



The essential daily brief on the Irish churches

Cork Bishop backs same-sex civil marriage

Cork's Church of Ireland Bishop, Dr Paul Colton, has spoken about his support for same-sex civil marriage.

The Journal.ie - Bishop Colton spoke at the launch of Cork LGBT Awareness Week early this week, where he [called for "unqualified equality"](#) for gay and lesbian couples.



Senator Deirdre Clune and the Rev. Dr Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, at the official launch LGBT Awareness Week at Cork City Hall.

In an [interview with BBC's Sunday Sequence programme today](#), he said that he acknowledged the "great hurt and tangible damage" that has been caused to gay and lesbian people by institutional religion over the years.

He said that the church's teachings are perceived as part of the problem.

"I certainly support civil same-sex marriage," he said. "I also recognise the Church of Ireland's definition of marriage is for itself and I adhere to that discipline."

But he noted "that is not to say that everyone must be required" to take the Church of Ireland's view of marriage.

Bishop Colton said that the Church of Ireland hasn't articulated a stance on current events regarding same-sex marriage.

The last time the Church of Ireland spoke about this was in 2012, in an internal resolution about marriage and engaging in the debate.

Bishop Colton noted that “political events have taken over” and that “the events in society are moving very rapidly and the church is not at all at pace with the events”.

Need for debate in the church

The Bishop spoke about the need for a debate in the church about nature of marriage with a view ultimately to blessings for same-sex couples following civil unions, “if not to their marriage in church”.

He described the church as having been “caught off-guard by rapid developments in society” and said the topic has the Church of Ireland “utterly divided”, with a lot of people rejecting his stance.

“It’s a very divisive debate, it’s something that we’re going to have to work through,” he said.

He said the focus should be on “common humanity” and not talking about people as if “they are something different and something other”.

Concluded Bishop Colton: “Whether the Church likes it or not... we must figure out how we must minister pastorally to these people.”

BBC - His comments were welcomed by the Church of Ireland's pro-gay group, Changing Attitude Ireland (CAI). Dr Richard O'Leary, Chair of CAI, responded that “*We welcome the Bishop of Cork's support for the full inclusion of same sex couples by both the state and our church*”.

Coincidentally services to mark the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT) with guest speakers are being held today (Saturday) in Church of Ireland churches in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Belfast and Derry.

Last month, Stormont rejected same-sex marriage for the third time in 18 months.

Northern Ireland is now the only part of the UK which has not passed a law to introduce same-sex marriage.

The first gay marriages have recently taken place in England and Wales, with Scotland due to follow later this year

Ahead of the assembly motion, the Church of Ireland restated its position on same-sex marriage, repeating what was affirmed at its general synod in 2012.

"The Church of Ireland affirms, according to our Lord's teaching, that marriage is in its purpose a union permanent and life-long, for better or worse, till death do them part, of one man with one woman, to the exclusion of all others on either side. The Church of Ireland recognises for itself and of itself, no other understanding of marriage," it said.

Catholic bishops in Northern Ireland wrote an open letter to all MLAs urging them to reject the motion.

The letter said the motion undermined the principle of equality by applying it "inappropriately".

Interview -

The full interview (10 mins) can be listened to on the BBC website. The interview is 10 mins into the program, (8.30-10.15)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007cphf>

It can also be listenened to on AUDIOBOO

[William Crawley @williamcrawley](#) ·

Dr Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork supports same-sex marriage - speaking today on Sunday Sequence: <https://audioboo.fm/boos/2173803-dr-paul-colton-on-same-sex-marriage>

[News Letter - http://www.newsletter.co.uk/bishop-backs-same-sex-marriages-1-6066360](http://www.newsletter.co.uk/bishop-backs-same-sex-marriages-1-6066360)

CNI - Saturday 17 May 2014 marked the 9th annual International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, the biggest LGBTI solidarity event in the world. May 17 actions have taken place in over 120 countries today. Before 3am (UTC), at the start of the Day worldwide, various top global figures came out in support for May 17 around the world. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon released a statement affirming his support for the global commemorations. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, followed his statement, with her own IDAHOT op-ed. UNDP, UNAIDS and other UN agencies have also released statements in support of the Day. See more at: <http://dayagainsthomophobia.org/>



A rally has been held in Belfast calling the release of more than 300 schoolgirls taken from northern Nigeria by Boko Haram

Nigeria schoolgirls kidnap: Belfast holds #BringBackOurGirls rally

A rally has been held at Belfast City Hall calling for the release of Nigerian schoolgirls abducted last month by Boko Haram.

Belfast Telegraph - Dorcas Obikoya, from the Nigerian Association Northern Ireland, said: "We are telling the Nigerian government to look into the actions of the Boko Haram and release those children. Their parents are in agony.

"We are appealing to all Nigerians, and all Nigerian friends to support us to campaign for bringing our girls back.

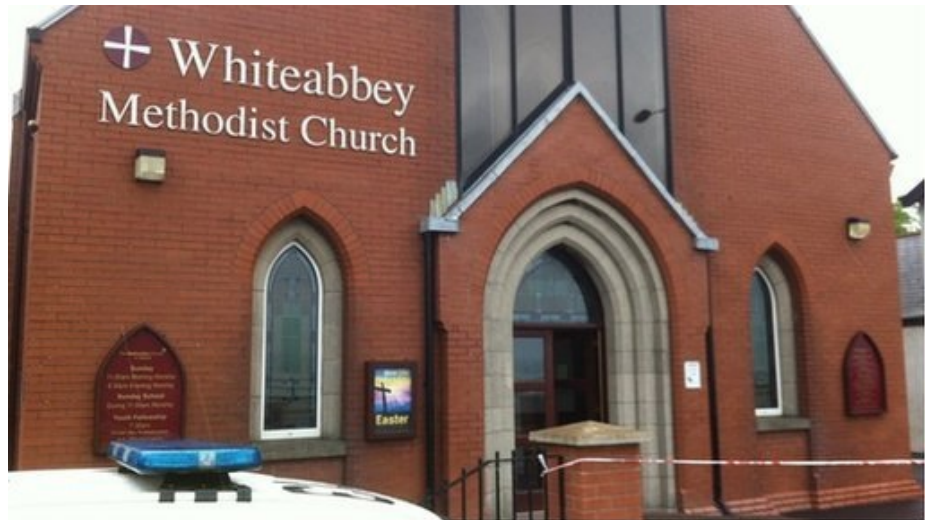
"We see support from the PSNI, and support from the city council. It is all over the news here in Northern Ireland, so it is very, very amazing the support we received in Northern Ireland."

Meanwhile the parents of Nigeria's missing schoolgirls left their homes and made the journey to the burnt remains of the Chibok school where their daughters were captured more than a month ago. More at -

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/world-news/nigeria-schoolgirls-kidnap-belfast-holds-bringbackourgirls-rally-as-president-goodluck-jonathan-snubs-grieving-families-30282275.html>

Whiteabbey Methodist Church damaged in overnight arson

A church in County Antrim has been damaged in an overnight arson attack.



The fire at Whiteabbey Methodist Church caused extensive damage to the kitchen

BBC - Arsonists broke in through the front door of Whiteabbey Methodist Church, on Shore Road and tried to light three fires inside the premises.

A kitchen at the rear of the church was extensively damaged in the blaze, that was reported at about 23:00 BST on Saturday.

Fire crews said they were able to stop the fire spreading to the main church.

Rev Pauline Lorimer said she was disheartened by the incident.

"I don't see how anybody can get any kind of kick out of destroying something that's good," she said.

"We had to have our service this morning in the Presbyterian church halls, which they very kindly opened for us.

"The church is badly smoke damaged and the forensic people have only just left.

"The halls are just newly finished and people are very proud of them. It's sad to see them being destroyed like this."

Paupers, Presbyterians and the Poor Law

The Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland (PHSI) will be holding their annual Robert Allen Lecture on Thursday, 22nd May at 8pm in Union Theological College, Belfast.

Dr. Olwen Purdue (Queen's University, Belfast) will address the subject of "Paupers, Presbyterians and the Poor Law in 19th Century Ulster."

Members and Non-Members will be very welcome.

For more information on the Presbyterian Historical Society visit their website www.presbyterianhistoryireland.org

Dealing with the Past Shaping the Future - new Presbyterian resource

The Presbyterian Church is finalising a DVD resource "Dealing with the Past Shaping the Future".

It features bible based presentations by Rev David Cupples Presbyterian minister in Enniskillen and Rev Dr Norman Hamilton former Presbyterian moderator looking at repentance, forgiveness, flags, parades and victims.

It is due out first week in June for Presbyterian general assembly

Towards a common vision - Irish Inter Church Committee May meeting

The leadership and representatives of the numerous traditions of Christianity in Ireland will meet under the auspices of the Irish Inter Church Committee on Thursday 29th May.

This ecumenical gathering, comprising members of the 14 member churches of the ICC, alongside the Roman Catholic Church, will gather to discuss the World Council of Churches document 'The Church Towards a Common Vision'. For a copy of the paper see below -

<http://www.irishchurches.org/cmsfiles/resources/The-Church---Towards-a-common-vision-2013.pdf>

Derry charity Children In Crossfire 'a lifeline'

A nun who has worked in Africa for half her life has thanked local people who have supported Children in Crossfire in the vital work being carried out there.

Derry Journal - Sister Maura Byrne has witnessed everything from the Biafran War in Nigeria to the famines of Ethiopia at close quarters.

The 79-year-old had been training medical staff in an Ethiopian village for many years through scholarships set up by Children In Crossfire, before here recent semi-retirement and return to Ireland.

The village where Sr Maura was based is Wolisso, 140 kms south of Addis Ababa and the training took place at a hospital with a large outreach area.

“The situation generally speaking today is better than it was. Years ago it would have been communist controlled when I was there and then when the Berlin Wall fell things improved, but it took a few years. It’s a better situation now than it was then.”

Sr Maura, originally from Castledermot in south Kildare, was there for the Famines of 1974-5. “That was the one when the communist revolution took place and they got rid of Haile Selassie. I was there for the one in 1984-5. There was a lot of hardship.

“Children In Crossfire gave us 45 to 50 nurse training scholarships which meant that the people that were trained were the poor people who would otherwise not have been able to afford it.

“When they finished their training we had good people who were giving a good service.



Shauna O'Neill from Children In Crossfire pictured with Sr Maura Byrne, who spent 40 years in Africa and helped deliver some of the charity's vital programmes.

“One of the big problems is malnutrition and that is an area Children In Crossfire have done a lot about.

“There are four seasons in Ethiopia, two wet, two dry. If the rain doesn’t come, the crops can’t be sown. That leads to famine.”

Sr Maura, who is with the Holy Rosary Sisters order, said that after a particular period of hardship, the Ethiopian government started up villages and settled people in them.

“The reason was they wanted to promote communist values. One day this bus came into this village and this boy never saw a bus before. This young lad Harry he got up in the bus and landed 650 kms away from his mother. So he had a difficult time for a few years. The Mayor brought him into his own house and he had an education and then later he got a Children in Crossfire scholarship.”

Young Harry’s story was one of many extraordinary tales Sr Maura has amassed, and there was a further twist to this particular story in that the boy was later reunited with his family.

He also became a deacon in the Christian country’s main denomination, the Orthodox Church, He also met and fell in love with a local girl and asked Sr Maura if she would qualify for a scholarship. Both have gone on to graduate and they now have two children.

Another nursing scholarship recipient was a girl who lost her mother during a famine and who was raised by nuns in an orphanage.

Children In Crossfire is also involved in building wells in Ethiopia, which Sr Maura described as marvellous work.

Sr Maura currently resides with the Killeshandra Holy Rosary Sisters in County Cavan.

She said she fell in love with Africa during her time in Nigeria, Kenya and Ethiopia and remains in contact with the friends she has made.

She is also at pains to point out how rich the cultural history of Ethiopia is and that it was one of the earliest civilizations and one of the most important players on the world stage since Biblical times at least.

Paying tribute to Sr Maura, Shauna O’Neill from Children In Crossfire said: “It is so important to give feedback to the people who are donating to show the impact it is directly having on the people of Ethiopia and to have first hand

experience accounts from people who dedicate their lives to that work is just a blessing for us.”

An away day for churches in Mid–Ulster

The Irish Churches Peace Project is inviting people from churches in the Mid–Ulster area to take part in a timely opportunity to explore the role of churches in addressing the legacy of ‘The Troubles’.

There will be opportunities to view and discuss film clips from a recent clergy conference in

Coalisland, including Professor Peter McBride from the Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health on trauma and spirituality, Professor Brandon Hamber of INCORE on the impact of the conflict, Dr Gladys Ganiel of the Irish School of Ecumenics on what churches can do to address the legacy, and personal stories of ministering through ‘The Troubles’ by Revd Dr David Clements and Fr Stephen Kearney.

Discussion will be facilitated by Emily Brough, Good Relations Officer with the Irish Churches Peace Project, working in the Mid–Ulster area, and her colleague, Glenn Harvey.

Participation in the day is free and transport will be provided.

For further information, contact Emily Brough emily@icpp.info or 0784 177 6868. There are only 16 places available to ensure the group is a good size for discussion. See -

<http://www.irishchurches.org/events/64/lsquogo-and-do-thou-likewisersquo>

Charity road run at Killead

Killead Presbyterian Church is holding its annual charity road run on Friday 30th May at 7pm.

News Letter - Pictured is Andrew Mackey with his 1964 MF 65 the same year that this year’s chosen charity the Cystic Fibrosis Trust was formed.

The Cystic Fibrosis Trust has come a long way in those 50 years and achieved some extraordinary things but their ultimate goal beating Cystic Fibrosis is now within reach.

To spur the charity on on its 50th anniversary a prize of 50 litres of agricultural diesel will be given to the vehicle the judge vintage enthusiast John Brown

would most like to take home with him. So if you think [your vehicle](#) has what it takes to catch John Brown's eye come along and support this worthwhile cause.

Everyone is welcome to enjoy the beef sizzle by McMaster Meats Whitehead.



John Brown , Andrew Mackey and CF supporter Isaac Ward

For more information contact Lyle Mackey on 07720 838 621.

Golf Fundraiser for South Sudan

St John's Moira is teaming up with Ballyrashane & Killydollah for a Golf Fundraiser for South Sudan at Galgorm Castle, Ballymena on Monday 2 June.

Both parishes are Link Partners with Ibba Diocese and Bishop Wilson Kamani through CMS Ireland. The two parishes are aiming together to raise funds for a new vehicle for Bishop Wilson so that he can get around his diocese.

A good vehicle is of huge importance to the area, especially as there are so few of them around and would be used to help the local people, eg. in medical emergencies.

What can you look forward to at Galgorm?

- Tea/Coffee/Scones at Registration
- Goodie Bag



- Golf and a Meal
- Half time snacks
- Prizes and Auction

There are 1st and 10th Tee starts between 9–11am. Entry: £50 per person

If you are a keen golfer or have golfer friends, get them on board and book now by telephone: 07872194201

Men's Society Annual Outing

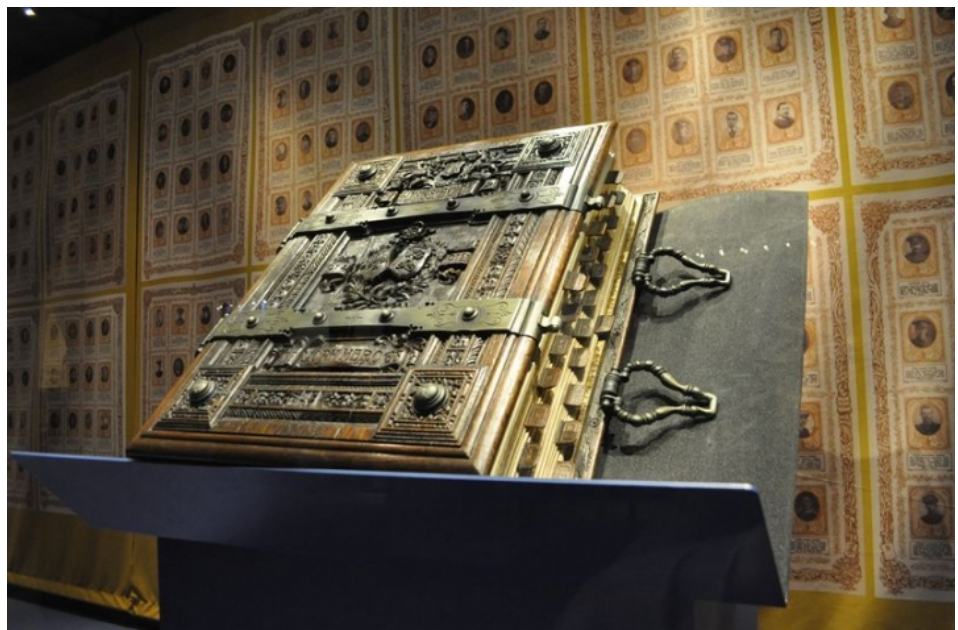
This year the Church of Ireland Men's Society will visit South Armagh.

The coach trip on Saturday 7 June will visit Crossmaglen, the historic parish church and graveyard at Creggan, Tynan parish and the parish church in the grounds of Castle Leslie, Glaslough, Co Monaghan.

Full details on the website www.cims.ireland.anglican.org or tel: 02890661641.

York Minster remembers city's World War One fallen

A unique memorial to the citizens of York who fell in the First World War has gone on display at York Minster.



The King's Book of York Heroes

The King's Book of York Heroes commemorates 1,447 local people killed in action, including the last reported British soldier to be killed in the Great War, George Edwin Ellison.

Ellison enlisted at the start of the war in 1914 and is reported to have fallen just before the 11am ceasefire on 11 November 1918.

The 9th 4lb book contains the names of the fallen, as well as their biographies and individual photographs.

It forms the centrepiece of the cathedral's display, 'They died that we might live', commemorating the centenary of World War One.

The display brings together photographs, letters and personal items to tell the story of those who fought in the conflict.

Among the items on display is the communion set used by Dean Eric Milner-White when he served on the Western Front.

"The new display is part of a four year programme of remembrance at York Minster to mark the centenary of the First World War," explains York Minster's Collections Manager Vicky Harrison.

"York Minster has a number of important monuments to people who died during the conflict but the Kings Book of York Heroes is believed to be unique, not only in the region but nationally because of the fact it includes individual photographs of the fallen.

"We hope the display will encourage visitors to learn about the story of York Minster and the First World War, which is one of courage, sacrifice and remembrance."