

APRIL 3, 2019



## Mothering Sunday Family Service 1930s style

**Members of Donagheady Mothers' Union, in County Tyrone, donned their best 1930s style for a special Mothering Sunday Family Service in St James' Parish Church in Donemana on Sunday morning.**

[churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)

Page 1

**APRIL 3, 2019**

The Service, which was led by the Rector of Donagheady, Rev Dr Robin Stokitt, marked the 80th anniversary of the founding of Mothers' Union in the parish, and celebrated the role of mothers – past and present – in families and worship in Donemana.

The Family Service was the brainchild of the local MU, many of whom donned pre-war costumes for the event. The Diocesan President of Mothers' Union, Jackie Armstrong, who was the guest speaker for the Service, donned her late mother's wedding dress for the occasion.

After worship, the congregation remained in church for refreshments. A magnificent cake – bearing Mothers' Union's distinctive emblem and the inscription '80 Years' - was baked specially for the Service and was cut by Ms Armstrong.

## **Bishop Donal McKeown welcomes Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation to young people 'Christ is alive'**

Pope Francis has today published his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation to young people and to the entire People of God, entitled *Christus vivit (Christ is Alive)*. It is the considered fruit of planning, consultation and over three weeks of deliberation involving senior representatives of Bishops' Conferences from around the world who attended

APRIL 3, 2019



**Bishop Donal McKeown of Derry with teachers from the diocese who recently graduated at St Mary's University College**

the Synod in the Vatican to discuss the theme 'youth, faith and vocational discernment' from 3 – 28 October last year.

In the document, composed of nine chapters and divided into 299 paragraphs, Pope Francis explains that he allowed himself to be "inspired by the wealth of reflections and conversations of the Synod" on young people. Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh, the President of the Bishops' Conference and Bishop Donal McKeown of Derry, chair of the Bishops' Commission for Worship, Pastoral Renewal and Faith Development, represented the bishops of Ireland at the 2018 Synod.



APRIL 3, 2019



**MCI President, Rev Billy Davison welcomes Simon Kinghan, the new Connexional Estates manager!. His role is to lead, plan and co-ordinate the management of the Church's property estate.**

Welcoming the publication of *Christ is Alive*, Bishop McKeown said, "*Christ is Alive* is an accessible and inspiring document! I remember clearly, at the end of the Synod, Pope Francis reminded his listeners that the Synod's work will continue both internationally and nationally. Today is a further such step. The early publication of the document is a welcome sign that Pope Francis recognises the urgency of a renewed emphasis on creating new young disciples of Jesus. The final document of the Synod was clear that youth ministry is essential for two reasons. Firstly, there are so many young people crying out for good news in their lives. And, secondly – in the [churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)

**APRIL 3, 2019**

prophetic words of Pope John Paul II during his 1979 visit to Ireland – every new generation is like a new continent to be conquered for Christ. *Christ is Alive* develops these important pastoral challenges.

“Across our country we prepared for the Synod on Youth by beginning a dialogue with young people and youth leaders. This initiative was followed-up with a meeting involving a representative group of youth directors who came to Rome in October for discussions with Archbishop Eamon and myself. Since that time, the bishops have met with young adults during our annual retreat, in Knock, last February.

“Looking forward, we have nominated two young people to attend an International Youth Forum in Rome, in June, and we welcome the setting up of Catholic Youth Ministry Ireland (CYMI) as a national forum for the mutual support of those involved in youth ministry across our island.”

Bishop McKeown concluded, “I earnestly encourage everyone to read today’s Post-Synodal Exhortation *Christ is Alive* so that the Church can – as widely as possible – speak into the lives of our families and parishes to proclaim the good news of God’s mercy and love for our young people.”

## **WCC general secretary: “We believe in God’s love”**

On 31 March at the Hollywood United Methodist Church, in a sermon entitled “The Two Brothers,” World Council of

APRIL 3, 2019



Churches (WCC) general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit reflected on the biblical parable of the prodigal son, among the most shared and well-known stories in the Bible.

“We all like good stories,” Tveit said. “Some of the best are presented to the world from this very town.”

Biblical stories and the stories of the Christian tradition shape our lives, Tveit reflected. “Our Bible is in fact a unique collection of stories,” he said. “Some of them we like, some of them we don’t.”

Tveit noted that Jesus told the story of the prodigal son to the scribes and the pharisees in response to the conflict and discourse among them. “It is a justification of the inclusive practice of Jesus, his eating and drinking with the others,



**APRIL 3, 2019**

the sinners,” said Tveit. “Just as the gospel story of the two sons perplexed and provoked people then, so it still can and does lead to critical self-reflection, questioning of our values, and ultimately to transformation.”

The world we live in today is definitely in need of words and stories that can bring us together, continued Tveit, who shared that the theme for the WCC 11th Assembly in 2021 in Karlsruhe, Germany, will be “Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity.”

Tveit explained the rationale behind the theme: “Because we believe something else is possible. Because we believe in God’s love. Just as the gospel story of the two sons perplexed and provoked people then, so it still can and does lead to critical self-reflection, questioning of our values, and ultimately to transformation,” he said.

“Jesus portrays some of the miseries and tragedies we can find ourselves in, and also the prejudices and other attitudes that exclude us,” he said. “We have no other mandate as church than to follow the example of the generous father, offering grace for free.”

Nobody should be excluded, concluded Tveit. “Everybody, everybody has a place at the table. Our human relationships are never divided because of generosity, openness, gentleness, grace. That is what it means when we say we are united in Christ’s love, not because we all agree, but because we are all loved.”

Read the full text of the sermon by the WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit (<https://>

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**APRIL 3, 2019**

[www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/general-secretary/the-two-brothers-a-sermon-hollywood-united-methodist-church-31-march-2019-rev-dr-olav-fykse-tveit-general-secretary/](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/general-secretary/the-two-brothers-a-sermon-hollywood-united-methodist-church-31-march-2019-rev-dr-olav-fykse-tveit-general-secretary/))

Hollywood United Methodist Church (<https://hollywoodumc.org/rev-dr-olav/?fbclid=IwAR29bKcZovsnngXNKNh2o8xcX2kxFuXBDkAgGOlvLLM3mGRDYImM2PTgWVM>)

## **OPINION : Recalling an afternoon that I shall never forget**

**Sandra Chapman writes in the News Letter**

The man on the other side of the desk from me was a solicitor.

I had come to seek his advice and for the first half hour he had to listen to a tearful, fairly desperate woman, sure that what had happened to her was very wrong and someone was accountable.

That was years ago when the only law I had studied was newspaper law and having to face a proper solicitor, blubbing about how my rights had been ignored and how I was sure I would suffer long term ill-health as a result, was an afternoon I shall never forget. That I eventually found justice, which went a long way to my recovery, was down to that young man who listened to every tear soaked word that afternoon and promised he would help me.



APRIL 3, 2019



That solicitor was Trevor Ringland, also a former Irish rugby international who has had a significant role in brokering peace in this province and whom the esteemed journalist Ruth Dudley Edwards described recently in her column in the Belfast Telegraph as ‘one of the most tireless and effective workers for peace Ireland has ever produced’. She had been responding to Trevor Ringland’s own declaration in the News Letter three days earlier that there was ‘no space in New Ireland for me’.

In this newspaper he revealed he had detected ‘hardening attitudes’ on the part of Irish nationalists at a function in 2017: “Just after the last NI Assembly elections I challenged a senior Sinn Fein figure. I said ‘you have pressed the hate button during that election campaign and it’s going to be very hard to put this back in its box’. His response was, he says, “I’ll not take lectures from the likes of you’.

**APRIL 3, 2019**

That comment has led him to the conclusion: 'No matter what I say, there's no space in their Ireland for me'. He believes Nationalists have become 'emboldened' because of the Brexit uncertainties and the 'renewed hype around calls for a border poll'. 'They listen but they don't hear', he believes.

We could all answer this by simply declaring 'we could have told you so' because it's what the entire Protestant community feels right now, I'm certain.

Mr Ringland has been involved with a number of cross-community organisations so it's a bit depressing to hear him so downbeat.

Maybe we are at a proper crossroads now; just maybe there are others out there seeing through the insincerity and untruths coming from the nationalist/republican side.

American author Lionel Shriver, who is in the North doing research for her next novel, claims she has found herself at odds with the IRA and thinks it is unfair for terrorists to be rewarded while forces of law are pursued. The latter has left most of us fuming and it has angered veterans so much they are believed to be plotting to boycott the Cenotaph remembrance parade in protest at the prosecution for murder of a former paratrooper over Bloody Sunday.

Sadly, Westminster is in such a shambles at the moment over Brexit it's doubtful if MPs will be paying much attention to how our armed forces are being hung out to dry. Then there's the argument that a 'new Ireland' should 'consider'

**APRIL 3, 2019**

joining the Commonwealth. I suspect such a move will get short shrift and that Ireland would rather starve for the next half century which is pretty much what they did when they forced the English out of the country back in the 1920s, only to be rescued by joining the EU.

It's entirely possible I'm wrong and that we are on the cusp of something big and peaceful but I'm not holding my breath. Sinn Fein president Mary Lou McDonald with her very public backing whilst in America of a stupid flag demanding England get out of Ireland shows a mindset that is still deeply entrenched in old style republicanism. And that suggests that people like Trevor Ringland still won't be listened to.

By the time my interview with him was completed all those years ago I had dried my tears and left his office confident he had listened. Through him I got justice.

## **News briefs**





**APRIL 3, 2019**

**+++Church Army launch St Kilda Centre of Mission** -The CA'S 5th Scottish centre of mission, it will be based in the remotest part of the British Isles & is an exciting opportunity to share Jesus to the many people who live on this isolated island.



**+++Rural Mission Sunday registration now open** - Visit the RMS website for more information on this year's theme, access to great materials and ideas for ways in which you can impact your community! Rural Mission Sunday 2019 - LiveTheLife [ow.ly/lhJC30oeAz8](http://ow.ly/lhJC30oeAz8)

**+++Presbyterian heritage** - O'Neill Country Historical Society Talk - The Life of the Rev John Kennedy of Benburb, 1683-1761 by Jonathan Gray on Tuesday, 9 April 2019 at 8 pm in [Benburb Presbyterian Church Main Street, Benburb, Co. Tyrone BT71 7LA](#)

APRIL 3, 2019



**+++Posts at Belfast Bible College** - There are two current job opportunities to work at the College; an Academic Administrator and as an Assistant Librarian. For full information and to apply go to:[belfastbiblecollege.com/jobs2019](http://belfastbiblecollege.com/jobs2019)

**+++Mothers Union seek Treasurer** - The Board of Trustees of Mothers Union Ireland are seeking to appoint an Honorary Treasurer to work as part of the All-Ireland Mothers' Union team.

The post holder will support the work of Mothers' Union throughout the dioceses in Ireland. The successful candidate will be required to work flexibly from their home base and closely with the Board of Trustees and All-Ireland President. Reasonable office and travelling expenses will be paid. Further information, a job description, and the application form are available from - Rossorry Rectory, 59 Derrygonnelly Road, Enniskillen, BT74 5PX. Email: [heatherme.ellis@gmail.com](mailto:heatherme.ellis@gmail.com)

APRIL 3, 2019



**+++Christ Church's 12<sup>th</sup> Canon installed** - The Revd Andrew McCroskery was installed as 12th Canon in the Chapter of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, on Sunday March 31. The cathedral's Precentor, Canon Roy Byrne, presided at the installation which took place in the context of Choral Evensong sung by the cathedral choir.

Andrew was joined for the service by family and friends and many parishioners from St Bartholomew's Church in Ballsbridge where he is Vicar.

Andrew was ordained a Curate to St Mark's in Newtownards in 1999. In 2002 he was appointed Dean's Vicar of St Fin Barre's Cathedral in Cork and became Rector of St Mary's Union in Youghal in 2004 before coming to St Bartholomew's in 2008. He was appointed Rural Dean of St Ann's Deanery in 2014.



**APRIL 3, 2019**

**+++Food for thought** - "Obedience is the road to freedom, humility the road to pleasure, unity the road to personality."  
CS Lewis

## Today in Christian history

**April 3, 1593:** George Herbert, one of England's greatest religious poets, is born in Montgomery Castle. After shocking the country by quitting his skyrocketing political life to become rector of rural Bremerton (a post he held for three years), "Holy Mr. Herbert" died of tuberculosis. But he gained great fame after his death for two posthumous books: *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*, and *A Priest to the Temple, or the Country Parson*.

**April 3, 1897:** German pianist and composer Johannes Brahms dies at age 63. Though not employed in an official ecclesiastic position, the devout Lutheran wrote extensively for the church. His *German Requiem* (1868) is considered by some to be the greatest major sacred choral work of his century.

## News Links

[Christmas celebrations will be scrapped under new ethos - Catholic schools warn](#)  
[Independent.ie](#)

The approach to the eight schools is part of the wider Department of Education initiative to reduce the dominance of the Catholic **Church** in primary ...

**APRIL 3, 2019**

**OPINION: Controversial New York priest chides Taoiseach**

Southern Star Newspaper

Yet, it was clear that Fr Rutler had the interests of Catholic **Ireland** among ... Why does the **Church's** moral authority in **Ireland** remain at ground level ...

**Annie Murphy 'shocked' at child sex abuse claims against Bishop Casey**  
**Independent.ie**

Annie Murphy unleashed a scandal within the Catholic **Church** in 1992, when she named the then-Bishop of Galway as the father of her son, Peter.

**Northern Ireland teen Cole Murray takes own life 10 weeks after becoming dad - heartbroken ...**

Belfast Telegraph

Rev David McMillan from Armagh Free Presbyterian **Church**, where Cole attended youth club for 14 years, said leaders there had been left "deeply ...

**Irish in Scotland have mixed feelings about Brexit**

Irish Times

Unsurprisingly, in a country where issues of ethnicity, **religion** and identity ... "It's my experience that if **Ireland** were playing Scotland at football, most ...

**Ebrington PS and Thornhill in finals of school choir of the year**

Derry Journal

Ebrington PS and Thornhill in finals of school **choir** of the year ... which **choirs** win the Junior and Senior titles of BBC Northern **Ireland School Choir** Of ...

**APRIL 3, 2019**

### [Dalriada in final of School Choir of Year](#)

Ballymoney and Moyle Times

BBC Northern **Ireland** School **Choir** of the Year is produced in association with the Ulster Youth **Choir**, and supported by the Arts Council for Northern ...

### [Surprise as “Sea of Change” leave IGT](#)

[WicklowNews.Net](#)

Viewers of **Ireland's** Got Talent were left surprised as “Sea of Change” were eliminated from the show on Sunday evening. The all women **choir** ...

### [Music Generation Louth tuning up for a busy April](#)

Talk of the Town

... String Orchestra Programme, they will host a wonderful afternoon showcase concert at St.Nicholas' **Church of Ireland** at 1pm on Saturday 6th April.

### ['Harry Potter' books burned at Catholic parish in Poland](#)

[Thegardenisland.com](#)

(AP Photo/Tim **Ireland**, File) ... But, speaking with the wpolityce.pl **news** portal, Parafianowicz argued that the occult and magic “have a bad influence ...

### [Dancing Druid causes St. Patrick's Day disruptions in Paris](#)

IrishCentral

An Irish spokesperson in Paris said “we are all part of a wide interconnected transnational Irish diaspora strongly linked to **Ireland**. What happens on ...

### [Disciplinary complaint lodged against Bishop of Chester](#)

Church Times



**APRIL 3, 2019**

... against the Bishop of Chester, Dr Peter Forster, by the **Church of England's** ... admitted eight counts of sexual assault in the 1970s (**News**, 15 March).

**Anglicans pray for unity in Brexit chaos**

The News International

The **Church of England** has promoted the initiative as "tea and prayer ... Despite a sharp decline in church attendance, Cottrell believes faith still has ...

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APRIL 3, 2019

