



Atouc Dut sifts sorghum ground in a village in South Sudan's Lol State

Global day of prayer to end famine

As more people face famine today than any time in modern history, the World Council of Churches (WCC) together with the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and a range of faith-based partners and networks invite a Global Day of

Prayer to End Famine on 21 May 2017, in response to the hunger crisis.

“Famine has been declared in areas of South Sudan, with Somalia, Nigeria, and Yemen on the brink of famine,” WCC general secretary Revd. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit said. “More than 20 million people are at risk of starvation in these four countries alone. And globally, millions more suffer from drought and food shortages. But famines are much more than simple lack of food. They are the result of conflict, drought, poverty and global inaction, and in most cases they are preventable.”

“We believe the churches have a prophetic role in calling to mobilize their members, the wider society and governments, and make a difference during this unprecedented period of suffering,” Revd Tveit added, reflecting that the Church has a key role to play both in providing emergency relief and support, and in building peace, thus putting an end to the violence and hunger that affects both current and future generations.

To encourage people of faith and good will around the world to observe the global day of prayer on 21 May, the WCC is making available a collection of liturgical resources, prayers, photos

and suggested songs to be used in faith congregations worldwide.

“Food is more than a human right; it is a divine gift that cannot be impeded,” said Revd Tveit. “As people of faith on a pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, we are called to respond to the hunger crisis through prayer, and we encourage communities of all faiths to organize themselves around the issue of access to food.”

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” (Matthew 25:35.)

Fortify, Catholic Youth Ministry conference

Fortify will take place in Dublin on June 10, over the course of one day, beginning at 9:00am and ending at 5:00pm. The morning will begin with a panel consisting of Bishop Donal Mc Keown (Derry Diocese), Gerard Gallagher (Dublin Diocese), Tony Foy (Net Ministries).

They will be interviewed primarily on youth ministry in the Catholic Church in Ireland. Question topics will primarily revolve around the topic of the history of youth ministry here in

Ireland. This is bound to be an interesting conversation between some of the foremost advocates of youth ministry in Ireland. Following that there will be a keynote presentation by the Very Rev. Brendan Canon Kilcoyne.

Fr. Brendan is a parish priest in Athenry, Co. Galway, who has been very involved in youth ministry. After hiring a team of youth ministry professionals to kickstart youth ministry in his parish, he hired a full-time youth minister to continue the work. An invigorating speaker who won't pull any punches in his presentation, Fr. Brendan will be discussing how to move from a state of maintenance to having a missionary mentality, whether in a family, parish, or diocesan situation.

The middle of the day will focus on analyzing different models of effective youth ministry. Attendees will be given the opportunity to attend presentations done by multiple ministries. Each presentation will be a description of that ministry's growth and struggles, as well as imparting some wisdom for strategies that work/ worked in their particular situation. Attendees will be given the opportunity to select between multiple presentations, in order to find a ministry whose situation reflects their own.

The afternoon will begin with another interview panel, formed up of all the attending bishops. The bishops will inform participants of any decisions or announcements they'd like to present to the youth ministry community in Ireland. Attendees will also be given a chance to ask questions of the bishops, in relation to youth ministry.

The later afternoon will consist of some final presentations to wrap up the day, and a Mass. The session prior to the Mass will be a discussion on the future of youth ministry in Ireland, and the hopes for fortify to become an annual occurrence. Mass will be celebrated at 3:30 pm, and will be offered up as intercession for the intention of youth ministry in Ireland. The final session of the day will be a presentation of some of the resources and support available to youth ministers across Ireland.

Throughout the day, following most sessions, there will be an opportunity for round table discussions. These will be opportunities for attendees to break open the things they are learning, ask questions of more experienced youth ministers, and discuss the presentations in a more in-depth setting.

The Fortify Conference will officially end at 5:00pm, to allow ample time for preparing the evening Matt Maher Concert.

This is a Catholic Parish Youth Ministry Conference designed to showcase youth ministry options available to parishes in Ireland. Young people in Ireland deserve an opportunity to receive the faith. There are approaches in Ireland that are effective.

Matt Maher will be workshopping with budding local musicians in the afternoon.

Conference will also be of interest to those involved in youth ministry in second and third level institutions.

The Matt Maher Concert is in the evening. Matt will bring his brand of contemporary Christian music to Dublin and show us that the Gospel can be transmitted beautifully through song.

Belfast Cathedral service to focus on childhood loss

A special service for anyone affected by the loss of a baby at any stage, during pregnancy, at birth or in infancy, will be held in St Anne's



Cathedral, Belfast, at 3/30 pm on Sunday May 28.

It is organised by The Mariposa Trust, a UK charity founded in 2012 by Zoe and Andy Clark-Coates, who saw a critical lack of support for people who, like them, had gone through baby loss.

With more than 258,000 babies being lost yearly in the UK alone, the charity needed to be able to offer not only a comprehensive package of befriending and support, but also national baby loss remembrance services for people to join together and remember the children they had lost.

They called these Saying Goodbye services, and four years on over 80 services have taken place across the UK, USA and France, and 2017 will see a further 20 take place.

St Anne's is one of the cathedrals to host an annual service and this year's begins at 3.30pm on May 28. In previous years a service was organised for "Remember our Child", a local support group whose memorial book is held in the cathedral.

A spokesperson for The Mariposa Trust said that one in four women suffer miscarriage and baby loss and the service is aimed at anyone who has either personally lost a baby at any stage of pregnancy, at birth or in early years, or who has been affected by a family member's or friend's loss.

"Whether the loss was recent or 80 years ago, everyone is welcome to attend," the spokesperson said.

"We have also extended the services, and gladly welcome anyone who is grieving the fact that they haven't had children.

"This may be due to circumstance, infertility or for other reasons – but all are welcome.

“Babies and children are also invited to come with their family, as the Saying Goodbye service is truly a family event for all.”

More information is available at:

www.sayinggoodbye.org

Cleric to give final organ recital in current Armagh series

The last in the organ recital series, in memory of Mr Theo Saunders, the former organist of St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral, Armagh, will be given by the Revd Dr Peter Thompson on Sunday 14 May 2017 at 4.15pm in the Cathedral.

Peter is the Cathedral's Assistant Organist and was the first to give a recital in memory of Theo, so it is fitting that he will complete the series.

In talking about his programme for this recital, Peter explained that he is often asked what his favourite piece of music is, but, as there are so many, he literally cannot choose. He has compiled this month's programme to contain a selection of his most favourite organ works. He says, “Where else could I begin but with Bach? I will open with one of his most exuberant

Preludes and Fugues, a piece which harks back to concertos of Vivaldi, followed by his most sublimely beautiful chorale prelude.” Peter continues, “The frenetic energy and pungent discords of Max Reger’s Toccata and Fugue are followed by Tim Knight’s ‘Three Pieces’, a suite from 1994, with its wistful Elegy flanked by two more exuberant movements.”

Alongside Bach, Peter’s other favourite composer is Herbert Howells, and he will play Howells’ most expressive and powerful ‘Master Tallis Testament’. To conclude, Peter will play Lang’s ebullient Tuba Tune, almost a pastiche of Handel, but with a modern twist.

As with all the recitals in this series, admission is free. The retiring collection will go towards the cost of a new piano for the Cathedral Choir’s rehearsal room.

Love Britain + Ireland Awards seek nominations

The Love Britain + Ireland Awards recognise outstanding groups, projects and services that put Christian faith and love into action within your local community.



Every day in our communities, Christians are demonstrating love for their neighbour by supporting and impacting different aspects of our communities. This is your chance to shine a light on the work they do and we want to hear about as many of the good things that are happening in communities across our nations.

There are 6 awards categories and prizes for each category include £500 cash and a media advertising package valued around £1000, including on-air and online profiles.

Nominations are open until Monday 15th May. **Nominate today the project in your local community** that is actively demonstrating Christian love and making a difference to people in your area.

the Love Britain + Ireland Award categories include ..

- Work with the Disadvantaged
- Youth and Children's Work
- Work with Older People
- Community Building
- Inclusion
- Innovation

Learn more about the 6 categories and [make your nomination today!](#)

Total immersion baptism and confirmation in C of I revival

Mount Merrion C of I Parish in Belfast celebrated a memorable day on Sunday, April 30 – its first confirmation service in 20 years.

At The Church of the Pentecost, a total of 22 people were confirmed with their number including two parishioners from nearby St. Columba, Knock.

Nineteen of the 22 were Mount Merrion adults, each of whom had undergone total immersion baptism en route to their confirmation.

The service – described by Bishop Harold Miller as “a really wonderful occasion” – provided

irrefutable proof of Mount Merrion's on-going revival.

Not too long ago the weekly congregation was down to a mere 20 parishioners, prompting real fears about its long-term future. The Rector, the Revd. Adrian Green, has worked tirelessly with the help of those brave souls in rebuilding the church. Bishop Harold said: "Mount Merrion is a genuine good news story and one which, I hope, will serve to inspire others."



Sr Stan receives 'Social Justice Hero' award

The DIT student volunteering committee has presented Sr Stan Kennedy with its inaugural 'Social Justice Hero' award, in recognition of her work supporting Ireland's most vulnerable, at the launch of a new website Studentvolunteer.ie/DIT: Ciarán Freeman (Student Volunteering Chairperson), Sr Stan Kennedy with her Social Justice Hero award and Emmet Jordan-Kelly (DIT Student Volunteering Development Officer).



IDAHOT Services 2017

[Changing Attitude Ireland](#): services to mark IDAHOT in conjunction with the following Anglican cathedral and churches...

May 20 from 3 p.m. @ [St George's Church of Ireland](#), High Street, Belfast (speaker: Rev Nigel Kirkpatrick)

May 21 from 10:30 a.m. @ [St Anne's Church of Ireland](#), Shandon, Cork (speaker: Rev Elaine Murray)

May 21; from 3.30 p.m. @ [Christ Church Cathedral](#), Dublin (speaker: Rev Dr Brendan McCarthy)

IDAHOT - International Day against
Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia

First major move to tackle Irish Catholic vocations crisis announced

Church leaders will this month open a new national office dedicated exclusively to promoting vocations to priesthood as the shortage of priests continues to bite and some dioceses are no longer able to staff parishes.

Bishop Phonsie Cullinan admitted that the Irish Church is playing 'catch up', telling *The Irish Catholic* that Ireland is "behind the curve" in not having had a national office for vocations until now.

The Waterford and Lismore bishop, who heads the Irish bishops' council for vocations, praised



Bishop Phonsie Cullinan

the work of vocation directors around the country, but pointed out that a lack of clerical manpower means that priests often cannot dedicate themselves full-time to their roles as vocational directors.

The new office, he said, will coordinate the national vocations strategy, “helping vocations directors in each diocese, keeping the vocations question to the top of the agenda, providing training for vocations directors and encouraging vocations initiatives”.

Funding for the project has been provided by the Knights of St Columbanus, with Supreme Knight Barry McMahon telling The Irish Catholic the

knights have agreed to provide funding of €25,000 a year for the next three years.

Adamant that the funding is to be used for specific initiatives, rather than wages or equipment, Mr McMahon said the funding “will help them go out and do the initiatives, and will help vocations because we’re so short of priests at the moment”.

Commenting on Ireland’s lack of a national vocations office before now, Mr McMahon observed that “each diocese would have had a vocational director, but there was no joined-up thinking between them”.

One of the knights has been appointed to a committee to oversee the actions of the new office, he added, explaining, “We do that now anywhere we put money into – we need control and accountability.”

While Dr Cullinan says it could take time for the fruits of this attempt to build a culture of vocation to show, he maintained that Irish people are still called to the priesthood. “There are people out there, of that I am convinced, and it’s a question of having the courage to ask,” he said.

Today in Christian History, May 8

May 8, 1373: English mystic Julian of Norwich receives 15 revelations (she received another the following Day) in which she saw, among other things, the Trinity and the sufferings of Christ. She recorded her visions and her meditations on them 20 years later in her book *The Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love*.

May 8, 1559: The Act of Uniformity receives Queen Elizabeth I's royal assent, reinstating the forms of worship Henry VIII had ordered and mandating the use of the Book of Common Prayer (1552).

May 8, 1603: The University of Leiden appoints Jacob Arminius, Dutch founder of an anti-Calvinist Reformed theology, professor of theology.

May 8, 1828: Henri Dunant, founder of the Red Cross and the Young Men's Christian Association, is born in Geneva. He won the first Nobel Peace Prize in 1901.

May 8, 1845: The Southern Baptist Convention, one of the largest denominations in America, organizes in Augusta, Georgia.

May 8, 1895: Roman Catholic archbishop and broadcaster Fulton J. Sheen is born in El Paso, Illinois. With his ABC shows "Life is Worth Living" and the "Bishop Sheen Program," he became the most prominent American Catholic of broadcasting's golden era.

May 8, 1915: Henry McNeal Turner, the first black army chaplain in the United States, dies in Windsor, Ontario, embittered toward America for its racism. Many consider him to be the precursor of black theology for his statement, "God is a Negro."

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