



Moderator visits Westminster

Presbyterian Moderator, Rt Rev Dr Charles McMullen, is in Westminster this week on an informal visit to Parliament.

The visit, which concludes on Thursday, has become an annual event for successive Moderators of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland where they have the opportunity meet privately with a cross-section of local MPs and peers.

Speaking from Westminster, Dr McMullen said, “In following in the footsteps of previous Moderators, this short visit to the Houses of Parliament is an opportunity to listen and to talk privately about a number of issues.

“Coinciding as it does with further votes on Brexit that take place this week, it will be an interesting time to be here. In many respects it is, however, a pastoral visit and I would encourage everyone who is a follower of Jesus Christ to pray for our MPs, and our locally appointed members of the House of Lords, especially at this time and as they speak

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into the issues of the day and carry out their responsibilities.”

Abp Diarmuid Martin addresses use of threats within Catholic Church

The Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin, has expressed concern at “a growing polarisation within the Catholic [Church](#) and by certain groups who seem to think that they have a right, self-righteously, to proclaim threats in the name of how they understand the truth”, the Irish Times reports.

He continued: “We have seen examples in our own days. The truth will only be attained in love. Error will only be refuted in love. Nastiness and hatred betray the message of love.”

The Archbishop was addressing young people at the Emmaus Centre in [Swords](#), Co Dublin, on Sunday where they had gathered for a “[Panama](#) in Dublin” Mass to coincide with World Youth Day in Panama, attended by [Pope Francis](#) and 30 young people from the archdiocese.

“The Christian message is a message that preaches and practises goodness and love,” [Archbishop Martin](#) told them.

*Last week, the venue for a talk by Minister for Culture [Josepha Madigan](#) on women and the [Catholic Church](#) was changed because of threats.

Ms Madigan led the [Fine Gael](#) campaign last year for a Yes vote in the May referendum on repealing the Eighth



Amendment to the Constitution which recognised the equal right to life of mother and unborn.

Her talk at the [Mercy International Association](#) in Dublin last week, hosted by the liberal Catholic We Are Church group, was to be on “Why the Catholic Church should open all ministries to women”.

It was moved to an unnamed Dublin hotel on February 11th following a letter from Sr [Mary Reynolds](#), chief executive of Mercy International Association.

Addressed to We Are Church, Sr [Reynolds](#) said that “threats have been made of busloads of protestors being brought to the site and two parishes have indicated that they speak on behalf of parishioners”, and that “there has been some vitriolic comment and at least one of our staff has been intimidated by a caller”.

Sr Reynolds added that many of the representations referred to Ms Madigan’s “connection with the abortion

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referendum and Bill” and apologised for “reluctantly” making the venue unavailable.

Last week Archbishop Martin was also accused of “abdicating his responsibility” as a moral leader in the run-up to the May referendum last year.

Renua candidate for North-West [Midlands](#) the next European elections in May, Michael O’Dowd, said “I believe he has abdicated his responsibility as a leader of the Catholic Church and silenced a potentially powerful voice for the most defenceless of all – the unborn child.”

He demanded that the archbishop state how he voted in the referendum.

On Thursday, May 17th last, a week prior to the referendum, Archbishop Martin said, in a lengthy statement giving his reasons: “I will be voting No.”

*The article was amended at 6.17pm on January 28th, 2019

Landmark book on Irish in the Church of Ireland relaunched in bilingual Form

The first book to chronicle the role of the Irish language in the history of the Church of Ireland has been re-published for a new generation by Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise. Thirty years after it was first written by Risteárd Giltrap, ‘An Ghaeilge in Eaglais na hÉireann’ was relaunched on Friday evening (January 25) in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, by broadcaster and Irish speaker, Bibi Baskin.

The new edition is bi-lingual with the Irish and English text on opposite pages making the landmark book more

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The Revd Trevor Sargent, Bishop Michael Burrows, ADC to the Lord Mayor, Martin McCabe, Risteard Giltrap, Lord Mayor of Dublin Nial Ring, Bibi Baskin and the Revd David Oxley.

accessible to Irish and English readers alike. The book shines a light on a strand of Irishness which has long been an influential aspect of Irish identity. The author, Risteárd Giltrap, who attended the launch felt that apart from Douglas Hyde's achievements in the Irish language movement, very little was known about the other members of the Church of Ireland who were, and remain, committed to the Irish language. The book is beautifully presented with many historic photographs and illustrations also.

The launch took place in the presence of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Nial Ring and his ADC Martin McCabe. It followed the annual ecumenical service in Irish which takes place to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The service
churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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was led by the Revd Trevor Sargent, the Revd David Oxley and Fr Liam Ó Cuív. The preacher at the service was Canon Gary Hastings. The service was sung by the Choir of Gaelscoil na Cille, Dún Dhéagláin and a consort of the Christ Church Cathedral Choir.

Officially relaunching the book, Bibi Baskin, said it was a very important publication which put paid to the notion that Protestants had no interest in Irish. She paid tribute to the amount of research the author carried out to include such a huge range of history and facts which are part of the background of members of the Church.

“This publication of the second edition is timely. There have been so many changes and we are living in a multicultural Ireland where we hear so many different languages being spoken. This begs the question: why don’t we appreciate our language?” she asked.

Patron of Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise, Bishop Michael Burrows, welcomed the publication of the second edition of the book. He said Mr Giltrap was one of the people who had helped to make him who he is.

Writing in the prologue in 1989 Mr Giltrap stated: “The objectives of this book ... are (a) to contradict the belief widely held by Irish people that no members of the Church of Ireland, with the exception of Douglas Hyde, struck a useful blow for Irish (b) to encourage young members of the Church of Ireland, and those responsible for them, in the hope that they may gain a fresh understanding of the Irish language tradition and its importance in the evolution of our Church and our nation”.

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‘An Ghaeilge in Eaglais na hÉireann’ will be available to buy online from the Church of Ireland website shortly.

Priest denied Holy Communion to politician who supported legal abortion

Earlier this month, a priest in Ireland denied Holy Communion to a politician who supports legal abortion., the Church Militaant reports



Father John Hogan refused to give Holy Communion to Robert Troy, a member of the Irish Parliament, [at a funeral Mass](#) on Jan. 4. The Mass where this happened was at the Church of St. Nicholas in the village of Multyfarnham in the diocese of Meath.

Troy had a previous track record of being opposed to abortion until he said publicly that he voted in favor of abortion in Ireland's abortion referendum in May 2018. In that referendum, the people of Ireland voted overwhelmingly

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to legalize abortion by overturning the Republic's Eighth Amendment, which protected the right to life of the unborn.

In December 2018, Troy [told the press](#) that he had voted for abortion in the referendum earlier last year.

Father Hogan refused to give Holy Communion to Troy when he came forward for Communion at the funeral Mass, owing to the politician's stance in favor of decriminalized abortion. Both Fr. Hogan and Troy have declined to give comment to the media about the incident.

Ever since the May 2018 abortion vote, Church leaders have been divided over how to handle the fallout from the legalization of abortion in Ireland.

In a homily on New Year's Day, Bp. Kevin Doran of the diocese of Elphin [denounced](#) politicians who back abortion, warning that they have "chosen a position which is clearly out of communion with the Church."

Back [in May 2018](#), Bp. Doran had said that those who knowingly voted in favor of abortion needed to go to confession.

Tackling the Benedict option

Some 350 people packed in to the historic Newman University Church on Dublin's St Stephen's Green last Monday night to hear Rod Dreher, author of The Benedict Option.

Mr Dreher describes The Benedict Option as "both manifesto and rallying cry for Christians who, if they are not to be conquered, must learn how to fight on culture war

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battlefields like none the West has seen for fifteen hundred years”.

To read the full coverage, visit: <https://www.irishcatholic.com/tackling-the-benedict-option/>

The journey of the Revd Robert Lawson

The funeral of the Revd Robert Lawson took place on Saturday (January 26) in St Brigid’s Church in Castleknock. Robert died peacefully on January 23.

Robert was a member of the pastoral team at Christ Church Cathedral. Before ordination he was an active and supportive member of the parish of Castleknock. Later he served in Lucan and Leixlip and then in Celbridge, Straffan and Newcastle—Lyons in Non Stipendiary Ministry. He also expressed his ministry through the Church’s Ministry for Healing and Contemplative Outreach Ireland.

He is survived by his wife Ada and sons Theophilus and Paul and mother Muriel. He is predeceased by his father William (Bill) and brother John. He is sadly missed by his loving family, mother-in-law Florrie, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends.

The preacher at Robert’s funeral service was the Bishop of Cork, the Rt Revd Paul Colton. He spoke of Robert’s journey through life, spirituality and illness:

“Robert’s journey was a deeply personal one, and sometimes, for those of us apart from himself, it was hard to figure out: perplexing. He was quite clear that it was ‘his

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journey'; 'I have to make the journey,' he said, but he knew that he was not alone. I am not thinking only and predictably of God, that again is too clichéd. So I want you all to know how Robert saw it and what he said to me about all of you – most of you are included anyway, I hope – (you can see Robert widening his eyes and putting his tongue in his cheek at my saying that; and perhaps even his deep guffaw of laughter – 'Did he just say that?'). Last week when he told me that he believed, to use his words, 'time is beginning to catch-up with me', I asked him if I could do anything for him. 'No thanks' he said "God has put me together with so many beautiful different people to learn from them. That's enough for me.' That's you guys."

News briefs

+++St Brigid's Cross Make and Take workshop - In honour of St Brigid, one of Ireland's patron saints, Christ Church Cathedral is offering a drop-in workshop on her feast day, February 1, 14:00h to 16:00h. You can learn how to make this traditional woven cross using rushes. No pre-booking necessary. All ages welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Free admission to the cathedral for kids 12 and under to participate in the workshop! (Normal cathedral admission fee applies for adults.)

+++Connor Lay Readers commissioned - Two new Lay Readers, Dr Brian Bennet, Lambeg Parish, and Mrs Gillian McCaughey, Belfast Cathedral, were commissioned for Connor Diocese at a service in Belfast Cathedral on January 27. The service was a celebration of the Ministry of Diocesan Lay Readers, and the Choir of St Polycarp's

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Parish, Finaghy, joined the Belfast Cathedral Choir for this special occasion.

+++Candlemass Procession Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin. Candle-lit service of readings and music celebrating the Presentation of Christ in the Temple and marking the conclusion of the season of Christmas in the church year. Sunday, February 3, 17:00h. All are welcome. Free of charge.

+++The Irish Biblical Association's 2019 annual meeting is coming up in a few weeks, Saturday 16 February 2019, 10am-5pm Trinity College Dublin -- you are invited

+++Bomb blast in Philippines cathedral - Consecutive bomb blasts at a Roman Catholic cathedral in the Philippines on Sunday resulted in the loss of 20 lives. The first bomb exploded inside the cathedral as worshippers were attending Mass at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral in Jolo's Barangay Walled City. The second explosion occurred outside the cathedral as security services responded to the first explosion. Officials in the Philippines said that most of the 20 dead and 100 injured were civilians. Five soldiers were killed by the second explosion.

January 30 in Christian history

January 30, 1536: Catholic priest Menno Simons leaves the Roman Catholic church over his doubts about transubstantiation and converts to the Anabaptist movement, which he would soon lead.

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January 30, 1649: England's King Charles I, a devout Anglican with Catholic sympathies who staunchly defended the "divine right of kings" while oppressing the Puritans, is executed after being convicted of treason under a Puritan-influenced Parliament.

A promotional poster for the New Irish Youth Choir 2019. The background is dark blue. At the top right is the 'NEW IRISH ARTS' logo, featuring a stylized '9' and the words 'NEW IRISH ARTS' in white and purple. The main title 'New Irish Youth Choir 2019' is in large white and purple font. Below the title, the dates '22-27 July 2019, Ganaway Activity Centre, Millisle' are written in white. A purple button with white text says 'Register now! newirisharts.com/youth'. There are two photos: a group of choir members in purple shirts and a conductor in a black shirt with 'NEW IRISH ARTS' on the back, leading the choir. In the foreground, some orchestra members playing violins are visible.

January 30, 1877: Responding to Henry Stanley's plea for "some pious, practical missionary" to follow up David Livingstone's missionary foray into Uganda, three members of Alexander Mackay's Church Missionary Society team arrive at King Mutesa's court. Though missions saw few

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immediate results, the Ugandan church quickly strengthened and grew after the missionaries' deaths .

January 30, 1912: Evangelical missionary, philosopher, author, and lecturer Francis Schaeffer is born in Philadelphia. A leading figure in the resurgence of evangelicalism during the 1960s and 1970s, he blamed the rise of relativism for the decline of Western culture.

News links

Black Muslims account for a fifth of all U.S. Muslims, and about half are converts to Islam

Even in the early 20th century Islam had a foothold in many black urban communities. Today, black people make up 20% of the country's overall Muslim population, according to a 2017 Pew Research Center survey.

ISIS bombing of cathedral in Philippines shows group's reach into Asia

A deadly bombing of a cathedral in the Philippines has brought fresh attention to the Islamic State's ability to metastasize across the world, even as the militant group has been reduced to a sliver of turf in Syria.

[More from The New York Times](#)

Provoked by Trump, the religious left is finding its voice

Religious conservatives have rarely faced much competition in the political realm from faith-based groups on the left. The provocations of President Trump may finally be changing that. [More from NPR](#)

With new 'affirmation' policy, American Bible Society loses LGBT staffers

The new policy allows the 203-year-old organization, which was founded to publish, distribute and translate the Bible, to let go of any LGBT employee who is not celibate. [More from Religion News Service](#)

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