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Mothers' Union makes history electing its first ever Worldwide President from outside British Isles.



Mrs Sheran Harper will become Worldwide President of the Mothers' Union from 1 January 2019.

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A record number of Mothers' Union leaders from across the globe voted for Mrs Sheran Harper from Guyana, to represent and lead the 142 year old movement's four million members in 84 countries.

"I am delighted to accept the role of Worldwide President for the new triennium. I feel very excited and privileged and I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our members who voted to make this dream a reality," says Mrs Harper, who will take up her new position in January 2019.

Sheran Harper was born in the United Kingdom and grew up in Guyana where she studied at the University of the West Indies School of Physical Therapy. She undertook her Clinical Practice at Guy's Hospital in London and then worked with the Ministry of Health in Guyana where she opened and managed new physiotherapy departments in hospitals throughout the country and lectured on the Rehabilitation Therapists Programme. She stopped working in this area 17 years ago to focus on her calling of serving Mothers' Union.

She has served as a volunteer at all levels from Parish, Diocese and Province and is currently a Worldwide Trustee. Until recently, she was the Worldwide Parenting Trainer where she rolled out Mothers' Union Parenting programmes in 23 countries across the globe. Her expertise is often called upon and she has been a spokesperson in her region for Mothers' Union on various inter-faith, and international panels and forums.

Sheran has been married to Roger Harper for 31 years. They have two grown up sons, Richard and Reginald and a daughter-in-law, Akilah.

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Sheran Harper (right) facilitating Mothers' Union Parenting training in Argentina.

These elections were undertaken under the revised Constitution, designed to ensure that the governance meets the latest standards required, and that the Board truly reflects the global nature of the movement.

In addition, 11 Trustees have been elected from within 11 zones worldwide, five from the Provinces within Britain and Ireland and six from outside. The Board will also have the flexibility to appoint four trustees with specific skillsets to compliment the experience and expertise of the elected members.

“We are extremely excited with the results. Not only will Sheran bring her global expertise, but we have a Board that is rich in diversity with eight different nationalities and also

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for the first time includes a man,” says Mothers’ Union’s Chief Executive, Bev Jullien.

The current Worldwide President, Mrs Lynne Tembey, has overseen the constitutional changes together with the current Board, and she will continue in post until the end of December, 2018. She says, “I thank God for his abundant blessings and his unfailing loving guidance. I pray that the Lord will continue to guide members and leaders everywhere and especially Sheran and the new Worldwide Board as they take up leadership of the Worldwide Mothers’ Union for the coming three years.”

Mrs Harper is proud to be leading an organisation that is making a difference in the lives of over three quarters of a million people worldwide. “Mothers’ Union is as relevant today as it was 142 years ago as the call to support families globally is now even greater. We are working alongside governments and other organisations in tackling issues which affect families wherever they are. In remote areas, where there is no access to social services, it is often Mothers’ Union that is leading the way,” she says.

Mothers’ Union announced the Provincial Presidents In Britain and Ireland for 2019 to 2021:

- Canterbury - Nikki Sweatman (continuing for one year)
- Ireland – June Butler
- Wales - Kay Warrington
- York – June Houghton
- Scotland – announcement to follow

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C of I education concerns at Irish government's Budget 2019 proposals

The Church of Ireland General Synod Board of Education (Republic of Ireland) has commented on this week's announcement by the government on Budget 2019. The Board states -

Investment in education has been key to the modernisation of Irish society since the 1960s. While a significant proportion of Ireland's GDP is spent on education, this has been tempered by the significant cuts applied to the education sector endured during the economic downturn. The announcement of an increase in both capital spend on education and an increase in funding of 6.7% facilitating significant additionality of teaching and special needs assistant (SNA) posts is especially welcomed.

Today's budget announcement of a 5% increase in the capitation allowance (the amount a school receives for each child annually from the State towards their education) is a welcome step towards rebalancing the drop in funding to schools since 2010; it is but one step. There are many competing demands on exchequer funding and Government must balance those demands. However, education is the key to a better Ireland in the long term and, in a globalised world, our young people deserve the same resources and opportunities as their counterparts across Europe and beyond. We note that the restoration of capitation funding is listed in the *Action Plan for Education* and we urge Government to view today's 5% increase as the first incremental step on an ascent back up to a level of

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capitation funding that reflects the value of investment in education, as an investment in the common good and the future of Ireland.

Outreach and dialogue key for church life Archbishop Jackson tells Dublin synod

The Diocesan Synods of Dublin & Glendalough took place yesterday evening (Tuesday October 9) in Temple Carrig School, Greystones.

The evening began with a celebration of the Eucharist with the commencement of Synod business immediately afterwards. During the Eucharist, the Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Revd Michael Jackson, gave his presidential address.

In his address, the Archbishop spoke about Pope Francis's visit to Ireland in August. He said that Pope Francis had had a huge impact on World Christianity, guiding Christians from the assumption that Christianity was the "first and often final" interpretation of religious experience, to begin the journey of expressing itself as a World Faith. He encouraged people to engage more with the Dublin City Interfaith Forum in this regard.

The Archbishop looked at Pope Francis's argument that tradition was the doctrine going forward – the essential did not change but it grows and develops, as a person does, through dialogue. He said that we were invited to lead institutional growth through dialogue.

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The congregation at the Synod Eucharist in Temple Carrig School.

Pope Francis's exploration of theology as being at the heart of ecology was also highlighted. The Archbishop said that ecology, while being about challenging waste and wastage and climate change and violation of habitat, was also the portal through which we engaged in dialogue with creation and law, earthiness and justice.

Turning to the United Dioceses, the Archbishop highlighted the ongoing work on a strategy of outreach and dialogue with those who will live in the areas designated for major housing development in the Dublin region over the coming years.

“There now is no escaping the fact that for the future we will need a mixture, a blend of church understanding

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combining who we are already and who we are yet to be in this area such as we do not yet know and have perhaps never needed to know before since the days, one hundred and fifty years ago, of the upsurge in what are now historic, settled leafy suburbs. We have resisted thinking about comprehensive change to our respective comfort zones in these diocese for too long, preferring to leave ‘parishes that do that sort of thing’ to ‘do that sort of thing.’ Again, I suggest the need for dialogue in the way the word is used by Pope Francis: tradition growing like a person, as we go forward. Dialogue will lie at the heart of this movement in faith and hope going forward. It cannot be a case of: we are the parish, this is what we have on offer, take it or leave it ... This movement will involve the strategy of prayer, the imagination of hope and the dialogue of attention shared with people who are new to church altogether and, by no fault of their own, have no knowledge of it whatsoever,” he said.

The Archbishop spoke about the Sanctuary Movement. Dublin City University became the first University of Sanctuary followed by University College Dublin, he said. Christ Church Cathedral became the first Cathedral of Sanctuary followed by St Patrick’s Cathedral.

The continuing link with the Diocese of Jerusalem was also highlighted. “Not only is this something that is of church interest; the current realities in The Middle East confront us daily in every newspaper and on every television channel; it is of the widest possible human interest. Our dioceses are linked with Syria, Gaza, the little town of Bethlehem, the city of Jerusalem. For us, this is a great privilege. In all our interchanges, we have been even-handed with the Israeli

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and the Palestinian peoples... As a diocese, therefore, we have sought to understand a broad range of perspectives and to talk and pray with and for all sides. Such even-handedness, particularly in times of incomprehensible and incalculable stress and distress, is also dialogue," he commented.

The development of the Gateway Project brings with it a devastatingly simple task, the Archbishop said: bringing and sharing and receiving the love of God. "We have had centuries of experience and opportunity to do this already. As the referee says: Use it," he added. In relation to the new communities which will grow in the new housing developments, he suggested that accommodating and getting to know these people would bring as exciting a period of development as any since 1870 during the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland.

"It ought to be noted and remembered that this development lies in the time when we will commemorate Disestablishment 150 the strapline of which was: ... *free to shape our own future*. In so many exciting ways, we are back in the days of the early church forming communities of hope and without any assurance of institutional success but free of much institutional baggage and encrusted pretension. This is the reality of ecclesiastical life that too many years of superficial settledness and security have left us to figure out once more from first principles. It is a once in a lifetime opportunity. This is a most exciting place to be. It brings us once again to dialogue, dialogue with others who will dialogue with us, the interaction and the interchange of tradition, encounter and growth," he stated.

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Looking ahead to the marking of the 150th anniversary of Disestablishment, the Archbishop noted that the relationship of the Church of Ireland with the totality of Irish history and culture was complex and could only become more complex as the commemoration of Disestablishment approached. “While many still mourn the loss of establishment status, many argue that were it not for disestablishment coming historically when it did, the Anglican tradition in Ireland might have found it significantly more difficult to survive than it has done so,” he said. He said it was important that Irish Anglicans address the issue of their identity.

“The period 2019–2021 will give us the opportunity to work out, through the 150th Anniversary of Disestablishment, what it is to be disestablished today. It follows immediately on the Commemoration of the end of World War 1 in November 2018. It may come as a surprise to many that the strap–line taken up by the architects of disestablishment was a positive and a pro–active one: free to shape our own future. Again we are in a position in every parish in the diocese to explore and to share this history and this future with our neighbours in an ecumenical, post–modern and increasingly post–Christian Dublin. There is an historical and a contemporary story to tell and we have our part to play and our contribution to make. Many of the churches for which we have custodianship stand on sites that are associated with our heritage both Disestablished and pre–Disestablishment. What is more, this is a great time and a great theme to share in our engagement with new communities for whom local history is so engaging and exciting,” he commented.

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You can read Archbishop Jackson's Synod address in full here.

Church's new moderator was an extra in Monty Python movie



An Edinburgh minister who was once an extra in a Monty Python movie has been selected as the new moderator of the Church of Scotland's General Assembly.

Rev Colin Sinclair will succeed the Rt Rev Susan Brown in the role next year. Rev Sinclair, originally from Glasgow, is the minister of Palmerston Place Church in Edinburgh.

The Stirling University economics graduate, who has worked for decades with Scripture Union, said he was honoured to take up the role.

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“I am honoured to be selected for this opportunity to represent the Church of Scotland nationally and internationally,” the married father-of-four said.

“It will be a pleasure to encourage church members in their faith and to see the impact of their faith in communities.

“I have thoroughly enjoyed being a parish minister and despite the challenges we face I believe the Christian faith is still relevant to Scotland. Our message is still Good News and it still changes lives.”

Rev Sinclair first became interested in the Christian faith as a pupil at Glasgow Academy when, to escape getting into trouble after a prefect saw him taking the wrong staircase, he dodged into a room where a Scripture Union camp video was showing.

While a university student, he took a holiday job as a film extra playing a Roman soldier in the 1975 comedy Monty Python and the Holy Grail.

Earlier this year, the Irish Presbyterian Church’s General Assembly voted to loosen ties with the Church of Scotland due to its more liberal attitude to same-sex relationships.

The decision means the head of the Church of Scotland will no longer be invited to the annual meeting of the General Assembly in Belfast.

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Catholic bishops hear the voices of young women at Rome synod



Pope Francis met youth and the Synod Fathers at the Pope Paul VI hall in Vatican

Roman Catholic bishops are meeting for their general assembly from October 3 to 28. Their theme is 'Young People, Faith, and Vocational Discernment'.

The Synod Fathers have entered a second week of discussion. On Saturday they met with young people from all over the world at an event called 'Per noi – unici, solidali, creativi' ('For us – uniqueness, solidarity and creativity'). Moved with emotion, Pope Francis shunned his prepared

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speech in order to speak frankly with the young people present.

There is a visible presence of young people in Rome this October. They have come in support of a synod, or meeting, of bishops to explore how young people understand their faith and the Church more widely. Around 260 bishops were chosen to represent different regions and countries and gather in Rome alongside 60 'auditors' who give testimony to the gathering and around 20 'experts' who serve the synod by collating the views and giving a theological, sociological input.

The event hosted on Saturday, October 6, acted as encouragement to the synod participants, who were present with Pope Francis. The evening included a mix of entertainment, testimony and reflection from around 50 young people, including singer Giovanni Caccamo. Attendance was mixed, with a large contingent of young religious, and while only around half of those present fitted into the official age bracket (16-29), those that were present were representative of the many ways that young people engage around the world. The event was conducted in Italian, with a translation provided via the Vatican Audio app. Due to technical difficulties and a lack of WiFi or data signal, this was not fully accessible during the event.

Testimonies included those from an Iraqi refugee, an ex-prisoner, an ecologist and a religious sister. The bishops also spoke to some delegates about the testimonies that they had heard during the first week of sessions. Bishops from around the world have been putting forward the biggest worries of young people in their countries, from

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Young people at the Synod with (left to right) Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Bishop Mark O'Toole and Bishop Ralph Heskett.



unemployment, a generational gap, and persecution for faith. The European experience was represented during the event, although one participant suggested that it was not portrayed in a fair light. A young woman from Newcastle said, 'I can't begin to imagine what some persecuted Christians go through in other countries, but that doesn't make our experience any less valid. It must be so difficult to bring together such vastly different experiences.'

The performers posed seven questions to the synod of bishops that they hope will be answered in the closing document, which is due to be published in early November. It was thought that Pope Francis would address the themes of these questions in his speech. However, he chose not to use the prepared speech, instead speaking 'off the cuff' in colloquial Italian to those gathered. Pope Francis spoke with heightened emotion about the value of young people in

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society. He urged the young people to believe that they are priceless, asking them to 'not let yourself be bought, do not be seduced, do not let yourselves be enslaved by ideological colonisations that put ideas into your head'. There were an equal number of men and women both performing and speaking at the event and as attenders. Both male and female religious gave testimonies. Women are also able to contribute to the synod directly as auditors – however, it seems that there are no female 'experts'. Neither young men or women can vote, as this is a right solely reserved for bishops. One synod expert understands that this issue is controversial, saying, 'the presence of women is real, their voice is taken seriously, but they are a small group within an overwhelmingly male environment'.

There have been many calls for the synod to be cancelled entirely, in order for the Church to focus primarily on the abuse scandal that is unfolding. One seminarian suggested that it is impossible to have a discussion about the future of the Church when it is currently in a state in which it cannot move forward. His opinion was countered however, by a young woman from Lincolnshire who said: 'We are not the Church of the future, but the Church now – and we have a right to be heard.' This week, the synod will reflect particularly on the role of young women, although no formal statements will be made until the end of the session.

For the young people out in Rome, Saturday's event was an opportunity for direct interaction between young people and the synod fathers in the midst of this wider conversation. Bishop Mark O'Toole, English bishop for evangelisation, appreciated the opportunity for young

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people to speak about 'finding a place where they could belong, where they were giving a space where they could be themselves, but also where they were at the reality of God and where the person of Jesus Christ was made real to them'. This event acted as one of the first steps on a long journey towards understanding the relationship that young people have with the Church.

Pope Francis used the idea of the 'road' or the 'way' several times in his speech. He spoke about looking forward, saying, 'Be young people on the move, looking at horizons and not in the mirror.' Critics would say that the Church must take a long, hard look in the mirror before setting new horizons.

News briefs

+++Kildare Remembrance service - A Service of Thanksgiving and Commemoration to mark the end of the First World War will take place at St Brigids Cathedral, Kildare on Sunday 4 November at 3 pm. The preacher will be the Very Revd Nigel Crossey, Dean of Kilmore and music will be led by the Cathedral Choir. Further information can be obtained from the Very Revd Tim Wright, Dean of Kildare (045 431 352, 085 866 9357, dean@kildare.anglican.org).

+++School chaplaincy - St Andrew's Press has published this month "Time for reflection: A Guide to School Chaplaincy and Spiritual Development" by Sam Younger. Now in stock <https://bit.ly/2Me1BRu>

+++Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh schools' harvest thanksgivings - yKEA hosted two Schools' Services of

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Harvest Thanksgiving. The first took place in Kilmore Cathedral and was attended by 450 pupils from national schools across the Diocese. The second service took place in Sligo Cathedral and was attended by more than 200 school children from the Dioceses of Elphin and Ardagh. The yKEA team were joined by members of Crown Jesus Ministries for a service of songs, stories and puppets! In a riotous, musical performance, Crown Jesus ministries reminded those present that they are to be people who are filled with humility and unselfish people who are pure in heart. A big challenge for Harvest time but a wonderful challenge as they remembered God's love and goodness to them.

+++Bicentenary of Bantry Church - The foundation stone of the Church of Ireland parish Church in Bantry, County Cork, was laid two hundred years ago this month on 23rd October, 1818. To mark the millennium in 2000, the Church was dedicated afresh as the Church of St Brendan the Navigator, Bantry. A statue of Saint Brendan the Navigator stands on Wolfe Tone Square in Bantry outside the church.

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The altar frontal in the Church of St Brendan the Navigator, Bantry

On Sunday 7th October, the Dedication Festival, the Bishop of Cork, the Right Reverend Dr Paul Colton, visited the parish, and presided and preached at the bicentenary festival Eucharist. To mark the bicentenary a parishioner kindly restored a beautiful altar frontal which had been in use in the Church until 1952, when it was moved temporarily to Rooska Church. Rooska Church having closed some decades ago, the restored altar frontal is in use once more in Bantry.

Throughout the weekend, from 5th to 7th October, there was also a Flower Festival to mark the beginning of a month of bicentenary celebrations.

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+++Derry Remembering our Babies and Children

service - The Altnagelvin Hospital Annual Service of Remembrance for Babies and Children will take place on *Sunday 14 October 2018 at 3.00pm* in the Multi-Disciplinary Education Centre, Altnagelvin Hospital. The service is in remembrance of all babies and children who have died either through miscarriage, neonatal death, still birth or infant death. All parents, families and friends are very welcome to attend. Families are invited if they wish, to bring a flower in memory of their child to present during the service. The flowers will be taken afterwards to Ballyoan Cemetery or family may take them with them again after the service. Please allow some extra time for parking due to ongoing construction work at the hospital. The service is hosted by the Chaplaincy Team and Neonatal / Maternity Department Staff at Altnagelvin Hospital

