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## Archbishops of Armagh on St Patrick – a role model for youth

On Friday 15th March 2019 in the Market Place Theatre, Armagh for the fourth year running, Archbishop Richard Clarke and Archbishop Eamon Martin came together to share insights on the life and witness of St Patrick.

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## Peaky fashion comes to Armagh

The theme for this year was 'St Patrick – a role model for youth'

Sarah Clarke from UTV was once again on hand to pose some questions to the 2 Archbishops, once they had each given their presentations.



Archbishop Richard in his address to the sizeable audience, focused on three observations of Patrick:

1. His lack of concern with his own image. In the modern age when we can be so concerned about our own image perhaps on social media, Patrick was more concerned with how God viewed him and not what other people might have thought.
2. Patrick's bravery and raw courage. Courage to stand for what is right. Courage when you are afraid but still prepared to do the right thing.
3. His willingness to stand up for the down-trodden and the defenceless - people who had no one else to stand up for them. Archbishop Richard also drew on the example of an

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**President Higgins and Mrs Sabina Higgins sign the book of condolence to New Zealand in the Pro Cathedral, Dublin**

Anglican cleric, Trevor Huddleston who opposed apartheid in South Africa which had a dramatic influence on Desmond Tutu when he was a boy and encouraged him too to become ordained.



Archbishop Eamon then spoke of how Patrick when he was first taken to Ireland as a slave at the young age of 16, must have been a powerful witness for Christ. This was illustrated in 2 examples. First when Patrick had the opportunity to escape and boarded a ship back to Britain crewed by pagan men, those very men cried out to Patrick in the midst of a violent storm 'Christian pray for us!' When the storm abated, the crew reacted with the words 'Thanks be to God'

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And secondly in the vision Patrick had when he was back home with his family, of Irish people requesting him to come back to Ireland with the words 'Come back among us holy youth'

Archbishop Eamon spoke of being at a gathering of young people in Rome with the thoughts of how he could better connect with young people. The message he received from them was that the real evangelists of the youth are the youth themselves and his role is to facilitate this.

## **Society and world needs bridge-builders, Bishop Colton at Cork civi service**

Preaching at the annual Civic Service in St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork to mark St Patrick's Day, the Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, Dr Paul Colton, said that 'more than ever our society and world needs bridge-builders.'

Speaking in the presence of the Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr Mick Finn, and the Deputy Mayor of Cork County, Cllr Derry Canty, Councillors, Micheál Martin, T,D,. Leader of the Opposition, members of the Oireachtas, representatives of the Defence Forces, An Garda Síochána, NGOs, community groups, as well as of the civic and business life of Cork, the Bishop set his remarks against the backdrop of the atrocity committed against Muslims at prayer in mosques in New Zealand, as well as in the context of the continuing disharmony arising from BREXIT, and the recollection of

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**Bishop Paul Colton and Bishop John Buckley joined the Lord Mayor of Cork, and Bishop John Buckley, and many others at the formal re-opening recently of the newly restored and famous St Patrick's Bridge in Cork.**

some of the wounds of our history in this period of centenary commemorations.

He said, “More than ever our society and world needs bridge-builders. The ghastly and horrendous atrocity at the Mosques in New Zealand – and it is important, I believe, not to talk simply about the horror in New Zealand, but to remember specifically that our Muslim brothers and sisters of faith, were targeted – all of this exemplifies how challenging the tasks of education, nurturing understanding, dialogue, demythologising are, if we are to tackle some of the world’s biggest problems – often

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ideological, and often infused with misplaced and hijacked religious outlook and zeal: extremism.

“The wake of BREXIT, whatever that will be, (for now we truly know that the phrase ‘Brexit means Brexit’ is one of the most vacuous of the 21st Century ... ), whatever the fallout will be, our bridge-building skills in politics, economics, commerce and at many other levels will be called upon. The Centenary commemorations of the present period in Ireland also highlight, for many, old wounds. One hundred years is not that long ago. ...

“As much as ever before, perhaps more than ever, we are called to be bridge-builders, bridging the gaps in the human diversity and differences that, rather than dividing us, should enrich us, nourish us, and make us a better humanity. Bridge-building is a civic obligation. It is also the calling of all Christians.”

## **Secularists attack charity status for faith activities**

More than 12,000 organisations in the UK should lose their charitable status because they exist solely to promote religion, secularists have claimed.

The National Secular Society (NSS) said faith-based groups must have to demonstrate an "undeniable" benefit to the public - such as alleviating poverty, advancing human rights or protecting the environment.

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NSS Chief Executive Stephen Evans said: "Under our proposed reforms, organisations that serve no charitable purpose aside from advancing a religion would no longer be able to be charities, meaning that they would have to pay tax like any other non-charitable organisation.

"This change is overdue and in the public interest. It would help to restore public confidence in the charity system, restore money to the public purse, relieve the burden on charity regulators and give religious organisations greater independence from the state."

"Advancing religion is not an unqualified good. In some cases it has no public benefit and in others it is actively harmful. Religious organisations that wish to be registered as charities should be required to demonstrate that they serve a genuine public benefit under another charitable heading, for example because they alleviate poverty."

The promotion of religion is among 13 charitable purposes set out in the Charities Act (2011). Charities benefit from tax

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**On Sunday the Moderator took part in a Seedtime and Ploughman's Service at Ballyblack. The praise was led by the Donaghadee Male Voice Choir. "In times of uncertainty God's promises remain unchanging. Seedtime and harvest will never fail", the Moderator commented.**

relief and some grant-awarding bodies only give money to recognised charities.

In a new report called 'For the Public Benefit?', the NSS also claims 25 per cent of UK charities with an annual income in excess of £10m have no objective other than religious activities.

Mr Evans added: "Advancing religion is not an unqualified good. In some cases it has no public benefit and in others it



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is actively harmful. Religious organisations that wish to be registered as charities should be required to demonstrate that they serve a genuine public benefit under another charitable heading, for example because they alleviate poverty."

"The rise of religious fundamentalism has demonstrated how religion can exacerbate tension, division, segregation and conflict in Britain. As such, there is a clear need now to consider whether the advancement of religion should be regarded as an inherent public good, deserving of the status of a charitable purpose."

The NSS claims some religious charities promote "harmful practises" such as so-called gay conversion therapy, infant circumcision and non-stun animal slaughter.

## **Our priests abused hundreds of children, admits Polish Catholic Church**

As many as 382 children were sexually abused by clergy in Poland between 1990 and 2018, according to findings presented on Thursday by the Polish Catholic Church in one of the most devout countries in Europe.

The report follows investigations into widespread abuse of minors by clergy in other countries – notably in Chile, the United States, Australia and Ireland – that have shaken the Roman Catholic Church to its foundations.

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'This is an especially painful, tragic issue as it is connected with consecrated people, who devoted themselves to serving the church, other human beings. They have social trust and this social trust was so tragically violated,' Archbishop Marek Jędraszewski said at a news conference.



### **Archbishop Marek Jędraszewski speaks during a news conference in Warsaw**

Polish bishops last year asked victims of past clerical abuse for forgiveness and began collecting data to 'identify the causes of these deeds and assess their scale'.

The report said as many as 198 of the victims were below the age of 15.

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Last month the Polish charity Have no fear, which supports abuse victims, delivered its own report to Pope Francis in which it calculated – purely on the basis of media reports collated since the mid-1950s – that at least 384 minors had been sexually abused by clergy in Poland. Activists say the real figure is probably much greater.

The charity has called for the creation of a panel to investigate the real scale of the problem, securing access to Church documents regarding the abuse of minors, and dismissing bishops found responsible for covering up sexual crimes.

In Poland, Catholic priests enjoy high social prestige and victims of sexual abuse by clergy are often suspected by devout Poles of making up false accusations, even long after the offender in question has been jailed.

Poland remains one of Europe's most devout countries. Nearly 85 per cent of Poland's 38 million-strong population identify as Roman Catholics and around 12 million attend mass every Sunday.

But Polish Church authorities have yet to reach a consensus on how to address the issue of sexual abuse.

An arm of the Church has filed a lawsuit in the Supreme Court seeking to annul a 1 million zloty (\$263,000) payment ordered by a lower court to a woman who, as a 13-year old child, was repeatedly raped by her local priest.

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The case was a landmark ruling in granting compensation and an annuity to a victim of sexual abuse by a Catholic priest in Poland.

## **March 19 in Christian history**

**March 19, 1229:** Having negotiated a treaty with Muslims for Christian access to Jerusalem, Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II (a reluctant participant in the sixth crusade) enters the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and crowns himself king. But his peace treaty was denounced by members of both faiths, and the same day the Catholic patriarch of Jerusalem pronounced an interdict on the city. Frederick was later excommunicated for making peace instead of war.

**March 19, 1684:** Jean Astruc, the founder of modern Pentateuchal criticism, is born in France. In 1753 he published an anonymous treatise positing that Moses used two earlier documents—called "Yahweh" and "Elohim" to designate which name for God was used in each—when he wrote the Pentateuch. The theory, which was first met with ridicule, was later expanded by J.G. Eichhorn.

**March 19, 1813:** Missionary-explorer David Livingstone is born in Blantyre, Scotland. Though he made only one African convert (who later backslid), he became Britain's missionary hero of the day and always considered himself a missionary more than an explorer.

**March 19, 1860:** William Jennings Bryan, the best-known fundamentalist in America from the Civil War to the Great Depression, is born in Salem, Illinois. A three-time presidential candidate, he was Wilson's secretary of state

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and the prosecuting attorney in the famous Scopes Trial in Tennessee.

**March 19, 1928:** Roman Catholic theologian Hans Kung is born in Germany. Appointed a theological assistant (peritus) of the Vatican II Ecumenical Council, he was later denied permission to teach as a Catholic theologian when his views began to challenge many traditional doctrines.

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