

The essential brief on the Irish churches



Passengers' belongings are gathered at the crash site.

WCC expresses sorrow over Malaysia Airlines disaster

The World Council of Churches (WCC) today expressed sympathy and sorrow to family, friends and colleagues who mourn the deaths of nearly 300 passengers and crew on board Malaysia Airlines flight 17 when it crashed in eastern Ukraine on 17 July en route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur.

Particular mention was made of the estimated one-third of the victims who were travelling to the International AIDS Conference in Melbourne, due to begin on Sunday 20 July.

“This is a profound tragedy that shocks and worries all of us; but especially for those who have lost their loved ones including our neighbours and partners at the World Health Organization (WHO) here in Geneva who lost over 100 staff in the crash,” the WCC general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit said.

“The thoughts and prayers of the world community are with you. It is our sincere hope for the eventual healing of your minds and spirits.”

“This tragedy taking place in a highly sensitive location and situation that remains poised on the brink of terrible violence, reminds us of the fragility and sacredness of life and the need for peace in this region,” he added. “Our sympathy also goes to the people of Malaysia who are now experiencing a second airline tragedy within a few months.”

Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri, the WCC associate general secretary for Public Witness and Diakonia, said, “The WCC is mourning the deaths of a reported 100 UN AIDS and WHO staff and their family members.”

“I knew personally and worked with some of the people who died in this crash,” Phiri said. “It is in this context that the WCC is seriously affected by these deaths. It is painful to realize that the deaths will have a negative impact on progress that was being made in the area of HIV and AIDS research at a global level. My own relatives whose lives depend on new discoveries in HIV and AIDS research will be affected by the deaths of these people.”

Since 27 May 1974 a “Memorandum of Understanding” has been in place between the WCC (and its former Christian Medical Commission) and the WHO enabling a working relationship by “joint involvement in common endeavors on a very practical level.”

The WCC, through the CMC, became the first Non-State Faith-Based-Organization (FBO) through which churches’ health workers could have a voice and a platform for advocacy on health policies at the annual WHO Assembly and the Executive Board.

The CMC was instrumental in WHO’s Primary Health Care Approach. Equally important, WHO was instrumental in the WCC’s ecumenical response to the AIDS crisis since 1986.

The cause of the Malaysia Airlines disaster is currently under investigation. Charges and counter-charges have been levelled by opposing sides in the on-going conflict within Ukraine.

Phiri observed, "This is a clear demonstration that any war in any part of the world affects us all."

Tveit said that, "All efforts should be made and it should be a goal of everyone that civil aviation does not again become a target in situations of conflict".

Iraqi Christians flee after Isis issue Mosul ultimatum

Iraqi Christians are fleeing Mosul after Islamist militants threatened to kill them unless they converted to Islam or paid a "protection tax".

BBC - A statement issued by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Isis) was read out at the city's mosques.



The Islamist militant group Isis has told Christians in Mosul to convert to Islam, pay a tax or be killed. Isis has declared the creation of an Islamic state in the parts of Syria and Iraq that it controls. A senior Christian cleric said the Islamist militants had been seen tagging Christian houses in the city



It called on Christians to comply by midday on Saturday or face death if they did not leave the northern city.

Isis has control of large parts of Syria and Iraq and said last month it was

creating an Islamic caliphate.

The ultimatum cited a historic contract known as "dhimma," under which non-Muslims in Islamic



societies who refuse to convert are offered protection if they pay a fee, called a "jizya".

"We offer them three choices: Islam; the dhimma contract - involving payment of jizya; if they refuse this they will have nothing but the sword," the Isis statement said.

"Christian families are on their way to Dohuk and Irbil," in the neighbouring autonomous region of Kurdistan, Patriarch Louis Sako told the AFP news agency.

"For the first time in the history of Iraq, Mosul is now empty of Christians," he said.

The patriarch, one of the most senior Christian clerics in Iraq, said militants had been seen tagging Christian houses with the letter N for "Nassarah", a term used for Christians in the Koran. More at -

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-28381455>

Kilkenny Conference on Swift & Berkeley

Next Friday a symposium and cultural weekend examining the work and lives of internationally renowned Irish philosophers such as George Berkeley and Jonathan Swift will begin in Kilkenny and continue until Sunday 27 July.

The weekend will be officially opened on Friday by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Charlie Flanagan TD, with an event in the Parade Tower of Kilkenny Castle.

On Saturday the conference will begin in the New Park Hotel and will be chaired by Dr Bill Eaton from the Georgia Southern University. Among the speakers will be Professor Tom Stoneham from the University of York, Dr Rachel Finnegan from Waterford IT and Dr Howard Keeley who is Director of the Centre for Irish Studies at Georgia Southern University.

The conference has been organized by the Georgia Southern University and Kilkenny College, where both Swift and Berkeley received their schooling. The College has been a significant Church of Ireland presence in the city since 1538 and continues to prepare young men and women for modern life.

Further information may be had from Hugh Trayer at info@hughtrayer.com or 085-1902223

Church musical events

Today (Saturday) at 1pm the third in the series of lunchtime recitals in Christ Church, cathedral, Waterford, will be given by the cathedral's organist, Eric Sweeney, who in addition to some of his own compositions will play works by Bach, Buxtehude and Walther. At 2pm the Donabate and Lusk Parish Fete, featuring music from the St George's Brass Band, will begin.

A series of musical events in Church of Ireland churches begins on Wednesday with a lunchtime recital in St Mary's cathedral, Limerick, by Edel O'Brien (alto) and Irina Dernova (piano). On Thursday evening the St Barahane's Church Festival of Music continues in Castletownshend with a recital by Eoin Ducrot (violin), Cian Ducrot (flute) and Sabine Ducrot (piano and flute) while 'Music in Calary', in Calary parish church, Co. Wicklow, features the Cassiopeia Wind Quartet. At lunchtime on Friday 'Summer Music at Sandford', in Sandford parish church, Ranelagh, continues with an organ recital by Ronan Murray.

Range of emphases in church services tomorrow

Tomorrow (Sunday) morning in Inishmacsaint parish church the Bishop of Clogher, will commission Eileen Cutler as a diocesan reader.

At 3pm Castletown church, in the Killeshin union of parishes, will hold its Songs of Praise Service with the former Dean of Cashel, Dr Philip Knowles, at the organ.

At Clonmacnoise the Annual Open Air Service will be held with an address by the Revd Dr Kiernan O'Mahony, a former chairman of the National Bible Society of Ireland.

In the evening at 7pm the Archbishop of Dublin will officiate at a Service of Thanksgiving to celebrate the 150th anniversary of St Patrick's church, Greystones. The church was consecrated on 19 July 1864 by Archbishop Richard Chenevix Trench.

Passing of two clergy stalwarts

This morning (Saturday) Lord Eames will give the address at the funeral of the Ven. W.A. Macourt in St Molua's church, Stormont.

Archdeacon Macourt, who retired in 1989, was Rector of Ballymacarret from 1964 to 1989, which were challenging years for the church in Belfast. He was appointed Archdeacon of Down in 1980.

On hearing the news of his death Bishop Harold Miller of Down and Dromore said: 'Billy Macourt was a unique archdeacon. He served in that role from 1980 to 1989 and was a mine of information. He had a long and happy marriage to Esmie, who predeceased him two years ago. Our love and prayers are with Malcolm, and all who were close to him'.

The burial is at Down Cathedral.

Yesterday the funeral took place from St Mary's Church, Macosquin of Canon Gerard Carson, formerly rector of Clonallon and Warrenpoint, Zion Mills and Urney and Dunfanaghy.

The preacher was the rector of Macsquin, Canon Mike Roemmele, and the Bishop of Derry was represented by Very Rev Dr William Morton, Dean of Derry. The interment took place in Dunfanaghy after a eucharist in the parish church. Canon Carson who was also a gifted artist was predeceased by his wife. He is survived by his son Mark and family.

Anglican Communion appoints director for women in church and society

The Rev. Terrie Robinson, formerly networks coordinator and women's desk officer at the Anglican Communion Office, has been named its

director for women in church and society.

Mrs Robinson has moved into the new role following a decision by the Standing Committee² that more needs to be done to support Communion-wide efforts to promote equal, influential and safe participation of women in the life and decision-making of the churches of the Anglican Communion and society.



The Rev. Terrie Robinson (left) with Africa's first female bishop the Rt Rev. Ellinah Wamukoya.

Speaking about the change of role, Mrs Robinson said, "I'm very excited at the prospect of being able to spend more time working with women and men in the Anglican Communion to promote the full inclusion of women's gifts, voices and concerns in the life, mission and structures of the Anglican Communion and beyond.

"There are already so many Anglicans committed to this, who bring every gift imaginable to the task. It will be a blessing to support them and to contribute everything I can to making sure that women are given voice and space wherever they are.

"In many ways, my engagement with the [Anglican Communion's Networks](#) will continue. They provide a vital mechanism for Anglicans who want to share their stories and resources, and who want to join in advocacy and pray for each other with greater knowledge and understanding.

"I know how important several of the Networks will be to my own ministry as it unfolds. All the Networks will continue to receive the support they need from the Anglican Communion Office to make sure their activities continue to inform decision-making and action at the international level."

The Anglican Communion Office has also recruited Stephanie Taylor to be Information and Records Manager.

Mrs Taylor, who come to the ACO from The National Autistic Society where she was Content Manager – Information, Advice and Advocacy.

Mrs Taylor said, “I am a passionate believer in the power of information and the difference that dynamically, well-managed, accessible information can make to the lives of individuals, and the effectiveness of organisations. Effective knowledge sharing builds connections and makes things happen, and in a Communion serving 165 countries that’s vital.”

Press Coverage Review - emphasis on assisted dying debate

Mail

A look at a biography of Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby (by Andrew Atherstone) focusing on a part of the book which reveals when he was originally interviewed about getting ordained, he was told by a former Bishop of Kensington that he had no future in the Church of England.

[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/books/article-2696497/Youve-no-future-Church-Mr-Welby-Archbishop-Canterbury-Justin-Welby-told-unsuitable-interview-vicar-25-years-ago.html?](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/books/article-2696497/Youve-no-future-Church-Mr-Welby-Archbishop-Canterbury-Justin-Welby-told-unsuitable-interview-vicar-25-years-ago.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

[ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/books/article-2696497/Youve-no-future-Church-Mr-Welby-Archbishop-Canterbury-Justin-Welby-told-unsuitable-interview-vicar-25-years-ago.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

Times

Diary column suggests Archbishop of Canterbury, who has resigned his membership of the Travellers Club after they voted against admitting women members, should try the neighbouring Athenaeum which has long attracted men (and, since 2002, women) of the cloth.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article4150532.ece>

Reports on today's debate in House of Lords on Lord Falconer's Bill on assisted dying on whether it should be lawful for doctors to help terminally ill patients kill themselves.

Guardian - Bishop of Worcester John Inge, whose wife died of cancer at Easter, writes that Lord Carey is wrong - had assisted dying been legal, we would have lost those last few precious months together.

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jul/17/my-wife-knew-she-was-dying-but-chose-life>

News report on the above article

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/jul/17/legalise-assisted-dying-pressure-people-john-inge-bishop-worcester>

Editorial says it is important to safeguard life

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jul/17/guardian-view-assisted-dying-falconer-bill>

Mail leader says there are no easy answers to this question but concludes that a law change would be a terrible and irreversible mistake. It also previews the debate including ref to expected speech by Archbishop of York and previous comments by Lord Carey.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2696771/DAILY-MAIL-COMMENT-A-profoundly-difficult-choice-Lords.html#ixzz37nQzXXDM>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-2696811/ASSISTED-DYING-BILL-DEBATE-MARATHON.html>

BBC says the Bill does not have the support of the Prime Minister

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-28352680>

Times - report that Parliament faces an important test over the issue of assisted dying, and must no longer try to pass responsibility to judges and prosecutors, former Commons Speaker Baroness Boothroyd, said yesterday. It adds that Parliamentary sources say it is unlikely to be debated by MPs before the next election.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/life/article4150525.ece>

Melanie Reid writes that no minority of older, religious men should be able to tell me how I can leave this world.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/columnists/article4150434.ece>

Telegraph reports says Lord Lloyd Webber is expected to vote against the Bill, having previously admitted he had considered going to Dignitas. The article also quotes Bishop of Worcester, John Inge.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/10974783/Lloyd-Webber-I-considered-Dignitas-but-am-set-to-oppose-assisted-dying.html>

Independent columnist Raymond Tallis writes that "The present situation is cruel, dangerous, and at odds with the deepest values of the profession of medicine which I practised for nearly 40 years"

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/why-we-should-allow-assisted-dying-compassion-choice-and-safety-9612561.html>

Mail

Report from yesterday's Commissioners Questions in Parliament quoting Second Church Estates Commissioner Tony Baldry who said there could be a woman bishop appointed by the end of the year.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-2695797/WOMEN-BISHOPS->

[IN-2014-HOPEFULLY.html](#)

Telegraph

Report that ahead of expected announcement from the Competition and Markets Authority (for a full-blown competition inquiry into the banking sector), Vince Cable has written to RBS to speed up Williams & Glyn divestment. Includes ref to the W&G business being sold to a consortium of investors including the Church of England Commissioners.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/banksandfinance/10974794/UK-banks-face-break-up-as-competition-inquiry-looms.html>

Guard

Report that Desmond Tutu, Graça Machel and Bono are among the signatories on a letter to the Prime Minister urging him to take a lead on UN climate change deal and millennium development goals.

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/jul/18/global-inequality-risks-military-conflict-cameron-warned>

Ind

Columnist takes a look at the common currency of 'the Devil' in light of General Synod vote to remove the devil from new supplementary christening materials.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/all-mention-of-the-devil-has-been-expunged-from-christenings--so-is-satan-now-a-harmless-caricature-of-his-former-fearsome-self-9613476.html>