



***Sister Clare Crockett***

## **Ecuador quake victim Derry nun Sr Clare now a focus for prayers around the world**

More than six months after Sister Clare Crockett was killed when an earthquake hit a school in Ecuador, the impact of her tragic death continues

to reverberate from across the globe back to her home in the heart of Londonderry, Donna Deeney writes in The Belfast Telegraph.

A film which draws its title, "All or Nothing", from Sr Clare's attitude to everything she did, is being made by the Home of the Mother Order that she belonged to.

Today, in a moving interview, her sister Megan tells the Belfast Telegraph how the family continues to be inundated with messages from around the world.

Sr Clare grew up in the Brandywell area where she spent 18 years doing what every other girl her age loves - hanging out with her friends and two sisters, gearing up for a weekend of partying and, in her case, planning a future as a successful and famous actor.

But life turned out very differently for Clare Crockett - she abandoned all her aspirations of fame and fortune when she was 17 after she was called by God to become a nun.

Sadly, her life as Sr Clare was cut short in April this year when the terrible earthquake hit Ecuador and reduced the school building she



***The funeral of Sister Clare Theresa Crockett at St Columbas Church, Long Tower in Derry. The 33 years old nun from the Mother Order died in who died in Playa Prieta when a school collapsed when Ecuador suffered from an earthquake on the 16th of April.***

was in to rubble, killing her as she tried to protect the children she was teaching.

As news of her death filtered through to her family back in Derry, it brought a devastation her

parents Margaret and Gerald and sisters Shauna and Megan could barely cope with.

But they drew comfort from the huge number of people from the city who called to their home to offer condolences.

In the weeks it took for Sr Clare's remains to be brought back to Derry for her funeral, the family heard countless stories of people who knew her and remembered her fun-loving ways growing up in the city.

Since then, that flow of well-wishers to the Crockett family home has never ceased, and includes those who knew Sr Clare in her role as a nun, and whose lives were impacted for the better by meeting her.

Megan Crockett told the Belfast Telegraph how every day they get an insight into how many lives Clare continues to touch.

"I am having to get used to being called 'that wee nun's sister' which I find funny because it makes our Clare sound as if she was a wee old lady," she said.

"Every day we are contacted by people telling us their stories of Clare - we get emails from people

in Ecuador and America where she touched so many.

"People have been telling us how they are praying to Clare, asking her to intercede for people in their family who are very ill in hospital and how they have recovered, and they tell us Clare did this for them.

"Just two weeks ago, a couple from Massachusetts called to our house who had come here especially to visit Clare's grave.

"We also found out recently about a wee pensioner from Belfast who gets the bus down to Derry every day so he can go and pray at Clare's grave.

"One day I was in the back of a taxi and the driver pulled down his sun visor and there was the novena with our Clare's picture on it. I told him that was my sister and he said: 'I say a Novena to that wee nun every day'.

"This has been going on for six months now and we know it isn't what usually happens when someone dies, but it continues to be a great comfort to us and helps us cope with missing Clare."

By her own admission, Sr Clare was an unlikely nun.

In her testimony before she took her final vows, she said: "I liked to party a lot. My weekends since I was 16 or 17 consisted of getting drunk with my friends. I wasted all my money on alcohol and cigarettes. "He (God) wanted me to live like the sisters in poverty, chastity, and obedience.

"I automatically told Him that that was impossible for me.

"I said: 'I can't be a nun! I can't leave drinking, cigarettes, partying, my career, and my family'."

Back in Derry, Sr Clare's family found it difficult at the start to imagine her as a nun.

Megan continued: "Growing up, the three of us - Clare, Shauna and me - were very close. As well as sisters we were best friends, but Clare was definitely the boss of us. Whatever she said went - if she had been told to do the dishes but decided she didn't want to, she said: 'I am the oldest, you two can do the dishes' and we did.

"Clare was incredible, she was full of energy, full of craic and full of fun.

"She was very definite about what her life was going to be like.

"She was going to be famous, star in the movies and everyone would recognise her all over the world, and it looked like she was on her way because she had been in a few documentaries.

"She had an offer from Nickelodeon to become a presenter just before she went on what she thought was a 10-day party trip to Ibiza in Spain, but was, in fact, a pilgrimage.

"Clare wasn't overly religious, in fact many's a time we skipped Mass, but we were cute enough to check what priest was saying Mass and what was in the parish bulletin first, so we were ready for any question mummy had when we got back home.

"The trip to Spain was very last minute, someone had pulled out so Clare had no time to find out too much about it, but she thought she was going on a 10-day holiday of partying.

"For the first two days, she rang home telling us how miserable she was because all they were doing was praying, but on the third day she said

she would stick it out instead of coming home early.

"When she did come home, she was a very different Clare, but a couple of days later she went back to her old self - going out and having a good time," Megan explained.

She added: "Not long after that though, she told us she was miserable and how she could only really be happy if she became a nun.

"Clare was at her absolute happiest as a nun and the ironic thing is, she has become famous.

"Maybe not in the way she imagined growing up in the Brandywell, but so many people all over the world know Sr Clare Crockett - my big sister."

## **Choirs Hit the Right Notes at Magnificent D&G 800 Diocesan Evensong**

The week of celebrations marking Dublin & Glendalough's 800 years together closed on a high note on Sunday afternoon (November 20) with a Festival Choral Evensong in Christ Church Cathedral. The uplifting service was sung by the



Combined Choirs of Christ Church Cathedral with parish choirs from all over the dioceses and Christ Church Brass. The choir of St Macartin's Cathedral in Enniskillen also took part in the service.

The Dublin & Glendalough 800 week of exploration in Christ Church Cathedral centred around the Octave of St Laurence O'Toole, the 12th century Archbishop of Dublin. A series of lectures, exhibitions and special tours were bookended by services of Choral Evensong. Opening the week, the combined choirs of Christ Church Cathedral were joined by the Girls' Choir of St Mary's Pro Cathedral for ecumenical Evensong. The preacher was the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Revd Diarmuid Martin.

Sunday's service featured singers from a total of 20 choirs. These included the Christ Church Cathedral Choir, the Christ Church Cathedral Voluntary Choir, the Christ Church Choral Mentoring Scheme, Christ Church Cathedral Past Choristers, All Saints' Grangegorman, Christ Church Bray, Zion Parish Church, Holy Trinity Killiney, Monkstown Parish Church, All Saints Blackrock, St Brigid's Stillorgan, St Patrick's



Greystones, St Patrick's Enniskerry, All Saints Raheny, Howth Parish Church, Newcastle Parish, the Seafield Singers, St Cecilia Singers, Blessington Chamber Choir and the Choir of St Macartin's Cathedral.

Archbishop Michael Jackson preached at the service and spoke about the life of Laurence O'Toole and his contribution to the rebuilding of Christ Church Cathedral as well as his connection to Glendalough.

The service took place on Christ the King and the Archbishop said, as the Season of Trinity drew to

a close, it was time to reflect on the church, the Spirit, the creation and the call to worship.

“As Christian people we are called to *worship* even more than we are called to *worthiness*; we are called to *being* even more than we are called to *doing*; we are called to *the unity of the Spirit* within, and the imperative to *the bond of peace* without. Whatever we do for ourselves, we must do for others. We can return to the life of St Laurence to see history return to live in our day: people who are homeless, children who are orphans, numbers of people who are foodless – in the city of Dublin; warfare and destruction, enforced emigration worldwide, fearful arrival as refugees – in the country of Ireland. It is *in such a world as this* and *at such a time as this* that Christ is The King; it is into such a creation as this that the Son of God comes as the Child of Bethlehem. In the spirit of St Laurence and celebrating 800 years of the uniting of Dublin and Glendalough Dioceses, we prepare for Advent and ask the same God: ...*Stir up, we beseech thee, o Lord, the wills of thy faithful people ...*,” he said. [You can read the Archbishop’s sermon in full below]

During the service the Archbishop presented a number of certificates to those who had completed various levels of the Archbishop's Course in Church Music. Margaret Stokes successfully completed the Foundation Course in Church Music. Christopher May completed Year 1 with Honours. Thomas Maxwell completed Year 2 with Distinction. Janet Armstrong completed Year 2 with Honours. Jonathan Stanley completed Year 2 with Distinction.

## **Church Law Workshops Held in Cork**

Two training seminars and workshops were conducted in Cork recently by Bishop Paul Colton, in association with the Centre for Law and Religion at the School of Law and Politics at Cardiff University. Dr Colton is an Honorary Research Fellow at the School of Law and Politics.

Two courses were on offer and were held at the Northridge House Education Centre, Castle Road, Mahon, Cork. Both courses were limited to 12 participants to allow for maximum engagement and dialogue.



***The group who attended the law seminar -  
'So Now You Are in Charge' recently***

The first course, entitled 'Introduction to the Law of the Church of Ireland', provided a very basic introduction to the law of the Church of Ireland: the place of Church Law within the law of the land; where people can find the law and go to get it; what the role and purpose of law is in the context of the ecclesiology; and, in order to generate practical engagement with the law of the Church of Ireland, the afternoon session was a workshop based on issues 'thrown up' by messages left on 'The Curate's Voicemail.'

The second course, called 'So Now You Are In Charge' was geared for those who have just taken on new responsibilities in ministry, in a new setting, or as incumbents or priests-in-charge. The topics covered were: where law fits in; where to find it; who to ask; the legal status of a church, its committees and officers; the governance of a parish (including select vestries and parochial officers); law particular to incumbents and priests in charge; an overview of relevant parts of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland; and, the afternoon session was a practical workshop in the area of liturgy and liturgical flexibility.

Dr Colton has also developed a series of training modules in other areas which will be offered in the future, again in association with the Centre for Law and Religion at Cardiff University.

## **Archbishop of Canterbury visits Pakistan**

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, visited Pakistan last weekend to express solidarity with the Church of Pakistan and church communities across the country.



***Archbishop Justin with survivors of the 2013 Peshawar church bombings, St Thomas Church, Islamabad, Pakistan, Saturday 19 November 2016.***

During visits to Lahore and Islamabad, Archbishop Justin met with church communities who have endured terror attacks in recent years, and shared with them in times of prayer and worship.

Freedom of religion and belief and the persecution of Christians and other minorities must lead to our support for those affected in

every way, a point that the Church has joined many others in making.

The Archbishop was invited, hosted and accompanied throughout the trip by Bishop Samuel Azariah, Moderator of the Church of Pakistan and Bishop of Raiwind.

On Saturday, Archbishop Justin joined a service at St Thomas Church in Islamabad, attended by families and victims of the suicide bombings at All Saints Peshawar in September 2013, including many children.

During the Eucharist service, which the Archbishop described as “deeply moving”, he spoke of the words of Psalm 56:8, of God knowing our sorrows, and of the Christian belief in the crucified God.

On Sunday, the Archbishop preached and presided at an Ecumenical Sunday service at the Central Cathedral of Praying Hands in Lahore, with the bishops of the Church of Pakistan.

There the Archbishop met with a husband and wife, the latter having been badly injured in the Peshawar attacks, where one of their children also died. The couple are now both in college in



Lahore, and spoke of the comfort of Jesus the Good Shepherd.

Later that day the Archbishop met with bereaved relatives and survivors of last year's terror bombing in Youhanabad, both Christian and Muslim. He spoke of the "amazing grace" shown by the survivors, and called for prayer for peace and justice in Pakistan.

On arriving in Pakistan on Saturday, the Archbishop met with the Adviser to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Foreign Affairs, Mr Sartaj Aziz, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to discuss freedom of religion and protection of religious minorities in the country, as well as to hear of the suffering of so many of the people of Pakistan in the struggle against terrorism

## **Pope allows priests absolve women of 'grave sin' of abortion**

[Pope Francis](#) has extended the faculties of all priests to absolve the sin of abortion beyond the conclusion of the church's Year of Mercy, which concluded on Sunday, Patsy McGarry writes in The Irish Times.



***The Pope on Sunday called abortion a “horrendous crime”***

In September of last year he announced that, as part of the celebration of the Holy Year of Mercy, he would permit priests to absolve women of the sin of abortion.

While the announcement did not change Catholic teaching on abortion, it highlighted his belief that the church must enable believers to experience “a true moment of encounter with the mercy of God”.

Up to then, under Catholic teaching, a woman who procured an abortion was de facto excommunicated from the church.

Given that excommunication is the most severe ecclesiastical penalty imposed by the church, only the pope himself or a local bishop, or a priest authorised by either the pope or the bishop, could absolve that excommunication.

In a lengthy Apostolic Letter, *Misericordia et Misera*, (Mercy and Misery) issued on Monday to mark the close of the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis said: “I want to insist as firmly as I can that abortion is a grave sin, because it puts an end to an innocent life.”

But, he continued: “I can and I must state that there is no sin that God’s mercy cannot reach and wipe away when it finds a repentant heart seeking to be reconciled with the Father.”

Though the Jubilee Year was closed, he said: “the doors of mercy of our heart continues to remain open.”

“May every priest, therefore, be a guide, support and comfort to penitents on this journey of

special reconciliation” for faithful who had abortions, he wrote.

He explained his rationale, saying: “Lest any obstacle arise between the request for reconciliation and God’s forgiveness, I henceforth grant to all priests, in virtue of their ministry, the faculty to absolve those who have committed the sin of procured abortion.”

Other matters he announced included extending indefinitely the faculties of priests of the Society of St Pius X to hear confessions and grant absolution.

A restoration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation to a “central place in Christian life” was necessary, he said.

He called for an annual day dedicated to making the Scriptures better known and more widely diffused and that the church dedicate the second to last Sunday of the liturgical year as a World Day of the Poor.

### **Pope allows all priests to absolve 'grave sin' of abortion**

Irish Examiner

<http://www.irisht Examiner.com/breakingnews/world/pope-allows-all-priests-to-absolve-grave-sin-of-abortion-765079.html>

## **Priests are now allowed forgive women who have abortions**

Journal.ie

<http://www.thejournal.ie/priests-can-now-forgive-abortion-3093509-Nov2016/>

## **News briefs**

**+++ Tuam National schools' service** - The Tuam, Killala & Achonry Annual National Schools Service was held in Saint Mary's Cathedral, Tuam, on Friday 18th November. Some 150 pupils and teachers from the five schools in the diocese – Colooney, Ballina, Westport, Galway and Leaffoney – gathered to swap stories, meet and greet each other and have some fun in the context of worship. The service was organised and led by Revd Jennifer McWhirter of Killala Union with help from Steve Brickenden, Diocesan Youth Leader. The music was provided by Michelle Gill. Readings and intercessions were led by pupils from all the schools. The guest preacher this year was the Revd Andrew Ison of Ballisodare Parish. Bishop Rooke also spoke to [churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)

the children and led the closing prayer and Benediction.

**+++ St Columba's, Knock, Christmas Tree Festival** - entitled, *Let there be light* will be held Novemebr 24 - November 27. Groups welcome. Please phone Emma Macpherson for catering on: 07816 773 288. Further details at [www.coiknock.org](http://www.coiknock.org)

**+++ Engage Connor Youth Christmas Event** - Excitement is mounting as the annual Engage Connor Youth Christmas Event is fast approaching. Young people from across the Diocese are invited to the party on Saturday December 10 in All Saints Parish Centre, Antrim. The fun gets underway at 7pm and the Youth Council is planning a range of exciting games. The Christmas message will be shared and there will be lots of Christmas nibbles. Christina Baillie, Diocesan Youth Officer, said: "The Christmas Event provides a great opportunity for groups of young people in a parish celebrate together with other groups. The young people love getting to know one another, and this is a high quality night out for the whole group. We are looking forward to welcoming

groups from across the diocese to this engaging event.”

## **News links to reports on faith, politics and education**

### **Priest's proposal for a Troubles memorial by old loyalist camp site**

Belfast Newsletter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/offbeat/priest-s-proposal-for-a-troubles-memorial-by-old-loyalist-camp-site-1-7689077>

### **William Trevor dies at the age of 88**

Irish Times

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/william-trevor-dies-at-the-age-of-88-1.2876737>

## **Ind**

Features to coincide with the launch of the Independent's Christmas campaign in partnership with Centrepoin charity for homeless young people. Includes an article on the late Rev Ken Leech, Centrepoin founder, whose experience of tackling homelessness while curate at St Anne's church in Soho, central London, led him to set up the charity.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/campaigns/homelesshelpline/centrepoin-charity-history-homeless-young-people-a7424391.html>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/campaigns/homelesshelpline/centrepoin-appeal-how-it-saves-young-people-from-homelessness-a7428401.html>

## **BBC/Portsmouth News**

Report that the Revd Simon Sayers has resigned as Rector of Warblington with Emsworth in Portsmouth diocese after he admitted initiating two sexual incidents with a 16 year old girl dating from the 1990s. A statement from the diocese said that the Bishop of London, Richard Chartres, found that the vicar "engaged in conduct unbecoming a clergy person and inappropriate for a married man" and prohibited him from ministry for five years, which led to the resignation.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-38044267>

<http://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/ems-worth-rector-resigns-after-investigation-into-sexual-misconduct-1-7689118>

## **Mail**



Report that four former lawyers at the IICSA have written to MPs on the Commons' Home Affairs Select Committee

detailing concerns that Professor Jay, the inquiry's fourth chairman, was aware of a culture of bullying, harassment and even allegations of a sexual assault but did not take action – and also tried to cover it up. The paper suggests these letters are likely to be published.

[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3955350/For-happen-child-abuse-inquiry-astonishing-Torment-woman-groped-QC-abuse-probe-HQ-bombshell-letters-sent-MPs.html?](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3955350/For-happen-child-abuse-inquiry-astonishing-Torment-woman-groped-QC-abuse-probe-HQ-bombshell-letters-sent-MPs.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

[ITO=1490&ns\\_mchannel=rss&ns\\_campaign=1490](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3955350/For-happen-child-abuse-inquiry-astonishing-Torment-woman-groped-QC-abuse-probe-HQ-bombshell-letters-sent-MPs.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

## **Premier**

Report that a church in Camden, North London, has been granted a licence to sell alcohol and host live music. St Michael's church will now be able to hold gigs three nights a week and sell alcohol between seven and eleven on weeknights, Camden Council said. In an interview with the Telegraph, the vicar Father Tom Plant had said he wanted to open the church up for small live music and poetry events. "We see it as outreach, not Bible-bashing, but welcoming people in," he said.

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Church-gets-live-music-and-alcohol-licence-despite-police-objections>

## **Mail**

Report that a church in northern Iraq has reopened after two years under Islamic State control. The bells have rung after two years of silence in the Mar Korkeis church in the town of Bashiqa, around 15 kilometres north of Mosul, Islamic State's last major city stronghold in Iraq.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3954180/Church-northern-Iraq-reopened-two-years-IS-control.html?>

[ITO=1490&ns\\_mchannel=rss&ns\\_campaign=1490](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3954180/Church-northern-Iraq-reopened-two-years-IS-control.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

## **Mail**

Report that on Sunday Pope Francis closed the Roman Catholic Church's Holy Year of Mercy. At a ceremony in St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Francis closed its 'Holy Door,' through which the Vatican estimates some 20 million pilgrims have walked since it was opened in December.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3954288/Pope-closes-Roman-Catholic-Holy-Year-marked-lights-shadows.html?>

November 22

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