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CHURCH
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IRELAND

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

Belfast pastor James McConnell denounces Islam as the devil's doctrine

Police have launched a probe into a potential hate crime after an outspoken evangelical pastor defended describing the Islamic faith as "satanic" and a "doctrine spawned in hell".

Senior Pastor James McConnell made the remarks as he addressed his congregation at the Whitewell Tabernacle Metropolitan Church on Sunday evening.

They were described as "very offensive", "hurtful" and "irresponsible" by a representative from the Belfast Islamic Centre.

There has also been an outcry on social media, with some calling for a police investigation into his comments.

One posted: "If this was a Muslim Imam speaking about Christianity, he would be arrested for inciting hatred."

During his sermon, the clergyman said: "Islam is heathen, Islam is satanic, Islam is a doctrine spawned in hell."



He also likened Muslims to the IRA, saying there were cells spread right across the UK.

When contacted by the Belfast Telegraph last night, the pastor said he stood over his remarks.

When asked why he made the comments, he said "because it is against the holy scriptures".

"The Bible says there is one God the father and one Lord Jesus Christ and that is what I believe and that is what Christianity is all about."

Raied Al-Wazzan from the Belfast Islamic Centre said: "I wonder what knowledge he has about Islam to say all of that.

"Has he met any Muslims and discussed these things with them?

"We respect Jesus and Noah and Moses as much as we respect prophet Mohammed.

"And you will never find any Muslim who will say any bad words about Jesus. More at -

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/video-belfast-pastor-james-mcconnell-denounces-islam-as-the-devils-doctrine-at-whitewell-metropolitan-tabernacle-church-sermon-30291041.html>

Order of Nuns admits emotional abuse in residential homes

Catholic order of nuns has admitted that emotional abuse and neglect took place in its residential homes in Northern Ireland.

News Letter -The Sisters of Nazareth have already acknowledged and apologised for physical and sexual attacks which occurred within their properties, a focus of the UK's largest ever institutional child abuse public inquiry.

A senior member, speaking on behalf of the congregation, said evidence from victims at the Londonderry homes was "shocking and harrowing".

Sister Brenda McCall said: "We must accept that at certain times, by certain sisters, things were just not right."

The treatment of young people, orphaned or taken away from their unmarried mothers, in houses run by nuns, brothers or the state is a key concern of an investigation chaired by retired High Court judge Sir Anthony Hart which is being held in Banbridge, Co Down.

It is considering cases between 1922, the foundation of Northern Ireland, and 1995.



The historical institutional abuse investigation is being held in Banbridge, Co Down.

Sister Brenda said the congregation accepted that sisters, older boys and lay people who accessed the homes physically assaulted children.

She added that bullying would have occurred.

The nuns have already apologised for physical and sexual abuse and Sister Brenda said that extended to those subjected to emotional harm or neglect.

She explained the order had made a generic apology in the round.

She added: “There has been individuals apologised to if they came forward in the last few years.”

Sister Brenda said: “I would like to say, having been up at the back for the last few weeks, it was a very harrowing and challenging time for us as a congregation and to listen to the evidence given was very harrowing indeed.

“We are a human group, a human organisation and we had people that were champions to the cause and we had people that were a bit weaker and all I can say is we had some wonderful, heroic, I would say inspirational sisters.

“I am proud to stand on their shoulders and carry on the work of the congregation started by our founder (Victoire Larmenier) to work for the...weak of society.”

Retired bishop Edward Daly, who was based in Londonderry, told the inquiry between 1957 and 1993 he received one complaint about the sisters, from a former resident sent to Australia under the child migration scheme seeking news of her brother via a “heartbreaking” letter.

He had worked as a farm labourer in Co Monaghan in the Irish Republic and died shortly before the letter was received.

Bishop Daly said: "She was devastated by it."

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/order-of-nuns-admits-emotional-abuse-in-residential-homes-1-6070389>

Papal Nuncio launches range of religious tiles (yes, tiles) with mystique

THEY DON'T INDICATE Garda stations. That's the first thing you need to know about the new tiles launched by the Papal Nuncio. The Papal Nuncio launched a new range of devotional tiles in Galway on Tuesday as part of 2014's year of special devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus.



Sr Colette, Abbess of the Poor Clare community in Galway, hands one of the new range of Holy Name tiles to Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Charles Brown watched by Fr Fearghus OFM, Bishop Martin Drennan of Galway and the Poor Clare Sisters

Visiting the enclosed Poor Clare Sisters on Nun's Island, Archbishop Charles Brown placed the first of the 2014 tiles into the wall of the nun's enclosure, watched by Mother Abbess, Sr Colette and Fr Fearghus of the Franciscan community in Galway.

A wave of devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus sprang up in 1914 and many people identified their devotion by purchasing the distinctive blue tiles bearing the monogram IHS or YHS and placed it above the entrance door to their homes.

Examples of the devotional tiles have been found all over Galway, Limerick, Ennis, Cork and beyond.

“There’s always been a kind of mystique surrounding the blue tiles and also some peculiar theories as to what they meant,” according to Poor Clare Abbess, Sr Colette.

“This is a good chance to affirm that they do not indicate Garda stations!”

The custom of placing an IHS monogrammed tiled over the door of houses was popularised by St Bernardine of Siena in the 15th century. He introduced this custom as a means of encouraging people to practice Christian charity and to be peacemakers.

It was also a way of invoking God’s protection upon the house-dwellers.

The 2014 Year of the Holy Name of Jesus, to which Pope Francis has given his personal support, was initiated by the Irish Franciscans in conjunction with the Poor Clares.

A website www.holyname.ie has been set up and contains information on the Holy Name plaques.

The new tiles are available from Bothar Emmaus Christian Bookshop, An Tobar Nua, 25-29 Lower Dominic Street, Galway. Contact Deirdre: 087 2145379/091 562175 and will soon be available through the www.holyname.ie website. More at -

<http://www.catholicireland.net/nuns-papal-nuncio-blue-tiles/>



Mystery worshipper reports on Cork Cathedral

The “Ship of Fools” web site carries reports on worship after a mystery worshipper attends a church or cathedral service. One visited St Finbarre’s C of I Cathedral in Cork in March and his report includes:

What was the name of the service?
Choral Evensong.

How full was the building?

I counted 19 in the surpliced choir and 20 people in the nave. With the clergy, 41 were present.

Did anyone welcome you personally?

A friendly usher greeted me quietly in the back of the nave as she handed me a prayer book and a hymnal.

Was your pew comfortable?

It was a pew. It was a rather plain unpadded bench with a kneeling rail permanently attached a few inches off the floor. There were small cushions marked "Kneel to pray" hanging from the back of the pew ahead. Serviceable enough for a service of an hour or less.

How would you describe the pre-service atmosphere?

Quiet and reverent. Expectant, too.



What were the exact opening words of the service?

"Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil."

What books did the congregation use during the service?

The *Book of Common Prayer for the Church of Ireland* (2000) and the *Church Hymnal 5th Edition* (2000).

What musical instruments were played?

A pipe organ, very expertly played.

Did anything distract you?

I rather wished I had taken a seat closer to front and centre so that I could have better seen the choir. The singers on the north side of the chancel were hidden by the pulpit, but I thought that to move around like the tourist I was would have been disruptive.

More at -

<http://shipoffools.com/mystery/2014/2671.html>

Installation of ecumenical canon at Belfast Cathedral

**The Rev Ruth Patterson
of the Methodist Church
was installed as an
ecumenical canon in St
Anne's Cathedral,
Belfast, on Sunday May
18.**



*Dean John Mann (r) with Canon Ruth Patterson and
Archdeacon David McClay*

Ruth was appointed by the
Dean and Chapter of St
Anne's in succession to
the Rev Brian Fletcher who
has retired.

The Presbyterian ecumenical canon in the Cathedral is also Ruth Patterson.
The Rev Ruth Patterson OBE, Director of Restoration Ministries, was
installed in the Cathedral in October 2012.

The Cathedral's new canon currently serves as the Methodist minister in
Ballynafeigh Church, Ormeau Road, Belfast, and is Superintendent of the
Ballynafeigh Circuit. Previously she served as a non-stipendiary minister in
Donegall Road Church, Belfast.

In both these positions Ruth worked closely with colleagues in other church
traditions in particular through the Ballynafeigh Clergy Fellowship and the
sharing of evening services with St Simon and St Philip's Church in Donegall
Road.

Ruth was educated at Fivemiletown High School and Methodist College
Belfast. On leaving school she trained as a Diagnostic Radiographer at the
Royal Victoria Hospital Belfast where she later worked as a clinical
radiographer, eventually specialising in neuroradiography, before moving to a
lecturer's post at the University of Ulster.

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In 2004 she received a Bachelor of Theology from Queen's University Belfast, and was ordained in 2006. She is married to Ian and they have two grown up sons.

Hymns through the seasons in Brookeborough

'Hymns through the Seasons' is the theme of a celebratory Flower Festival taking place (May 23 to 26) at Brookeborough Methodist Church, which is marking a significant milestone.

Impartial Reporter - Superintendent Minister, the Rev. Colin Milligan, on behalf of the Flower Festival committee and the



The Rev. Colin Milligan, Superintendent Minister, and Mrs. Brenda Boles, flower arranger, discussing the arrangements for the Flower Festival at Brookeborough Methodist Church

congregation, extends a welcome to their event, which he explains has been arranged as part of the Church's thanksgiving celebrations for its 175th Anniversary.

"The theme of our Flower Festival is 'Hymns through the Seasons' as our floral arrangements will focus on particularly well-loved hymns and choruses from down through the years," explained Mr. Milligan.

He added: "We pray that as you have the opportunity to view these beautiful arrangements that God would touch your heart anew with His goodness and with a fresh word from Him."

Mr. Milligan pointed out that in Brookeborough Methodist Church, they give thanks for God has shown them His goodness down through its years.

He noted: "From its construction in 1839 to the present date, the church has been the place where many faces, young and old, have heard the 'good news' that Jesus, God's Son, has defeated death and opened the kingdom to those who believe."

In a History of Brookeborough Methodists, the Minister records that the present Church building was erected in 1839 with the outside showing a typical Methodist absence of decoration but having a small internal porch.

More at -

<http://www.impartialreporter.com/news/roundup/articles/2014/05/18/405179-hymns-through-the-seasons/>

Concert in Carrick

In Saint Nicholas' Parish Church, this Friday 23rd May ...at Eight o'clock

Sound of Solace (Action Cancer Choir) with Kilkeel Silver Band, Victoria College Prep School, Sandys Street Men's Group and Gospel Pianist, Graham Murphy

... all in concert Saint Nicholas' Parish Church 8.00 pm. Suggested donation £8

Evening of Choral Music in Aid of St Columba's, Swords, Restoration Fund

An evening of choral music with Fingal Chamber Choir and special guests, Enchiriadis Chamber Choir, will take place in Christ Church

Cathedral on Saturday May 24 in aid of the St Columba's, Swords, Restoration Fund.

Conducted by David Maxwell with organist Andrew Johnstone, the concert will feature Vivaldi's Gloria and other favourite pieces. The concert gets underway at 7.30 pm.

Tickets cost €15 and are available from Christ Church Cathedral, helpusmakehistory.org or on the door on the night.

St Columba's Church in Swords has been closed for worship for over a year since part of the roof of the historic church fell in. The concert is part of the parish's ongoing fundraising activities aimed at enabling the church to be restored and reopened once again.

What Happens When Women Pray Conference

**Transformations
Ireland and Kairos
Trust are again
partnering to host a
conference for women
'WHAT CAN HAPPEN
WHEN WOMEN PRAY'.
This will be in
Orangefield
Presbyterian Church,
Castlereagh Road
Belfast.**



Spend the day with Daphne Godwin from Ffald-y-Brenin in Wales. This is a day for women and we will take time to hear from Daphne. We hope in the time we have together you will be challenged, inspired and envisioned to pray.

Time & Date: 9.30am – 4.30pm on Saturday 7th June. Cost: £20 (including Lunch)

Spend the day with Daphne Godwin from Ffald-y-Brenin in Wales. This is a day for women and we will take time to hear from Daphne. We hope in the time we have together you will be challenged, inspired and envisioned to pray.

Email: info@transformations-ireland.org Phone: 07841096571

Churches urged to pray for the media



Churches and Christians are being encouraged to pray for the media on Sunday June 1st.

ACNS - The initiative is being led by the Church and Media Network, with prayers being submitted by the Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, Revd Ruth Gee, President of the National Conference of The Methodist Church: Dr Daleep Mukarji, the Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, and the Rt. Revd. Nick Baines, the Anglican Bishop-designate of Leeds.

The Church and Media Network, which seeks to encourage Christians to engage with the media, is encouraging people to submit their own prayers on the newly-launched website www.pray4media.co.uk and to tweet prayers to @pray4media.

Revd Tony Miles, Chair of the Network, explained: "The British media is under scrutiny as never before. Illegal and unethical practices by some journalists have combined with tough economic times and pressures from new technology to make these challenging times for everyone working in the media.

“Yet as Christians we want to affirm the media’s vital role in our society. At its best the media gives a voice to the voiceless, holds the powerful to account, highlights unjust practices, calls for justice, keeps people informed, brings us strong opinions to challenge our own – and tells stories to entertain us.”

Tony Miles, Media Chaplain and Deputy Superintendent Minister at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, added: “We firmly believe that working in the media is an honourable profession. We want to encourage Christians and other people of faith and goodwill to consider it as a calling. We want to support all those working in and with the media in our churches, including church leaders and communications officers who help to portray and interpret the Church’s role in our society.”

The Church and Media Network is calling on churches – on June 1st and regularly - to:

- Include the media in their prayers for the world, country or local community. Specifically name the key local media when praying for the area.
- Include the media in prayer diary listings.
- Encourage people who work in or with the media in the church to talk about the pressures they face, and then pray about the issues raised.
- Get to know the staff of their local newspaper or radio station. Ask them to suggest how the church might pray for them.
- Use newspaper and website headlines and photographs as visual aids for prayer. Pray for the people who produced the reports – sometimes at great risk to themselves.

These ideas and others are included on the www.pray4media.co.uk website, together with other ideas to help build positive links between churches and their local media.

The Archbishop of York’s prayer reads:

Lord Jesus Christ, you speak and bring all that is seen and unseen into being:

we give you thanks for the gift of the media to reach the far flung places of the earth with messages of hope and life.

We give you thanks for those who risk their security and even their lives to expose injustice and to bring news of hope.

May they strive to be the bearers of good news that all people may come to know the abundant life for which we have been created; and yet more wonderfully redeemed in Jesus Christ.

We offer our prayer in your name, in the power of the Holy Spirit for the glory of the Father. Amen.

Much of the material for the day has been written by Revd Peter Crumpler, former director of communications for the Archbishops' Council, now serving as a curate in Sandridge, Herts.

New initiatives explore relationships between ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue

Addressing the urgency of witnessing to the gospel in current ecumenical and multi-religious situations, the World Council of Churches (WCC) will develop materials to assist churches engaged in both ecumenical dialogue and inter-religious dialogue.

Ecumenical dialogue is about conversations between different Christian churches while inter-religious dialogue is concerned with the conversations between different world religions.

The agreement to produce these materials were an outcome of vigorous conversations in a recent meeting, organized by the WCC's Commission on Faith and Order and the WCC's programme for inter-religious dialogue and cooperation, from 12 to 14 May at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, Switzerland.

Questions related to the relationship between ecumenical and inter-religious dialogues, their commonalities and distinctive features, were in focus at the meeting.

The meeting discussed different geographical and structural contexts in which questions of ecumenical and inter-religious relationships arise. The conversations showed that sometimes groups or individuals may find themselves with responsibility for both ecumenical and inter-religious concerns, and would welcome assistance about the different goals and methods appropriate to each context. On other occasions, it was said, expertise in one field could lead to a devaluing of the insights and importance of the other.

Participants of the meeting coming from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and North American region included people responsible for ecumenical and inter-religious relations in WCC member churches, as well as Christian



World Council of Churches

academics and researchers.

“This meeting is a timely first step towards a constructive dialogue that will mutually enrich the churches’ work globally in inter-Christian dialogue, and dialogue with other world religions,” said Dr Clare Amos, WCC programme executive for inter-religious dialogue and cooperation.

“With the WCC, there is a long history of expressions of both ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue. Both expressions of dialogue have much to contribute to the other,” said Canon John Gibaut, director of the WCC’s Commission on Faith and Order.

Cooperation between the WCC’s Commission on Faith and Order and the WCC’s programme for Inter-religious dialogue and cooperation, in working on these themes, is in response to the new way of working adopted by the WCC 10th Assembly in South Korea last year.

[Communiqué from the meeting “Called to dialogue”](#)

[WCC programme for inter-religious dialogue and cooperation](#)

[WCC Commission on Faith and Order](#)