



Archbishop of Armagh concerned about the persecuted church

The head of the Catholic Church in Ireland has expressed his concern for Christians in parts of the world who endure suffering and even death for their faith. Unveiling a new statue of St Oliver Plunkett (pictured), the Archbishop of

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Armagh martyred for his faith in the seventeenth century, Archbishop Eamon Martin said events in Sri Lanka and Burkina Faso were a reminder “that persecution and martyrdom are not something from the past but are a cruel reality today for many of our fellow Christians, of all traditions and denominations”.

Bishops from the Catholic Church and Church of England have formally welcomed the final report by the independent review into Foreign & Commonwealth Office support for persecuted Christians.

The review called on the British government to consider sanctions on countries where Christians are persecuted. The Bishop of Clifton, Declan Lang, lead bishop for international affairs, and the Anglican Bishop of Southwark, Christopher Chessun, said: “We are encouraged that the Final Report by the Independent Review into FCO support for persecuted Christians has grounded its analysis and recommendations in a human rights framework.” The final report reflects some of the input by the Churches, including mandatory training for diplomats, dedicated funding for promoting freedom of religion or belief and better engagement with faith communities.

A plough and a prayer: Bishop seeks Ireland's favourite prayer and a new prayer for the environment

Visitors to the 88th National Ploughing Championships in County Carlow from 17 – 19 September have two new

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challenges: they are being asked to vote for their favourite traditional prayer, and to compose a prayer for the protection of the environment. The search to discover Ireland's best-loved prayer, and a new one focusing on care for the environment, is the quest of Bishop Denis Nulty, Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin, in whose diocese the ploughing championship is once again being held.

Launching the search for Ireland's favourite prayer which Bishop Nulty said, "In the most recent census, over 85% of respondents said they had a religious affiliation. Prayer is still important for many citizens. In the two months leading up to the Ploughing Championships, I am asking people all around the country to choose the prayer they like most, such as the Rosary or the Lord's Prayer. Perhaps a prayer learnt at their mother's knee or handed down *ó ghlúin go glúin* in their family."

Bishop Nulty continued, "The Ploughing Championships takes place in the middle of the annual Season of Creation, which the Catholic Church marks from 1 September – 4 October. Because the 3-day ploughing championship focuses on rural living, I am also inviting people to submit a personal prayer (no more than 100 words) about the environment which they compose themselves. This new environmentally centred prayer could relate to farming, gardening or sustainability."

Bishop Nulty is extending his 'Prayer at the Ploughing' challenge to people of all ages and all faiths. He is hopeful that many school children will take up the challenge to write their own 'green' prayer and/or indicate which traditional prayer they prefer.

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People can submit their preferences and entries to prayerattheploughing@kandle.ie between now and 10 September.

A shortlist of the favourite prayers will be displayed at the Kildare & Leighlin stand when the event gets underway at Ballintrane, near Fenagh in County Carlow on 17 September.

Visitors to the Kildare & Leighlin Diocesan stand will be invited to vote for their favourite traditional prayer from the shortlist. The prayer for the environment will be selected by a guest adjudicator and the winner in this section will receive a €100 'One for All' voucher.

The Prayer at the Ploughing is one of several initiatives being taken by Bishop Nulty at the Fenagh event. The theme of the Kildare & Leighlin stand at the ploughing is 'Digging Deeper – Rooting for Christ' a continuation of his diocesan campaign exploring new ways for people to understand their faith.

Visitors to the stand will be invited to spend time in prayer and to also enjoy entertainment from soloists and choirs who will attend. Farmers and gardeners will be given blessed salt for their soil and young people will be presented with colourful wristbands. A cup of tea and a warm welcome is also assured.

Commenting on the importance of the National Ploughing Championships for the diocese, Bishop Nulty said, "Participating at the Ploughing Championships is always an exciting time for us whenever the event is held in

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our diocese. I thank the NPA Managing Director, Anna May McHugh, for her welcome and kindness.

“I expect there will be significant interest in our ‘Prayer at the Ploughing’ competition. We were taught in school that prayer is a lifting up of the mind and heart to God, and I know that many people do that on a daily basis. I am eagerly looking forward to seeing the entries for the favourite traditional prayer of Irish people, those we learnt from our parents, grandparents and teachers. I am also keen to view the new prayers for the environment and to observe the pleas of people for the protection of our planet.

“We enjoy meeting so many people at the Ploughing. Visitors always appreciate our gifts of blessed salt and our wristbands. They also enjoy our various wall displays. And despite so much activity at our stand, many people value a little quiet time too, in prayer. We are all looking forward to a busy few days in Fenagh in September. In the meantime, I
churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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hope many people will take up my challenge to tell me about their favourite prayer or to write a new one around caring for the environment.”

For more on the ‘Prayer at the Ploughing’ initiative see www.kandle.ie.

Presiding Bishop issues video message on immigration: ‘Who is my neighbour?’

The Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church (USA) has released a video on immigration. The text of the Bishop’s presentation reads -

I’m Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church. It goes without saying that there is a humanitarian crisis at the southern border of the United States. It is a human crisis, a crisis that has deep and complex roots, sources, and origins. But it is a crisis, a crisis of the human children of God.

There is suffering and there is hardship.

There is complexity and difficulty.

But it is a crisis that we as nation, that we as a global community, must face and find a way forward for the sake of our brothers and our sisters, for the sake of us all.

Deeply embedded in the Christian faith, indeed deeply embedded in the Jewish tradition, which is the mother of the Christian faith, and deeply embedded in the faith and traditions and values of many of the world’s great religions, is a profound conviction in a sure and certain value and

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virtue that care for the stranger, the alien, the visitor, is a sacred duty, a sacred vow.

In the Hebrew scriptures in the book of Deuteronomy, the book writes and says you shall love the stranger, for remember you were once strangers in the land of Egypt.

In the 25th chapter of Matthew in the New Testament, Jesus in the parable of the last judgment says that when you welcomed the stranger, when you did it to these who are members of my family, you have done it to me.

When you welcome the stranger, you welcome Jesus. The book of Hebrews in the New Testament says those who have welcomed the strangers have sometimes welcomed angels unawares.

Welcoming the stranger, or as some translations call the alien, welcoming those who are visiting among us is a cardinal virtue and value in our Christian faith.

Jesus was talking to a lawyer once; the story is told in Luke's gospel. And, when he was talking to the lawyer, the lawyer asked him what he must do to inherit eternal life. And Jesus said, what did Moses teach in the Hebrew scriptures? The lawyer said, well, Moses said you shall love the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself.

And Jesus said do that and you will find life.

But the lawyer went on and he asked, well, can we define neighbor more precisely? Who is my neighbor? And that's when Jesus told what we now know as the Parable of the Good Samaritan where one person helped another person, a person who was completely unlike them, someone that person considered other, not my tribe, not my nationality, not

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my religion, not even my friend. And Jesus at the end of the parable said, who was the neighbor to the man who was in need? And the lawyer said, well the one who actually showed compassion.

And Jesus said, now go and do that likewise.

That parable of the Good Samaritan invites us, calls us, challenges us, to be neighbor to the neighbor.

Some of our neighbors are at the border and some of our neighbors are those who have immigrated to this country and are living right in our neighborhood or in our city or in our community, or our state. To show compassion to them is to obey Jesus. Go and do likewise.

Show compassion. Show mercy. Help the neighbor. Help the stranger. Love the Lord your God. And love your neighbor as yourself.

July 19 - Today in Christian history

July 19, 1692: Puritan magistrates convict and hang five women for witchcraft in Salem, Massachusetts. By September, 20 people had been executed on charges brought by 15 young girls.

July 19, 1848: More than 300 men and women assemble in the Wesleyan Chapel at Seneca Falls, New York, for the first formal convention to discuss "the social, civil and religious condition and the rights of women." The event has been called the birthplace of the women's rights movement.

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July 19 - News briefs



+++Dublin and Glendalough Camino -The annual diocesan pilgrimage, the Glendalough Camino, will take place on Saturday September 14. The Camino has been growing from strength to strength and over 100 people joined the full pilgrimage from Hollywood to Glendalough along St Kevin's Way last year.

The pilgrimage has traditionally taken place on a Sunday but has been moved to a Saturday this year following feedback from clergy of the dioceses. The new day will facilitate clergy taking part in this diocesan event with their parishioners.

As usual pilgrims have two options. They can either undertake the full Camino route from Hollywood to Glendalough, a distance of 30 kilometres, or they can join shorter routes from the Wicklow Gap down to Glendalough, or around the monastic city itself. All participants on all the

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routes are invited to attend the short closing service which takes place at the stone ring fort on the shores of the Upper Lake in Glendalough at 5pm.

Those undertaking the full pilgrimage should allow six hours to complete the route. A pilgrim's blessing will be given in the ancient St Kevin's Church in Hollywood at 9am on Saturday morning after which they will set out. A bus will be provided to bring people back to Hollywood. Those wishing to avail of this bus service must register and provide contact details before departing.

Pilgrims planning to walk from the Wicklow Gap or around Glendalough may depart from St John's Church in Laragh which acts as a hub for the Camino throughout the day. Parking will be available locally and there will be a bus to bring people to the Wicklow Gap or the Monastic City at regular intervals throughout the day.

A full timetable will be available on the diocesan website at www.dublin.anglican.org/about-us/camino-de-glendalough nearer the time. Updates will also be available on Facebook at www.facebook.com/DublinandGlendalough

+++ Boost for Cork school - In recent weeks Cobh Mixed National School, in Cobh, County Cork, held their annual play in their school hall. Before the event, a cheque for €1200 for the repair and upgrade of the school hall was presented by Tracey Fortune of the school's Parents' Association to Harry Bollard, Chair of the Board of Management of the school.

The Parents' Association led a fundraising campaign for this vital work, which will allow the windows of the school hall to be replaced.

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The Rector of Cobh & Glanmire Union of Parishes, The Revd Paul Arbuthnot said: Many congratulations are due to the Parents' Association of our parish school for all their hard work in securing funds to upgrade the school hall. We are grateful to all those in the wider Cobh community who contributed so generously to this worthwhile cause.

+++ Food for thought - We tend to stay away from mourning and dancing. Too afraid to cry, too shy to dance...we become narrow-minded complainers, avoiding pain and also true human joy...While we live in a world subject to the evil one, we belong to God. Let us mourn, and let us dance. - Henri Nouwen

July 19 News Links

Church writes to First Minister seeking assurances that 'freedom of conscience will be protected ...

Scottish Catholic Observer

The Catholic **Church** has written to First Minister Nicola Sturgeon seeking ... an amendment at Westminster to introduce abortion to Northern **Ireland**.

Northern Ireland abortion plan 'very bad for democracy'

The Irish Catholic

Two members of the House of Lords, Baroness Nuala O'Loan and the former **Church of Ireland** Archbishop of Armagh, Lord Robin Eames sent an ...

Battle Escalates Over Northern Ireland Abortion, Same-Sex 'Marriage' Bill

Church Militant

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Father Hoban wrote this week that one of the most difficult things priests have had to deal with after the Catholic **Church** child abuse cases is whether ...

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The Irish Catholic

The Presbyterian **Church in Ireland** said that there were “many pressing issues to be dealt with in Northern Ireland, not least those affecting our ...

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Anglo Celt

His Holiness Pope Francis appointed Father Michael Router, **Parish** Priest of Bailieborough (Killann) as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Armagh ...

[Offaly church seek permission to build new rectory and garage](#)

Offaly Express

The Select Vestry of St Brendan's **Church** of **Ireland** in Birr is to apply to Offaly County Council for planning permission for a new rectory and garage.

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Brinkwire (press release)

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