



Churches launch appeals for Indonesia

The Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal is acting as a conduit for funds which will be directed to agencies to aid emergency relief efforts following last week's earthquake in Indonesia.

The earthquake hit the island of Sulawesi, causing a tsunami and around 170 aftershocks. It is the most devastating earthquake to hit Indonesia since 2004.

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While directing funds to agencies to aid emergency relief efforts on the ground, Bishops' Appeal is urging parishes and individuals not to divert their customary Harvest giving as there are many communities awaiting funding for life saving projects across the globe.

Examples are refugee training and trauma support centres in Lebanon and Iraq and access to safe water for schools and communities in Uganda.

All information on giving can be found at the 'Give' section of the Bishops' Appeal [website](#).

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Rt Rev Dr Charles McMullen, launched a special appeal yesterday for Indonesia, where tens of thousands of people are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance following the recent devastating earthquake and tsunami.

In anticipation of a generous response from congregations, the Church has released £60,000/€67,800 to be distributed to its relief and development partners, Christian Aid and Tearfund. Both organisations are already working through their partners on the ground to get food, shelter and medical help to those in need. A third will also go to PCI's partner organisation, the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (CCI), which is also working on the ground.

Dr McMullen said, "Over recent days we have witnessed many distressing scenes from the Sulawesi area of Indonesia, where around 1.5 million people have been affected by this powerful earthquake and tsunami. With more than 1,400 people confirmed to have lost their lives in

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the disaster, rescuers are predicting that the death toll will rise significantly in the coming days.”

Hundreds of thousands of survivors are now in urgent need of humanitarian assistance after the earthquake, which struck off the coast of Central Sulawesi on 28 September measuring 7.4 on the Richter scale. Triggering a tsunami with waves 18 feet high, tens of thousands of homes have been destroyed and entire communities have been decimated. Hospitals, roads and bridges and the local airport have been damaged. The city of Palu was badly affected, as were many other areas, which rescuers are struggling to reach.

One report received from CCI describes the need for basic supplies in the devastation. It also spoke of the destruction of a church building engulfed in mud. I was hosting a Bible

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camp for 140 young people - is thought that only 40 of them survived.

Dr McMullen continued, "It is distressing to hear of so many people whose lives have been devastated in an instant and who are now in desperate need of emergency assistance and the very basics for survival: clean water, food and shelter, not forgetting of course, medical help.

"Given the scale of this disaster, I am calling on Presbyterian members and congregations to respond in a generous and timely way, just as they have on many previous occasions, so we can play our part in saving lives and restoring hope to the many who face this catastrophic situation."

Dr McMullen concluded by saying, "I also encourage members of our congregations to pray earnestly for those who are experiencing such unimaginable hardship, loss and suffering at this time. As they attempt not only to rebuild their homes, communities and livelihoods, but deal with the trauma of what has happened, please pray and give generously."

Over the last 8 years there have been 7 Moderator's Special Appeals that have raised over £3.3 million for various humanitarian relief efforts around the world:

- March 2017 East Africa (drought) £693,000
- April 2015 Nepal (earthquake) £660,000
- August 2014 South Sudan (famine) £340,000
- November 2013 Philippines (Typhon Haiyan) £500,000

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- March 2013 Syria (refugee crisis) £135,000
- August 2011 East Africa (famine) £422,000
- August 2010 Pakistan (flood) £600,000

Mission Team from Belfast going to Bolivia

A team from Divine Healing Ministries (DHM) was recently commissioned in St Anne's Cathedral for a mission trip to Bolivia taking place from 10th-26th October. It will be a challenging trip as the team will be based in the city of La Paz, which is 12,000 feet above sea level. Their host will be Pastor Hendrik Hoere, a Dutchman who has worked in South America over the last 30 years. Pastor Hendrik and his wife Teija are highly respected among the numerous small independent churches which are typical in Bolivia.

Canon Brother David Jardine, Director Emeritus of DHM, has partnered in mission with Pastor Hendrik for over 15 years. As well as Brother David, the mission team includes Fergus McMorrow, Director of DHM, and Jonathan Kennedy. At the Commissioning Service, Brother David spoke about his previous visits to South America. Jonathan read from Matthew 28:16-20, the Great Commission.

Brother David paid tribute to Pastor Hendrik, describing him as "one of the greatest men produced by the Church in the 20th Century." He added: "We travel to South America to support the work he does in very poor communities."

Brother David, a fluent Spanish speaker, said that God had given him Psalm 91:1-2 for this mission to Bolivia: "He who

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dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'”

Fergus McMorrow reminded everyone at the service about the power of prayer and that “The God behind us is bigger than the giant in front of us.” Fergus said: “We are very grateful to all those who are making this trip possible, those who are supporting financially and with prayer.”

Kenyan Bishop says 'thank you' to schoolchildren

The Bishop of Butere, Rt Revd Dr Tim Wambunya – who’s visiting the North West this week to discuss his diocese’s links with Derry and Raphoe – has thanked children attending the annual County Donegal Schools’ Service for supporting Anglican clergy back home in Kenya.

Parishes in Derry and Raphoe have raised more than £60,000 for the ‘Buy a Cow for Butere’ initiative. The money has been used to buy animals for ministers in the Kenyan diocese, with which Derry and Raphoe has strong links. The first Anglican church and girls’ school in the region were built by the son and daughter of a former Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Revd George Chadwick.

On Thursday morning, Bishop Wambunya – who is in Ireland with his wife Gertrude – joined around 500 pupils from 30 schools at the service in Ramelton Presbyterian Church. Bishop Wambunya thanked those children who had helped with the fund-raising for the ‘cows project’ for their generosity. The service was hosted by the patrons of

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Church of Ireland and Presbyterian-managed schools in County Donegal.

The mostly young congregation were welcomed to the church by the St Johnston Presbyterian Church's minister, Revd Craig Wilson. Worship was led by the Moderator of the Derry and Donegal Presbytery, Revd Paul Linkens, who talked to the children about 'encouragement', and the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Revd Ken Good, led the service.

Children from many of the schools present played a role in the service by performing readings or saying prayers. Among those prayed for were the victims of the recent earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia.

As the schoolchildren left the church to return to the buses which would ferry them back to class, each school was presented with a large 'goody bag'.

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The times they are a changing refrain at Meath Synod

Members of Meath and Kildare gathered at The Oaks Centre, in Dunboyne, for their annual synod on Saturday, September 29.

The refrain from a Bob Dylan song, ‘The times they are a changing’, happened to provide a theme for a range of speakers. Speeches throughout the synod recognised the deep changes that have taken place in Ireland. Whilst recognising this, one speaker reminded synod members summed up the risk of faith - that “boats are not made for harbour but for taking to the sea.”

There was a sense of this being a moment, not just of challenge, but opportunity for the Christian message.

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Imagining the future

Over the previous nine months Church Army UK has conducted a diocesan consultation. This included meeting all clergy and groups of parishioners from every parish. In her address to members of synod Bishop Pat Storey talked of what the dioceses hoped to achieve when they commissioned the consultation. She said, “Church Army UK has been helping us to assess our state of play at (this) present moment of our church history ... (it will help us) plan a future which will strengthen the things that bring us joy, and face up to the things which make us nervous.”

Dr Tim Ling and Mark Russell from Church Army UK were invited to present the findings of the diocesan review to synod members, for discussion. Members then had an opportunity to discuss and reflect on the findings, including:

- That the dioceses has shared the experience of falling church attendance over the past decade.
- That out of a total population of 669,000, in the diocesan area, 51,500 identify as having no religion - five times as many as the Church of Ireland population. Church-going, practically everywhere, is declining – and yet very often people still claim to be spiritually open to God, but simply not to the church as an institution.
- That a culture of ‘keeping our head down’ is now beginning to change.
- There is an awareness of being in an era of profound change.
- There is a willingness to respond to the need for change, and move outside of our comfort zone.

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- That there is a need to take responsibility for discipleship.

Three young people were invited to respond to the presentation of the report findings, including the question ‘How can we reach the missing generations?’ - giving valuable insights. Mark Russell (CEO of Church Army) reminded those present that “the world is changed by hope-filled people.” He also reinforced a sense of possibilities for the future.

In her speech, Bishop Storey also talked of the new Ordained Local Ministry initiative beginning across the Church of Ireland, with several people across the dioceses now in training for it. She also expressed her gratitude to many people who serve in various ways to further the work of the dioceses. Exhibitors were also given a warm welcome. A range of speakers, speaking to reports, through the day recognised the service of volunteers, such as readers, retired clergy, diocesan committees.

Moment of opportunity

Bishop Storey concluded her address by saying: “As we see Irish society changing dramatically, we could bury our heads in the sand and lick our wounds – or we could recognise the opportunity that there is out there to shine brighter.”

Development and outreach focus of Connor Synod

Clergy and lay members from across the Diocese of Connor were in Ballymena on Wednesday October 3 for the annual Diocesan Synod.

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This was preceded by a Service of Holy Communion in St Patrick's Parish Church, which also hosted the evening meal.

In his Presidential Address, Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, spoke about Brexit, the 'tragic' absence of a Northern Ireland Assembly and the need to pray for a way forward and to find ways of dealing with the past.

The Bishop has recently returned from a four-month sabbatical, which he described as a 'gift' which gave him time to 'recover from the constant demands of ministry and leadership.' His new book, *The Jewel in the Mess*, will be published in the new year.

Bishop Abernethy spoke about the 'real potential' for Ordained Local Ministry and described his membership of the World Council of Churches Central Committee as 'challenging and stimulating.'

He said it was critical that the Church was aware of how it engages with its own local culture, adding that he was encouraged to see the number of parishes trying new and innovative ways to engage with their local communities.

In his wide-ranging address Bishop Abernethy also spoke about his Lent Seminars, parish issues, the growth of the Diocesan Learning Agreement, and the 'disturbing' news from Connor's link diocese of Yei in South Sudan.

Synod was divided into two sessions. The afternoon session included the President's Address, reports from Diocesan Council and Associated Notices of Motion.

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Some of those who took part in the evening session of Connor Synod which heard stories of outreach work in parishes with Bishop Alan Abernethy and Archdeacon Paul Dundas. Included are Alison Shaw and Dorothy Coates from St Aidan's, Sandy Row, front, and Janis Bennett and Heather Smith from Immanuel Church, Ardoyne, back.

The Report of Diocesan Council was proposed by Mr Ken Gibson, Lisburn Cathedral, and seconded by the Rev Danielle McCullagh, Lisburn Cathedral.

Tributes were paid to members of Team Connor for the work they are doing in the diocese, in particular Diocesan Development Officer Trevor Douglas, Youth Officer Christina Baillie, Children's Project Development Officer Jill Hamilton

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and Church Army Evangelists Karen Webb and Stephen Whitten.

In his report to Synod, Mr Douglas said he had assisted several parishes to develop strategic three-year plans. He said he was impressed by the number who had progressed their outreach work with new relationships established and new ministries formed.

Mr Douglas said he had secured additional funding for both children's and youth ministry, and seed funding for a leadership training programme for clergy and lay, designed to enable leaders to explore new forms of mission and ministry at parish level.

His report also highlighted work he has done with the Bishop to develop relationships with a range of community leaders and activists. "It is encouraging that even in what appears to be a growing secularism of society, that these leaders welcome a relationship with the Church and are willing to listen to our voice," Mr Douglas stated in his report.

In her report, Mrs Baillie revealed she will be launching a new project exploring issues around mental health and emotional well-being for young people later this year. "AFFIRM will equip and provide opportunities for young people in difficulty and their communities as a whole," the report stated.

The Rev Andrew Campbell, rector of Skerry, Rathcavan and Newtowncrommelin (AKA Broughshane...), paid tribute to Mrs Hamilton, Mrs Webb and Connor Children's Council for bringing Patrick's Mysterious Adventure to Broughshane for

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four days in March. He said the event had engaged more than 550 local people.

Mrs Karen Webb updated Synod on the success of the TLG (Transforming Lives for Good) programme initiated by the Centre of Mission in Shankill Road. She said this project, which supports primary school children who might be at risk of being excluded from school, now has nine new coaches, making a total of 15. It was already apparent what a difference this one-hour mentoring a week was making in the lives of the children being coached, Mrs Webb said. "This could happen in any parish in the diocese," she added.

Mrs Valerie Ash, whose six-year term as Diocesan President of Connor Mothers' Union President finishes at the end of this year, spoke about developments in Mothers' Union, particularly on the home front, and how the organisation supports the needs of others. Mrs Ash will be succeeded as Diocesan President by Mrs Sally Cotter.

At the end of the first session, Dean Sam Wright extended the thanks of the clergy for the support the Bishop has given them over the year. "In the challenges of life you are a listening ear. Your constant encouragement is appreciated by all of us," Dean Wright said.

Mr Tom Lyttle stepped up to thank the Bishop on behalf of the laity for all his 'openness and honesty'. "Thank you for the way you handle the business of the diocese on our behalf," Mr Lyttle said.

Thanking both speakers, Bishop Abernethy said: "One of the greatest gifts is the gift of encouragement."

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The evening session of Synod began with stories of outreach work in four Connor parishes – an Alpha course in Ardoyne; Messy Church and more in St Aidan's, Sandy Row; Filling Station (contemporary worship) in Ballymoney; and the African Child Ministries Shop in Greenisland.

Synod members then moved to the adjoining hall to meet representatives of a number of organisations, namely Messy Church, the North Belfast Centre of Mission, Xplore, Youth Forum, Streetreach, University Chaplaincy, CAP (Christians Against Poverty) and the African Child Ministries.

The final stage of the evening session was a keynote address by Bishop Abernethy, in which he reflected on his sabbatical, and how it helped him rediscover the wonder and beauty of Jesus.

The Bishop also looked at issues facing the Church today, including buildings, finance, and the dependence on clergy. He spoke about how, after the initial confusion, bewilderment and excitement of being appointed Bishop of Connor in 2007, he began to see a lot of 'disconnection.'

That led to the diocesan Vision Strategy with its focus on Engaging culture, Empowering ministry, Effecting change.

This Development Team has created new networks with Youth Council, Children's Council and a Centre of Mission building links with local community, local parishes and the parishes throughout the diocese, and recognition from civil society that the Church can be entrusted to be channels of help, Bishop Abernethy said.

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He said the Inter Diocesan Learning Project had helped him and others see the things that were happening in the diocese – equipping new leaders, discipling young people, new ministries emerging from the Centre of Mission, parishes reaching out in new ventures, university chaplaincies growing, Belfast Cathedral addressing its mission in the heart of the city – and all these stories being told to the diocese through the diocesan magazine.

The Bishop said he had visited various Church Army projects during his sabbatical and that the diocese in its vision could focus on the Church Army's DARE strategy – Doing, Advocating, Resourcing, Enabling.

Mothers' Union at the National Ploughing Championships

Have you ever wondered how people manage with babies at Europe's largest outdoor event? When babies need fed or changed they can't wait. But, how do you feed or change a baby at an event as big as the National Ploughing Championships, held outside Tullamore this year?

That was a question the organisers of this popular event asked themselves some years ago. It was then that the Mothers' Union volunteered their help. For the last twelve years members of the Mothers' Union have supplied a tent and volunteers - to give facilities to those with babies to change or feed their babies.

The free service is organised by the Mothers' Union in whatever diocese the Ploughing Championships are held in. They are joined by volunteers from other dioceses. This

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year the Mothers' Union from Meath and Kildare, led by diocesan president Sylvia Wheatley, provided the very welcome service.

Pope hosts month-long global gathering of bishops

Pope Francis has opened a month-long gathering of bishops from around the globe at a time of crisis in the Catholic Church over sex abuse.

One bishop has boycotted the meeting and another has stayed at home to deal with fallout from the scandal.

Though the synod's official title is "Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment," the worldwide sexual abuse

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scandal looms large in the background and many believed it would be part of the informal agenda in the discussions.

At an opening Mass in St Peter's Square on Wednesday, the Pontiff urged church leaders not to let the next generation's faith be snuffed out by what he called "our own shortcomings, mistakes and sins".

In a sign of the extraordinary pressure the church has come under from the scandal, Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia had called for the synod to be scrapped so the Vatican could concentrate on preparing another bishops' meeting on preventing sex abuse.

Cardinal Joseph Tobin, the archbishop of Newark, New Jersey, stayed home to deal with the scandal's fallout, and a Dutch bishop, Robert Mutsaerts of Den Bosch, boycotted, saying the synod lacked credibility.

More than 250 other bishops from around the world are taking part in the month-long meeting with about 40 young people invited to take part as observers.

Irish bishops

The Irish hierarchy is represented by the Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin, who is Primate of All Ireland, and the Bishop of Derry, Donal McKeown.

Two of the synod's bishops are from China, a first following the Vatican's landmark agreement announced 12 days ago that improved ties with the country's Communist government. Applause broke out as the Pope noted their presence in his homily at the Mass attended by tens of thousands of people.

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The church is enmeshed in sexual abuse crises in countries including Chile, Germany, the United States and Australia.

The synod began a day after a new Pew Research Centre survey found that confidence in the way Pope Francis is handling the sexual abuse crisis has dwindled among American Catholics.

While seven-in-ten American Catholics said the overall opinion of the Argentinean Pontiff was favourable, six-in-ten said Francis was doing an "only fair" or "poor" job handling the abuse scandal, nearly double the figure at the beginning of 2018.

Later, in a speech at the first working session, Pope Francis said he hoped the synod, which will result in a papal

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document, would "awaken our hearts" because the church today was laden with "struggles, problems, burdens".

He attacked clericalism, which he defined as a view that priests and bishops are the elite who exercise power. He branded it as "the root of many evils in the church".

Instead, he said, they should be humble and offer "free and generous service" to the faithful.

Irish Conference of Bishops statement

In a statement the Irish Conference of Bishops revealed that, as part of the preparations for the Synod, bishops met with representatives of youth ministry from around the country to discuss key themes arising from an earlier web-based consultation which they had undertaken with 2,500 young people.

The bishops said it had revealed both positive examples and obstacles facing young people's faith and experiences of growing up in the contemporary world.

A number of Irish young Irish lay Catholics are among the Synod's observers. The proceedings end on Sunday 28 October.

In a statement issued following their two-day quarterly meeting, this country's Catholic Bishops'acknowledged the anger and dismay experienced by many in response to reports from a number of countries over the summer concerning the criminal abuse of children and its cover-up.

"Despite the many reports and serious findings on this subject here in Ireland in recent years, these overseas reports were nonetheless shocking," the Bishops

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Conference statement said. They welcomed Pope Francis' decision to call the presidents of the world's Bishops' Conferences to a meeting in Rome next February to review the safeguarding of children in the church.

Last March Archbishop Martin commented on the acceptance of the resignation as Bishop of Down of Dr John McAreevey over criticism by abuse survivors of his response to serial abuses perpetrated by the late Fr Malachy Finegan.

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Dr McAreavey was the fifth Irish-based bishop to step down over clerical child sexual abuse scandals.

The primate said his prayers were with the people, religious and clergy of Dromore and in particular with those who have been abused and who were suffering because of abuse.

He reiterated his own Bishops' Conference's view that the church can never become complacent concerning the safeguarding of children.

News links

'Carnage' as Wicklow wedding is delayed when priest 'refuses to say mass until church decor is removed

<https://www.thevow.ie/the-final-say/wedding-talk/carnage-as-wicklow-wedding-is-delayed-when-priest-refuses-to-say-mass-until-church-decor-is-removed-37385003.html>

Sexual consent classes needed across all of third level, says Minister

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/sexual-consent-classes-needed-across-all-of-third-level-says-minister-1.3652138>

Parents of Belfast's most oversubscribed primary schools asked to help find solution

<https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/news/belfast-news/parents-belfasts-most-oversubscribed-primary-15238887>

[Supreme Court set to announce decision in Ashers 'gay cake' case](#)

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In the original court case, District Judge Isobel Brownlie ruled that religious ... Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK or Ireland where same-sex ...

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/supreme-court-set-to-announce-decision-in-ashers-gay-cake-case-37384366.html>

Presbyterians: terrorism was never justified

<https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/presbyterians-terrorism-was-never-justified-1-8656583>

Presbyterian Church responds to British government's legacy consultation

In its contribution the Presbyterian **Church** in **Ireland** said it “remain greatly exercised that the legal definition of a victim makes no distinction between ...

<https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2018/10/04/news/presbyterian-church-responds-to-british-government-s-legacy-consultation-1449664/>

Religion as primary school admission criteria is outlawed

Minister for Education Richard Bruton will sign an order that will outlaw the use of **religion** as a criteria for primary school admissions in almost all ...

<https://www.rte.ie/news/education/2018/1003/1000643-education/>

Constitutional blasphemy clause 'largely obsolete', Bishops decide

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However, it added the right of religious communities to contribute to public debate without been attacked or ridiculed “needs to be acknowledged and ...

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/constitutional-blasphemy-clause-largely-obsolete-bishops-decide-1.3650683>

Principal Reveals He Was Secret Atheist Leading Irish Catholic School for 20 Years

The ex-principal went on to argue that state-run Catholic schools in Ireland need to change and begin accepting students who are openly not religious ...

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/principal-reveals-he-was-secret-atheist-leading-irish-catholic-school-for-20-years-227731/>

Teachers warn removal of ‘baptism barrier’ will cause chaos Minority faiths, such as the **Church of Ireland**, will be allowed to continue to prioritise members of their religion in order to protect their ethos in cases ...

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/teachers-warn-removal-of-baptism-barrier-will-cause-chaos-for-schools-1.3650441>

The Sister Aloysius Memorial Prize for Religious Art 2018 - Diocese of Derry

<http://www.derrydiocese.org/component/easyblog/entry/news/the-sister-aloysius-memorial-prize-for-religious-art-2018?Itemid=549>

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[Pumpkin patch leads to much more than pies - Episcopal News Service](#)

[Homily of Pope Francis during the opening mass of the Synod of Bishops](#)

<http://www.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/en/news/homily-of-pope-francis-during-the-opening-mass-of-the-synod-of-b.html>

[Beware of burnout, Church tells priests](#)

Priests must watch for signs of “stress and burnout” and be careful what they post on social media, the Church of England has said amid concerns over ..

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/beware-of-burnout-church-tells-priests-nzsnjflj>

[CofE starts 'Big Conversation' about clergy care](#)

The **Church of England** has begun a 'Big Conversation' on ways to improve its approach to the care of its clergy. It has published the text of a ...

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<https://www.christiantoday.com/article/cofe-starts-big-conversation-about-clergy-care/130586.htm>

