



A service in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast yesterday to marked the unveiling of a Roll of Honour of the pre-World War 2 RAF Volunteer Reserve and the receiving of the No. 502 (Ulster) Squadron Standard.



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Education in Northern Ireland is beyond crisis, C of I bishop

Education in Northern Ireland is "beyond crisis," a Church of Ireland bishop has said.

The Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, the Right Reverend Ken Good, made his comments in a speech on Saturday at the Church's general synod.

"Little is happening to prevent the fabric of our education system from unravelling," he said.

Bishop Good was also critical of a lack of political leadership in Stormont, describing it as the "dead hand".

His speech came only days after more than 500 school principals warned that pupils were suffering due to the ongoing political stalemate.

'Declining morale'

He told the synod that a number of dangers were threatening to "undermine and even destabilise the whole school system".

These included a lack of vision, lack of money and declining morale among both staff and school governors.

He said that schools were facing a number of serious problems including more children with mental health issues

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and an increasing number of pupils who needed support for special educational needs.

Bishop Good said that only significant transformation could begin to address those problems.

"The lack of political leadership in Stormont is the dead hand," he said.

"It means there's no-one in charge who can take decisions about this transformation vision.

"The education system in Northern Ireland is in financial crisis too.

"The squeeze is becoming more and more serious and the consequences are becoming more and more hazardous."

Bishop Good said there were still a number of positive things in education, including the number of school governors from the Church of Ireland and the number of schools taking part in shared education.

He also said that the main Protestant churches and Roman Catholic trustees were still working towards creating some jointly-managed church schools.

However, he warned that the problems in education meant that a generation of pupils were being failed.

"The long-term picture is not healthy and we need to see action now to build a better future for our children and young people," he said.

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Knock matchmaking service for Catholic couples closes

A matchmaking service for Catholic couples is closing after 50 years following a decline in demand.

The Knock Marriage Introductions in County Mayo claims to have been responsible for 960 marriages.

The service, based at the Knock Shrine, was set up by Fr Michael Keane in 1968.

Current director, Fr Stephen Farragher, said online dating agencies and apps have now made it possible to meet someone "at the touch.

"Back in 1968, Ireland was a different place than it was today," he commented

"Fr Michael Keane saw the extent of loneliness and isolation, particularly as a result of emigration and also due to the fact that people didn't even have phones and landlines."

In its heyday, the service was responsible for 30 marriages a year, said Fr Farragher.

But in recent years, there had been a noticeable decline in demand for the service which made it no longer viable, he added.

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"Seven years ago, we had 10 marriages in the course of a particular year. In the last few years, it has varied from three to four marriages a year," he said.

As the money from annual client subscriptions decreased, the service had to be supplemented in recent years by donations from dioceses around Ireland.

Three Irish concerts by leading US college band

One of the best university college bands from the American midwest will play a free concert at Christ Church Cathedral on May 29.

The Bethel University Wind Symphony from Minnesota is made up of more than 45 wind, brass and percussion instrument players, many of whom are music students at the university in St Paul.

They will play a selection of Irish and Scottish airs including Amazing Grace, Loch Lomond and four Scottish dances as well as Cotillon, a suite of dance tunes, especially suited to wind instruments and first performed by the BBC Symphony Orchestra in 1939.

The concert will also feature a selection of American tunes including marching songs The Circus Bee and the classical American The Stars and Stripes Forever and American folk tunes including The Cry of the Wild Goose.

Recent overseas tours included Korea, England, Wales and the Czech Republic, and this year the Wind Symphony

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has decided to do a tour of Ireland and Scotland.

“These tours offer a wonderful opportunity to open up the world to students, creating a deep sense of community among the participants and giving our musicians an opportunity to focus deeply on our craft,” explains Stephen B Thompson, the orchestra’s conductor and professor of music at Bethel University.

In addition, the Bethel University Wind Symphony will also perform in Kilkenny at St Canice’s Cathedral, on 28 May at churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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3.30pm – entrance fee is €4.50; and at the Portadown Town Hall, Portadown, Co Armagh on 30 May at 7.30pm, entrance fee is £8 (£5 concessions). All proceeds for the Portadown concert go to the Lord Mayor's charity, Down's Syndrome Association.

The concert taking place at Christ Church Cathedral is free, but the event will be ticketed so seats must be reserved in advance at www.ChristChurchTickets.com

Moderator praises new prison officers

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Rt Rev Dr Charles McMullen, has encouraged new prison officers just starting out in their career, to see their new occupation not just as a job, but as a vocation. He was speaking in Belfast on Friday (17 May) at their passing out parade.

Dr McMullen said that 'vocation' was perhaps an 'old fashioned' word today, but it underlined a deep sense of calling. Reflecting on his own journey, he spoke about the peace that he had found once he had accepted the call on his life and had begun training for the ministry.

"I pray you will experience the same in your chosen walk of life. It will also not be without its misunderstandings, setbacks, frustrations and disappointments, but each experience can make us either bitter or better," he said.

"As time goes on, we can lose that sense of youthful vision and idealism we once had as we set out on the journey. There will be times as well when we will wonder if we are

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making any lasting impact, or difference, because much of what we do is routine, invisible and intangible. All I can do is urge you never to forget your sense of calling and the difference that you will be able to make on people's lives for good."

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has ministered in prisons to prisoners and staff in a number of locations and facilities across Ireland for many years. The Church currently has both full and part-time chaplains serving in HMP Maghaberry, Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre in Bangor, Hydebank Wood College and the Northern Ireland Women's Prison on the outskirts of Belfast and Mountjoy Prison in Dublin. The appointment of a part-time PCI chaplain to join the chaplaincy team at HMP Magilligan is pending.

Highlighting this important work that the Church is engaged in he said, "A chaplain is a listening ear, a pastoral heart and a wise mind – someone who helps re-connect all the broken and dislocated pieces of life...Chaplains are not only available to prisoners, but to all who would want to use their services."

In his address, the Moderator spoke of his visit to Maghaberry last summer, where he met chaplains, prison officers and some prisoners. He said that was deeply impressed by the caring ethos he experienced. "I came away not in any way depressed but encouraged by the genuine attempts being made to help those serving time to move on from their offences and face a future with renewed hope and confidence. The regime I experienced is humanitarian and progressive."

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Dr McMullen continued, “That is not in any way to minimise the seriousness of offences and the need for corresponding custodial sentences, because we must never forget the impossibly high cost of crime for victims and the often life-long shattering consequences.”

He also highlighted another important aspect of the Church’s work within the criminal justice system - Thompson House. Since 1984, the hostel in north Belfast has provided supported housing to ex-offenders who have been referred by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland as being in need of approved accommodation.

Speaking to the new officers, their families, senior members of the prison service and guests, the Moderator highlighted a section from Matthew’s Gospel (25: 34-45). Here, Jesus tells his disciples of the time when he will judge the world and how in small acts of kindness they had honoured him, such as feeding the hungry, looking after the sick and visiting those in prison. “As you support people to change and care for them in custody, there is a very definite pastoral role in your work,” Dr McMullen said.

September in Portsmouth for Mothers’ Union General Meeting 2019

The 2019 Mothers' Union General Meeting will be held at Portsmouth Guildhall on Wednesday 18th September. Celebration Services will be the afternoon and evening of the 17th September at Portsmouth Cathedral. Both of these events will be ticketed.

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This year marks the start of a new triennium and the new Worldwide President Sheran Harper will be present at the General Meeting along with some members of the new board. There will also be a number of staff from Mary Sumner House attending.

The programme will be released by the end of June. There will be a keynote address from Worldwide President, Sheran Harper.

In addition there will be:

- A “marketplace” for attendees to find out more about projects and programmes around Britain, Ireland and around the world.
- The launch of “Communities of Interest”, which will give members the opportunity to become more involved in those areas of MU which are of particular interest to them.
- Insights into how Mothers’ Union will be involved in supporting the Lambeth Conference in 2020.
- Feature on “new shoots” in Britain & Ireland.

Information Packs including ticketing information can be [downloaded here](#)

General Meeting tickets have been on sale from 30th April and are only available via the MU’s [Eventbrite web page](#)

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Tickets to the Annual Services are available via the booking forms in the Information Packs, alternatively [download it here](#)

The MU is working with Hampshire Conference Bureau for this event and it is able to offer some fantastic deals on a selection of hotels to members. [Access the hotel deals here](#)

Today in Church History

May 20, 325: Emperor Constantine convenes the first Ecumenical Council in Nicea (now Iznik), Bithynia, to discuss Arianism, a heresy arguing that Christ was subordinate to God the Father. "I entreat you," Constantine said at the opening of the Council of Nicea, "to remove the causes of dissension among you and to establish peace." The council attempted to resolve the bitter conflict by anathematizing Arius (Arianism's founder) and ordering the burning of all his books, but the conflict continued to rage for decades.

May 20, 1277: Pope John XXI dies when his castle ceiling collapses on him. The name was a mistake—there was never a John XX.

May 20, 1506: Christopher Columbus, who saw himself as a missionary, not just an explorer, dies impoverished in Spain at age 55. "I hope in our Lord that it will be the greatest honor to Christianity that, unexpectedly, has ever come about," he concluded in the log of his first voyage to the Americas (see issue 35: Christopher Columbus).

May 20, 1690: John Eliot, English missionary to the Native Americans of New England and publisher of the first Bible printed in America, dies.

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May 20, 1960: Six months before John F. Kennedy, a Roman Catholic, is elected president of the United States, the Southern Baptist Convention condemns the election of Catholics to public office. "When a public official is inescapably bound by the dogma and demands of the church," it declared, "he cannot consistently separate himself from these.

May 19, 804: Alcuin of York, an English scholar who became an adviser to Charlemagne and the most prominent figure in the Carolingian Renaissance (the rebirth of classical learning under Charlemagne), dies. He also devised a handwriting system using both small and capital letters for easier reading.

May 19, 1805: Joshua V. Himes, best known for promoting William Miller's Second Advent movement, is born. Miller predicted the Second Coming between 1843 and 1844. When this did not happen, many followers ...

News briefs

+++ Methodist President's engagements -

Sunday 19th May: 80th Anniversary of Greencastle Methodist Church.

Monday 20th: Home/ Office

Tuesday 21st: Pastoral Calls

Wednesday 22nd: Meetings Belfast and Men's dinner TBF Thompson's Garvagh

Thursday 23rd: Inter Church Meeting in Dublin

Friday 24th: North Western Prayer Beacon Event, Enniskillen

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Saturday 25th: Laying of Foundation Stone of new Hall,
Moville

Please pray for MCI President, Rev Billy Davison

+++ Sale of Howth retreat centre - The Sisters of Charity will sell the Stella Maris Retreat Centre in Howth, Co. Dublin, which is valued at over €3m due to a decline in attendance and cost of maintenance. Funds generated by the sale will help the sisters continue their mission in Ireland and overseas. The proceeds will specifically go towards their work with people affected by human trafficking, in their efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change on poor communities and in the promotion of education.

+++ Presbyterian ministry graduation - The Graduation Service for students for the ministry and others takes place on Thursday evening in Assembly Buildings. Six students for the ministry will receive a Certificate for Licensing, and will move on into two-year full-time assistantships in congregations. Please pray for those beginning their assistantships as licentiates that they will be a blessing in the congregations where they serve, and in turn be blessed by those congregations and further equipped for ministry.

Postgraduate Diplomas in Ministry will also be awarded: Pray for those receiving them that they may use what they have learned in their day-to-day work with young people and the wider church.

The Moderator-Designate, William Henry, will receive an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree. Pray for him as he prepares for the General Assembly that he may be assured of being in your will and equipped for the task ahead.

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+++ C of I Vocation Sunday - is on 15th September - two days before Canon David Gillespie Director of Ordinands, will co-ordinate a ministry and vocation day at the National Ploughing Championships on Wednesday 18th. Plan to visit the Church of Ireland tent.

+++ New organ and Special Service of Music - in Galloon Parish Church on Sunday 2nd June at 3.00pm with guest organists, hymn singing and a recital from NykkÖ-Mickaël Grégoire. The service will be conducted by Dean Ferguson. Please note that there will be no service at 12 noon on this date. This is a wonderful opportunity to come along, sing well known hymns and hear a professional recital on our new Lewis Organ.

+++ Tearfund fact - A Tearfund report estimates that between 400,000 and one million people die every year from illnesses and diseases such as diarrhoea, cholera, malaria, and some cancers caused by living near uncollected waste and plastic pollution.

+++Returned from Yei diocese - Billy Smyth of Moira has returned from his three week placement through CSMI in Yei Diocese, South Sudan. He was greatly encouraged to see early signs of peace and urges us to keep Bishop Hilary and the staff at the newly opened Vocational Training Centre in our prayers.

+++ Teaching in France - Prof Gordon Campbell from Union Theological College, Belfast spent a week at Faculté Jean Calvin in Aix-en-Provence, France teaching a short intensive course in New Testament.

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+++Lakota prayer at a cathedral lecture - given by Rev. Matthew Fox; spiritual theologian, an Episcopal priest and an activist for gender justice and eco-justice. Author of 'Order of the Sacred Earth'. Accompanied by Meshi Chavez; bringing in Lakota prayer through drumming, song and innovation and Nóirín Ní Riain; an Irish singer, writer, teacher, theologian and authority on Gregorian chant. For more information visit -

<https://www.facebook.com/events/421061652070220/>

+++ Clerical appointments - Congratulations to: Rev Sarah Marry, who has been appointed as incumbent of Edenderry Union Meath & Kildare). Sarah has been Priest-in-Charge of St Anne's, Shandon and Chaplain to St Luke's Home in the dioceses of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, since 2015. Bishop Pat Storey said, "We look forward to welcoming Sarah, her husband Declan and their two teenage children to the diocesan family.

Rev Carmen Hayes. presently of Kilcronaghan and Ballynascreen (Tobermore) is to be rector of Garvagh (Derry & Raphoe)'

+++ Guiding awards - Congratulations to Sharon Allingham, Cookstown Ranger Leader and Beverley Thornberry, Rainbow and Guide Leader in Loy. They both have been awarded the Girlguiding Ulster award for their dedication and commitment to guiding.

+++ New altar dedicated - There was "great excitement" in a Dublin parish as their long-awaited new altar was dedicated by the Archbishop of Dublin. After decades of

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using a temporary altar over 300 parishioners gathered for the ceremony in Sallynoggin parish earlier this month. The temporary altar was installed in Our Lady of Victories Church in Sallynoggin/Glenageary in 1977 for the ordination of now-Bishop Kevin Doran of Elphin diocese – who used to be a parishioner.

+++ Annual Shankill Youth service - Members of the 20th Scout Group attended the Annual Youth Church Organisation Service at St Matthews, led by the Rector, Rev. Tracey McRoberts.

HERITAGE - The Parish Church of St George is built on a very ancient Christian site. Belfast grew up around this site, the chapel at the ford, which eventually became the Parish Church and then the Corporation Church. A new Parish Church was built at the site now occupied by St Anne's Cathedral and the church fell into disrepair. Some Parishioners returned and a new church was built (1816). That is the church standing today. As was traditional at the time, the church though dedicated to St George, is named after the King. However, during the Troubles many bombs went off around it, causing considerable damage. However under the leadership of the Rector, Canon Edgar Turner supported by the then Bishop of Connor, Arthur Butler, despite threats of closure, it survived and is a very unique and thriving Anglican Church in the heart of our city.

News links

[Donal Lynch: 'How Ireland turned its back on religion, but kept Communion'](#)

Independent.ie

We're iffy about baptism, and having less and less **church** weddings, but the temptation to dress up our kids like tiny brides and grooms, is evidently ...

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[Parents, parishes should have greater role in sacrament prep, Dublin survey says](#)

Catholic News Agency

Dublin, **Ireland**, May 16, 2019 / 05:14 pm (CNA). ... "**Ireland** is changing and **Ireland** **religious** culture is changing, and we have to see how in the ...

[Irish priests disappointed at Pope's reluctance to ordain female deacons](#)

IrishCentral

Pope Francis's comments on women deacons show the Catholic **Church** is a "men's **church**," according to the organization representing over 1,000 ...

[Groups accuse Francis of 'stalling' over ordination of women](#)

The Tablet

The Association of Catholic Priests in **Ireland** has accused the Pope of ... at Pope Francis' suggestion that the **Church** is not ready to take this step.

[Ian Paisley's brother-in-law quits DUP over gay councillor Alison Bennington](#)

Belfast Telegraph

The Irish **News** has reported that Rev James Beggs has decided to leave the ... is now retired but holds the honorary position of Minister Emeritus at the **church**. ... to prevent the decriminalisation of homosexuality in Northern **Ireland**.

[Catholics urged to 'reflect deeply' before voting in divorce referendum](#)

Irish Times

He underlined the **Church's** belief that the number of marriage breakdowns and divorces could be reduced through introducing socio-economic ...

[Government should spend funds supporting marriage - not changing divorce laws in Ireland, says ...](#)

Irish Mirror

The Government should spend funds supporting marriage instead of changing divorce law, **Ireland's** Catholic **Church** leaders said on Saturday.

[Abuse survivors in Northern Ireland call for improved...](#)

Brinkwire (press release)

These were run by the state, local authorities, the Catholic **Church**, the **Church** of **Ireland** and the children's charity Barnardo's. The largest number of ...

['Anybody awkward was put somewhere. Ireland was closed, defensive, xenophobic'](#)

Irish Times

Preparing to publish his investigation into **Ireland's** **religious**-run residential institutions 10 years ago this month, Mr Justice Seán Ryan knew that he ...

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[Institutional child abuse down to **church** and State hand in glove](#)

Irish Times

Preparing to publish his investigation into **Ireland's** religious-run residential institutions 10 years ago this month, Mr Justice Seán Ryan knew that he ...

[Bishop of Lincoln suspended after information received by the Archbishop of Canterbury](#)

Anglicannews

Last month, the BBC's Panorama **news** and current affairs programme ... The **Church of England's** lead bishop for safeguarding, the Bishop of Bath ...

[Knock Marriage Bureau hangs up its Cupid's arrow for the last time](#)

Irish Times

It was not the only time he clashed with Catholic **Church** hierarchy, picketing ... with Fr Keane telling The **Irish** Times dating agencies were “exploiting” ...

[Abolish the Priesthood](#)

The Atlantic

Ireland was heaven to her, and the Catholic **Church** was heaven's choir. Then came the Ryan Report. Not long before The Boston Globe began ...

[Bróna is new principal for county's first community national school](#)

New Ross Standard

Patronage is being transferred from the **Church of Ireland**, to WWETB, and the school is now taking enrollments for junior infants to sixth class students ...

[Congregations' farewell to much-loved **churches**](#)

Isle of Man Today

Congregations of two Ramsey churches have joined forces - and are ... becoming a three-way ecumenical partnership with the **Church of England** ...

[Will a Documentary Take Down the Polish Government?](#)

The New York Times

Following sexual-abuse scandals in the United States, Britain, **Ireland** and Australia, it seems that the Roman Catholic **Church** may be on the verge of ...

[Grave danger' as 10 Catholics killed in Burkino Faso attacks – ACN Ireland](#)

The Irish Catholic

Following yet another attack on a **church** that killed six people including a priest over the weekend in the African nation, the director of Aid to the ...

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AN INVITATION

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from CNI**

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www.churchnewsireland.org**

