



Her Majesty the Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh arriving at St Columba's Church in London December 3 2015 for a service of thanksgiving to mark the 60th anniversary of the re-dedication of the building, which was destroyed during WWII.

Scots church thanks Duke of Edinburgh for 'unstinting' public service

The Dean of the Chapel Royal in Scotland has thanked the Duke of Edinburgh Prince Philip for

his “unstinting” promotion of organisations across the country.

The Duke of Edinburgh is retiring from royal duties this autumn, Buckingham Palace announced yesterday morning.

The Duke, who turns 96 next month, will attend previously scheduled engagements between now and August but will not accept new invitations.

It is understood he last attended worship in Scotland at Crathie Kirk last September, which the Royal Family regularly visit when they are holidaying at nearby Balmoral Castle.

He is patron, president or member of more than 780 organisations and charities.

His Duke of Edinburgh’s Award scheme has inspired young people for more than 60 years in over 140 nations and is one of the UK's best known charities.

The Very Rev Professor Iain Torrance, Dean of the Chapel Royal in Scotland and Dean of the Order of the Thistle, said: “In Scotland we are so used to public events with our witty and eagle-eyed Duke of Edinburgh, wearing his kilt in Deeside, unmatched in his unstinting promotion

elsewhere of the many organisations for which he is Patron, and always in steadfast support of The Queen. We salute him with great affection as he retires from these public roles and thank him with all our hearts.”

Well-deserved retirement

The Moderator of the General Assembly, Rt Rev Russell Barr, said: “Her Majesty the Queen has often spoken about the unwavering support she has enjoyed over the years from the Duke of Edinburgh and so the Duke’s decision to retire from public duties is not one which will have been taken lightly.

“Of all the many groups and organisations with which he has been involved, I have appreciated the leadership he has given to the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, something which has enhanced and transformed the lives of countless numbers of young people.

“Long past the normal age of retirement the Duke has continued to lead a full and active public life and, as well as offering him the Church of Scotland’s warmest thanks, let me assure him of our prayers for continuing health and strength in his well-deserved retirement.”

Last year Prince Philip had to pull out of attending a memorial service for the Battle of Jutland centenary at St Magnus Cathedral in Orkney due to ill health.

The Duke's only daughter Anne, HRH the Princess Royal, will be the Lord High Commissioner at this year's General Assembly of the Church of Scotland which opens on May 20 in Edinburgh.

1,500 members of Presbyterian Women at Annual Meeting

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland's (PCI) Assembly Buildings in Belfast welcomed around 1,500 members of Presbyterian Women (PW), a part of women's ministry within PCI, for their annual meeting and Evening Celebration yesterday May 4.

Coming from across Ireland to worship and hear from God's Word together, members launched the theme of 2017/2018 'Grow and bear fruit' and unveiled this year's Special Project, which focuses on deaconesses. The meeting also received the Annual Report that detailed over £500,000 (€591,000) raised last year by PW members for mission both at home in Ireland

and overseas. This included support for the renovation of the Damascus Presbyterian Church in Syria.

Orangefield Presbyterian Church's Youth Worker, Nicola Clarke, was the guest speaker speaking on this year's theme at both meetings. The Moderator, Rt. Rev. Dr. Frank Sellar, who brought the greetings of the General Assembly, was also welcomed to the meeting.

This year's President, Elma Leeburn, who is an Elder at Hillsborough Presbyterian Church and served as Home Vice President last year, said that she was thoroughly looking forward to visiting and encouraging PW groups throughout Ireland.

"Presbyterian Women is a well equipped organisation with the potential to impact thousands of women. In society the role of women has changed and although we may need to do some things differently there is one thing that hasn't changed and that is the PW motto 'Living for Jesus'," she said.

"Our theme for 2017/18 *Grow and bear fruit* wants us to consider how women in the 21st century can grow in their faith and live lives that glorify God. It is taken from Colossians 1:10 '..."



Presbyterian Moderator, Rt. Rev. Dr. Frank Sellar with Presbyterian Women's (PW) incoming President for 2017/2018 Elma Leeburn from Hillsborough Presbyterian Church check the time before the start of yesterday's PW Annual Meeting in Assembly Buildings in Belfast.

bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.' The Apostle Paul reminds us that we are all a 'work in progress' and that God wants us to blossom where we are planted and that He has not finished with any of us yet!

“If we keep close to God daily and allow Him to change us, we will not merely be His witnesses, but we will be evidence of what He is able to do in a life surrendered to Him.”

As women’s fellowships within the Church, each of the 465 PW Groups aim is to encourage women to become Christians, while seeking ways to actively reach women in their own area for Jesus and supporting mission at home and overseas.

Attending the meeting, Dr. Sellar said that he prayed God’s richest blessing on Elma for her year in office and the work and mission of PW. “In this year of Global Concern, our Fit for Purpose theme as a Church, it is thrilling to see that all over the world the gospel is bearing fruit and growing, and wonderful that women from so many congregations throughout Ireland are participants in this exciting adventure of faith.”

Keeping to the ‘Grow and bear fruit’ theme, guest speaker Nicola Clarke said that the Bible had much to say on the subject. “In John Chapter 15 Jesus tells His disciples that He is the Vine and they are the branches. In my talk I wanted to explore what it means and what it actually looks like for us, as Christian women, to

remain in Jesus and grow in our relationship with Him,” Nicola said.

“In the evening celebration I will be following on from this idea of growing in Christ and will look at how we bear fruit. The focus here will be Galatians 5:22 and the fruit of the Spirit which is ‘love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control’. I will be exploring the idea that they are not fruits but ‘fruit’ and what that actually looks like in our every day lives as we remain and grow in Jesus.”

Northern Ireland gambling statistics highest in UK

A new report has found Northern Ireland has a higher proportion of 'problem gamblers' than any other UK region.

The 2016 Northern Ireland Gambling Prevalence Survey identified 2.3% of people as being problem gamblers. That number is four times the figure for England.

While Northern Ireland's number decreased 0.3% from 2010, Christian Action Research and Education (CARE), said the findings are

concerning and demonstrates a need for government authorities to tackle problem gambling.

CARE's Northern Ireland Policy Officer, Mark Baillie, commented on the reasons why Northern Ireland has higher figures aren't clear.

"It may be because Northern Ireland has a greater level of deprivation in some areas, it may be cultural factors related to the view of gambling in different communities in Northern Ireland," he said.

"It's pure speculation, we're not really sure why exactly this is the case but it's been illustrated in a number of surveys that Northern Ireland in particular has this issue compared to other parts of the United Kingdom".

The survey, which questioned 1,004 revealed 75 percent of agreed that gambling is dangerous to family life.

Baillie said CARE has seen problem gambling cause harm to individuals and families. He explained: "We hear of things like family breakdown caused by problem gambling, divorce, mental health problems for the individual and also family members due to the

stress caused because of financial loss and debt.

"The effects can be wide ranging on families, and children can significantly lose out because of consequences of problem gambling".

The report shows that the most common form of gambling is the national lottery and the average problem gambler spends £47 on gambling. Findings also show that online gambling has more than doubled from 6.7% in 2010 to 15.8% in 2016.

Baillie said revamping regulations can help: "If an individual has difficulties online, what we want to see is a way in which an individual can self-exclude from all gambling websites rather than having to self-exclude from each one individually. There has been some good steps taken on that, but we want to see that fully implemented for individuals living in Northern Ireland."

Gospel Rising Music Festival arrives next week

**Ireland's biggest gospel music and choral
festival, now in its eighth year**

Gospel Rising Music Festival, Ireland's biggest gospel music and choral festival, comes to Galway, for a weekend of concerts, workshops, and interactive events, with artists and mentors from Britain, Spain, and Ireland.

The festival, now in its eighth year, takes place in Galway's West End from Friday May 12 to Sunday 14, featuring gigs from Kilá's Rónán Ó Snodaigh, trad/folk band Corner Boy, Moises Sala (Gospel Viu), UK Beatboxing Champion Grace Savage, and singer Gemma Sugrue.

Classes on gospel music, performance, and singing for all levels, including large group workshops and smaller masterclass style sessions, covering soloist technique, conducting, harmonising and beat-boxing, as well as two workshops focusing on the male voice, take place on Saturday 13. Rónán Ó Snodaigh will help run the 'Gospel ReJig' workshop, giving a new perspective into the Irish gospel music scene Sunday 14. Workshop booking is through gospelrising.com Tickets are €10/25/65 excluding booking fees. Advance booking is advised.

Festival gigs include Corner Boy at the Róisín Dubh on Friday 12 at 10pm with the Gospel Rising Jam Session, an interactive gig where the



audience can sing as well (admission €5). Leading Irish gospel choirs will perform at the Gospel Lunch at Monroe's Tavern, Saturday 13, from 1pm to 3pm. The annual festival concert is also on Saturday, at the Black Box Theatre, featuring gospel choir performances showcasing the many different styles that make up an 'Irish gospel choir'.

The festival is hosted by the Ignite Gospel Choir. Keara MacDhómhnaill, musical director of Ignite, said it is "very excited the festival is coming to Galway this year. Galway is a festival city and adding a Gospel Music Festival to the eclectic mix is just fantastic. No matter what choir you are in or if you just love to sing – there is

something here for everyone." - Report courtesy Galway Advertiser

Tickets are €15/12 from the Town Hall Theatre (091 - 569777, www.tht.ie). See also www.gospelrising.com, www.roisindubh.net, and www.monroes.ie

Bishop of Sodor and Man announced

Downing Street has announced the Queen has approved the nomination of the Venerable Peter Eagles for election as Bishop of Sodor and Man.

Rt Rev Eagles, 57, has been Archdeacon to the Army since 2011 and Deputy Chaplain General of the Royal Army Chaplains' Department since 2014.

His appointment comes after the resignation of his predecessor the Right Rev Robert Mar Erskine Paterson in November, 2016.

Commenting on his appointment he said: "I am both thrilled and deeply honoured to be coming to The Diocese of Sodor & Man. My hope is that I may support the people of the Isle of Man in



The Venerable Peter Eagles, Bishop elect of Sodor and Man.

their spiritual and historic identity and in looking confidently to the future.

"Among many other tasks, the bishop is to be chief pastor, a focus of unity, and a leader of mission. I therefore hope to encourage all Christians on the island, to support everyone who lives here, and to lead the Church in its work of caring for people in every community."

Rt Rev Eagles, who trained at St Stephen's House, Oxford after completing a degree at King's College, London has been ordained for 27 years.

After serving as a curate in Middlesex he became an Army Chaplain in 1992. In 2013 he was appointed as an Honorary Chaplain to the

Queen and in 2015 was appointed Honorary Canon of Salisbury Cathedral.

His appointment has been welcomed by many prominent figures from the Church of England.

The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu said: "Peter brings a wealth of experience in parish ministry and in army chaplaincy, and has many spiritual gifts to help him lead the church forward in the mission of God in the diocese to which he has been called.

"My prayers are with Peter and his family as they prepare to move to the Isle of Man. May they know the grace and power of the Holy Spirit strengthening them for all that lies ahead."

The Right Revd Nigel Stock, Bishop at Lambeth and Bishop to the Forces, said: "Peter Eagles has been a superb colleague over the time that I have been Bishop to the Forces.

"Always considerate he has been a great support to his fellow chaplains as Archdeacon to the Army.

"His learning is worn lightly but is very impressive. He is a man of prayer with a pastoral heart, but unafraid to face challenges. I know

that he will be a highly effective bishop and that the people of Sodor and Man will be very well served.”

We owe a debt to those buried at Arbour Hill – Bishop Denis Nulty at State Commemoration of 1916 Rising

Bishop Denis Nulty of Kildare and Leighlin has said that we owe a debt to those buried at Arbour Hill, who died with great faith so that we today can speak proudly of an Irish nation. Bishop Nulty was speaking at the annual Mass of Remembrance celebrating the State Commemoration of all who died in the 1916 Easter Rising. The Mass took place in the Church of the Sacred Heart – the church of the Defence Forces – in Arbour Hill, Dublin, Wednesday 3 May.

Today’s Mass was attended by President Michael D. Higgins, and Taoiseach Enda Kenny.

In his introduction to the Mass, Bishop Nulty said, “It is a year beyond the centenary, perhaps a little less fanfare and commemoration than last year’s memorable events, but our celebration is

all the more sacred and sincere. Loved ones never forget, and perhaps that is why the Irish tradition of ‘cemetery devotions’ is a very strong part of our psyche. We like to visit the graves, to read the headstones, to see the sprinkling of the water.

“Here in Arbour Hill, the ritual around this annual commemoration is carried out with synchronised perfection. There is honour in our remembering this morning; there is a dignity to our gathering; there is a poignancy in our prayer here.

“The Christ we meet this Eastertime is a wounded Risen Christ, we gather as a wounded people in a place that understands the wounds of the past more than most, but equally a place that can offer huge hope for the future.”

In his homily, Bishop Nulty said, “We have gathered in the sacred surrounds of Arbour Hill to remember those who died 101 years ago this week. This morning we have come from all religious traditions to seek God’s face and what a different world it would be if we all took time to look on His face and to take Saint Matthew’s words in our gospel to heart: loving enemies, blessing those who curse us, praying for those who treat us badly.



“We gather as families of a grateful nation to pray for the repose of the souls of those whose graves we will shortly sprinkle with Holy Water. This is very like a National Cemetery Sunday, except for the fact that the names and photos of those we honour today are not just in a memorial card in someone’s prayer book back in our home or on a bookmark in the latest novel we’re reading; these names are etched in Irish and in English in Wicklow Ardraccon limestone around their final resting place. They are the names and faces known throughout the country following last year’s dignified Centenary Celebrations centering on the Proclamation and Flag in all our schools. I remember from my own school days the 1916 poster, presented then in 1966, that hung on the corridor of Saint Patrick’s National School in Slane, in County Meath.”

Bishop Nulty continued, “I equally remember on that same school corridor close to the 1916 poster, the slightly fading sepia portrait of a young man, Francis Ledwidge, also from the parish, who enlisted in the British army in 1914. On hearing of the Easter Rising and the execution of a fellow-poet, Thomas McDonagh, he wrote a lament before he died horrifically himself on the first day of the battle of Passchendaele on 31 July 1917.

Concluding his homily Bishop Nulty recalled recent remarks by Pope Francis on the role of smaller nations like Ireland in world peace. He said, “Pope Francis reminds us little nations can play a significant role in world peacekeeping in his call on Norway to mediate in the current dispute between North Korea and the United States. The personnel of Óglaigh na hÉireann are equally equipped to mediate and have done so with great success in the past.”

Today in Christian History, May 5

May 5, 553: The Second Council of Constantinople convenes under the presidency of Eutychius, the city's new patriarch. The council, loaded with bishops from the Eastern church, attacked Nestorianism (a "heresy" —

many have questioned that anathema—that overemphasizes Christ's dual nature as God and man). Nestorian Christians exist to this Day.

May 5, 1525: Frederick III, the elector of Saxony also called "Frederick the Wise," dies. An avid collector of relics and a supporter of modern scholarship (he founded the University of Wittenberg), Frederick protected Martin Luther after the Diet of Worms condemned the reformer.

May 5, 1813: Christian existentialist Soren Kierkegaard is born in Copenhagen. The Danish philosopher believed no philosophical system could explain the human condition; the experience of reality was what mattered, not the "idea" of it. His most famous and his first book, *Either/Or*, sought in part to explain why he suddenly broke off his engagement.

May 5, 1816: The American Bible Society (ABS) organizes in New York to distribute the Bible throughout the world. The organization has distributed hundreds of millions of Bibles in thousands of languages worldwide.

May 5, 1925: Dayton, Tennessee, teacher John Scopes is arrested for teaching evolution in his classroom. (He volunteered to admit violating a recent statute prohibiting such teaching so that

the law could be tested in court.) The resulting trial—the first "trial of the century"—led to public mockery of fundamentalist Christians, driving them into a more self-contained subculture.

See this week's events diary on CNI

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