



The essential daily brief on the Irish churches

Top Canadian Choir Visits Ireland

Canada's award-winning chamber choir SPIRITUS teams up with Ireland's internationally acclaimed New Dublin Voices for what promises to be a wonderful one-off concert in Dublin's Christ Church Cathedral on Monday, April 28th at 8pm.

The Canadians are visiting Dublin as part of an Irish tour which culminates in the 2014 Cork International Choral Festival. Conducted by Timothy Shantz, this outstanding choir will perform a wide-ranging selection of choral music including beautiful Canadian folk songs in contemporary arrangements. Joining SPIRITUS is New Dublin Voices in a programme of striking contrasts between great masterpieces of the Renaissance and the exciting and provocative music of our own times.

Since its founding in 1995, SPIRITUS Chamber Choir has enriched Canadian choral scene with performances of high-quality choral repertoire. Known for its diverse programming, SPIRITUS has championed music both old and new from around the world, and integrated a variety of performing and visual arts within its performances. At the 2013 National Competition for Canadian Amateur Choirs, SPIRITUS took First Prizes in both the mixed-voice adult choir and contemporary music categories.

New Dublin Voices, founded by its conductor Bernie Sherlock in 2005, is a leading Irish chamber choir famous for concert programmes that are fresh and innovative and span a very wide range of style and period. NDV takes special pleasure in exploring the music of living composers, and is a regular prizewinner on the European circuit of elite choral competitions.

Tickets available online at www.newdublinvoices.com/tickets, at the door or can be reserved by email: info@newdublinvoices.com

More at -

<http://www.christchurchdublin.ie/NewsDetails/247>

Quinn challenges church over patronage of schools



Minister suggests teaching of religion at either end or start of school day

Irish Times - Minister for Education Ruairí Quinn has thrown down a challenge to the Catholic Church to give concrete examples of how its schools can be “genuinely inclusive” for children of all faiths and none.

Minister for Education Ruairí Quinn notes that one of the issues highlighted by the report of the forum on pluralism and patronage is “respecting a child’s rights not to receive religious instruction”.

In an address to be delivered at a teacher union conference this morning, Mr Quinn says it is “disappointing” that the church has failed to provide such information to his department as had been promised in previous discussions.

He also suggests that, in developing policies on inclusivity, Catholic schools in areas where there is no alternative patronage should consider timetabling faith formation at the start or end of the day to minimise disruption to class.

The intervention comes just days after Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin called for an acceleration of reforms to achieve a “plurality of patronage” in Irish education. In an interview with *The Irish Times*, the archbishop said he believed “a more robust collaboration” between the church and the Department of the Education “would make these things move a little quickly”.

Picking up on these comments, Mr Quinn says: "I look forward to working with Archbishop Martin and others to develop that robust collaboration."

He notes that one of the issues highlighted by the report of the forum on pluralism and patronage in 2012 is "respecting a child's rights not to receive religious instruction". More at -

<http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/quinn-challenges-church-over-patronage-of-schools-1.1769325>

Giro d'Italia: Armagh church services rearranged for race

The two cathedrals in Armagh have agreed to change the times of their Sunday services to avoid a clash with the Giro d'Italia cycle race.



BBC News - Northern Ireland is hosting the first stage of the event from 9-11 May.

Day three of the race begins just after 11:00 BST on Sunday 11 May - the same time as worship takes place at Armagh's Protestant and Catholic cathedrals.

Roads will be closed in and around the city centre and thousands of spectators are expected to fill the streets.

The 11:00 BST Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral has been cancelled, but an extra service has been arranged during the weekend at which some prayers will be said in Italian, to mark the Giro.

The Dean of Armagh, the Reverend Gregory Dunstan said it was a "difficult decision" to change church services for the racing event

The 11:00 BST Sunday service at the neighbouring Protestant cathedral has also been cancelled.

The dean of Armagh, the Reverend Gregory Dunstan, said: "We will hold one celebration at nine pm the previous evening, after sunset, taking our cue of course from Jewish tradition when the new day begins at sunset. And the second celebration we will hold at seven o'clock in the morning.

"It was a difficult decision. Christian worship on a Sunday matters but I consulted the congregation and suggested this is what we should do and this is what we've decided.

"I think it shows that we understand the importance to Armagh of this event (the Giro) in Armagh. That's the message we want to give."

Both cathedrals will be open to the public for visits during the Giro weekend, and Armagh council has arranged a series of community events in the city on Saturday 10 May.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-27105894>

Sunday at St Patrick's streamed

St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin - This Sunday at 11.15am Choral Matins sung by the gentlemen of the Cathedral Choir with music by Charles Wood (Te Deum in E & Great Lord of Lords) .

3.15pm Choral Evensong with music by Batten (Short Service) & Taverner (Dum transisset sabbatum).

As per usual both services will be streamed live via the Cathedral website <http://www.stpatrickscathedral.ie/live-screening.aspx?ln=1>

C of I Council for Mission – Synod Breakfast

The Rt Rev Justin Badi , Bishop of Maridi Diocese in South Sudan, speaks on 'Through Thick and Thin' – Partnership that works

What are the mutual benefits of long-term partnership?
How is the church there – and here – challenged to respond In light of the current political unrest in South Sudan?

Friday 9 May 2014 at 8:15 am
St Werburgh's Church, Dublin

To attend this Mission Breakfast, please download the application form below and return it to Reverend Paul Hoey by Sunday 4th May by email or post.

<http://ireland.anglican.org/cmsfiles/pdf/Synod/2014/MissionBreakfastInvitation.pdf>

Our Christian beliefs are under attack from influential and militant atheists



David Cameron [said last week](#) that Britain is a Christian country. In The Telegraph yesterday, 55 mainly atheist public figures said [in a letter](#) that it is not. The funny thing is, both sides are right.

Charles Moore in the Daily Telegraph - The Prime Minister is correct statistically, historically and culturally. Although the self-identification of Christians in Britain is declining, 59 per cent described themselves as such in the latest census. That is still a huge figure: allegiance to Christianity is roughly double that offered to any political party.

Besides, the country that we now (until September's Scottish referendum?) call the United Kingdom has been explicitly Christian for more than a thousand years. Its monarchy, Parliament, morality, law and education; its flag, national anthem, key texts, much of its literature, art and architecture; its

health care, many of its charities and endowments, public holidays and festivals, the structure of its week and its place-names – all these and many more are Christian in origin. Prof Jim Al-Khalili, who led the signatures, derives his first name from an apostle of Jesus, as do his co-signatories the novelist Philip Pullman and the anti-religious fanatic Peter Tatchell, who is named, ultimately, after the first Pope.

Usually these connections are not meaningless vestiges. Britain's entire political character today, with its idea of liberty based on Parliament, would be radically different if we had not become a Protestant nation in the 16th century. Without our religious history, our ancestors would not have explored North America or founded the United States. Scotland and England only united in the first place because they found a way of preserving their separate church structures, and their king produced a great Bible in English.

Our Queen, 88 yesterday, was crowned by an archbishop, and the same will apply to her successors. She is Supreme Governor of the Church of England, not to give her a pretty title but as a way of bringing peace and maintaining national authority in matters which can – and often did – lead people to kill one another. By the way she has lived her own life, she has shown how well she understands this.

So Mr Cameron would be an ignoramus if he did not identify Christianity as the key factor in our national story. And he would be a fool – as well being unfaithful to his own beliefs – if he did not celebrate its benign, continuing effects.

On the other hand, the angry atheists are surely speaking truth when they say that “we are a largely non-religious society”. If there is a battle in Britain nowadays between something explicitly Christian and something secular, the latter usually wins. Look at Sunday shopping, mass abortion, the growing desire to kill old people (sorry, let them “die with dignity”), divorce, surrogate motherhood and so on. For better or worse, religious objections couched as such tend to be disliked and rejected (unless they are made by Muslims, in which case people get scared of causing offence).

Even in his own Holy Week article for the Church Times that annoyed the atheists, Mr Cameron was careful to avoid anything about Christianity that was at all specific. Indeed, he was at pains to point out that being “evangelical” about Christianity did not in any way suggest that the Christian virtues are not shared by everyone else. The 55 accused him of “exceptionalising” the Christian contribution. He was so far from doing this that one sometimes wondered why he bothered to write the piece at all.

More at -

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/10778564/Our-Christian-beliefs-are-under-attack-from-influential-and-militant-atheists.html>

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