



The essential daily brief on the Irish churches

**Amnesty:
Legal
challenge
now
inevitable
as Northern
Ireland fails
to legislate
for equal
marriage**



*This is the third attempt to persuade the regional assembly to
back same-sex marriage in Northern Ireland*

**Amnesty
International
has repeated its warning of a likely legal challenge if Northern Ireland is
left as the only part of the UK without marriage rights for same-sex
couples.**

The warning came as a motion in the Northern Ireland Assembly supporting same-sex marriage was set for defeat after the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) lodged a Petition of Concern, meaning the proposal could only pass if a majority of both unionists and nationalists support it.

Patrick Corrigan, Amnesty International's Northern Ireland Programme Director, said:

"Politicians in Northern Ireland who continue to block marriage rights for same-sex couples are like latter-day King Canutes, trying in vain to hold back the tide of equality."

"States may not discriminate with regards to the right to marry and found a family, on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

"That obligation is clear in international law. This means that marriage should be available to same-sex couples in Northern Ireland, just as it is now in England and Wales and will shortly be in Scotland.

"Equally, the right to adopt, for instance, should be available without distinction based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Recently, that right to non-discrimination for people in Northern Ireland was secured through the courts rather than around the Executive table.

"Sadly, it appears that some politicians prefer to continue to abdicate their responsibilities, leaving it instead to judges to do the right thing.

"With politicians continuing to block equality, it is now inevitable that same-sex couples in Northern Ireland will take a legal challenge on the basis of inferior treatment with regards to the right to marry and found a family."

See also Guardian report -

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/apr/29/northern-ireland-gay-marriage-block-amnesty>

Handel, Bach, Messiaen and Vierne focus to Armagh organ recital

Dr Malcolm Sim, organist of Glasgow Cathedral will give an organ recital on Sunday 18 May 2014 at 4.15pm in St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral, Armagh.

The recital is one of a series in memory of the Late Dean of Armagh, Very Reverend Herbert Cassidy.

Malcolm Sim studied piano from the age of four and subsequently organ, taking up his first church organist post at the age of fourteen. He has been a regular contributor to the recital series on the fine Lewis instrument in Glasgow's Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery, when one of his performances was featured on BBC Breakfast Television.

Engagements as a pianist have included at the State Opening of the Scottish Parliament in 2011, and at Glasgow's St Andrew's Cathedral in 2012, in the presence of Archbishop Conti and Alex Salmond, First Minister of Scotland.

Recent organ recitals include St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh and the inauguration of the re-built Harrison organ in the historic Cromwellian church of Holy Trinity and St Mary in Berwick-upon-Tweed. He also contributed to the Queen's Scottish Diamond Jubilee Service in Glasgow Cathedral.

In 2014 Malcolm will give a recital in St Sulpice, Paris. In the summer he will be the organist for the national service which will commemorate the start of World War I to be held at Glasgow Cathedral and which will be broadcast live on BBC1 and throughout Europe.

For the recital in Armagh, Malcolm's programme will include works by Handel, Bach, Messiaen and Vierne.

The Dean of Armagh, the Very Revd Gregory Dunstan said: *"Dr Sim has been invited to play on some great occasions in Scotland. We look forward to welcoming him to Armagh, to the beautiful instrument and glorious acoustic of St Patrick's Cathedral."*

As with all the recitals in this memorial series, admission is free, with a retiring collection towards the maintenance of the Cathedral's fabric. To date, donations have amounted to £1,400.

CAP helping over 50 Coleraine families with debt

EAST Londonderry MP Gregory Campbell has visited the local Christians Against Poverty Debt Centre to hear first hand how the busy charity is providing hope and a solution to around 50 local families struggling with unmanageable debt.

Coleraine Times - Former client Wendy shared about how debt left her isolated and depressed.



Gregory Campbell MP at the Vinyard Church in Coleraine to discuss debt with Ricky Wright, David Kelly, Melanie Gibson, and Stephen Busteed.

Her daughter used to leave meals outside her bedroom door because she couldn't venture out.

Wendy now acts and feels like a different person partly due to the holistic nature of CAP and how they work for the betterment of the 'whole' person, not just the financial side of things. The CAP centre - Causeway Coast, had just been awarded 'Most Inspiring Debt Centre' title, out of the 252 centres across the UK, at a recent CAP awards ceremony.

Mr Campbell also heard about some of Vineyard Compassion's other projects such as Causeway Foodbank, heard some more first hand accounts and enjoyed a tour of the charity's increasingly bustling community hub. He was thanked in person for his continued support of CAP's work in the local and wider community,.

Thirty five MPs recently supported Mr Campbell's early day motion supporting the work of CAP groups in the UK.

C of I Parish Treasurer sentenced

A former treasurer of a Londonderry church parish has been given a suspended sentence for stealing £60,000 of funds.

BBC news - Lyndsey Bredin, 27, from Primity Crescent, Newbuildings, pleaded guilty to 19 counts of theft between March 2010 and October 2011.

Bredin was treasurer of the Culmore and Muff Church of Ireland parish.

The judge at Londonderry Crown Court sentenced her to 18 months in prison, suspended for three years.

He described her actions as a serious breach of trust that had jeopardised plans to re-roof a church in Muff, County Donegal.

The court heard that after money had gone missing a police investigation found that Bredin was writing cheques from church funds and making them payable to herself.

Bredin made a full admission to police.

The court also heard that the money had been used to pay bills, dine in restaurants and go on weekends away.

The largest single payment was for a car that cost £4,000.

Her defence barrister said Bredin knew she was doing wrong, but had been under serious pressure and had just come out of an abusive relationship.

The judge said her actions had been significant and noted that there was no prospect of the money being repaid.

Parish response

Diocesan News - The Church of Ireland Grouped Parishes of Culmore and Muff have responded to the sentencing of their former Treasurer for stealing some £60,000, or thereabouts, of parish funds...

... A spokesperson for the Parishes said, 'The theft has been traumatic and painful for church members and we are continuing to work together to face both the financial loss and pastoral consequences of our former Treasurer's breach of trust. Jesus' call to forgive and pray for those who have wronged us is difficult and challenging. We can only continue to pray for the strength to behave, as God would have us.' He continued, 'We look forward to reading the judge's full ruling to understand the appropriateness of a suspended sentence for a theft of some £60,000.'

The diocese and the Select Vestry of Muff and Culmore will be making no further comment on this matter.

Cardinal Brady celebrates Mass of Thanksgiving in Rome for Irish pilgrims

Pilgrims from Ireland in Rome for the Canonisation of Blessed Popes John XXIII and John Paul II gave thanks to God at a special Mass of Thanksgiving which was celebrated this afternoon by Cardinal Seán Brady, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland.

Cardinal Brady was the chief celebrant at the Mass which was concelebrated by Bishop Kieran O'Reilly, Bishop of Killaloe, Monsignor Ciaran O'Carroll, Rector of the Pontifical Irish College, and college staff Father Thomas Norris, Father Hugh Clifford and Father George Hayes as well as many Irish priests travelling with pilgrimage groups. The Mass was celebrated in the Basilica of Santa Maria in Domnica, which is close to the Irish College.

Cardinal Brady in his homily said

We are in Rome this weekend to celebrate two new saints. In baptism they were born again through water and the Spirit as Jesus had foretold in his conversation with Nicodemus.

Through their long lives Saint John XXIII and Saint John Paul II were attentive and obedient to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as they strove to see more clearly the call of the Kingdom of God at work in their own lives and the demands and challenges involved in following Christ.

Of course the Kingdom of God, announced and proclaimed by Jesus, has always encountered opposition in this world. In the first Reading we saw how Peter and John had been arrested, warned to desist from their preaching of Jesus – Crucified and Risen from the dead – and then released. Later Peter and John sought refuge in the support of the Community of Believers in the Church. In other words Peter and John told the Community all that the chief priest and elders had threatened. Together they prayed about the situation and asked for help in proclaiming the Good News. They asked for boldness to do all that was needed to be done in the name of Jesus.

We saw how their prayers were answered in a spectacular fashion. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit – who signalled His arrival with a thunderbolt – and the result was that they all began to proclaim boldly the Word of God. That is to say they all became missionaries of the Good News. Peter came to Rome and John went to Patmos. Of course Peter paid the supreme price with his own life precisely where hundreds of thousands gathered yesterday at Saint Peter's here in Rome.

Here we are today – gathered almost two thousand years later – on another of Rome's famous hills; the Coelian. We come to pay tribute to how the Good News of the Kingdom has spread and continues to spread. Here we are within yards of the Colosseum which was the scene of the horrific deaths of so many martyrs. We are surrounded by the churches built in honour of the Apostles and Martyrs. The Church of Saint Stephen – the first martyr is just across the road, burial place of the son of King Brian Boru, whose thousandth anniversary was celebrated yesterday in Armagh the place of his burial. The Church of Saint Clement – the home of the Irish Dominicans – is at the foot of the hill. Saint Clement was the martyred fourth Pope. We could go on and on, for example the Church of Saint Agatha – previous home of the Irish College – is nearby. She suffered martyrdom for her faith in Sicily and was honoured throughout the Church from the earliest times.

It is worthy of note that while the great monuments built by the persecutors like the Emperors Nero and Diocletian lie in ruins, the temples built in honour of their victims continue to be centres of prayer, charity and solidarity promoting a civilisation of love.

Today we thank God for having the privilege of living in a century that has produced three popes who are now canonised Saints. Where they have gone, we all hope to follow. Of course we all hope to become Saints. What is the alternative? We are all called to be holy. We all have the exact same helps available to us, to guide us on our way. The helps are:

- The presence of Christ, Risen and alive in His Church
- The Spirit of Christ in our Hearts
- The power of Christ, Risen and Alive, in His Sacraments
- The help of Prayer in His name, and,
- The intercession of His Saints on our behalf.

Presbyterian missionary returns to Malawi

Naomi and Thomas Leremore and family are departing N Ireland this week to return to Nairobi, Kenya.

Over the past five weeks, Naomi travelled to various locations in N Ireland speaking on 20 occasions about her work in Children's Ministry within the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA).



These meetings included Sunday services, Midweek Meetings, PW meetings, other church fellowship groups and primary schools.

Thomas joined the family for their final two weeks in Ireland, having had to delay his travel to N Ireland due to a visa issue.

Vacancy, Programmes Manager, Kiwoko Hospital

Kiwoko Hospital, Uganda, is seeking an enthusiastic Volunteer/Mission Partner to undertake the role of Programmes Manager. Kiwoko is a busy rural Christian Mission hospital operating under the Church of Uganda.

It is a "Christ-centred health facility providing accessible, affordable, curative and preventive health care for holistic healing of the poor and vulnerable;



reaching out to the community; and training of health workers; in partnership with individuals and institutions of like mind”.
(Mission Statement)

The Role - This senior management role involves programmes and project management, as well as mentoring and building capacity in the Ugandan management team. The Programmes Manager also works closely with the hospital’s Finance Manager in report preparation, donor relations and grant applications and also works in conjunction with

the Medical Director to ensure the effective management of hospital resources.

The Person - Must be a committed Christian, driven by compassion and a calling to crosscultural mission in another country – someone who is skilled in their profession, able to work in partnership with others, with the ability to build others up in skills and faith. The post would be ideal for a retiree (self-funded) or individual (Mission Partner) with high level management skills and experience of financial responsibility within a large institution.

The Process - For further details, or to arrange an informal discussion, please contact Dr Rory Wilson medsup@kiwokohospital.org (Medical Director) or Gillian Maganda (Personnel Coordinator) at CMS Ireland in their Belfast office, personnel@cmsireland.org

Concern for incidents at historic Meath church building

Concerns have been raised about escalating incidents of antisocial behaviour in Athboy following a number of incidents of arson in the past two weeks.

Merth Cghronicle - Trim Fire Service has been called to five arson incidents in the town over the past two weeks, with four of them occurring at the old cemetery behind St James’s Church of Ireland.

The latest incident involved a car which was set on fire in the cemetery on Friday night/early hours of Saturday morning. On the previous night, Trim Fire Service was called to the scene after wheelie bins which had been taken from businesses in the town were set on fire against the church wall. In fact, firefighters attended twice that night - once on Thursday night and a second time in the early hours of Friday morning.

On Wednesday of last week, they attended another incident in the cemetery where material was again set on fire, while the previous week, firefighters attended a fire at the farmers' market in Athboy where a storage area was broken into and items stored there were burned.

Gardai are investigating the incidents and say they will be keeping a close eye on Athboy over the weekend.

David Douglas, secretary of the St James's Church Committee, said drinking parties and litter have been a constant problem in the cemetery but in the last week or two, "things have really got out of hand".

Regarding the wheelie bin incident, he said they were very lucky that the roof of the church didn't go on fire and that the flames had been quite high. The fire has resulted in smoke damage to the exterior of the church. - See more at:

<http://www.meathchronicle.ie/news/roundup/articles/2014/04/29/4029890-rise-in-athboy-antisocial-behaviour-sparks-local-concerns/#sthash.CA4Bg1UX.dpuf>

Poppies planted this week in Churches and Church Schools for World War One

TENS OF THOUSANDS of poppy seeds will be sown this week by schoolchildren, junior soldiers, civic leaders, clergy, faith groups and community organisations as a joint act of remembrance to mark the centenary of the First World War.

In Leeds, letters home from a Leeds Pal who joined Kitchener's Call to Arms will be read out at a poppy planting ceremony in a city centre park with schoolchildren, civic and faith leaders including the new Bishop of Leeds for the newly created Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales, the Rt Revd Nick Baines, who will bless the proceedings.

He said: "A century is not a long time, but only 100 years ago the world fell apart in the most violent way. This simple act of growing poppies reminds us of our past and is a very visual way of pledging ourselves to serve together in the future."

In Dewsbury, Australian relatives of a First World War soldier buried in St John's churchyard will be the guests of honour as they join local schoolchildren to sow seeds together and in Harrogate, junior soldiers from the army training camp will plant poppy seeds in the camp's memorial garden with the Bishop of Ripon, the Rt Revd James Bell.

Church Leaders in the Oxford Diocese have sent packets of poppies to every church and church school and this week children and families will sow seeds along with relatives of soldiers from the First World War.

In Exeter packets of the special Northlew poppies have been sent to 500 churches and church schools to help the Devon village of Northlew plant a 20 mile poppy avenue along the route their men marched off to war and to build a community memorial shop. The village lost proportionally more men in the conflict than anywhere else.

In Manchester packets of poppy seeds have been sent to every church school and in Portsmouth, the Cathedral has organised a huge poppy planting event.

Hundreds of packets of poppy seeds have been sent to every church and church school by church leaders in the newly created diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales and everyone is being urged to plant their poppy seeds this week to mark their identity as a new diocese together and remember all those who lost their lives in the Great War.

Homeless director says there are new cases of people sleeping rough in Dublin every night

THE NUMBERS OF people sleeping rough in Dublin has reached a record high.

The Journal.ie - Inner City Helping Homeless (ICHH) is a group which started working with homeless people in Dublin's inner city six months ago.

They say they've logged 2,241 rough sleepers that they fed and clothed in the space of 28 nights.

ICHH says that a nightly run is now averaging 80 rough sleepers.

Inner City Helping Homeless Director, Anthony Flynn, said:

“These figures are a startling indication of the homeless problem that currently exists within the city.



ICHH are coming across new cases every night we are on the streets and have seen an increase week on week in the numbers we are interacting with.

“ICHH only two weeks ago [declared that we were at crisis point](#) in regard to rough sleepers on feeding 100 people in a single night”.

More at -

<http://www.thejournal.ie/new-cases-sleeping-rough-dublin-1440312-Apr2014/>

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