



Thousands gather under sunny skies for Clonard Novena

The annual Clonard Novena got off to an "amazing" start in west Belfast yesterday as thousands of people came together under sunny skies for the start of nine days of prayer.

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Shonagh Tumelty holds her 16-day-old daughter Aoife Bridget Tumelty-McCloskey at the Clonard Novena.

The first session at 6.45am was packed with worshippers, including many workers with an early start to their day.

Around 10,000 people are expected to attend the Redemptorist church every day during the novena.

Spread across 10 sessions on weekdays and nine at the weekend, many took advantage of the sunshine yesterday by sitting outside and listening to Mass on the loudspeakers.

Each session was addressed by newly-installed Rector, Fr Peter Burns, who said the 2019 novena had got off to an "amazing" start.

"The fact the sun was shining makes a huge difference," he said.

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"The first session on the first day is really, really amazing. It's wonderful".

Among the crowd was mother-of-three Shonagh Tumelty, who had brought along her 16-day-old daughter Aoife Bridget.

The 34-year-old from Clonard said she comes every year.

"I have brought all my wee girls. It's the first day and I wanted to bring her," she said.

"I find peace here. It makes you feel good".

Also among the crowd was Lenadoon grandmother Mary Mallon, who had brought her three-year-old grandson Cian Maguire.

"This has continued from I was young," she said.

"I have always come and brought my kids and my grandchildren. I feel a peace."

The Clonard Novena runs until Thursday June 27.

Mass with anointing of the sick will take place on Saturday at 11am, 12.45pm and 3pm, while a blessing of babies and children will be on Sunday at 3pm. Report and photographs courtesy The Irish News

Bishop Harold Miller to retire in September

The Church of Ireland Bishop of Down and Dromore, the Rt Revd Harold Miller, has announced he is to retire after more than 22 years in the post.

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He made the announcement during his address to the Diocesan Synod yesterday on Thursday 20th June.

The bishop will stand down on 30th September this year.

In his address, Bishop Miller looked back with gratitude over his episcopal ministry and spoke warmly of the diocese and its people.

He said, “As I look back over two decades, I truly give thanks for you, followers of Jesus Christ, in the diocese of Down and Dromore, whom I have had the privilege of getting to know and serve alongside.

“We have loved one another as a family, and it has been a joy to call this wonderful diocese my home.”

Bishop Miller is 69 and celebrates 43 years of ordained ministry next week.

He is the longest serving Bishop of Down and Dromore since Bishop Robert Knox who retired after 37 years in 1886. The bishop will give his farewell charge to the diocese

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at the annual Bible Week in Shankill Parish Church, Lurgan, from 27–30 August.

Future of small dioceses in doubt as Rome stalls bishops' appointments

The future of Ireland's smallest dioceses is coming under increased Vatican scrutiny with a policy to withhold appointing bishops once a small diocese becomes vacant. The Irish Catholic understands at least three of the smallest dioceses will not receive new bishops and will likely be amalgamated over a period of time.

Amalgamating dioceses in Ireland was first mooted in Rome to the Irish bishops at the height of the abuse scandals by the Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops, Cardinal Battista Re, but was shelved to avoid it looking like a punishment for the Irish episcopacy.

However, as vocations continue to decline and clergy retire, it is an issue that clearly has to be tackled.

The dioceses most likely to be affected are Dromore, Achonry, Clonfert and Killala, the first two of which are vacant and the other two have bishops, one of whom reached retirement age five years ago and the other who is four years from retirement.

Speculation

Armagh's Archbishop Eamon Martin, who has been Administrator of the Diocese of Dromore for the past two months understands why there has been speculation by priests and laity that Dromore could be amalgamated with his own diocese, but told this paper that while he will



oversee Dromore for several years he has not been asked to work towards a diocesan merger.

“The only thing is that at the moment I have not been asked by the Holy See to move towards amalgamation of Dromore,” he said.

However, The Irish Catholic has been told by impeccable sources that Rome does intend for the smallest dioceses to be amalgamated over time. Archbishop Martin conceded: “Whatever happens, it’s obvious that consideration needs to be given to the future of the smaller dioceses in Ireland.”

The archbishop was keen to point out that the Irish Church should not get caught up solely in the structures of dioceses but needs to ask “how are we going to hand on the Faith?”

Optimum size

“What is the optimum size of a diocese, or conditions within a diocese which will maximise mission and making disciples,” he asked. “In other words, what is too small to

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provide the best possible provisions for handing on the Faith?” The Archbishop also posed the question of whether a diocese could be too big.

Stressing that synodality needs to be the guiding principle behind any changes, with consultation with people and priests being essential in the dioceses and with a national synod being a real possibility in a few years time, Dr Martin said: “I would be disappointed if the reorganisation of dioceses in Ireland took place at a boardroom table in Rome. I think it needs to begin on the ground and move from the ground up.” Report courtesy The Irish Catholic.

Reconciliation is about coming to peace with the task of faith - incoming leader of Corrymeela

“Much of the work of reconciliation is about coming to peace with the task of faith.” So said the incoming leader of the Corrymeela Community, the Revd Dr Alex Wimberley, who was preaching at Christ Church Cathedral’s Patronal Service on Trinity Sunday.

Archbishop Michael Jackson presided at the service in the presence of Dean Dermot Dunne and it was sung by the Cathedral Choir. The annual lunch and AGM for the Friends of Christ Church Cathedral followed.

The Corrymeela Community is an ecumenical community dedicated to the work of peace and reconciliation and Dr Wimberley said he was initially relieved to learn that he need not preach on the subject of the Trinity. Quoting Dorothy L Sayers he said that the mysterious concept of the

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+++ Get ready for StreetReach 2020 - Summer Madness is hosting a StreetReach Youth Leaders Information lunch on Saturday 29th June during the festival. If you would like to attend the lunch and hear more about our 2020 plans or have any questions email: lynn@summermadness.co.uk

Trinity was incomprehensible and irrelevant. But in the light of what he was invited to speak about – reconciliation and living with diversity – he said the Trinity didn't sound so bad or irrelevant.

“There is something screaming at us about daily life and ethics in the notion that God is God not in singular aloofness but in vulnerable relationship with others. The essence of
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+++ New Dean of Westminster - The Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle (above) has been appointed as the new Dean of Westminster. He is currently Dean of Bristol and will be installed as Dean of Westminster on 16th November 2019. The current Dean, The Very Reverend Dr John Hall will retire on 1st November 2019, All Saints' Day, after 13 years at Westminster Abbey.

being divine, the Trinity tells us, is to live in loving communion with those different to us. Pluralism is good, the Trinity implies. And there is something downright practical in the idea that God's relationship with us is not based on a static, take it or leave it yes or no pronouncement, the result of some a-ha moment that some get and others don't. That when we get it, we get it all. No. The Spirit of Truth – at least in this passage – is a promise, not a possession. There is more to come," he explained.

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On the island of Ireland in 2019, he suggested that a God whose very existence stressed relationship with others and a God who walked with us in the process of becoming something new was the God we should be glad to worship. Ireland and the world were quickly becoming something new, Dr Wimberly stated. Never before had such fundamental change happened so quickly or so extensively.

“The digital revolution, the population explosion, the cataclysmic tipping point of climate change, the demographic shifts that fuel anxieties and flummox our governments. The latest calculation has whites like me in America becoming a minority in 2042. That’s 23 years from now. If you don’t think that a subconscious realisation of that is driving much of the populist backlash in US politics, then you’re seeing something I am not. I’m seeing a lot people uncomfortable with vulnerability. (Of course, if minorities weren’t treated like second-class citizens, there wouldn’t be anything to fear.) The date when whites become a minority in Britain is estimated at 2066. The date in Ireland may be sooner: around 2050. Now. We can choose to worship a God who welcomes this process of becoming, that holds these transformations of who are we in a spirit of hope and assurance – or we can insist on a god who wants to keep everything as it is, or to return us to where we used to be. That sounds like a god of fear and anxiety to me, a god of singular aloofness, a god more and more irrelevant to the world we are in, a god increasingly incomprehensible to coming generations,” he stated.

He described coming to peace with the task of faith: “That to be faithful is to trust that I can let go of what I once knew, of what I insisted was right, I can let go of my way of doing

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things, and who I decided I was – because I can trust through Christ that what lies ahead and what will remain will still be in keeping with the God who was and who is and who is to come. That a Europe or an America or an Ireland where being a white, straight Christian male is no longer an advantage will be still a Europe or an America or an Ireland that I will want to be a part of; that what is good and right and true and eternal will still be found – not because I fought to preserve it – but because it is good and right and true and eternal. And doesn't need my protection. It is of a God who will continue to be.”

Pope in Naples: migration and theology in the Mediterranean

Pope Francis travels to Naples today (Friday) to take part in a conference that will discuss the impact of the Apostolic Constitution, *Veritatis Gaudium*, on theological studies.

During his one-day visit to the southern Italian city of Naples on *21 June*, Pope Francis will deliver a speech entitled “Theology after *Veritatis Gaudium* in the context of the Mediterranean.”

The event takes place within an initiative that brings experts to the table to discuss theology in connection with the current context in the Mediterranean area which is impacted by migration, inter-culturality and in need of interreligious and ecumenical dialogue.

The event is hosted by the Jesuits who run the ‘Pontifical Theological Faculty of Southern Italy’ in Naples. Pope

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"Veritatis Gaudium" conference in Naples

Francis will be welcomed by the city's Archbishop, Cardinal Crescenzo Sepe, and by the dean of the Faculty. During his visit, he will lunch with Jesuits from across the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Pope Francis' apostolic constitution *Veritatis Gaudium* was published in January 2018, and stipulated new norms of governance and education for all institutions that issue ecclesiastical degrees.

In it, the Pope urges theologians and philosophers to always be open to the *maius* [greatness] of God and of the truth, which is always in development. The constitution also calls for institutions to develop procedures for the education of refugees and migrants.

Jesuit father Pino Di Luccio, is the Dean of the Faculty. He told Vatican Radio that the programme for the event

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foresees a series of interventions that will shine the light on the new context in Mediterranean countries impacted by immigration and inter-culturality.

He said speakers will focus on the crucial contribution of dialogue between religions.

June 20 - Today in Christian history

June 21, 1607: English settlers found the first Anglican (later Episcopalian) parish in America at Jamestown, Virginia.

June 21, 1892: Reinhold Niebuhr, American neo-orthodox theologian and ethicist, is born. He rejected some of the optimism of Christian liberalism, arguing for original sin and for a prophetic, culture-challenging Christianity, but his liberal views on politics, the Bible, and the nature of Christ (he believed Jesus was a moral exemplar, but not fully God) distanced him from conservatives.

June 21 - News briefs

+++ Methodist President's week - Rev Sam McGuffin has the following engagements -

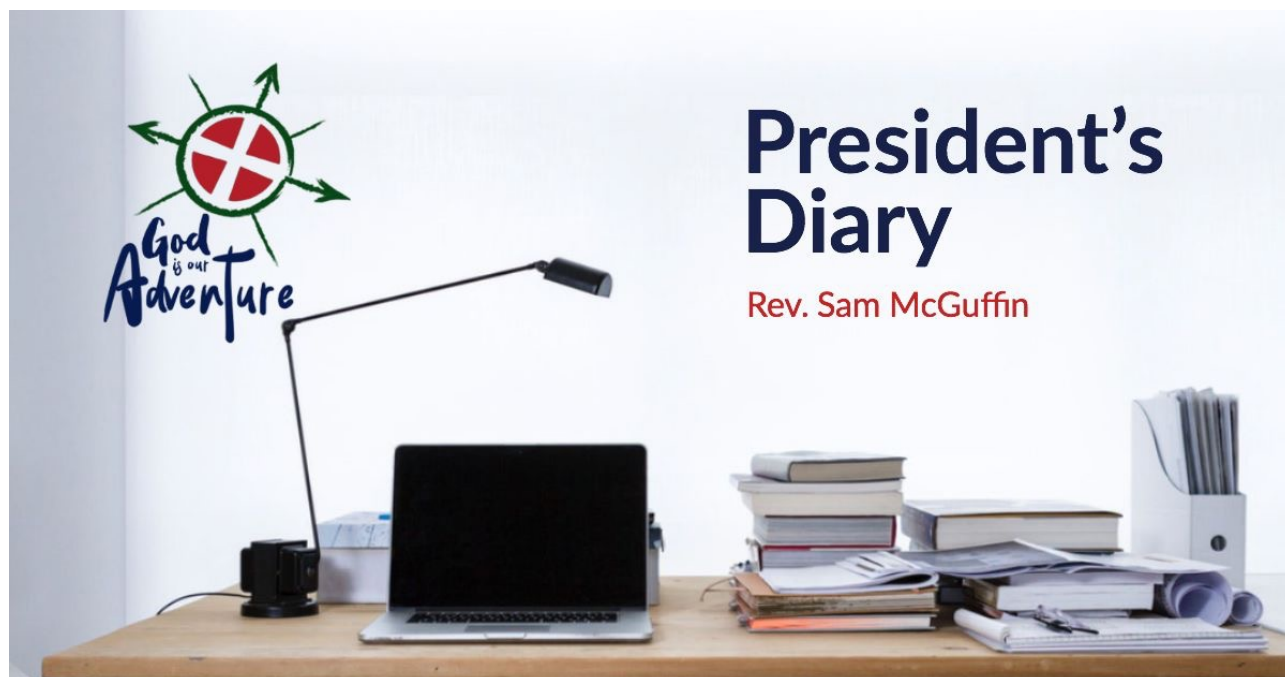
Sunday 23rd June: Preaching in Killarney am - Millstreet pm

Monday: Travelling home from Killarney

Preparing for the Conference of MCiB - Methodist Church in Britain

Tuesday: Preparing for the Conference of MCiB

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Wednesday: Chairing Connexional Team Meeting in Edgehill

Traveling to British Conference in Birmingham

Thursday: Attending Ministerial Conference of MCiB

Friday: Attending Ministerial Conference of MCiB

Saturday: Attending Representative Conference of MCiB

Praying at the opening session

Sunday 30th June: Preaching at a MCiB Ordination Service, St Martin's, Birmingham

Celebrating his 40th Wedding Anniversary

+++Parish Young Driver Awareness event - hosted by Rossorry MU facilitated by the NI Fire and Rescue Service, the PSNI, and Medical and Nursing practitioners. This event, the first of its kind in NI, provided eighteen of the parish's young people with a virtual reality experience of the aftermath of a road traffic accident and opportunity to discuss its consequences. The MU was led by Heather aided by Jonny Phenix the parish Youth Worker and the end result was a superb educational event. Hratitude was

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expressed to the professionals from the various emergency services who gave their time and expertise.

+++ Donegal Save our Spire success - The Save our Spire project at the parish church is now fully complete and paid for. The final cost of the whole project was €187,098, which has been covered as follows: Envelopes & donations €84,603; Fund raising €32,245; Grants €34,250; Existing funds €36,000.

+++Music in St Columb's Cathedral, Derry - This Sunday at 11.00am -Choral Matins, sung by the boys and gentlemen of the cathedral choir with music by Charles Villiers Stanford (Benedictus in C) and Hubert Parry (Dear Lord and Father of mankind). At 4.00pm, Choral Evensong sung by the

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Chamber Choir. Music is by Charles Wood - 'Evening canticles in E-flat' and 'O thou the central orb'.

+++Sanctuary Sunday in Christ Church, Dublin - This Sunday, June 23, to mark the end of Refugee Week, Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin is taking part in Sanctuary Sunday and all are welcome to attend. The Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal OBE, founder of the City of Sanctuary movement, will be the guest preacher at the service of choral evensong at 3:30pm. With refreshments and time for fellowship afterwards.

+++Sunday at the Seed Gathering -
MCI Home Mission Department.
23rd June,
"Time for a new model of church?"
Speakers:
Brian Sanders
(Underground Church Network).

Followed by a panel including Heather Morris and Simon Kilpatrick of MCI Home Mission Department. They will be discussing the question: If the world is changing around us and we each



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have a personal calling, do we need to radically change how we do church in order to fulfil our mission?

<https://www.irishmethodist.org/seed>

+++ Food for thought -

I cannot urge or beg you
To pray for anyone or anything,
For prayer in this green land
Is tarnished with stale breath,
Worn smooth and characterless
As an old flagstone, trafficked
With journeys no longer credible
To lost destinations.
- John Hewitt

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