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Dublin Interfaith Forum ‘United in Sorrow’ for bereaved in New Zealand

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Dublin City Interfaith Forum in a statement said it is “shocked by the appalling attacks at the Al Noor mosque in Christchurch and at the mosque in the suburb of Linwood in New Zealand.”

Ms Hilary Abrahamson, Chair of DCIF said, “Representing many different faiths, we are united in sorrow for those who have lost loved ones and for the injured. We join in prayer with all right minded people across the world in solidarity with the victims”.

Archbishop of Dublin Dr Michael Jackson and member of Dublin City Interfaith Forum said: ‘It is with intense sadness that the whole world learned of the terrorist attack on two mosques in Christ Church New Zealand. The targeting of people at prayer cannot be condoned and must be condemned. Our sympathy goes to all who suffer and to all who grieve as we remember before God those who have been killed in these particular attacks. Our thoughts and prayers are with all members of the Muslim Community in Ireland and in New Zealand at this time.’

The interfaith group also condemned any incitement to hatred and division and stands side by side with the Islamic Organizations in Ireland when affirming: ‘We believe that these horrendous and inhumane attacks are against all human and moral values and are crimes against humanity that cannot be justified under any circumstances. Acts such as these should be denounced wherever and whenever they occur. Terrorism has no welcome place in any society or community, and we condemn terrorism in all its forms and stand in support of all victims and their families, no matter when, no matter where. ‘

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Church representatives visit Muslim Community in Armagh to offer support & prayers following Christchurch tragedy.

Lord Mayor of Dublin Nial Ring said “My thoughts and prayers are with the people of Christchurch and New Zealand at this very sad time and in particular with the families of those who lost their lives in the attacks at two mosques in Christchurch today. On behalf of the people of Dublin I wish to express my sincere sympathies to all who are injured and grieving. Suaimhneas síoraí dóibh.”

Imam Arslaan Khan, Al Madina Mosque, said, “The atrocity carried out today is pure evil and has no place in humanity let alone in any religion to which we may belong. Once again it’s the innocent people praying in a place have worship who have been targeted. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims, their families and the community in New Zealand.

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“DCIF stands firm in solidarity against any act of terrorism perpetrated and pray for security and safety for all of humanity.”

Presbyterian Church of New Zealand denounces violent Christchurch attacks

Presbyterian Church Moderator, Rt Rev Fakaofu Kaio, adds the voice of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand to those railing against today’s violent shootings in Christchurch.

“We are deeply, deeply shocked. There are really no words to adequately convey the gravity of this situation where people have lost their lives and been injured in such a senseless and violent manner.

“In New Zealand this sort of violence is unheard of, and we must stand together as a nation against religious violence.

“There is strength the diversity, and many of us will have neighbours who are different to ourselves. We need to learn their names, break bread with them, and work to understand their values and their faith, because this how the hatred and fear that breeds such violence will be eliminated.

“We will be praying for today’s victims and their families, and we will also pray for God’s blessing upon the

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Christchurch community, who will be particularly affected by this terrible tragedy.

“I call on all of our parishes and faith communities, to please have a moment of silence before worship this Sunday. The love and power of God shall reign through all the world.”

Keith and Kristyn Getty perform for US VP to mark St Patrick's Day



Award-winning hymn writers Keith and Kristyn Getty have performed for the US Vice President and Ireland's Prime Minister to mark St Patrick's Day.

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The "In Christ Alone" married duo from Northern Ireland who also spend time living in Nashville were invited to the exclusive event at Mike Pence's Washington residence to perform a number of songs from their latest album.

Mr Pence has hosted a breakfast to celebrate St Patrick's Day and the close links between America and Ireland since 2017.

Keith Getty said of the performance: "We're honoured to have performed at this prestigious event celebrating the history and culture of a country we love.

"We are hugely grateful to the Vice President for the opportunity to perform and were delighted that the Taoiseach was also in attendance."

The Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar and his partner Matt Barrett were given a special welcome by the Christian vice president.

Mr Pence said it was an "honour" to have the two men in his house.

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The 34 guests feasted on an early morning Eggs St Patrick - which is poached eggs with spinach and bernaïse sauce, applewood smoked bacon, and roast tomato.

Presbyterian congregations hit out over sport on ‘Lord’s Day’

Presbyterian congregations in the Newry area have raised concerns over an increase in sport being played on a Sunday, breaching what they accept as the “Lord’s Day”, Billy Kennedy reports in the News Letter.

Newry presbytery of the Irish Presbyterian Church has backed the decision of Kilkeel Hockey Club to withdraw from an all-Ireland tournament because of having to play on Sunday, after a diktat from the sport’s authorities.

The presbytery supports the Kilkeel club and said it is “very concerned” about increasing use of Sunday for organised sporting activity.

The presbytery, in a statement, asserted: “We certainly approve of our young people and young adults engaging in all kinds of sport, believing that this involvement is good for character-building and teamwork. However, we are deeply concerned at the increasing use of Sunday for youth development in sport. We believe that Sunday is the Lord’s Day and ought to be kept special.

“More and more of our young people are being drawn away from our Sunday schools and church services because of a

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**Kilkeel
Hockey Club
do not play
on Sunday**

desire to be involved in competitive sport,” added Newry presbytery,



which represents 24 churches and 3,000 families in the South Down/South Armagh area.

The sport’s governing body, Hockey Ireland, said it dealt with the situation as per its rules. This means all teams representing a club must take part in any all-island cup competition on Sundays.

The presbytery said it fully supports the Kilkeel club. “Parents are often left with a dilemma – wanting to encourage their children in sporting activity, but also wanting to encourage spiritual understanding and development in church activities on Sunday. Our young people not only need to be physically fit, but need a moral, spiritual foundation for their future lives,” said the presbytery.

Three Presbyterian churches are located in the Kilkeel area - Mourne, Kilkeel and Annalong, with Mourne among the largest in Ireland.

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Methodist President opens sports facility at Wesley College

The President of the Irish Methodist Church, Rev Billy Davison visited Wesley College, Dublin, last week.

Describing his visit, the President said, “I was delighted and privileged to be asked to open the new sports facilities which marked another milestone in the history of Wesley College, Dublin. These halls will cater for student development well into the future.

“In a packed hall, I was delighted to bring greetings and best wishes on behalf of the Methodist Church in Ireland to

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One of many musical groups situated around the College.

Principal Mr Christopher Woods, Mrs Gillian Kingston, Chair of the Board of Governors, and all involved in this project.



“We proceeded outside to the new facilities for a prayer of dedication and declared the hall open with the cutting of the ribbon. Loraine and I very much appreciated being part of such a wonderful occasion.”

US bishops object to Canterbury exclusion of same-sex partners at Lambeth Conference

The Episcopal Church’s House of Bishops said March 15 that it is “aggrieved and distressed” by Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby’s decision to exclude the same-sex spouses of bishops invited to the 2020 Lambeth Conference.

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The bishops said they “are concerned by the use of exclusion as a means of building communion.”

Welby says on the website of the gathering of Anglican Communion bishops that he prays that “the Lambeth Conference will reinvigorate the Communion.” The website notes that Welby has invited “every eligible bishop and spouse.”

The majority of the house plans to go to Lambeth, according to the statement. The bishops said they want to continue to build relationships across the communion, “further the conversation around the various cultural expressions of marriage” and “reflect our understandings of marriage, as well as our commitment to the dignity of all human beings, including the human rights of LGBTQ+ persons.”

The statement passed on a voice vote. At least one bishop, Dan Martins of Springfield, could be heard voting no.

Diocese of New York Bishop Assistant Mary Glasspool currently is The Episcopal Church’s only actively serving bishop who has a same-sex spouse. She addressed the house on March 14.

The Rev. Thomas Brown is due to be ordained and consecrated on June 22 as the next bishop of the Diocese of Maine. He is married to the Rev. Thomas Mousin. The diocese elected Brown on Feb. 9. It is possible that Episcopal Church dioceses will elect bishops with same-sex spouses between now and the July 23, 2020, beginning of the Lambeth Conference.

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Many of the major liturgies during the Lambeth Conference of bishops take place at Canterbury Cathedral, the seat of the archbishop of Canterbury and what is considered the “mother church” of the Anglican Communion.

The only other active bishop in the Anglican Communion to whom Welby’s decision is known to apply is Diocese of Toronto Bishop Suffragan Kevin Robertson. He married Mohan Sharma, his partner of nearly 10 years, on Dec. 28, 2018.

The statement includes a statement from the Bishops Spouses Planning Group saying they “join our voices with those in The Episcopal Church who have expressed their disappointment and dismay” with Welby’s decision.

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The winner of the Inaugural Charles Wood Song Competition at Armagh was Ellen Mawhinney. Second place and the Charles Wood Song Prize went to Malachy Frame.

“We especially stand with our fellow spouse, Becki Sander, spouse of Bishop Mary Glasspool,” they said.

“The spouse community understands that the Anglican Communion is not of one mind with regard to marriage, and that, in the life of the communion, this is a complex issue,” they said. “Exclusion of same-gender spouses, however, seems like a simplistic reaction to this complex issue. It saddens us that all are not welcome to walk, listen, and

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witness with us, and that all voices will not be heard at this gathering.”

The bishops refused on a 44-42 show of hands to pass a second resolution calling on Presiding Bishop Michael Curry to ask Welby to change his mind. Curry told the house before the vote that he has had “one long conversation” with the archbishop and has exchanged letters with him as well.

“I’ve got to be honest with you, I don’t expect he’ll change, but I’m willing to say that this house really would like it to be reconsidered if there is any way that it can be,” he said.

Death of Dean Billy Beare

The Very Reverend William (Billy) Beare, a son of the United Dioceses of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, died on Friday 15th March in the care of the staff at Cork University Hospital. Dean Beare lived in Cork in his retirement, prior to which, from 1999 to 2008, he was Dean of Lismore, the neighbouring Diocese to the north-east.

Billy Beare (born in 1933) was made deacon in 1959 and ordained priest in 1960 and served his first curacy in Waterford. In 1962 he returned to Cork to serve a further curacy in the then Parish of Holy Trinity with Shandon. In 1964 he was appointed Rector of Rathcormac and, after four years, left there to become rector of Marmullane (Passage West) and Monkstown. From 1976 to 1982 he was a Diocesan Curate serving as hospital chaplain to all the hospitals in Cork City. In 1982 he was instituted as rector of Stradbally, Co Laois (1982-1999). In addition to

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canonries held in Cashel and Ossory, he was a Prebendary (Canon) of the National Cathedral of Saint Patrick, Dublin. Billy was predeceased by his wife Rose, and is survived by his children Walter and Rachel, his brothers Bob and George and a wide circle of family and friends.



Bishop Paul Colton writes:

“On behalf of us all in Cork, Cloyne and Ross I extend sincere sympathy to the Beare family following Billy’s death, and most especially to Walter and Rachel.

“When I was a child in the neighbouring parish of Douglas and Frankfield, I first came to know Billy when he was based in Passage West. Everyone in the Diocese knew him during his time as a hospital chaplain in Cork City.

“During my time singing with the choir of St Fin Barre’s Cathedral, I remember vividly concerts we performed when Billy and his brother Bob were soloists, and, indeed, his son Walter was then also a chorister.

“Billy had good advice to give to me when I was selected to train for the ordained ministry, which I have never forgotten.

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Therefore, when Billy became rector of Stradbally, Co Laois, I was by then training for ordination, and I was roped in to drive down to Laois to sing with the Cathedral Choir which had travelled from Cork that night to sing at the Service of Institution.

“When I worked part-time in RTE in the 1990s, Billy was well-known for the quality and style of his radio broadcasts, which were often commented upon.

“In retirement he returned to Cork to be near Rose who was in St Luke’s Home, where, once again our paths crossed regularly.

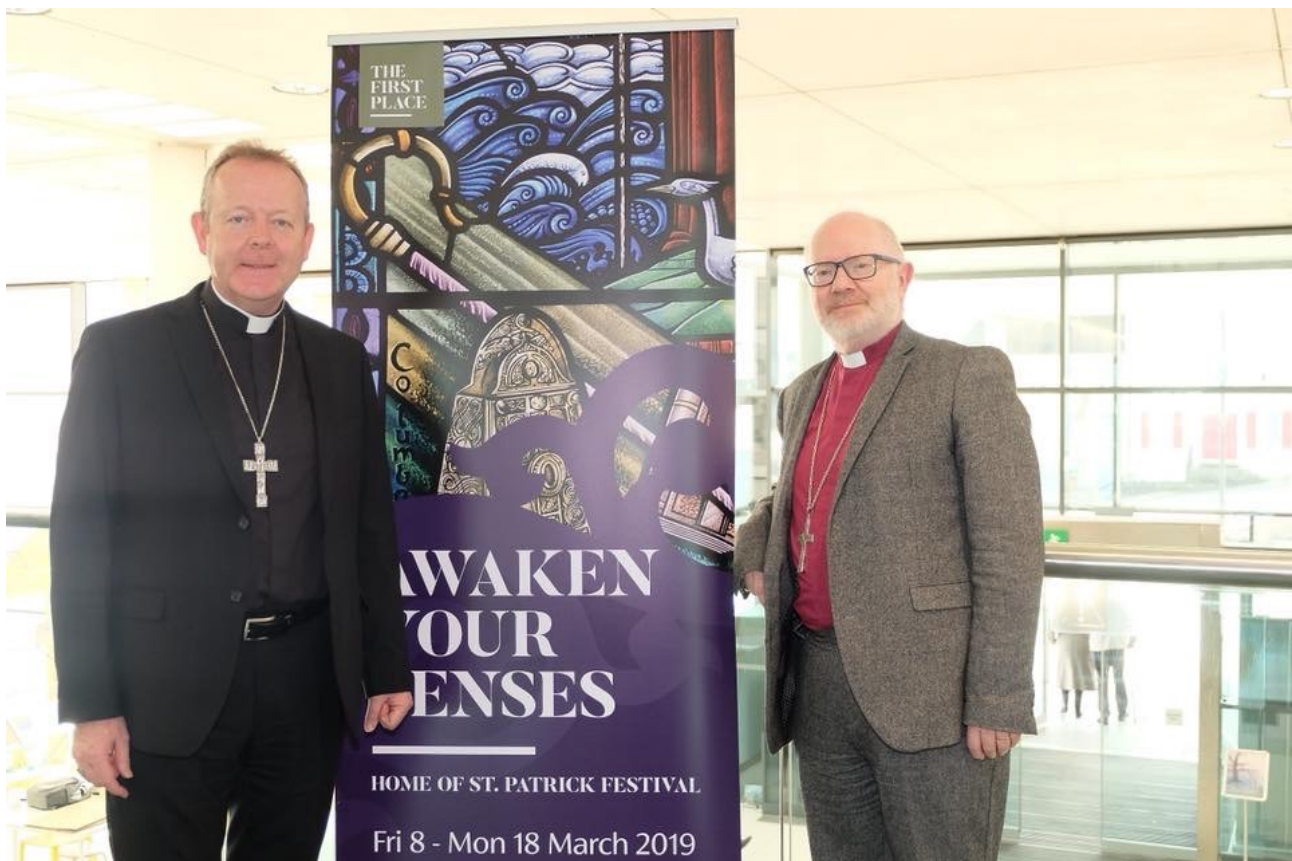
“He will be fondly remembered, and again, I extend my condolences to those who knew him best and who loved him most. May he rest in God’s peace and rise in glory.”

News briefs

+++Down faces on Songs of Praise - St Patrick’s Day Songs of Praise featured, amongst others, The Dock Cafe with Joachim Spiers and Holy Trinity Banbridge with Archdeacon Roderic West. Also spotted was Down Cathedral organist, Michael McCracken, conducting in St Macartins Cathedral.

+++St Michael’s Church, Pery Square, Limerick - is celebrating its 175th anniversary this year. As part of the programme, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin will give a talk in the church on ‘The Church of the Future’ on Tuesday at 8pm.

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+++Home of Saint Patrick Festival week in Armagh -
The Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, Archbishop Eamon

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Martin, and the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh, Archbishop Richard Clarke, participated in a special family celebration for Saint Patrick's Day, yesterday Sunday 17 March, in The Shambles Market area of Armagh, situated between the two cathedrals. The Primates of All-Ireland were joined by representatives of other Christian denominations. Last week the Primates delivered the St. Patrick's Lecture - A Role Model for Youth, compered by Sarah Clarke at Market Place Theatre, Armagh. Both events were part of the Home of St Patrick's Festival, Armagh - a ten day festival celebrating the life of Patrick and showcasing the best of Culture, Music and Spirituality.

+++Church Music Dublin will host a workshop - for all who enjoy singing the psalms and canticles to Anglican chant. It will be held in Christ Church cathedral, Dublin, on Saturday 23 March at 10am, led by Ian Keatley, the cathedral's director of music.

+++The AGM of the Church Education Society - will be held on Thursday, 28 March, at 4.00pm, in Church of Ireland House, Rathmines.

March 18 in Christian history

March 18, 386: Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem from 315, dies. Best known for his series of discourses given during Lent for those to be baptized on Easter, he early on advocated the veneration of relics and argued for transubstantiation—the doctrine that the bread and wine of Communion become the actual body and blood of Christ.

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March 18, 1123: The First Lateran Council opens in Rome. Convoled by Callistus II, it repeated and confirmed earlier decrees. The Western church, however, remembers its importance as being the first "ecumenical council" held in the West.

March 18, 1314: Thirty-nine Knights Templar are burned at the stake in Paris. Though few others besides Dante championed the innocence of the oft-maligned military order, most scholars now agree with him. Created to protect pilgrims going to the Holy Land, had become wealthy after the crusades. Perhaps because of jealousy, they were accused of sodomy, blasphemy, and heresy.

March 18, 1861: London's Metropolitan Tabernacle, the sanctuary of English Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon, opens. Spurgeon had insisted that the enormous building employ Greek architecture because the New Testament was written in Greek—a decision that influenced church architecture throughout the world.

March 18, 1885: The "Cambridge Seven," young aristocrats who decided to become missionaries to China—and thus became celebrities back home—arrive in Shanghai.

March 17 in Christian history

March 17, 461 (traditional date): Patrick, missionary to Ireland and that country's patron saint, dies. Irish raiders captured Patrick, a Romanized Briton, and enslaved him as a youth. He escaped to Gaul (modern France) but returned to Ireland after experiencing a vision calling him back to preach. Patrick enjoyed great success there as a

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missionary, and only the far south remained predominantly pagan when he died.

March 17, 1780: Thomas Chalmers, pastor, social reformer, and one of the founders of the Free Church of Scotland (FCS), is born. By his death in 1847, he had started missions in hundreds of poor urban settings, and he led a third of the Scottish clergy and a half of the laity of the church of Scotland into FCS in 1843. His chief concern throughout his life was the evangelization of the urban poor.

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