



The Bishop of Clogher, the Right Rev. John McDowell speaking at the Clogher Diocesan Synod.

Bishop: how should church respond to inequality?

The Church of Ireland Bishop of Clogher, the Right Rev. John McDowell, is to visit every parish in the diocese during 2017 to discuss their needs

with rectors and non-stipendiary clergy, he announced at the Synod, according to a report in *The Impartial Reporter*

He made the announcement in the context of the job description of a bishop as set out in the 1998 Lambeth Conference;

- (a) a symbol of unity of the Church and its mission
- (b) a teacher and defender of the faith
- (c) a pastor of the pastors and of the laity
- (d) an enabler in the preaching of the Word and in the administration of the Sacraments
- (e) a leader in mission and an initiator of outreach to the world surrounding the faithful
- (f) a shepherd who nurtures and cares for the flock of God
- (g) a physician to whom are brought the wounds of society
- (h) a voice of conscience with the society in which the local church is placed
- (i) a prophet who declares the justice of God in the context of the Gospel of loving redemption
- (j) a head of the family in its wholeness, its misery and its joy.
- (k) The bishop is the family's centre of life and love

He stated: “No-one is equipped to do all of that. Obviously these tasks can only be carried out in collaboration with clerical and lay colleagues.

“ I have been bishop of Clogher for five years now and in order to help me bring a greater focus to what our priorities should be as a Diocese over the coming years and to more fully grow into my own vocation, I propose to carry out a visitation of parishes in the calendar year 2017 which in the first instance will involve discussing with rectors, curates, non-stipendiary clergy in charge of parishes and Church Army Evangelist what they understand to be the needs of their parishes to help it carry out the work of the Kingdom and how we as a diocese might be able to resource those needs.

“That will not be an overnight exercise and will involve honest conversations and openness about our weaknesses as well as our strengths.

“I will undertake to report back to next year’s Synod on what that experience has yielded,” he added.

In his address at the Synod held this year in St. Patrick’s Parish Church, Monaghan, the Bishop

referred to inequality for many working people and how the church should react to that.

“Parishes are big enough communities to make a difference in their locality yet small enough for everybody’s contribution to be both needed and noticed, “ he said.

He also referred to climate change and how farming and stewardship of the land was not merely an economic question but one on which the character and morale of whole communities depended.

He added: “I would love to see each parish cultivate a living space, whether a garden or a vegetable patch or both, as a reminder of our original vocation to maintain the Garden of creation but also as a witness that we still have a vocation together to steward the resources given to us in reflection of His Glory.”

Gay Sex ‘Offensive’ And Contrary To God’s Design, Say Anglican Leaders

Leaders of more than half of the world's Anglicans have issued an unprecedented [joint statement](#) condemning gay sex as “offensive” to God and “contrary to God’s design”.

They have also warned of “serious implications” should the Church of England decide to offer blessings to same-sex couples.

The statement was one of two documents condemning same-sex unions that came out of the sixth conference of Global South Anglican leaders meeting in Egypt.

The 24 Global South provinces that stretch across southern hemisphere include Asia and Africa and are understood to represent more than 40 million of the 80 million Anglicans worldwide.

The Global South Anglican bishops, chaired by the Primate of Egypt, Archbishop Mouneer Anis, issued the joint statement with the Global Anglican Futures conference, or GAFCON, chaired by Archbishop Nicholas Okoh of Nigeria. The Global South bishops were meeting in Cairo at their sixth conference since 1994.

The GAFCON primates said in their joint statement with the Global South Anglicans: “We contend that sexual intercourse between two persons of the same sex is contrary to God’s design, is offensive to him and reflects a disordering of God’s purposes for complementarity in sexual relations.

Justin Welby to preach in Westminster Cathedral at close of Year of Mercy

In an email to priests, the Diocese of Westminster has said Archbishop Justin Welby will preach at the close of Year of Mercy.

The end of the Jubilee of Mercy will be marked by the closing of the Holy Door at a ceremony held in Westminster Cathedral on November 13. The most senior bishop of the Church of England has been invited to deliver a sermon at the event. The theme of the sermon has not yet been released.

The diocese has invited clergy members to attend and to designate two parishioners to

represent each parish. Cardinal Nichols also instructed that local Holy Doors in the diocese should be closed at the same time as the closing of the Cathedral Door at 3.30pm. All are welcome to attend the service in Westminster.

The announcement that Archbishop Welby will speak at the service follows the meeting between the Anglican leader and Pope Francis in Rome earlier this month to mark 50 years of efforts to strengthen relations between Christian denominations.

Albania's new cardinal: a priest who spent 28 years in labour camps

When Pope Francis visited Albania in 2014, he was brought to tears by a priest's description of the two decades of imprisonment, torture and forced labour he suffered under Albania's brutal communist rulers for refusing to renounce his Catholic faith. On Sunday, Pope Francis honoured Fr Ernest Troshani Simoni's witness by naming him to the College of Cardinals.

Fr Simoni, who turns 88 later this month, was one of 17 new cardinals named by Pope Francis who will be formally elevated at a Vatican ceremony on November 19. He is among four cardinals over age 80 who can't vote in a conclave to elect a new pope but were named to the club because of their service to the church.

For Albania's tiny Catholic Church, the nomination was a deeply symbolic gesture acknowledging the suffering of Catholic clergy during the reign of Stalinist dictator Enver Hoxha, who banned religion in 1967.

"That is an homage to a cleric symbolising all Albania's suffering clergy," said the Rev Gjergj Meta, a Church spokesman.

Fr Simoni recounted his life story to Pope Francis during the Pope's 2014 one-day visit to Tirana, a visit meant to highlight the interfaith harmony that exists among the majority Muslim nation of 3.2 million. It was the end of the day and Pope Francis was meeting with priests and seminarians at the Tirana cathedral.

Fr Simoni recalled his arrest, after celebrating Christmas Mass on December 24, 1963 and

being placed in isolation. He told of being condemned to death, but the sanction was commuted to 28 years of forced labour.

During his incarceration, he became the spiritual guide to many other prisoners, who then came to his defence when he was again sentenced to death in 1973 after a revolt. He was spared because of their testimony.

Fr Simoni was freed in 1981 but had to continue preaching clandestinely until the communist regime fell in 1990.

As Fr Simoni recounted his ordeal, Pope Francis — who was reading along an Italian translation of his remarks — became visibly moved, at one point tearing up. When he finished, Fr Simoni knelt before the Pope. They embraced for nearly a minute to the applause of the priests and nuns in the audience.

“Today I touched martyrs,” Pope Francis said of the experience.

Fr Simoni will be elevated to cardinal two weeks after the Vatican honours 38 of his confreres who were persecuted or executed under Hoxha’s

regime. The beatification ceremony is scheduled for November 5 in Shkoder, Albania, where the first public Mass was held after the fall of communism.

The Albanian church said Fr Simoni's elevation was a sign of the Pope's "honour and gratitude" on the eve of the beatification.

"Elevating the Albanian clergy persecuted during communism is a sign of how much this clergy has given to the universal Catholic Church with their martyrs," a Church statement said.

News briefs

+++ Cork, Cloyne and Ross Clergy

Conference - The Chancellor of Saint Paul's Cathedral, London – the Reverend Canon Mark Oakley – will be the speaker at this year's Ballylickey Conference for the clergy of the Church of Ireland Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross from Monday 10th to Wednesday, 12th October. This is the fifteenth year in which the clergy of the Diocese have joined the Bishop, the Right Reverend Dr Paul Colton, for this two day gathering in Ballylickey, near Bantry, West Cork.

+++ Cathedral's winning website - Saint Patrick's Cathedral announced today that it has won for Best Website in the sixth annual Dot IE Net Visionary Awards. In partnership with the Irish Internet Association and IE Domain Registry, the Net Visionary Awards recognise the best in digital Ireland across four areas of digital excellence: technology, entrepreneurship, digital marketing and innovation. The awards took place on 7 October at the RDS Concert Hall. Following a three-stage process of nominations from the public, judging by a panel of their peers and voting by the public, 16 winners were announced from among 77 shortlisted business people. In the category of Best Website, which was sponsored by Blacknight Solutions, stpatrickscathedral.ie competed against 5 other websites. The new Saint Patrick's Cathedral website, www.stpatrickscathedral.ie, was launched on 1 June, 2016. The website was designed by the Friday Agency after a tendering process supported by the Fáilte Ireland Digital Business Development programme. Speaking about the award, Cathedral Administrator Gavan Woods said, "I would like to thank the IIA for this award. Many factors contributed to delivering our new website, not least the enthusiasm, commitment and professionalism of the team

drawn from the Cathedral staff who worked so effectively with Friday to ensure something beyond our expectations was created.”

+++ Clogher Diocesan Administrator -

Following the acceptance by Pope Francis of the retirement of Bishop Liam MacDaid as Bishop of Clogher on Saturday last, the Diocesan Chapter, acting as College of Consultors, met in Monaghan, in accordance with its rights and duties under Canon Law, and elected Monsignor Joseph McGuinness, Diocesan Secretary, Chancellor of the Diocese and Administrator of the Parish of Tyholland, to be the Diocesan Administrator. He takes up his responsibilities immediately. The Diocesan Administrator will have responsibility for administering the day-to-day affairs of the Diocese until a new Bishop is appointed by Pope Francis. In his role as Administrator he will also attend meetings of the Irish Bishops' Conference. Monsignor Joseph McGuinness is a native of Lisnaskea (Aghalurcher parish), Co Fermanagh. He was educated at St Michael's College, Enniskillen, Queens University Belfast and St Patrick's College, Maynooth before being ordained a priest in 1984. He pursued post-graduate studies in liturgy and sacramental theology at the *Institut*

Catholique, Paris and completed teacher training in St Mary's University College, Belfast. He was appointed to the staff of St Michael's College in Enniskillen as a teacher of religion, science and music in 1988. He was President of the College from 2000 until 2006 after which he was appointed Parish Priest of Enniskillen in 2007. In 2010 Bishop MacDaid appointed Mgr McGuinness as Diocesan Secretary, Chancellor of the Diocese and Administrator of the Parish of Tyholland, Co Monaghan.

+++ Tuam institution - The Institution of the Reverend Dr. Andrew Ison to the Ballisodare Group of Parishes took place in Saint Paul's Church, Colooney, on Thursday 6th October. A packed congregation was led in worship by the Rural Dean, Revd Stephen McWhirter, who had been in charge of the parish during the year long vacancy. Archdeacon Alan Synnott presented the new incumbent to the bishop for institution and representatives of parish, diocese, ecumenical partners and the local community all played a part in the service.

+++ January installations for Belfast Canons - January 2017 will see the installation of a new Canon and two new Lay Canons in St Anne's

Cathedral. The Rev Gareth Harron, vicar of Holywood Parish, will be installed as a Canon in succession to the Rev Canon Norman Jardine who has retired, at at Choral Evensong on Sunday January 8. Gareth's appointment, by the Bishop of Down and Dromore, the Rt Rev Harold Miller, was announced in September. The Cathedral's two Lay Canons, Mrs Myrtle Kerr and Mr Robert Kay, will be installed at Choral Evensong the following Sunday, January 15. They will be the first Lay Canons to serve in the Cathedral following their appointment by the Dean and Chapter of St Anne's.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Methodist College Belfast set for £7m refurbishment

Belfast Newsletter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/education/methodist-college-set-for-7m-refurbishment-1-7622010>

Southern Protestants and the State

Irish Times

"that Irish Protestants are unionists", on the basis that his **Church of Ireland** parents "thought that partition was a tragic mistake" ("Interview – The Irish ...

<http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/letters/southern-protestants-and-the-state-1.2822474>

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