

February 8, 2019

CNI
CHURCH
NEWS
IRELAND

Anglican leaders in Arabian Gulf welcome Pope Francis' visit to United Arab Emirates



Pope Francis arrives to hold a mass at Zayed Sports City Stadium in Abu Dhabi

February 8, 2019

This week's historic visit to the United Arab Emirates by Pope Francis resulted in "extraordinary scenes", the Senior Anglican Chaplain in Abu Dhabi, Canon Andrew Thompson, has said. During his visit, Pope Francis celebrated Mass at the Zayed Sports City Stadium in Abu Dhabi. News reports cite a variety of numbers of those attending, varying from 130,000 to 180,000. Canon Thompson was one of those present. He told the *Anglican Communion News Service* (ACNS) that Anglicans and Roman Catholics have, for decades, "literally been neighbours" in the UAE "In every one of the emirates of the UAE, the Anglican churches lie literally in the shadow of the gigantic compounds which are the spiritual homes to thousands of Roman Catholics", he said.

The UAE, which has designated 2019 as the "Year of Tolerance", has the largest Catholic population amongst Arab nations. [According to the Reuters news service](#), most UAE citizens are Sunni Muslims; but the large migrant population – foreigners are said to outnumber locals by around nine to one – means that the country is home to some two million Catholics - around half the total number of Catholics living in Gulf countries.

"Relationships are close between Catholic and Anglican ministers, not least because we all share the same status as guest migrants in a nation which proudly defines her status as Islamic", Canon Thompson said. "This sounds as if we are bound together through the challenges of facing a hostile bureaucracy. The truth is actually the opposite.

"We both enjoy complete freedom of worship and the grace and favour of the ruling families. While there are certainly bureaucratic frustrations, a constant flow of pastoral needs,

February 8, 2019

Pope Francis hugs Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb, the grand imam of Egypt's Al-Azhar, after an interreligious meeting in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. They signed a joint statement on "Human Fraternity"



and legal conundrums, these issues are not unique to the UAE.

“We celebrate our friendship together by mutually hosting ecumenical gatherings, and are constantly cheered by the genuine welcome of the Emirati authorities.”

He said that this week’s “extraordinary scenes” in Abu Dhabi “have surpassed anything we have experienced in our shared journey together.” He added: “The sight of 130,000-plus worshippers gathering together for what is without question the biggest gathering of Christians ever seen in the history of the Arabian Gulf, reduced many of us to tears.

“The simple message of Pope Francis, who called the faithful to imitate Jesus in his life of compassion and humility, was profound. . .

“Anglicans rejoiced along with their Roman Catholic neighbours and this event has only served to strengthen our shared commitment with the UAE to push back against the

February 8, 2019

global trends of intolerance and instead see a world marked by acceptance and fraternal love.”

During his visit, Pope Francis met with the Grand Imam of Egypt’s al-Azhar Mosque and University, Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb. The two leaders signed what was described as “a historic declaration of fraternity” which called for “peace between nations, religions and races”. The declaration was signed in front of an international gathering of invited religious leaders, representing Christianity, Islam and Judaism, as well as other faiths.

The UAE is in the Anglican Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, part of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East. Its Bishop, Michael Lewis, told *ACNS* that more than 15,000 Christians pass through the gates of St Andrews, the main Anglican church in Abu Dhabi, each weekend. “St Andrew’s, firmly established since the 1960s and recently refurbished, sits in a compound that gives hospitality and the opportunity for worship to many groups as well as the strong and multinational Anglican congregations”, he said. “Those groups range from Eastern Orthodox to Pentecostals. . .

“His Highness Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak al Nahyan, a widely respected member of the royal family who is currently the UAE’s Minister of Tolerance, is a frequent honoured visitor to St Andrew’s on significant occasions such as the church’s fiftieth anniversary and attends Remembrance Day most years.”

Elsewhere in Abu Dhabi, the congregation of St Thomas’ – a church plant in the desert garden city of al-‘Ain – is about to

February 8, 2019

erect its first church building on land allocated by the government.

And in the suburb of Musaffah, near the bridges that lead to Abu Dhabi Island, a new 4,000-capacity All Saints Anglican Church is being built. Its halls and chapels will also be “at the service of Christians of other traditions as well as Anglicans” Bishop Michael said.

Massgoers asked for creative ideas to reach the unchurched

Dublin parishioners are being asked to come up with creative ways to help spark faith in parents who bring their children for First Holy Communion but are not churchgoers.

In a wide-ranging consultation process launched this week, parishes will be asked to face up to the reality that of the many children who receive the Sacraments on annual days like Communion and Confirmation, they rarely if ever see the inside of the church again until their wedding day.

It's part of a survey intended to transform sacramental practice in the country's largest diocese.

The archdiocese is appealing for parents, guardians, parishes and schools to respond to an online survey considering how the Faith is passed on, as a first step in a sacramental preparation review process.

Introducing the survey, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin said: “Ireland is changing, and Irish religious culture is changing, and we have to see how in the developing Irish religious culture we prepare people for the Sacraments, in particular for the Sacraments of initiation – Baptism, Holy Communion



and Confirmation – which are the ways people are brought into the life of the Church community.”

In a letter to accompany the survey, Archbishop Martin said he has become aware over the years of a “growing need” to review the preparation and celebration of the Sacraments, with there being a widespread concern that they should be “celebrations of a vibrant faith rather than the ‘conveyor belt’ they are often described”.

Survey

The first step in the consultation process will be a listening exercise, Dr Martin explained, beginning with a short online survey which will be online for the three weeks from February 4, after which a Review Group will contact parishes across the archdiocese to ensure that a representative sample of parishes have engaged with the process.

February 8, 2019

Done properly, the survey could help have “a transforming effect”, Dr Martin said.

As well as asking for thoughts on how many families involved in sacramental preparation are not churchgoers, the survey asks parents to consider whose responsibility it is to pass on the Faith and the role of Catholicism in their own lives. It also asks how the Faith of children and parents is enhanced by sacramental preparation, and what new directions should be considered in preparing for the Sacraments.

Describing this as “a great opportunity”, Dr Martin said: “There’ll be difficulties, but it’s a great opportunity of renewal in the Church, and I hope that many, many people will join in this consultation so that we come up with results that will be owned by people in today’s Church and in tomorrow’s Church.”

New Presbyterian moderator calls for ‘common sense’ over Irish language act

The new moderator-elect of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has said “common sense” needs to be considered when it comes to an Irish language act.

Rev William Henry, who will take up the post in June after a vote by Presbyterians this Tuesday, was asked about the issue by the News Letter in an interview at Assembly Buildings, the church’s headquarters, in Belfast.

February 8, 2019



Reverend William Henry, the minister of Maze Presbyterian Church and Moderator designate

The Presbyterian church has put its name to a number of statements about the Stormont impasse, voicing concerns about the lack of a devolved government and urging politicians to resolve their differences.

Sammy Wilson: Church leaders should call out Sinn Fein over Stormont deadlock

One of the main stumbling blocks has been Sein Fein demands for a language act.

Rev Henry said: “Presbyterian historically have had a role in the Irish language, going back to the 18th century – they were part of making the Irish language survive.” He said:

“Certainly we ’d want to believe that since the Irish language

February 8, 2019

is important to a sector of our community it should be valued. But also we recognise that it has been politicised in many ways, and we think that discussion needs to be depoliticised for the benefit and the good of the whole of our land. “I think we need to be sensitive, particularly if getting an Irish language act was too costly and bureaucratic and we need to measure that against hospital beds and all those aspects. So from that point of view, I think we need a little bit of common sense in the discussion.”

Archbishop Clarke welcomes Moderate designate

The Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, the Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke, has welcomed the election of the Moderator-designate of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Revd William Henry.

In a statement, Dr Clarke comments, ‘On behalf of the Church of Ireland, I wish to congratulate the Revd William Henry, and to wish him every blessing in the ministry he is about to undertake in leadership of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. I look forward to working alongside him in the Church Leaders’ group following his installation in June.’

National Bible Society of Ireland appoints Development Officer

Julia McKinley has been appointed to the role of Development Officer for the National Bible Society of Ireland (NBSI).

February 8, 2019



Julia McKinley

Julia was commissioned for the role at a special service in St Ann's Church, Dawson Street, by the Vicar, Canon David Gillespie.

A number of organisations were represented at the service including the Irish School of Ecumenics, the Irish Council of Churches, Christian Aid, Tearfund, the Irish Bible Institute, Dublin City University and Asset Ireland.

The NBSI has global as well as local links in Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The United Bible Societies are a historical network of biblical societies which

February 8, 2019

traditionally focus on bible translation and making the the biblical texts accessible and available to all, and have a range of exciting current national and international projects. See unitedbiblesocieties.org.

Julia's role primarily will involve collaborating with other biblically based organisations, partnering with the Bible Society in Norther Ireland on all-Ireland projects, and facilitating group engagement with Scripture at local and national levels. You can reach the NBSI at Julia@nbsi.ie or 087-3844990.

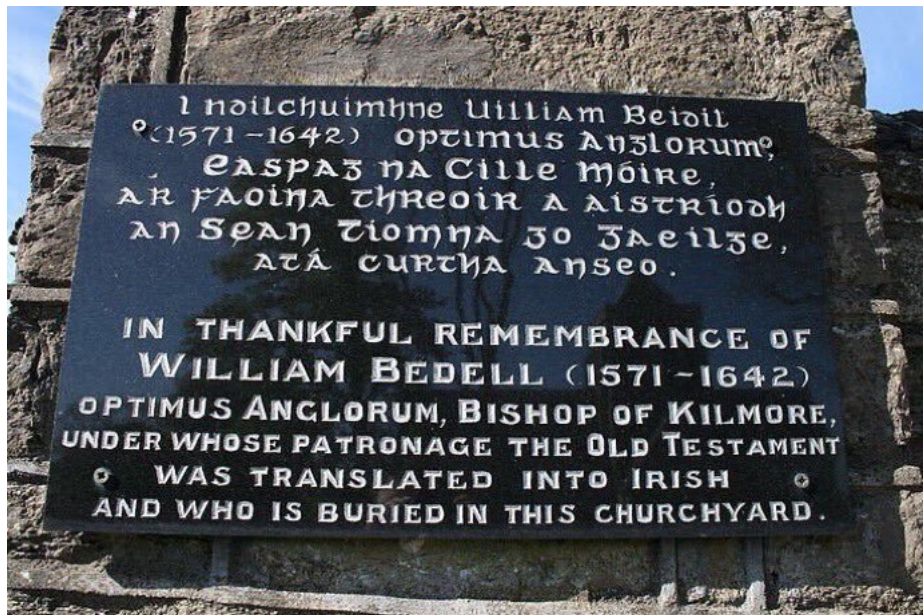
News briefs

+++Archbishop Welby meets King of Jordan - The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, who was in the Jordanian capital Amman for a regional Anglican Primates' Meeting, has met King Abdullah II of Jordan. A statement issued by the Royal Court said that the meeting covered Jordan's efforts in safeguarding Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem and preserving its identity as a unifying city of peace; as well as Jordan's efforts to promote interfaith dialogue and harmony.

+++Peregryne compline in Dublin - Peregryne will sing the office of compline in Dublin this weekend, Friday 8 - Sunday 10 February at 5.30pm in St Audoen's, St Catherine's Meath Street and St Patrick's cathedral in Dublin respectively. The music will include two works from the Eton choirbook: 'Nesciens mater' by Walter Lambe (c. 1452-after 1505) and 'Stabat virgo mater Christi' (i) by John

February 8, 2019

**February 7
1642 - William
Bedell Bishop
of Kilmore and
Bible
translator to
Gaelic died of
fever. He was
called the
'best of the
English'**



Browne (c.1453-after 1505) in a recent reconstruction by Timothy Symons and Magnus Williamson, as well as 'Te lucis ante terminum' Thomas Tallis (c.1505-85). All are most welcome and admission is free. The image of 'Christ on the Cross with the Virgin and St John' by Albrecht Dürer appropriately dates from 1510 at the end point of the lives of both Lambe and Browne.

+++Voice production - Ulster Society of Organists and Choirmasters event this Saturday, 9th February at 3:00pm in Fisherwick Church, Belfast. This will be of special interest to all singers and choir members! Voice production with Catherine Harper. Everyone welcome 🎵

+++Bereavement at an Irish Cathedral - "We are very sorry to announce that our beloved Cathedral cat, Calcifer 'Cal' has passed away. Cal was a cat of international renown as he greeted our guests from across the globe and ensured they had a warm and memorable welcome. Cal was chief of security here at the Cathedral and no mouse or pigeon dared stray into our Cathedral when Cal was on

February 8, 2019

duty. Calcifer was a dear little friend who will be missed by all who knew him.”



The Methodist Church's World Development group invite you to enjoy the buzz around Belfast as you walk the 8 mile route around the city at marathonbcm. The 8 mile walk is a non-competitive option which starts at Stormont and finishes up in Ormeau Pk. Is this the event for you? Get in touch!

worlddevelopment@irishmethodist.org

+++Meath clergy retreat - Bishop Pat Storey and the clergy from Meath and Kildare gathered for their annual retreat recently. They stayed at Mount St Anne's Retreat Centre, churchnewsireland@gmail.org

February 8, 2019



This is the ChurchArmy Academy in Nairobi in 2012 and 2019. Thanks to the generosity of many including ChurchArmy UK AND Ireland the school has been finished and makes a massive impact on hundreds of children's lives

near Portarlinton, from 4th to 6th February. The retreat conductor was Ven Robert Miller, archdeacon of Derry.

+++Thought for reflection -

The inability of many political leaders to separate what is good for them and what is good for the people they

churchnewsireland@gmail.org

February 8, 2019

ostensibly serve consistently astounds me. I wish I wasn't quite the naive idealist I am. I think it comes from growing up Methodist - Diane Butler Bass - now an Episcopal priest and theologian

Today in Christian History - February 8

February 8, 356: For the third time since the Council of Nicea in 325, Athanasius goes into exile. The defender of orthodoxy was out of favor as Arianism, a heresy condemned at the council, ran rampant throughout the Empire. He would be exiled twice more before he died.

February 8, 1587: Mary, Queen of Scots, is beheaded. Attempting to restore Catholicism to England, she began persecuting Protestants. But, largely thanks to the work of John Knox, her attempts failed.

February 8, 1693: The College of William and Mary is founded in Williamsburg, Virginia. Originally intended to educate Anglican clergymen, it is America's second-oldest higher education institution (Harvard is the oldest).

News links

New Presbyterian moderator backs church's gay marriage opposition

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-47148558>

[Presbyterian Church in Ireland elects youngest ever Moderator](#)

ChristianToday

churchnewsireland@gmail.org

February 8, 2019

Presbyterian **Church** in **Ireland** elects youngest ever Moderator ... 'I have a strong belief that the gospel is good **news** and that the **Church** is to do good ..

Million euro plans for St George's Church Mitchelstown

The Avondhu Press (press release)

Million euro plans for St George's Church Mitchelstown ... and restore the former **Church of Ireland** building in the town as an arts and heritage centre.

Through battles and tragedy in struggle for life

The Irish Catholic

They were married both in the **Church of Ireland** and the Catholic Church – after a priest assisted in her return to the Faith. However, after 19 years of ...

Pope Francis says priests and bishops have sexually abused nuns

Irish Times

But Francis has never raised the issue until he was asked to comment during a **news** conference aboard the papal plane returning to Rome from his ...

How Meghan Markle Leans on Her Faith and 'Close Relationship with God'

PEOPLE.com

Meghan, 37, was baptized into the **Church of England** in a secret ceremony last spring ahead of her wedding to Prince Harry. And the intimate service, ...

African churches leading evangelism in Britain

La Croix International

African churches leading evangelism in Britain ... Elsewhere in England, African worshippers can be seen enjoying rousing sermons at the ... The **media** cited a survey from 2018 that indicated "an unrelenting decline in **Church of** ...

Welby: 'Who cares' if you're Protestant or Catholic?

The Christian Institute

In an interview with the Spectator magazine, Justin Welby was asked about a range of issues affecting the **Church of England**, including declining ...

Trump's State of the Union garners mixed reactions among faith groups

"We can make our communities safer ... our faith deeper and our middle class bigger and more prosperous than ever before," President Trump said. **More from Religion News Service**

Environmental priest in Peru says little has changed since pope's visit

February 8, 2019

The Rev. Xavier Arbex has warned for years about the devastating impact of rapacious mining in the mineral-rich country. [More from Religion News Service](#)

There are no real evangelicals. Only imagined ones.

There are, in fact, many evangelicalisms and each has a different center and different boundaries, writes Kristin Kobes Du Mez. [More from Religion News Service](#)

Darwin in America: The evolution debate in the United States

About one-in-five U.S. adults reject the basic idea that life on Earth has evolved at all. And roughly half of the U.S. adult population accepts evolutionary theory, but only as an instrument of God's will. [More from Pew Research Center](#)

**AN INVITATION
to become a
FACEBOOK FRIEND
of CNI
and get headlines of the CNI daily
news magazine...
...Just a click at
<https://www.facebook.com/Church-News-Ireland-261305103892998/timeline/>**

February 8, 2019

+ Please share CNI with your friends
www.churchnewsireland.org

