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## Prominent philosopher Jean Vanier dies aged 90



**The academic was the founder of of L'Arche, an organisation described as a revolutionary international network of communities where people with and without disabilities live and work together as peers.**

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Jean Vanier, the founder of L'Arche, has died in Paris, aged 90.

In a statement on L'Arche's website announcing Vanier's death, its leaders said: "Jean passed away peacefully today . . . In recent days, while remaining very present, he had declined quickly.

"We all know Jean's place in the history of L'Arche and Faith and Light and in the personal stories of many of us. Jean's life has been one of exceptional fruitfulness. First and foremost we wish to give thanks for that...

"In his last message, a few days ago, Jean

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**Ulster University**

**Ulster University Choir**

Ulster University Choir presents

# Choral music from the United States

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Programme to include:  
Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* and  
Eric Whitacre's *Five Hebrew Love Songs*

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**Thursday, 9th May:**  
St Peter's Cathedral, Belfast - 8:15pm

**Monday, 13th May:**  
Church of the Sacred Heart, Carndonagh, Co Donegal - 8:00pm

**Tuesday, 14th May:**  
Cathedral of St Eunan & St Columba, Letterkenny, Co Donegal - 8:15pm

★ ★

*Admission free with retiring collection*

For further details contact: Development and Alumni Relations on 028 7167 5679 or [c.mullan@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:c.mullan@ulster.ac.uk)

[www.ulsterchoir.com](http://www.ulsterchoir.com)

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**400miles4Uganda - The team from The Hub chaplaincy at Queen's University have done it! Over 400 miles later they finished strong. A brilliant trip... Thanks to everyone who encouraged them along the way... They are heading home...**

said: 'I am deeply peaceful and trustful. I'm not sure what the future will be but God is good and whatever happens it will be the best. I am happy and give thanks for everything. My deepest love to each one of you.'

Speaking during a plenary meeting of the English and Welsh bishops in Spain, bishops' conference Cardinal Vincent Nichols said: "At our gathering in Valladolid, we heard with deep emotion of the death of Jean Vanier. For over half a century he has inspired an entirely new appreciation of the gift of people with learning disabilities and revealed the most profound heart of human community. We pray for him and his beloved Arche communities at this moment of loss. May he rest in peace."



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The son of a former Governor General of Canada, Georges Vanier, Jean Vanier was born in Geneva on September 10, 1928, where his father was en poste. He was educated at Dartmouth Naval College (now Britannia Royal Naval College) and served in the Royal Navy and Royal Canadian Navy before moving to Paris to study philosophy. His first publication was his doctoral thesis on Aristotelian ethics.

In 1964, feeling the need to do something more meaningful with his life, Vanier bought a house in Trosly-Breuil, northern France, and founded L'Arche, a community for those with learning disabilities to live with their carers and be helped to grow to their full potential. L'Arche International now has 150 sites around the world.

Vanier co-founded Faith and Light with Marie-Hélène Mathieu in 1971. This is an international network of forums for those with learning disabilities, their friends and family. It now has more than 1,500 communities in 81 countries around the world.

Jean Vanier was the author of more than 30 books. Among his many honours, he was a Companion of the Order of Canada, an Officer of the Légion d'honneur and a winner of the Templeton Prize.

L'Arche's leaders announced that his funeral will take place in his community at Trosly.

“This will be a private ceremony for his community, close friends and family and representatives of the Federation of L'Arche as well as of Faith and Light.” they said. “All those

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involved will receive a personal invitation, but the celebration will be filmed and broadcast live in order that each one of you can share this moment.”

## **Archbishop of Canterbury's tribute to Jean Vanier**

In a tribute to Jean Vanier, Archbishop Justin Welby said - Jean Vanier lived the Gospel in such a beautiful way that few who met him could fail to be caught up in it. I join countless people around the world in deep sorrow at his death, and great gratitude for his life.

His generosity of spirit and Christian hospitality embraced the whole world – supremely those with learning difficulties. His L'Arche communities were places for the so-called weak to teach the self-perceived strong.

His love for Christ overflowed into every relationship with abundant grace. To meet him was to love him, to be loved – and in turn to love all others he loved. Such a luminous goodness was combined with humour, wisdom and practicality. His goodness was also combined with learning; his lyrical commentary on St John's Gospel is the most beautiful piece of writing.

I had the privilege of spending time with him on several occasions, and always came away with a sense that here was someone whose whole way of being spoke of the goodness of God.



In 2016, Jean led the Primates of the Anglican Communion in a time of prayer and reflection at Canterbury Cathedral. At the end of it, he invited us to wash each other's feet. It was a moving experience for each of us - and a powerful reminder of the example that every disciple has been set by Jesus. He did the same at the 2008 Lambeth Conference.

Jean's life was shaped in response to that example. The L'Arche movement, where people with and without learning disabilities live and share in life together, is a legacy and gift that he leaves to the Church and the world. I pray that we will be challenged and inspired by his example for generations to come.

The heart of his profound discipleship was to foster communities that Jesus would have recognised:

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communities of love and fellowship where people carry each other's burdens, accept each other's gifts and limitations - and find belonging, joy and healing.

In a world where individualism and competition can seem to have the upper hand, his vision, his teachings and his example were a powerful reminder that as human beings we are called to something infinitely more precious.

It is fitting that one who lived so thoroughly with and for others, and who helped so many find new life, should come face to face with Christ in Eastertide. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

## **Catholic bishop: Don't use 1916 to legitimise merciless violence**

A Catholic bishop has praised the "sacrifices" of those involved in the Easter Rising, but said the events of 1916 should not be twisted in an attempt to justify subsequent acts of terror.

In his homily at the Irish state's annual 1916 commemoration ceremony in Dublin, Bishop Dermot Farrell said that "vengeance, retribution and ruthless justice" serves to "inspire ever more hate and evil propensities".

He said: "Rather than bending the events of Easter week 1916 in an attempt to claim legitimacy for a merciless campaign of indiscriminate acts of violence and murder, another logic is required."

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Almost 500 people were killed in the six days of fighting that followed the attempted rebellion on April 24, 1916. More than half were civilians.

Addressing the gathering at the Church of the Sacred Heart, Arbour Hill on Wednesday, Bishop Farrell said: “The seeds of democracy – freedom, vision, ideals and hope – sown at a foundational moment in the history of the Irish State had, and still have, momentous political consequences whose implications resonate to this day.”

He said the Belfast Agreement “has a similar dynamic” in that it “allows a generation never to witness the horrors of violence, but reap the benefits of peace,” and added: “The great challenge, now as it was then, is to create a society which will enable all of its citizens to flourish in equality in a country with an identifiably distinctive voice in Europe and in the world...a sovereign independent state to use the words of the Proclamation.”

## **Countdown to the 2019 Presbyterian General Assembly**

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) opens in just over 3 weeks time on 3 June. As Presbyterian congregations get ready for the annual event, it will be Rev Trevor Gribben’s fifth Assembly as Clerk of the General Assembly. Reflecting on the first time that he attended as an Assistant Minister in 1987 and looking forward to this year’s meeting, he says that one thing that has always struck him about the annual meeting is that it is the Presbyterian family coming together.



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**The Clerk of the General Assembly: Rev Trevor Gribben who was appointed Clerk of the General Assembly and General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in 2014.**



“For me the General Assembly has always been a wonderful picture of our Church coming together: ministers, who have been called by their congregations, elders who have been elected by their brothers and sisters in Christ, joining with other representatives, all coming together as a Presbyterian family to worship and pray,” Mr Gribben said.

One of the largest churches in Ireland and the largest Protestant, or Reformed’ denomination in Northern Ireland, along with its primary focus on mission and ministry as part of the Church of Jesus Christ, the General Assembly is a time where the pressing social, moral, denominational and

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public issues of the day are also discussed. He also said that while many of the issues are important, some can be mundane, but necessary, and sometimes they can be controversial.

“Sadly it’s often only the last of these that ‘make the headlines’, but on the ground and in different ways, our Church continues to make a unique contribution in communities across the country. Our annual meeting next month is the coming together of ministers and elders from every congregation across this island, meeting in General Assembly, to take decisions for the Church and often giving voice to the concerns of many people within and outside PCI,” Mr Gribben explained.

“The reports that are debated, and the resolutions that are passed, shape the Church’s direction in different areas. These decisions are taken jointly by ministers and elders, men and women, from congregations up and down the land. People who give of their time freely and use their many gifts on various bodies in the service of the Lord Jesus – and I pay tribute to these people and the work that they do at denominational, presbytery and congregational level.

“This year, much of the work reported on has stemmed from decisions taken at the last, or previous, Assemblies. For instance, Task Groups have been looking at a number of areas, including dissent and guidance for congregations around membership. Valuable work that we will be able to discuss next month,” he said.

Mr Gribben continued, “With the vast majority of our business conducted in an open, transparent and public way,  
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democracy is also one of the strengths and hallmarks of our Presbyterianism. As we discuss and debate together with grace and respect, I would also encourage everyone who is eligible to attend and take part.”

Speaking to the PCI family as a whole, Mr Gribben said, “As we come together, and as we seek to proclaim the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to people of all backgrounds, please pray for all involved in this year’s General Assembly and its deliberations - and for the life, ongoing work and witness of our Church.”

The General Assembly will take place in Belfast from Monday 3 June to Friday 7 June. All are welcome. See News Briefs this issue. For full details [www.presbyterianireland.org](http://www.presbyterianireland.org).

## **Gafcon seeks attention**

As the Anglican Consultative Council meeting in Hong Kong ended, the Gafcon Primates Council issued a communique at the close of their rival gathering.

In it they announced, “we have decided to call together a meeting of bishops of the Anglican Communion in June of 2020.”

The communique noted that “last year in Jerusalem our delegates urged us not to attend Lambeth 2020 if godly order in the Communion had not been restored.” Lambeth Conference takes place in July and August of 2020.

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In his statement to the ACC, the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion Office said Gafcon was “deliberately ignorant” of the communion’s polity.

On the eve of the ACC meeting, and the rival Gafcon meeting, it was announced that the Archbishop of ACNA, Foley Beach, was invited by the Archbishop of Canterbury to attend Lambeth 2020 as an ecumenical observer.

Beach responded with an emission taking offense that the Archbishop did not recognize him as a member of the communion. The Archbishop of ACNA is also the present chairman of Gafcon.

The Rt. Rev. Greg Brewer, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Florida, called Gafcon’s rival June 2020 bishop’s conference “an exacerbation of our divisions” and “a tragedy”.

## **Today in Christian history**

**May 9, 1760:** Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, founder of the Moravian Brethren and a pioneer of ecumenism and mission work, dies in Herrnhut, Germany. By his death the Moravians (which themselves only numbered in the hundreds) had sent out 226 missionaries around the world.

**May 9, 1983:** Pope John Paul II speaks before a gathering of 200 scientists and apologizes for the suffering that Galileo Galilei had endured at the hands of the church when he was forced to recant his views of a heliocentric universe



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under threat of torture in 1633. John Paul II indicated that the church had renewed a review of the matter, which eventually led to a reversal of the Catholic Church's condemnation of Galileo in 1992.

## **News briefs**

**+++Presiding Bishop welcomes royal baby** - Following the news of the birth of a son to the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, at whose wedding he preached last year, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry tweeted: The Jewish tradition reminds us that the birth of every child is a reminder that God is not finished with us yet. There is hope. Congratulations to the Duke and Duchess of Sussex and prayers of blessing for them and their baby.

**+++ General Assembly worship** - The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland will meet in Belfast from Monday to Friday, 3-7 June 2019. The General Assembly is the principal decision-making body of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The weeklong gathering is an important time of coming together, of fellowship, worship, Bible study, celebration and debate where decisions taken will set the direction for the life and ministry of the Church over the coming year and beyond.

The vast majority of its business is open to the public, as are the worship services:

Tuesday 11.45am - as part of the Assembly Communion Service

Wednesday 12.15pm

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Thursday 2.45pm

and the Wednesday Evening Celebration at 7.45pm - all are welcome.

For a full list of dates and times of business, visit [www.presbyterianireland.org/ga19](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/ga19)

**+++ More women bishops in C of E** - Ven Dr Joanne Woolway Grenfell, Archdeacon of Portsdown, in the Diocese of Portsmouth is to become the Bishop of Stepney, in the Diocese of London. She takes over from Rt Rev Adrian Newman who stepped down last year.

Rev Canon Dagmar Winter, Rector of St Andrew, Hexham, in the Diocese of Newcastle is to become the Bishop of Huntingdon, in the Diocese of Ely. She takes over from Rt Rev David Thomson who stepped down last year.

Venerable Sarah Bullock, Archdeacon of York in the Diocese of York, to the Suffragan See of Shrewsbury, in the Diocese of Lichfield. She takes over from Rt Rev Mark Rylands, who returned to parish ministry last year. It's brings the total number of women bishops to 22 four years after Rt Rev Libby Lane was named Bishop of Stockport in the Diocese of Chester.

**+++ CITI module on Reconciliation** - The Church of Ireland Theological Institute will be running a reconciliation module from 10th to 14th June for its part-time MTh students. The lecturer for the module is Johnston McMaster. If interested members of the Church and the wider public would like to attend for a day or for the week, please contact Jane at [janeKelly@theologicalinstitute.ie](mailto:janeKelly@theologicalinstitute.ie) for further information. **Church of Ireland Theological**

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**Institute**, Braemor Park, Rathgar, Dublin 14, +353 (0)1 492 3506 [admin@theologicalinstitute.ie](mailto:admin@theologicalinstitute.ie)

**+++Parish skills courses** - Over the last two months, members of Carnmoney Parish Church have undertaken a number of training courses laid on by experts in their fields. On Saturday March 9, 19 people attained a level 2 Food Hygiene Qualification, and the church is now looking forward to a number of sumptuous feasts over the coming years! On Saturday April 27, 12 people undertook a basic First Aid Course which has led to a three year qualification. The following week, eight members with little or no computer skills undertook training over two afternoons in the Vicarage led by one of the parish's own members Elaine Munn. The Vicar, the Rev Andy Heber, said: "All three courses were hugely enjoyable as well as providing invaluable learning"

**+++US visitor delights St Canice's** - The staff and clergy of St. Canice's Cathedral were delighted by the visit of Professor Maeve Brigid Callan of Simpson College (Iowa) who was leading a group of eager university students to examine the medieval context of the cathedral. Cornell University Press (USA) and Four Courts Press (Dublin: [fourcourtspress.ie](http://fourcourtspress.ie)) have published Professor Callan's book — 'The Templars, the Witch, and the Wild Irish' — which includes much material relating to our own Bishop Richard de Ledrede, Alice Kyteler, and Kilkenny.

**+++ Saying Goodbye service** - The annual Saying Goodbye service for anyone who has lost a baby at any stage of pregnancy, at birth or in early years, or who has been affected by a family member or friend's loss, returns to

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Belfast Cathedral on June 2. More information at <https://bit.ly/2VsJ3nH>

**+++Your prayers are requested for...** Volker & JinHyeog Glissmann are PCI global mission workers in Malawi. Pray for Volker as he continues with the groundwork for the revision of the Bachelor in Theology programme at the Theological Education by Extension College in South Africa.

**+++ Food for thought -** Ode By Arthur O'Shaughnessy

We are the music-makers,  
And we are the dreamers of dreams,  
Wandering by lone sea-breakers  
And sitting by desolate streams;  
World losers and world forsakers,  
On whom the pale moon gleams:  
Yet we are the movers and shakers  
Of the world for ever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties  
We build up the world's great cities.  
And out of a fabulous story  
We fashion an empire's glory:



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One man with a dream, at pleasure,  
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;  
And three with a new song's measure  
Can trample an empire down.

We, in the ages lying  
In the buried past of the earth,  
Built Nineveh with our sighing,  
And Babel itself with our mirth;  
And o'erthrew them with prophesying  
To the old of the new world's worth;  
For each age is a dream that is dying,  
Or one that is coming to birth.

## **News Links**

**'Nothing is impossible with God', church leader urges prayer over NI political talks**

Premier

President of the Methodist **Church in Ireland**, Rev William Davison is one of many church leaders who has sort to build unity between the parties.

**Watch: Northern Ireland minister claims agenda to condition Christians into thinking 'sodomy ...**

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Belfast Telegraph

The comments were made by Reverend John Greer during a service at his **church** and before last week's local government elections, the BBC ...

## [Anger over rabidly anti-gay US pastor's planned visit to Ireland](#)

IrishCentral

Pastor Steven Anderson, who is not affiliated with any Christian **church**, was set to visit **Ireland** later this month but campaigns have now begun to have ...

## [General Synod to debate motion involving persecution of Christians](#)

Irish Times

A motion calling on the **Church of Ireland** to write to the Department of Foreign Affairs asking it to place on a par with all other human rights issues the ...

## [New Auxiliary Bishop of Armagh to be based in Dundalk](#)

Talk of the Town

May 8, 2019 | Headline, Local **news** ... He will assist the head of the Catholic **Church** in **Ireland**, Archbishop Eamon Martin, in the archdiocese of ...

## [Sponsor a Slate programme launched to secure the future of Saint Patrick's Cathedral](#)

Irish Building Magazine

... the years, but the present building dates to the mid-thirteenth century and has served as The National Cathedral of the **Church of Ireland** since 1870 ...

## [The history of Ardagh is now set in stone as plaques are unveiled](#)

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Longford Leader

After their unveiling, the plaques were blessed by Ms Ruth Galbraith, **Church of Ireland** Lay Pastor, and Fr Vincent Connaughton, local parish priest.

The rebel priest: 'Gay people in the **church** are not going to go away'

The Guardian

In 2017, he resigned, publicly condemning the church as “institutionally ... “Unless the **Church of England** can be enthusiastic in its welcome of gay and ... US Christians through fiery sermons and savvy engagement with mass **media**.

**Church** leaders to meet to devise plan to combat knife crime

Premier

**Church** leaders, community workers and Christian charities will meet on ... London City Mission and **Churches** Together in Britain and **Ireland** (CTBI). ... to providing the **Church** with the most up to date and relevant **news** from a ...

Christian Aid Week follows **churches** in trialling cashless collections

ChristianToday

Christian Aid is partnering with Parish Buying, a scheme set up by the **Church of England** and Church in Wales to help churches collect donations ...

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