



Royal Portrush is to host the 2019 open for the first time since 1951.

PCI responds to Statement on Assessment on Paramilitary Groups

Commenting on the findings by the Independent Reviewers into Paramilitary Groups released on Tuesday, Dr. Norman Hamilton, Convenor of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Council for

Church in Society said its findings were ‘deeply troubling.’

“For many it will be no surprise that today’s report confirmed the continued existence of paramilitary structures across our community. I am deeply troubled that it finds that ‘PIRA members believe that the Army Council oversees both PIRA and Sinn Fein with an overarching strategy.’ From this it would appear that mainstream politics continues to be affected by those outside the democratic process. If we are committed to the primacy of the democratic process, that process must be entirely conducted within a democratic framework.

“I am also deeply concerned that the Report states that 17 years on from the Belfast Agreement, paramilitary groups, both Republican and Loyalist, remain a feature of life in Northern Ireland and continue to recruit. As our Moderator Dr. McNie said last week, we need to build a society ‘in which violence and criminality have no place whatsoever. Such activity needs to stop, if communities are not only to live in peace, but to flourish.’

“In the wake of today’s Report, it is my hope, prayer and expectation that our elected representatives take stock and work to bring about a satisfying outcome for all our people in the midst of ongoing political instability.”

Trócaire received €29m in public donations last year

Trócaire, the Irish Catholic Church’s overseas aid agency, received €29.6 million last year in donations from Irish people, or almost €5 for every person on the island of [Ireland](#).

Patsy McGarry in Irish Times - The funds are being used to help improve the lives of some 3.4 million people in the poorest regions of Africa, Asia, [Latin America](#) and the Middle East.

The figures emerged on publication of the 2014 *Annual Report and Financial Statements* of the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference yesterday. Funds for the conference are handled by the Hierarchy General Purposes Trust, for which the four Catholic archbishops are trustees. Trócaire exists independently of the trust.

The trust’s income last year was just under €5.4 million. The main sources were diocesan



Bishop William Crean, chairman of Trócaire: Figures from the 2014 'Annual Report and Financial Statements' of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference show the charity received €29.6 million last year in donations.

contributions provided by the bishops themselves, with an additional €350,653 from investments. Total expenditure for the year was €4.7 million leaving a surplus of €616,091. The balance sheet shows reserves of €5.2 million, of which €965,783 is restricted for specific purposes.

The membership of the conference is made up of the bishops (or administrators) of the 26 Catholic dioceses on the island of Ireland together with auxiliary bishops.

The largest single area of expenditure by the trust last year was €1.5 million on the church's Towards Healing service which assists survivors of clerical child sexual abuse.

However, spending last year on the church's child protection watchdog, the National Board for Safeguarding Children, was almost €100,000 lower than in 2013, at €243,975. The Bishops' Council for Emigrants spent €170,549 last year helping Irish people in the US, Australia and England. A further €150,091 was spent helping more than 1,400 Irish prisoners in 25 countries.

Last year the conference spent €112,003 on legal and professional fees, and €25,444 on expenses.

Some €526,456 was spent on the care of retired bishops. Full details are at www.catholicbishops.ie/finance.

The Protestant experience of 1916

On Saturday, 14 November there will be a one day conference examining how the Protestant community in Ireland experienced 1916 and the years that followed. Entitled *Silenced Stories: The Protestant Experience of 1916*, the event will

begin at 9.30am in Renehan Hall, Maynooth University (south campus).

Speakers at the event include Professor Roddy Cowie from Queen's University, Belfast, on the effects of 1916 on the Protestant psyche; Mr Ben Levitas from Goldsmith's Universe, London, on 'Sean O'Casey and the unfinished revolution'; and, finally, Dr Miriam Moffitt, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, who will explore how political upheavals in the early decades impacted on society. Those interested can register online: www.journeyinselfbelief.org/silencedstories. The fee is €30 (waged) or €20 (unwaged). This includes lunch and refreshments.

Enquiries can be addressed to Earl Storey: earl.storey@nuim.ie. Additional details can be found in the flyer attached: [The Protestant Community in Ireland](#)

New Chair for Changing Attitude Ireland

On 17 October at St Audoen's Church, Dublin, Bishop Michael Burrows delivered a talk 'Learning to Disagree Agreeably – some lessons

from Church of Ireland experience during the past 50 years’.

The talk was followed by the annual general meeting of Changing Attitude Ireland. Scott Golden from Greystones replaces Richard O’Leary as chair and the other members of the Executive for the coming year are Adrianne Elson, Mark Gardner, David Godfrey, Stella Jones, Ginnie Kennerley, Leo Kilroy, Emmeline Kingsley-Grace, David McConnell, Richard O’Leary and Pam Tilson.

Dublin diocesan Ministry of Healing service

The annual Dublin & Glendalough Diocesan Service of the Church’s Ministry of Healing took place in St Mary’s Church in Howth on Sunday evening (October 18). The service was led by the Rector, the Revd Kevin Brew with assistance from diocesan chaplain to the Ministry of Healing the Revd Bruce Hayes, the Revd Lesley Robinson and the Revd Willie Black. The sermon was preached by Bishop Richard Henderson.

During the service intercessors and members of Healer Prayer Unions were invited to renew their



Members of Healer Prayer Unions and Intercessors with the clergy at the Diocesan Ministry of Healing Service in St Mary's, Howth.

commitment to prayer in an act of dedication. There was also time during the service for members of the congregation to receive prayer, laying on of hands and anointing.

In his sermon, Bishop Henderson said that exaltation and degradation were part of the continuum of life and the ups and downs of life did not devalue living. The process of being alive was one of pain and joy, life and death, being healed and broken, he said.

Referring to the Old Testament reading [1Kings 19: 4–12] he said that Elijah went from

experiencing immense victory with God on his side to immense despair when God appeared to be absent. Ultimately for Elijah, God was in the whisper. He suggested that the story combined practical realities and mental states. “God is leading him, not just on a physical journey but a journey to where the spiritual inhabits the physical. That is why we lay on hands – it is what flows through the touch that brings healing. So we should never, never separate the spiritual and the physical,” the Bishop said.

From the New Testament reading [Collossians 3:12–17] Bishop Henderson suggested that many of the miracles that Jesus performed had one thing in common. They were all accompanied by a command: go wash..., pick up your matt and walk... He said there was a point of acquiescence.

He pointed out that the service was in the context of Holy Communion and observed that through the centuries much time and energy had been spent thinking about what Holy Communion really is and what it really means. “The core of Holy Communion is what Jesus commands us to do in remembrance of him. The core of this is not the bread and the wine. Jesus says: ‘This is my

body'... 'This is my blood'... He is saying: 'This is me for you'. This is the essence of what Christ offers us and our accepting obedience is what we need to pray for and pray for that intimate whisper of God," Bishop Henderson stated.

Sudan mission team introduced at Lisburn Cathedral harvest

A weekend of harvest thanksgiving celebrations in Lisburn Cathedral included the introduction of a mission team planning to visit Yei Diocese in South Sudan this summer.

Connor Diocese has had a partnership with Yei for several years, and teams from Lisburn Cathedral have travelled to South Sudan before.

The weekend's harvest celebrations began at a Community Harvest Celebration on Friday evening, October 16, when the speaker was the retired Archbishop of Armagh, the Rt Rev Dr Robin Eames (The Lord Eames of Armagh).

Speaking about his experiences of meeting people from many different backgrounds, he challenged all present to respond to Christ and to see how much 'Jesus loves you.'

The Cathedral had been beautifully decorated by a group from the parish assisted by ladies from the Hillhall community.

During the service, the Hillhall Youth Drama group performed 'If ever we needed you, Lord it's now.'

On Sunday October 18, the morning harvest thanksgiving service focused on the mission link between the Cathedral and Yei Diocese. A team of six people planning a META (Mission Experience Team Abroad) from the Cathedral to South Sudan next year was introduced to the congregation.

Mrs Jenny Smyth, Mission Director of the Church Mission Society Ireland (CMSI), spoke on the challenges facing Christians in South Sudan and the important role the church plays in brokering peace and building community in health care, schools and theological training.

The service was conducted by the rector, the Rev Canon Sam Wright, assisted by members of the mission team. The Scripture lesson was read by Margaret Fullerton and prayers were led by Denis Fullerton.

Macosquin Parishioners “Proactive, Energetic and Unstoppable” Says Bishop

Parishioners in Macosquin have been praised for their generosity in raising money for a new roof for one of the oldest churches in the diocese of Derry.

A Festal Service of Choral Evensong was held in St Mary's Church, on Sunday – the Feast of Saint Luke – to celebrate the completion of the project. Fund-raising for the Roof Replacement Scheme began in February of this year, following an appeal by the Rector, Canon Mike Roemmele. A variety of events were held to raise money, including an open garden at Walworth House in Ballykelly and a 'Sell a Slate' scheme. Construction work on the project finished in August and earlier this month the Rector announced the end of fund-raising.

The preacher at Sunday's Celebration Service, Bishop Ken Good, rededicated St Mary's Church to the glory of God. In his sermon, the Bishop said there was evidence all over the church of the call of God. There had been a Christian witness on the site since the 8th century at least,



and the new roof would prolong that for centuries more.

“The present church,” Bishop Good said, “was envisioned and planned and then built because somebody took the decision to go ahead and not procrastinate. And ever since, this building has been drawing people towards faith in God.”

Bishop Good congratulated the Rector on the success of his fund-raising effort and thanked the people of the parish for their generosity in supporting it. “I want to commend those who in this generation have been so proactive, so energetic, so unstoppable that they will provide a place for coming generations in future decades –

and centuries even – to respond to Christ here. May God continue to glorify you in all that you do in this place.”

The Belfast Chamber Choir Renaissance, who helped launch the appeal in February, returned to St Mary’s for Sunday evening’s service. Among those in the congregation was the Mayor of Causeway and Glens Borough Council, Councillor Michelle Knight-McQuillan.

Church of Scotland official heads government group to tackle food poverty

A senior Church of Scotland official has been appointed to chair an influential group which will identify issues that push people into food poverty and come up with ideas to tackle the problem.

The Rev Dr Martin Johnstone, secretary of the Church and Society Council, was given the role by the Scottish Government and he and his team will make a series of recommendations to SNP ministers by February next year.

The working group, which comprises of representatives from the Poverty Truth Commission, Fareshare, Nourish, Oxfam, Poverty Alliance, Trussell Trust, Big Lottery, STV Appeal, The Robertson Trust, The Hunter Foundation, Bridging the Gap, local government and the Food Commission, met for the first time in Edinburgh today.

The inaugural meeting coincides with the Poverty Alliance's annual Challenge Poverty Week which runs until Friday and aims to challenge the stereotypes around poverty and increase public support to combat it.

The latest statistics from charity Trussell Trust, highlighted by the Scottish Government, show that a total of 117,689 people picked up a three-day supply of groceries from foodbanks in 2014-15.

Of those, 36,114 were children. This is more than eight times the number helped just two years ago.

Dr Johnstone said: "I am delighted to be chairing this Independent Working Group on Food Poverty, whilst appalled that in a country as

wealthy as Scotland the number of people going hungry is increasing by thousands each year.

"Our starting point will be that we need to reverse that trend.

"The group will bring together people with a wide variety of experiences of tackling food poverty including, critically, those with direct experience of what it means not to have enough for you and your family.

"I hope that together we can highlight what is working, what needs to change and what the Scottish Government and others can do to bring about a hunger free Scotland."

Broadcaster Adrian Chiles inspires at church media conference

The TV and radio presenter Adrian Chiles has delivered a thought provoking lecture on how churches can reconnect with people who've lost their faith at the annual Church Media Network conference in London. He spoke of his own religious conversion and his belief many people are seeking to develop their spirituality but don't know how to go about it or who they can talk to.



Adrian Chiles told church leaders they can reconnect with people who have lost their faith.

"Everyone is seeking a spiritual dimension" he told the audience of journalists and communicators from a range of faith groups, including the Church of Scotland. "My mother, father and brother are all atheists. But I felt something was missing. I went to several different churches before I came to Holy Trinity Parish in Brook Green. I looked around and it was full of people I could relate to. I just felt at home and I knew I'd found what I was looking for."

His is a consumerist view of religion - a 'try before you buy' approach he believes works. "People don't talk about their faith. But every time I go into the bookshop I see the section on mindfulness and wellbeing expanding. To me, that's religion! People are interested, it's just shifting the focus. Churches must get better at putting their message across."

One reason for this, he believes, is that many churches get too caught up in the detail. "When I was converting to Catholicism, I was lucky enough to be guided by an old priest called Father Ben. He told me not to worry about the catechisms and all that. He said "Just be still and the answers will come to you." It made sense and it really helped me get through."

Adrian was speaking three weeks into a month of filming a new series on religions around the Mediterranean to be screened on BBC2 in January. It's taken him to meet religious leaders from diverse faiths in Turkey, Lebanon and Israel, with further filming in Rome and other locations is planned. While admitting he is no theologian, it's led him to a simple conclusion. 'We're all the same, we all worship under the same God, regardless of the traditions we follow. I've been

surprised to find broad agreement on that between the faith leaders I've spoken to be they Christian, Jewish or Muslim. No one has a monopoly on the truth. No one can know. I like the fact it is mysterious."

Adrian believes the single greatest factor determining people's connection and experience of faith is the clergy they encounter on their spiritual journey. "At the heart of every faith story is a cleric, be they good or bad. In my opinion it's all about the cleric at the end of the day."

His opinions have been shaped by his experience of attending mass on 46 consecutive days at different churches across England and Wales. What he found was a variety of approaches and welcomes, not all of which worked. "I wrote a piece on the BBC website which simply put said 'Mass is too long and priests are too boring.' It got an incredible reaction and was the third most read piece on the entire website. People came up and thanked me for speaking out. But all I was saying was that next to believing in God, clerics next most important duty is to be nice, as they have the power to move people."

A conversation with his mother revealed an experience she'd never shared with him before. As a 7 year old girl growing up in a Catholic family, at her first confession she pretended she had taken some jam without asking so she would have something to tell the priest. But when she realised she was lying in order to please God. She could find no sense in being untruthful, and at that tender age it was enough for her to turn her back on faith never to return.

His conclusion? "When Christians are holier than thou, it's a turn off for people. I mean, who am I to judge? We need to encourage people to develop their spirituality, to find meaning in prayer. Everyone prays - I mean, there are no atheists in a penalty shoot out! It's just that they've lost focus. We just need to normalise faith and the Bible, to drop it into conversation, to be joyful and to do it with humour whenever we can. Then more people might find the faith they are seeking."

You can read Adrian's BBC article on his 46 day marathon of masses here <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-32849125>. You can find out more information about the Church and Media Network here <http://www.churchandmedia.net/>

Media digest

Guard/Times/Mail

Reports that a motion, tabled in the House of Lords, which would have blocked the government's plans to introduce tax credit cuts, has been withdrawn. Instead, Lady Meacher, a former chair of the East London NHS trust, said she would table a motion calling on the government to deliver a report responding to the warning by the Institute for Fiscal Studies that three million families would lose £1,000 a year.

The Times reports opposition to the Chancellor's plans from leading Conservative members of the House of Commons. *The Mail* reports the maiden speech of Heidi Allen in the Commons in which she said her party was cutting tax credits too hard and too fast.

<http://www.theguardian.com/money/2015/oct/20/government-forces-lords-to-back-down-over-tax-credits-motion>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/politics/article4591803.ece>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3281981/Tax-credit-cuts-betrayal-values-says-Tory-MP-Backbencher-uses-maiden-Commons-speech-savage-Osborne-s-plans-hard-fast.html>

Times

Reports that next week's vote on extending Sunday trading hours has been postponed. The article reports that the government feared it would lose the vote because of opposition from its own benches. The proposals are still expected to reach the Commons. The CofE is opposed to the extension. In a submission the Church said, "The proposals to extend Sunday shopping hours are directly contradictory to the government's desire to build more resilient local communities."

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/politics/article4591655.ece>

BBC

The Local Government Association is calling for a 'common sense approach' to be applied to parents who take children out of school for holidays during term time. Strict new rules on term-time holidays - including fines - were introduced in 2013 to discourage absence. But the LGA says the system is unworkable and is calling for change.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolreport/34581078>

Times/Mirror/Tel/BBC

Figures released by the Office for National Statistics show that a total of 15,098 same-sex

couples have married since the law changed in March 2014. The number of civil partnerships fell sharply after same-sex marriage became legal. There were fewer than 1,700 civil partnerships in 2014, compared with more than 5,600 in 2013. Just over half the number of same-sex marriages were conversions from civil partnerships, and for just under half it was the first time the relationship had been legally acknowledged.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/life/families/article4591574.ece>

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/more-15000-gay-couples-married-6672110>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/11943304/How-gay-marriage-shows-women-really-are-more-in-love-with-weddings.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-34580793>

Exp/Mail

Thou shalt commit adultery. A rare bible with a classic proofing error is coming up for auction. The volume was one of 1,000 printed in 1631. King Charles 1 ordered that they should all be burned but a few escaped the recall. It is not now known whether publishers, Robert Barker and Martin Lucas, the royal printers, made a genuine error or if it was a mischievous act by a business rival. The book, one of only nine known to exist is

expected to fetch £15,000 when it is auctioned in London next month.

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/weird/613430/thou-shalt-commit-adultery-bible-auction-bonhams-wrong-misprint>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3280916/Thou-SHALT-commit-adultery-Incredibly-rare-1931-sinners-Bible-contains-unfortunate-typo-Ten-Commandments-forced-publisher-BURN-1-000-print-run.html>

Comment

Mail

Now we know the true cost of liberal grandstanding - £24,000 per migrant per year (at least)

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3282096/DANIEL-JOHNSON-know-true-cost-liberal-grandstanding.html>

Magazines

Reports on [CofE involvement](#) in Church Legacy Week and launch of a new film

<http://www.fundraising.co.uk/2015/10/19/christian-legacy-encourages-more-churches-to-promote-leaving-a-legacy/>

<http://www.inspiremagazine.org.uk/Stories/National?storyaction=view&storyid=2033>

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