



Irish Church leaders have welcomed the political accommodation and agreement made between Sinn Fein, the DUP, the Dublin and London governments. Report this issue

Mothers' Union vigils against worldwide gender based violence

The Mothers' Union throughout Ireland is taking part in 16 Days of Activism Against Gender

Violence, a global movement which speaks out against gender-based violence.

The 16 days begin on November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Woman) and end on December 10 (Human Rights Day).

Mothers' Union members are hosting Vigils throughout all 12 dioceses in Ireland on Saturday November 28. In a powerful gesture of solidarity with their sisters at home and across the world who are suffering at the hand of gender based violence, Mothers' Union All-Ireland is spreading the word and getting together in prayer and in person on Saturday, November 28 in the form of an All-Ireland Prayer Vigil. This simple action will also raise awareness among the general population and contribute to pressurising governments to take action.

Mothers' Union are urging as many people as possible to come along on the day, for all or part of the vigil, and to bring their friends. Yellow and purple are the colours associated with the 16 Days Campaign Against Gender Based Violence. While not essential Mothers' Union encourage those attending to wear these colours on November 28.

Mothers' Union Dublin & Glendalough is organising a prayer vigil at Christ Church Cathedral on Saturday November 28 from 3.00 pm until 6.00 pm.

What is 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence?

Beginning on November 25, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and ending on December 10, Human Rights Day, the campaign is used by individuals and groups around the world to call for an end to all forms of violence against women. Figures from the World Health Organisation show that, globally, an estimated 23% to 37 % of women suffer violence from an intimate partner; and that 38 % of all women murdered across the world are killed by their partner. '16 Days' provides the opportunity to raise awareness of this issue, demonstrate solidarity against violence and put pressure on governments to take action.

On Saturday November 28. Members from **Connor and Down & Dromore dioceses** are sharing in a Vigil in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, from 3pm–6pm. For further information on the Prayer Vigil in St Anne's Cathedral, please contact Joyce Bond on 028 2586 1215

Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh diocese Mothers' Union will be holding a prayer vigil as part of the Mothers' Union '16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence' on Saturday, 28th November, in St George's Church, Carrick-on-Shannon, between 3pm and 6pm.

The event will include speakers from the Domestic Violence Advocacy Service, The Samaritans, Sligo Rape Crisis Centre and Invisible Trafficking.

Church leaders welcome political accommodation and agreement

The heads of the Catholic Church, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and the Methodist Church all put their names to a statement in support of the deal, which hopes to salvage Northern Ireland's power-sharing administration.

The deal, which took ten weeks of talks to form, was prompted by the coalition Executive's near collapse after a range of disputes including the fallout from a murder linked to the IRA and an acute budgetary crisis.



In it, they said: “As Church leaders, we came together in September and called on our elected representatives to place at the heart of their discussions ‘an awareness of their shared responsibility for the common good’. Today we welcome the announcement, that with the support of the two Governments, a wide ranging agreement has been reached.

“We recognise that everyone involved in the negotiations will not have achieved all that they wanted in this agreement, nor will everyone who reads it be fully content with every aspect of it. Such is the nature of any agreed accommodation. However, we pray that this particular accommodation reached in the interests of all, will be the basis for beginning to

restore hope to those who are struggling and re-establish the trust that has been slowly ebbing from our political institutions.

“As Churches we will study the detail of The Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan and will no doubt comment further. We also encourage it to be carefully and widely read across the community and given fair and thorough consideration.”

The signatories were: Rev. Brian Anderson, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland; Archbishop Richard Clarke, Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh; Archbishop Eamon Martin, Catholic Archbishop of Armagh; Rt. Rev. Dr. Ian McNie, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland; Rev. Dr. Donald Watts, President, Irish Council of Churches

The new deal, which is almost 70 pages long, resolves the budgetary crisis which was caused by the long-term failure to adopt welfare changes.

However, it failed to secure a solution regarding the issues that have arisen from the Northern Ireland troubles.

David Cameron has said the Stormont deal was "an important turning point for Northern Ireland." It is also backed by the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Féin, but the executive's Justice Minister David Ford, who leads the Alliance Party, has said his party refused to support it.

NGOs call for Stormont talks to be 'family-centred'

Victims' groups have said they are disappointed there is no movement on the legacy issues of the Troubles.

NGOs have called on the Irish and British Governments to ensure that any legacy mechanisms that may be agreed at the negotiating table in this week's Stormont talks are 'human rights compliant' and family-centred. The organisations; Amnesty International, the Committee on the Administration of Justice, the Pat Finucane Centre, Relatives for Justice and Rights Watch UK, urged the two governments 'to comply with their responsibilities under Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights', the right to life.

A spokesperson for the groups, said: "The Stormont House Agreement reached last December, an agreement which involved the two governments, offered the real possibility of an independent investigatory mechanism for families who have been bereaved through the conflict – the Historical Investigations Unit (HIU).

“The independence of the proposed HIU has been put at risk by the apparent insistence that ‘national security’ caveats are inserted in the legislation. This is flagrantly outside the terms of the Stormont House Agreement. Families, many of whom have been waiting decades, will not accept a process that is not independent.

“As NGOs working in this area we wish to urgently remind the two Governments and the political parties that ‘national security’ can never be used to justify withholding information on human rights violations.

“The Governments have international legal obligations. The political parties have a moral obligation to victims and survivors. Any agreement which does not have the human rights of victims and survivors at its core will fail.”

Retiring Dean will be C of I rep at C of E's General Synod

The Dean of Connor, The Very Rev John FA Bond, will represent the Church of Ireland at the Inaugural Service of the Tenth General Synod of the Church of England at Westminster Abbey on Wednesday November 24.

Her Majesty the Queen, will be present, and will open the Synod in the presence of guests including Dean Bond. Her Majesty will also attend the Ecumenical Lunch hosted by the Presidents of the Synod to which Dean Bond and his wife Joyce are invited.

Dean Bond, who retires as rector of Skerry, Rathcavan & Newtowncrommelin in January after 48 years of ministry in Connor Diocese, was asked to attend the General Synod by the Standing Committee of the Church of Ireland.

“It was a real honour to be asked,” Dean Bond said. “It is nice to finish on a little bit of a high!”

Dean Bond will be robed for the Procession and Inauguration Eucharist in Westminster Abbey. Mrs. Bond will attend the service.



The Dean of Connor, The Very Rev John FA Bond

Following the service, the Dean will be part of the platform party including the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, sitting in Church House, London, which will hear Her Majesty's short address to Synod.

This will be followed by lunch with Her Majesty, the Archbishops and other ecumenical and interfaith guests.

Dean Bond said he was looking forward to the occasion. “It will be interesting to see how they do things in the Church of England and to see if they have learned anything from the Church of Ireland,” he joked.

Dean Bond previously shared a service with the current Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev Justin Welby, when he was Dean of Liverpool, shortly before he became Bishop of Durham and later Archbishop of Canterbury.

Dáil hearing of Bill to provide legal security to LGBT employees

GLEN - the `Gay and Lesbian network - has welcomed yesterday's (18 November) second stage of the Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2013 in the Dáil. The Bill, if passed, will amend the provisions of Section 37(1) of the Employment Equality Act to remove the 'chill factor' for LGBT employees of religious run institutions. The Bill has already passed through the Seanad.

“This Bill is the necessary piece of the legislative map that will allow LGBT people to get married and have a family without a threat to their job if they work in a religious run institution. It is fitting

that the Bill comes to the final stages in the Oireachtas in the week, as the first lesbian and gay couples get married”, stated Sandra Irwin-Gowran, Director of Education Policy with GLEN.

“This legislation, while not perfect, is a very important stage in bringing an end to the situation where LGBT employees of religious, medical and educational institutions have to hide their sexual orientation, gender identity, civil or family status”, continued Sandra Irwin-Gowran.

“The Bill, when it completes its passage through the Dáil, will give much greater legal confidence to LGBT people working in religious run employments that are funded by the tax payer, to live openly and enjoy the same employment protections as their co-workers” said Irwin-Gowran.

“GLEN affirms the principle that every employee should enjoy equal protections in their workplace and in their recruitment and promotion prospects. This Bill moves a major step closer to that principle for those working in publicly funded institutions.

GLEN also highlights where further progress remains to be made for privately funded religious-run institutions and for trans people.

“The same protections should be available for employees of privately funded institutions under the control of a religious body, which would include increased certainty for all employees under all equality grounds. While many transgender employees are covered under the gender ground and therefore through the provisions of this Bill, further protections to ensure that all trans employees are equally protected remain to be addressed” concluded Irwin-Gowran.

Belfast healing service for young people

A special service aimed at young people is taking place in Belfast Cathedral on Monday 30th November at 8pm under the auspices of Interdenominational Divine Healing Ministries. It will be led by Youth With a Mission and the speaker will be Jonny Clarke, leader of YWAM Ireland.



Jonny is an engaging and inspiring speaker and will share experiences of healing and hope that will encourage all generations in these days. We believe that this service on the 30th November will also be significant in allowing younger people to experience the healing of Jesus and to be equipped in bringing this healing out to their peers, churches and communities.

Fergus McMorrow, Youth Officer of DHM said, "May I encourage you to commit to pray for this Youth Service and particularly for Jonny and his team, for the worship team, the prayer ministry and that many would be drawn to participate at this service. This service will bring hope to people of all ages, so please invite and promote in any way you can over the next couple of weeks."

Personal prayer for healing and anointing with oil will be offered at this service. For more

information, telephone: 02890 311532. Email:
divinehealing@live.co.uk.

Web: www.divinehealingministries.org

Concert for Paris: St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin

A concert for Paris will take place this Friday evening (20th November) in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. The event will start at 8.00pm. Admission is free and all are welcome. More information is available at www.concertforparis.org

Births within wedlock on course to become a minority in England and Wales

Babies born within marriage could become a minority in England and Wales within five years as younger couples turn their back on matrimony, new figures suggest.

John Binham in Daily Telegraph - According to the Office for National statistics just over half – 52.5 per cent – of women who gave birth in England and Wales last year were married.

That compares to 57.8 per cent a decade earlier and more than 61 per cent at the beginning of the new century.

Although the decline appears to have stalled in the last two years, if it continues at the average rate seen over the last decade, only a minority of babies would be born in wedlock by 2020.

But when the effects of immigration are removed from the figures, the landmark has already been passed – as most British-born women who gave birth last year were unmarried.

The trend can be seen in new official figures which also [confirm that middle aged mothers have overtaken younger women in maternity wards for the first time](#) in a major milestone in the reshaping of family life in Britain.

Media digest

Ireland's 'first same-sex marriage' couple told they cannot wed

Belfast Telegraph

A gay Irish couple admitted their dream to marry turned into a nightmare after bureaucratic confusion resulted in their marriage having to be postponed ...

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/irelands-first-samesex-marriage-couple-told-they-cannot-wed-34208098.html>

Same-sex marriage: Co Antrim couple among first to marry in Republic under new Irish law -

[BelfastTelegraph.co.uk](http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk)

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/samesex-marriage-co-antrim-couple-among-first-to-marry-in-republic-under-new-irish-law-34210508.html>

Muslim Ballymena family believe petrol bombing was motivated by Paris attacks

Belfast Telegraph

Police have described it as a "**religious** hate crime" and now the family is preparing to flee their home in fear.

They believe the attack could have killed ..

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/video-news/video-ballymena-attack-muslim-mans-family-home-targeted-by-petrol-bombers-34209823.html>

Stormont deal: Four biggest churches welcome agreement

Belfast Newsletter

The heads of the Catholic church, **Church of Ireland**, Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and the Methodist Church all put their names to the statement after **news** of the ...

Rev Brian Anderson, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland; ...

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/northern-ireland-news/stormont-deal-four-biggest-churches-welcome-agreement-1-7071107>

Guard

More than 100 Syrian refugees have arrived at Glasgow airport as part of the UK government's promise to take in 1,000 people by Christmas. The plane brought mainly families from camps bordering Syria. At least five local authorities - Edinburgh, Glasgow, Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and North Ayrshire - are expected to host the refugees.

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/nov/17/syrian-refugees-arrive-glasgow-scotland>

BBC

A jury has failed to reach a verdict at the trial of a priest accused of defrauding his church by keeping service fees in his own bank account. Canon Ian Finn, denied fraud by abuse of his position at his church in Haverhill, Suffolk. Mr Finn had been accused of dishonestly keeping more than £13,000 in fees from funerals and wedding banns over the period from 2007 to 2014. The Crown Prosecution Service is to decide whether it will seek a re-trial.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-suffolk-34846553>

Guard

Reports an American poll, which suggests that most millennials would prefer to put off marriage until they accomplish other important milestones. The online survey of 3,000 18 to 29 year olds found that 21% agreed with the statement, it was "very important" for a couple to live together before marriage.

<http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2015/nov/17/millennials-delay-marriage-american-family-survey>

Co-Star

The CofE is preparing to sell the former offices of the Embassy of The Republic of Slovenia on Little College Street. The property at 10 Little College Street, SW1, has planning approval for residential conversion and is located close to the Houses of Parliament.

<http://www.costar.co.uk/en/assets/news/2015/November/Church-of-England-to-sell-in-SW1-/>

Comment

Evening Standard: The Rt Revd Richard Chartres writes that in these troubled times, London's many faiths must work together.

<http://www.standard.co.uk/comment/comment/the-rt-revd-richard-chartres-in-these-troubled-times-our-city-s-many-faiths-must-work-together-a3116396.html>

Times: Usama Hasan writes, "Give us time. This is Islam's Reformation."

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article4616761.ece>

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