matthias' Church on Sunday 10 May.

I had already planned to be at the evening services on that Sunday, and have decided that, as bishop, in the context of this painful time, I will also conduct and preach at the afternoon service.

Please pray for healing and reconciliation in Knocknamuckley. This has been a difficult time for all and, as your bishop, I grieve to see division and will help in any way that I can.

See also - Why the Churches need to show more Christian charity - Alf McCreary writes in Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/columnists/alf-mccreary/why-the-churches-need-to-show-more-christian-charity-31188851.html>

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/parish-still-divided-over-controversial-ministers-as-bishop-meetings-held-31186631.html>

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/an-idyllic-church-shattered-by-an-unholy-row-31186601.html>



Church bans parents from taking Communion and Confirmation photos

Parents are being banned from taking Confirmation pictures during the ceremony - because the Catholic Church fears images of children may end up in the hands of potential abusers.

Irish Independent - Each diocese in Ireland has been directed to have specific guidelines

governing the filming and photography of children while they are on church grounds.

The rules derive from the 'Safeguarding Standards' guidelines, introduced by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland (NBSCCC), in 2008. These stipulate that each diocese must have robust child protection policies in place, which are "implemented consistently".

The National Board was established in response to the clerical abuse scandals, as a way of ensuring that a given set of standards were put in place, and are adhered to.

"It's to avoid a situation whereby photos get into the wrong hands of potential abusers," said Ger Kenny, spokesman for the NBSCCC.

"The risk issue is people will be taking pictures of kids who are not related to them, and for inappropriate reasons."

Annette O'Donnell, spokeswoman for the Dublin Archdiocese, said there is a ban on taking photographs during any religious ceremony.

These include confirmations, baptisms and weddings. She said it extends to all churches in the Dublin diocese.

She stressed this is now "best practice" for anyone dealing with groups of children, whether they are in "churches, schools or sports clubs".

"Parents are not allowed take pictures during Mass. Our child protection officers tell our parishes not to allow photography without parental consent.

"The practice during confirmations is that we ask people not to take photographs, full stop," she told the Irish Independent.

More at -

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/news/church-bans-parents-from-taking-communion-and-confirmation-photos-31189423.html>

Archbishop Eamon Martin issues statement over gay marriage referendum

The leader of the Catholic Church in Ireland, Archbishop Eamon Martin, has said that to



interfere with the definition of marriage is not a simple or trivial matter.

Archbishop Martin was addressing the subject of the same-sex marriage referendum in the Republic of Ireland.

It is taking place on 22 May.

Irish prime minister, Enda Kenny, has said that the right to equal marriage applies to civil marriage and not to church or faith-based unions.

Archbishop Martin said the proposed amendment to the Irish constitution would remove "the unique and privileged status in society for the marriage between a man and a woman".

"Until now, Ireland has accepted that it is in the best interests of children and of society to promote and protect the model of children being born and raised in a family with their biological parents," he said.

He added that Irish bishops had already said they "cannot support an amendment to the constitution which redefines marriage and effectively places the union of two men, or two women, on a par with the marriage relationship between a husband and wife which is open to the procreation of children".

Last week, Mr Kenny said heterosexual marriage would not be diminished by same-sex marriage and that the institution of marriage would be enriched by it.

He said the State respected religious freedom and did not seek to encroach on any church or faith.

See also - BBC - Ireland's divisive referendum on same-sex marriage

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-32486426>

Commemoration of sinking of RMS Lusitania



The Lusitania Peace Memorial in Cobh, County Cork

This coming week marks the centenary of the sinking of the RMS Lusitania 18km off the coast of County Cork. A number of coastal towns, communities and parishes in this Diocese were caught up in particular ways with the tragic events of that day, 7th May, 1915. Cobh (then Queenstown) was one such town. Survivors and victims alike were brought to the port. Local people accommodated the survivors in their own homes, in lodging houses and in hospitals. More

than 100 of the casualties were buried in the town's old cemetery.

Yesterday, the Bishop of Cork, Dr Paul Colton visited the parish of Cobh and Glanmire Union where he spoke about the events of 100 years ago and also confirmed 5 young people from the parish.

The Bishop said, “The sinking of RMS Lusitania was one of the major tragedies of worldwide significance in the twentieth century. As I shall be attending the General Synod of the Church of Ireland later this week I will not be able to attend the local ceremonies marking the centenary, but I'm glad that I will be represented by the Reverend Adrian Moran. I was pleased to mark the centenary by visiting the union of parishes today.

“The celebration of a Service of Confirmation of five young people made it a forward-looking and hopeful visit as we reflected, not only on a past event, but on the contribution individual Christians and Christian communities continue to make in our time.”

Moderator of PCI congratulates The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on the birth of their daughter

Speaking on the announcement of the birth of a daughter to Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Right Reverend Dr. Michael Barry said: “On behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, I would like to offer The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge our heartfelt congratulations on the birth of their daughter.

“We are pleased to hear that both mother and baby are doing well and offer our warm good wishes to Their Royal Highnesses. As their family grows, I pray that along with her brother Prince George, she will come in time to know the transforming love and saving grace of Christ.”

Homeless Jesus sculpture a reminder of the plight of the homeless

[Church of Ireland](#) Archbishop of Dublin Dr Michael Jackson said - We in the city of Dublin are *honoured* and *chastened* to be the recipients of the genius of the sculptor of The Homeless Jesus, Tim Schmalz, and of the generosity of the donor. I say *honoured* because of the beauty of the craftsmanship and the trust expressed in the location of Christ Church Cathedral as a place for all the people of Dublin to be and to see; and also a hearth of welcome for hundreds of thousands of international pilgrims and visitors every year. I say *chastened* because of the scandalous fact that the relentlessness of homelessness and the statistics of individual homeless people in Dublin in 2015 still merit such a sculpture as a reminder and as a memorial. For my own part, I see it also as a testimony to the human spirit of individual homeless people in Dublin and to their capacity for life in the midst of danger, distress, degradation and deprivation.

The Scripture tells of the words attributed to Jesus in his lifetime: The Son of Man has



Dean Dermot Dunne, Archbishop Michael Jackson, Tim Schmalz (sculptor) and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin at the blessing and unveiling of the Homeless Jesus sculpture.

nowhere to lay his head. The Sculpture gives to everyone who passes by the opportunity to pause and reflect on this facet of the big narrative of Christianity: the birth, crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The great events of Christmas, Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter are brought into this sculpture with electrical intensity and with pellucid fluidity. The confident sweep of the clothing that The

Homeless Jesus wears gives cover and dignity to death itself, the death of the One who came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many, shared with every homeless person.

Throughout the world of today human beings are subjected to indignity, homelessness, trafficking and death simply for being alive and getting under the ideological skin of their oppressors. Every day for them is a Good Friday. They wait for the Day of Resurrection in hope and in fear, in trust and in betrayal, in darkness and in light. Homeless people draw us into their world – and rightly; we dare not abandon them here or abroad. The twenty–first century is not yet an improvement on the twentieth century. The Homeless Jesus is a reminder of their plight and terror, whatever their nationality or creed – and an icon of solidarity with them. Evil and exclusion make few distinctions of subtlety as they sweep forward in giddy destructiveness. I should like to thank the Dean and Chapter for housing this .

See also -

CNI - May 2 and

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/homeless-jesus-at-christ-church-set-to-provoke-reflection-1.2197405>

Youth Link's Faith Based Community Relations conference

Faith Based Community Relations conference -
What is the future of CRED in our sector, and
what do we really mean when we talk about
Peace Building, Reconciliation and Inclusion?

Guest speakers: Rev. Steve Stockman (Fitzroy Presbyterian Church) & Fr Martin Magill (Sacred Heart Parish), co-founders of the Four Corners festival an event which 'seeks to inspire people from across the city to transform it for the peace and prosperity of all. It consists of innovative events designed to entice people out of their own 'corners' of the city and into new places where they will encounter new perspectives, new ideas, and new friends' This year they received a standing ovation at the Sinn Fein ard fheis when speaking on the subject of reconciliation from a Christian perspective.

Wednesday, June 10 at 9:30am - 1:30pm. Youth Link, Farset Enterprise Park, 638 Springfield Road Belfast, BT12 7DY
Details at -

<http://www.youthlink.org.uk/cred>

Premiership Stars Give Poverty The Boot This Christian Aid Week

Prized items including former England Captain, Steven Gerrard's signed football boots, signed shirts from the Chelsea and Everton teams and a signed photo of the Arsenal team will be auctioned for [Christian Aid Week](#) (10-16 May 2015), giving people the chance to score a winning purchase.

The items will be part of an [eBay for Charity auction](#) to mark Christian Aid's 70th Anniversary that will go live on Saturday 9th May 2015 at 7pm and will close on Saturday 16th May at 7pm.

This year's Christian Aid Week, Britain's longest running door-to-door fundraising week, is asking the British public to support women living in poverty around the world who are discriminated against from birth.

The money raised from the auction will help Christian Aid support women like Loko, a young Ethiopian woman who features in this year's Christian Aid Week appeal. Loko walks around 38.5km a day to collect firewood so that she can earn enough money to feed her family, while the average midfielder covers around 10 to 11km in 90 minutes trying to win a match.

Loko dreams of owning a cow – its milk would nourish her children, provide an income and give her recognition and a voice within her community.

In Ethiopia Christian Aid partner HUNDEE works with both women and men in poor cattle-rearing Borena communities to challenge violence against women and harmful traditional practices, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), to bring about lasting change and ensure women can live in dignity and are treated with respect.

HUNDEE encourages men to get more involved with household tasks, including looking after their children, and to consult their wives about the decisions that affect them.

They also provide the poorest women in pastoralist communities with livestock, raising their status within society, because when they

have a cow they have a voice in community decision making, as well as a means to earn a living.

Other items up for grabs in the Premiership themed auction include Captain of Crystal Palace, Mile Jedinak's signed boots; Hull City Defender, Michael Dawson's boots; Swansea Defender, Ashley Williams' boots; a signed photo of the Sunderland team; a tour of Leicester City's stadium and a signed Burnley FC pennant flag. More items are to be announced.

Christian Aid Director David Pain said: "Christian Aid is thrilled that the football clubs have donated these exclusive items for our Christian Aid Week auction. It is wonderful to see some of the Premiership's top teams getting behind us for Christian Aid Week, to help us blow the whistle on poverty.

"The funds raised from the eBay for Charity auction will provide much-needed income for our work in some of the world's poorest countries, as will the efforts of 20,000 churches and communities nationwide that will be raising funds for Christian Aid Week in the coming days. We'd hope as many people as possible bid for the boots and other football memorabilia, so that we can kick out poverty for good."

Visit www.ebay.co.uk/ebayforcharity (from Saturday 9th May 2015 at 7pm) to find out more and bid on your favorite item.

You can help to change the lives of women in places like Ethiopia this Christian Aid Week by donating online at www.caweek.org calling 08080 006 006, or texting 'WEEK' to 70040 to give £5.

Egypt jails 69 Islamists for church attack

The attack on the Coptic church near Kerdasa took place in August 2013.

Sixty-nine suspected Muslim Brotherhood supporters were each sentenced to 25 years in prison in Egypt on Wednesday for attacking and burning a church in a village near Cairo in 2013, judicial sources said.

The church in the village of Kafr Hakim, near Kerdasa just outside Cairo, was burned in August 2013 in a wave of violence that rocked the country after the army toppled elected Islamist president Mohamed Morsi following mass protests against his rule.

Egyptian authorities have jailed thousands of suspected members of Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood and the courts have sentenced hundreds to death.

The Brotherhood says it is committed to peaceful activism. Since taking office in 2014, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has identified Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood as a threat to national security.

Judge Mohamed Nagi Shehata also sentenced two other juvenile defendants to 10 years in jail each without parole, the sources said.

All the defendants were convicted on charges that included deliberately setting fire to a church and looting it, they added. The 69 were also fined 20,000 Egyptian pounds (\$2,623) each.

"There is no proof against the defendants... even the church's priest said he didn't see any of the defendants after the incident," Hany El-Sayed, a defense lawyer for some of the defendants, told Reuters. The verdict can be appealed.

Judge Shehata has played a prominent role in the Egyptian judiciary's mass jailings of Islamist and liberal demonstrators.

Separately, another court sentenced 63 people to jail terms ranging from one to seven years in a case related to violence inside Al Azhar University's campus in Cairo in Dec. 2013, state news agency MENA reported.

The university has witnessed repeated clashes between pro Brotherhood students and police. Another 13 defendants were acquitted, including a photo journalist.

The convicted were fined a total amount of 2.16 million Egyptian pounds. Their verdicts can also be appealed.

Episcopal bishop accused in drunken driving death resigns

The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland says a bishop accused of fatally striking a bicyclist while driving drunk in Baltimore has resigned.



The diocese announced Friday that it has accepted the resignation of Heather Cook, who was bishop suffragan. Cook is no longer employed by the church. Cook was the second-highest ranking Episcopal leader in Maryland.

Cook faces charges of vehicular manslaughter, drunken driving and distracted driving stemming from a Dec. 27 accident. Prosecutors say Cook was drunk and texting when she fatally struck 41-year-old Tom Palermo on his bicycle. Cook is free on a \$2.5 million bail.

A June 4 trial date has been set in the case.

The diocese says Cook's resignation is separate from any disciplinary action taken by the church.

Media digest

General Election 2015

Gay marriage turns into key battleground as DUP and Alliance clash - Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/general-election-2015/election-gay-marriage-turns-into-key-battleground-as-dup-and-alliance-clash-31186396.html>

Sinn Féin defends leaflet amid accusations of 'blatant sectarianism' - Journal.ie

http://www.thejournal.ie/sinn-fein-leaflet-sectarianism-2080340-May2015/?utm_source=twitter_self

NI parties Q&A: What is your definition of Troubles victim? - News Letter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/ni-parties-q-a-what-is-your-definition-of-troubles-victim-1-6720327>

Gay man 'couldn't believe Wells' response to question' - News Letter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/gay-man-couldn-t-believe-wells-response-to-question-1-6722583>

Christian politicians should recuse themselves from decisions: MLA - News Letter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/christian-politicians-should-recuse-themselves-from-decisions-mla-1-6722570>

What the Commissioner wants the next Government to do for older people in Northern Ireland - COPNI

<http://www.copni.org/news/general-election-2015.html>

Leader Losses and gains - Church Times leader

<http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2015/1-may/comment/leader-comment/leader-losses-and-gains>

ABORTION

Hospitals disclosed names of women who had abortions - Irish Independent

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/health/hospitals-disclosed-names-of-women-who-had-abortions-31186691.html>

NI abortion law: Jane Christie says she is devastated by first minister's comments - BBC

The mother of a woman who faced carrying her baby until it died in her womb has said she is devastated by the DUP leader's comments that attempts to change the abortion law are doomed.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-32551326>

C of E

**Judge to decide whether C of E bishop
accused of sex assault crimes will stand trial
- Guardian**

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/may/01/judge-to-decide-whether-bishop-accused-of-sex-assault-crimes-will-stand-trial>

USA

Most US Republicans would attend a same-sex marriage - poll - Christian Today

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/most.republicans.would.attend.a.same.sex.marriage.poll/53054.htm>

America Letter: Supreme court arguments mirror Irish marriage equality debate - Irish Times

http://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/us/america-letter-supreme-court-arguments-mirror-irish-marriage-equality-debate-1.2197501?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter