



DUP MP ‘humbled’ by visit to Iraqi refugee camps

Three MPs joined a Catholic charity’s project trip to see the situation of refugees in Erbil, northern Iraq, who are being cared for by the Church.

The visit, organised by Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), included visits to camps for displaced families and meetings with high-ranking prelates and government officials. They also attended an ordination ceremony.

Jim Shannon MP for Strangford, and chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Freedom of Religion or Belief, said: “It was illuminating, it was heartening, it was humbling.

“For me, it was an opportunity to see in some places a very thriving Church, and in other places a very persecuted Church, to meet some of those who had to flee with only the shirt on their backs as Daesh (ISIS) descended upon them to do their worst.”

Also on the ACN project trip, which finished on Sunday, were Chris Green, MP for Bolton West, and Mark Menzies, MP for Fylde.

The trip included a visit to Ashty 2 Camp, Ankawa, Erbil, where 5,500 people are living in 1,088 housing units.

Talking about seeing the camps, Jim Shannon added: “There were many things that impressed me, but one thing that impressed me greatly was when we went around the camps and I met some of the displaced people was this – they had lost so much, but they had on their walls a picture of the Lord Jesus with the words: ‘Jesus I will trust in thee’.

“For me though it was their faith that was sustaining them, so it was an important visit to make and one that I’ll never forget.”

Chaldean Archbishop Bashar Warda of Erbil, who is overseeing the Church’s aid efforts, said that the overall number of Christian families in the camps has fallen from 120,000 to 100,000. Many families have left the country.

Archbishop Warda told MPs that his top priorities were renting houses for the displaced, providing them with food, setting up more medical centres, and giving families pastoral and spiritual support.

He decried the lack of aid from the Iraqi government in Baghdad, saying they had provided no help, but thanked charities, including

ACN which assisted with €10 million last year for a range of projects in Iraq.

MPs and ACN staff also attended ordinations held in the Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Ankawa, which included that of 25-year-old Fr Martin Banni, who trained at St Peter's Seminary, Erbil.

While many members of Fr Banni's family have left Iraq for the US or Sweden, he decided to remain in Iraq to minister to those still there.

Head of the Chaldean Church Patriarch Raphael Sako said: "This ordination is a sign of hope – we hope that the refugees will be able to go home soon. Father Martin should be a model of Christ – of courage and sacrifice." The trip also included a meeting with Falah Mustafa Bakir, head of the Kurdish Regional Government's Department of Foreign Relations.

Presbyterian Church Public Square seminar series

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland is holding six thought-provoking seminars this autumn as part

of its Church in the Public Square series. Entitled 'On being human', they will address a number of topical subjects, from human identity to end of life issues.

Drawing on the expertise of academics and professionals working in a variety of disciplines in Ireland and the UK, the seminars will provide an opportunity to reflect on what it means to be a human being in the 21st Century by exploring the essence and uniqueness of human life.

Organised by the Church's Union Theological College and Council for Public Affairs, College principal, Professor Stafford Carson, welcomed the opportunity to explore such a diverse range of subjects. "Many of the moral and ethical issues we encounter today have a theological dimension, none more so than what it means for us to be human. This series of seminars is designed for people who are interested in thinking more deeply about a range of issues that are all connected with 'being human'."

Open to people of faith and no faith at all, the first seminar takes place on Monday

26th September in Union Theological College in south Belfast and will set the scene for the series by looking at what the Book of Genesis says about human identity. The seminars will take place on Monday evenings throughout October and November, with speakers from Union College, Dublin City University, Belfast Bible College, Queen's University and University College London.

“Debates surrounding abortion and assisted dying are based on our understanding of the essence of human life. Today advances in technology, for example, mean that we may soon be capable of so modifying and enhancing human capabilities that we have to re-define what we mean by ‘being human’. Should we embrace these developments? Added to these are all the questions surrounding human sexuality, gender identity, and human rights, areas that this series of seminars will discuss,” Professor Carson said.

“As a Church we are very much a part of society and very conscious of the need to engage fully around the pressing social, moral and ethical issues of the day. I hope that this series of

seminars contributes to this ongoing public discussion,” he said.

Individual seminars cost £5, while the series of six costs £20. For booking and more information see www.presbyterianireland.org/publicsquare.

Belfast Methodist churches welcome new superintendent minister



Members of the congregations of Ballynafeigh, Knockbreda, Belvoir and Cairnshill Methodist churches recently came together to welcome the Rev Maureen Hassard who has taken up her

new appointment as superintendent of the circuit and minister of Ballynafeigh and Knockbreda. The preacher at the service was Belfast District Superintendent the Rev Dr Tom McKnight. Ms Hassard is pictured (fourth left) with Dr McKnight (fifth left) and representatives of the four churches on the circuit.

New Dean's Vicar Installed At Christ Church Cathedral

The Revd Abigail Sines was Installed as Dean's Vicar at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, yesterday (Sunday September 11). The Installation took place during Choral Evensong, sung by the Cathedral Choir, and Abigail was assigned her stall by the Very Revd Dermot Dunne. The sermon was preached by the Revd Dr William Olhausen.

Abigail succeeds the Revd Garth Bunting who was appointed Rector of Drumcondra and North Strand earlier in the summer. She was ordained a Deacon in 2014 and priested the following year for curacy in the Christ Church Cathedral Group. She is from Hampton, Virginia, in the United States. In university she studied international



relations and Chinese. After graduation she spent a year in China teaching English before undertaking postgraduate studies at the University of Hawai`i, continuing her academic interest in China and eventually taking up a position at the East–West Centre, the Honolulu–based organisation that had sponsored her studies.

After six years Abigail felt the call to study theology and in 2008 began studies at Belfast Bible College and completed an MTh there in 2010. She then began her studies at the Church

of Ireland Theological Institute in 2012. Following her ordination to the diaconate, she served as Intern Deacon at St Paul's, Glenageary.

The duty of the Dean's Vicar is to assist the Dean to teach the Christian Faith, to welcome all visitors and pilgrims, care for those in need, pray for the clergy and people in the United Dioceses and for the Church of God throughout the world and to promote the work and mission of the people of God in the cathedral.

In his sermon Dr Olhausen outlined the context in which the Gospel reading [John 6: 51–69] was set and the series of events which showed that people were excited about Jesus and wanted to know who he was. Speaking in the synagogue in Capernaum Jesus said he was the living bread which came down from heaven. He said that these words were a revelation and that cathedrals and churches are places of revelation. "Abigail, the Lord has called you to minister in the largest place of gathering in these United Dioceses. Never forget that this is a place where the voice and word of Christ can be heard," he said.

Pope Francis to celebrate Mass for Fr Jacques Hamel

Pope Francis is to celebrate Mass for Fr Jacques Hamel, the French priest killed by two Islamist terrorists in July.

The murder took place on July 26 in the church of Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray as Fr Hamel, 85, was celebrating Mass.

According to Rome Reports, the Mass for Fr Hamel will be held on the morning of September 14 at 7am, in the chapel of Casa Santa Marta, the Pope's residence. The bishop and 80 pilgrims from the Diocese of Rouen, where Fr Hamel lived and worked, will be in attendance.

Archbishop Martin co-chairs working group on relations between WCC and Roman Catholics

The relationship between the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church is being reviewed in a five-day meeting which

began yesterday at the Ecumenical Centre in Switzerland.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is “a fellowship of 348 member churches who together represent more than half a billion Christians around the world,” it says on its website. Most Anglican provinces are members of the WCC, as are most of the world’s Orthodox churches. Its membership also includes Lutheran, Baptist, Methodist, African Instituted, Assyrian, Evangelical, and many more.

But the Roman Catholic Church has never been in membership; despite being part of local ecumenical groups of churches in different parts of the world.

In 1965, following what the WCC calls “the ecumenical thaw in relationships . . . encouraged by Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council,” a Joint Working Group (JWG) was established between members of the WCC and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

Last year, in a message to mark the 50th anniversary of the JWG, Pope Francis urged



World Council of Churches

them to “become ever more a ‘think-tank,’ open to all the opportunities and challenges facing the churches today in the mission of accompanying suffering humanity on their path to the kingdom, by imbuing society and culture with gospel truths and values.”

A review of the relations between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church is a key focus of the five-day meeting of the JWG which got underway yesterday (Tuesday). The JWG is co-moderated by Metropolitan Nifon of Târgoviște, from the the Romanian Orthodox Church; and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin, the Roman Catholic Church’s Primate of Ireland.

“One session in the five-day programme aims to address ‘co-operation on inter-religious relations, on refugees and migrants, and on justice and peace,’” the WCC said. “There also will be discussions of Pope Francis’s exhortations *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Amoris Laetitia*, and of his encyclical *Laudato Si’*.”

“Other topics before the group are to include finding doctrinal common ground, world mission and evangelisation, marriage and the family, environmental threats to God’s creation, the on-going ecumenical pilgrimage and ‘building the agenda of the JWG for the coming years.’”

Christian Aid welcomes UK proposals on responsibility for fraud and tax evasion

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committed in other countries as well as in the UK, Christian Aid said this week. (12 September 2016)

Any new law must also be backed by adequate resourcing of the UK government authorities supposed to enforce it, the charity added.

“These proposals are a welcome recognition of the responsibility that comes with the vast power now held by people who run large companies,” said Eric Gutierrez, Christian Aid’s anti-corruption expert.

“That personal responsibility does not end at the UK’s borders and any new law should reflect this. Fraud and tax evasion committed abroad by UK-linked companies must be caught by these reforms, just as the Bribery Act 2010 already makes UK-linked firms responsible for bribery by their staff in other countries.

“A globalised economy requires globalised responsibilities. “Developing countries are especially vulnerable to the impacts of fraud, corruption and tax evasion and it is the poorest people who suffer worst of all. “It is important that UK companies are not allowed to undermine

the UK's aid programme by facilitating or committing financial crimes in poor countries.”

Mr Gutierrez added: “If these welcome new proposals are to make much difference, then the government must also ensure that those expected to enforce the new law have enough staff and other resources to do so.”

* Christian Aid <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/>

News briefs

+++ Broadcast service ahead of National Ploughing Championships - Service on Sunday on RTÉ1 this week will be broadcast from St Catherine's Church, Tullamore (pictured), on the theme of 'Come and See the Fruits of His Creation'. The service will commence at 11am and be led by the Revd Isaac Delamere, Rector of the Tullamore Union of Parishes. The preacher will be the Most Revd Pat Storey, Bishop of Meath and Kildare. Choirs from the parish and the local community will be leading the worship and one of the readings will be read by Ms Anna May McHugh, President of the National Ploughing Association. The service will be taking place ahead of the National Ploughing

Championships (20th–22nd September) in Screggan, near Tullamore, where the Dioceses of Meath and Kildare will be hosting an exhibition tent, offering a friendly welcome, coffee and a prayer space for visitors. Listeners can also catch up with Service on Sunday on the RTÉ Player at the following [link](#)

+++ Connor Youth Forum launch - Engage Connor Youth will launch the Connor Youth Forum at its Reveal event on Saturday October 1. This is an opportunity for young people from across the Diocese to share in games and food and to hear about the Youth Forum. The Forum allows young people aged 15 plus from across the Diocese to discuss and influence issues together on behalf of young people. All groups are welcome to the Reveal event which will run from 7pm to 10pm in Carrickfergus YMCA. Diocesan Youth Officer Christina Baillie said: “We hope it will be a welcoming night for those who have not been to a diocesan event, so groups are so welcome to come along and try for the first time.”

+++ Ordination of Church Army Captains - Last Sunday 11th September, Revd. Captain Richard Beadle and Revd. Captain Richard

Waller were ordained as Deacons for ministry in the Church of Ireland by Rt. Revd. Ferran Glenfield, the Bishop of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh. The service took place in St. Fethlimidh's Cathedral, Kilmore. Richard Beadle, who has been an active Church Army Officer in the Diocese, has transferred to ordained ministry and will continue to serve in the Kildallon and Swanlinbar Group of Parishes. Richard Waller, who is also a Church Army Officer, will serve as a deacon intern in the Killeshandra Group of Parishes, with Revd. Ali Calvin. The Venerable Captain Isaac Hanna, also a former Church Army Captain who transitioned to ordained ministry – currently as the Rector of the Drumcliffe Group of Parishes and Archdeacon of Elphin and Ardagh – gave the address. He began by reminiscing about how they had all met at the Church Army training college in Sheffield many years earlier.

+++ Connor deacons - Two new deacons were ordained to serve in Connor Diocese at a service in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, on Sunday September 11. Danielle McCullagh was ordained to serve an internship in St Brigid's, Mallusk, and Christopher St John was ordained to serve an internship in the parish of Holy Trinity, Woodburn.

The preacher at the service was the Rt Rev Harold Miller, Bishop of Down and Dromore.

+++ Culture night in Monkstown - Monkstown Parish Church opens for the first time for [#CultureNight](#) this year for self guided tours accompanied by organ music on the historic church organ. The present Church of Ireland (Anglican) church was consecrated on Sunday 30 August 1789, a plain rectangular building surrounded by open fields. Described as the fairest country church in Ireland, it was the only Anglican church between Ringsend and Bray. In 1831 work began to rebuild the church under the direction of Semple incorporating the earlier Georgian building. The work took eight years and resulted in an elaborate and extravagant T shaped building. It was further extended eastward in 1862 The church is widely admired today but had its critics in Victorian Dublin including one who described it as a 'perversion of judgement and taste'!

+++ Victorian Field Day popular - Huge crowds flocked to the annual Enniskerry Victorian Field Day last weekend. There was a brisk breeze but the rain largely held off allowing people to peruse vintage vehicles and the many attractions which

included a tug of war between the Lakers Tug of War team and the Enniskerry Victorian Field Day committee. The event is organised by Powerscourt and Kilbride as a fundraiser for the parishes and Lakers.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

VIDEO: RNLI celebrate the naming of two new lifeboats

Irish Examiner

The Very Reverend David Herlihy PP, Rev Edwin Hunter (**Church** of Ireland), and Rev Tim Kingston (Methodist) led the service of dedication.

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/video/news/video-rnli-celebrate-the-naming-of-two-new-lifeboats-420534.html>

Dublin church introduces new 'park and pray' scheme for busy car-park

[Independent.ie](http://www.independent.ie)

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/dublin-church-introduces-new-park-and-pray-scheme-for-busy-carpark-35045304.html>

Inspire/[Lancs Evening Tel](#)/Premier

Reports the successful end of the four day Crossroads Mission in Blackburn Diocese, led by the Archbishop of York, which finished with an open-air celebration in

Preston. Archbishop Sentamu said, "I hope that all who have been touched by Crossroads are transformed and renewed in faith. This has been a fabulous weekend of activities that show when God is with us, everything is possible."

<http://www.inspiremagazine.org.uk/Stories/Personal?storyaction=view&storyid=2304>

<http://www.premier.org.uk/Across-the-UK/Lancashire-Cheshire/Crossroads-Mission-A-Great-Success>

Mail

Report that Oxfam has called for Company Executives to be paid no more than 20 times the wages of their lowest-earning worker as it launched a campaign against inequality. However, the article highlights that at least a dozen of Oxfam's fellow charities pay their leaders 'far in excess' of the £300,000 level, which amounts to 20 times the Government's new National Living Wage of £7.20 a week, including the Church Commissioners, which has worked with Oxfam to produce research on food banks, benefits and poverty.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3786390/Oxfam-call-cap-bosses-wages-20-times-lowest-paid-worker-fight-against-equality.html>

Christian Today

Reports that 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 C of E bishops from what he calls the "bloated" Upper House, which has 805 members.

Ind

Reports that the National Audit Office has warned the Government will have to quicken the pace at which it is resettling Syrian refugees to Britain in order to meet its own target - 20,000 of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees by 2020. In a report, the NAO said the scheme had so far been a success and that early interim targets had been met by the Government but warned that the programme would have to resettle more people each quarter than they had already done so far in order to meet the overall target.

Ind/Mail/Exp/Christian Today/Premier/ITV

Further coverage of a letter written by 200 faith leaders including the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Williams, which calls on call on Prime Minister Theresa May to do more to help refugees fleeing Syria, Iraq and other warzones.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/theresa-may-urged-to-rethink-britains-refugee-policy-by-200-religious-leaders-a7237701.html>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-3784853/Ex-archbishop-Williams-leads-religious-call-Syrian-refugees.html>

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/709697/Syrian-refugees-Theresa-May-help-Archbishop-Rowan-Williams>

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Lord-Williams-makes-September-school-term-plea-for-child-refugees>

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

[Edgbaston.com](http://www.edgbaston.com)

Reports that it is to host the first-ever three-way T20 tournament between three faith cricket teams at Edgbaston this Thursday. The Archbishop of Canterbury's XI are hosting a visiting side from the Vatican, the St Peter's XI, and The Mount, a Muslim team from Yorkshire.

<http://www.edgbaston.com/news/edgbaston-looks-forward-unity-cricket-tournament/>

Comment

Times: Paul Barber writes "Church schools help make Britain more diverse and tolerant".

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/church-schools-help-make-britain-more-diverse-and-tolerant-8r5tg7zxc>

Spectator: Why C of E schools must resist becoming more religious

<http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2016/09/cofe-schools-must-resist-becoming-religious/>

Christian Today: Vicky Beeching, Jayne Ozanne and Archbishop Cranmer: What happens when argument turns toxic.

Blogs

C of E Comms: On Being @OurCofE during the Crossroads Mission

<http://cofecomms.tumblr.com/post/150314161447/on-being-ourcofe-during-the-crossroads-mission>

Faith and Wisdom in Science: Take your Vicar to the lab

<https://tcbmcleish.wordpress.com/2016/09/11/take-your-vicar-to-the-lab-and-she-can-bring-her-bishop-too/>

Law & Religion UK:

Northern Island Brexit challenge

<http://www.lawandreligionuk.com/2016/09/12/northern-ireland-brexit-challenge-to-be-heard-in-october/>

Enquiry into child sexual abuse

<http://www.lawandreligionuk.com/2016/09/12/inquiry-into-child-sexual-abuse-statement-from-the-new-chair/>

Issues of imprisonment and the C of E

<http://www.lawandreligionuk.com/2016/09/12/issues-of-imprisonment-and-the-church-of-england/>

Think Theology: An ethic of subsidiarity

http://thinktheology.co.uk/blog/article/an_ethic_of_subsidiarity

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