

Inspirational Mizen parents to speak at National Eucharistic Congress in Knock



At the Marian Shrine in Knock preparing for the National Eucharistic Congress on September 26 and 27 are, from left: Sheena Darcy, coordinator of planning; Fr Richard Gibbons, rector at Knock Shrine; Patricia McCarthy, prayer guide at Knock Shrine; Dr Kevin Doran, Bishop of Elphin; and Una Nolan, music director at Knock Shrine

The parents of murdered UK schoolboy, Jimmy Mizen, are to speak at Knock Shrine later this month about their inspirational campaign to spread a message of compassion and hope.

Barry and Margaret Mizen lost their son Jimmy, one day after his 16th birthday, during a violent attack by another teenager in a bakery in South London in 2008.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, determined not to let their son's death have been in vain, the Mizens set up a charity in his honour, called the Jimmy Mizen Foundation.

The foundation promotes peace and forgiveness and raises awareness amongst young people, parents and teachers about the consequences of violent crime.

Barry and Margaret, who spoke in front of Pope Benedict XVI during the 2010 Papal visit to the UK, are speaking in Knock as part of the Youth Space programme for the National Eucharistic Congress.

Thousands of Catholics from across Ireland are expected to travel to the National Eucharistic Congress at Knock Shrine on September 26 and 27 to participate in more than 40 talks,

workshops, ceremonies, prayer, music and reflection.

The National Eucharistic Congress is a major gathering of the Catholic Church in Ireland. It will take place at the National Marian Shrine in Knock, Co Mayo, over the weekend of September 26 and 27 , with the theme 'Christ Our Hope'.

The Congress will consist of more than 40 workshops, talks and ceremonies, many addressing the themes of marriage and family.

The purpose of the congress is to aid spiritual preparation ahead of the 51st International Eucharistic Congress in Cebu in the Philippines next January.

Ireland hosted the last International Eucharistic Congress in Dublin in 2012.

All Ireland Methodist Women's President installed in Enniskillen

Visitors travelled the length and breadth of Ireland and across the Irish Sea to attend the Service of Installation of the new All-Ireland President of MWI, Linda McGuffin. Over the years, as a minister's wife, Linda has travelled



***Linda McGuffin and the Rev Brian Anderson,
President of the Methodist Church in Ireland***

the length and breadth of Ireland herself, serving churches in Portlaoise, West Cork, Belfast and Londonderry, before coming to Darling Street Methodist church, Enniskillen, where the installation took place on Saturday.

Special guests at the service included Alison Judd, representing Methodist Women in Britain; Phyllis Grothier, President of Mothers' Union; Sandra Stokes, President of Presbyterian Women; and members of Linda's family. The Lay Leader of the Methodist Church in Ireland, Kenneth Twyble, was also present and the act of installation was carried out by Methodist

President the Rev Brian Anderson who commented on the hugely significant role MWI plays in the life of the Church. As expected at a Methodist gathering, the singing was uplifting, with special musical contributions from Linda's daughter-in-law, Rebecca, and from Darling Street Ladies' choir.

Linda's chosen theme for her two years of office is 'God is able' and this was the subject of an address in which she shared her personal experience of God at work in and through her life. An accomplished homemaker, she would never have seen herself as a public speaker or preacher, but she had said 'yes' to the challenge of her new role in the confidence that she could depend upon God. She quoted the words of Phillips Brooks, the 19th century Bishop of Massachusetts: 'It is almost as presumptuous to think you can do nothing as to think you can do everything'. Encouraging all present to trust God to do far more than they could ever ask or imagine, she emphasised the value of childlike faith. Neither she nor the other MWI committee members had the answers to the difficult questions that face the Church today; but 'God has been able, God is able and God will be able [to lead us on],' she said.

Community boost at May Street Presbyterian Church, Belfast

An official opening ceremony has been held, following the £350,000 refurbishment of a basement hall at May Street Presbyterian Church in the heart of Belfast.

The schoolroom is part of the Urban Soul basement area and will be made available for community-based activities and Christian outreach.

The 1,400 sq ft hall, which boasts an entertainments licence and disabled access, can accommodate up to 120 people and will be in demand for conferences, classes, meetings and musical events.

The lead funder for the project, which also involved the renovation of toilet facilities and the entrance lobby, was Belfast City Council, which provided £200,000 through its £5 million [Local Investment Fund](#), with additional support from the Alpha Programme (managed by Groundwork NI) and Biffa Award, plus the Listed Places of Worship Scheme.



A plaque was unveiled by Councillor Declan Boyle, Chairman of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee with Belfast City Council.

Also participating in the ceremony, which was attended by around 60 people, were Mel Waddell from Groundwork NI and George Peel from Biffa Award.

Prior to the official opening, a Service of Re-Dedication was held in the sanctuary of May Street Church. It was conducted by Dr Ian McNie, the Moderator of the General Assembly, and Dr Rodger Crooks, vacancy convenor at May Street.

Councillor Boyle said that the project “ticked all the boxes” as far as the council's Local Investment Fund - a key initiative within its city-wide Investment Programme - was concerned, as one of its priorities was the regeneration of the city centre.

He said: “May Street Church is a landmark building which has a strategically important location in the city centre and we look forward to this new amenity being much used for the betterment of the wider community.”

Mr Waddell said: “Congratulations should go to the Urban Soul Community Interest Local Committee which, through its efforts over the last number of years, has helped transform a derelict and little used space into a great community asset right in heart of Belfast.”

Mr Peel commended all concerned in the development of such a “beautiful venue” in the heart of the city and said Biffa Award’s contribution, which involved the installation of a drainage sump, had ensured that the basement would never again be affected by flooding.

Arthur Acheson, Clerk of Session at May Street Church, expressed thanks on behalf of the church and Urban Soul to all the funders.

He said they were now open for expressions of interest as regards the use of the hall and for the franchise of the adjacent Urban Soul Café.

Bishop of Cork takes part in Harvard international conference on church law

The Bishop of Cork, Dr Paul Colton, took part in an international conference on church law at Harvard University, in his capacity as an Honorary Research Fellow at Cardiff University Law School.

The ecumenical colloquium, believed to be the first meeting of its kind in the USA, was held at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts on Saturday, 12th September under the auspices of the Centre for Law and Religion at Cardiff University Law School. The colloquium was an ecumenical exploration of the teaching of church law to ordinands and others in churches. It was organised by Professor Norman Doe, Director of the Centre for Law and



At the Colloquium from the Centre for Law and Religion at Cardiff Law School were (l-r), Professor Norman Doe (Director), Honorary Professor Mark Hill, QC, and Dr Paul Colton (Honorary Research Fellow at Cardiff Law School)

Religion at Cardiff Law School. The Bishop of Cork, Dr Paul Colton, took part in his capacity as an Honorary Research Fellow at Cardiff University Law School.

More than forty lawyers and teachers took part, mostly from the USA, but also from Canada, England, Wales, Ireland, the Netherlands,

Belgium, and South Africa. The day was spent examining the purposes of teaching and study in church law in ministerial training, the subjects of study, the methods used, and also whether there would be longer term value in setting up an international network of teachers and scholars in this field for greater ecumenical understanding.

Among the lawyers, the Christian denominations represented were: Roman Catholic, Anglican/Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, Dutch Reformed, and several other reformed churches.

Lough Derg is tough - Bishop of Derry

Commenting on Facebook, Bishop Donal McKeown writes - Just back yesterday after the three day Lough Derg experience. There were 43 of us on the Derry bus and we joined 200 others who landed there on Friday. By Saturday night there were 484 on the island doing the bare feet, 24 hours without sleep and the fasting on one daily meal of dry toast and black tea.

Lough Derg is tough - but people go there for a myriad of reasons and they choose it because it is tough. Some are very religious, some much less so. The fasting, bare feet and lack of sleep

can break through the saccharine coating of unreality that we are asked to take as normal (eg. 'Life is a beautiful sport' - Lacoste; 'Let's feel good' - Boots) - and actually help us get in touch with the gritty reality of living and the harsh reality of life for so many of our fellow human beings. There is more humanity in 'fast' than there is in 'don't cook, just eat' or 'obey your thirst'. Lough Derg is not an escape from reality - it is an encounter with it!

Youth Officer joins Connor staff team

Christina Baillie has joined the Connor Diocesan staff team as Youth Officer.

Christina, 25, will be developing youth ministry across the diocese and building on the good work carried out in recent years by the Engage Connor Youth Council.

A native of Islandmagee, Christina later moved to east Belfast and now lives in Holywood. She is married to Mark who works for the Christian charity CARE.

A former pupil of Larne Grammar School and Grosvenor Grammar School, Christina studied Social Work at Queen's University, Belfast, and

since graduating has worked for a number of community organisations including the Simon Community, Mindwise and most recently CAUSE.

A member of First Holywood Presbyterian Church, Christina has long held an interest in youth ministry, and has been involved in Urban Saints, helping run a Sunday evening youth group in Gilnahirk and organising Easter camps.

“Youth work is something I have always had a passion for,” said Christina. “I love to help young people take hold of their own faith and share it with their friends. I am also looking forward to being able to encourage our youth leaders. I think this role will hold a lot of exciting challenges for me.

“It is really exciting to see the things that are already established for young people in the diocese and I want to help develop them. My role will enable me to draw more people in and connect all the good work that is being doing with young people in Connor.”

Stressing the importance of children’s and youth work, Christina said: “I will be looking at youth work from a diocesan wide approach and seeing what is working in different parishes and what can be shared with others.

“In the next few months I hope to meet with clergy and people running youth groups or wanting to be involved in parish youth work, and also get to know lots of the fab young people in Connor.”

Rector has surprise meeting with the President of Ireland on recent holiday



A Cookstown Church of Ireland Rector has shared his surprise at meeting the President of Ireland on a recent holiday in Northern Italy.

Canon Norman Porteus was waiting for a ferry at Salo on Lake Garda, when he said he “noticed a familiar face”.

After getting into a conversation with President Higgins in a “most pleasant and engaging encounter” he managed to verify that he “was indeed the President of the Irish Republic” and got permission to have his picture taken with him.

“It’s amazing who you meet on holidays,” the Derryloran Rector said.

Re-hallowing of Christ Church, Strabane

A Service of Re-hallowing and Celebration has been held in Christ Church, Strabane to mark the completion of the first phase of a major improvement project in the C of I parish.

Since the spring, parishioners have using the Parish Hall for worship, while essential repairs were carried out to the interior of the church building. The work became necessary after dry rot was discovered in the nave, south transept, chancel and sanctuary of the Church. The total cost of the restoration work is estimated at £100,000.

The Re-hallowing Service marked the completion of Phase 1 of the project, which involved the removal and treatment of dry rot, and re-plastering and repainting of the church interior. New wall plates also had to be installed, and minor repairs made to the lower part of the roof. The second phase the project is now under way. It involves repointing of the church exterior and storm-glazing the windows.

First Minister praises Scottish inter faith work

The Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Most Revd David Chillingworth, joined other Christian leaders and the leaders of other religions this week for a meeting with the First Minister of Scotland.

After the meeting, the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, praised the role of faith groups and inter faith work in “transforming lives and building a stronger, fairer and equal Scotland.”

“At the weekend we witnessed faith groups working together as one voice to show their



support to what is first and foremost a humanitarian crisis that requires all communities to work together to support those in desperate need,”

Ms Sturgeon said. “Interfaith work and the contribution of faith groups is essential in transforming lives and building a stronger, fairer and equal Scotland. The overwhelming support we have seen from across Scotland over the past week [to the refugee humanitarian crisis] shows willingness of the people of Scotland to help the most vulnerable arriving in Scotland and across the world.

“By working together with all communities I want to see a safer, stronger and more inclusive society which we are all able to fully contribute to and benefit from.”

In addition to discussing interfaith dialogue and the refugee crisis, the meeting also discussed the importance of faith in public life.

Bishop Chillingworth was joined at the meeting by a number of other faith and religious leaders including the Rt Revd Dr Angus Morrison, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Archbishop Mario Conti from the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland, Rabbi Moshe Rubin Senior Orthodox Rabbi of Scotland, and Sayed Ali Abbas Razawi from the Ahl ul Bayt Society.

Tributes paid to retired Anglican priest killed in Achill flash flood

A retired Anglican priest in his mid-80s has died after his car was swept away in floods which ravaged an island community overnight - Irish Independent reports.

The incident happened near Doogort on Achill Island shortly after 10pm during torrential rain which brought chaos to many roads in the west of the country.

Rev Roger Grainger was a retired Church of England priest who had moved to the west of Ireland three years ago after a lifetime of visiting the country with his late wife Doreen.

He had just bought a house in Doogort six weeks ago, close to St Thomas' Church of Ireland where he helped local minister and close friend Rev Val Rogers.

"We have lost an incredible man and great friend here," Rev Rogers told the Herald.

"Roger had a great love for the west of Ireland. He decided to move over permanently and he had just bought a little house close to our church five to six weeks ago.

"He had been out for dinner and was driving home when his car was lifted off the road and into a ditch. The torrent was tropical, a dreadful flash flood that had gone just a couple of hours later."

Rev Grainger had completed seven degrees during his life and had just been accepted on another degree course at Galway University.

“He was an absolute dynamo, a former actor with the Old Vic,” said Rev Val.

“He had been psychotherapist and a chaplain in psychiatric hospitals and all of those experiences came together in his books which featured the healing power of drama and liturgy.