



## **Methodist East Belfast Mision's Irish Language Project Wins Award**

East Belfast Mission's (EBM) Irish Language project Turas has won this year's Glór na nGael 'Duais (roinnte) Cholmcille' award for creating links between Scotland and Ireland.

The 2014 national awards ceremony took place in Barberstown Castle recently.

Turas received the award in recognition of their visit to the Isle of Lewis last year, their continuing efforts to promote the Scottish Gaelic tradition and their very successful 'Slighe na Beatha' Gaelic Psalm singers event that took place in Skainos in February this year. Turas was awarded €1,500.

Turas means “Journey” and it is EBM’s Irish Language Programme. It has grown tremendously this year and learners are enjoying weekly classes, as well as events held in other Irish language centres throughout the city.

## **Inter - church riders saddle up for Christian Aid cycle**

Members of two local churches have joined together to take on an energy-sapping challenge in support of Christian Aid Week.

Newtownabbey Times - Ten keen cyclists - five from St Patrick’s Church of Ireland, Jordanstown and five from Whiteabbey Presbyterian - will saddle up for a 70-mile cycle to mark the 70th anniversary of Christian Aid.

The riders will set off from Jordanstown at dawn on Sunday, May 10, making their way through Carrick and Larne, along the Antrim coast road



***Gearing up for the Christian Aid cycle are (l-r) Rev Jonny Campbell-Smyth, Ian Cochrane, Joanne Cochrane, Helen Brown and Alex McClenaghan.***

to Carnlough. They will then head inland to Broughshane where they will stop off for refreshments before getting back on their bikes and riding towards Doagh and then back to Jordanstown. Their aim is to be back in time for the 11am services at St Patrick's and Whiteabbey Presbyterian.

The cycle challenge is being held to mark the 70th anniversary of Christian Aid, which was set

up in the wake of the Second World War to help European refugees.

Today the charity carries out humanitarian work in countries across the globe, striving to eradicate poverty.

The focus of this year's Christian Aid Week (May 10 - 16) is highlighting the plight of women in many developing countries.

"It's all about raising awareness of Christian Aid Week and encouraging people to donate when the Christian Aid envelope comes through their door," explained cycle challenge organiser Alex McClenaghan.

She said that the idea behind the dawn start is to "create a bit of empathy with people who have to get up very early every day and do something that's a struggle - walking miles just to collect firewood or water - just to survive."

Rev Jonny Campbell-Smyth, Curate Assistant at St Patrick's Church, is among those taking part in the cycle.

As well as the physical challenge, he also faces the added pressure of having to complete the

70-mile route in time to preach at the morning service.

Admitting that he's not really looking forward to the cycle, he said: "I think my body will make it back in time for the service; I'm not sure whether my mind will. But thank the Lord that we write sermons earlier on in the week so all I should have to do is say what's on the sheet and worry about my legs at some later stage."

Stressing the importance of the work of Christian Aid, Rev Campbell-Smyth added: "I'm looking forward to the two churches coming together and working together on something that is really, really important and can make a real difference to so many people's lives. It shows that the churches can be united and that Christians can get together and act in situations of need."

The riders are hoping to raise as much money as possible for the charity. And the fundraising will continue after the morning services on May 10 with a bread and cheese lunch at Whiteabbey Presbyterian.

Anyone who would like to support the cyclists in their fundraising effort can do so by donating online at [www.justgiving.com/70-miles-to-Church](http://www.justgiving.com/70-miles-to-Church)

Following the devastating earthquake in Nepal on April 25, the cycle organisers have decided that all donations received via the justgiving page will go to Christian Aid's Nepal Earthquake Appeal.

For more information about Christian Aid Week log on to [www.caweek.org](http://www.caweek.org)

- For direct link to the 70-miles-to-Church justgiving page click [here](#).

See -

<http://www.newtownabbeytoday.co.uk/news/your-community/church-news/riders-saddle-up-for-christian-aid-cycle-1-6719217>

## **Ireland's singing priest: 'a music career in the US and my own album'**

Ireland's singing priest Fr. Ray Kelly has opened up about his new career in music after shooting to the heights of internet fame last year.

Irish Independent - The priest, from Oldcastle Co. Meath, was recorded singing Leonard Cohen's 'Hallelujah' in mass last April and the video was posted to Youtube where it has been watched more than 50 million times.



Since the video's success, Fr. Kelly has recorded and released an album with Universal in America and Ireland. This week, it is set for its Australian launch.

"It's been mad. I never thought this would happen at this stage of my life," said Fr. Kelly speaking to The Irish Sun.

"I was thinking of nearly retiring and now all of a sudden I've a music career," he said.

The priest has been to Britain, Germany and the US to promote his album.

Fr. Kelly said his recent success has attracted American tourists to his Co. Meath parish, all

hoping to hear the priest bang out a chorus or two from the alter.

“They might fly into Dublin airport on Sunday morning and their first port of call was to Oldcastle for 11.30am Mass and then go off on their [holidays](#) but they wanted to meet me and hear me sing,” he said.

The priest revealed that the success hasn't yet gone to his head though and parishioners should not expect the new levels of fame to change him.

“As for myself, there'll be no Lamborghini outside the church or a yacht,” he said.

<http://www.independent.ie/entertainment/trending/irelands-singing-priest-all-of-a-sudden-i-have-a-music-career-in-the-us-and-my-own-album-31193414.html>

## **Former C of I Archdeacon's mind change on same sex marriage**

Changing Attitudes Ireland are hosting a meeting at the C of I General Synod venue' this week. 'Why I changed my mind on same sex marriage' is the title of a talk to be given by Archdeacon Gordon Linney, the former Archdeacon of Dublin.



Time and venue - Thursday 7th May 1.15 – 1.55pm. Double Syndicate Room, Armagh City Hotel.

CAI will have a stall at General Synod.

IDAHOT day on 17th May is being marked by a number of church services, one of which is being hosted by St Columb's Cathedral, Derry at 4pm on Sunday 10th May. The preacher will be Canon Raymond Fox.

## **Churchgoers give their views on marriage referendum to Irish Times**

In religious institutions around the country, debate is taking place over what approach should be taken to the [same-sex marriage](#) referendum on May 22nd.

Irish Times - As worshippers filtered out of Dublin's Pro-Cathedral following Sunday morning Mass, Rita O'Connor (83) wonders aloud about the possible rationale behind anyone voting No in the upcoming ballot.

“I’m just going to vote for gay people because I have nothing against them. I can’t understand why anybody is against it; they’ve done no harm to anyone,” said the [Coolock](#) resident.

“I think it’s a stupid carry-on the way the church is going on at the moment, ridiculous.”

Despite the strong opposition to same-sex marriage emanating from Catholic hierarchy, she’s not alone in her views...

... Stuart McConnell, speaking outside St Ann’s [Church of Ireland](#) on Dawson Street, told *The Irish Times*: “I will be voting Yes, not just because our son is gay but because they have a right to be treated equally, and at the moment they feel they’re not equal.

“I think it’s totally distasteful that the No campaign are constantly using the ‘child deserves its mother’ approach. I don’t think it’s right. A child deserves parents,” he said.

More at -

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/churchgoers-give-their-views-on-marriage-referendum-1.2198732>

## **Cross of shell casings - symbol of hope at Derry inter-church service**

A brass cross made from empty 50 calibre shell casings was held up to a congregation in Londonderry this evening as a poignant and powerful symbol of hope.

The cross belongs to the Presbyterian minister, Rev Dr David Latimer, who was guest speaker at a cross-community Praise Service which took place in All Saints Clooney Church. Dr Latimer – who is the minister at First Derry Presbyterian Church – was invited to speak about his spell as chaplain in Helmand province, in Afghanistan, almost seven years ago.

The service was organised and led by the Rector of All Saints, Rev David McBeth, and the congregation included members of the Presbyterian, Catholic and Methodist churches, as well as the Church of Ireland.

In 2008, Dr Latimer was assigned for over three months to a Territorial Army unit based at Camp Bastion. During the 14 weeks he spent there, the base's hospital treated almost eleven hundred casualties.

The clergyman has described the experience as “life-changing” but he told the congregation that the experience of the wounded who were brought into the hospital for surgery “ranged from life-changing to life-ending”.

The congregation listened in rapt silence as the minister recalled praying in an operating theatre while a surgeon held a wounded soldier’s heart in his hand. On another occasion, he witnessed a doctor battling to save the life of a gravely injured young Afghan girl. Dr Latimer said he told the surgeon – who had daughters of his own in England – “You couldn’t have done any more to save your own children”.

Dr Latimer said he wanted to share with the congregation some of the pain he had seen in Afghanistan and turn it into a symbol of hope. “We can live without many things,” he explained, “but we can’t live without hope”.

During the service, Rev McBeth led the congregation in prayers and singing. He encouraged those present to remember those who had suffered as a result of the Nepalese earthquake, “those who’ve lost homes; those who’ve lost loved ones; those whose lives will never be the same.”

A collection was taken up during the service and the proceeds will be used to help the recovery effort in Nepal.

## **Former member of C of I ordained as priest**

A member of the C of I who converted to Catholicism as a teenager was ordained a priest in Down and Connor yesterday.

Irish News - Fr Andrew Black, who was baptised into the Church of Ireland, was ordained at Church of St Colmcille in his native Holywood in what was described as a "journey".

The 27-year-old is one of two deacons from the Down and Connor diocese to enter the priesthood this year, as the number of ordinations in Ireland continues to drop.

In 1994, there were 209 men studying to become priests at Maynooth seminary. At the end of September last year, there were 69.

But there was standing room only in the Co Down church yesterday where the 500-strong congregation attended the ceremony at which



the Bishop of Down and Connor, Noel Treanor, was the chief celebrant.

Fr Black told *The Irish News* that he began to discover his faith when he was just 14-years-old - and within two years he converted to Catholicism.

"Through the readings of the New Testament I discovered the truth and beauty of the Catholic Church, which has been there since the beginning of Christ," he said.

While the Co Down man said his family are not Catholics, he stressed they were "fully supportive of him" in life.

More at -

<http://www.irishnews.com/news/celebrations-as-man-who-converted-to-catholicism-as-teenager-ordained-1445830>

## **Presbyterian and Methodist churches' stands at Balmoral Show**

The Lisburn and Dromore Circuit Executive has been successful in securing a Stand at the forthcoming Balmoral Show which will take place again this year at Balmoral Park on the Maze site from 13 - 15 May. The Dromore *Presbytery* have also secured a stand.

For showmanship, spectacle and super family fun, Northern Ireland's biggest agricultural event never fails to disappoint.

The 147th Balmoral Show promises yet another extravaganza of colour and competition, combining old family favourites such as classes of livestock, prize-winning animal parades and equestrian displays, with novel new and exciting attractions.

There is scarcely a corner of Northern Ireland that is not represented in some shape or form at this event, thanks to the extensive involvement of community groups, schools, Women's

Institutes, Young Farmers' Clubs, farmers and food producers.

For younger enthusiasts there's the chance to hold, stroke and feed the baby animals within the Children's Farm and to take a spin on one of the many fun-packed rides in the Balmoral Show Funfair. What's more, visitors can enjoy a bird's eye view of the Showground from the Ferris Wheel. This is family entertainment at its best!

Pre-show tickets are now on sale. Web:  
[www.balmoralshow.co.uk](http://www.balmoralshow.co.uk)

## **Catholic bishops urge 'No' vote in marriage equality referendum**

The Catholic Church stepped up its campaign for a 'No' vote in the marriage equality referendum in the Republic of Ireland with its leading bishops issuing pastoral letters to their dioceses amid claims 'No' campaigners were being branded homophobic.

Belfast Telegraph - The leader of Ireland's four million Catholics, Archbishop Eamon Martin, kicked off a series of statements opposing a 'Yes' vote and was followed on Sunday by senior bishops around the country.



“We have got ourselves into the situation that many people won’t even raise these issues in their families and workplaces for fear of being ridiculed or condemned as homophobic,” said Archbishop Martin.

He said it is a “fact of nature” that same-sex unions are “fundamentally and objectively different” from the sexual union of a woman and a man, which is “naturally open to life”.

He said the Church “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”.

Pastoral letters from eight senior bishops were also read out by priests at parish Masses around the Republic on Sunday.

Bishop of Raphoe Philip Boyce insisted: “Equality and human rights should be afforded to everyone, but it should be done without sacrificing the institution of marriage and the family.”

Reflecting the view of his fellow bishops, Dr Boyce said the Church accepts people “with homosexual tendencies” with respect and

compassion but their legal rights were already protected in civil partnerships.

He said a 'Yes' vote on May 22 would have "serious implications" for children.

"Every child, no matter what sexual orientation he or she may have, has the human right to a father and a mother," said Dr Boyce.

The Faith in Marriage Equality group urged the church to "respect the freedom of conscience" of those Catholics voting 'Yes'.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/catholic-bishops-urge-no-vote-in-republic-of-irelands-marriage-equality-referendum-31192705.html>

See also Media digest below

## **Cardinal congratulates royal family on birth of baby girl**

Cardinal Vincent Nichols has sent a letter of congratulations to the royal family after the Duchess of Cambridge gave birth to a girl on Saturday morning.

Archbishop Nichols sent a letter to Kensington Palace over the weekend, congratulating the

royal family. He wrote: “Your Royal Highnesses, On behalf of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, I would like to congratulate Your Royal Highnesses on the birth of your daughter, Her Royal Highness, the Princess of Cambridge.

“The birth of the new princess will be a source of joy not only for the royal family but for the peoples of the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and beyond.

“I assure Your Royal Highnesses of the prayers and best wishes of the Catholic Church in England and Wales for your new family member.

“May Our Lord Jesus Christ bless and protect you all, and may the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Joseph intercede for your family.”

## **Media Digest**

### **GENERAL ELECTION**

**Election Diary: Crudely sectarian SF leaflet shameful, say SDLP**

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/election-diary-crudely-sectarian-sf-leaflet-shameful-say-sdip-1-6723643>

## **McKinney silent on Catholic 'faith' decisions**

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/mckinney-silent-on-catholic-faith-decisions-1-6723661>

## **REFERENDUM**

### **Voting No to same-sex marriage is not homophobic, say bishops**

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/politics/voting-no-to-samesex-marriage-is-not-homophobic-say-bishops-31192852.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-32565546>

<http://www.catholicbishops.ie/2015/05/02/message-marriage-referendum-archbishop-eamon-martin-2/>

### **Joan Burton says referendum 'is not about religious marriage'**

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/politics/marriage-referendum-joan-burton-says-referendum-is-not-about-religious-marriage-31193964.html>

## **HERITAGE**

### **Stained glass window depicts the saint who granted safety from lightning**

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/stained-glass-window-depicts-the-saint-who-granted-safety-from-lightening-1-6719207>

Read the diary of an Irish priest in the World War I trenches

[http://www.thejournal.ie/diary-priest-world-war-one-2073121-May2015/?utm\\_source=twitter\\_self](http://www.thejournal.ie/diary-priest-world-war-one-2073121-May2015/?utm_source=twitter_self)

## **Reported in the News Letter on May 2, 1957: Church halls 'are the living room of the family of God'**

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/reported-in-the-news-letter-on-may-2-1957-church-halls-are-the-living-room-of-the-family-of-god-1-6723531>

## **Lusitania remembered in Courtmacsherry, Co Cork**

<http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/lusitania-remembered-in-courtmacsherry-co-cork-1.2198740>

## **NUIG students discover church linked to St Columbanus in Italy**

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/nuig-students-discover-church-linked-to-st-columbanus-in-italy-1.2198790>

## **GREAT BRITAIN**

## **London Catholics celebrate diversity and call for fair treatment of migrants**

May 5

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/04/london-catholics-celebrate-diversity-and-call-for-fair-treatment-of-migrants>

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