



CNI



Bishops' joint walks to promote shared Columban heritage

Two bishops from the North West – one Roman Catholic and the other Church of Ireland – are to take part in a number of events this year, including a 30-mile joint-walk, to promote reconciliation in the community and highlight their shared Christian witness and heritage.

The Bishop of Derry, Dr Donal McKeown, and the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Ken Good, say their initiative will begin with a three-

day walk in April from St Columba's birthplace at Gartan, in Donegal, to St Augustine's Church in Derry-Londonderry (which is believed to be the site of a sixth century monastery founded by Saint Columba).

The pilgrimage will take place in three stages between 27th and 29th of April. As they walk, the bishops will meet people and visit places along the route, and pray with parishioners in local churches. The walk will be followed in early June by a visit to Iona, where St Columba settled, founded another monastery and eventually died. And in September, the church leaders will undertake joint walks from Claudy to Strabane (on Thursday 14th) and Limavady to Garvagh (on Saturday 16th).

In a joint statement, Bishop Good and Bishop McKeown said: "In undertaking this initiative and these pilgrimages, we are inspired by the example of our predecessors and building on our shared Christian identity. Saint Columba is one of the great figures in Christian history and someone of whom Christians in the North West can be proud."

The saint's last recorded words to his community on Iona – 'Preserve with each other sincere charity and peace' – are inscribed on the

large cross marking his birthplace in Gartan, and have been chosen by the bishops as a guiding theme for their pilgrimages.

"We are eager to heighten the profile of faith traditions in our dioceses and hope our shared witness to the Gospel will encourage reconciliation in our community," the bishops said. "We want to raise awareness of the long ecclesiastical history of our community, its shared Columban narrative and rich Columban heritage."

Belfast's oldest Catholic Church to close for three weeks

The oldest Catholic Church in Belfast is to be closed for three weeks in the summer for renovation work.

St Mary's, in Chapel Lane in the city centre, will undergo both external and internal restoration between May and August but will be open as normal for the majority of that time.

It follows on from the first phase of development work on the church, which was completed in 2014.



Belfast's oldest Catholic Church, St Mary's in Chapel Lane, will be closed for around three weeks in the summer due to renovation work. Picture by Hugh Russell, The Irish News

In a message to parishioners in the weekly bulletin, the parish administrator, Fr James Boyle, wrote: "I wish to confirm....that the proposed external refurbishment and internal redecoration of the Church will commence on Monday 8th May and is due to be completed by Friday 18th August."

Work to be done on the outside of the building includes the complete replacement of the main roof coverings and the repairing and re-pointing



New paving is to be installed in the grotto area, which is dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes. Picture by Hugh Russell

of walls and stonework, while new paving is to be installed in the grotto area, which is dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes.

The main walls and ceilings inside the church, where Mass was first celebrated in 1784, will also be cleaned down and repainted.

Fr Boyle wrote: "The external work will not cause any disruption to the daily operation of the Church, however, the internal redecoration will

result in the main Church being closed for a period which will not exceed three weeks.

"The relevant dates will be confirmed ASAP at which time we will clarify the alternative arrangements for daily celebration of Masses."

A grant of £86,000 from the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund in Manchester will go towards the final bill, and Fr Boyle describing the grant as the "catalyst" for further work as it must be used by early 2018.

Cleary Contracting, a firm based in Randalstown, Co Antrim, has been appointed to undertake the project.

"The total cost of all the intended work will be in excess of £300,000. The remaining funding requirements for the roof and other specified works will be met by St Mary's parish," wrote Fr Boyle. "With your continued generosity we will eventually catch up with any shortfall." -

Courtesy Irish News

Be part of Streetreach 2017

Application forms for Streetreach 2017, running in Glenavy Parish from July 4-7, are now available.



Streetreach is Connor Youth Council's local missional opportunity for young people aged 15 and over. The aim of this Streetreach is to bless people and communities in the name of Jesus. This is achieved through partnering with parishes in the diocese to enable young people to serve locally and encourage a local parish in their own mission.

Christina Baillie, Diocesan Youth Officer said: "We are really excited to be partnering with Glenavy Parish for this diocesan opportunity. Streetreach has had a massive impact for the young people who have taken part over the past two years when we partnered with churches in north Belfast.

“The opportunity has made connections across the diocese and really enhanced the community feeling amongst the young people. I want to thank the Rev John Rutter and the parish for agreeing to host the team over the summer.”

Any young people from across the diocese can attend and registration forms will be released soon. Streetreach costs £25 with an option to fundraise an additional £25 for resources for the team. It is a residential experience with the team staying together, and this is included in the cost as well as meals for the duration.

Christina added: “We would invite any young people to apply, whether they attended last year or haven’t experienced anything like this before, all young people will be very welcome.”

Download application forms here: <http://connor.anglican.org/2017/04/19/apply-part-streetreach-2017/>

Lecture on historical Presbyterian heresy trial

‘Professor J. E. Davey and the Heresy Trial’ is the title of the Robert Allen Memorial Lecture 2017 to be give to the Presbyterian Historical



Society. Dr Andrew Holmes, Queen's University, Belfast, will present an overview within a broad cultural, intellectual and theological context of the heresy trial of Davey who was accused of being a 'modernist'.

The lecture is on Thursday 4 May 2017 at 8.00 p.m. in Union Theological College, 108 Botanic Avenue, Belfast BT7 1JT. All are welcome.

Lay-led prayer trials in Limerick

Churchgoers in the diocese of Limerick expecting their local priest to celebrate Mass on

Tuesday of this week had instead lay people leading the way in daily church ceremonies.

The move is on foot of a range of proposals voted for at last year's Synod in Limerick which acknowledged the need to move towards lay-led prayers as a result of the decline in vocations.

The Synod, which was attended by 400 delegates — more than 300 of whom were lay people — saw 97 proposals endorsed across a range of themes to provide a pathway forward for the diocese to meet the challenges of the future.

Among the specific lay-led liturgy proposals adopted at the Synod was the plan to develop and support lay leadership in public prayers.

Speaking ahead of Tuesday's initiative, Bishop of Limerick Brendan Leahy said: "It's inevitable with the fall-off in vocations that we need to explore new and exciting opportunities to celebrate the Word and one of the ways will be through lay-led times of public prayer.

"As we move forward, we need to prepare for a time when, even though priests are not available, each local community will be prepared to arrange for moments of public prayer for various occasions.



“No parish should find itself in a position where it is not prepared for such a possibility so it makes sense for us to begin right now.”

Bishop Leahy said that communion will not be distributed at Tuesday’s service, though he stressed this is not to suggest that it might never be at future lay-led liturgies, especially, for instance, in nursing homes.

“All over the world, when priests are not available, the liturgy of the Word is celebrated in parishes without the distribution of communion,” he said.

“We are, in many respects, going back to the future as not that long ago people would attend weekly Mass without receiving communion,

which was largely a sacrament received only occasionally.”

Bishop Leahy said he would like to see people celebrate public prayer more in its own right rather than it being synonymous only with Mass and receiving Holy Communion.

He said the Church already has many forms of public prayer, such as morning and evening prayers, the rosary, holy hours of adoration, reading of scripture or benediction.

“Lay-led prayers will not be an ‘alternative’ or ‘mini’ Mass but, instead, a moment of public prayer that is thoroughly valued in its own right,” Bishop Leahy said.

“We are facing many challenges due to the decline in vocations but we must view these as opportunities and explore through these how we can encourage more lay engagement and participation in liturgy.

“Increasingly, we will see lay people lead prayers in funeral homes, and at the reception of the remains in the Church or other moments when public prayers are required.” Courtesy The Irish Examiner.

Songs of Praise in Dublin this Sunday

A 'Songs of Praise' will be held in St Ann's, Dawson Street, Dublin on Sunday 7th May at 7pm. It will feature St Ann's Church Choir, The Seafield Singers, The Leinster Singers, Dublin Male Voice Choir and Classicus Youth Choir with The Steadfast Brass Band. The Rector states, "It will be a great night. Help us raise the roof! All are welcome."

Does the Church in Wales have a future? 'Absolutely', says senior bishop

The Welsh Church has seen steady decline in attendance in recent decades, but the Bishop of Swansea and Brecon John Davies sees great opportunities ahead, according to [Wales Online](#).

'I've got absolutely no doubt whatsoever now with the resources we have, with the people we have, there is every likelihood that we've got a strong future,' he said.

Davies says that the Church needs to better articulate itself for the younger generation.



St David's Cathedral, in Wales. The most senior bishop in the Church in Wales says that despite declining attendance, he is optimistic about its future.

He said: 'I find with young people...They have got the most admirable sense of justice. They've got the most admirable understanding of injustice and feel outraged at some of the injustices that are perpetrated both in our own country and elsewhere.'

'They find Jesus an attractive individual. They find the gospel message immensely attractive because it's about truth and justice...

'I think the question that perhaps we are being challenged to ask of the institutional Church is: Do we actually articulate that call, that gospel? Do we embody it or are we just perceived as an institution creaking on in the direction of celebrating its centenary, clinging on by its fingertips?'

In 2020 the Church in Wales will celebrate a century since its disestablishment from the state – it was formerly part of the Church of England.

Davies added: 'I want us to get to 2020 with clear plans, clear strategies for re-imagining what the Church is going to be. If we can do that [we] will have a wonderful future.'

Barry Morgan, former Archbishop of Wales since 2003, stepped down in January and has not been replaced. The average adult attendance at a Sunday service has fallen from 33,783 in 2011 to 29,019 in 2015. In 2004, it was over 40,000.

Davies emphasised the priority of innovation for the future: 'If you do what you've always done you'll get what you've got always got.'

Youth Ministry Co-ordinator wanted

St John's Parish, Moira wishes to appoint a full-time Youth Ministry Co-ordinator. We are a growing church family with a vibrant youth ministry. The successful applicant will share the ethos and values embodied in our Mission Statement and he/she will be a committed Bible believing Christian who has a heart and passion for young people.

For further information, including a role profile and person specification please contact jennifer@moiraparish.org.uk

Application by CV and a covering letter explaining your motivation for applying and outlining how you meet the essential criteria. Please mark your application Private and Confidential.

Applications will be received by email to jennifer@moiraparish.org.uk or by post to St John's Parish Centre, 51 Main Street, Moira, Craigavon BT67 0LQ.

Closing date for completed applications is 5.00pm on Tuesday 16 May 2017. Interviews will be held 24 May.

Mothers' Union: resist weakening resolve in fight for women's empowerment

Mothers' Union has warned against a 'weakening resolve' in the fight for women's empowerment and called upon the UK to do more to promote gender equality, and end discrimination against women in the workplace. Following the 61st United Nations Commission on the Status of Women [UNCSW], which focused on 'Women's Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work', Mothers' Union spoke out about its concern over the scaling down of rhetoric and faltering language recorded in the Agreed Conclusions from the Commission.

Rose Wright, Campaigns and Social Policy Manager at Mothers' Union, an organisation which represents four million members in 83 countries worldwide, said; "While we welcome the call for governments to strengthen and enforce laws outlawing violence against women within the world of work, we are concerned that the global resolve around this critical issue is weakening, putting at risk the progress that has been made in recent years in the battle to eliminate violence against women and girls, a



key pathway to women's economic empowerment.”

Overall, Mothers' Union gave a qualified welcome to the Agreed Conclusions, which urge governments at all levels, and invites civil society, the private sector and others, to address women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work. However, Mothers' Union called upon the Government to take necessary action to ensure that the social norms and stereotypes that underpin much of gender inequality are reviewed, particularly those relating to unpaid work and care, job segregation, and practices which perpetuate violence against women and girls, such as those

exacerbated by the media, and advertising industry.

Mothers' Union echoed UNCSW's challenge to governments to recognise violence against women and girls [VAWG], as a barrier to the economic empowerment of women, and take measures to eradicate structural barriers such as unfair charges in the child maintenance system, access to legal aid, and support within the workplace. Mothers' Union also called for increased recognition of unpaid care and work, and an appreciation of the societal and economic benefits this brings.

Mothers' Union is also keen to challenge the issue of gender inequality and harmful gender norms, through the education system, by developing comprehensive and age appropriate programmes that promote healthy relationships and sex education. Finally, the Agreed Conclusions also drew attention to access to education, female illiteracy and the treatment of migrants, as key issues to address.

Mothers' Union has consultative status with the economic and social council of the United Nations, and attends UNCSW annually. Mothers' Union delegation liaised, and consulted daily with representatives from the UK Government

during negotiations, and its members spoke about the work of Mothers' Union at various side events.

Today in Christian History, April 27

April 27, 1667: Blind, bitter, and poor, Puritan poet John Milton sells for ten pounds the copyright for *Paradise Lost*—a book that would influence English thought and language nearly as much as the King James Version and the plays of Shakespeare. The theme of the epic appears in its opening lines: "Of man's disobedience, and the fruit / Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste / Brought death into the world, and all our woe, / With loss of Eden.

April 27, 1775: Moravian minister and missionary Peter Boehler dies. He met John Wesley in 1737 while both were sailing to minister in America, and his assurance of faith and belief in joyous, instantaneous conversion left a permanent mark on Wesley.

See this week's events diary on CNI

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