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Christian Aid launches emergency appeal after Cyclone Idai



Christian Aid are appealing for support for those affected by Cyclone Idai

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Christian Aid have launched an appeal to support people in Malawi and Zimbabwe where Cyclone Idai has caused catastrophic flooding and tremendous destruction.

More than 145 people are known to have died with that number expected to rise.

More than a million people have been affected by severe flooding with the numbers rising rapidly as the full extent of the damage becomes clearer, the charity says.

Rev Sally Foster-Fulton, Head of Christian Aid Scotland, said: "My colleagues in Malawi have shared with me their pain that years of work have been washed away within a space of four days.

"Livelihoods have been turned over and we have to start rebuilding the lives of the vulnerable populations for whom we have worked so hard to help restore dignity.

"Malawi holds a special place in the hearts of Scots.

"There is a heightened awareness of the current struggle and people are already responding.

"Christian Aid's partners on the ground in Malawi and Zimbabwe are working hard to provide the basic resources desperately needed now and will be there to help strengthen fragile infrastructures.

"When the storm is over, the work will continue.

"Thanks to everyone for their generous, active concern."

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**Parts of Malawi
have been
devastated by
floods**

**Power and
communication
lines down**

Cyclone Idai carrying heavy rains and winds of up to 170km/h (106mp/h) made landfall at the port of Beira, Mozambique's fourth largest city, on Thursday night (14 March), leaving the 500,000 residents without power and communications lines down.



The cyclone follows a week of heavy rains and flooding across South East Africa that has already killed at least 145 people in Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe.

The President of Mozambique has warned that the number could exceed 1,000.

Nicholas Shamano, Christian Aid Country Director, Zimbabwe, said: "The situation is already dire.

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"Lives, livelihoods, infrastructure and property have been lost.

"The priority now must be on addressing the immediate needs of the affected communities.

"But we also need to focus on addressing the effects of natural disasters and improve disaster preparedness for communities at risk to ensure resilience to extreme weather systems"

The cyclone moved across Mozambique to Zimbabwe over the weekend.

Nearly 1.6 million people are estimated to live in areas that could be impacted by high winds and rainfall.

While the full extent of the cyclone's impact is not yet clear, it is likely to include damage to schools and health facilities; road networks, telecommunications, damage to water and sanitation infrastructure; impeding access to safe water for affected communities; bringing a heightened risk of water-borne diseases, destruction of people's homes, and increased protection risks.

'We are, I am sorry to say, in the hands of God' - Jean-Claude Juncker on Brexit delay

As the UK Prime Minister seeks a short Brexit delay, the European Commission president has stressed the

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importance of Parliament accepting the negotiated Withdrawal Agreement.

Speaking to German radio station DRF about the short extension to Brexit, Jean-Claude Juncker said: "Those months would have to produce, as an end result, an agreement from the British Parliament to the (Agreement) text which is before them.

"If that doesn't happen, and if Great Britain does not leave at the end of March, then we are, I am sorry to say, in the hands of God.



"And I think even God sometimes reaches a limit to his patience."

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Any request for extra time is subject to unanimous approval by leaders of the remaining 27 EU states at a meeting in Brussels today, Thursday.

While Mr Juncker said he had not received Mrs May's letter, he said he was hoping for "clarity" from the UK on the way forward.

In a letter to European Council president Donald Tusk on Wednesday, Theresa May is believed to have asked for a three-month extension to 30th June in the hope of securing approval from MPs for her Withdrawal Agreement.

Bishop Alan McGuckian addresses Brexit and the 'Finchley question'

In an article titled 'The Finchley Question', featured in the current issue of *The Tablet*, Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ, Bishop of Raphoe and chair of the Council for Justice and Peace of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, highlighted that the issue of the Irish backstop must not be used as a "stick in the current fight" over Brexit.

Bishop McGuckian writes: "There was a time, not long ago, when the inevitability of violence in Northern Ireland was accepted as a tragic given. The opposed national loyalties, British and Irish, unionist and nationalist, and the conflicting constitutional claims that backed them up formed a square that could never be circled."

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“Then along came the European Union”, he continues. According to Bishop McGuckian, while the EU was not the only factor that ultimately led to the Good Friday Agreement, it established a “shared framework” for Nationalist and Unionist identities in Northern Ireland to coexist in peace.

The Bishop of Raphoe states: “The special – and different – status of Northern Ireland has been agreed and settled for nearly twenty years. Remember, there was once a time when a Prime Minister made the claim that, “Northern Ireland is as British as Finchley.” The claim drew smiles even then, because when it is put into words and spoken out loud everybody realises that it simply is not so, or at least, not entirely so.”

Crucially, Bishop McGuckian emphasised: “Northern Ireland should not be used as stick in the current fight. The United

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Kingdom government and parliament must recognise – as Thatcher did – that in its Britishness and its Irishness Northern Ireland is a special case.”

He urged British prime minister Theresa May and her government to remember the “fierce opposition” to the Good Friday Agreement from the Democratic Unionist Party under the late Dr Ian Paisley. Bishop McGuckian argues that this opposition was rooted in a rigid reading of the statement “Northern Ireland is as British as Finchley”. He continued: “That claim had to be faced down. The DUP had to be helped to come to live in a world that is “both and” rather than “either or”.”

The Bishop of Raphoe also recalled the “big constitutional compromise” accepted by the Irish nation collectively in order to establish the Good Friday Agreement. He states: “In May 1998, a referendum was held in Northern Ireland in which the result was a majority of 71% in support for the Good Friday Agreement; on the same day, the electorate in the Republic of Ireland voted by 94% to drop the constitutional claim, articles two and three, that asserted Irish sovereignty over the entire island of Ireland. That was a big ask for the Irish people, unionist and nationalist, north and south of the border.”

He continued: “The Irish Backstop proposal, that whatever outcome is agreed by the UK and EU, there *must* be a common regulatory area on the island of Ireland in order to safeguard an open border between North and South, is essential if the gains from the Good Friday Agreement are not to be thrown aside. The border should not be allowed to be a “sore thumb” frustrating the efforts of both the UK

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and the EU to find a way out of the current impasse. The Irish question should not be allowed to stand in the way of the freedom of the people of the United Kingdom to choose their own future.”

Bishop McGuckian concluded: “Northern Ireland is different: it is as British as Finchley and it is *not* as British as Finchley. The future relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union must reflect that reality.

“The European Union will find ways to accommodate this necessary anomaly. So should the government of the United Kingdom. Indeed the integrity of the United Kingdom demands it.”

New life in Drumbo Parish



This week the Revd Mervyn Jamison (left) has been instituted as rector of Drumbo Parish after serving as Minister-in-Charge for 18 months.

Revd Carlton Baxter, Curate Assistant in Magheralin, gave the address at the service in Holy Trinity Ballylesson on Tuesday 19 March.

The parish is in good heart having seen significant growth

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with around 50% more people attending on Sunday mornings. By another measure, after church coffee consumption has risen from 2 flasks to 8 flasks per week!

“Our Friday night youth club was a great driver for growth,” says Mervyn. “It was our first major initiative and we had 20–30 kids walking in from around the area every week. That put us back on the local map so to speak, and other things have happened from there.”

Jack Wilson came on board as part–time Pastoral Assistant last September and is overseeing the thriving youth and children’s programme. When he’s not working at the church, Jack can be found serving customers in Cameron’s, the local café and deli. Cameron’s is also the venue for the current Alpha which has attracted 25 people.

Sunday morning worship is at 11.00 with a 9.30 communion service twice a month. The tea and coffee time after the service has been very popular, indeed, so much so, that a weekly walking group has grown out of it.

Buildings and plans for the future

A new rectory is next on the agenda, but the parish is already thinking about an extension to the church. The building has become very busy with children and hospitality and more space and accessible toilets are needed.

In the meantime, and with a lot of support from the Select Vestry and parishioners, Mervyn has continued a programme of renewal and refurbishment begun by his predecessor, Canon Robert Neill. The parish halls have been brightened up with a fresh coat of paint, resurfaced

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floors, and some upgrading to the kitchen. The grass area behind has been tidied and now serves as a football pitch, complete with floodlights.

“The halls have burst into life. There’s barely a day in the week when they aren’t being used,” says Mervyn.

Badminton, Ladies’ Guild, a group for the bereaved, community Mums and Tots, Youth Club and more, all benefit from the use of the halls.

The biggest draw, however, has been an ‘Honesty Box’ Pilates Class, which attracts more than 60 people over three classes each week.

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Along with Sunday worship, all of these are valuable touching points and have led to Holy Trinity becoming a hub for the community around Ballylesson.

“Our door is always open,” says Mervyn, “and the welcome is warm. I’m delighted to have been appointed as rector and I look forward to seeing all that God has in store for us here in the future.”

Visit - www.holytrinityballylesson.com

News briefs

+++ Christ Church candle lit film series - Featuring a progression of thought provoking films exploring the theme of journeys, the Candle-Lit Film Series takes place every Monday evening in March. For more information visit CC website. Next week's film will be Fire At Sea

+++Ordinations to the priesthood in Spain have soared - by 24 per cent in the last year. In 2018, a total of 135 men were ordained priests compared to 109 in 2017, according to statistics released March 12 by the Spanish bishops' conference.

The Archdiocese of Madrid recorded the highest number of ordinations, with 14. The Diocese of Valencia recorded 10 ordinations, followed by eight in the Diocese of Toledo, seven each in the dioceses of Seville and Alcala de Henares and six each in the Cartagena and Zaragoza dioceses.

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+++Edinburgh decision on abortion clinic protests -

Edinburgh City Council has rejected plans to create “censorship zones” outside abortion clinics. The council dropped proposals to ban peaceful pro-life prayer vigils after a report stated there was “no overwhelming evidence” the vigils caused “unnecessary distress”. The **Scottish Sun** reports that a team involving the city council, NHS Lothian and Police Scotland considered whether to create a zone banning prayer, information and conversations taking place outside local abortion clinics.

+++Pope refuses resignation of archbishop convicted of covering up child abuse -

Pope Francis has not accepted the resignation of Cardinal Philippe Barbarin as Archbishop of Lyon. The cardinal travelled to Rome to present his resignation to the Pope after he was convicted by a French court of covering up sexual abuse committed by a priest. He received a six-month suspended sentence, but is appealing the conviction. In a **statement** on Tuesday, the cardinal said: “By invoking the presumption of innocence, [Pope Francis] did not want to accept this resignation.” However, the statement added that vicar general Fr Yves Baumgarten will temporarily take over the running of the diocese.

March 21 in Christian history

March 21, 547: Italian monk Benedict, author of the Benedictine rule (which established the pattern for European monastic life through the Middle Ages), dies at Monte Cassino. In 1965 Pope Paul VI proclaimed him the patron saint of Europe.

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March 21, 1146: At the urging of Bernard of Clairvaux (one of the most famous theologians and monks of his day), France's King Louis VII announces he will lead the Second Crusade to regain the crusader capital of Edessa. When he failed two years later, Christians were devastated that a crusade preached by a moral exemplar and led by royalty could fail.

March 21, 1556: After denying earlier forced recantations, Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer, a crucial figure in the English Reformation and author of the Book of Common Prayer, is burned at the stake by Queen Mary. He reportedly thrust his arm into the flames, saying the hand that had signed the recantations should be the first to burn.

March 21, 1685: German organist and composer Johann Sebastian Bach is born in Eisenach, Germany. Though largely unrecognized in his day and forgotten for years after his death, he has since become recognized as one of history's unequalled musical masters. But music was never just music to Bach. Nearly three-fourths of his 1,000 compositions were written for use in worship. Between his musical genius, his devotion to Christ, and the effect of his music, he has gained recognition in many circles as the "Fifth Evangelist."

March 21, 1656: James Ussher, calvinist theologian and archbishop of Armagh, Ireland, dies. Famous for his chronology of the Bible (which placed the creation of the world in 4004 B.C.), he also created a history of the Latin Church and the articles of faith for the Church in Ireland. Respected by Christians of all traditions, he was given a state funeral and buried in Westminster Abbey.

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March 21, 1788: Charles Wesley, brother of John and author of 8,989 hymns (including "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," "And Can It Be," "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing," "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling," "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today," "Soldiers of Christ, Arise," and "Rejoice! the Lord Is King!"), dies at age 81.

March 21, 1844: William Miller's first proposed date of Christ's return—between March 21, 1843, and March 21, 1844—ends with little fanfare. Miller soon changed the date to October 22, 1844, but when that passed his followers became disillusioned and premillennialism experienced a massive setback. The Adventist churches grew from the Millerite movement.

March 21, 1871: Journalist Henry M. Stanley, on assignment for the New York Herald, begins his search for David Livingstone in Africa. After he found him (and uttered the famous words "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?"), the Scottish missionary converted him. Stanley was persuaded to return to Africa years later to continue missionary work and exploration.

March 21, 1900: After the death of its founder, evangelist Dwight L. Moody, Chicago's Bible Institute for Home and Foreign Missions changes its name to Moody Bible Institute.

March 21, 1965: Baptist minister Martin Luther King, Jr., leads more than 3,000 civil rights demonstrators on a march from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery. By the time they reached their destination four days later, the group had expanded to 25,000.

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