



The essential daily brief on the Irish churches

Bishops will be held accountable on abuse, Pope Francis tells survivors

Pope Francis has told abuse survivors that bishops who fail to protect children from abuse “will be held accountable”.

Catholic Herald -

Speaking at Mass in the chapel of his residence, the Pope said: “There is no

place in the Church’s ministry for those who commit these abuses, and I commit myself not to tolerate harm done to a minor by any individual, whether a cleric or not. All bishops must carry out their pastoral ministry with the utmost care in order to help foster the protection of minors, and they will be held accountable.”

He compared child abuse by priests and bishops to “a sacrilegious cult” and said that such crimes had “a toxic effect” on faith and hope in God.

“Some of you have held fast to faith, he said, “while for others the experience of betrayal and abandonment has led to a weakening of faith in God. Your



St Mary's Church of Ireland National School, Carrigaline Co. Cork, recently hoisted their very first Green Flag at a full school assembly. Local Councillor Seamus McGrath and the Revd Elaine Murray (Rector of Carrigaline Union) did the honours as the Green School Committee (consisting of Pupils, Teachers and Parents) looked on.

presence here speaks of the miracle of hope, which prevails against the deepest darkness. Surely it is a sign of God's mercy that today we have this opportunity to encounter one another, to adore God, to look in one another's eyes and seek the grace of reconciliation."

Six abuse survivors – two each from Ireland, Britain and Germany – attended the Mass. The Pope received afterwards them at his residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae. Vatican spokesman Fr Federico Lombardi said Francis spent 30 minutes with each of the six visitors.

“ I express my sorrow for the sins and grave crimes of clerical sexual abuse committed against you. And I humbly ask forgiveness...”



Pope Francis has begged forgiveness from the victims of clergy sex abuse in his first meeting with abuse survivors

Homily of Pope Francis who met survivors of abuse in the Vatican yesterday

The scene where Peter sees Jesus emerge after a terrible interrogation... Peter whose eyes meet the gaze of Jesus and weeps... This scene comes to my mind as I look at you, and think of so many men and women, boys and girls. I feel the gaze of Jesus and I ask for the grace to weep, the grace for the Church to weep and make reparation for her sons and daughters who betrayed their mission, who abused innocent persons. Today, I am very grateful to you for having travelled so far to come here.

For some time now I have felt in my heart deep pain and suffering. So much time hidden, camouflaged with a complicity that cannot be explained until someone realized that Jesus was looking and others the same... and they set about to sustain that gaze.

And those few who began to weep have touched our conscience for this crime and grave sin. This is what causes me distress and pain at the fact that some priests and bishops, by sexually abusing minors, violated their innocence and their own priestly vocation. It is something more than despicable actions. It is like a sacrilegious cult, because these boys and girls had been entrusted to the priestly charism in order to be brought to God. And those people sacrificed them to the idol of their own concupiscence. They profane the very image of God in whose likeness we were created. Childhood, as we all know, young hearts, so open and trusting, have their own way of understanding the mysteries of God's love and are eager to grow in the faith. Today the heart of the Church looks into the eyes of Jesus in these boys and girls and wants to weep; she asks the grace to weep before the execrable acts of abuse which have left life long scars.

I know that these wounds are a source of deep and often unrelenting emotional and spiritual pain, and even despair. Many of those who have suffered in this way have also sought relief in the path of addiction. Others have experienced difficulties in significant relationships, with parents, spouses and children. Suffering in families has been especially grave, since the damage provoked by abuse affects these vital family relationships.

Some have even had to deal with the terrible tragedy of the death of a loved one by suicide. The deaths of these so beloved children of God weigh upon the heart and my conscience and that of the whole Church. To these families I express my heartfelt love and sorrow. Jesus, tortured and interrogated with passionate hatred, is taken to another place and he looks out. He looks out upon one of his own torturers, the one who denied him, and he makes him weep. Let us implore this grace together with that of making amends.

Sins of clerical sexual abuse against minors have a toxic effect on faith and hope in God. Some of you have held fast to faith, while for others the experience of betrayal and abandonment has led to a weakening of faith in God. Your presence here speaks of the miracle of hope, which prevails against the deepest darkness. Surely it is a sign of God's mercy that today we have this opportunity to encounter one another, to adore God, to look in one another's eyes and seek the grace of reconciliation.

Before God and his people I express my sorrow for the sins and grave crimes of clerical sexual abuse committed against you. And I humbly ask forgiveness.

I beg your forgiveness, too, for the sins of omission on the part of Church leaders who did not respond adequately to reports of abuse made by family members, as well as by abuse victims themselves. This led to even greater suffering on the part of those who were abused and it endangered other minors who were at risk.

On the other hand, the courage that you and others have shown by speaking up, by telling the truth, was a service of love, since for us it shed light on a terrible darkness in the life of the Church. There is no place in the Church's ministry for those who commit these abuses, and I commit myself not to tolerate harm done to a minor by any individual, whether a cleric or not. All bishops must carry out their pastoral ministry with the utmost care in order to help foster the protection of minors, and they will be held accountable.

More at - <http://www.catholicbishops.ie/2014/07/07/homily-pope-francis-met-survivors-abuse-vatican-today/>

Hungry for Reconciliation - Northern Ireland CRC

Contrasting the success of the recent Community Relations Week and existing tensions, the Community Relations Council for Northern Ireland says that Community Relations Week demonstrated greater need, and greater demand, for initiatives by civic society to address the unfinished work of peace and reconciliation.

Peter Osborne, Chair of the Community Relations Council, says:

“The recent Community Relations Week showcased the wealth of good relations work taking place right across Northern Ireland by community and voluntary groups, District Councils, schools and others in every city, town, village and hamlet. This work has been acknowledged and praised at all levels across all parts of the community.

“Among those working at community level, at interfaces and in other cross-community contact, it is evident that there is a real hunger for reconciliation. Whilst the Northern Ireland Executive struggles to agree on a framework for dealing with the unresolved issues of the past and present, our work – the reconciliation impulse that will build the peace – continues with renewed determination and vigour.

“For the Community Relations Council it is business as usual. Difficult as the challenges are, we will continue to encourage and support actions and

programmes that seek to proactively acknowledge and deal with the legacy of our conflict and the continued impact of division.

“Political agreement is one thing but the work of civil society on a cross community basis is to build reconciliation free from intimidation and threat, where peace and mutual respect are the norm.”

Historic insights for today's Irish Methodists

‘.....(they) tended to hold meetings in private houses, rather than church buildings...’ ‘The strategy here depended on the preacher’s readiness to identify himself with the people he was evangelising, to be counted as one of them and to accept their hospitality.’



The Rev Robin Roddie (Archivist) and Ms Jennifer Stutt (Secretary of the Methodist Historical Society of Ireland)

‘This open-mindedness, a willingness to accept expressions of spirituality different from their own and to mould the message around the needs of the hearers, helped to assuage the moods of the crowds and was very effective in personal evangelism.’*

The quotations are from a paper on Methodist open-air work in a bygone era, but they echo the impetus of this year’s Conference which saw Methodists urged to move out into their local communities, ministers encouraged to spend time with those who are not members of their own congregations and highlighted the value of establishing a range of small-group meetings.

‘A Challenge to Partition: Methodist open-air work in Independent Ireland, 1922-1962’ by Eugenio Biagini is the lead article in the latest *Bulletin* of the Methodist Historical Society of Ireland and offers much of interest, not least the opportunity to set our most recent history in a broader perspective.

Edited by Robin Roddie, this issue of the *Bulletin* also contains articles by Garth Hentzschel, Ciaran McCabe and Norman Taggart and book reviews from Scott Boldt, Dudley Levistone Cooney and Stephen Skuce. *A Challenge to Partition: Methodist open-air work in Independent Ireland 1922-1962* by

Eugenio Biagini (Bulletin of the Methodist Historical Society of Ireland 2014 , Vol 19, pp 31, 32)

Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise Annual Pilgrimage

Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise has organised a pilgrimage to Clonmacnoise on July 20 2014 for an open air service.

A bus will leave Winetavern Street, Dublin, at 12.00 noon and will stop en route at Tyrrellspass for lunch before arriving at Clonmacnoise at 2.30 pm. The service will take place at 4.00 pm. Participants will leave Clonmacnoise at 5.10 pm and travel to Athlone for dinner before returning to Dublin at 7.30 pm.

The cost for the day is €15 which includes dinner. All are welcome to join the pilgrimage and places on the bus must be reserved by July 16 with Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise's development officer, Caroline Nolan: email: gaeleaglais@gmail.com, tel: 00+353 85 1632 772 or 00+44 7885 633 651.

‘Exploring the needs of Generation Y’ - Seminar

‘Exploring the needs of Generation Y’ with Jackie Mann (Myton Church, Warwick), a seminar at the [Bangor Worldwide Missionary Convention](#)

Why do they do that? Understanding the generations is a crucial task for anyone who is wanting to disciple and release 18–30s into mission.



This seminar aims to help the local church see how they can encourage the next generation into gospel work at home or overseas.

When: 23 August 2014 from 10.30 am – 12.00 **Where:** Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church, Bangor. For catering purposes please register by email: ldavis@globalconnections.co.uk

Prayer, reconciliation, witness - Archbishop Welby visits the Province of the Indian Ocean - On the final leg of his visit to Primates in Southern and Central Africa, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and his wife, Caroline, travelled from South Africa to Mauritius.

Bishop of Mauritius is the Most Revd Ian Ernest, Archbishop and Primate of the Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean.

The Province, covering Madagascar, Mauritius, and Seychelles, was founded in 1973. It comprises the dioceses of

Antananarivo, Antsiranana, Fianarantsoa, Mahajanga, Mauritius, Seychelles, Toamasina and Toliara.



On Saturday morning, Archbishop Welby addressed a gathering of the clergy and their spouses at the Bishop's house. He based his reflections on the theme of 'fear' using as his text Psalm 18 composed by King David who gave thanks and praise to God for delivering him from his enemies.

Out of this reflection the Archbishop brought out three important points for our spiritual guidance:

1. On prayer, devotion around the scripture and spending time in the presence of God: The Church exists not as an NGO to serve but to draw closer to Jesus and know Jesus better and follow him closer. The revival of the Church came through monasteries and the monastic life with much devotion to God and the knowledge of Jesus.
2. On the ministry of reconciliation. Reconciling with God and with those in our community, loving one another is very important. We may disagree with one another but must love and live in harmony with one another. We should uphold one another and support one another. Then we don't need to live in fear, but in love and peace.
3. On witness and evangelism. Sharing the Good News of Jesus to the world should be focus of the function of the Church. We should proclaim Jesus as the same yesterday, today and forever.

Therefore, following Jesus closely in prayer and devotion, living our communal life in a spirit of reconciliation and witnessing Jesus in the world should be our focus. Everyone present was blessed with the message of the Archbishop of Canterbury.



During a lunch hosted by Archbishop Ernest and his wife, Mrs Kamla Ernest, the director of the Anglican Training Centre Bishop P J Lawrence presented the Archbishop of Canterbury with a book on the "Asian face of Jesus".

Building an important partnership

After lunch, the Archbishop of Canterbury proceeded to the site of the proposed Haven Residential Care Home for people with mental disabilities. The project is a collaboration between the Anglican Diocese of Mauritius and an NGO Friends in Hope.

While laying a foundation stone the Archbishop of Canterbury said this was the first time he had done so and joked that he hoped the building would stand.

Archbishop Justin told those gathered for the ceremony that he celebrated the way Anglicans and the charity were partnering to serve the community. The Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Social Security also pledged the support of the government of Mauritius for the important project. After this the Archbishop of Canterbury proceeded to St James Cathedral where His Grace inaugurated the exhibition of the Anglican diocese of Mauritius on the theme 'Faith Journey'.

WCC: Central Committee listens to perspectives on economic justice

The chasm between the haves and have-nots is increasing around the world. And churches need to do more to ensure economic justice for

communities. This perspective underlined the discussions at a plenary held during the World Council of Churches (WCC) Central Committee meeting on 5 July in Geneva, Switzerland.

The 150 member committee, a chief governing body of the WCC, was addressing the issue of economic justice as part of the meeting's theme, "pilgrimage of justice and peace". The theme is a call issued by the WCC 10th Assembly held in Busan, Republic of Korea in 2013.

Through its plenary speakers, the committee heard diverse perspectives on links between economic and ecological crises, as well as how current economic systems are intensifying inequality, poverty and ecological destruction.

Among the speakers was Dr Manuel Montes, a senior advisor on finance and development at the South Centre in Geneva. He provided an overview on how people have suffered due to the flaws in the global economic system. This system, he said "favours the lenders and not the debtors".

Speaking about the economic depression of the 1920s and the collapse of the financial system in 2007 – 2008, Montes shared his observation that many challenges of the 20th century which led to immense destruction have harkened back to the current economic situation.

He called the current economic situation a "challenge to the faith communities".

Montes introduced the audience to the work of the Ecumenical Panel on a New International Financial and Economic Architecture, which produced the report entitled *An Economy of Life for All Now: An Ecumenical Action Plan for a New International Financial and Economic Architecture*. The panel has developed strategies for the churches to realize ethical, just and sustainable economic and financial systems. It was established by the WCC, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the Lutheran World Federation and the Council for World Mission.

Montes also spoke about the São Paulo statement on International Financial Transformation which encourages visible actions ensuring social inclusion, gender justice and care for the environment while setting "limits to greed" and promoting an "economy of life". This statement was issued in 2012.

Theological reflections on economic justice were shared by Rev. Dr Hyun Ju Bae, theologian and WCC Central Committee member from the Presbyterian Church of Korea. She said, “The call for economic and ecological reformation in our time presents a profound theological challenge, as it requires the overhaul of our theological formulation and imagination,” she said.

Bae added that churches need a “transformative spirituality that nourishes the love of God who loves justice (Isa 61:8), promotes literacy sensitive to eco-justice, ecological debt, sustainability and biodiversity, and enables a new lifestyle.”

Bae stressed that theological education, both at the level of seminaries and local churches, is necessary to equip Christians with knowledge that promotes economic and ecological justice.

“The church is composed of the colonized and the colonizers, the oppressor and the oppressed both in the Global South and the Global North. Many of ‘us’ inhabit the camps of both oppressor and oppressed, the margins of power and its centers. This complexity complicates the quest for justice, yet also is of infinite worth,” Bae said, quoting from the report and action plan produced by the Ecumenical Panel on a New International Financial and Economic Architecture.

David Woods of Oikocredit International introduced his organization at the plenary. Oikocredit, established at a WCC meeting forty years ago, is one of the world’s largest sources of private funding to through microfinance sector, providing credit and equity to trade cooperatives, fair trade organizations and small to medium enterprises.

Woods shared that, through microfinance, Oikocredit lends to microfinance institutions (MFIs) across the world. In turn, they provide financial services to disadvantaged people, with a special emphasis on rural areas, women, agriculture and trade. The organization is dedicated to measuring social results, ensuring investments support initiatives for sustainable livelihoods, women empowerment and environment.

Fresh ways of being Church excite, inspire Anglicans

On the penultimate day of the *Anglicans Ablaze* conference in Johannesburg, South Africa, delegates were challenged to do something for the Kingdom, and do it differently.

Bellah Zulu, reporting from Johannesburg - The Rt Revd Graham Cray is Archbishop's Missioner and Team Leader of Fresh Expressions. He shared with the conference about a dynamic and new form of worship with a focus on mission and "willingness to re-imagine church".

The Fresh Expressions movement was started in the UK to address the significant reduction in church attendance. He explained that adopting a fresh expressions of church model has become an effective way of planting new congregations; one which also works with Christians from a broad range of denominations, cultures and traditions.

Bishop Cray said it is "gaining popularity among Anglicans and changing lives across the world...Christians are trying new things...and congregations are being formed and lives are being changed."

Less and less people in church

He challenged people to consider which communities current forms of worship are failing to reach. "Less and less people are coming to church because they are attracted to other things...People will not automatically come to us, we have to go out there and find them hence the need for fresh expressions of church," he said.

He reminded conference delegates that they owe it to those who have not yet encountered the grace of Christ in their lives to share the gospel with them. "We need to step out...if we don't go, people will never discover the transforming power of God," he said.

The mess will bless

Lucy Moore is the founder of Messy Church, a very successful fresh expression of church that puts families having fun at the centre. In a passionate and driven presentation to the delegates, she reminded Anglicans that "God is in love with the Church, including the Anglican Church" and that he "wants to use it to transform the world."

"There is need to reflect who God is in the way we do church. Jesus went out to the edges and did not stay on the tour. He went out to people on the fringes, to people in a complete mess."

"There is a perspective in society that the church is for people who are good enough but we who go to church know it is not true. We go there because we

know we are in a mess and the best place for God to deal with us is in church,” she said, adding that Messy Church was “lighting fires in our own hearts” to reach out to the unchurched.

Lucy, who was visiting Africa for the first time, said she very much appreciated the love and warm welcome she had received from African Anglicans.

Some Churches in Africa are already embracing the concept of Messy Church. Delegates watched a video from the Diocese of George in South Africa where the church has embraced the concept and using it to bring together kids and adults from the community to experience church in a different way. One kid from there described Messy Church as “fun and creative.”

Going beyond people’s expectations

Oscar Muriu is an outspoken Kenyan pastor who leads the Nairobi Chapel. He described one of his major aims is winning young people to Christ. In an effort to get youngsters to church and to get them to stay, he and his team aim to go beyond all expectations when reaching out to people. They aim to add the ‘wow factor’ to all aspects of the church service from the reception, through the praise and worship to the preaching.

Pastor Muriu got perhaps his biggest applause when he addressed the need to not only sing the “good old songs from centuries back” but also ones that people could connect with today.

In a youth workshop, Pastor Muriu also presented the young people attending the conference with a challenge. Using the Biblical characters Joshua and Caleb as examples of young men who rose to major challenges, he asked “Where are the people who will face the Goliath in our church?”

“The church needs courageous young men and women who will stand tall and make a difference,” he said. He reminded the young people of the need to “see with the eyes of conviction of who God is” and that “God is bigger and better than any challenge.”

In an atmosphere of deep praise and worship, day three was clearly one where people were asked to reconsider their own experience of church. One participant from Uganda admitted to ACNS that he had been very challenged by seeing the Archbishop of Canterbury washing young people’s feet.

Anglicans Ablaze are a group of organisations, under the oversight of Bishop Martin Breytenbach, within the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA) who desire to be set ablaze with God's love and power in order to build up the church and to serve God in the world. This year's international conference runs from July 2 to 5.

Press Coverage

Mail - Report on how campaigners are calling for a 'Hillsborough-style' inquiry into historic allegations of child sex abuse. This would involve an independent board of experts similar to the panel that investigated the 1989 football disaster, which was chaired by the Bishop of Liverpool, the Right Reverend James Jones. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2682593/New-fears-cover-calls-inquiry-Westminster-sex-scandal-grow.html>

Times - Report on Tour de France in Yorkshire notes that 'Allez Alleluia!' was the message on the yellow jersey emblazoned on top of York Minster's central tower. It states the Church's bandwagon jump was symbolic of the success of the Tour de God's Country, in which almost everybody took the chance to showcase the county's grandeur and their business wares. <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/sport/cycling/article4140412.ece>

BBC - Report that three old churches in the East Midlands will share more than £500,000 to complete urgent repairs. It states St Vincent's Church, in Caythorpe, Lincolnshire, will get £194,800 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), along with St Mary and St Lawrence, in Bolsover, Derbyshire, and St Peter's Church, in Tilton-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire. The funding will also help the places of worship provide better facilities and make the churches more suitable for wider community use. <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-28175646>

BBC - Report that the United Reformed Church has failed to reach agreement on becoming the largest Church in the UK to hold same-sex weddings. Its General Assembly, which met in Cardiff, failed to persuade some delegates to drop their opposition to proposals on same-sex marriage. It states General secretary the Rev John Proctor said a "clear majority" was in favour, but the Church needed "full consensus". <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-28181046>

Times - Opinion article on Lord Falconer's assisted dying bill, which would allow the terminally ill to die. It states the new law ushers in a new dark age, which would allow doctors to help terminally ill patients to commit suicide if

their life-expectancy is less than six months.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/columnists/article4140365.ece>

Times - Report that a prominent imam has reignited the debate about ritual slaughter by urging the government to ban halal killing unless animals have been stunned first. It states the British Veterinary Association (BVA) yesterday praised Nizar Boga, a former adviser to the Prince's Trust, for urging politicians to take the lead in encouraging all Muslims to eat meat from animals that are rendered unconscious before their throats are cut.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article4140394.ece>

Tel - Article on how faith should offer answers, but not on the way to work, after Jehovah's Witness hand out literature near London tube stations. It quotes a recent *Telegraph* poll which found that the majority of Anglicans and Roman Catholics now feel afraid to express their beliefs, partly out of concern over the perceived vulnerability of Christians to abuse or discrimination. The report claims people don't choose to publicly self-identify as a member of a faith: because their religion is deeply private.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/10950334/Jehovahs-Witnesses-Religion-should-offer-answers-but-not-on-the-way-to-work.html>

Guard - Report that Pope Francis is to hold his first meeting with victims of sexual abuse by priests today. It states six victims, two each from Ireland, Britain and Germany, will attend the pope's private morning mass in his Vatican residence and then meet him afterwards.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/07/pope-francis-meet-sex-abuse-victims>

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