



Moderator dedicates and opens Drumbo's new church halls

Presbyterian Moderator, Rt. Rev. Dr. Frank Sellar, officially opened and dedicated Drumbo Presbyterian's new church halls (Saturday September 10) at a special weekend service attended by members of the congregation, local

elected representatives and community groups based in the village.

Speaking to members of the congregation and guests on Saturday, Dr. Sellar expressed his admiration for those who had worked so hard to bring this project to fruition and encouraged the congregation quoting from Romans 12 verses 11 and 12. “This is a special day in the life, ministry and witness of the Church in this village and surrounding area and it is a privilege to be here with you,” Dr. Sellar said.

“In days of bewildering change within contemporary society, the church has a specific role to radiate the love of Christ and bless the community in which it is set. So can I encourage you in the words of the Apostle Paul, “Never be lacking in zeal, to be aglow with the Spirit and to serve the Lord” as this new chapter opens in Drumbo.”

The £815,000 new building has four meeting rooms that will seat between 20-60 people, a sports facility and café lounge area and will be used by various organisations that used the old halls. This includes the Boys’ Brigade and Girls’ Brigade and local community groups.



At the unveiling of a commemorative plaque to mark the official opening of Drumbo Presbyterian's new church halls are (LtoR): Drumbo Elder Denis Currie, architect Jonathan Todd, Presbyterian Moderator Rt. Rev. Dr. Frank Sellar, Mark Crowe of contractors ME Crowe Ltd and the Minister of Drumbo Presbyterian Church, Rev. Adrian McLernon.

Drumbo's minister, Rev. Adrian McLernon, explained that the new halls follow in the tradition of the previous building on the site, as a place not just to be used by the church but by the local community.

“Way back in 1894 the Presbyterian Church in Ireland built a school on the site that was managed by the Church until it came under the

control of the old Stormont Government in the 1920s. The school was opposite the church in Drumbo and when in the 1950s the children left for a new school we received the building back.

“For more than 50 years we used it, as did the local community, but in later years it really needed a lot of upkeep, so in 2013 we took the decision knock it down and rebuild.

“When we started this project we looked at the minutes from the 1890s to see what was said about the decision to build the school. The reason was “to build a school for the community and large enough to facilitate the church’s need.”

“In many respects, nothing has changed. Today we celebrate a new phase in the life of the village and the story of our church, as our new building continues being a part of the community to the honour and glory of God in this place. We are very grateful that the Moderator was able to dedicate and officially open it for us.”

The first Presbyterian Church in Drumbo was established in 1655. The current church, which dates from 1882, has 300 families drawing

around 800 people from Drumbo itself, Dromore, Hillsborough, Lisburn and Carryduff.

The Mayor of Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, Councillor Brian Bloomfield MBE, spoke on behalf of the elected representatives present, which included fellow councillors, MLA's and the local Member of Parliament, Rt. Hon. Sir Jeffrey Donaldson.

Avoid a 'hard border' and address legacy issues - Archbishop Clarke tells British-Irish conference

On Saturday September 10, the Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, spoke to the annual conference of the British–Irish Association (BIA) meeting in Pembroke College, Oxford (9–11 September 2016) this year. The BIA annual conference brings together a wide range of people – senior politicians and government officials, businessmen and women, academics, faith leaders, writers, former paramilitaries and community workers – to discuss matters of mutual concern (*in camera*). Archbishop Clarke's

focus was on responding to the social, political and economic challenges facing Northern Irish society today, in order to set the scene for further discussion at the meeting.

Truth in public discourse

Archbishop Clarke stressed the need for a better quality of public discourse across society and the need to 'reject any notion that truth can be treated as disposable' – a theme which he explored recently in the *Irish Times* when he argued that a general contempt for logos – logic, truth and reality – leads to the loss of empathy as a basic and vital human quality. The Archbishop argued that much public discourse today was based on the appeal to identity and to emotion, than on proper dispassionate discussion on public issues which is a basic essential for a functioning democracy. He suggested that the foundations of democracy are under threat today in western Europe in a way that has previously been unthinkable since the end of the Second World War.

Social inequalities and public services

Dr Clarke called for politicians and leaders to consider how social inequalities and improvements to public services can be seriously



addressed. He said that it is clear that the whole of the UK (and the Republic of Ireland) ‘is in current account deficit’ and that we must face up to the challenges of how to both increase the public finances in order to deliver the public services we need – from health to education to housing to policing – and to address the reality of poverty in an era of dependence by some on food banks. While acknowledging the complexity

of the challenges, Archbishop Clarke proposed that it is time for ‘serious, reasoned and reasonable discussions’ on taxation – something that cannot be avoided because it is too difficult to resolve.

‘Legacy’ issues

Flowing from his views on social and economic inequality, Archbishop Clarke also touched on his belief that ‘legacy’ issues in Northern Ireland still need to be prioritised – not least because so much of the public discourse in Northern Ireland continually returns to these issues. With regard to victims and survivors of ‘the Troubles’, Dr Clarke stressed that the term ‘legacy’ in itself ‘can sound too abstract when in fact the issues relate to real not abstract situations’, with people still needing a great deal of public support (and not always financial). He said that a ‘one size fits all’ approach will not work because individual perspectives and circumstances must be taken into account.

Avoiding a ‘hard border’

Finally, in the context of his broader themes of the challenges around public finances, social inequalities and the building up of the common good in the future of Northern Ireland,

Archbishop Clarke said that he, like many others, is of the view that a post–Brexit ‘hard border’ between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland needs to be avoided. Dr Clarke stated that he feels it is essential to the peace, stability, good relations and quality of life for the people on the island of Ireland as whole that a ‘soft border’ is maintained.

Faith leaders unite in call for UK action on refugees

The Primus of Scotland, the Archbishop of Wales and the former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams have called on the British government “urgently to revise its policy towards refugees.” They are amongst a large number of Anglican bishops and clergy from the UK who have put their name to an [open letter to British Prime Minister Theresa May](#). It has been signed by 224 faith leaders.

“The best of this country is represented by the generosity, kindness, solidarity and decency that Britain has at many times shown those fleeing persecution, even at times of far greater deprivation and difficulty than the present day,”

they say in their letter. “We rejoice in the mosaic of different faiths and British communities that we now represent. We are proud that in May 2016, in a survey by Amnesty International, 83 per cent of Britons said they would welcome refugees into their neighbourhoods and households.

“In the face of the unfolding human catastrophe, there are immediate and viable steps that the Government can take to offer sanctuary to more refugees. We call on you to create safe, legal routes of travel, for example by adopting fair and humane family reunion policies for refugees.

“Under the present immigration rules, a British doctor of Syrian origin could not bring her parents from a refugee camp in Lebanon – even though they were refugees and she could support and house them. A Syrian child who arrived alone in the UK could not bring his parents from a refugee camp in Jordan – even if the child were recognised a refugee and even though his parents were themselves refugees.

“Families in these situations can currently be reunited only by resorting to desperately unsafe irregular journeys, sometimes ending in avoidable tragedies.”

In addition to the Primus of Scotland, David Chillingworth; and the Archbishop of Wales, Dr Barry Morgan, the letter has been signed by more than 50 other Anglican bishops, clergy from of other Christian churches, and leaders of other faith groups including Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, and Zoroastrian. They say they have produced the letter because “all our faiths compel us to affirm the dignity of all human beings and to offer help to anyone in need.”

They are calling, in particular, for the UK to accept “a fair and proportionate share of refugees, both those already within Europe and those still outside it”, as well as “safe and legal routes to the UK, as well as to the rest of Europe,” and also within Europe, as well as “access to fair and thorough procedures to determine eligibility for international protection wherever it is sought.”

Last week, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, raised the issue in a speech in the House of Lords – the upper house of the British Parliament. He told MPs that his diocese had taken on a staff member to work in “the Jungle” – the make-shift refugee camp in Calais, France,

which has become home to asylum seekers trying to reach the UK – alongside a staff member taken on by the Roman Catholic diocese of Arras.

“We are still having continual reports of delays for really quite young children who are not being brought across,” he said, he said that “where children – particularly young ones – have families in this country there is no reason why they should not be brought across within the day.”

In response, government minister Baroness Williams of Trafford said that “many of the children are coming here very quickly, but if any child has to stay over in the camp for any longer than it should that is one child too many.”

She said that the government’s position was that refugees in Calais “should first of all claim asylum in France and then come over here” through an international agreement known as the Dublin regulations. She said that 120 refugee children had been admitted to the UK under this system so far this year.

See links to media reports below.

Pope Francis approves establishment of day of prayer for abuse survivors

Members of the Pope's commission for child protection, including an abuse survivor, have been speaking with new bishops and major Vatican offices as part of a mandate to develop and educate the church about best practices.

Pope Francis also approved the establishment of a day of prayer for survivors of abuse, but decided it will be up to each nation's bishops' conference to decide when the memorial should be held, according a press release released on September 12 from the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors.

Members of the pontifical commission have spoken recently with officials at the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, as well as at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, which trains priests for service in the Vatican's diplomatic corps.

Pontifical commission members, who were in Rome in early September, were also set to

address the Congregation for Clergy and to speak at seminars for recently appointed bishops; the training seminars are organised by the Congregation for Bishops and the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples.

Marie Collins, a commission member and survivor of clerical abuse, was scheduled to be one of a number of commission members to address the September 11-18 session of what is commonly referred to as “new bishops school.”

Jesuit Father Hans Zollner, a psychologist and commission member, and Archbishop Charles Scicluna of Malta, a longtime abuse investigator, already delivered their talks on abuse by clergy and the importance of protecting minors and vulnerable adults during the early September seminar for bishops newly elected to dioceses in mission lands.

The commission has completed a template meant to help all Church entities — from bishops’ conferences to Catholic associations — in formulating guidelines in preventing and responding appropriately to abuse.

Pope Francis was set to receive the template “shortly,” according to the commission press release.

At the request of a clerical abuse survivor from Canada, the commission developed a proposal for a universal Day of Prayer because “prayer is one part of the healing process for survivors and the community of believers” and public gatherings for prayer also help raise awareness about the issue, it said.

Pope Francis received the proposal and has asked “that national bishops’ conferences choose an appropriate day on which to pray for the survivors and victims of sexual abuse as part of a Universal Day of Prayer initiative,” it said.

The reason a universal date was not set is because a number of bishops’ conference around the world already have specific days set aside for penance and prayer for victims and their healing, Fr Zollner told Catholic News Service.

For example, the church in Australia adopted the nation’s own Day for Child Protection — September 11 — to mark its Day of Prayer.

The Southern African Bishops' Conferences will dedicate December 2-4 — days which fall during Advent this year — to penance, fasting and prayer, the press release said.

The commission said it has resources like prayers for Mass, liturgical texts and other materials available on request as part of the Day of Prayer initiative.

Tory MP proposes to kick 21 bishops out of the House of Lords

A Conservative MP has proposed removing bishops from the House of Lords in response to Government plans to reduce the number of MPs from 650 to 600 as part of its manifesto bid to “cut the cost of politics”.

Charles Walker, who is chair of the Commons' Procedure Committee, has set out plans to eject 21 Church of England bishops from what he calls the “bloated” Upper House, which has 805 members.



The plans – which would leave only five senior bishops as ‘Lords Spiritual’, including the Archbishop of Canterbury – were [reported by the Mail on Sunday](#).

They also include removing the remaining 92 hereditary peers and a new rule requiring all peers to stand down after twenty years.

The Tory Government’s plan to axe 50 constituencies is likely to cause infighting among MPs.

News briefs

+++ Three cathedrals, three canons - The Bishop of Down & Dromore has announced three new canons – one for each of the diocesan cathedrals. The Revd John Auchmuty, rector of St Columba's, Knock, is to be a Canon of Down Cathedral. The Revd Bryan Martin, rector of Donaghcloney and Waringstown, is to be a Canon of Dromore Cathedral. The Revd Gareth Harron, vicar of Holywood, is to be a Canon of Belfast Cathedral.

+++ Armagh deacon - The Revd Graham Hare was made a deacon by the Archbishop of Armagh, Most Rev. Dr. Richard Clarke, in St Mark's, Armagh, on Wednesday, 7th September.

+++ Cork courtesy call - On Friday, 9th September, the Bishop of Cork, the Right Reverend Dr Paul Colton, and Mrs Susan Colton received the Lord Mayor of Cork, Councillor Des Cahill, to afternoon tea at The Palace. The Lord Mayor was accompanied by Ms Ruth Buckley, Deputy CEO of Cork City Council. Cllr Cahill is the eighteenth Lord Mayor to make a courtesy call to Bishop Colton. In the course of the afternoon the Lord Mayor set out his adopted theme for his year in office, which is 'positivity'; a wide range of views were shared and issues

discussed that affect the city and its people, as well as the work of the Church of Ireland in Cork.

+++ Macedonians gather at St Teresa's birthplace - Hundreds of people have gathered in the main square of Macedonia's capital for a ceremony dedicated to Macedonian-born St Teresa of Calcutta, who Pope Francis canonised last week at the Vatican. Sunday's ceremony was held near the site of the now demolished house where the nun and missionary was born in Skopje in 1910. The events, which included a procession and a Mass, came at the end of a week of festivities organised by Macedonia's parliament. Archbishop Vinko Puljic, the pope's special representative for the celebrations in Macedonia, addressed the crowd. Teresa lived the first 18 years of her life in what is now Macedonia.

+++ Dublin & Glenalough Mothers' Union Service - On Thursday evening the Archbishop of Dublin will preside at at Mothers' Union Service in Dunlavin where the preacher will be the Revd Neal O'Raw.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Athy lesbian couple return to 'packed church' to retake roles

Irish Times

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/athy-lesbian-couple-return-to-packed-church-to-retake-roles-1.2788134>

BBC/Times/Guard/ITV/Int Business Times

Reports that more than 200 religious leaders have urged the UK to relax immigration rules so refugees from Syria and other areas can be reunited with their families. In a letter to the Prime Minister, they say close relatives of Britons and refugees already in the country are living abroad in "desperate conditions" and should be given a legal route in. Former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams is among the faith representatives to have signed the letter to Theresa May.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-37328151>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/faith-leaders-in-plea-for-refugees-and-their-families-rnnfh2cj>

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/sep/12/rowan-williams-200-faith-leaders-open-letter-revise-refugee-policy>

<http://www.itv.com/news/2016-09-12/rowan-williams-joins-over-200-faith-leaders-to-urge-more-government-action-on-syrian-refugees/>

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/revise-policy-reunite-refugee-families-uk-faith-leaders-plead-1580786>

Guard

Reports that the oil company Royal Dutch Shell has started production at the world's deepest underwater oil and gas field, 1.8 miles beneath the sea surface in the Gulf of Mexico. The article recalls that at Shell's annual shareholder meeting last year, the board promised a group of shareholders, including the C of E, to better explain how bonus schemes for its Chief Executive and others were aligned with its professed ambitions to help tackle climate change.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/sep/11/shell-begins-production-at-worlds-deepest-underwater-oil-field>

Exp

Profile of Terry Waite, the former Archbishop of Canterbury's envoy, focussing on the five things he can't live without; books, a radio, family photographs, companionship and a Russian Cross.

<http://www.express.co.uk/life-style/life/709531/Terry-Waite-five-things-cant-live-without>

Comment

Times: Theresa May risks entrenching the ethnic divide. More religious segregation in schools is totally at odds with the PM's stated desire to create a "One Nation" Britain says Clare Foges.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/comment/may-risks-entrenching-the-ethnic-divide-mlbbdvkwd>

Telegraph: Charles Moore writes, "In Theresa May's meritocracy, what will become of the stupid and useless?"

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/09/11/in-theresa-mays-meritocracy-what-will-become-of-the-stupid-and-u/>

Blogs

Law and Religion: Round up September 11th

<http://www.lawandreligionuk.com/2016/09/11/law-and-religion-round-up-11th-september/>

Nick Baines: Why discuss cosmology with clergy and more science

<https://nickbaines.wordpress.com>

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