



**Image of the day - Ireland brings help to Haiti**

## Reports

### Help for Haiti from Ireland aided by C of I Bishops' Appeal



**The devastating earthquake which hit the south-western coast of Haiti in August damaged or destroyed more than 130,000 homes, more than 2,000 people died and almost 13,000 were injured.**

**Habitat for Humanity** has worked in Haiti since 1984 and is well placed to respond to this latest disaster. Habitat's team on the ground has been working since the earthquake hit, helping support family's immediate needs with hygiene and emergency shelter kits.

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Oxelia's (pictured on page 2 above) Habitat home was built to be disaster resilient and, like 98% of Habitat homes in the earthquake zone, stood strong when so many homes in her neighbourhood crumbled.

Oxelia said, "We screamed and ran outside into the street. We were all too afraid to go back into the house because you could feel the aftershocks. Now it has been days, and I see that my neighbour's houses have a lot of cracks, but mine is fine."

The devastating earthquake comes on top of political instability and COVID and more than half of Haiti's people continue to live below the poverty line. Habitat will be there for the long-term; providing permanent housing solutions ensuring more families have disaster resilient homes, like Oxelia's.

**Jenny Williams, Chief Executive of Habitat for Humanity Ireland** said,

"There are so many global challenges and this latest earthquake in Haiti hardly made the headlines so we are especially thankful to Bishops' Appeal, for allocating €5,500 to support Habitat's response in the country."

The Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal is the church's world aid and development programme.

You can still donate to Habitat's Haiti Appeal here:  
[www.habitatireland.ie/haiti](http://www.habitatireland.ie/haiti)



## **Opening of the 2021 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland**

**The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Right Rev Dr David Bruce, will begin his second term of office on Monday at the Opening Service of Worship at the denomination's General Assembly in Belfast.**

Members of the New Irish Orchestra, including a string quartet, will provide the music to accompany the hymns sung at the service. Led by Creative Director Jonathan Rea, Sylvia Burnside will also perform the song 'There is hope'. The organist will be the Rev Mark Spratt, Minister of Kilmore Presbyterian Church.

PCI's longest serving Moderator, Very Rev Dr Godfrey Brown, will briefly take the Chair for the election and appointment of the Moderator for 2021-2022.

Dr Bruce's address to the in person, socially distanced gathering of ministers and elders from across PCI's 500-plus congregations will kick start three days of debate and discussion, closing on the afternoon of Wednesday, 6 October. Business will also take place over two evening sessions - Monday (until 9pm) and Tuesday (until 8.30pm).

For report on business of the Assembly - see CNI  
September 30

All business can be viewed on the General Assembly's livestream which can be accessed via PCI's website  
[ [www.presbyterianireland.org](http://www.presbyterianireland.org) ]



## **Mothers' Union rebuilding Hope and Confidence charting way out of Covid times**

**Mothers' Union can be at the forefront in charting the way out of Covid times, the organisation's annual Festival Service has heard.**

'Rebuilding Hope and Confidence' was the theme of the Dublin and Glendalough MU Festival Service which took place in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, on evening of September 21.

The service, which was led by Dean Dermot Dunne, was attended by representatives of Mothers' Union from across the United Dioceses. During the service Archbishop Michael Jackson commissioned Canon Leonard Ruddock as Diocesan Chaplain to MU, Juliana Morais as Hon Secretary and Helen Moses as Press Officer.

The preacher was Canon Ruddock who drew on the reading from the Second Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians (4: 1–6): "Since it is by God's mercy that we engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart".

He said it was a sad reality for most people that it was very easy to lose heart. He praised the MU theme and said it was very important to keep hope and confidence alive.

"Many people can struggle with hope and confidence. Many people struggle to get out of bed every day... their hope and confidence is at an all time low. Holding onto hope and

confidence may be a serious challenge,” he stated adding that there were times in his own life that he found it hard to hold onto hope but what helped him was the unfailing care, love and support of other people.

Mothers’ Union, through their varied projects, could reach out to those who were struggling and could offer care, love and support. That could be through knitting for premature babies, knitting warm hats for people in homelessness, supporting women’s refuges, their ‘Away from it All’ programme or their support for children in coping with emotional issues.

“All of these are practical projects,” Canon Ruddock stated. “As we emerge somewhat battered from Covid, rebuilding hope and confidence is essential. We have learned things during Covid. We have learned of the need for contact. Mothers’ Union can be to the forefront as we chart our way out of Covid times. But we cannot delay ... We do not know what is around the next corner which is why we need to act now to rebuild hope and confidence and rebuild our lives, parishes and Mothers’ Union branches.”

## **Day for Life message focuses on end of life care**

**This year's Day for Life will be celebrated on Sunday 3 October on the theme 'The Good Samaritan: A Model of Compassion'.**

Day for Life is celebrated annually by the Catholic Church in Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales as a day dedicated to



raising awareness of the meaning and value of human life at every stage and in every condition.

Commenting on the theme chosen for this year's Day for Life message, Bishop Kevin Doran, chair of the Bishops' Council for Life said:

"In the context of the

recent proposal to introduce assisted suicide, both in Ireland and the UK, this year's Day for Life message invites Catholics to consider a more positive and compassionate response to the care of people who are in the final stages of life.

"The Catholic Church's approach to end of life care is well articulated in the recent Vatican document *Samaritanus bonus* on the care of persons in the critical and terminal phases of life.

"In that document we are reminded that Jesus gave us the image of the good Samaritan as the model for our compassion and our solidarity with those who find themselves vulnerable and who fear being abandoned in their final illness. The Good Samaritan is one who "crosses over", who "binds up wounds" and who, most important of all "stays with" the person for as long as is required.



"There is much that we can do to foster a culture of life. We can begin by overcoming our fear of talking honestly about death and dying. Dying is as natural and universal as living and breathing yet our society can make it difficult for people to talk about it. As Christians, of course, our faith in the Resurrection of Jesus will stand to us. For some, if not for all, the support of prayer, and the opportunity to share faith can be of great help.

"I invite parishes to share this year's Day for Life message as an important contribution to discussions on the issue of end of life care."

### **Day for Life Pastoral Message of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference: 'The Good Samaritan - A Model of Compassion'**

The fragility of life and the reality of death have been brought into sharp focus during the Covid-19 pandemic. In Ireland alone, more than 8,000 people have died with Covid-19. Each of these lives is precious and every life matters. With a most amazing spirit of solidarity, the energies of our society - in hospitals, test centres, vaccination clinics, schools, churches, supermarkets and in so many other places - have been directed towards protecting those who were most vulnerable to disease. We have begun to see the fruits of those efforts.

While all of this was going on, the Oireachtas was being asked to discuss legislation to provide for assisted suicide. That particular piece of legislation, thank God, has been rejected by the Oireachtas Committee for Justice on the grounds that it was deeply flawed. The surprising and

disappointing thing is that the Oireachtas Committee did not reject the principle of Assisted Suicide and has proposed that Assisted Suicide be discussed further by a special committee, which would report within a specified timeframe.

Compassion is often presented as a justification for assisted suicide, but having compassion means "suffering with" someone. Assisted suicide reflects a failure of compassion on the part of society. It is a failure to respond to the challenge of caring for people who are terminally ill, or who have disabilities or dementia, as they approach the end of their lives. Those who assist with a suicide, whatever their motives, co-operate with the self-destruction of another person. It is one thing when life is allowed to take its natural course, with appropriate management of pain and stress, but is not artificially prolonged by burdensome treatment. It is something else entirely, when one person actively and deliberately participates in ending the life of another.

One feature of the legalisation of Assisted Suicide in other jurisdictions is that, once it becomes lawful, it is then presented and perceived as something good to do. Instead of being surrounded by love and care, people who are already vulnerable and dependent on others due to their illness, are made to feel that assisted suicide would be "the decent thing to do".

Assisted suicide presumes that there will be somebody with the required skills who is prepared to "assist" in bringing about the death of another person. Wherever assisted suicide is legalised, healthcare professionals are assumed to be the "suitably qualified persons" because they are already licensed to use drugs. It is important to be clear that

healthcare professionals are given privileged access to the human body and to drugs for the express purpose of healing and alleviating pain. Any suggestion that they should be expected to assist and, under certain circumstances, actually perform the act that ends the life of another person, is seriously damaging to the ethos and the credibility of the healthcare professions.

Jesus gave us the image of the good Samaritan as the model for our compassion and our solidarity with those who find themselves vulnerable and who fear being abandoned in their final illness. The Good Samaritan is one who "crosses over", who "binds up wounds" and who, most important of all "stays with" the person for as long as is required.

There is much that we can do to foster a culture of life. We can begin by overcoming our fear of talking honestly about death and dying. Dying is as natural and universal as living and breathing yet our society can make it difficult for people to talk about it. As Christians, of course, our faith in the Resurrection of Jesus will stand to us. For some, if not for all, the support of prayer, and the opportunity to share faith can be of great help.

The Hospice Care Movement fosters a culture of living well until the end. By doing normal things with people who are terminally ill, we can contribute to fostering their sense of being "normal", which can often be undermined by the "routine of illness". The experience of presence, companionship and even the acceptance of limitation and dependency, when we take time to appreciate them, can greatly enrich the later stages of life.



The attitude of Jesus towards the sick and towards those who are in any way marginalised, has much to teach us about the value of time spent caring for one another. Many of us, at times, are called to be carers in our own circle of family and friends. Others may find it possible to care for the carers. The bonds of friendship and solidarity that are developed and strengthened in caring relationships, extend beyond the carer and the one who is cared for to the whole of society.

## News briefs

### Dublin and Glendalough Synods

The Diocesan Synods of Dublin and Glendalough will be held online on Zoom on Wednesday October 6 2021.

Synods will commence with a celebration of Holy Communion which will be livestreamed from Taney Parish Church at 4pm. The business of Synod will begin at approximately 5pm when the Archbishop takes the chair as President.

Members of Synod must submit notices of motion in writing to the Honorary Secretaries at the Diocesan Office no later than 4pm this Friday, October 1. Due to the exceptional circumstances, members of Synod are requested to submit specific queries and questions arising from the Book of Reports to the Diocesan Office prior to Synod. All efforts will be made to address these during Synod.

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Details on how members can participate on the night will be given by the chair at the start of the session. Joining details will be issued by email to members in advance of the meeting.

## Change at New Irish Arts

Jonathan Rea the Creative Director of New Irish Arts writes - “For the last 14 years, New Irish Arts has been very privileged to have Clara Johnston as our Events and Office Manager. So it is with sadness that we announce today that she will soon be leaving us to take up a new post as Director of Gatherings and Communications in Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church.



“Clara began working with New Irish Arts while she was still a student and right from the start, she has been held in high esteem. Both in character and in capability, she has been an absolute pleasure to work with. While we are very sorry to lose her, we are also delighted to see her ready to take on new responsibilities and leadership in God’s kingdom.

“Watch this space for an advert in the not too distant future, but for now we just wanted to let the New Irish Arts

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community know Clara's news and congratulate her on her new appointment".

## **Preachers and Canons in Residence at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin**

3 October The Revd Canon Adrienne Galligan

10 October Greg Fromholz

17 October The Revd Canon William Deverell

24 October The Revd Canon Andrew McCroskery

31 October The Revd Canon Lorraine Kennedy-Ritchie

## **Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars**

### **Christian Resources Exhibition 2021**

For decades,  
fearsome looking gear  
was the preserve of  
raucous rock bands.  
No longer. Now every  
church needs to get  
its acoustics right.  
The Christian  
Resources Exhibition  
(12-14 Oct, Sandown  
Park, Surrey), often

[churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)



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READERS OF KEEP THE FAITH**

# **Nothing beats hearing it**

**CRE** | CHRISTIAN  
RESOURCES  
EXHIBITION

**12-14 Oct 2021  
Sandown Park, Surrey**



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dubbed the 'ideal church show', is where you will meet the people behind the product. Expert advice will be available from more than 170 exhibitors, covering everything from church seating to heating, computers to clothing. Dozens of seminars will help you and your church in areas of new technology, social media, streaming, creative arts, home groups, mission, youth work and much, much more.

The impact of the **Windrush Generation** will be a major focus over all three days, presented by Roy Francis, former BBC TV Songs of Praise producer, music consultant and author. Contributors include the Ken Burton Singers, Rev Les Isaac OBE and Rev David Shosayna.

More than 3500 visitors are expected to attend. Entrance to CRE National 2021 is £8 on the door. CRE National 2021 opening hours: Tue 12 and Wed 13 Oct, 10am-5pm; Thu 14 Oct, 10am-4.30pm.

**Watch the final highlight reel from Sing! 2021**



**Keith and Kristyn Getty write** - "We are writing to you all, breathless and beyond thankful to the Lord, after watching the highlights video from the Sing! conference. To each of

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you, for your prayers, voices, creativity, encouragement, and rich participation, we are so grateful.

“Our prayers continue this week and every week for the work of Sing, as we bring what we learned back to our homes and churches. We have been enjoying watching through the conference again in our home and taking time to think more deeply about what the Lord has taught us. We hope SingGlobal.com will continue to be an enriching resource to each of you. In the next two weeks we will start walking through the journey of 30 hymns and hope you can join us in that.”

The final highlight reel -

[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8ULmYWdqrs>]

## Perspective

### Revolution needed in conventional farming to cut emissions and boost productivity - by Christian Aid

#### **New report shows urgent need for agroecology revolution to cut emissions and boost productivity**

Ahead of the UN Food Systems Summit Christian Aid published a report highlighting the damage that conventional farming is doing to the climate and soil systems upon which humanity relies.

The report highlights how an increasingly intensive food system based on the use of synthetic chemical inputs such

as fertilisers and pesticides has driven up emissions, degraded soils and is the main driver of biodiversity loss.

Despite the claims of the chemical industry that they are essential to higher yields and food security, in fact the opposite is true with agroecological approaches such as organic farming and agroforestry increasing productivity and resilience, reducing emissions and drawing carbon back into soils and trees more effectively than any alternative

### **The report's findings include:**

A study on agroecology across 57 countries, found increased productivity on 12.6 million farms with an average crop yield increase of 79%.

Food production contributes a third of global greenhouse gas emissions and reducing this rapidly will be vital if we are to reach net zero by 2050.

This is compounded by the intense cultivation of soils that releases carbon into the atmosphere and the clearance of forests and the loss of their vital carbon absorbing capacity.

Nitrate fertilisers are particularly damaging, releasing both methane and CO<sub>2</sub> in their production, generating 1.4% of global emissions. After they are applied to the soil, they are also the main source of nitrous oxide, which accounts for a further 6%.

Only about 17% of nitrate fertiliser ends up in food – the rest generates greenhouse gases, dangerous particulates and



stratospheric ozone loss. It washes into groundwater from where it pollutes rivers and deoxygenates seas.

Globally, about 385 million cases of unintentional acute pesticide poisoning occur annually, 11,000 of these resulting in death. This means that 44% of farmers are acutely poisoned every year, with the largest numbers in South Asia, followed by South-East Asia and East Africa.

A frequent critique of organic farming methods is that it would result in a drop in productivity and yield with claims a growing global population needs 70% more food which can only be provided by increasing chemical inputs.

In reality the global food system already produces enough food for 10 billion people, more than the expected population in 2050. But it is so inefficient 30% is lost or wasted through neglect of product storage (13.8%) or by households (17%).

A consequence of this is that 8-10% of global emissions are associated with food that is never eaten.

## **Food quality has also fallen**

Since the adoption of chemical inputs in the 1930s, the concentration of essential minerals such as calcium and iron has been decreasing in both fruit and vegetables. A meta-analysis of 343 peer-reviewed publications focusing on the quality of organic vs chemically produced food found “statistically significant and meaningful differences in composition between organic and non-organic crops/crop based foods.”

Agroecology can also help reverse the biodiversity crisis a recent study found was “primarily driven” by the global food system. A literature review of 396 comparisons found that organic systems were more biodiverse in 80% of cases - on average, organic farming increased species richness by at least 30%.

The report shows that widespread adoption of agroecology would see huge benefits to soil health, water usage, climate change and increased yields and profit to farmers.

Agroecology encompasses a wide variety of farming systems with an emphasis on diversity, locally-led and adapted approaches to harness much greater resilience. Rather than relying on expensive chemical inputs which damage soil and water leading to diminishing returns, it focusses on both farmer and scientific knowledge and harnesses natural processes to bring sustainability to the food system.

Studies clearly show the enhanced resilience, productivity and profitability of these sustainable agroecological practices when compared to conventional, chemical agriculture. A huge study which analysed 286 interventions introducing more sustainable and resource conserving practices across 57 countries, covering 37 million hectares (3% of the cultivated area in developing countries), found increased productivity on 12.6 million farms, while also improving the supply of critical environmental services. The average crop yield increase was 79% and all crops showed water use efficiency gains, with the highest improvements in the rain-fed crops that most poor small-scale farmers rely on.

A growing range of subsequent studies have shown productivity improvements of 5-120% as farmers adopt more agroecological methods, and they recover faster after severe shocks, such as cyclones and droughts

These findings were echoed in a UN report which found organic and near-organic methods and technologies in Africa delivered increases in productivity per hectare of food crops. This, it concluded, “challenges the popular myth that organic agriculture cannot increase agricultural productivity.”

In Paraguay, crop yields under conventional tillage which damages soil declined by 5 to 15% over a 10-year period, while yields using agroecology methods increased by the same amount. In the latter cases, fertilizer and herbicide inputs dropped by an average of 30 to 50% as improved soil and plant conditions led to reduced disease vulnerability and a greater diversity of pest predators, while crop rotations mitigated the build-up of insect pest species.

Agroecology methods have also proved to be more resilient in the face of climate change. An assessment of small-scale farmers adopting agroecological methods such as conservation agriculture across Sub-Saharan Africa showed that relative yield performance improved with increasing drought severity and exposure to high temperatures, both of which are set to intensify.

**Report co-author Richard Ewbank, Christian Aid's Climate Programme Advisor, said:**

“Some portray agroecology and organic food as a middle-class preoccupation but why should healthy, safe nutrition

that doesn't degrade the climate and environment be a privilege for the wealthy? For vulnerable farmers, especially small-scale farmers in developing countries already facing more extreme weather, it's the smartest, most resilient and profitable solution. Far from being an optional extra, agroecology is an essential part in the fight against climate change, for improved land and water management and to enhance vital carbon sinks"

**Co-author Winnie Mailu, Christian Aid's Markets and Livelihoods Advisor added:**

"Agricultural intensification has failed to yield the much waited-for results of transforming productivity to increase food and nutrition security for the poorest. Two decades down the line and the environment is in a worse state in terms of poorer soils, monoculture cropping and contaminated water sources, to mention just a few. It is no longer negotiable that for humanity to survive, food systems must be in harmony with nature."

"Despite the clear benefits, agroecology receives only 1% of global agricultural research funding. This needs to be ramped up and made a policy priority for Governments beginning this week at the UN Food System Summit.

"For there to be any chance of reaching zero net emissions by 2050 and ensuring global food security, the food system needs to be transformed to agroecology with at least the same speed and urgency as the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy. The \$700 billion in annual agricultural subsidies and the 99% of research funding that overwhelmingly supports conventional chemical agriculture



needs to be completely reoriented to this goal. The UNFSS and any processes it initiates need to be completely focused on supporting this transformation.”

**Nicola Cannon, Associate Professor of Agriculture at the Royal Agricultural University in Gloucestershire said:**

“Agricultural production techniques require urgent reform to meet global food supply. Climate change, rising temperatures and expanding global population are all creating an enormous challenge to humanity. Solutions are urgently required to understand and adopt environmentally sustainable production techniques which can reliably meet global food security in the long term. Current production systems heavily rely on synthetic fertilisers and agrochemicals which are energy intensive to produce and potentially damaging to the environment. Agroecological solutions must be developed and adopted to enable climate smart farming solutions and boost food production.”

**Agness Machona a farmer in Zimbabwe**, has participated in training to help her adopt agroecology for crop and livestock production. She also now leads a group of 41 wild food collectors, adhering to organic standards requiring good environmental management practices and grows high-value organic crops such as rosella and Kalahari melon. She said: “I was taught to be self-sufficient by the project and am now resilient since I can withstand any shock and stress. Before the program we had shortage of water as a result of severe droughts. People in the community are having better livelihoods as they are both socially and economically resilient”.

**Senthamilselvi is the founder of Sathuragiri Kanakam** a charity that works in the village of Akkanapuram in India encouraging agroecology. He said: ‘I’m promoting an alternative livelihood. If they (Dalit women) weren’t here, they’d be working in matchsticks or fireworks factories or as farm labourers on chemical farms. Here they learn everything about all the organic farming processes, so they can be self-sufficient.”

There are a whole host of health issues caused by chemical pesticides and fertilisers. Women suffer from uterus problems, breast problems, poisoned breast milk, sickness and vomiting, sores on their hands and feet.

He continued: “No mother wants to give poison to her child. Our work is to help people understand that chemical farming is poisoning them. Only women can understand and change this. Organic farming is sustainable, that’s why I am doing it, so we don’t need to rely on anyone else, we can be self-sufficient”.

**G Parvathy, aged 48, lives in Akkanapuram village.** Both she and her husband worked as agriculture labourers, earning a daily wage of just 150 rupees to support their family - they started with a small land area with support from Christian Aid’s EcoVeg project. They work as a team of women and cultivate organic vegetables, preparing organic inputs with locally available natural ingredients. She said:

“Our vegetables and flowers are better than you can buy elsewhere. Previously we had no idea about business or organic farming skills. Women have no rights to land in India

and they don't manage the money, even when they earn it. As a women's group, we are working together to build a business".

## Poem for today

### October by Robert Frost

O hushed October morning mild,  
Thy leaves have ripened to the fall;  
Tomorrow's wind, if it be wild,  
Should waste them all.

The crows above the forest call;  
Tomorrow they may form and go.  
O hushed October morning mild,  
Begin the hours of this day slow.  
Make the day seem to us less brief.  
Hearts not averse to being beguiled,  
Beguile us in the way you know.  
Release one leaf at break of day;  
At noon release another leaf;  
One from our trees, one far away.  
Retard the sun with gentle mist;  
Enchant the land with amethyst.  
Slow, slow!

For the grapes' sake, if they were all,  
Whose leaves already are burnt with frost,  
Whose clustered fruit must else be lost  
For the grapes' sake along the wall.



## Speaking to the Soul

Bible verse, thought for the day and prayers - on site daily

