



Next stop COP21 for Pilgrimage2Paris

Nearly 50 pilgrims set off yesterday on a 200-mile journey from London to Paris calling on world leaders to agree a fair, ambitious and binding climate deal at the United Nations Climate Change Conference later this month. Report in this issue

A Feakle traitor - The life and times of Jack Weir in focus

Jack Weir, one of four Protestant clergymen who met the Provisional IRA at Feakle in an attempt

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to persuade them to call a cease fire will be the focus of a lecture in Belfast next week. Together with Bishop Arthur Butler and Canon William Arlow of the Church of Ireland, and the Rev Dr Eric Gallagher of the Methodist Church, he was regarded by some as a traitor to his church and community.

Entitled 'Jack Weir – ['Feakle traitor', peacemaker, 'Saviour of the PCI', the cold church administrator, a prophet and evangelist'](#), the lecture will be given by Rev. Dr. Bill Addley, former professor of Practical Theology at Union Theological College.

Dr. Addley will speak about the life and times of a man who often defied convention and will touch on some of the more controversial initiatives that he undertook.

Born in 1919 to Presbyterian missionary parents in Manchuria (in what is North East China today), he attended local missionary schools, but continued his education in Northern Ireland and Scotland. Ordained in 1944, Rev. Jack Weir followed in his parents' footsteps and returned to China as a missionary.



With the defeat of Japan and the ending of the Second World War in August 1945, he remained in China for five years. In 1950, a year after the Communist victory in the long-running civil war, he was expelled by the new authorities and was the last Presbyterian missionary to leave the country.

Returning to Ireland he was Minister in Letterkenny from 1952 until his appointment as Assistant Clerk of Assembly in 1962. He became Clerk in 1964 and was elected Moderator of the

Presbyterian Church in 1976, retiring as Clerk in 1985.

On his death in the year 2000, aged 81, the then Moderator, Dr. Trevor Morrow, said of him, "[His] willingness to honour and give of himself to those with whom he may have disagreed meant that there was no one in the Presbyterian Church and in the wider community who did not respect and genuinely admire him . . ." He also described him as 'a man of utter integrity.'

As a young minister, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Ian McNie, the current Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, remembers Dr. Weir as "a man of considerable influence and a man of stature and wisdom within the Presbyterian Church and wider Christian community.

"In his day Dr. Weir was indeed an influential figure and during the Troubles someone who was prepared to take risks in the interests of peace, which garnered both respect and criticism in equal measure.

"I remember that he had an air of tangible authority, rather like a headmaster, which could be daunting for a young minister, but I always

found him to be wise and his advice sound,” Dr. McNie recalled.

The [Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland's](#) lecture on Jack Weir will take place on Thursday 19th November at 8pm in Bloomfield Presbyterian Church, Belfast. For further information contact phsilibrarian@pcinet.org or telephone 028 9072 7330.

Laity are disciples, not ‘second-class members’ of Church, says Pope

Laypeople are not second-class members at the service of the Church hierarchy, but are disciples of Christ called to “enliven every environment, every activity and every human relationship according to the Gospel,” Pope Francis has said.

The Pope sent a message to Cardinal Stanislaw Rylko, president of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, and participants of a workshop marking the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council's Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, which

defined the role, vocation and mission of laypeople in the Catholic Church.

In his message, the Pope said that the Second Vatican Council did not just highlight the importance of the laity in the Church, but defined their role as a vocation.

The proclamation of the Gospel “is not reserved to some ‘mission professionals,’ but should be the profound aspiration of all lay faithful who are called to evangelise by virtue of their baptism,” he said.

The Pope said that while the council’s teachings have contributed to the growth of lay formation, its application challenges “every generation of pastors and laypeople, because it is a priceless gift of the Holy Spirit that must be accepted with gratitude and a sense of responsibility.”

Telling participants that making the teachings of the Second Vatican Council come alive in the Church was a strong pastoral motivation for St John Paul II, Pope Francis asked them to “have in your hearts the same longing to live and implement the council and bring the light of Christ to the world.”

Meanwhile, the pope has met with members of the Guanellian Family, a group of individuals and associations inspired by the life and charism of St Louis Guanella, the Italian founder the Servants of Charity, the Daughters of St Mary of Providence and the Confraternity of St Joseph.

Meeting some 5,000 members on a pilgrimage to Rome today, Pope Francis told them that if he were to imagine what their founder — who died in 1915 — would tell them today, he said it would be “to trust, look and hurry.”

People have to trust in the fact that God cannot help but love his children no matter what, he said.

He added: “If we are distant from him, we are longed for; when we draw close, we are embraced; if we fall, he picks us up; if we are repentant, he forgives.”

Join in highlighting food poverty - an invite from East Belfast church

Last week, The Larder food bank organised by Boring Wells in St Christopher's, Mersey Street, East Belfast, gave out emergency food to its 5000th person in under three years.

The folk at The Larder invite you to join them in highlighting food poverty by gathering signatures.

Boring Wells leader, Revd Adrian McCartney, says: “The Larder in St Christopher’s exists to both serve people in need and as a reminder that some things in our society are not working as well as they could.

“We would love 5000 people to sign the statement below as part of our preparations for Feeding the 5000 Day at the Larder food bank on 1 December. The list of signatures will be addressed to the people who could help to make the changes needed to improve this situation:

”At the original feeding of the 5000 Jesus said to his followers, ‘You give them something to eat.’

We would like to apologise to all those who have less than they need because we want to keep more than we need. Would you join with us in bringing about the changes that will make this apology more than words?’

“We will be presenting these signatures to representatives of Stormont and Westminster. This is not party–political. We just want to suggest that attitudes like compassion and

generosity are valid considerations when making economic and welfare policy.” See - <http://www.boringwells.com/feeding-the-5000.html>

New president for Down and Dromore Mothers' Union

June Butler MBE, who is to become the next Diocesan President of Down and Dromore Mothers' Union. She succeeds Joy Wilcox who has held the position for the past 3 years.



June is the Diocesan Secretary of Down and Dromore and Connor, a post to which she was appointed in October 2010. Previously she was Assistant Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland.

Speaking of her selection, June said, “I feel privileged and humbled to have been selected by my colleagues in the Mothers’ Union in Down and Dromore to be their next Diocesan President. I hope my experience in the public sector and more recently working for the Church of Ireland will help me to guide the members through the next few years and whatever challenges they may bring, particularly in sustaining our MU aims and developing our role. It will be challenging for me to follow in the footsteps of so many committed and inspirational MU leaders in this Diocese.”

June will be commissioned on Sunday 10 January at 4.00 pm in her home parish of Saintfield.

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Some of the pilgrims cross Westminster Bridge on the first leg of their pilgrimage to Paris for the COP21 summit.

world leaders to agree a fair, ambitious and binding climate deal at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris.

At a service at St Martin in the Fields to celebrate creation and bless the pilgrims before they leave London, the Bishop of Salisbury, the Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam, the Church of England's lead bishop on the environment, said, "We walk in solidarity for climate justice for the world's

poorest and most vulnerable. We are all aware of the impact of climate change and we can not be the first generation to knowingly turn away from our responsibilities to protect the planet. These 50 pilgrims are highlighting the need for those involved in the climate change talks to reach an agreement that moves us towards a fairer, low-carbon future at Paris and beyond."

The pilgrims will arrive in the French capital on the 27th November, as negotiators from more than 190 nations gather for the start of the talks. The pilgrims will be joining with other faith groups to hand in campaign petitions to Christiana Figueres, executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as well as participating in the mass mobilisation through the centre of the city, ensuring the Church has a strong voice in and around the talks.

James Buchanan who is leading the Pilgrimage2Paris, said, "After months of hard work we are now on our way. This morning's service is a reminder of what is at stake at the upcoming UN Climate Change conference, and we can't wait to add our voice. There is no planet

B so please do join us on this journey to Paris for climate justice."

The pilgrimage has the backing of the Church of England and major aid agencies Christian Aid, CAFOD and Tearfund. Pilgrims will be staying in churches and in the houses of church members along the route, following in a centuries-old tradition.

Join us on the journey. For more information and to keep up to date with the pilgrims' progress, visit: www.pilgrimage2paris.org.uk, or follow @pilgrims2paris on Twitter and Instagram.

History made with first Anglican confirmation service in Moroccan capital

A new Anglican congregation in Rabat has held its first confirmation service in what is believed to be the first such service in the Moroccan capital.

The north African country has had an unbroken Anglican presence for just over 100 years with churches in [Casablanca](#) and Tangier – although

the first C of E church, in Tangier, has its origins in the time of Charles II.



Three candidates make their confirmation vows at the new St Augustine of Hippo Church in Rabat, Morocco.

Official statistics show that 99.9 per cent of the population are Muslim. Islam is the official religion of the country but the King of Morocco gives permission to four churches – Roman Catholic, Orthodox, French Protestant and Anglican – to minister to their own communities.

In April 2013, the Revd Canon Dr Medhat Sabry [moved from Cairo](#) to become the priest-in-charge of St John the Evangelist Church in Casablanca. Less than a year later, in January 2014, that church [held its first confirmation service](#) since 1996 when 19 Christians from the Philippines, the USA, Nigeria and Liberia confirmed their baptismal vows in front of the Suffragan Bishop of Europe, the Rt Revd David Hamid.

A few months later, in April last year, Dr Sabry planted two new congregations – in Marrakech and Rabat – to cater for the many English-speaking foreign Christians living in those areas. And now, twelve months on, the Church in Rabat, named after the African saint, St Augustine of Hippo, has held its own confirmation service for three members of its growing congregation.

“There are a large number of foreign Christians [in Rabat] who seek to worship in the English language,” Bishop Hamid said. “The community is growing with members coming from the Philippines and several sub-Saharan African countries.”

The bishop described last month's confirmation service as "a significant date for this new community", adding: "I believe this may be the first Anglican confirmations ever held in Rabat."

The new church of St Augustine of Hippo meets for a weekly Eucharist service in the chapel of a Roman Catholic school – the *Filles du Cœur Immaculé de Marie*.

The Revd Canon Dr Medhat Sabry was raised in an Anglican family and attended Jesus Light of the World church in Old Cairo since his childhood. He served the church as Sunday school teacher, youth leader, and – after ordination – as its priest.

He served on the diocese of Egypt's Executive and Finance boards and taught a number of Old Testament courses at three theological seminaries including the Anglican theological seminary at the Alexandria School of Theology and Hope International University, Middle East branch; before accepting the call to lead the Anglican Church in Casablanca in April 2013.

Media digest

Mail

News report, following [the publication](#) of an overview of the Church's finances for the past 10 years, that the CofE's income was £1.41 billion in 2013. The article relates the figure to turnovers of high street coffee and fast food chains and notes that almost half the income was from churchgoers, who put nearly £700 a year each into collection plates or via tax-efficient donations. The article quotes the bishop's pastoral letter written in the run up to the General Election in May.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3316421/Church-makes-money-Starbucks-McDonald-s-Income-1-41bn-tops-fast-food-giant-s-earnings-1-37bn-three-times-higher-coffee-chain.html>

Mail online

Agency report of a speech given by Terry Waite, the former envoy of the Archbishop of Canterbury, on the need to build trust to make peace possible. Mr Waite was speaking at RISING 15, a global peace forum meeting in Coventry. He said face to face contact was vital if peace was going to "stick".

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3315999/People-need-build-trust-make-peace-possible-former-envoy-Waite.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490

Tel

A CofE school in Hartlepool has been criticised for telling girls to wear black tights with school skirts in the "interest of modesty". A letter sent by St Hild's CofE School to parents highlighted concerns regarding the "length of skirts worn by female students".

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/11991428/Primary-school-tells-girls-to-wear-tights-in-interest-of-modesty.html>

Comment

Telegraph: Climate change is a moral priority writes the Bishop of Salisbury, Nicholas Holtam, but Government proposals to reduce Feed-In Tariffs early risk damaging our efforts to fight it.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/energy/renewableenergy/11989345/Britain-is-on-the-brink-of-a-solar-revolution.-Dont-put-the-brakes-on-now.html>

International Business Times: Malcolm Brown, Director of Mission and Public Affairs Division of the Church of England on moves to deregulate Sunday trading hours.

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/longer-sunday-shopping-hours-churchs-argument-against-them-isnt-about-religion-1528274>

Obituaries

Times: The Rt Revd Simon Burrows, former Bishop of Buckingham.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/obituaries/article4612721.ece>

Guard/Exp

A majority of British Muslims say they have witnessed discrimination against followers of the Islamic faith and that a climate of hate is being driven by politicians and media, a study has found. Six out of 10 Muslims in Britain surveyed by the Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) said they had seen Islamophobia directed at someone else, up from four in 10 when the survey was

first conducted in 2010. Former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, is quoted.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/11/majority-of-british-muslims-have-witnessed-islamophobia-study>
<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/618662/Attacks-Muslims-on-rise-report-Islamic-Human-Rights-Commission>

Tel

The government's plans to extend Sunday trading laws have received a boost after the Liberal Democrats said they would support the plans. Eight LibDem MPs, led by leader Tim Farron, were expected to agree to back the Prime Minister's plans to allow local councils to let shops open for longer on Sundays. The news means that the vote on whether to relax the rules - which Mr Cameron postponed from next week in the face of opposition from 20 of his own MPs and the SNP - could be very close.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/retailandconsumer/11989622/Vote-on-Sunday-trading-hours-on-knife-edge-as-LibDems-MPs-back-David-Cameron-relaxation-plans.html>

BBC (History Extra)

In pictures - treasures from England's parish churches

<http://www.historyextra.com/article/medieval/pictures-treasures-englands-parish-churches>

BT

This weekend marks the 75th anniversary of Nazi Germany's air raid on Coventry. For 11 hours on the night of November 14, 1940 tons of high explosive bombs were dropped on the Midlands city. The city's Cathedral was

destroyed in the raid. Events marking the date culminate in a peace and reconciliation concert at Coventry Cathedral on Saturday, with a memorial service the following day.

<http://home.bt.com/news/uk-news/75th-anniversary-of-coventry-bliitz-to-be-honoured-11364015963283>

BBC

A couple from Taunton have celebrated a combined 150 years of ringing bells at their church in the town. Margaret and Dennis Whatmore, who met during World War Two and married in 1947, said their role was a "never-ending challenge". Dennis, 92, started ringing when he was 13 while Margaret, who turns 92 on Friday, only started learning when she was 19.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-somerset-34789816>

BBC

One of the world's smallest consecrated chapels has closed for "major structural work". The Little Chapel, in Les Vauxbelets, St Andrew, Guernsey, measures 16ft (5m) by 9ft (3m) and will be shut for "a number of months". Last year, cracks started appearing in the structure, which were blamed on subsidence. The length of closure is unclear in what is described as the "first phase" of a "restoration project".

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-guernsey-34721901>

Comment

Times: Europe must persuade governments to offer migrants a stable future in their home countries.

[http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/leaders/
article4611634.ece](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/leaders/article4611634.ece)

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