



Derry parishioners build traditional boat to sail on St Columba's Day

Clergy and parishioners of Christ Church, Culmore, Muff and Saint Peter's (CCCMSP) have completed a 10-day-long cross-community project to build a fully functioning ancient Irish currach, under the expert guidance of master boat-builder Donal Mac Polin from the Traditional Boats of Ireland Co-operative.

The 16-foot craft was completed at the '4 R's' Recycling Project's workshop at Pennyburn Industrial Estate in Londonderry, before being transported to CCCMSP's parish hall, the Acorn Centre. '4 R's' is a social enterprise initiative which was set up four years ago by the Resource Centre, Derry. Its trainees and volunteers were involved in every stage of the boat-building process.

The Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Ken Good, visited the workshop in the early stages of the boat's construction, and lent a hand as Resource Centre staff, clergy and parishioners put the finishing touches to the currach's frame. The team used a combination of hazel, spruce and pine to build the boat's skeleton, before covering the hull with ballistic nylon fabric and sealing it with pitch.

The CCCMSP project was the brainchild of Rev Katie McAteer who came up with it during the



Diocese's Year of Opportunity in 2016. Rev McAteer said they had considered a number of projects, involving children, seniors and men – at one stage even contemplating founding a Men's Shed – before opting for the currach. "We hope to sail it on the Foyle for Saint Columba's Day, on June 9th," Rev McAteer said. "Holy Trinity Church, Culmore and Culmore Primary School are both celebrating their 150th anniversaries this year. We hope to row our currach along the churchnewsireland@gmail.com

Foyle to Culmore Point, where it'll be met by pupils who will carry it to Holy Trinity Church where a Service of Confirmation will be celebrated on the evening of Saint Columba's Day."

Rev McAteer said the team from the parish were also considering including their new boat in the Foyle Maritime Festival in July this year, while Deacon Intern, Rev Bob Wray, has even more ambitious plans. He would like to see a party of currachs being sailed from Carlingford Lough, along the Upper Bann, through Lough Neagh, along the Lower Bann and onto Lough Foyle. Rev Wray said, "If we could get teams of people to row the boats, perhaps camping along the way – carrying the currachs where necessary – it would be a real opportunity to travel through the six counties of Northern Ireland, building partnerships and friendships. The project has already included both genders, many age groups and various denominations, and – pardon the pun – we can push the boat out further."

The Rector of CCCMSP and Archdeacon of Derry, Ven. Robert Miller, said the currach-building project was enjoyable and enriching for all those involved. "It has already rewarded us handsomely in terms of the friendships we've made, and the fellowship we've enjoyed with our

neighbours. Many people have worked hard to build the new craft, but it hasn't been hard to discern the hand of God at work as well. And now we've even more reason to look forward to Saint Columba's Day on June the 9th and our Confirmation Service in Culmore."

Good Friday Walk of Witness in Dublin

Archbishop Michael Jackson of Dublin commented, "As the Taize Cross is carried through the streets of the city of Dublin, there is a deep sense of urgency and a quickening pace on the part of those who walk with the cross. Beginning in Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin 8, we are bound for St Mary's Pro-Cathedral in Dublin 1.

"While the number of walkers grows each year, people who are on the streets are nonetheless surprised that something like this happens. Our job is simply to keep walking. Nobody has ever interrogated the motivation of those who walk and it is right that it should be like this. Some may be walking for themselves. Some may be walking for a loved one who has suffered or who is suffering. Some may be walking for the suffering of humanity.



“The whole experience is made possible by the generosity of Archbishop Martin and by the clergy of both cathedrals and by the people who take the time and make the effort to walk The Way of the Cross.”

Defiant but damaged Copts mark Good Friday

Egypt's Coptic Orthodox Church has held reduced celebrations marking Jesus' crucifixion on Good Friday.

It's after two Islamic State suicide bombers murdered 45 people - mostly Christians - at two churches in Egypt on Palm Sunday.

The leader of the Coptic Church, Pope Tawadros II, led a Good Friday service at the coptic cathedral in the capital Cairo.

Security was tightened there and at other key Christian sites across Egypt after the double bombing - one which came only months after another suicide bomber murder 25 people at Cairo's cathedral in December.

The Egyptian parliament has also instated a national state of emergency, giving police more arrest and search powers, in the hope of preventing further attacks.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi has also personally visited Pope Tawadros II to confirm his intentions to eradicate terrorism against minorities.

Coptic bishop Macarius told Reuters: "We can consider ourselves in a wave of persecution but the Church has gone through a lot in 20 centuries.

"There are waves of persecution. It reaches to the highest point like a pyramid and then it goes down again. We are at a very high point."

Meanwhile, American President Donald Trump used his Easter message to condemn last

week's IS attack on Christians in Egypt, and highlight the need for greater religious freedom there and in other countries where believers are suppressed.

"We condemn this barbaric attack, we mourn for those who lost loved ones, and we pray for the strength and wisdom to achieve a better tomorrow," he said.

The possibilities for rural Ireland are boundless, Maynooth head of pastoral studies

The head of pastoral studies at Mary Immaculate College in Limerick has said that the possibilities for rural areas are boundless. Fr Eamonn Fitzgibbon was speaking to the local media after the recent 'Building Rural Communities – Lessons from the World of Sport' conference, held at St Patrick's College in Thurles recently.

The conference featured contributions on rural Ireland from Tipperary Senior hurling manager Michael Ryan, former Ireland and Munster rugby prop forward John Hayes, businessman and entrepreneur Padraig Giblin and the CEO of the National Ploughing Championships Anna May



Fr Eamonn Fitzgibbon

McHugh. Former Kerry footballer and Chairman of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) Pat Spillane was unavoidably absent on the night due to illness.

Speaking about the conference to the Tipperary Star newspaper, Fr Eamonn Fitzgibbon said that “The size of the attendance proved that people are concerned about rural Ireland and want to work at rejuvenating it and making it as dynamic and sustainable as they know it can be. We had people from Waterford, Kerry, the west coast of Clare, Galway, even Co. Louth. The one thing they all came with was a desire to hear from rural leaders about the type of thinking and approach required to make a difference in

challenged communities. What does that say? It says that people care and that's a brilliant start."

Commenting on the speakers, he said: "We heard stories from people like Pdraig Giblin as to what has been built in Scariff in Co. Clare, from Mick Ryan as to what has been achieved in Upperchurch. Anna May McHugh left us all enthralled regarding the ultimate rural gathering, the Ploughing Championships and the magnitude of what has been achieved there. Then John Hayes told us about his special part of the world, Cappamore, the 'show' there and its impact as well as the success of his first rugby club, Bruff, in another rural area."

He concluded: "the enthusiasm and energy in the room was infectious and the big message that was taken away from it was the need to do things for ourselves and that it starts by bringing people, young and old, generational parishioners and newcomers, together. What starts with a casual chat in a meeting room or out on a walk with community members can result in something very special."

Appointment to Knocknamuckley

Bishop Harold Miller of Down & Dromore has announced that the Reverend Geoffrey Haugh,

Curate of Holywood Parish, in the Diocese of Down, has been appointed as Incumbent of the Parish of Knocknamuckley, in the Diocese of Dromore.

Service of Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide

A Service of Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide will take place on Monday April 24 at 7.00 pm in Christ Church Cathedral. The service will be attended by members of the Armenian community in Ireland and their friends including Archbishop Michael Jackson, Dean Dermot Dunne, Prof Maria Bagramian (UCD), Sunniva McDonagh (Barrister) and Hayarpi Drmeyam (the Consul from the Armenian Embassy in London). All are welcome.

Mission to Seafarers Belfast Spring Auction

The Mission to Seafarers in Belfast will hold its Spring Auction in The Flying Angel Seafarers' Centre on Saturday April 22 starting at 10.30am.

Refreshments will be available and there is parking at the rear of the Flying Angel Centre which is in Prince's Dock Street, at the main gate

of Belfast Port. This is a great opportunity to pick up a bargain!

For further details please contact Colin Hall-Thompson on 02890 751131 or email colin.hall-thompson@mtsmail.org.

Thousands taking part in National Pilgrim Paths Week

Thousands of people all over the country are currently taking part in National Pilgrim Paths Week, which is running from 11 to today 17 April.

Despite a long pilgrim tradition and strong national reputation for spirituality, there was until three years ago relatively little activity on Ireland's ancient penitential paths, with the country not regarded as an important destination for travel motivated by spirituality.

Ireland's first National Pilgrim Paths Day was held in 2014, and was aimed at raising awareness of the country's network of pilgrim routes and providing a more general appreciation of Ireland's medieval Christian heritage.



Easter Saturday, 19 April 2014, was designated National Pilgrim Paths Day. The event proved a huge success, with almost 1,800 participants taking part at 11 pilgrim path locations across Ireland.

Ireland's second National Pilgrim Paths Day took place on Easter Saturday, 4 April 2015, with a nationwide series of walks taking place on 13 of the country's major medieval walkways.

In 2016, the Pilgrim Paths Festival was extended to a week-long celebration for the first time. A National Pilgrim Passport for Ireland was also introduced, with pilgrim walkers who completed 120 km of Ireland's penitential paths entitled to a Teastas Oilithreachta (completion certificate) from Ballintubber Abbey.

Speaking this week, John G. O'Dwyer, Chairman of Pilgrim Paths Ireland, said that "National Pilgrim Paths Week was created to raise awareness and use of Ireland's rich inheritance of pilgrim routes."

He added that "The event is targeted not only at those who enjoy exploring Ireland's ancient tracks, but also the growing numbers seeking to escape the daily grind of life and take time out to reflect and meditate a little while enjoying the outdoors." Among the routes included this year are Tóchar Phádraig, Co. Mayo, St Kevin's Way, Co. Wicklow, Rath/Dysert Pilgrim Path, Co. Clare, St Bridget's Way, Co. Kildare, Cosán na Naomh, Co. Kerry, St Finbarr's Pilgrim Path in West Cork and St Declan's Way from Drimoleague to Gougane Barra.

Details of the walks are available at www.pilgrimpath.ie.

Resurrection is about transformation says Archbishop Jackson in Easter sermon

Archbishop Michael Jackson presided at the Easter Day Festal Eucharist at Christ Church Cathedral yesterday morning. Focusing on the

Resurrection in his sermon, the Archbishop spoke of the importance of living out the hope and transformation of the Resurrection for others rather than talking about resurrection to one another.

“Resurrection is about transformation here and now; resurrection is about new life for all here and now. And it is such because of the cosmic impact of the coming together of God the creator and the creation of God’s loving it, in and through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Religious truths are difficult, arresting, irritating, confrontational,” he said.

Archbishop Jackson continued: “It is for these reasons that I raise the question: What would it be like if we believed it really were true? The first thing I suggest is that churches would have a much more pro-active executive grasp of the relationship between *justice* and mercy. This would lift churches out of the loss adjustor mentality around human relationships and human sexuality. It would also enable individuals inside the churches and outside the churches to see that resurrection is a response to humanity and its dilemmas where faith on the part of some members of society releases the energies of flourishing for everyone irrespective of their belief and value system”.

He also suggested that the relationship between hope and humanity would be highlighted. He said the invitation to hopelessness in today's media driven world was almost an unstoppable force – fear followed terror and hopelessness followed both.

“And yet there are sufficient pointers to human magnificence, human victoriousness right across the world, in the most squalid of circumstances, to tell us that there is justice in the midst of corruption, there is compassion in the midst of exploitation, there is light in the midst of darkness – everywhere. The challenge is for us to seize it and to honour it and to share it – whatever its source – and to learn from it and to be taught by it,” he said. He added that hope could not be suppressed by the church at its most scandalous and uncaring.

As the 500th anniversary of the Reformation is celebrated this year, the Archbishop asked if it was time for the churches in Ireland, north and south, to put their traditions at the service of the greater good by reforming together for the future.

“As churches, chastened by recent events and deadly cruelties, we now need to be invited by our society to do this, rather than it being our

own assumption that we can convene the meeting. It would be a very exciting type of reformation. Justice and mercy, hope and humanity are not confined to Christianity. On Easter Day, nonetheless, they should feature in our recognitions and in our relationships. They should inspire the hope in things unseen. It is to this that we are called forward at Easter. Hallelujah!"

Armagh's Charles Wood Festival of Music and Summer School

The Charles Wood Festival of Music and Summer School for singers, organists and choir directors will take place in all the main churches in Armagh, Northern Ireland, from 20th - 27th August 2017.

Application forms to become a member of the [Charles Wood Singers](#) are now available. The closing date for applications is 21st April 2017.

Full details of the rich and varied programme, which will feature lunchtime and evening concerts, services, and teaching and workshop sessions, will be announced in due course.

The School's association with the [Northern Ireland International Organ Competition](#) will continue in 2017. Young organists will have an opportunity to compete for awards totalling over £2000 on Monday 21st and Tuesday 22nd August with the bonus of prestigious recital appearances for the winner of the Senior category. Further details to follow.

David Hill - Artistic Director says "The Charles Wood Summer School is a week in my diary to which I look forward. It combines marvellous music in worship, concerts and masterclasses alongside the architectural magnificence of Armagh's two Cathedrals. At the centre of it all lies a man and his music, Charles Wood, whose music continues to inspire Church musicians the world over. Most of all, the week provides an opportunity for singers, congregations and audiences to share the glories of church music. At a time when the world faces so many difficult challenges, music and worship nourishes the soul in a way nothing else can compare".

<http://www.charleswoodsummerschool.org/>

Today in Church History - April 15

April 15, 1415: Jerome of Prague, a friend of Bohemian reformer Jan Hus, is seized by church authorities meeting at the Council of Constance. Under duress, Jerome recanted his Wycliffe-influenced beliefs and accepted the authority of the pope. However, when a crowd was assembled to hear him repeat the recantation, he changed his speech and eloquently defended both Wycliffe's teachings and the recently executed Hus. Jerome was subsequently burned at the stake (see [issue 68: Jan Hus](#)).

April 15, 1452: Italian painter and scholar Leonardo da Vinci is born in Florence, Italy. Among his most famous religious works are the Virgin of the Rocks, The Last Supper, and St. John the Baptist.

April 15, 1638: The castle of Hara, located on the Shimabara Peninsula, Japan, falls to invaders. Masuda Shiro Tokisada defended the fortress with 37,000 Christians, 17,000 of them combatants. They fought valiantly to the end—even the women and children. After the battle, all of the survivors were subsequently beheaded, save one Judas (Yamada) who had plotted to open the castle gate to the enemy.

April 15, 1729: Johann Bach conducts the first and only performance of St. Matthew Passion

during his lifetime at a Good Friday Vespers service in Leipzig, Germany. The choral work has been called "the supreme cultural achievement of all Western civilization," and even the radical skeptic Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) admitted upon hearing it, "One who has completely forgotten Christianity truly hears it here as gospel."

April 15, 1889: Belgian Roman Catholic priest Joseph Damien, a missionary to lepers on Molokai, Hawaii, dies from the disease.

April 15, 1892: Dutch devotional writer Corrie ten Boom, known for hiding Jewish refugees in her home during World War II (an act dramatized in the 1971 film *The Hiding Place*) is born. She also died on this date in 1983.

Today in Church History - April 16

April 16, 1521: German reformer Martin Luther arrives at the Diet of Worms, convinced he would get the hearing he requested in 1517 to discuss the abuse of indulgences and his "95 Theses." He was astounded when he discovered it would not be a debate, but rather a judicial hearing to see if he wished to recant his words. In defending himself the next Day, Luther said, "Unless I can be instructed and convinced with

evidence from the Holy Scriptures or with open, clear, and distinct grounds of reasoning . . . then I cannot and will not recant, because it is neither safe nor wise to act against conscience. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me! Amen!" When negotiations over the next few Days failed to reach any compromise, Luther was condemned .

April 16, 1879: Bernadette Soubirous, who at age 14 became famous for her visions of the Virgin Mary at Lourdes, dies in Nevers, France. In 1933 the Roman Catholic church declared her a saint.

Today in Church History - April 17

April 17, 1492: Spain's King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella give Christopher Columbus a commission to seek a westward ocean passage to Asia. Though he was also interested in wealth, Columbus saw himself as a "Christ-bearer" who would carry Christ across the ocean to people who had never heard the gospel (see issue 35: Christopher Columbus).

April 17, 1708: Ambrose, Archbishop of Moscow from 1768-1771 is born. In 1771, in the middle of an outbreak of the plague, Ambrose (who is known for his translations of the Hebrew psalter

and some Greek and Latin fathers) was martyred by a mob when he removed an icon from the church to prevent the spread of infection.

April 17, 1937: With Mussolini's troops occupying Ethiopia, Sudan Interior Mission missionaries who had started a small church among the previously devil-worshiping Wallamo tribe are forced to leave the country. "We knew God was faithful," one missionary wrote. "But still we wondered—if we ever come back, what will we find?" The missionaries returned in July 1943 to find that, despite severe persecution by Italian soldiers, the Christian community had grown from 48 members to 18,000.

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