



**The essential daily
brief on the Irish
churches**

Archbishop Richard Clarke Contributes To New Book On Pope Francis



L–R: Kevin Cross, Fr Michael Collins, Dr Louise Fuller, Dr Eamon Maher, Patsy McGarry (The Irish Times), Archbishop Richard Clarke, Fr John Littleton, Fr Patrick Claffey

The Archbishop of Armagh, The Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke, has contributed a chapter to a new book on Pope Francis, published by Columba Press and launched this week.

The new book is entitled *The Francis Factor – A New Departure*, edited by John Littleton and Eamon Maher, and it was launched by Patsy McGarry of

the Irish Times, with Kevin Cross as Master of Ceremonies, at the Parish Centre of St Mary's, Haddington Road, Dublin.

This volume of essays assesses the first year of the new papacy and seeks to elucidate what constitutes the 'Francis Factor'. Among the contributors to the book including Archbishop Clarke are theologians, historians, journalists, clergy, sociologists and commentators. Their assessments of Francis are based on his Jesuit formation, life experience, writings, interviews, spiritual witness and human interactions. Columba Press states that 'The result is a highly thought-provoking and readable account of Francis the public and private man'.

More at: <http://www.columba.ie/index.php/the-francis-factor.html>

Methodist local preacher and church planter appointed Executive Director of EAI

Tony O'Connor, from Dublin Central Mission, has been appointed to the position of Executive Director with the Evangelical Alliance of Ireland (EAI).



Tony's remit will be to oversee the organisational and fundraising aspects of EAI and to develop its membership services. The EAI is dedicated to promoting closer cooperation between all Evangelical and Pentecostal churches in Ireland and to giving a voice to the Christian point of view in local and national debate.

Tony is an active local preacher in the Dublin District. In recent years he was a member of the team that successfully planted a new Methodist church in Blanchardstown, West Dublin. More recently he has been working on the planting of another church in Ashtown, Dublin 15. Tony is married to Anne and has three adult sons. When he is not engaged in church-related work, Tony divides his time between business consultancy and university lecturing.

C of I archbishop to chair annual Le Cheile - Together lecture

The new Vice Chancellor of St Mary's University, Twickenham, London, Dr Francis Campbell, will deliver a public lecture entitled: 'Faith and

education in a pluralist world' in St Mary's University College, Belfast, Tuesday 6 May at 7 pm.

The Chair will be The Most Rev. Richard Clarke, Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland.

Commemorating a centenary - 100 years of Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise

On 29 April 2014, 100 years to the day when Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise held its inaugural meeting in St. Ann's Parish Hall, Dawson Street, Dublin, there will be a celebration of the Eucharist in St. Ann's Church at 6.00pm.

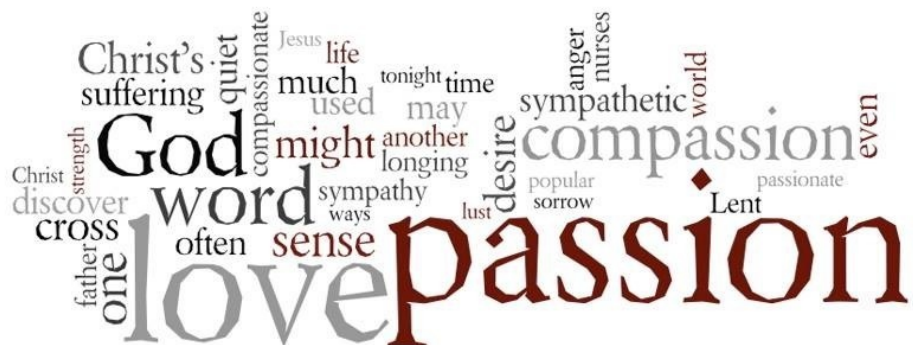
The service will be followed by refreshments and a talk on the Irish Guild of the Church of Ireland in the Parish Hall.

Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise will also be launching its commemorative programme of events to mark this significant milestone in the history of the Church of Ireland.

The Right Reverend Michael Burrows, Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory and Patron of Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise will celebrate Holy Communion, using the parallel text service book, *An Chomaoineach Naofa agus Seirbhísí de chuid Eaglais na hÉireann*, in St. Ann's at 6.00pm. He will be assisted by Canon David Gillespie of St. Ann's Church.

Bishop Michael Burrows, commenting on the centenary said;

“amid all the many centenaries being commemorated in the Church of Ireland in this and coming years the 100th anniversary of the foundation of c g na he must not be overlooked. Its ideals remain as important as ever they were and in today's Ireland where there is so much stress on inclusivity and



cultural richness they offer fresh opportunities to enrich our shared spiritual journey”.

The minutes of the inaugural meeting record - *Sir Roger Casement and the Lord Chief Justice sent their apologies and the Bishop of Tuam became President.*

More at - <http://ireland.anglican.org/news/5073>

Belfast Community Gospel Choir in Kilkeel churches concert

Christ Church Kilkeel and Kilkeel Presbyterian Church present Belfast Community Gospel Choir on Saturday 12 April at 7.30 pm.

Tickets are available from the parish office at a cost of £7.50 and £5 for concessions and from the Faith Mission Bookshop in Kilkeel.

Email: kilkeelparishoffice@tiscali.co.uk

Dublin and Glendalough Theology Circle Annual Lecture

The theme of this year's Dublin & Glendalough Theology Circle annual lecture will be *The Everlasting Covenant between God and Every Living Creature, Genesis 9:16: The Biblical Vision for Creation.*

All are welcome to this event which will take place at 8pm on Tuesday May 6 in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin.

The lecture will be delivered by Margaret Barker who was awarded a D.D. by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 2008 “in recognition of her work on the Jerusalem Temple and the origins of Christian Liturgy, which has made a significantly new contribution to our understanding of the New Testament and

THE PARISH SECRETARY HELPS OUT THE RECTOR



opened up important fields for research.”

Dr Barker’s lecture will be based on her 2012 book, *Creation: A Biblical Vision for the Environment*. She writes not only as a biblical scholar and Methodist preacher, but as a participant for many years in the ongoing symposium, *Religion, Science and the Environment*, convened by ‘The Green Patriarch’, HAH Bartholomew I.

To find out more re Dr Barker, see www.margaretbarker.com.

The lecture will be preceded by Choral Evensong at 6pm sung by the Cathedral Choir and a reception at 6.45pm to launch the exhibition *Linen in the Bible*, curated by Margaret Barker and Bruce Clark.

Northern Ireland shared education campuses - 15 applications

**Education Minister
John O'Dowd says
15 applications have
been lodged for
shared education
campuses in NI.**



The education minister has said 15 applications have been lodged for shared education campuses in NI.

There are plans to establish 10 campuses across Northern Ireland.

John O'Dowd also told the education committee negotiations were being finalised with the charity Atlantic Philanthropies about a "significant investment" in shared education.

He said the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister was taking the lead in the discussions.

Atlantic Philanthropies had previously part-funded a scheme that employed teachers to be shared by Catholic and controlled primary schools.

However, despite being seen as a success, the project came to an end because funding ran out.

Last month, the BBC revealed that a plan for a shared education campus in Armagh had hit a major obstacle - as one Catholic grammar school decided to opt out of a joint site and stay in its current grounds.

Read more:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-26954150>

Wedding video featuring a Cookstown man and his Co. Kildare bride has gone viral

Chris and Leah O’Kane got the biggest surprise of all when the priest celebrating their wedding ceremony, Father Ray Kelly, burst into his own rendition of the Jeff Buckley classic Hallelujah.

News Letter - The video, uploaded on Monday April 7 has already had over 165,000 hits on YouTube and continues to rise.

Father Kelly, had told no-one what he was about to do while celebrating the Wedding ceremony in the Old Castle Church, Co Meath.

Patrick Rush, who uploaded the video to YouTube, and works with the groom at The Sacred Heart House of Prayer in Cookstown told the Mid Ulster Mail everyone in the congregation was ‘amazed’ at what happened.

He said: “No-one could believe it. The SonLight musicians were meant to sing a third song, but when the priest stood up he nodded over and we expected him to finish the mass, no-one expected what he did next. He just pressed play on the backing track and off he went.”

He said the happy couple were ‘smiling like Cheshire cats’ the entire way through Father Kelly’s personalised rendition of the song. He said: “Chris’s reaction after the ceremony was just ‘madness’ he said. They could not believe what had happened.”

Father Kelly, who has released two albums with proceeds going to charity, has sung at other weddings before but neither Chris or Leah had any idea of his talent.

Patrick said what Father Kelly had done for the couple was a ‘great gift’.

He said: “It was a really beautiful gift, it was lovely, a real blessing for them starting out their married life together. He didn’t really know them that well apart from through the Wedding preparations yet he personalised the song to

them. It was a great gift that will continue on and on as it spreads around the world.”

He added that the happy couple who are currently on their Honeymoon have been in touch and cannot quite believe how far the video has spread “They are so excited,” he said. “They have had messages to say it has reached Australia, the USA from Washington DC to San Francisco and further afield. It really is amazing, I never thought it would spread how it has.” Video at -

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/video-singing-priest-at-tyrone-groom-s-wedding-a-youtube-hit-1-5990872>

Ireland invited by UEFA to mark 100th anniversary of First World War truce

UEFA is planning to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the First World War Christmas truce, when soldiers from the two alliances shared in a spontaneous informal truce, notably by playing football in a field in between the trenches in Flanders in December 1914.



To remember the occasion, UEFA President Michel Platini has invited the heads of state and/or government of the nations involved to commemorate together what is known worldwide as the “Christmas Truce of 1914” on 17 December, the eve of the European Council meeting in Brussels.

The projected venues for the commemorative events are the neighbouring Belgian towns of Ypres and Comines-Warneton - where the informal football game took place.

It is planned for the remembrance ceremony to take place in the **St Martin’s Church in Ypres**, with the UEFA President addressing those present, and an

animated film about the game being shown. UEFA also plans to place a monument in the field where the game took place.

Michel Platini has sent invitations to the heads of state and/or government of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Republic of Ireland, and the United Kingdom. The presidents of these countries' national football associations will also be invited to the commemoration events.

"This remembrance ceremony," said Mr Platini, "pays homage to the soldiers who, a century ago, expressed their humanity by coming together to play football, thereby opening an important chapter in the construction of European unity and serving as an example for today's young people to follow."

Appointment

The Rev Christopher Easton, currently Priest-in-Charge of the Parish of Whiterock, has been appointed as Incumbent of the Grouped Parishes of Armoy, Loughguile and Drumtullagh in Connor diocese.



Concert in Ballinderry Parish Church raises £5,450 for cancer research

Ballinderry Parish Church was filled to capacity for a musical evening featuring the King's Chorale Choir, with guest artistes Gillian McCutcheon and Roberta Tuft.

The proceeds from the event, which was organised by



Ballinderry Ladies Fellowship, were for Prostate Cancer Research at Queen's University, Belfast, and this very successful evening raised a total of £5,450

Presbyterian Church urges continued prayer for Syria

On the third anniversary of the conflict in Syria, the Presbyterian Church is urging for continued prayer for the people of Syria and the surrounding region who are caught up in the horrendous violence that has engulfed the area.

Rev. Cheryl Meban, convener of the Presbyterian Church's Board of Mission Overseas has just returned from the area where she was taking part in a consultation organised by the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL) with its partner churches around the world of which the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is one.

Writing in this month's Presbyterian Herald, Mrs. Meban makes this prayer request. "Please pray for the Church in Syria and Lebanon, that the Spirit of Christ may build his kingdom amidst the ruins and destruction caused by violence and the poverty that ensues.

"Please pray for governments to be wise, for the peace talks to save lives and for genuine peace which values all human life to be given to Syria and the region.

"Pray for violent hearts to be changed by grace and mercy, and for the homeless, the widows and orphans, the jobless and hopeless to find a home in the grace and community of Jesus Christ."

During her visit Mrs. Meban met with Rev. Butros Zaour, minister of the Presbyterian Church in Damascus – a church planted by Irish Presbyterians in 1866.

"Rev. Butros spoke warmly of his desire to stay connected to the Irish Presbyterian Church, and sent his greetings as well as his appreciation for the generous support given by the Irish Church to help his Church.

"His congregation in Damascus with nearly 650 communicant members is currently supporting 30-40 Christian families connected with the congregation, who have come to Damascus, having had to leave homes and jobs, schools, family members and friends in more dangerous or destroyed parts of the country. In addition, the congregation is helping to support another 600 displaced families – not connected to the congregation at all – as

part of their Christian presence and witness in the city.”

Rev. Butros explained the risks that are currently being taking by the pastors and church members telling Mrs. Meban that the Presbyterian Church in Homs has been totally destroyed and the pastor there risks his life to support the remaining population with aid packages and spiritual care.

Yet as in any situation there is always hope and Mrs. Meban was encouraged by some younger people she met who are training as ministers.

“Even at such a difficult time, there are small numbers of wonderful and courageous younger people training to serve as ministers in the Church. Mathilde is a young woman studying at the Near East School of Theology, impressive by her intelligence, maturity of outlook, strength and humility. The grace of Christ at work in her is such a joy to encounter, and yet one cannot help wondering what great price she will pay for her calling to ministry in this troubled place.”

The scale of the disaster in Syria is unthinkable. Figures vary. Official figures say that Lebanon alone is hosting 900,000 Syrian refugees. But many refugees are not registering as official refugees, lest their status is interpreted as opposition to the regime, and reflects badly on family members (such as those too frail to travel) left behind.

Through the Moderator’s Appeal last autumn Presbyterians around Ireland gave generously to support the churches in the area as they struggles to face danger, conflict, and huge displacement of people both within Syria and across the border putting strain on Lebanon’s struggling economy. This has been appreciated by NESSL leaders who have expressed their thanks to all who have shown their love and support and solidarity in this tangible way.

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