



St Columb's Cathedral, Derry

Mothers' Union 'Tour of the North' celebrates 130 years of service

Phyllis Grothier, All Ireland President, and Lynn Tembey, Worldwide President, spent last week end with members in Derry & Raphoe, Connor, Down and Armagh dioceses, marking 130 years of Mothers Union service in Ireland.

On Saturday morning in Londonderry members gathered at St Columb's Cathedral. The Service at St Columb's was led by the new Dean of Derry, Very Rev Raymond Stewart, and the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Ken Good. In attendance were the Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Alderman Hilary McClintock, Mrs Jean Davidson (representing the Lord Lieutenant for the County Borough of Londonderry, Dr Angela Garvey) past Diocesan Presidents of the MU and members of more than 40 MU branches from across the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe.

During the Service, 13 toys – one for each decade of MU in Ireland – were blessed and dedicated by Dean Stewart, and presented by Mrs Good to Foyle Contact Centre.

For the first day in almost a fortnight there was persistent rainfall but, after the service, members of the congregation defied the elements and walked to the city's Guildhall – via the historic city walls – for a Mayoral reception. Afterwards they crossed the iconic Peace Bridge to visit Ebrington.

Connor members met the Presidential duo in Coleraine and despite the major diversions caused by the North West 200 motorcycle races,



HML for County Antrim, Mrs Joan Christie (4th from left) with Archdeacon Stephen McBride, Valerie Ashe, Connor Diocesan President, Phyllis Grothier, All Ireland President, Lynn Tembey World President, Rae Scott, Margaret Ferguson and Rev David Ferguson, Rector of Ballycastle

they progressed to Ballintoy Parish Church and then to Ballycastle.

A prayer walk and service were held in Ballycastle Parish where the first branch in Northern Ireland was established, the second in Ireland, Raheny Parish branch being the first in All Ireland.



Past presidents of Connor MU: Moira Thom, Pam Trail, Sheila Hughes, Paddy Wallace, Roberta McKelvey and Norma Bell

On Sunday Members from the Diocese of Down and Dromore met on Sunday afternoon in Holy Trinity Parish Seapatrick, Banbridge.

D&D Diocesan President, June Butler, members of the D&D Diocesan Council and representatives from several other dioceses were present at a reception hosted by Seapatrick Branch.

The World President was guest speaker at a service and that was greatly appreciated by the organisers.

In keeping with the celebratory tone of the occasion, the Seapatricks branch presented members who have over 30 years of MU service with certificates marking that milestone, after which they concluded their special afternoon with a very special tea party.

Following a service in Armagh Cathedral, the World President planted a tree in the cathedral grounds to mark the occasion.

.May 7 to May 21 was set aside to celebrate 13 decades of the Mothers' Union's on-going work and influence for good in Ireland, and to mark that the organisation's All-Ireland President undertook to visit each of the 12 Dioceses – in other words, to complete the 'MU Pilgrims Way'.

Photographs of the service in Derry at-

<http://derryandraphoe.org/news/item/1172-national-and-international-guests-celebrate-130-years-of-vmu-in-ireland>

Photographs of the service in Armagh at-

<http://armagh.anglican.org/Gallerys/Mothers%20Union%20130th%20Anniversary%20-%20May%2017/index.html>

Time to ask the really big questions, Moderator at Dublin City University Exam service

Preaching at Dublin City University's Service for Exams in All Hallows Chapel, Drumcondra, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Rt Rev Dr Frank Sellar encouraged students to use their University experience as an opportunity to ask the 'vital questions of life'.

Dr Sellar said, 'University is great. Enjoy it. It's a privilege to be part of DCU but know this – Important though they may be, College is for far more than passing exams. It is for more than getting an education or even for preparing for life. Now is the time to be asking really big questions; Who am I? Why am I here? and Where am I going?'

Drawing upon the Gospel Reading from Mark 1, Dr Sellar added, 'You are an infinitely valuable, unique individual made in the image of a loving, creator and creative God. As God said to the Lord Jesus at the start of his early ministry: 'You are my Son, whom I love. With you I am well pleased''.

The ecumenical Service for Exams was held in the All Hallows Chapel, which is part of a newly acquired Campus within the fast-growing Dublin City University. The All Hallows Campus on Grace Park Road in Drumcondra, which was previously All Hallows College, now forms part of DCU's Institute of Education which houses the Church of Ireland Centre (CIC).

The CIC, which was formerly the Church of Ireland College of Education (CICE), prepares teachers to work in Primary Schools under Protestant patronage in the Republic of Ireland. Referring to his own personal connection to the Centre, Dr Sellar said, 'During the 20 years I lived and ministered in Dublin I was Chaplain to the Presbyterian students training to be teachers in CICE when it was located in Rathmines. I still use with delight the inscribed fountain pen kindly given to me by some of the students'. Following the Service there was a BBQ Reception in the garden of All Hallows for DCU staff and students, which was sponsored by Ecclesiastical Insurance Ireland.

Kilmore youth pilgrimage to Knock

The Kilmore Diocesan Youth Ministry team have organised a special pilgrimage to Knock Shrine



for junior cycle students of the Diocese to take place on June 16th.

The Youth Ministry team, led by Ms Carina McGinnell, have invited all 1st, 2nd and 3rd year students of the diocese to join with them in a pilgrimage to Knock Shrine, for a day of workshops, quiet time and prayer. The pilgrimage offers a quiet space for young people in need of a break from the busy, noisy lives that they lead.

This special youth pilgrimage will form part of the ongoing Knock pilgrimage season, which takes place from April to October of this year. Organised pilgrimages from dioceses and

communities will take place every weekend during the season.

The story of Knock began on the 21 August 1879 when Our Lady, Saint Joseph and Saint John the Evangelist appeared at the south gable of Knock Parish Church. This miraculous apparition was witnessed by fifteen people, young and old. Knock is an internationally recognised Marian Shrine and was visited by Saint Pope John Paul II as part of his 1979 papal pilgrimage to Ireland. For more information on pilgrimages to Knock and other events at Knock Shrine please visit www.knockshrine.ie.

Dublin city wide chaplaincy team commissioned

A city wide chaplaincy team for Dublin was commissioned on Wednesday May 17 by the Archbishop of Dublin. The team covers both universities and hospitals and the chaplains have undertaken training in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute as part of a new initiative.

Archbishop Michael Jackson commissioned Susie Keegan (Dublin Institute of Technology), the Revd Rob Jones (Third Level Chaplaincy Team Leader), Sarah Marshall (DIT), the Revd

Steve Brunn (Trinity College Dublin), Scott Evans (University College Dublin) and Philip McKinley (Dublin City University) in the area of Third Level Chaplaincy. He commissioned Hilda Plant and Olwyn Lynch to work in the area of Hospital Chaplaincy.

The Archbishop thanked all who had worked tirelessly to bring the new chaplaincy team together paying particular tribute to those in the Dublin & Glendalough Diocesan Office, the Priorities Fund and the Allchurches Trust. He also thanked the Revd Rob Jones for the tremendous work he had done in developing the team.

Addressing the chaplains, Garda Darren Coventry–Howlett of the Garda Bureau of Community Diversity and Integration compared the roles of community policing and chaplaincy and said they were defined by their service to others. Often those involved in policing see people at their worst but their humanity is also there, he said. Those in chaplaincy meet people at their most vulnerable and how the chaplain responds shapes them, he explained adding that it is a matter of faith.

“The opportunities are amazing, in building bridges, in stepping outside our own personal



Archbishop Michael Jackson and Garda Darren Coventry-Howlett

bubble – it’s very easy to surround ourselves with people who believe the same as us – and in interfaith and intercultural engagement,” Garda Coventry–Howlett commented. “Interfaith and intercultural work is hard... but when you see it working it opens up your eyes to the potential and there is a great sense of joy when you see people coming together in shared purpose.”

Among the pitfalls of chaplaincy, the Garda suggested, was the feeling that it is something that has to be done alone and said the chaplains should never be afraid to reach out to others. He

said expectations also had to be managed and being open to sharing the views of others was a challenge as was building trust.

He concluded with words of encouragement:

“Embrace your vocation in a world that doesn’t acknowledge the idea that you do this for others. You have an opportunity to embrace the idea that you want to be in the service of others. It’s a hard road but it’s worth walking because it does sustain your faith”.

Archbishop Jackson thanked Garda Coventry–Howlett for actively seeking to help those being commissioned to find their place, engage in society and know they have support. “You have helped us to see vital connections: the relationship between God and Creation and the Holy and domestic is something we should cherish and develop within the context of and Ireland that is self–secularising. We should not be silenced to a faith that is the heartbeat of who they are or who we are,” he said.

The Archbishop added that interfaith engagement meant engaging with people of difference on a level playing field and building community. As with much of ministry, he said, it is about empowering, enriching and equipping others.

Following the commissioning Sarah Marshall and Hilda Plant spoke about their hopes and aspirations for their respective roles.

Sarah said that chaplaincy was the ministry of presence and that was her hope for her role in DIT. She said that she hoped to bring a presence of space and a flavour of God and for people to feel connected. She said she wanted to engage with the real issues on campus and create a space where people can have conversations about these issues.

In the hospital setting, Hilda said she had had the privilege to journey with people at the end of their lives. People believe that everyone has family with them at the end of life but some people don't. "They have come to a place where in their dying moments want prayer and it is a privilege to be there with them at the end of their journey," she said.

Pope Francis's words of compassion for Huntington's sufferers have been a long time coming

Franklin Soto will develop Huntington's disease (HD), a lethal genetic disorder that causes progressive mental and physical deterioration and for which there is no cure. His two sisters already have it. His wife died of the disease last year, and his three-year-old daughter has a 75 per cent chance of developing it.

Franklin comes from Lake Maracaibo in Venezuela, where he scrapes a living carrying boxes of crabs. Every day is a struggle and the deteriorating political situation in his country makes things worse. But for a few minutes yesterday, Franklin forgot all his troubles as Pope Francis took him in his arms and told him not to be afraid.

Franklin's was among a number of South American families who travelled to Rome this week for an audience with the Pope. The Pontiff thus became the first head of state and major religious leader to mention HD, which is thought to affect nearly one million people worldwide. The actual prevalence of the disease is unknown, because families often hide it, and are forced to live in fear and isolation far from the treatment and support they need.



Pope Francis embraces a member of the congregation after an audience for Huntingtonís disease sufferers and their families

The irony is that it was families from Lake Maracaibo who contributed to the research that led to the identification of the gene responsible for HD in 1993. As a result of that breakthrough, a diagnostic test now exists that means that those at risk can determine whether or not they will develop HD. If they carry a mutation in the gene in question, they will certainly do so, but usually not until middle age. This allows them to gain access to specialist treatment, and to plan for the future – all options that were unavailable to Franklin.

Hence HDdenomore, as the initiative to bring the South American families to Rome was called. The brainchild of former war reporter and HD advocate Charles Sabine, organised by an international team of HD clinicians and scientists, and funded in part by drug company Teva – which is conducting research aimed at developing new HD therapies – its goal was to lift some of the stigma attached to the disease.

“We all very acutely feel the debt that is owed to those families in Maracaibo,” said Ed Wild, a neurologist and HD researcher at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery in London.

“You are precious in God’s eyes, and you are precious to the Church,” Pope Francis told the families. The organisers hope that this message, uttered by the head of the world’s largest non-governmental healthcare provider, will mobilise efforts both within and beyond the Catholic community to provide better care for those affected, while giving patients and their relatives the courage to come forward and be counted – and to continue to take part in clinical research.

We all stand to benefit from their participation, since HD shares disease mechanisms with other, more common neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. That research could therefore lead to drugs that will help the one in three of us who will likely develop dementia in our lifetimes.

This was not in the Pope's speech, however. He merely called for more compassion towards those suffering from HD and from all rare, genetic diseases – words that have been a long time coming, but that needed to be said.

Today in Christian History, May 20

May 20, 325: Emperor Constantine convenes the first Ecumenical Council in Nicea (now Iznik), Bithynia, to discuss Arianism, a heresy arguing that Christ was subordinate to God the Father. "I entreat you," Constantine said at the opening of the Council of Nicea, "to remove the causes of dissension among you and to establish peace." The council attempted to resolve the bitter conflict by anathematizing Arius (Arianism's founder) and ordering the burning of all his

books, but the conflict continued to rage for decades.

May 20, 1277: Pope John XXI dies when his castle ceiling collapses on him. The name was a mistake—there was never a John XX.

May 20, 1506: Christopher Columbus, who saw himself as a missionary, not just an explorer, dies impoverished in Spain at age 55. "I hope in our Lord that it will be the greatest honor to Christianity that, unexpectedly, has ever come about," he concluded in the log of his first voyage to the Americas (see issue 35: Christopher Columbus).

May 20, 1690: John Eliot, English missionary to the Native Americans of New England and publisher of the first Bible printed in America, dies.

May 20, 1960: Six months before John F. Kennedy, a Roman Catholic, is elected president of the United States, the Southern Baptist Convention condemns the election of Catholics to public office. "When a public official is inescapably bound by the dogma and demands of the church," it declared, "he cannot consistently separate himself from these.

GET CNI HEADLINES EACH DAY

Facebook and Twitter

Click on logo at CNI Home page

www.churchnewsireland.org

+ Please share CNI with your friends

www.churchnewsireland.org

