



## Belfast Cathedral's Indoor Easter Egg Hunt is major success

Dozens of children visited St Anne's Cathedral on Easter Tuesday to take part in the Biggest Indoor Easter Egg Hunt in Belfast!

They searched all the Cathedral's nooks and crannies to find colourful plastic eggs. The children had to fill their egg-boxes with six eggs of the same colour, and many took the



***Easter smiles from Adam and Lucca.***

opportunity to do the hunt several times before claiming their prize – chocolate Easter eggs or bunnies.

Parents, aunties, uncles and grandparents who accompanied the children took the opportunity to look around the Cathedral interior. Several made a point of saying how much they and their children had enjoyed their Easter Tuesday visit.

The Easter Egg Hunt ran from 12 noon until 4pm and the Cathedral thanked all those children who brought their adults along on the day!

## **Derry group prepares for World Meeting of Families**

In preparation for the forthcoming World Meeting of Families 2018 in Dublin, our diocese was asked to form a group of parishioners to help identify the reality that families face in today's world.

The group is formed of people from all age groups and come from all over the Derry Diocese. The members of the group range from single, engaged, newly married and married as well as members of the religious community.

Bishop Donal oversees all group activity and the group is chaired by Fr. Pat O'Hagan from the Moville Parish.

The aim of the group is to come together and identify what families face today as well as plan events and activities leading up to the World Meeting of Families 2018. The group also aims to establish a legacy of prayer and faith based around the



family that will live on after the meeting passes in 2018. They are looking at establishing prayer within young people throughout the schools, promoting the domestic church within the home and also helping young couples transition into the sacrament of marriage.

The diocesan group started meeting late in 2016. Since its inception the group has been meeting monthly to discuss a plan of action to help inform the community about the up coming meeting in 2018.

Information will be posted on the Diocesan Website and there will be a Facebook and Twitter page dedicated to news and events

leading up to the World Meeting of Families 2018.

So search Facebook and Twitter for [@WMOF2018DERRY](#) for the latest news within Derry Diocese. Visit the WMOF Website by clicking [here](#)

## **Cork C of I honours Olympic hockey player**

John Jermyn, Jnr, a member of the Irish Olympic team has been honoured by his home club. The Incorporated Church of Ireland Cork Young Men's Association ([ICICYMA](#)) at Garryduff Sports Centre, Cork has honoured , one of the most distinguished of their hockey players, with honorary life membership.

The award was made recently as a mark of [Church of Ireland Hockey Club's](#) esteem for John, for his contribution to the Club, all that he has achieved as a hockey player and as an Irish international, including participation in the 2016 Rio Olympics.



Leaving aside all that he has achieved with his club and province, John has 178 caps playing for Ireland, in which context alone he has scored 92 goals.

The President of the Club, Mervyn Kerr, made the presentation in the Club House at Garryduff, Rochestown, Cork in the presence of John's family and a large gathering of members and friends.

## **CMS Missionaries complete 28 year Sorani language Bible translation project**

A 28 year project to translate the Bible into the central Kurdish language of Sorani has been completed by CMS and its partners.

Now Sorani speakers in Kurdistan, which is in Northern Iraq, have access to the scriptures for the first time thanks to the Church Mission Society (CMS) and well as other partners.

The new translation is available in physical copies. People can also access it digitally through the YouVersion app and a newly designed Kurdish app called Pertukekem ('My Book').

Paul Thaxter from CMS said the translation was a great need.

He said: "Having the Bible anchors your faith and enables people to engage it in a way that you just can't simply do with not having the written word and not having the stories told to you orally".



Thaxter says the project took a massive amount of commitment which included working alongside indigenous Kurds and other foreign nationals drafting text, checking names, terminology and style, and finally checking both the Old and New Testaments so they could be published together for the first time as the complete Bible.

He said: "I think any translation of the Bible to do it well, requires a long term commitment to that.

"Our people there have been able to do that and through many different situations, whether there's been peace or not peace they've been able to be commitment to local people in the local language so it does take a long time actually to do that".

The organisation believes this will leave a legacy.



Thaxton said: "This is a gift not simply for this generation but it's an intergenerational gift.

"So I know it may have taken 28 years to bring this translation together in the Bible, but it's going to serve future generations."

CMS has already received positive feedback from Sorani speakers. A man told them he felt "empowered" by being able to use the new version on his mobile phone".

## **US Church welcomes thousands of new Catholics at Easter Vigil**

The US Catholic Church has welcomed thousands of new Catholics at the Easter Vigil in what the Roman Missal describes as "the mother of all vigils".

About 60 of the nearly 200 dioceses in the United States reported numbers of catechumens and candidates entering the Church in 2017 to the US Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington.

Catechumens receive the sacraments of initiation – baptism, confirmation and first Communion – during the Easter Vigil, having prepared for this moment through the Rite of



***The newly baptised receive their baptismal candles during the Easter Vigil***

Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). Candidates, who are already baptised, also go through the preparation program to receive confirmation and first Communion to enter full communion with the Church.

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles, the largest diocese in the United States, welcomed 1,756 catechumens and 938 candidates, while the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston reported 1,667 catechumens and 708 candidates. The Archdiocese of Seattle had 679 catechumens and 409 candidates, the Archdiocese of Miami had 524 catechumens and 214 candidates, and the Archdiocese of Washington reported 483

catechumens and 698 candidates. Not far behind was the Diocese of Brooklyn, New York, which reported 387 catechumens and 528 candidates.

The Tablet, Brooklyn's diocesan newspaper, said that the numbers of new Catholics entering the Church and those seeking full communion in the Church were so staggering that the diocese had to hold two different ceremonies for the Rite of Election in early March. On Holy Saturday, at the Basilica of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Brooklyn, the "greatest and most noble of all solemnities" took a little longer than usual this year. In addition to the dramatic symbols of light and the seven Old Testament readings, 52 catechumens and 25 candidates were welcomed into the Church.

"Now that I am an adult, I better understand my call to faith. I have a responsibility to cooperate with my faith in God," said Kari Morales, a native of Mexico, who was joining the church at Easter.

## **Churchgoing Scots plummeting**

New figures have revealed the number of churchgoers in Scotland has dropped by over half in the last 30 years.

The 2016 Scottish Church Census, performed by Brierley Consultancy, found 390,000 regularly attended church in 2016. This compares to 854,000 in 1984. This is mirrored by a decline in congregations, from 4,100 in 1984 to 3,700 in 2016.

Aberdeenshire was the only place in Scotland bucking the trend, with 350 more people attending church in 2016 compared with 2002.

If the current decline continues, less than 300,000 Scots will be regularly attending in 2025.

The age of regular Scottish churchgoers is also a concern. The census found 42 per cent of them are aged 65 or above - twice the proportion of the Scottish population as a whole. The census said this "has obvious implications for the future".

Immigration has been credited with propping up some churches in Scotland.

For example there are now 25 Polish churches in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, and attendees at Pentecostal churches have almost doubled since a previous census in 2002. The number now stands at 19,000 - 5 per cent of all churchgoers in Scotland.

Consultant researcher Dr Peter Brierley noted: "The result of the 2016 Scottish Church Census will be disappointing for most church leaders, but a forecast based on the results of the 2002 Census would give an estimate of 350,000 by 2016, so the actual result is better than expected, 11% higher, partly as a result of the numbers of immigrants coming into Scotland, and the growth of the Pentecostal churches."

## **Catholic school 'purged' records of 'blasphemous' Billy Connolly**

Billy Connolly was "purged" from the records from his former Catholic primary school, it was claimed during a special programme aired on Tuesday.

The 74 year old comedian, who has Parkinson's disease, said on ITV that he was treated as a "non-person" at St Peter's Boys School in the Patrick area of Glasgow.

In a one-hour programme, Dame Judi Dench, Sir Elton John and Peter Kay were among a host of stars celebrating the work of Connolly.

The writer Armando Iannucci, who attended St Peter's after Connolly, told the programme

Connolly's routines were considered blasphemous by teachers.

He said: "The head mistress sat us down and told us it was bordering on mortal sin to listen to Billy Connolly because at the time it was full of blasphemous filth.

"Then he became famous and was invited back to the school."

'Billy Connolly & Me: A Celebration' featured the comic sharing "his thoughts on such topics as turning swearing into an art form and the underestimated power of laughter."

St Peter's Boys School is no longer a school, having merged with another school.

## **Canadian church celebrates Easter by hiring helicopter to drop 45,000 chocolate eggs**

A Christian charity in Canada hired a helicopter this Easter which dropped 45,000 chocolate eggs to children waiting below.

#WeheartOttawa is the outreach arm of the Kingdom Culture church in Ottawa which puts on free events in the city.



Shawn Gabie and his wife Michelle, who are pastors at the church, booked the Canadian Aviation and Space Museum and rented a helicopter for a free family event on Saturday.

'In 10 days, just through social media, we had 5,500 people register online,' Shawn Gabie said.

'We had to shut down registration. We didn't expect that to happen. We thought we would have a couple thousand people show up, registering up until the last week. Everybody who comes will get an invite to our Easter service, which is the next day. Easter is a time where people who never come to church will come.'

More than 5,000 people attended the event.

Because “We Heart” Ottawa does not advertise that it is a church brand, they managed to recruit 15 different sponsors, according to the Christian website [Spur Ottawa](#).

'I feel like this will shift paradigms of what church looks like and what other churches feel like they are capable of,' said Matt Campbell, one of the organisers before the event. 'We will push the envelope of going big, going outside the idea of having a barbecue on the church grounds.'

The event did not have any overt 'gospel presentation', according to Spur Ottawa, and there was no mention of church on the event's website.

But Campbell said: 'Easter is a time where people who never come to church will come. If we can create life and expectation, it may inspire people to think about what they can do for their city. What can I do for the 2000 homeless people living in my city? What can I do to change the life of my boss?'

Every family attending received a welcome bag with coupons from the sponsors, the biggest of which was Kingdom Culture, and an invitation to go to church on Easter Day.



## Today in Church History - April 21

**April 21, 1109:** Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury and one of the most profound thinkers of the Middle Ages, dies around age 76. He attained fame for his argument that faith is the precondition of knowledge ("credo ut intelligam"), his "satisfaction theory" of the atonement ("No one but one who is God-man can make the satisfaction by which man is saved") and for his ontological argument for God's existence.

**April 21, 1142:** Medieval French philosopher, teacher, and theologian Pierre Abelard dies. Though well-known for his writings on revelation and the relationship between faith and knowledge, he is probably most remembered for his love letters to Heloise, a nun (see issue 30: Woman in the Medieval Church).

**April 21, 1855:** Edward Kimball, a Sunday school teacher in Boston, leads 18-year-old shoe salesman Dwight L. Moody to Christ at the Holton Shoe Store. Moody went on to become the most successful evangelist of his Day.

**April 21, 1897:** A.W. Tozer, devotional writer (The Pursuit of God and The Knowledge of the Holy)

and influential pastor in the Missionary Alliance Church, is born.

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