

January 26, 2019

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Bangor parishioners visit Kiwoko Hospital, Uganda

People's Churchwarden and former Church Missionary Society Ireland's Medical Director of Kiwoko Hospital, Dr

January 26, 2019

Rory Wilson, is leading a group of eight other Ballyholme parishioners on a short exploratory expedition to Uganda.

The group left on Wednesday 22 January and will return the following Tuesday. The shortness of the trip works well for the group of mostly younger Dads, for whom family and work commitments are at their peak.

The team members had collected useful items and arrived with lots of extra luggage to distribute. A number of the men have a background in finance, banking and IT but the group also includes a property developer, a solicitor and an accountant. The short trip will allow them to explore ways in which they can support the hospital and its mission.

Visit www.kiwokohospital.org to find out more.

25 students begin courses at C of I Theological College

A total of twenty-five students will be in attendance at the Theological Institute over the course of the weekend of 22–24 February 2019 for the commencement of two further training courses. Nine men and eight women from five dioceses will be embarking on the one-year Foundation Course programme, whilst eight will start the fifth cycle of Reader training, lasting two years.

The weekend, entitled ‘Fit for the Purpose’, takes as its theme a biblical and personal exploration of various matters to do with vocation. The main facilitators are Canon Dr Christina Baxter, former Principal of St John’s College

January 26, 2019

Nottingham, and the Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott, Director of CITI. Also in attendance from St John's will be the Rev Dr John Tomlinson, Course Director, and Jacqui Brown, Course Administrator.

Killaloe Diocese welcomes 31 candidates for new ministry roles

Last October the Diocese of Killaloe invited applicants for two new ministry roles to serve parishes across the diocese into the future. The Ministry of Catechist and the Ministry of Pastoral Care were introduced by Bishop Fintan Monahan and 31 candidates have now been chosen to study for these new ministries.

An introductory evening was held in Carrigoran on January 10 and each month from now until Summer the candidates will have training weekends in Mount St. Joseph's and Spanish Point as part of their preliminary year.

This Ministry of Catechist is for those who are interested in exploring Christian faith in a way that is meaningful for today and who is interested in helping others to explore these questions for themselves.

A diocesan catechist will work to create opportunities for people to explore faith and to assist of various faith development programmes at both Parish and Pastoral Area Level especially around the moments of preparation for the Sacraments.

January 26, 2019

In most parishes, up to now, the priest was the only frontline minister. The Ministry of Pastoral Care, especially, has been seen as a ministry reserved to priests only. It's the priest who visits the sick and elderly, brings them Holy Communion.

This ministry is being introduced into the Diocese of Killable, at this time, so that there will be trained people in our Christian Communities, with the necessary skills and awareness, to take up some of these ministries, in a time, when there are fewer priests covering wider areas.

Furthermore, the thinking about the Ministry of Pastoral Care has developed in our Church since Vatican II. No longer is it seen as ministry which only the priest can exercise. Nowadays, it is seen as a ministry of the whole Christian Community. Those who exercise this ministry do this on behalf of the Christian Community, showing the love and compassion of Christ to their neighbours at times of illness and vulnerability.

The primary focus of the role of the Pastoral Care Minister is to reflect God's unconditional love and compassion. They will "exercise pastoral care" on behalf of the Christian Community to those who experience illness or aging. They will be a compassionate presence to families at the time of funeral, and where invited, they will be a supportive presence in times of bereavement.

The Ministry will take different forms according to local needs and the skills, and level of comfort of the Pastoral Care Minister. With training and experience it is envisaged

January 26, 2019

that Pastoral Care Minister will be involved in some of the following areas:

- Visiting sick or elderly people at home, in a nursing home or in hospital setting — where such visits are welcome.
- Leading a lay-led liturgy or other form of prayer in a nursing home setting.
- Having a concern for those who are isolated or on their own in the community.
- Supporting people and families at a time of a funeral by offering personal contact, warmth and support where appropriate.
- Helping families to prepare a funeral liturgy and facilitating their involvement.
- In the future, it may become necessary for Pastoral Care Workers to lead some moments of the Funeral Liturgy such as the Receiving of Remains or the Rite of Committal.
- Sensitive care for people who are bereaved in a parish or pastoral area context according to their needs and wishes.

For more on the new ministries in the Diocese of Killaloe see

<https://www.killaloediocese.ie>

Larne curate is new president of Ulster Society of Organists and Choirmasters

The Rev Dr Ian Mills, curate in the Parishes of Larne and Inver with Glynn and Raloo, says he is relishing the role with the society which was formed in 1918 as a forum for church

January 26, 2019

musicians and enthusiasts of all denominations.

Having just celebrated its centenary, it is thriving, maintaining a busy schedule of monthly events



which include visits to organs of historical note and instruments which have been recently built or rebuilt, an overseas tour each May, an annual Members' Recital, educational events and master classes from distinguished guests.

Ian said: "It is a great honour to succeed Professor Desmond Hunter as President of the Ulster Society of Organists and Choirmasters at this exciting time in our history.

"Our centenary year has provided us with an opportunity to look back over 100 years of USOC and survey the changing landscape of organ playing in Ulster.

"The society enters its second century aware of the challenges facing church musicians, but also enthused at the opportunities which lie ahead. To that end I look forward to continuing the society's outreach to new players, especially those of young age, and seeking opportunities for further collaboration with friends in like-spirited organisations."

January 26, 2019

Ian, a Minor Canon of Belfast Cathedral, has a very musical background. He grew up in Londonderry where he was a chorister in St Columb's Cathedral. He did A-levels at Foyle College and went on to obtain a PhD in Music at Queen's University, Belfast.

Before studying at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute, Ian worked as Organist and Master of the Choristers in St Columb's under the leadership of the Very Rev William Morton, now Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.

He also kept a busy freelance schedule as a recitalist and accompanist, and taught in St Malachy's College and Methodist College, Belfast.

Following his ordination as a Deacon in Connor Diocese in August 2017, Ian served an Internship in the parish of St John the Baptist, Agherton (Portstewart), and spent two months on the clergy team at St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, before taking up the role of curate in Larne following his ordination as a priest last September.

Ian is married to Kelly-Ann, a Registrar in Obstetrics & Gynaecology in the Royal Victoria Hospital and a lecturer in medicine at Queen's University.

Mullingar Cathedral to welcome local Christian communities for ecumenical prayer service

The largest gathering of Christian faith leaders in Mullingar will join in the ecumenical prayer for Christian unity on Sunday 27 January at 7pm.

January 26, 2019



Canon Alistair Graham and Fr Paul Crosbie in Cathedral House, Mullingar.

The Cathedral of Christ the King will host the prayer service, as well as hospitality for everyone afterwards.

Fr Paul Crosbie and Canon Alistair Graham have worked closely on the preparations for the event, and are inviting all Christian communities in the locality to join

together in prayer and friendship. “There’s so much talk today of Brexit and borders and divisions,” Fr Crosbie said, “and our joining together as religious leaders sends a signal that unity, not division, should be our goal.

“The Cathedral is honoured and delighted to play a part in bringing faith communities together. It’s exactly what we are about.” Among those who will take part in the prayer service will be the local Church of Ireland parish, Ballynacargy and Sonna parish, Collinstown parish, Mullingar Christian Fellowship, the Presbyterian Church, ‘Youth for Christ’, Kinnegad parish and Multyfarnham. See mullingarparish.ie and Facebook for updates.

Sleeping pods to be installed in Welsh churches for SpiritCymru cycle tourism campaign

Special sleeping pods will be installed in a number of remote churches and chapels in Wales for use by cycling

January 26, 2019

tourists. The *SpiritCymru* project is the brainchild of Ceredigion businessman James Lynch, who runs a sustainable holiday company. It



is being launched as part of the Welsh Government's *Year of Discovery* tourism campaign. The Church in Wales said that the scheme will "bring valuable support to struggling – even closed – rural churches by opening them up as accommodation for touring cyclists."

The head of Property Services at the Church in Wales, Alex Glanville, said: "This is an exciting opportunity to work in partnership with fforest to find a new, innovative purpose for churches that have been closed. These buildings remain special places which will find a new audience through *SpiritCymru*."

James Lynch commented: "We know that there are some 800 chapels and churches in the rural and coastal communities of Wales – many of which are facing an uncertain future. *SpiritCymru* will celebrate and promote the heritage values of these beautiful buildings and provide a new sustainable model for continued community engagement and use,"

January 26, 2019

The scheme has received financial backing from Welsh Government's Tourism Product Innovation Fund and bookings are expected to open in the autumn.

Welby under fire as report clears Bishop Bell over sex abuse claims

The Archbishop of Canterbury was accused on Thursday of persisting with a “malign” attack on Bishop George Bell after he refused to exonerate him following a “copycat” allegation of historic child sex abuse.

An official report published on Thursday concluded that a 70-year-old allegation against Bishop Bell was unfounded. It found that the evidence of the complainant – a woman named only



The Rt Rev George Bell, above; Justin Welby, below, has refused to declare him innocent of sexually abusing a young girl in the Fifties

January 26, 2019

as “Alison” – was “unreliable” and “inconsistent”.

Alison had written to the Church of England, claiming she had been sexually assaulted by the bishop in 1949 when she was aged nine.

The letter was sent a week after the Church of England was found to have wrongly besmirched Bishop Bell in its handling of a previous complaint brought by a woman known only as “Carol”.

The latest report suggested that Carol’s allegation had “prompted a false recollection in Alison’s mind”.

On Thursday, the Most Rev Justin Welby “apologised unreservedly for the mistakes” in the handling of the complaint made by Carol. But he declined to publicly clear the former Bishop of Chichester of any wrongdoing or retract a statement that he had a “significant cloud ... over his name” and that he had been accused of “great wickedness”.

In a private letter, however, sent to Bishop Bell’s closest surviving relative, his niece Barbara Whitley, he wrote: “Once again I offer my sincerest apologies both personally and on behalf of the Church. We did wrong to you and before God.”

Bishop Bell, one of the towering figures of the Church in the 20th century, has been unable to defend himself, having died in 1958. But his supporters urged the Church to restore his reputation after two reports exonerated him.

Ms Whitley, 94, said yesterday: “I would like to see my uncle’s name cleared before I die.”

January 26, 2019

Desmond Browne QC, a leading barrister who acted for the bishop's family and who was christened by him in 1949, said: "What is now clear is that the investigations by two experienced lawyers [have established] George Bell's innocence. But not once [has] the Archbishop of Canterbury offered Bell the presumption of innocence."

Alison had alleged that Bell, the former bishop of Chichester, had sat her on his lap and "fondled her".

Church faces criticism over new Bishop Bell allegation

Decision to make public a 70-year-old child sex abuse claim is 'foolish and unwise', says Lord Carlile

*By Robert Mendick
and Olivia Rudgard*

someone from beyond the grave. An independent report by Lord Carlile QC into the previous claim – made by a woman known only as Carol – had found the Church had "severely and unnecessarily damaged" Bishop Bell's reputation. A psychiatric report suggested her claim could have been the result of false memory.

A Daily Telegraph report on the case

January 26, 2019

But the report by Timothy Briden, an ecclesiastical lawyer and vicar general of Canterbury, concluded that in her oral evidence “her attempts to repeat what had been written in the letter displayed, however, a disturbing degree of inconsistency”.

Alison had alleged in the letter the abuse had taken place indoors in front of her mother but in oral testimony thought she had been assaulted outdoors. He concluded that her claim was “unfounded”.

The existence of Alison’s complaint made in December 2017 was made public by the Church of England at a time when it was facing increasing criticism for its handling of the earlier allegation by Carol. Alison’s claim was passed in January 2018 to police, who then dropped the case.

Mr Briden also investigated a separate complaint made by an 80-year-old witness – known only as K in the report – that his mother had told him that she had seen Bishop Bell “carrying out a sexual act with a man over his Rolls-Royce” in 1967.

Bishop Bell died in 1958 and did not have a Rolls-Royce. The report said: “The longer that the statement from K’s mother is analysed, the more implausible it appears.”

Lord Carlile, the QC who carried out the damning inquiry into the handling of Carol’s claim, was scathing of the Church of England’s decision to make public the police inquiry into Alison’s complaint.

Lord Carlile said: “I am astonished that the Church [made] public the further complaint against Bishop Bell and the

January 26, 2019

error has been proved by the conclusion of this latest inquiry.”

Prof Andrew Chandler, Bishop Bell’s biographer and spokesman for the George Bell Group, said “the claim by Alison appeared a copycat of Carol’s complaint”. Carol was paid £15,000 compensation in a legal settlement in October 2015.

In his statement on Thursday, Archbishop Welby described Bishop Bell as a “remarkable role model”, adding: “I apologise unreservedly for the mistakes made in the process surrounding the handling of the original allegation against Bishop George Bell.”

But he went on: “It is still the case that there is a woman who came forward with a serious allegation ... and this cannot be ignored or swept under the carpet.”

The current Bishop of Chichester, Martin Warner, also declined yesterday to exonerate his predecessor. But he accepted that a public statement he made signifying Bishop Bell’s guilt and released in 2015 after Carol’s claim was settled was probably now an error.

“Knowing what we now do [we] would want to re-examine that and I don’t think we would [make that statement].”

Wrongfully accused **How the false claims unravelled**

‘Carol’ first contacted the Church in 1995 to claim she had been sexually abused by Bishop Bell in the Forties and Fifties.

January 26, 2019

The complaint was ignored but she made it again in 2013 in a letter to Lambeth Palace.

This time it was taken seriously and in 2015 Carol was awarded £16,800 damages and £15,000 legal costs. Carol alleged that she had been sexually abused over a four-year period from the age of five.

The Bishop of Chichester issued a formal apology and expressed his “deep sorrow” over his predecessor’s behaviour. But a campaign group forced the Church to re-examine the case and an independent inquiry by Lord Carlile found a series of errors in the handling of Carol’s legal claim.

He concluded in December 2017 that Bishop Bell’s reputation had been wrongly traduced.

‘Alison’ wrote to the Bishop of Chichester on Dec 22 2017 – a week after the Carlile report – claiming she too had been abused by Bishop Bell.

She said that on one occasion in about 1949 he had sat her on his knee and “fondled her” in front of her mother.

The claim was passed to Sussex Police in January 2018.

The force dropped the case after a short investigation.

January 26 and 27 in Christian history

January 26, 1564: Pope Pius IV accepts and confirms the decrees of the Council of Trent by the bull *Benedictus Deus*. The product of the Counter Reformation, it improved church

January 26, 2019

organization, strengthened the papacy, and blocked any reconciliation with Protestants.

January 26, 1859: Millionaire inventor of the reaper, Cyrus McCormick, marries Nettie Fowler, a devoted Christian. Following Cyrus's death in 1884, Nettie used her enormous wealth to establish Chicago's McCormick Theological Seminary and to support the work of D.L. Moody, John R. Mott, and countless missionaries to Asia.

January 26, 1906: The Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee), the oldest Pentecostal denomination, convenes its first General Assembly.

January 27, 398: John Chrysostom, the greatest preacher of his age, is consecrated bishop of Constantinople.

January 27, 417: Pelagius, a British monk, is excommunicated for heresy. He denied original sin and claimed that men could become righteous by the exercise of free will.

January 27, 1302: On a trumped-up charge of hostility to the church and corrupt practices, Dante Alighieri is fined heavily and perpetually excluded from political office (he was a chief magistrate). Further condemned in March and driven out of Florence in April, Dante began writing The Divine Comedy, an epic poem in which he travels through hell, purgatory, and heaven.

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