



A nun cries after the bombing of a Coptic chapel in Cairo in December

Pope Francis is visiting Egypt as 'messenger of peace'

Pope Francis has told the Egyptian people he is coming to Cairo this week as a friend and a "messenger of peace."

In a videotaped message in Italian released by the Vatican on Tuesday, Francis says he hopes

the pilgrimage will be “an embrace of consolation and of encouragement to all Christians in the Middle East.”

Twin bombings of Coptic Christian churches in Egypt on Palm Sunday killed 44 people. Francis departs for Cairo on Friday and returns on Saturday.

He wished the “dear people of Egypt” peace and said he was coming “with a joyful and grateful heart.”

Francis expressed hope that his trip to the majority Muslim nation might also “offer a valid contribution to interreligious dialogue with the Islamic world, and to ecumenical dialogue with the venerated and beloved Coptic Orthodox Church.”

Egypt’s Copts, the Middle East’s largest Christian community, have long reported suffering discrimination as well as outright attacks.

Among those inviting the Pope were the grand imam of Al-Azhar, the leading center of learning of Sunni Islam, which previously had frozen relations with the Vatican.

Francis in his message said the world “torn by blind violence” needs “courageous people able to learn from the past to build a future without closing themselves up in prejudices,” as well as “builders of bridges of peace, dialogue, brotherhood, justice and humanity.”

Francis has strived to improve Vatican dialogue with the Islamic world after tensions developed during the pontificate of predecessor Benedict XVI.

Royal Irish enhance their chapel in Belfast Cathedral

New chairs and kneelers were dedicated by the Dean of Belfast in the Regimental Chapel in St Anne’s Cathedral yesterday, Tuesday April 25.

Lt Col James Linford, chair of the Royal Irish Chapel Committee, said the 10 new chairs had been commissioned following the reordering and expansion of the Chapel in 2015.

Lt Col Linford said the Committee had been delighted with the response from organisations and individuals wishing to sponsor the chairs.

Families of those commemorated by these gifts were present at the service.



Donors of chairs and kneelers in the Chapel

The Chapel now houses 30 wooden chairs, many of which have been dedicated at different times since it was consecrated in 1981.

Mrs Evelyn Creaney was present, along with her daughter Felicity Pierce, to see one of the chairs dedicated in memory of her husband Colonel John Creaney OBE QC TD DL. Col Creaney was Commander of the Fifth Battalion The Royal Irish Rangers and was Honorary Colonel of Queen's University OTC and other Regiments. He was also Crown Prosecutor and his wife said his great love was the Irish Fusiliers, with whom he was commissioned in 1955. He died in 2008.



Korean War veteran Colonel Robin Charley, who donated a chair in memory of members of the Royal Ulster Rifles killed in action during the war, with his daughters Elizabeth Charley, left, and Catherine Champion.

“It is lovely to have a chair in this Chapel in John’s memory and I have lots of family and friends planning to come and see it,” said Mrs Creaney.

Colonel Robin Charley, who celebrated his 93rd birthday on the day of the dedication, attended the service with two of his daughters, Catherine Champion and Elizabeth Charley.

Col Charley OBE, a Korean war veteran, and his daughters donated a chair in memory of the officers and men of the Royal Ulster Rifles killed in action in the Korean War 1950-54.

Lt Col Harvey Bicker OBE of the Royal Ulster Rifles, donated in memory of his uncle, Private Bertie Bicker, 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers, killed at Messines on March 23 1918.

The Regimental Chapel in St Anne's contains many important historical artefacts including Books of Remembrance, the font, lectern, and chairs presented by families in remembrance of soldiers who had lost their lives.

Among the Colours laid up in the Chapel are the last stands of Colours presented to 1st Bn Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers by HRH the Duke of Gloucester in Kenya in 1962 and 1st Bn The Royal Irish Fusiliers by Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer in Germany in 1963.

One of the most important artefacts is a Book of Prayers written on rice-paper by a prisoner of war in Korea and presented to Capt James Majury, a gift from the prisoners who had found comfort in the services he had held for them during their captivity in 1952-53.

Other chairs and kneelers were donated as follows:

- East Tyrone Branch Regimental Association of the Royal Irish Regiment
- Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) FS Hewitt
- The London Branch Regimental Association of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers
- David Hall and Limavady, Ballymena and Enniskillen Branches Regimental Association of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers
- Armagh and Portadown Royal Irish Fusiliers Old Comrades Association
- Regimental Association of the Royal Irish Rangers in proud memory of the service and sacrifice of all members of the Royal Irish Rangers
- Regimental Association of The Royal Ulster Rifles

Final Parish Service Held in St George and St Thomas's Dublin

The Church of St George and St Thomas on Cathal Brugha Street in Dublin's city centre was full on Sunday morning (April 23) for the final service to be held there in its current form. The

service marked the closing of the Parish of St George and St Thomas and many who have been associated with it in the past joined parishioners to give thanks for the life and work of the parish. Parishioners from the receiving parish of Drumcondra and North Strand also attended.

The service was celebrated by Archbishop Michael Jackson who was joined by the Archdeacon of Dublin, the Ven David Pierpoint and the Rector of Drumcondra and North Strand, the Revd Garth Bunting.

St George's Brass Band, which began life in St George's Church and continues to practice in St George and St Thomas's, joined the organist in accompanying the hymns. Discovery Gospel Choir, which is also based in the church, sang two songs. Past members of the 14th Dublin Company Boys' Brigade also attended including its last captain, Philip Denner.

In his sermon, the Archbishop said that the church in the heart of Dublin 1 will remain a significant marker in our history. It's predecessor, St Thomas's Church was built in 1762 and destroyed in 1922 during the War of Independence. St George's Church on Hardwick



Street, remains one of the most magnificent buildings in Dublin, the Archbishop said.

“Both separately and both combined have served their parochial populations extremely well and extremely faithfully. Parishes across the diocese bear testimony to this in the faithful involvement of people whose faith was nurtured here. I should like to thank all who have maintained this witness over centuries along with the tremendous contribution made by The St George’s Band, The Discovery Choir, the Christians of the Filipino tradition, the Indian Orthodox tradition and the Igbo tradition to the energy of St George and St Thomas,” he stated.

He continued: "Diversity is the lifeblood of this church and of this community. My prayer would be that this spirit should continue to be infectious, inspiring and innovative. This is the energy, the graciousness and the hospitality I want to see carried through into the next expression of Godly life here in St George and St Thomas. I want to say also that the diocese is taking direct responsibility for the administration of the church building; and the diocese has brought about the transfer as of today of the pastoral and liturgical life of the people of the parish to the Parish of Drumcondra and North Strand. I thank the rector, the Reverend Garth Bunting, and the parishioners in those parishes for the welcome they are already extending and for their being at this service today. There is every intention on the part of the diocese to find a new use within the Church of Ireland and within the dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough for the very beautiful church building that is St George's and St Thomas' Church".

He thanked all who participated in the service and the clergy, church officers and parishioners who had kept the flame of faith and the light of love bright in the church.

[You can read the Archbishop's sermon in full here.](#)

Ebay recovery of valuable memento of Fermanagh parish history

A valuable silver trowel which had been presented to a dignitary at the laying of the foundation stone of a Church of Ireland rectory over 100 years ago, has been discovered for sale on eBay and bought back by the parish.

The silver trowel had been presented to the 7th Earl of Lanesborough at the laying of the foundation stone of the Church of Ireland rectory in Newtownbutler, Co. Fermanagh.

The intriguing tale of the trowel began in January this year when the rector of Galloon Parish, Newtownbutler, the Revd Anita Kerr, received an email from a member of Kerry Archaeological and Historical Society, who said that while browsing on eBay, he had come across the presentation trowel which originated from Galloon.

He was keen to see the trowel returned and had contacted her who forwarded the email to Mr Bert Robinson, the Glebe Warden.

Revd Kerr explained: "Bert was most enthusiastic and our thanks to Bert for

researching the history of our Presentation trowel and acting so promptly to see the trowel returned to the parish.

“The Newtownbutler trowel was presented to the Earl of Lanesborough (surname Butler) after laying the foundation stone of the rectory in Newtownbutler on April 11 1914. This solid silver trowel with all the silver hall marks was made by Hilliard and Thomason in 1883 in Birmingham. The handle is either ivory or bone.

“The inscription on the trowel reads: ‘Presented by the Select Vestry of Galloon Parish to Major the Right Hon the Earl of Lanesborough on the Occasion of His Laying the Foundation Stone of a New Rectory Newtownbutler 11 April 1914’.”

There appears to be a lapse of 29 years between making the trowel and its presentation.

“It was presented to the 7th Earl of Lanesborough who lived in Lanesborough Lodge at Quivy near Belturbet. This house was burned during the 1920s Troubles and is now only a ruin. The Lanesborough surname was Butler and they were very prominent in the Cavan and Fermanagh area.

“The 8th Earl who was Major Henry Cavendish Butler lived for some time on Inish Rath Island

opposite the New Bridges going to Derrylin,” Revd Kerr said.

Bert recalled: “As a young boy I remember him reading the lessons in the church in Derrylin on Sundays for Revd Canon Grant.” His son, Denis Anthony Brian Butler, the 9th Earl, died in 1998 with no male issue so the title is now gone.

Revd Kerr continued: “Bert spoke to some of the church members who showed great interest in retrieving the Newtownbutler trowel. It is part of our history and complements the original plans which we have and also the books of quotations which were contributed to and bought by supporters as a fundraiser at the time of the building of the Rectory.

“The seller was contacted and after some negotiating we were able to make a deal. This presentation trowel was anonymously purchased as a gift to the Parish.”

Rector Appointed to Kill O’ the Grange Parish

The Revd Alan Breen has been appointed Rector of Kill O’ the Grange in the Diocese of Dublin.



Alan grew up on the Northside of Dublin. He has been married to Ruth since 2001 and the couple have two children, Naomi (12) and Andrew (9), and a dog named Levi (1 1/2).

Having being involved in full time youth ministry since 1993 (working in Lucan Presbyterian Church from 1993 to 1997, Dun Laoghaire Evangelical Church from 1997 to 2009 and Dunganstown Union of Parishes from 2009 to 2014), Alan went to train for ministry in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute in 2012. He was ordained a Deacon in September 2014 and Priesthood in 2015. He is at present Curate in

St Patrick's, Greystones and Chaplain in Temple Carrig School.

Throughout his life, Alan has been involved in a variety of ministries and has been a speaker at conferences, camps, evangelistic events and more. He is also a co-host of the Graveyard Shift Podcast with Scott Evans and Greg Fromholz which has an average of 1,000 downloads per week.

Alan is very excited for the journey ahead in Kill O' the Grange and eager to see what God has in store for the parish as they seek to serve and love God and the community within, and surrounding the church.

Quality of preaching is key factor in church attendance, major new US poll

A majority of US churchgoers say that the quality of the sermon is the main factor affecting their church attendance.

The sermon, in both its application of Scripture and relevance to life, takes ultimate priority for

both Protestant and Catholic worshippers, according to a Gallup poll released last week.

Gallup surveyed over 1500 US adults in March, collating statistics from both the religious and non-religious about their attitudes to attending religious gatherings.

Compared to Catholics, Protestants, or those who identify as simply Christian, are more likely to value the role of the sermon in church. Eighty-three per cent of Protestants said that 'sermons that teach about Scripture' was a major factor in church attendance, while for Catholics it was 62 per cent.

The lowest-ranked factor for both groups was 'Choir or other spiritual music': 44 per cent of Protestants called it a major factor, and just 29 per cent of Catholics said the same. The poll surveyed those who attend church monthly or more often.

Gallup observed: 'Overall, Catholics rate none of the factors as more important reasons for attending than do Protestants, suggesting that the latter group -- with dozens of denominations and branches of Protestantism to choose from -- may be more attuned to specific dynamics of

what they prefer in their church experience than Catholics.'

In a more general survey of Muslims, Jews and Christians, three in four of those polled said that the sermon, either one that connects religion to one's own life, or teaches about Scripture, was a major factor affecting church attendance. The next most significant factor was 'Spiritual programs geared toward children and teenagers', which 64 per cent of those polled said was a priority. The least significant 'major factor' was quality worship music (38 per cent), 36 per cent of those polled said it was a minor factor.

Gallup also polled those who no longer attend church, but used to, why they left. There was no predominant, pervasive reason for not attending, but the most cited reason was preferring to worship alone (44 per cent). Thirty-six per cent of those asked said their dislike of organised religion was a major factor. Other major factors included not finding the right church (22 per cent), or not having time to attend (19 per cent).

Sixteen per cent said they didn't like being asked for money when they went to church. The least cited major factor was not feeling welcome at church (six per cent).

Gallup concluded from its study: 'While social benefits are clearly important to majorities of those who worship regularly, what most motivates them to attend is learning more about the tenets of their faith, as well as connecting that faith to their lives.'

It suggested that if churches wish to survive, it should focus on reclaiming the 35 per cent of Americans who once attended church, but have since lapsed.

Portsmouth Catholic diocese launches its own app

The Diocese of Portsmouth launched its own diocesan app on Easter Sunday in an effort to better involve parishioners in the life of the diocese.

The app is a digital guide to live events in the diocese and features maps and local information about Mass times, Eucharistic Adoration and Confession.

It has been specially designed to support Catholics in their daily prayer lives and includes



reminders to pray at certain times of the day with a link to the Liturgy of the Hours.

Commenting on the new app, Bishop Philip Egan said: “I’m delighted to announce our new Diocesan App! It helps to bring the diocese and its communications right up to date, making things much more user-friendly.

“I wish to encourage all our clergy and parishioners to install it on their smartphone, iPad, tablet etc. It will be an invaluable practical help for knowing where the nearest parish is, maps and directions, the next Mass, the availability of the ‘nearest’ Sacrament of Reconciliation and so on.

“One of the features I’m really pleased with are the reminders that can be set up for certain times of the day to pray the Angelus and say the Divine Office. There is also a prayer section – I call all this ‘Catholic Mindfulness’ – with a Holy Half Hour with Eucharistic Adoration which means that anyone anywhere can ‘tune in’ for a few moments of prayer with Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist.

“So I highly recommend this to our diocese and to anyone further afield too. It’s free to download. We’ll be adding lots of new features as time goes on, with a prayer station to Our Lady and a virtual candle-rack where we can ‘light’ a candle and offer a prayer.

“I hope and pray that the new Diocesan App will be a great tool of new evangelisation, helping us all grow in holiness and virtue, and proclaiming to a wider audience the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

To download the app visit the App Store or Google Play App for Android phones, in the normal way and search for Portsmouth Roman Catholic Diocese.

Today in Christian History, April 26

April 26, 1521: After Charles V promises to take firmer measures against his doctrines, Luther leaves the Diet of Worms. A month later, his teachings are formally condemned (see issue 34: Luther's Early Years).

April 26, 1877: Residents of Minnesota observe a state-wide Day of prayer, asking deliverance from a plague of grasshoppers that had ruined thousands of acres of crops. The plague ended during that summer.

April 26, 1992: Worshipers celebrate the first Russian Orthodox Easter in Moscow in 74 years.

See this week's events diary on CNI

GET CNI HEADLINES EACH DAY

Facebook and Twitter

Click on logo at CNI Home page

www.churchnewsireland.org

+ Please share CNI with your friends

www.churchnewsireland.org