



'Urgent national debate' needed ton Britain's spiralling knife crime problem, NI born Church Army chief



Mark Russell (left) Chief Executive of Church Army with Bishop David Chillingworth

Northern Ireland born Church Army CEO Mark Russell has called for an 'urgent national debate' to discuss ways to

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reduce knife crime after 10 teenagers were killed in stabbings in the first two months of 2019.

Five of the victims were in London, while another three were in Birmingham. Two more were killed in Manchester and Sutherland.

Mr Russell **said** that while there was 'no single answer' to Britain's knife crime problem, it was important to 'create positive alternative communities for young people to belong to'.

The number of attacks involving 'a knife or sharp instrument' had been falling steadily since 2011 before rising steeply again after 2015, Home Office figures reveal. Between 2015/16 and 2016/17, England and Wales experienced a 19.6 per cent increase in attacks.

At the same time, the number of police officers fell from over 140,000 in 2010 to just over 120,000 in 2018.

Metropolitan Police commissioner Cressida Dick said this week that she believed there was 'some link' between a rise in violent crime across the UK and falling numbers of police officers.

Mark Russell was appointed as the youngest ever Chief Executive of Church Army at the age of 31. In this role he leads a team of over 600 people working across the British Isles and Ireland. He grew up in Northern Ireland and at 21 was one of the youngest licensed Local Preachers in the Methodist Church in Ireland. After 2 years of trouble shooting management in industry he served for 3 years as

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Youth Pastor of Lurgan Methodist Church in Northern Ireland.

Children 'neglected' in Brexit discussions

The voices of children and young people are going 'largely unheard' by the nation's leaders as they continue to debate Brexit, The Children's Society has said.

The organisation warned that the perspectives of young people were being 'neglected' by politicians despite the fact that millions stand to be affected by Britain's exit from the EU.

'As final preparations are made for the UK's withdrawal from the EU, it is more important than ever that the Government understands fully how children and young people will be affected by Brexit,' it said.

'As yet, children and young people's voices have been largely unheard, yet it is their future and their rights that will be impacted the most.'

The Children's Society raised particular concerns over the welfare of around 900,000 children in European families that need to apply for 'settled status'.

'This opens up the risk of leaving thousands of children undocumented and subject to hostile immigration policies,' it said.

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'As the new Immigration Bill continues its scrutiny through Parliament this week, Government needs to put in place key safeguards for children and families, such as reducing citizenship fees and providing legal aid for all children and families to ensure that no-one is left undocumented and destitute.'

The Children's Society said it wanted to see new legislation ensuring the protection of children's rights after the UK leaves the EU.

'EU law provides a stronger, additional layer of protection for children's rights that does not exist in UK law,' it said.

It added: 'Children and young people were not given a say in the decision to leave the EU, yet the decision will have a profound impact on their lives.'

'For this reason, it is more important than ever that the Government listens to their voices as the formal process to leave the EU reaches its final stages.'

Pan cakes everywhere

This week the **Church on the Hill in Maghaberry** had their first ever Shrove Tuesday pancake party! Despite the wet weather, well over 200 pancakes were cooked fresh and given away to the local community, including the children on their way home from school. It was a great way to bless the local community and gave the opportunity for many conversations to take place and relationships to be built. Well done to the team of volunteers who made it happen!

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Serving pancakes to children, parents and passers-by in Ballyclare on Shrove Tuesday.

The weather wasn't playing ball in **Ballyclare** on Shrove Tuesday, but it didn't deter the pancake makers of the **United Parish of Christ Church and St John's** from cooking up a delicious feast!

Pancakes were served to school children, parents and passers-by, brightening up a wet Tuesday morning for many.

The parish's new associate Dianne Hamilton, who has only just arrived Christ Church and St John's, joined in this Shrove Tuesday activity.

Dianne, who is married to Luke, has been appointed Families, Youth & Children's Associate, and will be formally
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commissioned into this role on March 17 at a service in St John's at 6pm.



A charity pancake party hosted by **Cloughfern Parish** on Shrove Tuesday, March 5, was very well supported and raised £203 for SOS NI.

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin to give Annual Trócaire lecture

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin will deliver this year's Saint Patrick's College Maynooth Annual Trócaire lecture on the theme 'At the service of justice and peace'.

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The annual lecture is a joint initiative between Saint Patrick's College Maynooth and Trócaire, the overseas development agency of the Catholic Church. It will take place in Renehan Hall, Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth on Tuesday 12 March.

The annual lecture takes place each year during Lent. This year's Trócaire Lenten campaign focuses on land rights. The iconic Trócaire box this year features the stories of Maria from Guatemala, Patricia from Uganda and Maya from Syria. You can read more about their stories on <http://www.trocaire.org/>

Larne Parish quilters new exhibition celebrating the joy of Easter



The Parish Piecemakers of St Cedma's, Larne, have been busy quilting during their weekly meetings as they prepare a brand new exhibition of quilts celebrating the joy of Easter.

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Two years ago this talented group of ladies created a set of quilts depicting the Christmas story and this exhibition met with widespread acclaim.

Anne Marcus of the Parish Piecemakers, said: “The penitential season of Lent is a long and hard journey of faith – the joy of Easter Day is a real release of energy and celebration.

“Our quilts, which range from traditional and ecclesiastical in design to modern and humorous, aim to show that joy – the hope of new life encompassed in the signs of Spring all around us.”

The quilts will go up in St Cedma’s for Easter morning and will be open for public viewing on Easter Sunday afternoon, April 21, between 2pm and 4pm. On the following weekend the exhibition will be open on both Saturday and Sunday afternoons (April 27 and 28) between 2pm and 4pm with ‘tea and cake’ in the adjoining hall together with Revamp selling pre-loved clothing.

Anyone who is a real quilt addict can call into Larne Museum between April 5-27 where there will be an exhibition by Loose Thread Quilters – ‘Around the World in 40 Quilts’ -

<https://www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk/events/around-the-world-in-40-quilts-by-loose-thread-quilters>

For further details on the ‘Joy of Easter’ quilt exhibition at St Cedma’s, please contact the parish office on 028 28274633

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Gardaí recover head of the crusader – Archbishop of Dublin welcomes its return

Gardaí from the Bridewell Garda Station in Dublin have recovered the head of The Crusader and another skull that had been taken from the Crypt of St Michan's Church over the weekend of February 23/25.



The items were recovered as a result of information that came into the possession of the investigating Gardaí.

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News of the recovery has been welcomed by Archbishop Michael Jackson:

“We in the United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough are delighted that both the head of The Crusader and the skull which also was in the crypt of St Mican’s Church, Church Street, Dublin, have been recovered. They were left in a place where the Gardaí were able to make this recovery.

“As Archbishop of Dublin, I should like to thank the Gardaí and everyone else who has worked tirelessly to make this possible. The National Museum of Ireland are now acting in an advisory capacity.

“The emphasis will now be able to turn to consideration of future security and display of the remains in the crypt of St Michan’s. Renewed thanks go to all who have shown interest and concern for the mummies. They are a priceless part of the heritage of the city of Dublin and its citizens.”

An Garda Síochána has also thanked the public for their assistance in the investigation, which they say remains ongoing.

Major refurbishment of Ballycastle Church

At a service on Sunday March 3 in Holy Trinity Church, Parish of Ramoan, Ballycastle, the Archdeacon of Connor, the Ven Dr Stephen McBride, rededicated the church after its major refurbishment.

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At the service of rededication and commissioning in Holy Trinity Parish Church, Ballycastle, are, from left: Mrs Sharon Wilson, Diocesan Reader; The Ven Dr Stephen McBride, Archdeacon of Connor; Mrs Laura Kane-Kelly, children and families' worker; and the Rev David Ferguson, rector.

Archdeacon McBride also commissioned Ramoan and Culfeightrin's new children and families' worker, Mrs Laura Kane-Kelly, for her role in the parishes.

Rector, the Rev David Ferguson, said: "It was a wonderful day with many community representatives and parishioners from Laura's previous parish of St Jude's, Belfast, in attendance."

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For Lent 2019 those who work at the Methodist Church's Edgehill House have penned some reflections, taking you on a prayerful journey throughout the Easter season. Rooted in the scriptures, inspired by genuine real life experiences and written with the desire to encourage.

News briefs

+++Time2Care manual launched at Stormont - The Methodist President, Rev Billy Davison and his wife attended the launch of Time2Care manual at Parliament Buildings. The President commented, "My colleague and Pastoral assistant in Newtownabbey Methodist Mission Rathcoole, Mary Henderson, has produced a training manual which will prove to be an invaluable support for those caring for family and friends within their community. This Carers' Training Manual follows years of reflection on

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what is a very relevant issue and it was highly commended at its launch.”

+++Persecuted church focus to Down St Patrick's Day -

The Diocese hopes you will join in on **Monday 18 March** as members *Stand with the Persecuted Church* at their St Patrick's Day celebrations. This year the diocese is partnering with Open Doors UK & Ireland and those present will have the privilege of hearing from “Michael Jones”, an Egyptian Christian, at the Festival Service in Down Cathedral. They will also hear from Archdeacon David McClay who will share his experience of meeting North Korean believers who have suffered extreme persecution. The story below is incredible. Please watch, churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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share and join us for all or part of the programme on Monday 18 March ([full details here](#)).

+++Incumbent sought for Rathmichael - The Parish of Rathmichael is now seeking to appoint an Incumbent. The parish is located in the Dublin suburb of Shankill with a thriving national school. The rectory, situated close to the church, is in good repair. To obtain a Parish Profile or to lodge an expression of interest, please write to: The Archbishop of Dublin's Personal Assistant, Archbishop's Office, Church House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6. Email: archbishop@dublin.anglican.org

The Board of Nomination will not meet before 25th March 2019

+++ N Ireland Cub Scout quiz - On Saturday 2nd March 18 Cub teams from around Northern Ireland competed in the Cubs NI Quiz. It was a closely fought competition and the Jokers were being used to their fullest. For the overall competition 1st Maghaberry came out the winners with 30th Belfast second and 1st Randalstown third. 30th Belfast also lifted the Belfast Quiz trophy for being the highest placed Belfast group. A big thank you was given to Shelagh and the Armagh team for organising the quiz, Joy for setting the questions and the NI team for helping in the background and on the day with collecting and marking the answer sheets. It all happened so seamlessly. The Lough Neagh Discovery Centre provided excellent facilities, Tayto provided crisps for the Cubs (and a few leaders) and the Lord Mayor of Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council whose very kind donation went in no small way to help pay for the day.

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+++Moderator's visit to Iontas Centre - With Darren McQuillan, Iontas Centre Director, Castleblayney. The Moderator said, "The inspiration of Sister Celine McArdle, Iontas or Place of Wonder, is an inspirational community centre combining theatre, creche, child and day care, art classes, women's programmes, library and computer suite."

March 7 in Christian history

March 7, 203: Perpetua, a Christian about 22 years old, her slave, Felicitas, and several others are martyred at the arena in Carthage. They were flogged, attacked by hungry leopards, and finally beheaded. Perpetua remains one of early Christianity's most famous martyrs .

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March 7, 1274: Thomas Aquinas, one of the most significant theologians of all time, dies at age 48. Known for his adaptation of Aristotle's writings to Christianity, he became famous for his massive Summa Theologiae (or "A summation of theological knowledge"). In its early pages, he stated, "In sacred theology, all things are treated from the standpoint of God." Thomas proceeded to distinguish between philosophy and theology and between reason and revelation, though he emphasized that these did not contradict each other. Both are fountains of knowledge; both come from God.

March 7, 1530: Pope Clement VII rejects Henry VIII's request to divorce Catherine of Aragon. Henry eventually responded by declaring himself supreme head of England's church.

March 7, 1964: At a Roman parish church, Pope Paul VI celebrates mass in Italian instead of Latin, implementing one of the most significant changes of the Second Vatican Council—worship in the vernacular.

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