



'Words cannot convey our distress': New Zealand church leaders respond to mosque killings

March 16, 2019

Church leaders in Christchurch have responded with horror to the terrorist attack that saw at least 49 Muslims murdered yesterday and expressed their support for the Muslim community.

The Anglican Bishop of Christchurch, Rt Rev Peter Carrell, issued a statement saying: 'Church leaders are absolutely devastated at the



unprecedented situation in Christchurch this afternoon and our hearts and prayers go to all involved. No religious organisation or group deserves to be the target of someone's hate – regardless of beliefs.

'We stand for an Aotearoa New Zealand which will never condone such violence. So across the churches of Christchurch and Canterbury, we are praying for our Muslim brothers and sisters, for those injured and those who have lost loved ones, for the police, ambulance and other emergency services, and for all in the city of Christchurch who are feeling distress and fear due to this event. We are upholding you all in our prayers.

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'We pray too for the shooter and their supporters, because for any person to do this, they must have such hatred in their hearts, such misalignment of the value of human life, that they too, need our prayer. We thank many others from around our nation and the world who are praying for peace in Christchurch.'

The Catholic Bishop of Christchurch, Rt Rev Paul Martin, said: 'We are horrified at the violence that has been inflicted on people of our city this afternoon. Words cannot convey our distress. Our prayers are with those who are suffering.'

He pointed Catholics to the prayer of St Francis of Assisi which begins, 'Lord, make us instruments of your peace: where there is hatred, let us sow love, where there is injury, pardon.'

An ecumenical grouping of churches comprising Baptist, Anglican, Methodist, Salvation Army, Catholic and independent churches, the Christchurch Inner-City Christian Ministers' Association, wrote to the city's Muslim community saying: 'In the face of today's horrific shooting, the combined inner-city Christian ministers and their congregations wish to extend our love to the wider Muslim Community of Christchurch and assure them of our friendship and support at this time of great loss.'

'Be assured of our continuing prayers as our joint city community and people struggle to understand what has happened in the wake of this unconscionable act.'

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'As members of two faith traditions, born out of a shared Abrahamic inheritance, we stand in solidarity with you, looking, and crying, to God, the source of all.'

**Bishop
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In a statement issued yesterday morning, 15 March 2019, Bishop Kevin Doran, Bishop of Elphin, said: “I am deeply saddened at this morning’s news of a savage attack on two Muslim communities at prayer in New Zealand.”

He continued: “Responsibility for these attacks clearly rests with some violent individuals. At another level, however, there are serious questions to be answered, including in our own society, by those who unjustly blame the entire Muslim community for the extremism of some.”

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Bishop Doran concluded: “It is just as unacceptable to speak and write in racist or sectarian terms against Muslims as it is to speak and write in similar terms about Christians.”

The Bishop of Elphin asked for prayers at Mass this weekend for the victims of the attacks in New Zealand.

Last week Bishop Doran was appointed chairman of the Bishops' Conference newly established Council for Life. The Council for Life appointments were announced at the conclusion of the Conference's Spring General Meeting which took place in Maynooth this week.

Archbishop of Canterbury warns British Christians against cultural imperialism

British Christians need to be sensitive to their country's colonial past and how this might affect their witness in communities that once belonged to the Empire, the Archbishop of Canterbury has said.

Delivering the annual Deo Gloria Trust lecture at Lambeth Palace on Wednesday night, Archbishop Justin Welby suggested that for some people, the British Empire may appear to be at odds with the message of the Christian faith it brought with it.

He encouraged British Christians to be aware of how they might come across when sharing their faith with diaspora communities.

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'How are British Christians heard when we talk of the claims of Christ by diaspora communities who have experienced abuse and



exploitation by an empire that has seemed to hold the Christian story at the heart of its project?' he said.

Addressing evangelism more generally, he said it was important that all Christians let their witness be 'seasoned with gentleness and respect', and listen as much as they speak.

It was also important, he suggested, to recognise the good that other people bring to the table.

'Let us never be guilty of demeaning the light that others have, just show them something of the light you know,' he said.

'Let's tell people about Jesus and witness to what he has done for us, without feeling the need to presume to tell others what is wrong with their faith.'

He continued: 'Let's be honest. How much of our evangelism is monologuing?'

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'Any credible witness requires us to be in dialogue with the other.'

The Archbishop said it was not a contradiction for Christians to present the Gospel faithfully while at the same time being ready to learn from people who belong to different faiths.

'We are not contradicting any of the claims we make about the centrality of Jesus Christ to the whole of creation, our commitment to him as the source of all salvation, by recognising that other traditions offer people encouragement, community and even deep wells of spirituality,' he said.

'But we may find our understanding challenged and enriched.'

He concluded by saying that evangelism was at its heart about building relationships of love, not power, with other people.

It was also, he said, not about 'ensuring the survival of the Church' as he warned that some people might be put off if they felt they were just a 'target' for conversion.

'This is why so many religious groups rightly complain of being 'targeted' by Christians,' the Archbishop said.

'It's one thing to feel a calling to share your lives with a particular culture or people. It's another thing altogether to see their value only as would-be Christians.

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'How do we express our love for others in witness so that they understand that we care for them even if they make no decision to follow Christ?'



Church of Scotland: God would support ban on smacking children

God would support a ban on smacking children, the Church of Scotland has said.

The Kirk has come out in support of a ban and will tell MSPs that Jesus would not have countenanced violence against children.

Faith groups will give evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee on Thursday about the proposed Bill, which was introduced last September by John Finnie MSP.

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Ahead of the committee meeting in Skye, Rev Peter Nimmo argued there are theological and humanitarian reasons to oppose physical punishment of children.

Rev Nimmo, a minister from Inverness, said: "Scripture constantly challenges social norms, both from the time when it was written and today.

"Through scripture we are encouraged to ask difficult questions about how we live and are in the world.



"In doing this our primary example is Jesus, who consistently challenged violence and highlighted that children were central to the world he called us to create.

"We believe that God would want us to give children the same protections as adults, ensuring they are able to thrive and flourish."

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Two meetings with faith leaders have been organised in Skye, with the Church of Scotland, Quakers and Humanists due to speak in support of the Bill.

However, several religious groups are arguing against the ban, including the Christian Institute, the Evangelical Alliance and the Free Church of Scotland.

In written evidence submitted to the committee, the Presbytery of the Outer Hebrides of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) said it is strongly opposed to a ban.

It said: "Reasonable chastisement, in the form of a mild physical punishment such as a smack, is one of the means belonging to parents whereby they are able to discipline their children when they are disobedient, out of love for them and for their good.

"It is a means which has been given to them by God (see eg Proverbs 22:15; Hebrews 12:9), and the state has no right to remove it from them.

"The absence of proper discipline in the home and in the school has been responsible in part for the lack of respect for authority in society."

If passed, the legislation would remove the defence of "justifiable assault" in Scots law, which allows parents to use physical punishment on children.

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Blessing of the shamrock in TU Dublin



The annual Blessing of the Shamrock Service took place in St Laurence's Church on TU Dublin's City Campus (formerly DIT Grangegorman) today, Thursday March 14. Archbishop Michael Jackson presided and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin was represented by Fr Kieran McDermott.

The service was attended by students and staff of the Technical University along with people from the wider community including people who used to work in St Brendan's Hospital which used to be on the site.

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The service is organised by the TU Dublin Chaplaincy Team and after the shamrock was blessed by Archbishop Jackson it was distributed to those present.

In his address, Fr McDermott looked at the legacy of St Patrick. He said that as the shamrock is blessed, Christians are reminded of their Trinitarian baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He added that Christians are called to overcome their doubts and live their lives on the foundation of God.

A number of TU Dublin students who use the chaplaincy services were interviewed by Fr Alan Hilliard, coordinator of the Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy Service. They spoke of the influence of St Patrick in his own times and today and the challenges of finding faith for young people today.

News briefs

+++President's visit to Newtownards - The President of the Methodist Church, Rev Billy Davison, visited Newtownards last week with his wife Loraine.

They joined Down District Superintendent, Rev Andrew Kingston, and Nicky Hazley, Lay Pastor Comber Methodist Church, for their Monday morning coffee and chat with those from church and community. The President said it was, "An example of a church facilitating mission and connecting with the needs of community. Well done to those who provide the lovely coffee, tea and scones and to Nicky for her enthusiastic leadership."

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Then it was on to Lakeland's Dairies on Monday afternoon for a tour of their Newtownards plant. The President said, "This is a brilliant company who export their products across the world and employ 240 people in Newtownards. As many as 720 other jobs are also dependent on Lakeland Dairies. A big thanks to manager, Tim Acheson, for giving us his time & talking through the challenges posed by Brexit and other issues. I was glad to have the opportunity to pray & give thanks for such an important local employer."

+++ General Synod appointments - Standing Committee at its March meeting ratified the following -

- ACC Forum on Intentional Discipleship: the Revd Adam Pullen and Dean Tim Wright;
- Central Communications Board: the Revd Alan Rufli;
- Historical Centenaries Working Group: Dr Marie Coleman, Dr Ida Milne and Professor Brian Walker;
- Secondary Education Committee (nominations): Mr Wilfred Baker, Ms Elizabeth Hassell, the Revd Robert Jones, Ms Kara Turner, Ms Hazel Corrigan, Mr Roy Crowe, the Revd Katharine Poulton and Ms Joyce Ryder;
- Delegates to meetings of other Churches: Dr Bridget Nichols and Dr Kenneth Milne (Religious Society of Friends), the Bishop of Clogher (Scottish Episcopal Church), Canon Gillian Wharton (Church of England, July Group of Sessions), and Canon Dr Ian M Ellis (German Protestant Kirchentag).

+++Live Issue Gospel Concert - There's a little over two weeks to go until Kilbride parish's Gospel concert in the Theatre at the Mill, Mossley, when the UK's top Gospel band, Live Issue, will be appearing. In a recent

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announcement local singer and composer Heather Vient will be joining them for what will be a wonderful evening of Gospel music. Time to get a ticket as it's an event not to be missed! They are available by phoning the box office (028 90340202), calling in to the Theatre in person or by visiting the Theatre at the Mill website and buying them online.

+++Anniversary Gospel Concert Cullybackey - Milltown Accordion Band will be hosting its 10th Anniversary Gospel Concert on Saturday, March 23, in Cullybackey College. Compere for the evening, which gets underway at 7.45pm, will be Rev Gary Millar. It will feature Grace In Harmony Trio, John Porter, The Montgomery Sisters and Milltown Accordion Band. Admission of £6 is payable at the door. Everyone welcome.

+++Priorities Fund grants - The General Synod Standing Committee adopted the Priorities Fund Committee's annual report and recommendations. Seventy-six applications were received in 2018 totalling €1,238,141; the committee recommended 66 new grants and 12 second year grants, totalling €701,987.

+++New Safeguarding officer appointed for C of I in Republic - Mr Robert Dunne has been appointed as Safeguarding Officer (Republic of Ireland). Mr Dunne has previously worked as a youth and community worker and has over 10 years' experience with Barnardos in child protection and family support.

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+++Welcoming ministry in Down - An opportunity has arisen in Down Cathedral's Welcoming Ministry. Over the course of a year 70,000 visitors and pilgrims are welcomed to Down Cathedral, some as individuals and some on organised tours. The Cathedral would like to appoint a member of its team to work on Saturdays, Sundays and at least one other day per week (9.30 am – 4.30 pm). This would involve greeting visitors; giving short talks to tour groups; being available to chat with pilgrims and assisting in the cathedral shop. If the person appointed was either ordained or a lay reader there may also be opportunities to lead in services and assist in the LAMP team Ministry. The post will initially be for six months from Easter until October but may be extended. For more information please contact the Dean, the Very Revd Henry Hull.

Email: henryhull@downcathedral.org.

Closing date for expressions of interest: 3 April 2019

+++ Food for thought - One way to pray in a fear filled world is to choose love over anxiety. Henri Nouwen

March 16 in Christian history

March 16, 1072: Adalbert, Archbishop of Bremen-Hamburg, dies. He energetically promoted missionary activities in Scandinavia, Iceland, Greenland, and the Orkneys, but he seems to have been largely unsuccessful.

He did, however, gain considerable influence as tutor of the young Henry IV, Holy Roman Emperor, and for a time was virtual ruler of the empire.

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News Links

Alf McCreary in conversation with Ruth Patterson - first woman ordained in Ireland

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/life/alf-mccreary-in-conversation-with-ruth-patterson-first-woman-ordained-in-ireland-37893725.html>

[Mary McAleese says 'game is almost up' for all-male Catholic Church](#)

Irish Times

Speaking to The **Irish** Times, Ms Malone said she continues to pray three times a day “but I am out of the Catholic **church**”. She said women members ...

[US Irish Consulate rejects Irish pro-life group's application to use facilities](#)

Lifesite

The event would have showcased the legacy and extraordinary work in the US of ordinary Irish American citizens and residents—including **religious**, ...

[Competition: Connecting Pomeroy](#)

Architects Journal

... a new £450,000 community hall for the local **Church of Ireland**, a £120,000 multi use games area at Pomeroy's Presbyterian Church, a £480,000 ...

[Whitehead RBL to mark 75th years](#)

Belfast Newsletter

A service will take place at St. Patrick's **Church of Ireland** on Sunday March 31, starting at 7.00 pm. The Legion is asking members to wear their medals ...

[Greystones notes week March 11th](#)

[WicklowNews.Net](#)

Reviewing stand will be at St. Patrick's **Church of Ireland**. Awards will be ... St. Patrick's Day is Ireland's National Day, celebrated all around the world.

[Diocese 'sorry' for not acting on information about abusive priest](#)

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Premier

A **Church of England** diocese has issued an "unreserved apology" to a man sexually assaulted by a priest during childhood. The Diocese of Chester ...

[Cathedral 'should help conservative worshippers avoid women priest-led services'](#)

Premier

In its 'Five Guiding Principles', the **Church of England** says it is "fully and unequivocally committed to all orders of ministry being open to all irrespective ...

[Obituary: Lord Habgood, outspoken and liberal former Archbishop of York](#)

The Scotsman

Lord Habgood, who as Archbishop of York and second in the **Church of England** hierarchy for 12 years until 1995, was the most outspoken and ...

[CSO musicians' strike forces postponement of Old St. Patrick's Church concert](#)

Chicago Sun-Times

An **Irish**-themed concert scheduled for Tuesday night is the first casualty of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra musicians' strike. Old St. Patrick's **Church** ...

[Canada to lose 9000 churches over next 10 years](#)

The Post Millennial

The oncoming loss of churches should perhaps be no surprise, as in many ways, ... Between April and September, nine churches have shut their doors, ... any pleasure in closing churches," Bishop Robert Harris told CBC **News**. ... closings, apart of a new plan being considered by the **Church of England**.

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