



The essential brief on the Irish churches

Belfast Cathedral WW1 commemoration

The outbreak of World War One will be remembered at a centenary service in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, on Monday August 4.



This is one of a number of services marking the 100th anniversary of the start of the Great War, and Her Majesty the Queen will be represented in Belfast by His Royal Highness The Duke of York KG.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, The Right Hon Theresa Villiers MP, will also be in attendance with other representatives of civic and political life. Senior figures from the main churches in Northern Ireland will be present along with representatives of other faith communities. Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht of Dáil Éireann will also attend.

The service will be led by the Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev John Mann, and the preacher is the Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, Archbishop of Armagh.

Young people will light five candles during the service, each representing a year of the war. The Duke of York will read a lesson and will light a candle to commemorate the occasion. This will be placed beside one of the eight volumes of books kept in the Cathedral which record the names of all those from across the island of Ireland who fought and died during the 1914-18 war. Music will be provided by the Cathedral Choirs, directed by Master of the Choristers David Stevens, and their repertoire will include the moving *In Paradisum* by Gabriel Fauré.

There will be a distinctly Irish flavour to the service, with hymns including *St Patrick's Breastplate* and *Be Thou My Vision*. Ian Barber will preside at the organ.



The Royal British Legion will raise two Standards, and there will be an Act of Remembrance introduced by the Dean and the President of the Royal British Legion in Northern Ireland, Mr Mervyn Elder.

The Chairman of the Northern Ireland First World War Centenary Committee, the Rt Hon Jeffrey Donaldson, will read an Ulster poem of the First World War.

Dean Mann said: "The service commemorating the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War is a quite unique occasion, requiring deep reflection; and some sensitivity to and understanding of the world as it was in 1914.

"There will be remembrance, but more vital even than that element at this particular service is the need to contemplate the profound emotions and inner tensions of the national soul, as the steps to war are taken. So the focus is also on today; upon the world's conflicts and contrition and sadness at humanity's apparent inability to prevent them."

Admission to the service, which begins at 7pm, is by invitation only.

News Letter - A candlelit vigil and act of remembrance will be held later that night at the Cenotaph at Belfast City Hall.

Organiser Jeffrey Donaldson said: "We face a decade of significant centenaries in Northern Ireland and on the island of Ireland and I feel it is important that these should not become divisive.

"The global events that took place during 1914-1918 involved people from across the island and the political divide and had a profound effect on the history of Ireland in the 20th century.

“We owe it to those who sacrificed their lives with such valour to ensure that the centenary is used to promote better understanding between our various traditions on this island.

“The centennial commemorations of the war provide an opportunity to enhance our shared understanding of this history and to promote reconciliation.”

A member of the Royal Family and First Minister Peter Robinson will be present at the commemorative service along with a senior member of the Irish government and other community leaders from across Ireland.

Representatives of the Royal British Legion and regimental associations of the army will also attend.

The candlelit vigil will coincide with a similar event at [Westminster Abbey](#) and in other regional capitals across the UK.

It will be open to the public and those planning to attend are encouraged to bring a candle. The ceremony will include a short act of remembrance and wreath laying, with “lights out” in City Hall for a period during the vigil.

Mr Donaldson chairs a Centenary Committee which organised the events. It believes the key themes for the commemoration of the First World War in Northern Ireland should be remembrance and reconciliation.

The DUP Lagan Valley MP added: “We have sought to engage in traditional acts of remembrance such as the Last Post and the laying of wreaths, but we also recognise that arts and [culture](#) must play an important role in our commemoration of the First World War.

“The war itself produced and inspired great poetry, prose, music and art, and I hope that over the next four years we are able to add to that with contemporary work that will help us reflect on the war in a new way.”

The committee has identified a number of significant dates that Northern Ireland will play a part in, including the centenary of the battles of Gallipoli in April 2015 and Jutland in May 2016, with HMS Caroline in Belfast playing an important part in that particular commemoration.

July 1 2016, the centenary of the start of the Battle of the Somme, will also be of special significance in Northern Ireland.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/first-world-war-centenary-service-at-st-anne-s-cathedral-1-6207078>

Remembrance tree reminds us of futility of war

A new exhibit in St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin commemorating the centenary of the start of World War I will remind people of the futility of war.

Irish independent - This is an inclusive monument and will connect with any culture and country in the world," said Rev Victor Stacey, dean of the cathedral.

"Commemorating the fallen soldiers from WWI seems more poignant given the current conflict in Gaza."

Entitled 'The Tree of Remembrance', the new monument features a warped and barren tree trunk covered in faux barbed wire.

Visitors are encouraged to write messages to fallen soldiers or civilians affected by conflict on foliage-shaped pieces of papers and tie them to the barbed wire.

"Over 1.6 million people will visit this monument in the next four years," St Patrick's education officer [Andrew Smith](#) said. "Their messages of positivity will detract from the ugliness of war."

The statue stands in the north transept of the cathedral. It is a fitting home, given that the stained glass triple lancet behind it was designed by Welsh artist Frank Brangwyn, who produced more than 80 posters during the war.

Another window commemorates the role of the Royal Irish Regiment in South Africa between 1899 and 1902.



The launch of a specially commissioned monument and exhibition named 'Lives Remembered' to mark the centenary of the outbreak of World War One at Saint Patrick's Cathedral was Re enactor Stephen O'Leary from Fermoy Co.Cork . The Centrepiece of the exhibition is the 'Tree of Remembrance' on which members of the public are invited to tie their own messages of remembrance

The statue is part of the 'Lives Remembered' exhibition which includes interactive timelines and videos of WWI veterans.

- See more at: <http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/news/remembrance-tree-reminds-us-of-futility-of-war-30466131.html#sthash.Z8mEvXfU.s8j65Mk9.dpuf>

Night of nostalgia, tinged with sadness, as community marks closure of school

Parents, former teachers and former pupils of Timolin National School came together for a social evening tinged with sadness as they marked the closure of the school at the Moone High Cross Inn recently.



Kildare Nationalist - Reverend Isaac Delamere said those who came to the gathering did so at a difficult time for the Church of Ireland community in the Timolin and Narraghmore area.

“Friends of the school, as well as parents, teachers and pupils from the past and the present came together to mark the enormous contribution that the school has made to the community over the past nearly 200 years.

“There were no speeches on the night. It was a chance for those who were there to share their thoughts and reflections with each other. Cannon Ginnie Kennerley, who would have been instrumental in getting the two new classrooms built and open during her time here as a rector from 1991 to 200, was among those who were present on the night.”

Reverend Delamere described the school as a treasured part of the community. “It’s a difficult time for the whole community but there is an acceptance that changes to the pupil teacher ratio made a future for the school difficult. These changes have made it difficult for all small schools to have a future, in particular schools of minority faiths. When the school closed for the summer break we had 20 pupils, two full-time teachers, one resource teacher and one learning support teacher. The school catered to the

community of Narraghmore and Timolin and was open to pupils of all traditions and none, to attend but the pupils were predominantly Church of Ireland.”

Reverend Delamere concluded by adding; “The Church of Ireland response has been one of graciousness and there has been an avoidance of blame which is destructive and leads to nothing going forward and the community is committed to the path of grace.”

The management of the school previously held an event for the parents of the children who were attending the school up to June and a religious service to mark the school closure is planned for the autumn.

**Fr Brian
D'Arcy: My
battle with
cancer, the
Catholic
Church and
how my faith
survived
trauma of
being abused
as a boy of 10**

Fr Brian D'Arcy is one of Ireland's best-known clerics – controversial and frank. He speaks to

Adrian Rutherford of the Belfast Telegraph, about the future of the Catholic Church and how his faith survived the trauma of being abused as a boy of 10 in Omagh.



Q. You are one of Ireland's best-known priests, but was religion always a part of your life?

A. I was born in 1945 and, growing up in the 1950s and 60s, not many families weren't religious. By modern standards, there were exceptionally religious families back then.

It was a culture. It didn't matter what religion you were, you went to church on Sunday, you had respect for your parents, the law and your community.

We weren't a family that was always in church or highly religious. We were a very normal family.

We were highly involved in GAA affairs – my father was a famous footballer – and that was almost as big a religion as Catholicism.

Did we believe in a God, did we pray, did we keep the Commandments? Yes, we did that as simply as you breathed because there was no other way of life.

MORE AT -

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/fr-brian-darcy-my-battle-with-cancer-the-catholic-church-and-how-my-faith-survived-trauma-of-being-abused-as-a-boy-of-10-30462682.html>

Gaza Statement by the President and Vice-President Methodist GB

The situation in Gaza continues to capture our attention and prompt our compassion. It is time now to pray.

This year's Conference directed the Methodist people to the resolutions of the 2010 Conference. One of those resolutions commended all the peoples of the region to the care of Almighty God and urged the Methodist people to engage in regular, informed prayer for the needs of the Land of the Holy One. As President and Vice-President of the Conference, we call all Methodists to that urgent task.

We are not alone in doing so. Christian Aid have provided a prayer for the region; an appeal for funds to help in the situation; and a call to sign a letter to the Foreign Secretary asking for Britain to take some action. These can be found at [Christian Aid's website](#).

A prayer:

Holy God,
holy and strong in love,

holy and immortal.
have mercy on us and on all in the land called holy.
Where fear brings despair, let there be hope.
Where the urge to defend others brings violence, let there be love.
Where the causes of conflict and the means of reconciliation are beyond our
comprehension
may the peace of the Lord, which passes all understanding, guide everyone's
hearts and minds
in Christ Jesus. Amen.

The Revd Kenneth Howcroft, President of the Methodist Conference

Mrs Gill Dascombe, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference

France ready to offer asylum to Iraqi Christians

**In this 13 June 2014
photo, an Iraqi
refugee girl from
Mosul stands
outside her family's
tent at Khazir
refugee camp
outside Irbil, 217
miles (350 kilometres) north of Baghdad, Iraq.**



France announced on Monday that it will offer asylum to those forced to flee Iraq as the Islamic State (IS) continues to tighten its grip across the country.

Referring to the thousands of Christians and other religious minorities persecuted by extremist Sunnis, the Foreign and Interior ministers, Laurent Fabius and Bernard Cazeneuve, said in a statement that France is "outraged by these abuses that it condemns with the utmost firmness."

"We are ready, if they so desire, to help facilitate asylum on our territory," the statement said.

Despite the historic significance of Christianity in Iraq, members of the faith have been driven from their homes as the Islamist militants have declared a caliphate in parts of Syria and Iraq.

The nation's second largest city, Mosul, was virtually emptied of Christians on July 18 after warnings rang out from the city's mosques, telling Christians to leave, pay a tax, convert to Islam or face 'death by the sword'.

Hundreds of families fled, and if any remain, they are in hiding.

"The ultimatum given to these communities in Mosul is the latest tragic example of the terrible threat that jihadist groups in Iraq, but also in Syria and elsewhere, pose to these populations," Fabius and Cazenueve added.

Former Bishop Geoffrey Rowell, writing in a [letter to the the Times](#), said the activities of IS were "savage" and "chilling". Former UK Ambassador to the Holy See, Francis Campbell, has condemned the events as a form of "ethnic cleansing".

"A culture and civilisation is being destroyed and our political leaders are silent," Campbell recently tweeted.

The British government has not yet released any information on its own policy regarding Iraqi refugees, but a spokesperson for the UK Foreign Office [told The Tablet](#): "The threat to Christians in the Mosul area is a particular tragedy, given that it has one of the oldest Christian communities in the world".

The spokesman confirmed that the government will work with Iraqi officials to "raise these matters further".

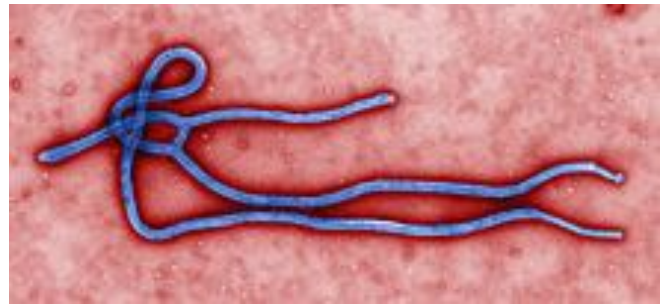
In 2003, there were around 1.5 million Christians living in Iraq. There are now thought to be less than 200,000.

Deadly Ebola outbreak continues to spread across West Africa

Liberia shut most of its borders yesterday and Nigeria stopped flights on its major airline Arik Air last week in an attempt to battle the worst Ebola outbreak in history.

The virus has killed at least 660 people in West Africa since February, and about 1,200 people have been infected.

The deadly outbreak that began in south-eastern Guinea in February has spread to Liberia and Sierra Leone, and the first case has now been seen in Nigeria.



Ebola Virus

Most worryingly the virus has spread to large cities with dense populations, where the infection is at risk of rampant spreading.

A prominent Liberian doctor died from the disease on Saturday, and two American Christian relief workers have also been infected.

Dr Kent Brantley and Nancy Writebol were both working at an Ebola care centre run by Samaritan's Purse in Monrovia, the Liberian capital.

Dr Brantley, 33, from Texas, was the medical director at the clinic. He recognised the symptoms and immediately isolated himself.

His wife and children were living with him in Liberia but flew back to the US before he started showing symptoms. He was said to be in a stable but very serious condition.

Ms Writebol, from North Carolina, was decontaminating medical staff treating Ebola patients on an isolated ward.

She and her husband David went out to Liberia with Serving in Mission in 2013, supported by their church. Ms Writebol's condition was stable but serious.

"We are doing everything possible to help Dr Brantly and Nancy," Samaritan's Purse president Franklin Graham said. "We ask everyone to please pray urgently for them and their families."

Ebola often causes a fever, muscle aches, a headache and vomiting, and in some cases internal and external bleeding.

It is not highly contagious, as it is spread through contact with bodily fluids, but there is currently no cure or vaccine. The incubation period is 21 days, but people with the virus are only contagious once symptoms appear.

The virus has a mortality rate of up to 90%, and victims die within a few days to a week of symptoms appearing.

Between 1976 and 2008 Ebola killed 1,503. Previous outbreaks have been in rural areas, where it is easier to control the spreading.

If the virus were to spread to developed countries, which is a possibility, it is likely that it would be controlled as there are more advanced medical resources available.

Press Review

Tel

Report that France has offered asylum to the thousands of Christians driven from their homes by the threat of the Islamist State jihadist group in Iraq. The offer was made in a joint statement by Ministers, who said they were shocked by the persecution of the minority. It mentions vicar of Baghdad's Anglican church, Canon Andrew White's comments that "the end of Christianity is very near" in Iraq.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iraq/10996727/France-offers-asylum-to-thousands-of-Christians-driven-from-homes-by-Islamic-State.html>

Times

Report that Theresa May is facing calls to appoint a self-described "radical lawyer" as chairman of the public inquiry into high-profile child abuse cases, after a group of abuse survivors, lawyers and care professionals wrote an open letter to her calling for Michael Mansfield, QC, to be selected to lead the inquiry. Mr Mansfield, who is retired from the Bar, is renowned for his work on cases from the Birmingham Six appeals to the Stephen Lawrence inquiry. He also represented Mohammed al Fayed at the inquest into the death of his son and Diana, Princess of Wales. It mentions original chair, Baroness Butler Sloss, who stepped down after her credibility was called into question because of her establishment links and allegations that she had withheld the name of a Church of England bishop from a previous report.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article4159610.ece>

Ind & Guard

Reports that a practising Catholic has been appointed as the new chief executive of Britain's largest gay rights organisation Stonewall - and pledged to do more to win over "hearts and minds". Ruth Hunt, who has led the lobby

group for six months as acting chief executive, was yesterday confirmed as the permanent replacement for Ben Summerskill, who resigned in January. Announcing her priorities, Ms Hunt said she wanted to build on the legal and victories secured under Mr Summerskill - including same-sex marriage - by helping change social attitudes.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/practising-catholic-ruth-hunt-heads-gay-rights-group-stonewall-9634155.html>

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/28/stonewall-ruth-hunt-promote-transgender-rights>

Mail

Report that Pope Francis has become the first pope to visit a Pentecostal church, pressing his outreach to evangelicals who represent Catholicism's greatest competition for Christian souls around the globe. It states Francis visited the under-construction Evangelical Church of Reconciliation in Caserta and met privately with preacher Giovanni Traettino, an old friend and apologised to the 350-strong congregation for Catholic persecution of Pentecostals during Italy's fascist regime, stressing that there was unity in diversity within Christianity.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-2708668/Papal-Francis-visits-Pentecostal-church.html#ixzz38pce8fU6>

Mail

Report that a woman blew herself up at a petrol station in northern Nigeria on Monday, killing three people in one of three suicide bombings by females in Kano in two days. The suicide bombing was one of five attacks in Kano in two days. Kano State Police Commissioner Aderenle Shinaba, said five others were killed in a church bombing on Sunday and a third bomb was discovered near a mosque. Three suspected Boko Haram militants were arrested immediately after the church bombing.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-2708503/3-female-suicide-bomber-kill-Nigeria.html#ixzz38peGfRzl>

Blogs

Archbishop Cranmer - while thousands flee Iraq the Vicar of Baghdad keeps going back

<http://archbishop-cranmer.blogspot.co.uk/>

Ethical Comment - *Looking beyond the Mosul Tragedy*: Dr Charles Reed,

CofE's Foreign Policy Adviser (MPA)

<http://ethicalcomment.wordpress.com/2014/07/26/looking-beyond-the-mosul-tragedy/>

ChristianityToday:

Carey Lodge: 'Please stop': tearful Pope Francis pleads for peace

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