



Pope Francis exchanged gifts with Taoiseach Enda Kenny during a private audience at the Vatican

Pope Francis to visit Ireland in August 2018

Pope Francis will visit Ireland in 2018, the Irish prime minister has confirmed.

Pope Francis met Taoiseach Enda Kenny in the Vatican on Monday, with the Irish prime minister tweeting after the meeting that the Pope will visit Dublin for the World Meeting of Families.

Kenny had travelled to the Vatican to formally give his support to the proposed papal visit. The Irish Bishops' Conference had previously extended the invitation to the Pontiff.

Meanwhile, some Irish government officials have said the timing of the papal visit could be "inappropriate" because it may coincide with a referendum on abortion law.

The Transport, Tourism and Sport Minister Shane Ross told The Times: "I think it would probably be inappropriate for [Pope Francis] to come at exactly the same time as the referendum. I do not see that happening, I think it would be a bit of a faux pas."

The Eighth Amendment to the Irish Constitution was introduced in 1983. Effectively, the amendment bans abortion.

The amendment states: "The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and,

with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and, as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right.”

A 67 per cent majority passed the amendment in a referendum. Four subsequent referendums about abortion have upheld the unborn child’s right to life.

In the run-up to the 2016 election, major parties committed to holding another referendum to repeal the amendment. A date for the latest referendum is not yet set.

After the meeting, Kenny presented the Pope with a print by artist Harry Clarke, while Pope Francis gave the taoiseach an etching of St Peter’s Basilica.

Ground-breaking visit to Northern Ireland predicted

Pope Francis will make a ground-breaking visit to Northern Ireland when he travels to Ireland in 2018, Northern Ireland's Deputy First Minister has predicted.

Within moments of the Pontiff confirming a widely-expected trip to Dublin for a global gathering of the Catholic Church, Martin McGuinness said there was "no prospect" of him not crossing the border.

"I think there is no prospect whatsoever of him coming to Ireland and him not coming to the North," he said.

Asked how why he was so sure, he replied: "Because I'm around a long time and I know how these things work."

Pope John Paul II was unable to cross the border into Northern Ireland during the last papal visit in 1979.

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin's reaction

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin said he was very pleased to hear that Pope Francis told Taoiseach Enda Kenny yesterday morning that he hopes to visit Ireland for a short visit for the World Meeting of Families in 2018. He said it confirms the importance of the World Meeting for the Church in Ireland and around the world.

Preparations for the World Meeting are already underway.

Archbishop Martin travelled to Rome yesterday afternoon (Monday) to meet with Cardinal Kevin Farrell head of the Pontifical Council for the Family who will be planning the World Meeting, with the host diocese of Dublin. Archbishop Martin said it was an important gift from Pope Francis to the Irish Church and the Church globally.

He said he welcomed the fact that the Taoiseach had reiterated the government's commitment to providing all appropriate arrangements in the event of Pope Francis coming to Ireland in August of 2018.

Powerful and moving prayer vigil against Gender Based Violence

Mothers' Union in Dublin & Glendalough held a powerful and moving prayer vigil on Saturday morning (November 26) as part of the '16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence'.

The vigil took place in St Brigid's Church, Stillorgan, and was attended by Mothers' Union



Prayers being hung on the prayer tree during the Dublin and Glendalough Mothers' Union Vigil Against Gender Based Violence.

Diocesan President, Karen Nelson, and members from around the Dublin & Glendalough. The service was led by the Rector, the Revd Ian Gallagher and MU Diocesan Chaplain, Canon David Mungavin.

During the service the congregation wrote prayers on prayer leaves which were hung on a tree outside the church. Prayers were said for the victims and survivors of abuse, for those who

work with and support those who experience abuse and survivors and for the perpetrators of abuse. Prayers were also said to enable people to speak out against abuse and challenge social injustice.

Detective Sergeant Jennifer Malony of the Garda Crime Prevention Unit addressed the vigil about the various types of domestic abuse ranging from violence to psychological and financial abuse. She spoke about the work of An Garda Síochána in the area of domestic abuse and changes in legislation.

She said that if someone suspects that domestic abuse is going on they should not confront the person experiencing abuse directly as that might put them at greater risk. They should, however, go and learn about the supports available to victims of domestic abuse and let them know subtly that they know something is going on and be there for them when they are ready to talk.

Throughout the service there were periods of reflective music played on the harp by Ann Walsh, past MU Diocesan President. Sixteen candles were lit symbolising the '16 Days Campaign.

16 Days of Activism against Gender–Based Violence is an international campaign which takes place each year and runs from November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to December 10 (Human Rights Day), and also encompassing other important key dates. Widely known as the ‘16 Days Campaign’, it is used as an organising strategy by individuals and organizations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

Archbishop Eamon Martin officially opens new Irish missionary seminary

Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, has opened a new Irish missionary seminary, the Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Dundalk, Co Louth, in the Archdiocese of Armagh.

There are currently sixteen seminarians studying for the priesthood in the seminary and the young men come from eight countries: Croatia, England, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Scotland, Spain and the USA. The seminarians receive their

formation in Dundalk and travel to Maynooth for their philosophical and theological studies.

At the blessing of the newly renovated first phase of the seminary Archbishop Eamon Martin said, “Today I pray God’s blessing and I give thanks for everyone who has helped in some way has made this possible. I am convinced that the Lord is with this, because already we can see it bearing fruit and I hope and pray that it will continue and that we will all be faithful to what the Lord wants of us.

“As we mark the feast day of Saint Columbanus, let us reflect on this saint who was a great Irish missionary, and who was one of a whole body of Irish men and women who left this country and went out into Europe and brought the Gospel at a time when it was difficult and dark and alien to the faith but, with the help of God, these pioneering faith-filled missionaries succeeded and began a new chapter in the life of the Christian faith in Europe.”

Archbishop Martin concluded, “Now we are beginning something similar for Ireland and for Europe, the New Evangelisation, under the protection of the holy Saints Columbanus and

Patrick and, of course, Mary, the Star of the New Evangelisation.”

Present at the ceremony was Father Maciej Zacharek, originally from Poland, who was the first seminarian to be ordained to the priesthood from the local seminary in 2014. Now he is serving in Our Lady of Lourdes parish, Drogheda.

The seminarians from Redemptoris Mater, when ordained, will be incardinated into the Archdiocese of Armagh and serve in the parishes of the Archdiocese, they may also be available to serve as missionaries for the New Evangelisation in other parts of Ireland and internationally.

The seminary is located in the former De la Salle brothers' residence in De la Salle Terrace, Dundalk. It functions largely due to donations from individuals, those wishing to donate can find details on their website www.redmatarmagh.org/help-us

Cork's First Christmas Tree Festival

The Church of Ireland Carrigrohane Union of Parishes, which include the three parish



churches of St Peter's, Carrigrohane, The Church of the Resurrection, Blarney and St Senan's, Inniscarra is hosting what it believes to be the first Christmas Tree Festival in Cork. It will run from Friday next 2nd December until Sunday, 4th December at the Church of Ireland churches in Carrigrohane, Blarney and Inniscarra.

Each venue will host part of a trail of imaginatively decorated Christmas trees that, together, tell the Christmas story in a new and wonderful way. The trees have started to arrive today and there is lots of interest, including from TV.

Fifty-five school and community groups are involved in decorating the trees. The groups

come from across Carrigrohane/Ballincollig, Blarney and Inniscarra areas. Participating groups will be provided with a verse from the Christmas story on which to base the decoration of their tree – so there will be all kinds of styles and interpretations! Full details are available on the Christmas Tree Website.

A free souvenir programme will be produced that explains all the trees – and will include advertisements for all the local business that have sponsored the Festival.

The Festival will be open to the public and there will be no entrance fee. There will be voluntary donation boxes available to support the churches' on-going work, including local community activities, and the festival partnership with St Vincent de Paul food bank.

UKIP elects pro-life Catholic as its new leader

Ukip has elected a pro-life Catholic as its new leader. Paul Nuttall, MEP for North West England, gained 62.6 per cent of party members' votes.

Nuttall, 39, is a practising Catholic. Last year he told the Tablet: “On moral issues, we, more than any other political party, are more in line with Catholic thought. Whether it’s on gender-choice abortion or same-sex marriage, we are absolutely 100 per cent behind the Catholic Church.”

Nuttall is a former deputy leader of the party, which he joined in 2004. He was elected as an MEP in 2009.

After his election, he said he would press the Government for a “real Brexit”, and said he would challenge Labour for working-class support. “I want to replace the Labour Party and make UKIP the patriotic voice of working people,” he told the BBC, adding that the Labour leadership was part of “a North London Islington set”.

Earlier this year, Nuttall wrote to the Catholic Herald to express his “shock” at the Royal College of Midwives’ support for scrapping all abortion restrictions. In 2010, he spoke at the AGM of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, at which he said it was frightening that a child is safer on the streets than in its mother’s womb.

Nuttall told the BBC he would prioritise “immigration, crime, defence, foreign aid, ensuring that British people are put to the top of the queue in the job market”.

New Pioneer Minister at the University of Stirling

The Church of Scotland has appointed a new Pioneer Minister to work with the students and staff at the University of Stirling.

Rev Dr Janet Foggie, 45, who has been the minister at St Andrew’s in Dundee, also known as the Trades Kirk, since 2009, says she is excited about her new role, which begins next month. A service of introduction will be held on Thursday 15 December at Logie Kirk from 6.45pm.

Dr Foggie said: “This is a unique and visionary opportunity to build a new church community which is part of the Church of Scotland and is shaped and created for the University which it will serve.

“It will be my job to reach out to the students, lecturers and staff at the university and to work



Rev Dr Janet Foggie the new pioneer minister for Stirling University

church that is inclusive, loving and open to all.

“This won’t be about just me; it will be a cooperative effort and we will shape our church around the ideas of everyone involved and the needs of our respected and valued university community.

“We will be asking what it means to have a Christian faith in the 21st century.

New faith communities

Dr Foggie's appointment comes after the General Assembly of Church of Scotland allocated £1 million over five years to fund five pioneer ministers to develop new faith communities across Scotland.

Jill Stevenson, head of student support services at the University of Stirling, said:

“The University's team of Honorary Chaplains give valuable support and guidance, be it emotional, spiritual or practical, to students and staff of all faiths and none.

“We welcome Rev Dr Janet Foggie to the team and to the wider University community and look forward to working with her and our existing multi-faith Chaplaincy team to guide and listen to any student who needs support.”

The Presbytery of Stirling successfully developed the idea for a ministry to work with students and staff at the University of Stirling.

A pioneer minister is already working with the Glasgow arts community and another will serve a new housing development in Midlothian, starting 1 December.

Two other ministers—yet to be appointed—will serve the Ayrshire farming community and a deprived area in Paisley.

Stirling University has 12,000 students from 120 countries

Rev Alan Miller, clerk to the Presbytery of Stirling, said: "We were delighted to be among the first to pilot a pioneer ministry, and we are looking forward to Janet Foggie taking up her appointment on December 12.

“The vision of the Presbytery in applying for a Pioneer Minister is to find new ways of renewing and strengthening the relationship between the Church and the University, working ecumenically in collaboration with the existing multi-denominational and multi-faith chaplaincy team.

“The University has more than 12,000 students with a large number of international students—20% of the student body are international students and they come from 120 different countries—living both on the University campus and in accommodation throughout the wider city area.

“Our hope is that through the appointment of a Pioneer Minister the church will find new and creative ways to engage members of the University community in exploring questions of faith and spirituality, to bring about a new expression of ecclesial community centred around the University community on campus and in the city.”

Graham Astles, acting convener of the Pioneer Ministry Project Group, said the posts are an investment by the church in looking at new ways of engaging with Scottish society.

“Bienvenido todos” – Anglicans in Spain welcome pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago

The *Iglesia Española Reformada Episcopal* (the Reformed Episcopal Church of Spain) has stepped up its welcome to pilgrims undertaking the *Camino de Santiago* by dedicating its cathedral in Madrid as a welcome centre. The Church’s Bishop, Carlos López-Lozano, consecrated a symbolic tile adjacent to the

cathedral's door on Saturday night as a sign of welcome for pilgrims. The move is seen as a step on the Church's own journey to build an Anglican centre in Santiago.

Santiago is considered by many to be the third holiest pilgrimage site in Christendom, after Jerusalem and Rome. Since at least the ninth century, Christians have made the journey to Santiago, on Spain's north-west tip, where Jesus' disciple St James is said to be buried. Earlier this year the Church [announced plans for the new Anglican centre](#) in the town, to provide a base from where protestants could celebrate the Eucharist at the end of their pilgrimage.

The IERE is an Anglican Church, but doesn't qualify for provincial status because it has less than four dioceses. Instead, it is one of five independent Anglican churches under the metropolitanical authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury. "Pilgrimage is at the very heart of our faith," Archbishop Justin Welby said.

"In recent decades the *Camino* of St James in Spain has grown in popularity but until now, the Anglican church has not been able to welcome its pilgrims," the archbishop said. "In the Bible we



The Revd Aloysi Busquets, a priest from the Iglesia Española Reformada Episcopal (IERE), highlights the welcome tile at the entrance to the Anglican Cathedral in Madrid, for pilgrims undertaking the Camino de Santiago.

often see Jesus walking with fellow pilgrims and so the prospect of building a centre where

pilgrims can be given hospitality is a positive step forward for the church.

“The Anglican Centre in Santiago will bring people together, welcoming all for a common good. I offer my congratulations and thanks to the church for this, a global interfaith religious centre, part of the Anglican Communion in Spain.”

Speaking at the service on Saturday, the Bishop of Spain, Carlos López-Lozano, said that “In our blessing of the cathedral today . . . we wish to designate this site as a sacred place for pilgrims from all of the world to be welcomed.

“We, the Spanish Episcopal Church, a proud member of the Anglican Communion, wish to be part of the radical hospitality which defines our faith.”

He continued: “Pilgrimage and the *Camino* here in Spain are becoming increasingly important. Up until now there has not been an Anglican welcome centre in Madrid for pilgrims. There is now: a place where pilgrims can be welcomed with a cup of coffee or tea or tapas and a blessing. . .

“The golden shell, a symbol of the *Camino*, will now adorn our cathedral, a beacon to the world that we believe pilgrimage is a central part of our faith, that walking on the road as the disciples did on the way to Emmaus, is central to our spiritual journey, a time of reflection and illumination: the idea is that faith is within us – portable – something we take with us wherever we go.

“We wish this message to resound throughout the Anglican Communion this Advent, I say to all of you, ‘Welcome!’ ‘*Bienvenido todos!*’”.

News briefs

+++ Advent marked in Dublin - The beginning of Advent was marked in both St Patrick’s and Christ Church cathedrals with candlelit Advent Processions on Sunday afternoon (November 27).

In St Patrick’s Cathedral, A Sequence of Music and Readings for Advent was sung by the Cathedral Choir (Schola and Men’s Voices). Dean William Morton presided and the readings were delivered by Canon Horace McKinley. In Christ Church Cathedral, Archbishop Michael Jackson presided with Dean Dermot Dunne. The service was sung by the Cathedral Choir.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Premier

Report that the Archbishop of York is providing a daily online reflection throughout Advent (see above). Beginning yesterday, the reflections are an accompaniment to a book by Tom Wright 'Advent for Everyone - a journey through Matthew' which the Archbishop commended as his Advent Book for 2016. Archbishop Sentamu said: "By reading this book alongside my online reflections I hope that these two resources will give a wealth of growth, learning and rejoicing. Come with me on this wonderful journey through Advent."

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/World/Archbishop-of-York-to-give-Advent-reflections>

Times/Tel/Mail

Reports that a prominent journalist at the BBC has accused it of not taking religion seriously and failing to fulfil its role as a public service broadcaster. Roger Bolton, who presents Radio 4's *Feedback*, criticised its output for not explaining and analysing the role, importance and influence of religion well enough. In an

article for the *Radio Times* Mr Bolton criticises the corporation's "whole approach" to religion. He writes, "How can young people and immigrants to this country understand the UK without learning of the crucial role Christianity has played in the formation of its political structures and culture?"
<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/we-are-failing-on-religion-bbc-man-says-msgfxl6ws>

Christian Today/Mail/Star

Further coverage that the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is to publish a report this week criticising organisations that victimise Christians for fear of offending others. The Star and Christian Today note the report is particularly critical of last year's ban by cinema chains on the one-minute Lord's Prayer advert from the Church of England.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3976164/Bring-Christmas-Britain-s-equality-chief-says-bosses-use-common-sense-not-dilute-festive-cheer-avoid-offending-faiths.html>

<http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/565648/Christmas-work-ban-politically-correct-UK-bosses-David-Isaac-equality>

Mirror

Further coverage that Britain's biggest cinema chain is to show films on Christmas Day. Article notes the Odeon group has scheduled more than 120 screenings in 20 of its cinemas on Sunday, December 25 – some of which will clash with services.

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/church-groups-accuse-odeon-ruining-9347180#ICID=nsm>

Ind/Tel/Guard/Mail

Further coverage of the interview given by Theresa May to the *S. Times Mag* with reference to her growing up as the only child of an Oxfordshire clergyman and her Christian faith.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/27/theresa-may-says-christian-faith-helps-make-difficult-decisions/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/nov/27/brexit-keeps-me-awake-at-night-says-theresa-may>

BBC

Reports that an MP who had to take out a loan to bury her son has said she could not fill a kettle at the time, let alone fill in a 35-page form to apply to a social fund. Swansea East MP Carolyn Harris will lead a debate in the Commons today

calling on the UK government to scrap child burial fees. The Prime Minister has said social fund funeral payments are available. But Ms Harris said she wants £10m set aside to automatically cover costs.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-38121879>

Tel

As [ExploreChurches.org](http://www.explorechurches.org) launches offering users the opportunity to see Britain's most fascinating churches by location or feature, the paper offers its list of the world's 23 most beautiful churches.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/arts-and-culture/The-worlds-most-beautiful-churches/>