



## The essential daily brief on the Irish churches

### NI Secretary of State Outlines Priorities for Political Progress to Church Leaders

**Church leaders today met with the Secretary of State who outlined her priorities for political progress in Northern Ireland.**



This engagement builds on a long history of dialogue between Churches and political leaders.

Those present were encouraged by Ms. Villiers' acknowledgement of the important role Churches play in society in Northern Ireland. There was open and constructive conversation with the Secretary of State following her address. The Secretary of State spoke of the need to move beyond the politics of identity to the politics of delivery. For Churches, however, there needs to be a long-term focus on what might be described as the politics of fulfilment – moving beyond a focus on service delivery to examine the relationships that can lay the foundation for lasting change.

A particular concern for Churches was the relationship between the proposed welfare reform and the process of dealing with the past. We continue to believe that agreement on the contentious issues addressed in the Haass process will bring us closer to peace and reconciliation. For many people in Northern Ireland issues such as health, education, employment and welfare are an immediate priority. In our approach to healing the past we, as a society, cannot afford to lose sight of the responsibility to care for the vulnerable.

Participants recognised the challenge to Churches to continue to play our part in working for a more peaceful and reconciled society. We reiterate our commitment to supporting our political leaders and the whole of civic society as we work to address remaining obstacles to lasting peace.

Cardinal Seán Brady, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh  
Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh  
Rt Rev Dr Rob Craig, Presbyterian Moderator  
Rev Dr Heather Morris, Methodist President  
Rev Dr Donald Watts, President of the Irish Council of Churches  
Press release issued on behalf of the church leaders



## **Newcastle West takes Passion Play on to the streets**

**Every year since 2006, Good Friday has been marked in Newcastle West with a re-enactment of the Way of the Cross.**

Limerick Leader - And this year, once again, Transition Year students at the Desmond College are preparing for the solemn yet very dramatic procession

through the town which draws in hundreds of followers and ends with the lifting of the cross during the Good Friday ceremonies in the Catholic church.

When Sean Shiels, an art teacher at Desmond College, and his friend Peter Lane first came up with the idea almost a decade ago, local priests Fr Dwohig and Fr Keane were extremely supportive, Sean recalled this week.

“We didn’t know what kind of response we would get,” he said. “We didn’t even know if people would turn up.”

But, to his immense satisfaction, there was a fantastic response. “When we were going down Bridge [St](#), we looked back and there were hundreds and hundreds of people following down the street.”

That fantastic support has been there every year since, Sean added. And if anything, it has grown.

Most of the TY students who will take part in next week’s procession have themselves grown up with the Good Friday Way of the Cross and are now very pleased to have the chance to be actively involved. More at -

<http://www.limerickleader.ie/news/local-news/newcastle-west-takes-passion-play-on-to-the-streets-1-5994035>

## Crucifixion account in oldest gospel script on display in Dublin

**Among the treasures at the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin Castle is the Biblical Papyrus collection of incredible texts dating to the 2nd century, discovered in Egypt in 1929.**

That find includes some of the oldest and most important biblical manuscripts in the world including St Paul's letters (dated c AD 200); the oldest surviving copy of all four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles in one codex, and portions of the Book of Revelation. **A highlight of the collection, and of great interest at Easter time, is a fragment of one of the oldest Gospel texts in the world (ca AD 150-200) which contains part of John’s account of the Crucifixion where Jesus asks John to take care of his mother.**

Now, the Library has started to digitise these manuscripts to bring them to a wider public. The first phase of the project has been completed. The work involved a partnership with the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts (CSNTM) in Texas, which involved the digitisation of over 5,000

images from the manuscripts. The process revealed some text that had not been seen before.

In 1950, Beatty decided to move to Ireland and bequeathed his entire collection to the Irish people. He was Ireland's first honorary citizen and was given a state funeral when he died in 1968.

[http://www.cbl.ie/cbl\\_image\\_gallery/exhibition/overview.aspx?exhibitionId=18](http://www.cbl.ie/cbl_image_gallery/exhibition/overview.aspx?exhibitionId=18)

## Cork Chrism eucharist today

**Thursday of this week, widely known as Holy Thursday, or Maundy Thursday (Maundy - *mandatum*) - the command/mandate of Jesus to us to be servants of each other, as he showed by washing the disciples' feet.**

You are invited to St Fachtna's Cathedral, Rosscarbery, County Cork for the Chrism Eucharist today at 12 noon.



It is a tradition that lay people from the parishes of the Diocese gather with the Bishop and clergy at St Fachtna's Cathedral, Rosscarbery for the blessing of the oils: the holy oils which are used in service by the Church in pastoral care and liturgy in the year ahead. Also at the Service, before the holy Triduum (the three holy days ahead) begin with the evening liturgies of the day, all are invited to renew their commitment to Christian Service and ministry.

Afterwards everyone in the congregation is invited to accept the Bishop's invitation to a light lunch which is being arranged by the local branch of the Mothers' Union.



## Church Of Ireland Rector Appointed As Deputy Lieutenant For County

**The Revd Canon Samuel McVeigh, MBE, TD, Rector of Drumachose, Christ Church, Limavady, has been appointed a Deputy Lieutenant for the County of Londonderry.**

This is the first time ever that a cleric has been appointed to such a position in Northern Ireland.

The office of Lord–Lieutenant has existed for well over four hundred years. The title Lord Lieutenant and Deputy is given to the British monarch’s personal representatives in a county. The person appointed has usually given significant service to their local community.

Canon McVeigh’s contribution to community life was recognized when he was awarded an MBE earlier this year.

Bishop Good congratulated Canon McVeigh by saying ‘I am delighted that Canon McVeigh’s commitment and work for his local community in Limavady

has been recognised. Our diocesan vision in Derry and Raphoe is Transforming Community Radiating Christ. This award recognises the significant work he has done in this regard.’

Lord and Deputy Lieutenants aim to promote a spirit of co-operation by the encouragement of voluntary service and benevolent organisations, and by taking an active interest in the business, industrial and social life of the county. The role is essentially non-political. They are also involved in arranging visits of members of the Royal Family, and receiving and escorting Royal Visitors to their local community.

## Titanic disaster dead remembered

**Relations of those who died on the Titanic have gathered in the city where the doomed liner was built to commemorate the anniversary of the sinking.**

News Letter - The Titanic Memorial Garden in the grounds of Belfast City Hall witnessed a poignant memorial service as relatives laid flowers in memory of those lost 102 years on from the disaster.

The White Star Line vessel, which foundered on her maiden trans-Atlantic voyage after striking an iceberg, was built less than a mile away in the city’s once thriving docklands.

Each year on the day of the April 1912 tragedy, a solemn ceremony is held at the memorial garden where all 1,512 victims are listed on bronze plaques.

As well as relatives of Irish victims, relations of a number of international passengers who died travelled to today’s event in Belfast.

President of the Belfast Titanic Society John Martin, whose great uncle Dr John Edward Simpson - one of the liner’s two doctors - died on board, said many people retained an interest in the ship.

“Some with a direct family connection to people on board, some who were perhaps related to people who built the ship and then there are others who are more interested in why she sank and all the disaster management type of aspect of the story, so it’s important for a lot of people,” he said.

“But the importance of today - the anniversary - is very much about the people who died and that’s what we are here for, just to commemorate those

people and to think about all the years that they lost, all their lives cut so short.”

Belfast Lord Mayor Mairtin O Muilleoir was among those who laid wreaths at the foot of the main Titanic memorial, which was erected in 1920. More at -

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/titanic-disaster-dead-remembered-1-6002359>

## Replica of cross placed at Down cathedral

**An exact replica of the iconic Downpatrick High Cross, weighing around one tonne, was installed in front of Down Cathedral yesterday and in time for Easter.**



*The replica was made using computer technology to make a copy of the original*

BBC News - The original cross, which is 1,100 years old, was removed in December to be preserved as the centrepiece of a display in Down County Museum.

The replica was made by a County Down stonemasons, using computer technology to make a copy of the original.

The granite used was blasted from Thomas Mountain in the Mourne.

The head of the cross shows the Crucifixion of Christ, flanked by the spear-bearer, sponge-bearer and the two thieves, who were given their own names in Irish in the 8th century.

The interlace on the side is made up of intertwined snakes, symbols of resurrection as they slough their skin and are reborn. More at -

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-27036391>

## Craigavon Mayor's top ten hymns

**The talent of Ryan Harris, director of music in Thomas Street Methodist Church, Portadown, was among the musical gifts contributing to a lively**



## **evening of spiritual song hosted by the Mayor of Craigavon, Councillor Mark Baxter.**

This event, entitled 'The Mayor's Top Ten Hymns', was held in Craigavon Civic and Conference Centre on Thursday 10 April.

The Mayor's favourite hymns were: 10 – Blessed assurance, 9 – 'Abide with me', 8 – 'Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah', 7 – 'Amazing grace', 6 – 'I once was a stranger to grace and to God', 5 – 'Love divine all loves excelling', 4 – 'Be Thou my vision', 3 – 'It is well

with my soul', 2 – 'In Christ alone', and 'How great Thou art' took the number one spot.

Adding joyful energy to the singing were the Salvation Army Songsters, with Ryan accompanying on both the baby grand piano and the keyboard. During the evening local missionaries gave an overview of their outreach work and a retiring offering was taken to support this.

## **RTÉ broadcasts of the Good Friday and Holy Saturday services from Diocese of Limerick**

**The Diocese of Limerick will host this year's live broadcast by RTÉ of the Good Friday and Holy Saturday services on Friday 18 April and Saturday 19 April from Saint John's Cathedral in Limerick on RTÉ television and radio.**

Looking ahead to the Easter celebrations, Bishop Brendan Leahy, Bishop of Limerick said: "We are delighted to have RTÉ here to broadcast our celebrations. It's a privilege for any community and all the more so because of Limerick's status as the City of Culture 2014. Each liturgy is, in a sense, a cultural event. The televising from Limerick of the Easter celebrations is great opportunity to highlight the role of Christ and the Church in Limerick culture. We are issuing an open invitation to people to attend from across the diocese to come and join us for these services."

The broadcasts will begin with the Good Friday Celebration of the Lord's Passion at 2.55pm. This service will include the presentation of the 'Garment of Suffering' – a patchwork quilt made up of squares of cloth from parishes



across the diocese, carrying a symbol of suffering from each of them. It will be presented during the Good Friday service and draped around the Cross to symbolise how local suffering is united to the suffering of Christ. The Church of Ireland Bishop of the United Dioceses of Limerick and Killaloe, Bishop Trevor Williams, will participate in the Good Friday commemoration. Music will be from the Diocesan Youth Choir under the direction of Lorna Byrne. This will be simulcast on RTÉ One Television and RTÉ Radio 1 LW 252/1xtra/Digital Platforms. The broadcast will conclude at 4pm.

On Holy Saturday RTÉ will broadcast the Solemn celebration of the Easter Vigil Mass beginning at 11pm. The Mass will be representatives from parishes across the diocese coming together with celebrant Bishop Brendan Leahy. This Mass will be the first occasion when a new Mass setting composed especially for the Diocese to mark Limerick's designation as the National City of Culture by Glenstal monk Father Columba McCann, OSB, will be performed. Music is from the Saint John's Cathedral Choir under the direction of Bernadette Kiely. The Mass will be simulcast on RTÉ One Television and RTÉ Radio One LW 252/ Digital Platforms. The broadcast will conclude at 12.30am.

## **Famine cross returns home after 30 years**

**A famine cross which vanished from Clonakilty about 30 years ago is to return to its former home on Good Friday.**



Irish Examiner - The 9ft pine cross, which dates from the 1800s, is believed to have stood since famine times in the former Workhouse Chapel, in what is now the town's Mount Carmel Community Hospital.

However back in the 1980s, the cross was believed to have been moved from its position during large-scale renovations on what was then the County Home, eventually ending up in a builders' yard in Cork City. "The cross was in the old workhouse chapel. When they were renovating what is now Mount

Carmel, a lot of the buildings were knocked down,” says Clonakilty Mayor Phil O’Regan, who led the campaign to bring the cross home.

In famine times, she said, the Clonakilty Workhouse was used by many emigrants before they took the boat from Long Quay in Clonakilty to Cobh and, from there, to the US....

...believing the cross should be returned to Clonakilty, Cllr O’Regan consulted with local parish priest Monsignor Aidan O’Driscoll, who in turn made contact with the parish priest at St Vincent’s: “We were told the cross would gladly be handed back to the town,” says Cllr O’Regan, adding that it is currently being assessed and refurbished in Clonakilty: “It doesn’t require much work; it’s in very good condition. We are going to re-install it in Clonakilty,” she said.

On Good Friday, prior to the Liturgy of the Passion at 3pm, the Cross will be brought through the town in silent procession at 2pm from the old Paircin Garveyard, a burial site of many victims of the Famine.

“We have identified a space in the Church grounds for it and we will plant a Garden of Remembrance around it,” said Cllr O’Regan who said the cross would be permanently erected over the next few months. More at -

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/famine-cross-returns-home-after-30-years-264926.html>

## Crucifix conflict splits Kerry county council

**A resolution by councillors in Kerry to erect a crucifix on their new chamber,**

**which is set to open after Easter, is unlikely to be carried through because of a conflict with equality legislation, it has emerged.**



*A crucifix stands outside Leinster House in Dublin.*

Irish Times - The crucifix would mark a new departure for the council in Kerry which has hitherto eschewed all religious symbols, a meeting of the council was told this week.

However councillors said they were tired of apologising for their religion and one councillor suggested the erection of the cross might even encourage truth telling in the Kerry chamber.

Various equality acts including the Equal Status Act and Employment Equality Acts and the Equality Act, were being consulted yesterday – but the initial conclusion was the crucifix, a symbol of one religion, could not be erected on the council chamber which serves the general public and which is also a workplace, a council spokesman said.

“We are obliged to carry out motions passed by councillors – but only in so far as other legislation is not breached,” the spokesman said. More at -

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/crucifix-conflict-splits-kerry-county-council-1.1763742>

## **Evangelicals admit struggling to find time for daily Bible reading and prayer**

**New research has shed light on the difficulties evangelicals have in making time for their spiritual life.**

In particular, the Evangelical Alliance's study found that evangelicals struggle to find the time for both reading the Bible and praying each day.

Of the over 1,500 surveyed, nearly all (90 per cent) said they read the Bible regularly, but only 31 per cent said they set aside a substantial period of time each day to pray.

Although 87 per cent agreed that every Christian needs to spend time alone with God on a daily basis, and that without that their faith will suffer, 42 per cent said that they find it difficult to find time on a regular disciplined basis to pray and read the Bible.

Nearly a fifth (18 per cent) said they do not have a fixed pattern of prayer but rather pray when the chance or need arises. This figure rises to 29 per cent among those born after 1980.



Over half of those surveyed (60 per cent) said they prayed "on the move", while walking or using transport. When they do find the time to pray, evangelicals are most likely to be asking God to bless their family (49 per cent).

"Older people (those born before 1960) are significantly more disciplined and structured in their prayer patterns," the Alliance noted.

Nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) admitted to being easily distracted when spending time with God and while most (88 per cent) agreed it was important for a Christian to read or study the Bible on a daily basis, in practice only half are managing to do this. Another 40 per cent said they read the Bible several times each week.

Dr Dave Landrum, director of advocacy at the Evangelical Alliance, said that the findings could help churches to recognise the challenges their congregations are facing and the need to support Christians in today's busy culture.

"It's encouraging to see that the majority of evangelical Christians are determined not to let the daily pressures of time get between them and God," he said.

"Even so, we should be aware of how easily we can be distracted, and how we need to be intentional about our growth as Christians.

"Our discipleship is critically important, and I hope the report findings will inspire church leaders to consider how they can support busy people to be disciples of Christ."

In the conclusion, Evangelical Alliance General Director Steve Clifford said: "Challenges remain, and this research is designed to spark conversations

and ideas in your church. It raises some important questions for us all, such as: how can we make sure that our churches are effectively discipling Christians at all stages of their faith? How can churches equip people to share their faith with others? What can help us avoid life's distractions and set aside time to be with God?"

The *Time for discipleship?* report is available to read in full at [www.eauk.org/discipleship](http://www.eauk.org/discipleship)

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