



***Greg Fromholz, the Revd Alan Breen and Scott Evans  
of the Graveyard Shift.***

## **The Graveyard Shift approaches 100th podcast milestone**

The 100th episode of the Graveyard Shift will be released in mid-March representing a significant milestone for the three presenters who, in their own words, “hang out to talk about church culture and its effect (or lack of it) on us as

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individuals and in our ministry”, Dublin & Glendalough Church Review reports.

During the last two and a half years Scott Evans, Greg Fromholz and Alan Breen have had about 40,000 ‘listens’ to their podcast and have occupied the number one spot in Ireland in the Religion and Spirituality category on iTunes on a number of occasions.

The Graveyard Shift is a podcast about faith, life and Christian culture from an Irish perspective. The trio are longtime friends and taught themselves the skills of podcasting by watching YouTube tutorials. Scott Evans is the Church of Ireland Chaplain in UCD, Greg Fromholz is (among other occupations) Dublin & Glendalough’s Young Adults Officer and the Revd Alan Breen is Curate in St Patrick’s Church, Greystones and Chaplain at Temple Carrig School in Greystones.

Between them, Scott, Greg and Alan have about 60 years’ experience in ministry and would often meet to talk about their experiences and to let off steam. They began to look for a way to share their musings as a means of connecting with young adults but also to show that sometimes living a life of faith is tough... but that’s ok.

“For us it’s cathartic,” Scott explains. Greg adds: “But then people start listening to it. The podcast is not a church but it has an incredible attendance among Irish young adults. It’s opt in technology – you have to choose to listen to a podcast and about 500 to 600 people a week are opting to listen to it”.

The Graveyard Shift’s listeners gain a diverse experience from the podcast. They’re laughing, learning and connecting via social media. Scott believes that it is a helpful introduction to church. “As a Chaplain, to ask people to go to church is a challenge but The Graveyard Shift creates an entry point. It gives people the opportunity to participate without being noticed and then decide if they want to enter further into the Kingdom of God,” he comments.

Scott, Greg and Alan are at pains to stress that they do not take themselves too seriously. They may disagree about issues during their conversations but they do not fall out and each believes the others’ perspectives are legitimate. Their listeners may also disagree with them and challenge their views but they are happy to get the feedback.

In the world of podcasts, the temptation is to get traction by doing something glib, short or

shallow. But some of their most listened to episodes have dealt with biblical interpretation, relationships, digital burnout and meditation. “People are looking for depth and how to live their lives and live well,” Scott contends.

That is not to say that The Graveyard Shift is very heavy going. They play games including ‘50 Shades of Pray’, ‘Design-a-Church’ and ‘ForGodorForCountry’. “We don’t take ourselves seriously but we do take the content seriously. It’s permission giving: have the conversation and don’t be afraid to have the conversation. The Graveyard Shift may not be a polished podcast but if people want to sit in on a conversation about life, then this might be for them,” Greg concludes.

The Graveyard Shift received a Church of Ireland Priorities Fund Grant this year for which they are very grateful and which enabled them to upgrade their equipment. You can become a patron of The Graveyard Shift at <https://www.patreon.com/thegraveyardshift>

Listen to The Graveyard Shift on iTunes at: <https://goo.gl/hRnE2o> or on Stitcher at: <http://goo.gl/ltvSN5>. You can also follow them on Facebook at: [www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/)

[thegraveyardshiftireland/](https://www.facebook.com/thegraveyardshiftireland/) and Twitter at: @gyardshift.



## **Harmony and healing at Belfast inter-faith celebration of music in worship**

“I have never been to an event quite like this in Northern Ireland as Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Baha’i and Buddhists gathered together to celebrate the role of music in their faith”, writes a correspondent from the 4 Corners 2017 Festival in Belfast.

Harmony and Healing in association with The Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum was a beautiful mix of music and engagement between faith groups. Ed Petersen from Clonard Monastery wove the night together and the tone was set early on as Jubilate Chamber Choir, conducted by David Stewart sang Ubi Caritas and Psalm 23.

Next up was Chaim Moscovitch, the former Cantor from Belfast Synagogue who now teaches in England. As well as giving us the beautiful Hebrew chants of Psalm 104 and 23 he also spoke about the work he does with children where they learn how to create Biblical Scrolls using the ancient techniques. He showed us a scroll with the Exodus story on it that the children had made last week and talked of the delight of using the ancient in the modern setting. Tamer Khalil and Hesham Mohammad talked about the structure of the Qur'an and how the recitation is practiced. In such a time as this to hear a beautiful melodious recitation of the call to prayer was an act of healing in itself.

Members of the Baha'i community explained the role of music in their practice and sang a number of different songs including one set to the ancient Irish tune also used for My Lagan

Love. Paul Fitzsimmons and Rachel McCarthy shared some of the Shakyamuni Buddha's Lotus Sutra building up into a powerful recitation of the phrase Nam Myoho Renge Kyo which literally filled the hall with power and filled the audience with awe. Nirmal Munir from the 4 Corners organising committee shared 2 poems of unity she had written.

Norman Richardson from the Northern Ireland Interfaith forum concluded the evening with some thoughts on the relationship between music and faith and his belief that music is part of the divine plan. For the 180 people in the hall it was a moving night and in a time of fear, Trump and Brexit a strong symbol of unity of humanity – of the image of God that is in everyone.

Committee Member Jim Deeds was blown away by the event and wrote this reflection. We cannot create harmony if we all sing the same note.

Tonight, we had an inter-faith evening of musical harmony. Contributions from Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, Baha'i, Jews and Christians held a packed hall spell bound. I looked around the room as I listened to all these different types of music (all expressions of the participants' faith) and saw people of different skin colour and

faith, wearing different traditional and modern clothing. And all were listening. Sitting together and listening. Smiling and sitting together and listening. Respecting each other and smiling and sitting together and listening.

Different notes- musically and otherwise- tonight created great harmony. This was awesome!

Our Muslim friends sang, 'Allahu Akbar' - God is great. Nirmal Munir read a poem telling us that beneath our bodies, lie souls without differential identity- we are one. I agree. God IS great, we ARE one.

## **German human rights award for Irish Columban missionary Fr Shay Cullen**

A high profile German human rights award is to be presented to Irish Columban missionary, Fr Shay Cullen, in recognition of his “extraordinary commitment in the field of peace and human rights” through the Preda Foundation.

The 2017 AK Shalom Award is an honour made by the working group ‘Shalom – For Justice and Peace’ based at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt in Germany.



The prize, which was initiated by a group of theology students at the university, has been awarded annually since 1982.

Seventy-three-year-old Fr Cullen has pioneered justice and peace programmes in the Philippines since he arrived there in 1969.

Last November he was awarded the Hugh O'Flaherty International Humanitarian Award in Killarney.

Fr Cullen has, in recent months, been highlighting the killing of over 7,000 drug users and pushers by police and vigilante groups in the Philippines under President Duterte's war on drugs.

The 2017 AK Shalom Prize recognises the work of the 54 staff – social workers, therapists, administrators and public educators – who work for the Preda Foundation and are engaged in defending human rights and promoting justice for the marginalised.

Preda is active in rescuing and caring for abused children who have been saved from jails, abusers and brothels. The Foundation offers the victims of abuse a safe home with protection, education, values formation, affirmation,



***Fr Shay  
Cullen***

empowerment, healing therapy and restoration of their self-esteem.

It takes legal action against child abusers and campaigns for the rights of the child through governments and the media.

Preda believes that many acts of violence, conflict and war begin with individuals who have been victimised as children.

The prize will be presented to Fr Shay on 4 May in the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt in Germany.

Ulrike Schurr-Schöpfel, a member of the organising committee, commented, "The award is one of the highest donated human rights awards in Germany and includes a substantial donation to the work of the recipient.

"It is important that the people here in Eichstätt and Germany can learn about the situation in other countries. We choose award recipients who very often risk their lives for their work.

"Last year, Bertha Caceres, the recipient in 2012, was killed because she campaigned for the indigenous people in her country, Honduras. We have known about Fr Shay Cullen's work for some years already, and think it is an excellent project."

Born in Dublin on 27 March 1943, Fr Shay was educated at Presentation College, Glasthule, Co Dublin.

He completed his college education at St Columban's, Dalgan Park, Navan, and was ordained in April 1969. He was subsequently assigned to parishes in Zambales and Olongapo

City, Subic Bay, on the main Philippines island of Luzon.

Fr Shay established the People's Recovery, Empowerment and Development Assistance (PREDA) Foundation, saving children from abuse, prison and exploitation, in Olongapo City in 1974 to promote human rights, justice and peace.



## **New C of I Youth Ministry initiative**

The C of I Youth Department is developing a number of training initiatives including a certificate in Youth Ministry accredited by Cliff College in Derbyshire which will begin in September.

Details can be found at  
[www.auroratraining.org.uk/eire](http://www.auroratraining.org.uk/eire).

The Connect training days continue and this year are focusing on Understanding Youth Ministry and Young People, Group work and Spirituality

providing a foundation of knowledge, resources and tips and following a hugely successful training weekend in the Diocese of Cork. Youth Officer Steve also delivers bespoke training events locally designed to address specific needs of local leaders and volunteers. See - <http://ciyd.org/news/certificate-in-youth-ministry/>



## **New report examines charity law violations during 2016 Assembly elections**

Northern Ireland's charity regulator has revealed in a new report how three charities came to be issued with regulatory guidance during the 2016 Assembly election.

On each occasion the charity or its trustees speaking on behalf of the charity directly endorsed candidates or campaigned for them.

The case studies provided by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland are essential reading for charity trustees unsure about charity law and also for political parties seeking support this election time.

Earlier this month the Commission was forced to issue a warning to trustees of a Belfast-based charity after social media activity appeared to show their members supporting a particular party's candidates.

The Commission's Chief Executive, Frances McCandless, said: "Charities cannot be established for political purposes and their interaction with politics must only be as a way to advance their charitable purposes.

"The release of this report demonstrates not only the situations that charities must avoid but also the Commission's determination to ensure that the charity sector remains independent, as the public expect."

Charities that are in doubt or are in need of further guidance should consult the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland guidance, available at [charitycommissionni.org.uk](http://charitycommissionni.org.uk)

Read the [report](#).

## **C of E Synod adopts key strategy for laity's witness in their everyday lives**

The Church of England is to undergo a major "culture shift" to mobilise lay members to spread the gospel in their everyday lives. General Synod has given its support to the report, "Setting God's People Free", which calls for Christians to be equipped to live out their faith in every sphere - from the factory or office, to the gym or shop - to help increase numbers of Christians and their influence in all areas of life.

The paper is a key element of Renewal and Reform, an initiative from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, to help grow the Church. It asks a key question of how to empower around 1 million Christians who are not ordained to live out their faith in all aspects of life Monday to Saturday as well as Sunday.

Introducing the report, Canon Mark Russell, CEO of Church Army, said: 'We want to help Christians be even better influencers for the gospel in their everyday lives. We see this report as marking the start of a vital journey.'

Setting God's People Free calls for a shift in culture, looks beyond the institutional Church, seeks to affirm and enable the complementary roles of clergy and of lay people, and proposes steps to nourish, illuminate and connect what is working already in parishes.

Calling on the Church to be more confident of the difference it makes to the good of the nation, Canon Russell said: 'There are a million people out there, in every village, every town and every city. People working in every profession, young and old, in rural areas and inner cities, and they give over 23 million hours of voluntary service.'

The report follows research that shows lay people lack confidence in applying their faith into their Monday to Saturday lives. An implementation plan will be rolled out to introduce new learning communities in pilot dioceses. A bid will be made this year for financial support from the Church Commissioners which through the Archbishops' Council which is resourcing key elements of Renewal and Reform. This will be used to resource the changes called for in the report.

The debate heard from a wide range of speakers from Newcastle to Winchester, Essex to Bath and Wells and included people working in



diverse contexts from the Armed Forces to the NHS as well as parish priests, Archdeacons, Bishops and the Archbishop of York.

Renewal & Reform is an ambitious programme of work, which seeks to provide a narrative of hope to the Church of England in the 21st century. It is rooted in a sense of Biblical hope and an understanding of Christ's call to us to pray that the Lord of the harvest will send out workers into the harvest field. Renewal & Reform aims to build on the 3 goals to:

- Contribute as the national church to the common good
- Facilitate the growth of the church in numbers and depth of discipleship
- Re-imagine the church's ministry

## **C of E Synod supports request for new bishop for cultural diversity**

The C of E General Synod has given its support to a proposal from the Diocese of Leicester to request HM The Queen to create a new See to be called the Bishop of Loughborough. It is the first such new episcopal position since the See of Brixworth was created in 1987.

The Bishop of Loughborough will support the Diocese to grow new churches specifically those that reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the area. This is part of a strategy that has already received financial support from grants as part of the national programme of Renewal and Reform, which offers a hopeful future for the Church.

Introducing the proposal at General Synod, the Rt Revd Martyn Snow, Bishop of Leicester, said: 'At the last count there are now over 100 BAME majority churches in Leicester - our issue is that only three of them are Anglican.

'If we truly want to be inclusive of all who live in our parishes, then we have to heed the cultural changes and challenges within our cities.'

'I hope that he or she will provide both a role model and a prophetic challenge to our church, which has for too long talked a good talk, but failed to act on God's calling.'

Michael Clarke, Chair of the Dioceses Commission spoke in the debate in favour of the proposal saying that it will have minimal financial impact and will further the mission plans of the Diocese.

Following the vote at General Synod, Martyn Snow said: 'Receiving such strong support from General Synod now allows me to petition Her Majesty the Queen for the creation of the See of Loughborough. It was encouraging to hear so many voices in favour of this proposal, particularly its focus on Loughborough and the role of the new bishop in growing the generosity and confidence of Christian communities across the diocese in serving their local communities.'

## **Church leaders in Portugal present evidence for Fatima nun's beatification**

Catholic Church officials in Portugal said on Monday they have assembled more than 15,000 pages of testimony and documentation to support the proposed beatification of Sister Lucia, one of three shepherd children who said the Virgin Mary appeared to them in the town of Fatima 100 years ago.

The officials said the case for Sister Lucia's beatification — the first step toward canonisation as a saint — will be sent to the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Saints, in line with Church procedure.



***The statue of Our Lady of Fatima overlooks worshippers at the Fatima shrine***

The documentation was presented at a church ceremony in the convent in Coimbra, 200km (120 miles) north of Lisbon, where Sister Lucia lived from 1948 until her death at age 97 in 2005.

Her cousins Francisco and Jacinta Marto, who also said they witnessed the apparitions, died at ages 9 and 11 of pneumonia. They were beatified in 2000.

The Catholic Bishop of Coimbra, Virgilio Antunes, said the documentation on Sister Lucia took eight years to compile and includes information from 11,000 letters she wrote as well as some 61 witness statements.

If the Vatican congregation's experts agree a candidate for beatification lived a virtuous life, the case is forwarded to the Pope, who signs a decree attesting to the candidate's virtues.

Pope Francis is to visit Fatima, a small farming town dominated by the Catholic shrine erected to honour the apparitions, on May 12-13 for the pilgrimage marking their centenary. He will be the fourth pontiff to visit the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima.

## **WCC chief speaks on religion and discrimination**

Is religion discriminatory? Does discrimination exist within and by different religions? World Council of Churches (WCC) General Secretary the Rev Dr Olav Fykse Tveit explored these questions with fellow panelists during a conference at a cultural centre in Trondheim, Norway earlier this week.

"Discrimination is all about justice, and justice must be expressed in rights," said Tveit. "Rights belong to structures of accountability; universal human rights are what the national states should

implement in their legislation and systems of justice. Rights are defined in international conventions and agreements.”

When we connect these definitions with religion, we add many dimensions to the discussion, he continued. “Particularly we add basic questions to the dimension of accountability: What does it mean that we are accountable to God when we discuss religion and discrimination? My answer is, it means a lot, what we mean by moral accountability and even legal accountability.”

Tveit spoke about religion and discrimination as it relates to the WCC’s current pilgrimage of justice and peace.

“To establish justice and peace is to a large extent to address all forms of discrimination”, he said. “Being accountable to God, to the living God and the creator of all, is to be accountable to the living of today. Particularly – and first and foremost – we are accountable to other human beings, all of whom are created in the image of God. To be a human being is to be ‘the fellow human being’, always relating to the others, even the unknown and the stranger.”

Ultimately, he noted, considering religion and discrimination requires asking difficult but vital questions: “What can bring hope for human beings for tomorrow? Is religion something we use to secure our own future, to safeguard the reproduction of our clan, our group, our nation only, or is it a basis and an inspiration for what we can call the future of humanity?”

Tveit spoke as part of a plenary session addressing the topic of religion and discrimination. The speakers told their own stories and experiences from different parts of the world and religions, then took part in a discussion.

Other speakers included Marina Nemat, a Christian refugee from Iran, and Dr Ismail Cuneyt Guzey, who is associate professor of the Department of Neuroscience and Movement Science at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) as well as leader of the Muslim Society in Trondheim.

\* The World Council of Churches promotes Christian unity in faith, witness and service for a just and peaceful world. An ecumenical fellowship of churches founded in 1948, by the

end of 2012 the WCC had 345 member churches representing more than 500 million Christians from Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and other traditions in over 110 countries. The WCC works cooperatively with the Roman Catholic Church.

\* World Council of Churches [http://  
www.oikoumene.org/en](http://www.oikoumene.org/en)

## News briefs

**+++ Soil from parishes marks Derry Catholic Schools Week** - During a Mass celebrated on Thursday 26th January in St Eugene's Cathedral by Msgr Andy Dolan to launch Catholic Schools Week each visiting School brought some clay from their home parish to the Cathedral which was placed in two wheelbarrows in front of the Sanctuary.

At the end of Mass this soil was brought outside where Msgr Andy planted a tree with it in the Cathedral grounds. Each school also took a tree back with them to plant in their school grounds.

The theme for the week was 'Learning to care with Pope Francis for our Common Home'



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