

Historic day for Foyle Child Contact Centre



Bishop Ken Good, Mrs Mary Good, the Mayor of Derry and Strabane District, Cllr John Boyle, and Lady Christine Eames at the official opening of the Foyle Child Contact Centre's new premises.

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Lady Eames helped create a small piece of history in Londonderry last Friday afternoon when she opened the Foyle Child Contact Centre's new premises in Londonderry – making it the first child contact centre in Northern Ireland to have sole use of its own premises.

The new facility, in the Diamond, will provide a warm, welcoming environment in which children can spend quality time with a parent or other family member with whom they are not living.

Foyle Child Contact Centre was set up in 2005 – with grant support from Mothers' Union and the Church of Ireland Board of Social Responsibility – to meet the need for a safe, welcoming, neutral, child-centred facility. Since then it has been supported, too, by the Western Health and Social Care Trust. In the last 13 years, the centre has facilitated contact for 777 families and almost 2,000 children in the Salvation Army's premises at John Street. Speaking at today's opening, the chairperson of the Foyle CCC board, Jean Thompson, said the organisation was indebted to the Salvation Army for all it had done for the centre.

Foyle CCC is delighted to have acquired its own new, neutral, secluded premises in the city centre, making it the first child contact centre in Northern Ireland to have sole use of its own leased premises.

The centre will be managed by coordinator, Liz McCorkell, with the support of 40 volunteers and the centre's board of management. The charity offers seven contact sessions per week, including one in Strabane and one in Limavady, and the service would be unable to function without the help and dedication of its volunteers.

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Foyle CCC is the first group in Northern Ireland to have been accredited under the new Northern Ireland Network of Child Contact Centres scheme. In August 2018, the centre received the Queens Award for Voluntary Service – regarded as the MBE for voluntary groups – in recognition of the high quality of service it offered.

Several dozen people attended the lunchtime launch in the Diamond. Lady Eames – a long-time advisor to the NI Child Contact Centre – was assisted at the official opening by one of the children who attend Foyle CCC. Also in attendance were the Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Councillor John Boyle, representatives of the judiciary and the acting Chairman of the Western Trust, Niall Birthistle.

Lady Eames told the gathering that volunteers and volunteering were at the heart of child contact centres in Northern Ireland, and that they were owed a great debt by the community at large for the way in which they were prepared to put their head above the parapet and give of their time.

“This centre is a tremendous asset for this city and the wider area,” Lady Eames said. “None of us knows when we will need to avail of a service such as this. None of us knows the difficulties that will come. Any of us can hit a point of crisis at any particular time in our lives, and we turn to each other.

“So, this is a milestone for the contact centre, it’s a milestone for its leadership, it’s a milestone for its volunteers and all who’ve been involved, and it’s a milestone for this city which is very, very close to my heart.”

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If you are interested in volunteering for Foyle Child Contact Centre or would like more information on its work, please contact the coordinator on 07841072907, email foyleccc@icloud.com or visit the website at foylechildcontactcentre.org



Appetite for Alpha in Down and Dromore

The start of the year is a good time to run an Alpha Course and quite a few of churches in Down and Dromore are doing just that in January and February.

Some of the leaders have shared their experience of Alpha, a valuable tool that's used by Christians all around the globe.

Revd Mervyn Jamison, Minister in Charge at Holy Trinity Ballylessen says:

“Alpha has a way of explaining the basics of the Christian faith in simple yet moving way. It also gives people the opportunity to ask those questions that have held them back

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or confused them. However not everyone responds to the simple message of the Gospel and that's ok! I'm still very close to a number of friends who still differ in opinion. Alpha doesn't frighten people into the 'Kingdom'. It simply lays the facts before them.

"I have run Alphas in churches but have got a better response by running it in a neutral Venue. On the first occasion, Comber Churches Together ran it above McBrides Pub in the Square. We had a bit of opposition but our response was to ask them, 'Where did Jesus meet people'?"

"The church plant I was involved with in Moneyreagh also ran Alpha in the 'Auld House'. From that first course the church grew three home groups and it also raised the profile of the church in the village."

Holy Trinity Ballylesson's Alpha begins on Wednesday 6 February at 7.30 pm in Cameron's Café and Deli.

Revd Jim Cheshire, rector of Ballybeen, has run Alpha in Hollywood and Bangor. Jim says:

"Alpha is a great course for helping 'seekers' and 'regulars' alike to grapple with the basics of the Christian faith in a safe, non-threatening environment. The course not only offers learning, but also crucially the chance to discuss questions participants may have about the given topics. Over the years, people who have done Alpha have often commented that the Alpha Course was the catalyst that brought them to the point of encountering Christ for themselves or experiencing the reality of the Holy Spirit in their lives."

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Ballybeen's Alpha begins on Sunday 17 February 17 at 7.00 pm in St Mary's.

Jim Fleming is a pioneering evangelist working in Killicomaine, Portadown. He ran Alpha last term. "We had a team of six helpers and, after a full leaflet drop around the estate before the course started, fourteen guests arrived on the first evening!" he says.

"One lady came to faith and the group developed strong bonds during the course, so much so that they approached us as to 'what happens next?' We thought and prayed about it and on 8 January we started an 'After Alpha'; studying the 'Jesus Lifestyle' by Nicky Gumbel.

"The vast majority have returned and have been joined by a few others. The course runs over sixteen sessions and we also plan to continue meeting beyond that as we have the Community Centre booked until the end of June.

"Anyone in the area who would like to join us and deepen their walk with Jesus will be made very welcome."

(Tuesday evenings in Killicomaine Jubilee Community Centre, 32a Festival Rd, Portadown BT63 5HE at 7.00 pm.)

Other Alphas coming up or already running in the diocese

Bangor Parish

Beginning Sunday 3 February in Ground Espresso Coffee Shop in Bangor.

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Church on the Hill, Maghaberry

Friday nights at Church on the Hill at 7.45 pm (began 18 January)

Shankill Lurgan

Tuesday nights at 6.30 pm in Café Incredible at the Jethro Centre (began 15 January)

Willowfield

Alpha AM – Thursdays at 11.00 am – this one has Creche facilities available.

Alpha – Thursdays at 8.00 pm

Both taking place in Willowfield Church (began 17 January)

Find out more at www.alpha.org

Derry museum to be home to Bloody Sunday stole

The stole worn by the late Bishop Edward Daly on Bloody Sunday is to be donated to the Museum of Free Derry.

The vestment, along with a photograph of the teenage victim Jackie Duddy, which Bishop Daly kept on his desk for over four decades, will be formally given to the museum at a ceremony on Wednesday, January 30, the 47th anniversary of Bloody Sunday.

Footage of the then Fr Daly waving his handkerchief as the 17-year-old Jackie was carried along Chamberlain Street has long been an iconic image of Bloody Sunday [pictured]. After Mr Duddy was shot, Fr Daly vested himself in his stole and administered the Last Rites to the dying teenager while others attempted to treat his wounds.

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The stole and photograph will be exhibited alongside the handkerchief, which the Duddy family donated to the museum some years ago.

Connor Diocesan Curate retires after 20 years

After 20 years as Connor Diocesan Curate, the Rev Canon Ken Ruddock has retired.

Archdeacon George Davison, Commissary for the Bishop of Connor, visited Canon Ruddock in his Ahoghill home on Friday January 25 to present him with a thank you gift on behalf of the diocese.

Canon Ruddock, 88, was ordained in 1953 for the curacy of St Patrick's Parish, Ballymena. He served a further curacy in St Thomas's, Belfast, before moving to the Parish of Tomregan, in the border village of Ballyconnell, Co Cavan, in 1960. In 1968 Canon Ruddock, his wife Kathleen and three children moved to the Parish of Lower Falls, Belfast.

Canon Ruddock was rector of Whitehead and Islandmagee from 1980 until his retirement in 1996. He was appointed Diocesan Curate in 1998.

As Diocesan Curate, Canon Ruddock's job was to ensure all churches had cover for services during vacancies, holidays and sickness.

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The Bishop of Connor's Commissary, Archdeacon George Davison, presents a gift to Canon Ken Ruddock as a thank you from the diocese on the occasion of his retirement.

Presenting Canon Ruddock with the gift, Archdeacon Davison said: "I want to say on behalf of Connor Diocese how much we appreciate all that you have given."

Canon Ruddock will be succeeded as Diocesan Curate by Dean John Bond, former Dean of Connor.

Canon Ruddock (who incidentally won the 1.5 mile Liffey Swim in Dublin in 1947) is now considering taking another

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Cork quartet at annual CIYD Church of Ireland Youth Forum



Four young people from Cork, Cloyne and Ross – from Carrigaline, Kilgarriffe and Rosscarbery parishes – accompanied by the Diocesan Youth Officer, Hilda Connolly, attended the second annual CIYD Church of Ireland Youth Forum, which took place on Saturday 19th January in the City North Hotel in Dublin. Around 50 young people from throughout Ireland attended.

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The forum was organized by Church of Ireland Youth Department (CIYD) and was facilitated by Nic and Sally Sheppard of Church Army and assisted by Simon Henry, Steve Grasham and Barbara Swann from CIYD.

The young people, including those from Cork, clearly showed that they wanted to be there to learn more about the Church and to be part of it to discuss what they need and want from it and how they can be included more: an amazing bunch of young people gathered from all over Ireland and really got stuck in! Youth Forum 2019 was a success once again!

Pope winds up Panama global youth gathering with huge outdoor mass

Pope Francis said an open-air Mass before a huge crowd on Sunday to wrap up a jamboree of Catholic youth, the last big event before he returns to Rome to prepare for a historic trip to the Arabian Peninsula in one week.

Organisers said about 700,000 people attended the closing mass of World Youth Day, which takes place in a different city every three years. The next jamboree, which has been dubbed the 'Catholic Woodstock', will be in Lisbon, Portugal, in 2022.

Around 700,000 people attended the closing mass of World Youth Day in Panama.



Many of the young people in the crowd spent the night on the fields of a park named after Pope John Paul, who was the last pontiff to visit Panama, in 1983.

In his closing homily at the mass, which started unusually early at 8 am, because of the sweltering tropical heat, Francis urged the young people to work against 'fear and exclusion, speculation and manipulation'.

After a week at the Vatican, Francis leaves on Sunday for a three-day trip to Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, where he will become the first pope to visit the Arabian Peninsula and say the first mass in a public venue there. There are about 1 million Roman Catholics in the UAE, all of them expatriate workers.

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The freedom to practise Christianity – or any religion other than Islam – is not a given in the Gulf and varies from country to country. In the UAE and Kuwait, Christians may worship in churches or church compounds and in other places with special licences. Saudi Arabia, home to Islam's holiest sites, bans the practice of other religions.

During the Panama trip, the themes of migration and the Church's sexual abuse crisis loomed large.

Francis said at one event that it was 'senseless and irresponsible' to stigmatise migrants and see all of them as threats to society, weighing in again on one of the most divisive issues in the United States.

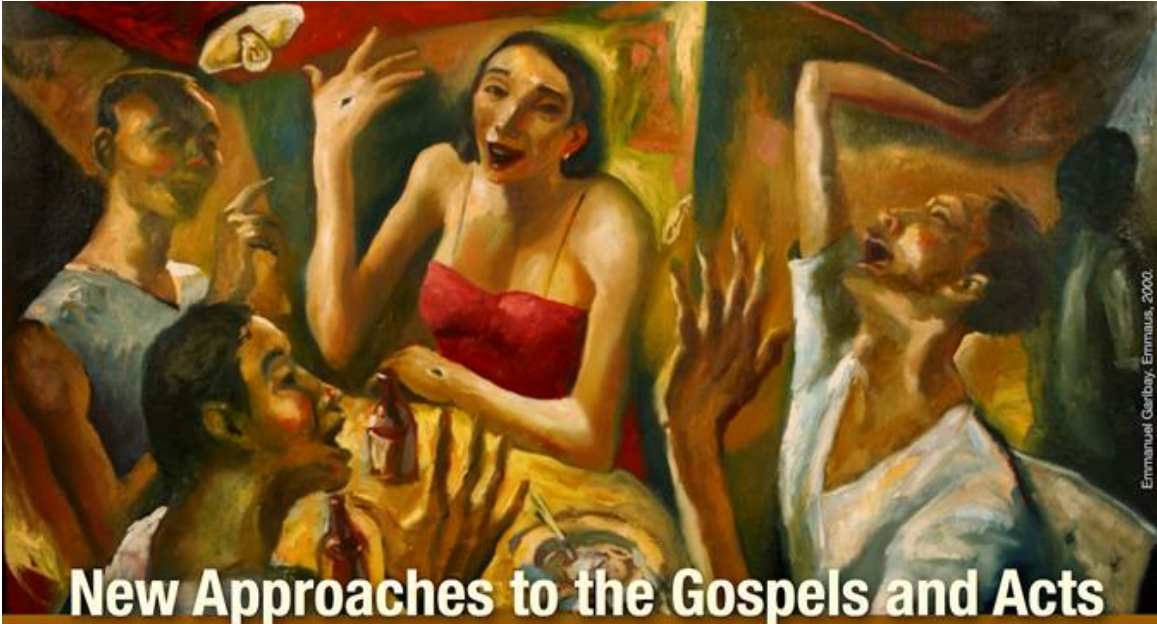
He spoke several times of the need for 'bridges, not walls', again putting himself at odds with US President Donald Trump, who on Friday agreed under mounting pressure to end a 35-day partial US government shutdown but without getting the \$5.7 billion he had demanded from Congress for a wall along the US-Mexico border.

Trump has repeatedly warned about the dangers of illegal immigrants, and said the wall would help solve the problem.

On Saturday, Francis said the Roman Catholic Church was weary and 'wounded by her own sin', in an apparent reference to the global sexual abuse crisis.

Later, at a lunch with a delegation of young people, he told the American representative that clergy sexual abuse was a 'horrible crime' and that the Church should be united in fighting it.

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New Approaches to the Gospels and Acts

Saturday, 16 February 2019
Loyola Institute
Trinity College Dublin
Registration from 9.30am

Dr. Margaret Daly-Denton
A Johannine Christian View of Earth.

Prof. Dr. Sandra Huebenthal
Experience, social memory, and a new approach
to reading the Bible.
and
Reading the Gospels as memory stories:
Luke in a new light.

Dr. Luke Macnamara
Characterisation in the Gospels and Acts.

Cost: €35 / €20 Concessions (with appropriate ID) for full day with light lunch included.

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Dr. Margaret Daly-Denton
Trinity College Dublin



Prof. Dr. Sandra Huebenthal
University of Passau



Dr. Luke Macnamara
St Patrick's College Maynooth

Francis has called a summit of the heads of national Catholic churches at the Vatican February 21-24 to discuss what is now a global sexual abuse crisis.

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The February meeting offers a chance for him to respond to criticism from victims of abuse that he has stumbled in his handling of the crisis and has not done enough to make bishops accountable.

News briefs

+++Dates for annual Armagh Music fest - This year's Charles Wood's Festival and Summer School will be held from Sunday 18th - 25th August.

+++ Abaana New Life Choir at Dondonald - Another chance to enjoy the Abaana New Life Choir, this time in St Mary's Parish Church Ballybeen on Sunday 10 February at 7pm. Free event with an offering to support the work of Abaana.

+++ Bishop Treaner presents Pope's message to Europe - At a great morning "Prayer&Breakfast" event organised by @jpeurope in the @ComeceEu office in Brussels, Bishop Noel Treanor from DownandConnor presented 2019 Papal Peace message. Klaus Welle, European Parliament secretary general responded.

+++Changling Attitudes Ireland AGM - The annual CAI Conference & AGM 2019 will take place in Cork on March 2nd. This his year's guest speaker is to be the Right Revd Paul Colton of Cork. Venue and times TBC.

+++President's visit to Sydenham Methodist church - Rev Billy Davidson, President of the Methodist Church

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shared in Belfast District's Sydenham Methodist Church worship on Sunday morning. Rev Robin Waugh, Ruth Boyce, Brian Maxwell helped make it a special time of praise and fellowship.

+++The 4 Corners Festival Art Exhibition launches on Thursday evening (31st)... Barbara Dass finds crosses, injustice, grace and hope in the 4 Corners of Belfast... a powerfully spiritual viewing

+++ Half a million at Panama WYD - More than half a million young people from 155 countries in high festive mood at Metro Park in Panama as Pope Francis arrived to celebrate the closing mass of World Youth Day for them. They shouted, cheered, danced and sang as he drove among them in the pope-mobile

+++Dublin Panama event - "The Christian message is a message that preaches and practices goodness and love." Archbishop Martin said to young people at Panama in Dublin on WYD2019

+++The St John Passion contains some of Bach's most dramatic, dissonant, even hysterical music. Come and hear Dublin Bach Singers sing this masterpiece on April 14 at the Pro-Cathedral.

+++ Presbyterian Herald feature on CAP - A teaser for the February edition of the Presbyterian Herald - an article has been released on @CAP_NI at @Lowe_Church through Issuu - have a read and you can download the rest of the magazine from the link (copy and paste in your browser) issuu.com/presbyterianir...

+++ Motion on divisions for C of E General Synod - The motion says that “social divisions feel more entrenched and intractable than for many years”, and that divisions in major political parties are “stifling the emergence of a hopeful and viable vision for the common good in our communities”.

January 29 in Christian history

January 29, 993: Ulric (890-973), bishop of Augsburg from 923, is formally canonized by Pope John XV, the first recorded canonization by a pope.

January 29, 1499: Katherine von Bora, a German nun who married Martin Luther in 1525, is born. At their wedding, she was 26 and he was 41.

January 29, 1523: Before an audience of more than 600 people gathered at the first Zurich Disputation, Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli successfully defends his 67 theses. He appealed only to Scripture and rejected the authority of the pope, the sacrifice of the Mass, the invocation of saints, times and seasons of fasting, and clerical celibacy. But the city council nevertheless declared "that Master Ulrich Zwingli (may) continue to preach the Holy Gospel and the true divine Scripture as he has done until now for as long a time and to such an extent until he be instructed differently".

January 29, 1535: The French royal family, church officials, and many other dignitaries join in an immense torch-lit procession from the Louvre to Notre Dame—an attempt to purge Paris from the defilement caused by overzealous

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Protestants and their placards (a man named Feret had nailed one of the most inflammatory placards to the king's bedroom door months before). The day ended with six Protestants being hung from ropes and roasted.

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