

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



Sinkhole causes church collapse on Croagh Patrick

A giant sinkhole has appeared on the peak of holy mountain, Croagh Patrick causing the church to collapse and disappear.

The Mayo News - A section of the roof is the only part of the oratory, built by local men in 1905, that is now above ground and visible.

Experts say 'a spate of sinkholes all over the country' are the result of the recent extreme weather which has had catastrophic consequences along the west coast, leading to a whole herd of cattle vanishing on the Erris peninsula and a holiday home near the village of Louisburgh disappearing without trace.

Emergency services were called to the holy mountain, whose pyramidal peak

dominates the skyline, shortly after 8am this morning (Monday) after a regular pilgrim made the dramatic discovery. Retired teacher, Mr Donnchadh Ó Móráin, from Dunfanaghy in County Donegal, said he normally climbs the 764-meter high mountain twice a month and that when he reached the summit around 7.30am it was – as is often the case – engulfed in rolling mists and he initially ‘didn’t notice the giant crater where the oratory used to be’.

“I was exhausted after the climb and stopped for a few minutes, looking out over Clew Bay, to catch my breath and rub moisturiser into my feet. I thought I was seeing things when I turned around and noticed the oratory had vanished into the ground. So naturally, I knelt down and said a prayer, just in case I was in the middle of some kind of miracle,” Mr Ó Morain told The Mayo News.

He continued: “But when it slowly dawned on me that this was real, I walked towards the spot where the roof of the church was jutting up and discovered a huge crater in which the oratory is now dangling perilously. All I can say is, Saint Patrick would turn in his grave, it is like an abyss.”

Mayo County Council personnel along with local community leaders, a representative of the Clergy as well as members of Mayo Mountain Rescue team were on the scene by lunchtime but such was the size of the sinkhole, they were left speechless, scratching their heads and looking into the hole. More at -

http://www.mayonews.ie/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=19637:sinkhole-swallows-croagh-patricks-church&catid=23:news&Itemid=46

Bishop and former Corrymeela leader to retire

Bishop Trevor Williams has announced his intention to retire at the end of July 2014.

He commented, ‘It is not a decision I have come to lightly, but I am convinced it is the right time for the Diocese, my family and myself. I am very thankful for the privilege of serving the United Dioceses of Limerick and Killaloe for the past six



years.'

Bishop Williams served as a university chaplain, leader of the Corrymeela Community, BBC presenter, and parish rector. See also -

<http://dublin.anglican.org/old-site/pr/2008/pr080506-williams-limerick-bishop.html>

Inter-church event in Larne

The Irish Churches Peace Project is holding an event in Larne which brings churches and community together to look at befriending the elderly and supporting families with dementia.

The vision is that all groups supporting community or families should come, also individuals wanting to support these groups come. It is at Larne town hall on Monday 7th April at 7.30.

Introduction of gay marriage 'concerning for many Christians'

The introduction of same-sex marriages in England and Wales is "concerning" for many Christians, a group which represents evangelicals has said.

News Letter -Saturday saw the first gay marriages in England and Wales under the new law, but Northern Ireland retains the old law after the Assembly rejected a motion to extend same-sex marriage to the Province.

David Smyth, public policy officer at Evangelical Alliance Northern Ireland, said: "While Saturday was a day of celebration for some, it was a concerning day for many.

"Christian opposition to same-sex marriage was never just about protecting churches. It's always been about the wellbeing and welfare of family and communities for generations to come.

"The whole idea of 'equal' marriage comes from a premise that many outrightly reject, that marriage is an inequality to be corrected."

He added: "This change in marriage law was argued on the grounds of equality and love.

“What about ‘equal marriage’ for the bisexual person who is ‘banned’ from being able to marry both their male and female partners?”

But the Anglican group Changing Attitude Ireland, which campaigns for gay rights, welcomed the change.

Its chairman, Richard O’Leary, said: “We hope that marriage equality will be extended to Northern Ireland and introduced in the Republic of Ireland without undue delay.

“We are concerned that the many gay and lesbian Anglicans who migrate between Britain and Ireland will find that the different marriage provisions cause legal difficulties.”

A spokesman for the Irish Presbyterian Church said that it “continues to fully support the retention of the present legal definition of marriage in Northern Ireland as ‘the permanent and lifelong union of one man and one woman, to the exclusion of all others’.”

He added: “While the change in legislation in England and Wales is bound to increase the pressure for such a development in Northern Ireland, the Presbyterian Church continues to stand with other churches and fellow Christians in seeking to retain the present definition and opposing any change to a fundamental building block of society.”

Community project to honour 'people's priest'

A community project - including a Garden of reflection - has been spearheaded in memory of a popular west Belfast cleric who died suddenly last year.

Irish News - Fr Matt Wallace, who was parish priest of Holy Trinity Church in Turf Lodge, took his own life last June sending shock waves through the community.

The 69-year-old, who was originally from Templetown in Co Wexford, had been dubbed "the people's priest", after serving communities in west Belfast for almost four decades.

In the run-up to the first anniversary of his death, public representatives, parishioners and residents are spearheading The Trinity Project, to remember the much-loved cleric. Led by Sinn Fein MP Paul Maskey, the project will see shops near Holy Trinity church renamed the 'Fr Matt Wallace Centre'. A reflection Garden will be built opposite the church and an oak tree - which

represents hope - will be planted in the middle, while flowers in the colours of Wexford County will be planted around it. Elsewhere, environment improvements will be carried out along Nor-glen Gardens while work will also be carried out at Holy Trinity youth Centre and Boxing Club.

The work will coincide with a week-long festival in the lead-up the first anniversary of Fr Wallace's death.

The festival will include a series of events by various groups in the parish - including members of the Wallace

family - taking part in a two-day charity cycle from Wexford to Belfast, arriving in Turf lodge on Sunday June 1.

The festival will conclude with an anniversary Mass at Holy Trinity on Saturday, June 7. More at -

<http://www.irishnews.com/news/community-project-to-honour-people-s-priest-1346183>

Cork rector appointed

The Reverend Cliff Jeffers has been nominated for appointment as the new Church of Ireland Rector of the Fanlobbus Union of Parishes in West Cork (centred on the towns of Dunmanway and Drimoleague, with churches also in Drinagh and Coolkelure).

Cliff is currently working as Chaplain at the Dublin Institute of Technology. After ordination he served as curate of Limerick City Parish, before ministering as Rector of Clonenagh (Mountrath), and more recently as Rector of Athy, County Kildare.



Cliff is originally from Bandon, County Cork where he attended Bandonbridge National School and Bandon Grammar School. After school he completed a Certificate in Electronic Engineering at the Cork Institute of Technology. This was followed by a Diploma in Industrial Engineering, also at CIT, before completing the degree of Bachelor in Theology at Trinity College,

Dublin. Cliff is married to to Eunice, and they have two sons Andy and Simon.

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin celebrates Mass in Catholic school amalgamated to assist Educate Together school

The Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Diarmuid Martin celebrated Mass in one of the first Catholic schools to amalgamate, to allow for more plurality in education in the local area.

At Mass in St. James' Primary school, Basin Lane, the Archbishop said it was "an important landmark in the history of Catholic Education in the area."

Two local Catholic boys and girls schools came together to form a co-educational primary school, St. James', at the start of this academic year. As a result, a new Educate Together School has been established in the locality.

In his homily the Archbishop said what was happening in Basin Lane was not a retreat from the tradition of Catholic education, but the beginnings of a new presence. "We come to bless the fruit of this amalgamation which witness both the rich heritage of the past, but also recognition of a changed Ireland. Catholic education still has its vital place in our educational system, as something which brings its unique value system, a value system which is recognised by families of a variety of religious traditions in this community who opt to send their children to a Catholic school."

The Archbishop said having other schools in the area which will embrace a different ethos, was to be welcomed. This he said, would contribute to the rightful pluralism of educational provision in today's Dublin. "In that spirit we wish success to the Educate Together School which has been established in this wider area." he said. More at -

<http://www.catholicbishops.ie/2014/04/01/archbishop-diarmuid-martin-celebrates-mass-amalgamated-catholic-school/>

Interim Appointment Anglican Centre Rome

The Rev. Marcus Walker has been appointed Interim Associate Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome from mid-May 2014.

ACNS - The appointment is being made because the Director, Archbishop David Moxon, has recently taken on additional responsibilities working closely with the Vatican as a member of the Executive Board of the Global Freedom Network and it is therefore urgent to provide him with additional support to ensure that the ministry of the Anglican Centre itself also grows and develops.

The Global Freedom Network is a faith-based initiative to eradicate human slavery, strongly supported by the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Associate Director's role will be to ensure the smooth running of all the Centre's activities and to support Archbishop Moxon in all aspects of his role as Director of the Anglican Centre.

Marcus Walker (33) is currently curate of St Paul's, Winchmore Hill in London. Born in Jerusalem, he spent his childhood in the Holy Land, Moscow and Cairo. After reading History at Oxford, where he was President of the Union, he worked as a parliamentary researcher for five years. Marcus's training for ordination included a term at the Venerable English College in Rome. He was ordained deacon in 2011 and priest at Petertide 2012.

The appointment of an Interim Associate Director precedes the selection process for a longer-term post of Associate Director with effect from later in the year.

Former nun and Belfast Community education pioneer Noelle Ryan dies

Noelle Ryan, who helped hundreds of disadvantaged people to gain an education, has died aged 82.

BBC News Ni - Ms Ryan, a former nun originally from Dublin, came to Belfast in 1972 after spending six years as a member of an enclosed order.



Noelle Ryan's visit to Belfast was to last more than 40 years

However, while she was still a novice in the Dominican contemplative order, her mother superior suggested she would be more suited to working in outside communities.

It was a piece of advice that would lead to an improved quality of life for hundreds of people.

After leaving the convent, she worked in communities in Liverpool, Dublin, Lourdes and Belfast.

Her "temporary stay" in St John's Parish in west Belfast's Ballymurphy area was to last for more than 40 years.

Working with west Belfast priest Fr Des Wilson, she helped develop a further education and training centre in a four-bedroomed house at 123 Springhill Avenue.

Springhill Community House, or simply 123, as it became known, initially targeted the disadvantaged and set them on the path to further education.

The project, set up in one of Northern Ireland's most deprived areas at the height of the Troubles, eventually became the largest educational outreach centre in west Belfast.

Ms Ryan was particularly interested in those who had missed out on education in their early years or felt they had no value, and no contribution to make to society. More at -

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-26815275>

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www.churchnewsireland.org