



Flanders Fields Memorial Dedicated in Dublin Peace Park

A new Flanders Fields Memorial was officially unveiled in Dublin's Peace Park on Tuesday (April 30). The Peace Park, which has recently been given new life by Dublin City Council, is located at Christchurch Place, across the road from Christ Church Cathedral and Archbishop Michael

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Jackson and Dean Dermot Dunne were in attendance while the Cathedral Choir sang at the event.

Lord Mayor Nial Ring and Jan Peumans, Speaker of the Parliament of Flanders presided over the ceremony which was jointly organised by Dublin City Council and the Government of Flanders, Belgium.

The solemn act of remembrance for all those from the Island of Ireland who died in Flanders Fields during World War I, saw Flanders soil integrated with Irish soil from all four provinces and placed within a circle of Leinster granite which reflects the circular design in the roof of the Menin Gate in Ypres.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Lord Mayor accepted the gift from the people of Flanders on behalf of the citizens of Dublin. “This memorial will serve as a reminder of our long standing friendship with Flanders and along with the ‘Tree of Life’ Sculpture, will stand as focal points in the Peace Garden when it officially re-opens in the coming weeks. This Peace Garden which will be maintained by the dedicated staff of Dublin City Council Parks & Landscape Services will provide a place for reflection, rest and relaxation for visitors and citizens,” he said.

Nic Van der Marliere, General Representative of the Government of Flanders to Ireland said the human price paid to safeguard peace and human rights and the message of tolerance and reconciliation, were an essential part of remembrance for Flanders.

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“The First World War may be a hundred years behind us, but the inalienability of the rights of all human beings, respect for freedom and democracy, are as relevant today as they were then. Maybe more so, because today too many people and countries take them too much for granted. Flanders will always show its profound gratitude for the extraordinary generosity and support of the Irish people in its hour of need. The Flanders Fields Memorial, uniting soil from Flanders and the four Provinces of Ireland will be an eternal testimony to our great and unwavering friendship,” he stated.

Pierre–Emmanuel De Bauw, Ambassador of Belgium to Ireland added: “We remember with emotion all people from this island who served in World War I. They fought for peace in their own time and for us today. Peace is the most treasurable value for us human beings. If the terrible sacrifices of World War I taught us one thing, it’s this: we should, and we can live together in peace.”

Minister of State for European Affairs Helen McEntee, said that while the memorial recalled the largest military engagement of Irish people on Flemish soil, Ireland and Flanders had a long shared military heritage. “The memorial today brings together soil from the resting places of Irish people who died in Flanders and soil from their home provinces. I commend Dublin City Council for this initiative. This memorial will stand as a monument to our shared history and I thank the people of Flanders for the care of our dead over the last 100 years,” she said.

Pupils from St Enda’s Primary School in Dublin 8 carried the soil from the four provinces to the memorial during the

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ceremony. Buglers from Flanders played the Last Post and Reveille. Members of Dublin City Interfaith Forum, including Archbishop Jackson, read prayers for peace.

The memorial will be covered with a grass sward and engraved with poetry from Francis Ledwidge. Around the memorial, benches of Belgian blue stone have been engraved with the crests of Leinster, Munster, Ulster and Connacht.

Methodist Church President designate visits Fiji

The Rev. Sam McGuffin who will be the next President of the Methodist Church in Ireland is currently visiting sites in Fiji that have significant relation to Methodism.

He will be installed at its 250th annual Conference in Cork city on 12th June. He has been a minister for 36 years and has served on 7 of the 72 circuits in the Irish Conference.

Sam is married to Linda. They will celebrate their fortieth anniversary this year. Sam and Linda have been blessed with three children:

Mark, the eldest is a business manager in London married to Emmeline and they have a little daughter Edde. Richard is a counsellor in Derry and his wife is Rebecca. The youngest Jeni is married to Desi and their young son is Lucas.

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Sam has been the Editorial Secretary of Conference and Secretary of the Belfast and Lakeland's Districts and Superintendent on the North West and Lakeland's Districts. His recreational interests include choral singing, woodwork, gardening, reading and enjoys holidaying with Linda in places of interest.

Sam loves and enjoys the role of Preacher and is also by his very nature a Pastor – he is passionate about for the disadvantaged in society. He leaves Fiji for Ireland on the 6th of May.

Northern Ireland Catholic school population surges to record high

Statistics from the Department of Education show that, on school census day this year, there were 175,649 Catholic

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pupils in Northern Ireland's nursery, primary, secondary, grammar and special schools.

This accounts for almost 50.7% of all enrollments, with the amount of Catholics pupils at an all-time high.

In comparison, there were 114,314 Protestant pupils, 33% of the total, while 56,408 were designated as 'other'.

Back in 2000/1, the divide between Catholic and Protestant pupils was 50.7% and 42.7%, respectively.

At this time, there were 146,086 Protestant pupils and 173,253 Catholics.

While the number of Protestant pupils has decreased by 27.8% over this period, the number identifying as 'other' or 'non-Christian' has more than doubled.

These figures also reflect recent trends in employment in Northern Ireland, with the latest Labour Force Survey Religion Report showing the number of working age people designating themselves as Protestant has fallen dramatically in recent years.

Between 1990 and 2017 the proportion of the population aged 16 and over reporting as Protestant has dropped from 56% to 42%, while the proportion reporting as Catholic increased from 38% to 41%.

Last year, a leading academic predicted that Catholics could outnumber Protestants in Northern Ireland as soon as 2021.

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“Three years from now we will end up, I think, in the ironic situation on the centenary of the state where we actually have a state that has a Catholic majority,” Dr Paul Nolan said.

Christian Aid welcomes appointment of Rory Stewart as new DFID Secretary

Responding to the news that Rory Stewart has been made DFID Secretary, replacing Penny Mordaunt, Christian Aid's Head of UK Advocacy Tom Viita said:

“Any modern DFID Secretary needs to understand the issues of climate change, conflict and international diplomacy and thankfully Rory Stewart has an excellent grasp of these crucial subjects.

“The first item on his to-do list must be the global climate emergency that is affecting the world’s poor from Mozambique to Myanmar.

“We thank Penny Mordaunt for her leadership at DFID and congratulate her on her appointment as the UK's first ever female Defence Secretary. Her understanding of the complex interplay of poverty and conflict, particularly gender-based violence, will bring a vital new perspective to the MOD.”

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‘Intentional discipleship’ or ‘Jesus-shaped life’ is moving through the Anglican communion

Anglicans across the communion are beginning to see how to live a Jesus-shaped life in the “season of intentional discipleship.” writes Mary Frances Schjonberg, the Episcopal News Service’s senior editor and reporter.

That was the message in Hong Kong on April 30 as Anglican Consultative Council members attending the council’s 17th meeting spent the morning discussing the modern version of what many said has been the foundation of Christianity since Jesus told the disciples to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Meeting in Lusaka, Zambia, in 2016, the ACC accepted a report titled *Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making: An Anglican Guide for Christian Life and Formation* and called for a “season of intentional discipleship” from then until ACC-18, which could run until approximately 2021.

Northern Argentina Bishop Nick Drayson, a member of the committee guiding the initial work, told the council April 30 that the term “intentional discipleship” needs some unpacking. The group coined the phrase “Jesus-shaped life” because, he said, “it makes more sense.” He said the phrase refers to the lives of individuals and communities being shaped by Jesus “rather than the world or anything else moulding us,” while also being examples to others.

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The Rev. John Kafwanka, Anglican Communion Office director of mission, agreed. “We have talked a lot about Jesus but sadly many people have not seen Jesus in us,” he said.

The hope, Drayson said, is that the Anglican Communion will become known as a group of churches made up of disciples who lead others to discipleship in all aspects of their lives such as parenting and work and life in one’s culture. “It’s not just about church activities,” he said.

The Rev. Bartholomew Bol Deng, clergy member from the Province of South Sudan, said that most of the dioceses in his province are “young” and filled with people who were recently evangelized. Many of them need to take the next step, he said, of learning “how to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, not just to come to church.”

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His comment came during one of many short report-back moments in a morning that alternated between presentations about the work and frameworks for creating context-specific programs, and table discussions among the members.

Mark Senada, a youth member from Egypt, said he believes there is a “longing for seeing good Christians who say what they do and do what they say,” just as Jesus did.

Edmonton Bishop Jane Alexander told her colleagues that the idea of intentional discipleship has been “like a train gathering speed” in her diocese after a series of activities across the Canadian diocese encouraged people to begin talking about what living a Jesus-shaped life meant. “Sometimes we have to rediscover Jesus,” she said

There were two reasons for beginning the work, Alexander said. First, was increasing secularization. “In my context, the church can no longer assume that the story of Jesus Christ is known. Our evangelism effort can’t assume we’re reacquainting people with an old friend or a childhood memory, but it’s often a completely new introduction to God in Christ Jesus,” she said. “We’ve seen firsthand that as much as we might wish it, the prevailing culture doesn’t bring people through our doors.”

Yet, in asking those people who are in the church to go out and tell others about Jesus, “they often don’t know where to begin,” she said. “Therefore, our discipleship efforts [up until now] have engendered a sense of shame and guilt for not having been good enough doing it.”

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Second was a litany of pain from generations of trauma experienced by the indigenous people of Alberta including nearly 2,000 murdered or missing girls and women. Some 12 percent of Albertans live in poverty, including one-fifth of all children and half of all indigenous children.

There is a lack of clean drinking water in many of those communities. Food banks use has increased by 50 percent in the last 10 years. There is human trafficking, addiction, teen suicide and social isolation.

“People need to hear good news, but we had a problem. We needed a shared understanding of our own personal call to be disciples,” she said.

Rosalie Ballentine, The Episcopal Church’s lay member, said the idea of discipleship reminds her of the old question of “What would Jesus do?”

No matter the term, she said, the intent is for Christians “to be the people who are out there fighting for those who are the least of them, those who can’t fight for themselves, fighting against injustice.”

Ballentine said Christians cannot “just say that we’re going to be nice and kind to our neighbors or our colleagues, but [they have] to speak truth to power, to stand up for what is right because that’s what Jesus did and so that’s what we should do.”

The Rev. Canon Jerome Stanley Francis from the Province of Southern Africa echoed that notion, saying that

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“challenging the authorities of the day” is an important part of discipleship.

Leading a Jesus-shaped life, he said, means speaking that truth to “leaders who abused their power, their authority, their people” and “misuse the trust that people have in them.”

The committee is identifying examples of best practices in discipleship programs around the communion to share with other Anglicans and is also encouraging Anglicans to develop programs that make sense in their cultures.

Bishop of Chelmsford Stephen Cottrell, another member of the working group, cautioned that the Anglican Communion “tends to be the sort of church that produces pages of documents; it’s our way of doing things.” He suggested that “we have to get away from the idea that being a disciple is like doing a degree in God.”

Cottrell said it’s not that the working group wants the church to be anti-intellectual, but “I think we need to become a much better church at telling stories; that’s how Jesus taught. A story doesn’t close down meaning; it finds community, it finds dialogue.”

During a news conference on April 27, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said that “intentional discipleship” is an idea which has to work its way throughout the communion in much the same way the concept of the Five Marks of Mission took time to anchor itself in Anglicans’ consciousness.

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Today, May 2, ACC members plan to visit places in the [Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui, the Anglican province in Hong Kong, where intentional discipleship is being put into practice.

Archbishop of Hong Kong and ACC Chair Paul Kwong said at the news conference that the province recently committed itself to the work through theological education, evangelism and social services

Relevant web links -

<https://www.anglicancommunion.org/structures/instruments-of-communion/acc.aspx>

<https://www.anglicancommunion.org/structures/instruments-of-communion/acc/acc-17.aspx>

<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/220191/intentional-discipleship-and-disciple-making-an-anglican-guide-230316-.pdf>

<https://www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/intentional-discipleship.aspx>

<https://www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/marks-of-mission.aspx>

News briefs

+++Trinity Monday Service - “The young people who study here at Trinity have the gifts and the capacity to change the world. This is how you must seek to be remembered – that

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you made a difference, that you discovered you could weep before the tragedies and harsh realities of life, but you did not stand back; you used your talents and “got stuck in” to the problems of the world, tackling at the same time any inconsistencies in your own values and behaviour.” – Archbishop Eamon Martin preaching at the Trinity Monday Service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving



+++65th anniversary of ordination - The former Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Dr James Mehaffey, celebrated the 65th anniversary of his ordination yesterday.

The occasion was marked with a Service of Holy Communion in St Columb's Cathedral in Londonderry, at which the Dean of Derry, Very Rev Raymond Stewart presided, assisted by Rev Canon John Merrick. The Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Ken Good, pronounced the Benediction.

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Bishop Mehaffey was accompanied by his wife, Thelma.

Among those in the congregation were the Archdeacon of Derry, Ven Robert Miller, and the Archdeacon of Raphoe, Ven David Huss. The latter was baptised by Bishop Mehaffey in 1975. After the Service, friends and former colleagues gathered in the Chapter House to enjoy refreshments and fellowship.

+++Pastoral Care Visiting Assistants recognised - Over this past year the dioceses of Meath and Kildare, along with Dublin and Glendalough, jointly ran a Certificate Course for 'Pastoral Care Visiting Assistants'. A special service took place in St Peter's Church in Dunboyne on 30th April. During the service those who completed the course were presented with their certificates.

The service was led by Rev Eugene Griffin (rector of Dunboyne, who also preached. Certificates were presented by Archbishop Michael Jackson and Bishop Pat Storey. Those who received certificates were joined by family and friends. After the service there was reception in the adjoining Oaks Centre.

The course was facilitated by Archdeacon Isaac Hanna, who has a training background in the Church Army. It will equip those who participated to assist local rectors with pastoral visiting.

Bishop Pat Storey congratulated those who had undertaken the course. She said, "We are grateful for the commitment of everyone who has undertaken this training for an important part of parish life. We also appreciate the quality of training provided by Archdeacon Isaac Hanna."

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+++Notes of Congratulation - to Belfast Cathedral's Organ Scholar and latterly Acting Assistant Organist Jack Wilson (left) on gaining a place to study MMus at Cambridge. Jack will also be taking up the post of Organ Scholar in Sidney Sussex College, and accompanist of the St John's Voices.

+++ Church member's all Ireland cycle -

William Rutherford a parishioner from St Cedma's, Larne, is cycling from the very north of Northern Ireland to the very south of Ireland to raise money for Marie Curie this June. This epic journey is also in memory of Sam Nelson, who sadly died from cancer. You can hear more and meet William on Saturday 11th May, from 10:30am, at the East Antrim Boat Club, as well as at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/sams-runners-and-riders>

+++ Methodist President's schedule -

Sunday 5th May: Fivemiletown(am) Omagh (pm)

Monday 6th: Home/ Office

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Tuesday 7th: Pastoral and Hospitals

Wednesday 8th: Lay Ministry Committee Edgehill House

Thursday 9th: Meetings in Belfast

Friday 10th: Meetings in Belfast

Saturday 11th: Day Off

+++Bishop of Monmouth retires - The Bishop of Monmouth, the Rt Revd Richard Pain, is to retire at the end of the month. Bishop Richard has served the Diocese of Monmouth for 34 years, the last six as Bishop. He is retiring due to ill health following an absence of several months from his duties. Throughout his ministry, Bishop Richard held a number of diocesan and provincial appointments with a particular interest in the selection, training and nurturing of clergy and other church leaders. As Bishop, he held the portfolio for ministry matters in the Province, and was chair of the Council of St Padarn's Theological Institute. He has been instrumental in the development of new monastic communities as places of mission and formation for young Christians.

+++Former student returns as Principal - Bishop Mark Sowerby is to be the next Principal of the College of the Resurrection in succession to Fr Peter Allan CR, who will retire at the end of the academic year.

+++Highlands joint Christian-Muslim service - was held in the Highlands on Sunday to commemorate Indian soldiers who died during the Second World War. <https://www.lifeandwork.org/news/news/post/1176-interfaith-service-for-muslim-soldiers>

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+++Irish Youth Ministry Gathering - There are great opportunities for teaching, training, and encouragement at the new Irish Youth Ministry Gathering next month. It will run from May 16-18 in Assembly Buildings in Belfast.

+++Prayer requests - for **Chris and Rachel Humphries** – PCI global mission workers in Portugal. As part of the Easter programme at Comunidade Pedras Vivas, the church did some outreach at the local market. Pray for the contacts made and those who took some of the literature. Pray that God would work in the hearts of these people and bring transformation. Pray for language study, that Chris and Rachel would continue to apply themselves in learning and be patient when faced with language barriers. Give thanks that their son Ezra has settled well into a Portuguese nursery school. Pray that he will continue to make new friends.

Please keep **Phil Peters** in your prayers, Methodist World Development requests. Phil is off to Kenya today to conduct Monitoring and Evaluation of the Open Schools projects and to meet with the volunteers who were trained last year November.

+++Food for thought - “If conversion to Christianity makes no improvement in a man's outward actions – if he continues to be just a snobbish or spiteful or envious as he was before – then I think we must suspect that his 'conversion' was largely imaginary.” CS Lewis

Today in Christian history

May 2, 373: Church father Athanasius, "the father of Orthodoxy," dies. He attended the Council of Nicea, and churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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after becoming bishop of Alexandria, he fought Arianism and won. He was also the first to list the New Testament canonical books as we know them today.

May 2, 1507: Reformer Martin Luther is consecrated a priest, a role in which he would serve for 13 years before being excommunicated.

May 2, 1559: John Knox, having spent several years on the Continent studying and writing, returns to Scotland to help lead the Reformation there.

May 2, 1821: Methodist missionary William Taylor is born in Virginia. He ministered to miners during the California gold rush and later became missionary Bishop of Africa (1884-1896). Taylor University in Upland, Indiana, named itself after him.

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