



Pupils from St George's NS in Balbriggan try out Archbishop Michael Jackson's Crozier at the Dublin and Glendalough schools service - See report this issue

Northern Controlled Schools' Support Council still months away

A new body designed to fight state schools' corner is still months away from being set up.

Irish News - It had been expected that the Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC) would launch at the same time as the Education Authority (EA) took over from the area boards.

Irish News - While the EA began on April 1, work to establish the controlled schools body is continuing.

The CSSC will mirror other sectoral support bodies already in existence by offering professional support and advocacy to schools.

It will be the first time ever the north has had a support body for controlled schools.

The CSSC board will include members from various school types as well as members of the Transferors' Representative Council, which represents the Church of Ireland, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches in education.

The Churches had told the assembly that the CSSC was long overdue.

For the past number of decades, the education and library boards had not been able to be an advocate for the controlled sector because they had to be neutral in legislation for all schools, the education committee heard.

Rev Trevor Gribben told members "the controlled sector has not had a voice; it has not had that coherence built in it; it has not had the affirmation that other sectors have had".

The Executive approved the functions of the new body in September 2014. It will differ from the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools in that it will not employ teachers.

It will provide a representational and advocacy role for controlled schools, "including advice and support in responding to consultation exercises in respect of education policies, initiatives and schemes".

In addition it will work with schools "to develop and maintain the collective ethos of the sector including, where appropriate, a role in identifying, encouraging and nominating governors and in ensuring ethos is part of employment considerations".

It will also work with the Education Authority to raise educational standards and participate in the planning of the schools estate.

The Department of Education last night confirmed that work to establish the CSSC was "progressing" adding that there were no plans

for the department to be represented on its board, unlike similar support bodies.

"It is intended that a recruitment competition will be launched within the next few months to fill senior posts within the council," a spokeswoman said.

"The Controlled Schools' Support Council is not a statutory body and is currently classified as a third party organisation. The board members represent the various school types within the controlled sector as well as representatives of the Transferors' Representative Council."

200 schools 'would be enough' to satisfy non-religious parents

Just 200 of the existing 3,300 primary schools would be needed to serve parents who want a non-religious education for their children, according to the secretary of the Church of Ireland board of education, Dr Ken Fennelly.

Irish Independent - Dr Fennelly said figures from the Central Statistics Office indicated that 27,238 parents with a child of between five and 12 were "expressly no religion", which equated

to the number of Protestant children in the same age-bracket in the country.

"Given that less than 200 schools is enough to serve the Protestant minority then it would not be, in my estimation, too much of a leap to say that the same number would serve non-religious parents," he said.

Speaking at the same event, organised by the pro-religion organisation, the Iona Institute, Professor Eamonn Conway of Mary Immaculate teacher training college, Limerick, described as "bizarre", proposals to teach a compulsory world religions course in primary schools, including faith-based schools, called 'Education about Religions and Beliefs' (ERB).

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is at an advanced stage of preparation on the proposed new ERB programme but Professor Conway said its introduction in faith-based schools "would undoubtedly adversely affect religious instruction and characteristic ethos".

Meanwhile, sociologists in Trinity College Dublin say religious education in Irish primary schools should not promote any particular religion.

Growing secularisation and the arrival of new culturally and religiously diverse migrants are posing new challenges, particularly in primary schools under Catholic patronage, according to the paper published in the British Journal of Religious Education. The research was undertaken by Prof Daniel Faas, Beata Sokolowska and Dr Merike Darmody.

Meanwhile, Dublin City University (DCU) president Professor Brian MacCraith told the annual conference of National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD) that the education debate in Ireland was still centred on a lot of the things that were being discussed 40 years ago, including Junior Certificate reform and religious education.

He said that as Ireland emerged from a lengthy period of austerity, it was time for a step-change in the approach to education and it was "imperative that we develop a bold, new ambition for the system".

Local bishops should not set policy on Communion for divorced/ remarried Catholics - Archbishop of Armagh

Archbishop Eamon Martin has rejected the idea that individual bishops or episcopal conferences could set their own standards for allowing divorced and remarried Catholics to receive Communion.

“I think if we are part of a universal teaching Church, then we do have a very clear vision for marriage and the family and I don’t think that should be subject to interpretation at the level of individual episcopal conferences,” Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh told the *Irish Catholic*. He added that it is “difficult to reconcile” the notion that divorced and remarried Catholics who receive the Eucharist with the permanent teaching of the Church on the indissolubility of marriage.

Archbishop Martin said that there should be ways to reach out to Catholics in irregular marriage, inviting them to participate in the life of the Church, with “a more welcoming and Christ-like pastoral approach,” without a change in Church teaching.

Africa in Focus - theme of PCI missionary event in Belfast

‘Africa in Focus’ is the theme of an event in Whitehouse Presbyterian Church in north Belfast on Friday, 13th November 2015 at 7.30pm.

The speakers will include two PCI (Presbyterian Church in Ireland) overseas mission personnel who will be in Ireland in November.

Stephen Cowan, who is engaged in community development and outreach ministries in Tuum, a rural town in Northern Kenya and Dr. Lyn Dowds, who serves as Medical Officer in Charge in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian's David Gordon Memorial Hospital, in Livingstonia, Malawi will talk about their work and experiences.

The evening will also include an interview with Jorum Mugari, a Zimbabwean student at PCI's Union Theological College in Belfast, who is due to return to serve in his home country early next year. Rev. Uel Marrs, Global Mission Secretary, will also provide an update on the Presbyterian Church South Sudan, the world's newest country, which has been suffering from a civil war and food shortages over the past two years.

Rev. Liz Hughes, Convenor of PCI's Council for Global Mission and Minister in Whitehouse said, "We do hope that many people from various congregations will join us for this special evening of focus on PCI's mission involvement in Africa. We know that a large number of people throughout our denomination have a great heart

for the spreading of the gospel in this continent, and indeed for its many people groups and all they have to teach us.

“This event will be an excellent opportunity to hear updates from some of our personnel and partners, to gather new information, and to be inspired, as we continue supporting mission in Africa. Everyone will be most welcome to come and join us.”

The evening will also include prayer, praise, fellowship and light refreshments.

Those intending to come, are asked to let the Presbyterian Mission Department know on +44 (0)28 9041 7271 or email global@presbyterianireland.org.

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has been involved in mission in East and Central Africa for many years. At present, PCI has 15 adults serving the Lord on the continent, and has partnerships with churches in Kenya, South Sudan, Malawi and Zambia.

For more information on this event [click here](#).

Dublin and Glendalough schools service fills Christ Church Cathedral

About 600 primary and junior school pupils from all over Dublin and Glendalough filled Christ Church Cathedral on Thursday morning (October 15) for the annual diocesan schools' service. The service, which was full of joy, great singing and some drumming, had its theme 'We, though many, are one body in Christ'.

Archbishop Michael Jackson presided in the presence of Dean Dermot Dunne. The service was led by Canon Niall Sloane, who with a subcommittee of the Diocesan Board of Education, organised the morning.

Drawing on the theme of the service, the preacher, Canon Roy Byrne, spoke of all the things that make up Christ Church Cathedral. The children supplied him with some of the information including the organ, the Archbishop's throne or cathedra and the stained glass.

Canon Byrne added some historic and slightly creepy elements of his own – items which have been found in the dusty crevices and cupboards



Canon Roy Byrne

of the hidden passageways, underground storage rooms and vast attics of the cathedral.

These included a ‘widow’s mite’ or coin which was minted 2100 years ago. This coin was referred to in St Mark’s Gospel. He then revealed a historic metal plate which had been attached to the top of a coffin of a long dead archbishop who was buried in the crypt. His final and most ghoulish exhibit was a broken sword which was found 200 years ago beside a soldier who had died in the crypt having been locked in after a funeral.

Pupils from many schools took part in the service. The greeters were from St Andrew’s NS, Malahide; St Maelruain’s NS, Tallaght; and Zion NS. The collectors were from Rathgar NS; St

Andrew's NS; Jonathan Swift NS; and Chapelizod No 2 NS. The Confession was led by pupils from Glasnevin NS while the Collect was said by a pupil from Whitechurch NS. The readings were given by pupils from Alexandra College Junior School and Holmpatrick NS. A wonderful drumming interlude was provided by pupils from Primrose Hill NS, Sprindale NS and St John's NS (Clondalkin).

A Glebe NS pupil led the Creed and the Litany of prayers and thanksgiving was led by pupils from Glenageary Killiney National School, Kill O the Grange NS, Athy Model School, Rathmichael NS and Carysfort School, Arklow.

Choral Evensong to celebrate Macosquin Parish church roof replacement

Lovers of sacred choral music will be welcome at St Mary's, Macosquin, on Sunday, for a special Service of Choral Evensong, led by the renowned Belfast Chamber Choir, Renaissance.

The service, which will start at 6.30pm, will be one of celebration and thanksgiving, to mark the completion of the project to replace the church roof. The preacher, Right Revd Ken Good,



Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, will dedicate the recent efforts of the parish and the ongoing work of the church to the glory of God.

St Mary's – which was built in 1620 on the site of a 12th century Cistercian Abbey – is one of the oldest Plantation churches in Northern Ireland.

Invited guests at the service will include local dignitaries and many of the people who have supported the project since it was launched by the same choir at a similar service in February.

It has been a huge undertaking for a small country parish and its parishioners. The final fund-raising events took place last week. There was an afternoon tea party in the Long Room of the Old Rectory and a supper dance was held in the Bushtown Hotel, with entertainment provided by the band Good Fortune.

Music, story and mission at St Jude's, Belfast

St Jude's Ballynafeigh is nearing the end of 9 days of 'Time for you?' mission events with Archdeacon Andrew Foster as missionary and special celebrity guests, Paul Jones and Fiona Hendley Jones dropping in.

Paul was the lead singer with sixties group Manfred Mann and now tours with 'The Blues Band' as well as hosting a show on Radio 2. He and his actress/singer wife, Fiona, have a wonderful story of their conversion to Christianity and 30 years of married life walking with God.

They shared their faith stories in words and music at an event on Wednesday evening and on Thursday, Paul played the famous 'Errigle Inn' on the Ormeau Road, once again mixing anecdotes with music for an appreciative crowd. Meanwhile, in the church hall, the ladies enjoyed an evening with Fiona, who shared very personally about the healing she has received as a result of her relationship with God.

The mission began with a Family Fun Day and continues until Sunday.

Media digest

BBC

Reports that a vicar has walked free from court after a jury failed to reach a verdict over sexual assault allegations. The Revd Roy Catchpole, of Gainsborough, Milborne Port, Somerset, denied three counts of sexual assault and one of indecent exposure involving one woman. The CPS has seven days to decide on a retrial.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-somerset-34541743>

Premier

Reports that the CofE has published its contribution to the debate on the extension of Sunday Trading hours. The article says the Church's opposition is rooted in three principles: protecting vulnerable members of society, the balance of work and leisure and family time.

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/CofE-speaks-out-against-Sunday-Trading>

Tel

Reports how the rural community of Kingston Lisle in Oxfordshire kept its church, St John the Baptist, open. The article highlights the report by the Church Buildings Review Group published earlier this week, which launched a consultation on proposals to improve the support for its 16,000 church buildings.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11933401/How-we-kept-a-tiny-rural-parish-church-alive.html>

Ind

Profile of Bishop Michael Curry, who on November 1st will be installed as the first African American Presiding Bishop to of the Episcopal Church. Bishop Michael will replace Katharine Jefferts Schori, who was elected the Church's first female presiding bishop in 2006.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-episcopal-church-celebrates-its-first-black-leader-bishop-michael-curry-a6695866.html>

BBC

The autographs of more than 20 James Bond film stars have been auctioned after a man wrote to them to help raise money for his Herefordshire village church. Bond Sir Roger Moore, Dame Judi Dench, who played M, and Miss Money Penny actor Samantha Bond were among those helping St Peter's church in Pudleston. The memorabilia raise £299 at auction.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-34538695>

Times

Continuing coverage of the discovery of an early draft of the King James Bible in a notebook in a Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. The book belonged to Samuel Ward, who served as Master of the college, after working as one of seven men in Cambridge who translated disputed passages for the King James Bible.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/arts/books/article4587378.ece>

Comment

Guard

Giles Fraser - We must do to our churches what
Beeching did to the railways.

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2015/oct/15/we-must-do-to-our-churches-what-beeching-did-to-the-railways>