



Archbishop Richard Clarke (Church of Ireland) and Archbishop Eamon Martin (Roman Catholic Church) inspect names on a memorial at Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin at the start of their cross-community peace pilgrimage, earlier this year, to significant World War One Battle of the Somme sites in France and Belgium.

Donegal priest joins lifeboat crew

A Donegal curate on the island of Arranmore is saving souls in more ways than one, as he is also a member of the local lifeboat crew.

Fr Liam Boyle, who was ordained in September 2014, says he had no previous seafaring experience before joining the Arranmore lifeboat crew. His only previous experience of operating a boat was “on the pond in Dunlewey in a little tub.”

Now he is part of a crew of 21 volunteers responsible for rescuing seafarers in trouble anywhere along the northwest coast.

After serving six months as a curate in Ardara, Fr Liam moved last year to Arranmore Island, which has a population of 550 people.

A few months ago, curiosity took him down to the pier to inspect the local lifeboat, *Myrtle Maud*, an all-weather Severn-class vessel. He says that when he went over to have a look at the lifeboat, he almost fell down the steps of the pier! Nevertheless, despite his lack of sea legs, the crew members present invited him aboard to have a look around the craft.



“I joked about becoming a member and the lads said ‘why not?’” said Fr Liam. “I thought nothing more of it then, but as the months passed I thought a little more about it and decided to undertake the training. And now I am a full volunteer and ready to answer emergency calls.”

Fr Liam and the other crew members wear a pager so that they can be contacted when an emergency call is made and their assistance is required.

Some of these calls involve lifeboat men and women going to sea in treacherous conditions. In 2006, for example, the *Myrtle Maud* rescued a yachtsman 50 miles out to sea in swells of between 10 and 12 metres in height. On that

rescue mission, the lifeboat was at sea for 22 hours.

While it is fairly unusual to have a clergyman as a lifeboat crew member, increasingly RNLI volunteers come from ‘non-traditional backgrounds’ – only about 10% are involved in maritime occupations.

When Fr Liam was being ordained, Bishop Philip Boyce of Raphoe told him in his homily: “Be the servant of all, especially of those most in need.”

The bishop little imagined that the young curate would respond to that injunction by joining the RNLI, responding to SOS – ‘save our souls’ – messages and going to the aid of ‘those in peril on the sea’.

Of course, Fr Liam is not the first clergyman to be part of a lifeboat crew. Fr Tom Dalton, parish priest of Riverchapel in County Wexford, is a volunteer with Courtown RNLI.

In popular culture, the priest most associated with lifeboats is Fr Thomas Byles, who twice refused a place aboard a lifeboat after the *RMS Titanic* hit an iceberg. After all the lifeboats had been launched, he heard confessions and gave

absolution to more than 100 passengers trapped on the stern of the stricken ship. Pope Pious X described him as 'a martyr for the Church'.

Brilliant Weekend Blast by Down and Dromore youth

Tim Burns, Diocesan Youth Development Office for Down and Dromore reports on the first Kilbroney Weekend Blast.

Our first Kilbroney Weekend Blast is over, and it was brilliant! Born from an idea sparked during our Kilbroney Adventure Camps in the summer, we had 28 young people from across the diocese come to the Kilbroney Centre for a weekend of activities, bible teaching and good fun.

For our teaching and discussion times we explored the life of Paul, his conversion, his speech to the Athenians about 'The Unknown God' and his imprisonment with Silas within the context of Deuteronomy 6: 5 'Love the Lord your God with all your Heart, Soul and Strength'. Time was given for personal reflection on what was being taught, and there was a wonderfully designed prayer space with stations to reflect on various aspects of God and our relationship with him.



On Friday night we ran a night line through the Kilbroney Centre Wood's, on Saturday, before lunch, we built catapults for eggs. Then, Saturday afternoon the teams made music videos, which were judged on Saturday night by our X-Factor panel, mixed in with some messy games, and the night rounded off with songs by the campfire, hot chocolate and smores. At the end of the weekend one camper said, 'It was amazing, so much fun and a good time to hear from God but now I'm wrecked.'

It was a real privilege to spend the weekend with a brilliant group of young people, we had great laughs, important conversations on faith and life,
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and came away deeply encouraged by young people who were not only good to be around, but are also working out their faith in Jesus and what that looks like in the worlds that they inhabit.

A special mention must go to the leaders who volunteered for the weekend, who committed time and energy in the build up to making the weekend happen, as well as giving so much during the weekend to ensuring that it was a significant weekend for young people.

Next stop Saturday Night Live on the 3rd of December in Ballybeen. Visit <https://www.facebook.com/SaturdayNightLiveDownAndDromore/> for more info.

Former Moderator "knighted" by Roman Catholic Church

A former Moderator of the General Assembly has been awarded one of the highest honours in the Roman Catholic Church for her work to build good relationships among churches in Scotland.



Dame Sheilagh Kesting was surprised and delighted to be invested in the Order of St Gregory the Great by Archbishop Cushley

In a historic first Very Rev Dr Sheilagh Kesting has been invested as a Dame of the Order of St Gregory the Great by Pope Francis.

The award, in recognition of her many years of ecumenical work, is seen as a tangible sign of the good relations between the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church.

It is the equivalent of the papal "knighthood" awarded to men. Sir Tom Farmer is one recipient in Scotland of this rare honour.



Dr Kesting is the first Church of Scotland minister to receive the award and the Roman Catholic Church says it has only been awarded once before to a non-Catholic woman in the United Kingdom.

Dr Kesting was invested as a Dame of the Order of St Gregory on Sunday 6 November by Archbishop Leo Cushley of St Andrews & Edinburgh in the presence of the Catholic bishops of Scotland.

David Waterton-Anderson of the UK Association of Papal Honours said:

“It is a very, very high honour and a very rare thing for a non-Catholic to receive the Order of St Gregory the Great. And this honour is something

she can be really proud of because it is not political, but only given for good works.”

He said Lady Hazel Sternberg, who died in 2014, is the only other non-Catholic woman in the UK he believes to have been invested as a Dame of the Order of St Gregory.

The Pontifical Equestrian Order of St Gregory the Great was established in 1831 by Pope Gregory XVI.

It is given to recipients “in recognition of their personal service to the Holy See and to the Roman Catholic Church, through their unusual labours, their support of the Holy See, and their excellent examples set forth in their communities and their countries.”

Dr Kesting is now permitted to style herself as Dame Sheilagh Kesting DSG.

News briefs

+++ PCI Calendar available - The 2017 Presbyterian Church in Ireland desk/wall calendar is available to order online, using the

form below. Each calendar costs £4.00/€4.00 (cost includes postage). Featuring scenes from across the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as well as key dates in the church year, the calendar will be a useful addition to the home.

Conveniently, two months are on view with each image, and Scripture verses are also displayed alongside. To guarantee delivery before Christmas, please place your order by Wednesday, 14th December 2016.

+++ Book on Belfast architecture - A new book by the Church of Ireland Press Officer, Dr Paul Harron, will be launched in Belfast on Thursday evening. *Young & Mackenzie: a transformational provincial practice, 1850–1960* examines the architectural practice which was responsible for some of Belfast's iconic buildings such as the department stores of Anderson & MacAuley and Robinson & Cleaver. The book has been published by the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society.

+++ Indian Orthodox Advent Service - On Friday the Archbishop of Dublin will attend the Indian Orthodox Advent Service at which the Indian Orthodox Bishop of India will be presiding.

+++ New rector's vows - The new incumbent of the Grouped Parishes of Maghera & Killelagh (Derry & Raphoe) has promised to “love, cherish, honour and care” for his parishioners for as long as he is their rector. Rev Terence Kerr was speaking shortly after being instituted in St Lurach's Parish Church in Maghera by the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe Rt Rev Ken Good. The Ballymena man said his had been an unusual appointment. He had already been in charge – “well, second in command, somebody else has been in command” – for ten or eleven months. It had been a wonderful apprenticeship, he said, during which he had found many new friends and a wonderful team. Among those there to see Rev Kerr being instituted were his wife Carol and two of the couple's three sons, Mike and Stephen. Their eldest son, Andrew, is travelling in South-East Asia and was unable to attend. Also in the congregation was a local lady who was watching her seventh institution in St Lurach's Church. Rev Kerr's period as Priest-in-Charge in the parishes was, he said, a bit like being engaged to be married: “You do a few months or years, and then this is a bit like my wedding day“.

+++ Events on Tuesday - On Tuesday the Bishop of Cork will give the address at the meeting of the Munster Retired Clergy in Kingstown College, Mitchelstown. As part of a programme to raise €300,000 for the restoration and preservation of St. Doulagh's medieval church in Balgriffin, there will be a concert in Christ Church cathedral, Dublin, on Tuesday evening at 7.30pm featuring the Band of An Garda Siochana and also the Ladies Choir of An Garda Siochana. Tickets are available at the door or by phone to 087-6711547 or from www.christchurch.com/events/on-the-beat-a-night-of-music-song-by-the-garda-siochana-band-ladies-choir

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

East Belfast hosts array of arts events in memory of CS Lewis

Newsletter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/whats-on/arts/east-belfast-hosts-array-of-arts-events-in-memory-of-cs-lewis-1-7675443>

Role of Stormont suicide prevention group under review

BBC News

A number of Stormont bodies, including one set up to tackle the growing number of suicides in Northern Ireland, are under review.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-37956975>

S Times

Interview with Rev Matt Woodcock, author of *Becoming Reverend* published by CHP earlier this month. Article focuses on Matt's call to ordination, he and his wife's struggles with infertility and how he has turned around his church in Hull, soon to become a Minster.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/cheers-god-this-vicar-salutes-you-for-inventing-bedroom-gymnastics-npgj89bdv>

S Exp

Report on a crackdown on Christian worship in China focusing on a raid on a House Church which had put up a crucifix. Article notes that the crackdown has forced Christians underground and has left a deal between the Vatican and China on the brink of collapse.

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/731557/christians-beaten-jailed-crucifix-china>

S Tel

Further feature on Mike Pence, US vice-president elect, focusing on his Christian evangelicalism.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/12/mike-pence-donald-trumps-vp-will-soon-be-the-second-most-importa/>

S Exp

‘My favourite photograph’ with Rev Richard Coles recalling his time with the Communards and focusing on his book *Bringing In The Sheaves: Wheat And Chaff From My Years As A Priest*.

<http://www.express.co.uk/life-style/life/730845/The-Communards-Reverend-Richard-Jimmy-Somerville>

Times/FT

Reports that more than 100 institutional investors, including the Church Commissioners, are suing for alleged losses after Tesco’s £263 million accounting scandal in 2014 and seeking damages “in excess of £100m”. Investors are bringing the claim for alleged breaches of the Financial Services and Markets Act and are naming several former senior Tesco executives.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/tesco-sued-over-263m-black-hole-vs6xp5ccx>

<https://www.ft.com/content/4deaa8be-a807-11e6-8898-79a99e2a4de6>

BBC/Christian Today

Report that the Church of Scotland has said it is "deeply concerned" by a Home Office decision to deny two Pakistani Christians entry into the UK. The men were invited to Scotland by the Kirk as part of plans to twin Glasgow Presbytery with the Diocese of Hyderabad. Their visa applications have been refused twice over finance concerns. The Home Office said it did not comment on individual cases.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-37947608>

Christian Today/Guard

Report that TV's *Gogglebox* vicar Kate Bottley has defended parents who allow children to go online and play video games, especially when they are on the autistic spectrum. She made the comments in an interview with the *Guardian* at the National Video Arcade in Nottingham where she was speaking.

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/nov/11/gogglebox-vicar-kate-bottley-on-faith-family-lifelong-love-of-gaming>

Christian Today

Article looking at the future of the Church in the US following the election result noting that ‘although an overwhelming number of white evangelicals voted for Trump, many from other Christian groups did not, particularly those in minority communities.’ Article notes comments by Jim Wallis made during the campaign.

Times

Feature on Mike Pence, vice president-elect of US, who is described as ‘an ideological conservative of deep evangelical faith’. Article notes that he opposed the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, a policy banning open homosexuality in the military, and a law defining homophobic violence as a hate crime and that he “longs for the day” of the repeal of Roe versus Wade, the Supreme Court ruling enshrining a women’s right to abortion.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/evangelical-christian-will-be-power-behind-the-throne-dhgdlk9v2>

Huff Post

First person article by a CofE Vicar, now in South Africa, on living with chronic pain and depression. Article is part of a month-long focus

around men to highlight the pressures they face around identity and to raise awareness of the epidemic of suicide.

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/dave-meldrum/on-being-a-vicar-with-chr_b_12787550.html