



€1.9 million European money for cross-border saints

A cross-border initiative has been announced to promote two medieval Celtic saints: the Welsh saint David and his pupil, the Irish Saint Aidan – or Máedóc of Ferns as he is

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sometimes known. The European Union are providing funding of €1.9 million Euro (approximately £1.6 million GBP) in the scheme, which is planned to “drive forward economic growth across the two regions through regeneration, cultural and educational projects and business to business mentoring.” The three-year project will “rediscover the fascinating heritage of the early medieval saints,” the Church in Wales’ Diocese of St Davids said.

The scheme is being led by Pembrokeshire County Council, in partnership with Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority in Wales, alongside Wexford County Council and Visit Wexford in Ireland.

The plans will see the restoration of St Non’s well at St Davids, the tiny city named after the Welsh saint, which is said to be his birthplace. Permanent artworks will be commissioned in both regions which will thematically correspond with each other. Schools will take part in a joint project to animate the story of the two saints, with pupils taking part in a visit to the partner country.

In addition to giving his name to the City and Diocese of St Davids, the patron saint of Wales is commemorated across the city, where he spent much of his life. Similarly, St Aidan is closely associated with Wexford, particularly in the town of Ferns. The Diocese of St Davids said: “As well as enabling both communities to rediscover their shared heritage, the project aims to use this shared history as a way of attracting new visitors to these coastal communities.”

St Aidan is said to have travelled from Wexford to Pembrokeshire to study under St David for several years

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before returning to Ireland to build his own monastery at Ferns. Both Ferns and St Davids have historically important cathedrals, the cathedral at Ferns, in the Diocese of Cashel and Ossory, is the smallest in Ireland and the cathedral at St Davids being a key tourist destination.

Councillor David Simpson, the Leader of the civic County Council in Pembrokeshire, said: “This has been a truly collaborative piece of work with a great many partners in the private, public and third sectors working with us throughout the application process”.

Mothers’ Union: One of Anglican Communion’s greatest gifts to worldwide Church – Abp Welby

The Archbishop of Canterbury, has praised the “unique and extraordinary” work of the Mothers’ Union, as he commissioned the international Anglican mission agency’s new Worldwide President, Sheran Harper, during a service in London’s Southwark Cathedral on Tuesday night. Sheran Harper from Guyana, the former Provincial President of the Mothers’ Union in the Province of the West Indies, is the first Worldwide President to be elected from outside the United Kingdom.

Archbishop Justin congratulated Sheran “for the trust the members have bestowed on you” and also expressed his thanks to outgoing Worldwide President Lynne Tembey for her service.



The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby with his wife Caroline; with the new Worldwide President of the Mothers' Union and the mission agency's new global Trustees Board at their commissioning service in Southwark Cathedral, London, on Tuesday. To the left, June Butler, All Ireland President of MU

“There is only one Mothers' Union”, he said. “It is unique. It is the world's oldest and largest women's movement. It is a gift of God to Anglicans and is one of the Anglican Communion's greatest gifts to the worldwide church.” He described its four million members as “a powerful force of hope in every aspect of the life of the worldwide Church and indeed of society” and praised its role in bringing hope and reconciliation.

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Centre - the new Worldwide President, Sheran Harper

“You are one of God’s great works throughout the Anglican Communion”, he said. “We delight and rejoice in what you do. You share love and hope; you give support and strength.” He urged the new Worldwide President to make the Mothers’ Union better known.

More than 600 people from around the world attended last night’s service in Southwark Cathedral. The congregation included the High Commissioner of Guyana to the UK, Fredrick Hamley Case, and a representative from the High Commission of Rwanda in London.

In addition to Archbishop Justin, the service was attended by at least four other Bishops, including the Bishop of

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Guyana, Charles Davidson, the Bishop at Lambeth, Tim Thornton, the Bishop of Southwark, Christopher Chessun, and the Archbishop of Canterbury's Advisor for Anglican Communion Affairs, Bishop Anthony Poggio.

"I feel overjoyed and humbled by the outpouring of love and support I have received", Sheran Harper said. "I am so very grateful to everyone who travelled from far and wide for this special day in the history of Mothers' Union. Thank you everyone who came and those who were unable to but were lifting me up in their prayers.

"Our Trustee Board now reflects the truly global nature of the movement."

"I especially thank Archbishop Justin for his encouraging words. We are indeed a unique and extraordinary gift from God. Mothers' Union is at a very important point in history when our Trustee Board now reflects the truly global nature of the movement. Our recent global conversations, with emerging themes are setting the tone for the future of our work which will be even stronger in meeting the needs of the communities we serve in a life-changing way."

Referring to the readings from Romans, Archbishop Justin spoke about the simplicity of the New Testament and how, once called by God, He "takes us by the hand and takes us on the greatest adventure that there is, the adventure of Christian discipleship", he said. "That adventure has taken Mothers' Union from Mary Sumner in the countryside of England to a worldwide organisation on which people can depend."

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He spoke of the challenges that many Mothers' Union members face in their work of supporting the communities in which they live and serve, "in many places you will have to bear the cross of other people's suffering. Whether it's in Burundi, the DRC, Guyana, South Sudan, Nigeria or in towns and cities and slums, whether it is domestic violence, whether it is loneliness, whether it is spiritual emptiness, the Mothers' Union is there bringing hope and a future", he said. "So, make yourselves known."

During the service, Archbishop Justin also commissioned the Mothers' Union's new global Trustee Board, whose members are elected to represent Mothers' Union regions.

The new Trustee Board comprises: Nikki Sweatman (Church of England's Canterbury Province); Libbie Crossman (Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, Australia, Melanesia, and Papua New Guinea); Canon Catherine Hilton (Church of England's York Province); Jennifer Barton (Church in Wales); June Buter (Church of Ireland); Thembsie Mchunu (Central Africa, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, and Southern Africa); Kathleen Snow (Canada, South America, the US, and the West Indies); Roshini Mendis (Korea, Myanmar, North India, South India, Sri Lanka); Paul Hindle (Scottish Episcopal Church); Deaconess Mary Kamwati (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Jerusalem and the Middle East); and Marie-Pierrette Bezara (Burundi, Congo, Indian Ocean, Rwanda, and West Africa).

Sheran Harper was born in the UK and grew up in Guyana where she studied at the University of the West Indies School of Physical Therapy. She undertook her Clinical

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Practice at Guy's Hospital in London and then worked with the Ministry of Health in Guyana where she opened and managed new physiotherapy departments in hospitals throughout the country and lectured on the Rehabilitation Therapists Programme.

She stopped working in this area 17 years ago to focus on her calling of serving Mothers' Union. She has served as a volunteer at all levels from parish, diocese and province. Until recently, she was the Worldwide Parenting Trainer where she rolled out Mothers' Union Parenting programmes in 23 countries across the globe. Her expertise is often called upon and she has been a spokesperson in her region for Mothers' Union on various inter-faith, and international panels and forums.

Archbishop Eamon Martin speaker at major young peoples England and Wales event

Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh will address young people from across England and Wales on Saturday 2 March at the 2019 Flame Congress in the SSE Arena in Wembley, London.

Flame is the largest Catholic youth event in England and Wales with up to 10,000 young people expected to fill the arena for a day of prayer, adoration, catechesis, reflection, celebration and praise.

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The theme for /Flame 2019/ is ‘#Significance’. Today, young people often feel constrained to measure self-esteem and self-worth simply by Twitter and Instagram “likes”, responses to Facebook status updates and Snapchat conversations. /Flame/ will explore the deep Catholic Truth of our being; that we are ‘God’s work of art’ (Eph 2:10) and we can only ever really understand ourselves in relationship with Him. /Flame 2019/ will offer our young people a fresh perspective that they are loved and they are significant, based on a personal relationship with God the Father.

Throughout the day speakers will give bursts of input, interspersed with world class music and Archbishop Eamon Martin will address the gathering on Saturday afternoon.

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The archbishop was as a Synod Father during the Synod on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment in October 2018 and acted as a 'relator' which is a reporter or secretary to one of the English language groups.

Encouraged by the Synod, in addressing the Holy Father and the Synod Hall, Archbishop Eamon said, "Young people are the agents of evangelisation to each other and, indeed, to the whole Church. During the synodal process, inspired by the Holy Spirit, we have identified the need for 'a preferential option' for our young people."

He went on to say, "The Catholic Church is facing a "re-imagination of parishes and structures so that young people are heard, listened to, appreciated and encouraged."

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster and President of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales will address the gathering. Other speakers include Robert Madu, a Gospel preacher from the USA, rapper Guvna B and his wife, Emma, will give joint testimony. Music and worship will be led by award-winning worship leader, Tim Hughes, who has written worship songs including "Here I Am to Worship", "Happy Day", "The Way" and "Hope & Glory".

The Flame Congress gets bigger each year and this year they hope to attract up to 10,000 young people from across the country. The event is aimed primarily at young people aged 10-13.

/Flame/ is an initiative of the Catholic Youth Ministry Federation (CYMFed) which is separate to, but recognised

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and supported, by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales. The CYMFed Chair represents the CYMFed membership to the Bishops' Conference through the Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis. In addition, the Bishop responsible for Youth is a member of the CYMFed Board.

For more on Flame 2019 see <https://cymfed.org.uk/flame2019/>

C of I students 'Fit for the Purpose' weekend

Twenty-five students attended the Church of Ireland Theological Institute's 'Fit for the Purpose' weekend between Friday and Sunday last.

The weekend marks the start of two courses at CITI and focuses on biblical and personal exploration of matters related to vocation.

Seventeen people from five dioceses commenced the one year Foundation Course programme while eight people started the fifth cycle of reader training which lasts two years.

The main facilitators were Dr Christina Baxter, former Principal of St John's College, Nottingham and Canon Dr Maurice Elliott, Director of CITI. Also in attendance were the Revd Dr John Tomlinson, Course Director, Jacqui Brown,

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Course Administrator, Canon Dr Will Murphy and the Revd Ruth Noble.



US United Methodist Church affirms gay marriage ban

The United Methodist Church (UMC) has voted to uphold bans on same-sex marriage and the ordination of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender clergy.

A new policy affirming its traditional stance was backed by members of its governing body meeting in St Louis, Missouri. It passed by 438 votes to 384.

One leader said the result resolves long-running debate over how the Church "can best accomplish our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world".



UMC President Bishop Kenneth H. Carter

Bishop Scott Jones from the Texas Conference added: "This decision is consistent with our denomination's historic stance on human sexuality, outlined in the Book of Discipline since 1972.

"We will continue to welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer persons to our churches and affirm their sacred worth.

"I pray we, as a denomination, can now move forward, working with each other in the spirit of Christian love and joining together as one.

"We are stronger together in serving God's mission as a diverse body of Christ.

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The result received cheers and singing by some members, while others responded with dismay.

Rev Tom Berlin from Virginia warned the policy, known as The Traditional Plan, was a "virus" as he called for the Church to pass an alternative motion which would support greater LGBT inclusion.

He said: "If the Traditional Plan is voted in, it will be a virus that will make the American church very sick.

"Many pastors are going to leave... There will be trials, and they will be on the news. The only news about the church will be about people we don't serve."

Formed by the merging of two American protestant denominations in 1968, the UMC boasts twelve million members worldwide (predominantly in the US)."

Possibility official Anglican presence could open in Bethlehem

An official Anglican presence could open in Bethlehem – the first in the Palestinian town which is the birthplace of Jesus. The Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem, Suheil Dawani, met the Mayor of Bethlehem, Anton Salman, last Friday (22 February), to discuss plans for a World Anglican Centre. "Please keep its eventual construction in your prayers", the

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Diocese of Jerusalem said on its website, adding: “there are still many obstacles to overcome.”

The Diocese in Jerusalem owns a property near Bethlehem’s Manger Square, off Milk Grotto Way; but has no churches in Bethlehem. “In the early years of our missionary partnership with the Lutheran Church, it was agreed that the Lutherans would minister in the areas south of Jerusalem, and the Anglicans in the north,” the Diocese said. “For this reason, the Diocese of Jerusalem currently does not have any ministries in Bethlehem. This planned Anglican Centre would be first.”

The Diocese of Jerusalem maintains close links with Churches in Bethlehem. On 24 December each year, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, Theophilos III, offers the use of his private chapel in the Church of the Nativity to Bishop Suheil for an Anglican Christmas Eve service. Coach loads of worshippers leave St George’s Cathedral in Jerusalem on Christmas Eve and travel in convoy with a number of western diplomats to the Church of the Nativity for the service; before heading back to St George’s for Midnight Mass.

###Food for Thought - “Every celebration of the Eucharist is a ray of light of the unsetting sun that is the Risen Jesus Christ. To participate in Mass, especially on Sunday, means entering in the victory of the Risen, being illuminated by his light, warmed by his warmth.” - **Pope Francis**

February 28 in Christian history

February 28, 1551: German Reformer Martin Bucer dies in England at age 60. One of the first Protestant ministers to take the radical step of marrying, he attempted to mediate between Martin Luther and Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli, but Luther would have none of it. "It is better for you to have your enemies than to set up a fictitious fellowship," Luther said .

February 28, 1807: Robert Morrison sails from Britain to become the first Protestant missionary to China. By the time he died 27 years later, he had baptized only 10 Chinese, but his pioneering work (including a six-volume dictionary and a translation of the Bible) helped missionaries who came after him.

February 28, 1944: Nazi soldiers arrest Dutch Christian Corrie ten Boom and her family for harboring Jews. The Jews hiding in her house escaped. Corrie was the only member of her family who survived internment in concentration camps.

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