



The wine boxes filled with kindling

Wine boxes of kindling promote Christian Aid's work

A Killiney parishioner has come up with a novel idea to help raise awareness and funds for Christian Aid. Utilising freely available twigs and wine boxes with a Christian Aid label attached, David Millar of Holy Trinity, Killiney, is hoping to spread the word about the important work of

Christian Aid and also raise money. The initiative was launched in his own parish on Sunday but David hopes his idea can spread far and wide as a way of 'sharing the load' with those who struggle.

Inspired by Loko's story, which was highlighted in a Christian Aid campaign two years ago (<http://www.christianaid.org.uk/getinvolved/christianaidweek/lokos-story/#woman>), David has come up with a way to connect our lives with the lives of people who struggle to make a living. Loko walked for miles every day, facing much danger collecting firewood to sell so she could feed her family.

In the winter many people here buy kindling which is freely available in people's gardens or in the hedgerows nearby. David suggests gathering the kindling and putting it in wine cartons (six to 12 bottle boxes are best, he says, and wine merchants are delighted to get rid of them) with a specially designed label affixed. The boxes of kindling are not for sale but a donation to Christian Aid is encouraged and the label raises awareness of the charity. This project is something that every parish could do for Christian Aid without incurring cost and it could



Canon Niall Sloane, David Millar and Peter Byrne

also be adopted by youth groups and eco groups, he says.

Speaking at the launch, David recalled Peter Byrne visiting the parish two years ago with a 15kg load of wood. Having worked in Africa, he recalled the women collecting wood and this sparked an idea. “We want to get more and more people collecting and distributing boxes of kindling. We hope that this could spread to other parishes so we can lighten the darkness, feel the heat and share the load, as it says on the label,”

he commented. Peter Byrne of Christian Aid said that since the Christian Aid campaign, Loko has become part of a project and has received one cow and two goats which have transformed her life. She no longer has to walk for eight hours a day to collect fire wood. The project has given her life and hope, she says.

He paid tribute to David for reflecting on Loko's story and coming up with a plan of action. "He has connected something from Loko's world and ours and he has picked up on some of the current and pertinent themes such as desertification, climate change and ethical consumerism," he commented. The Rector, Canon Niall Sloane, also commended the initiative and urged parishioners to take a box home and be reminded of those who struggle each day.

Everything is connected Bishops' pastoral theme for Day for Life

"Growing in wonder will help us to treasure more deeply the gift of human life" – Bishops

This Sunday across Ireland marks the celebration of *Day for Life*, a day dedicated to raising awareness about the meaning and value of human life at every stage, and in every condition. *Day for Life* is celebrated each year by the Catholic Church in Ireland, Scotland, and in England & Wales. The theme for this year's *Day for Life* is 'Everything is Connected'.

Printed copies of the bishops' brief *Day for Life* pastoral message will be circulated at parish Masses this weekend. The text of the pastoral message is available in English, and in the Irish and Polish languages on www.catholicbishops.ie.

In their pastoral message for 2016, bishops share a reflection from *Laudato Si'* the recent encyclical letter from Pope Francis on care for our common home. In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis said, 'Neglecting to monitor the harm done to nature and the environmental impact of our decisions is only the most striking sign of a disregard for the message contained in the structures of nature itself. When we fail to acknowledge as part of reality the worth of a poor person, a human embryo, a person with disabilities – to offer just a few examples – it

becomes difficult to hear the cry of nature itself; everything is connected.’

In their *Day for Life* pastoral message the bishops say, “When we recognise and grow in wonder that we are all brothers and sisters living in one common home, it will not only affect how we care for the environment, but also how we care for one another and how we welcome and accept those with different needs and abilities, refugees, the elderly, the unborn, the forgotten and the abandoned.”

Commenting on this year’s *Day for Life* message, Bishop Kevin Doran, Bishop of Elphin and the Bishops’ Conference Day for Life delegate said, “*Laudato Si*’ is not just about conserving the environment for its own sake. It is about how we use and share the limited natural resources, which God originally intended for all, including the generations yet to be born. For many in our world today, the management of the environment is a matter of life and death”.

A special web feature is available on www.catholicbishops.ie which includes:

- Link to *Laudato Si'*, the encyclical letter from Pope Francis on Care for Our Common Home.
- Text of the bishops' pastoral message 'Everything is Connected' in English, Irish and Polish.
- *Day for Life* prayers and reflections.

Bishop commends Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

“There is no doubt that ecumenical engagement could do with some renewed enthusiasm”, says the Bishop of Clogher, the Rt Revd John McDowell, who is Chair of the C of I's Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue.

Bishop Mc Dowell in a statement said, “Familiarity breeds contempt” and although it would be unfair to link the proverb with the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, there is no doubt that ecumenical engagement could do with some renewed enthusiasm.

“Perhaps some of that enthusiasm can be generated by looking back and simply being

thankful for all that has been achieved so far – in official commissions and documents, in great symbolic events of mutual respect and recognition, but most of all in local collaboration, which is the true heart beat of ecumenism.

“Collaborative events are a demonstration to ourselves as much as to the world that wherever Christians meet for worship or any other activity they meet as a family. It is a family which has had its quarrels and reconciliations; a family separated by great distance and by the habits and temperaments of its many members. As in all families there can even be the suspicion that one member is doing something deliberately to annoy another. However, as with all families, its vigour and interest are generated both by what we have in common and by what distinguishes us from one another.

“Such is family life and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is that fixed point of family reunion which perhaps we don’t always look forward to but are always glad afterwards that we made the effort.

He continued by commending resources produced by the inter-church body for Britain and

Ireland, “As always CTBI (Churches Together in Britain and Ireland) have provided a framework based on an international theme (this year originating in Germany) and entitled *Crossing Barriers*. The material can be easily adapted and comes along with many other suggestions for activities during the week. It can be used at any time of the year, although, given its place in the calendar of so many Christian Traditions worldwide, the January Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is a particularly suitable time.”

Bishop McDowell concluded, “As the Chair of the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue I wish to commend the use of these resources to and to wish you well in whatever way you choose to celebrate the Week of Prayer as a witness to the unity which is our gift in Jesus Christ.”

The CTBI material can be downloaded free of charge [from this link](#).

Church members must shout about the injustice of homelessness

“Ten thousand people would pass me every day but not one of them would see me.” These words on what it is like to be homeless were shared by



Glenn Cronin (Tiglin Graduate), Phil Thompson (CEO Tiglin), Fr Peter McVerry (Peter McVerry Trust), David Carroll (Director of Services and Development Depaul) and the Revd Adrian Dorian (Chairperson of CASC).

Glenn Cronin at the Church and Society Commission of the Church of Ireland seminar on homelessness on Monday September 26. Glenn, who is a graduate of Tiglin Challenge, spoke alongside Phil Thompson of Tiglin, Fr Peter McVerry and David Carroll of Depaul Ireland at the seminar for clergy and faith leaders of all denominations which took place in Griffith College.

Speakers at the event highlighted the importance of treating people who are experiencing homelessness with dignity whether at a personal level as people engage with homeless people or at a service provision level in the quality of services available. Fr McVerry posed the question: “If you have always been at the receiving end then what does that do for your dignity?” Throughout the morning those present were challenged to think about what they could do to highlight the injustice of homelessness.

In his opening remarks, Archbishop Michael Jackson, suggested that there remains insufficient connection between the concept of economic recovery, the enactment of the common good and the true plight of individuals and families. He spoke of frustration at the limitation of the noun ‘homelessness’. “There is a person or a family at the heart of the word to whom the abstract noun does not do justice to the public and private panic,” he stated. He said the seminar offered an opportunity to discern by listening, inform our prayer for those who are homeless, make contact and connection with experts, and return to parishes changed by information and inspiration.

Tiglin Challenge provides residential and day programmes for people struggling with addiction and an aftercare service providing safe, step down, residential accommodation. They also run the No Bucks Café bus which offers friendship and food to homeless people at night in the greater Dublin area. Phil Thompson, Tiglin's CEO, explained that 72 percent of the people they see have been homeless during their addiction. "Tiglin addresses the reason they became homeless and addresses the reason they are in addiction. It is a wrap around service which helps people to successfully exit homelessness or addiction and bring out their full potential."

Glenn Cronin described his journey to addiction and homelessness. He explained that not all homeless people are visible – he stayed on friends' sofas before moving to a squat. He described how it felt to beg for money. "My patch was at the bank machine on Baggot Street, sitting on the cold concrete underneath the bank machine so full of shame. The lowest point of my life was sitting underneath the bank machine. Ten thousand people would pass you every day but no one would see you. That was difficult to

realise – you’re just going to disappear and no one will realise,” he said.

Glenn arrived in Tiglin in 2010. After graduating from the programme he moved to supported accommodation in Greystones and went to college. He is now a self employed engineer. Asked how people can engage with people who are begging, Glenn said there is a huge barrier but showing a bit of love was key. “Someone talking to you means they have seen you... I’ve seen the power of change in my life... It’s that love that will pull down the barriers of all the broken and lost people. Ninety–nine percent of the time you will get brushed off but you might reach one,” he commented. On the issue of whether to give money to people who are begging or not, Phil said he chooses to buy them a cup of tea and if he has €2 he will give it to them. He had come to the view that if people need money to buy drugs they’ll get it anyway and you might save the person doing something wrong to get the money.

Fr Peter McVerry outlined the background to the setting up of the Peter McVerry Trust. The trust now has 14 hostels in Dublin and one in Newbridge along with a number of programmes

for drug treatment and stabilisation and a drop in centre and apartments for homeless people. He said that the first and most important thing individuals and church communities could do was to engage with homeless people. “Our dignity depends on our ability to contribute. Homeless people are always on the receiving end, what does that do for their dignity?” he asked. “Get to know homeless people. Build that relationship. Don’t just buy them a sandwich. How do you know they want a sandwich? Go and ask them what they want. If they ask for money, give them money – if they’re on drugs their going to get money anyway.”

Addressing the Churches’ responsibility Fr McVerry said there were five fundamental rights – food, health, education, work and a home. The most fundamental of these, he said, was the right to a home because having no home affected access to all the others. “As Churches we declare that every single human being is a child of God. If we preach this on a Sunday but do not struggle to affirm the dignity of every single human being during the rest of the week, then what we say on Sunday is empty. We as Churches should be screaming from the rooftops about the injustice of this, an injustice that is the

denial of the dignity of the person... As a Church our role is to reveal God to the world. You can only reveal a God of compassion by being the compassion of God and in some way responding at local level. It's a real opportunity for clusters of parishes to respond," he stated.

Director of Services and Development with Depaul Ireland, David Carroll, brought perspectives on homelessness from north and south of the border. "We should as a society want to end homelessness. We can be overwhelmed but we must believe that there is an end goal," he stated. Depaul works in four areas: homelessness and families, prevention of homelessness, homelessness and addiction and criminal justice and mental health. He commended the Government's rapid build programme but said it was not ambitious enough. He said the key issues to examine were how to stop people becoming homeless and how to get them out of dormitory accommodation fast. He said that the Government needed to outline a long term approach spanning a 20 to 30 year period.

He suggested that Churches could provide moral and ethical leadership and speak out about

homelessness. He added that Churches could continue their partnerships within communities and between parishes and organisations dealing with homelessness. Churches could also provide pastoral support to people experiencing homelessness and could encourage people to volunteer. He encouraged clergy to communicate the message of homelessness to their congregations.

C of I Bishop at launch of new Cork Educate Together school

On Monday, 26th September, the Bishop of Cork, the Right Reverend Dr Paul Colton, was among religious leaders, community representatives, and civic guests who had accepted an invitation from Mr Colm O'Connor (School Principal) to the launch, in the Aula Maxima, University College, Cork, of the new Cork Educate Together Secondary School.

This is the first such Educate Together secondary school in Munster, and the first outside Dublin.

Educate Together now runs 81 primary schools in the State, and the Cork Educate Together



At the launch, in Aula Maxima, UCC, of Cork's first Educate Together Secondary School were (l-r) Dr Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork; Sister Jenny Clifford (Roman Catholic Church), Colm O'Connor (School Principal), the Reverend John Faris (Presbyterian Church in Ireland), Sabina Nagle (Bahai) and Brian Whiteside (Humanist Association of Ireland).

Secondary School is the ninth second level school under the patronage of Educate Together.

The 47 students, the entry group and pioneers of this Cork school, gave a musical welcome to the large group of parents, friends and invited guests

including the Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr Joe Kavanagh, Minister Simon Coveney, T.D., the leader of the Opposition, Micheál Martin, T.D., Micheal McGrath, T.D., Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire, T.D., and Senator Jerry Buttimer. Emeritus Professor of Education at UCC, Áine Hyland, who was a founder of the Educate Together school over forty years ago was present as were Dr Emer Nowlan (Educate Together), and the launch itself was performed by the President Emeritus of UCC, Professor Michael Mortell.

Along with the Church of Ireland Bishop, Dr Paul Colton, other denominations and faiths represented were the Roman Catholic Church (Sister Jenny Clifford), the Reverend John Faris (Presbyterian Church in Ireland), Sabina Nagle (Bahai) and representatives of the Cork Hebrew Congregation and the Russian Orthodox Church.

Half of Scots say they aren't religious

Figures showing further decline in the number of Scots who say they are religious do not represent the full picture, the Church of Scotland has insisted, reports Christian Today.

The latest Scottish Household Survey revealed nearly half of Scots don't identify with a religion – a steady rise from 2009 when 40 per cent said they had no faith. The data also showed a continued drop in the proportion who say they belong to the Presbyterian Church of Scotland from 34 per cent in 2009 to just 25 per cent in 2015.

Rev Dr Richard Frazer, convener of the Church and Society Council and a minister in Edinburgh, said the figures only tell a "small part of the story," however.

He said the decline in affiliation to formal religion was "not surprising" but said increasingly "people express an openness to faith and spirituality without feeling it necessary to tie that into to affiliation to a church".

He insisted the Church is successfully adapting to this "changing nature of faith" and said people continue to have spiritual needs even if they would not declare themselves religious.

"Many of the initiatives of the Church of Scotland over recent years have sought to meet people

where they are, rather than expecting everyone to come to the church," he said.

"We have almost 1,400 congregations, and there are many where activities throughout the week are as much a part of church life as the activity of Sunday morning worship.

"In some cases there may even be more people affiliated to groups associated with the church than there are church members. These activities include everything from lunch clubs, mother and toddler groups, social enterprises and the organising of professional support such as counselling and social care, offered to everyone, regardless of belief."

He pointed to the Kirk's recent "Take a Pew" video campaign as an effort to reach beyond the dwindling numbers in church pews. He also highlighted the Church's care arm, CrossReach, as an example of providing for the vulnerable.

The value of the Church of Scotland was "incalculable", he said.

"If these latest statistics provide something of a challenge, they will not diminish the social impact

the Church of Scotland has in communities the length and breadth of the country."

Church membership plummets in Wales, but bishop holds on to hope

Tumbling church attendance in Wales could herald the end of Sunday worship as it is currently known, reports Christian Today.

Bishop of Bangor Andy John said he believed there could be a shift in worship patterns towards different types of events that appeal more to young people and people with families.

He was talking to Christian Today after the latest Church in Wales **statistics show** that since 1990, the church has lost more than half its members. Average Sunday attendance is now less than one per cent of the total population of Wales.

In one year alone, between 2014 and 2015, average adult Sunday attendance fell from 30,424 to 29,019, a fall of five per cent. Even weekday attendance was down by three per cent to 3,896.

Easter communicants were down one per cent to 51,435, while the number of Christmas communicants fell three per cent to 49,972.

More than 30,000 people took part in some form of non-traditional worship such as arts festival or beach services in 2015, but even this was down from 36,000 in 2014, a fall of one fifth. This is also having an effect on finances.

The statistics report says: "Despite the generosity of members, the Church in Wales's long-term financial security is being damaged by the fall in numbers. This is in addition to the very real damage being done to the church's capacity for and effectiveness in its mission and ministry by becoming numerically smaller year-on-year."

The Governing Body of the Church in Wales **noted the figures** "with a heavy heart".

Bishop John told Christian Today that the problem was not so much a lack of money as the best way to spend it to help revive the fortunes of the Church.

He said the Church remained committed to the current parish system.

But many young people do not turn up at church on Sunday mornings simply because they are still in bed. People are getting older, and as they die, they are not being replaced by younger generations.

"The crucial thing that the Church can do is invest in areas where there is evidence that growth can take place," the bishop said, noting that this meant initiatives taking place in unusual venues. This is a "risk", he said, but one that the Church has to take.

News briefs

+++ Sir Andreas Whittam Smith to step down

- Sir Andreas Whittam Smith, First Church Estates Commissioner announced today his intention to step down from his current role following fifteen years' service. The decision will take effect at the next AGM of the Church Commissioners scheduled for June 2017. The First Commissioner is the Chairman of the C of E's Church Commissioners' Assets Committee, a statutory committee responsible for the strategic management of the Church Commissioners' £7 billion investment portfolio. A Crown nomination, the First Commissioner is also a member of the

Church Commissioners' Board of Governors, the General Synod and the Archbishops' Council.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

BBC/Times/Tel/Guard/Exp

Reports that Ben Emmerson QC, the most senior lawyer working for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), has been suspended from duty. A statement from IICSA said it had "recently become very concerned about aspects of [his] leadership of the counsel team" and he had been suspended so these could be properly investigated. The Inquiry said press suggestions that Mr Emmerson was considering resigning after raising disagreements with chair Professor Jay over its future direction were untrue. The C of E is one of the institutions being investigated by IICSA. Mr Emmerson has not commented.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-37500878>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/abuse-inquiry-in-tatters-after-lawyer-suspended-c3bxwwljd>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/09/28/arrogant-top-lawyer-suspended-from-child-sex-abuse-inquiry-in-la/>
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/sep/28/ben-emmerson-counsel-child-sexual-abuse-inquiry-sacked-concerns-over-leadership>
<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/715624/ben-emmerson-child-abuse-alexis-jay-independent-inquiry-child-abuse-levery>

Times

Further coverage of the address the Archbishop of Canterbury gave to [Anglican Academies and Secondary Heads Conference](#) in Coventry Cathedral. In it he said that teachers are being forced to confront the issue of religiously motivated violence in a way not seen since the aftermath of the reformation 400 years ago.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/teach-pupils-how-jihadists-think-welby-urges-vr7f5qpjw>

Mail

Reports that armed police have started to patrol in the grounds of Canterbury Cathedral. The move follows a string of terror attacks across Europe, including on a priest who was murdered by Islamic State supporters in a French church. A spokesman for the Cathedral said, "Having grown used to armed police patrols in our rail stations, airports and in the capital cities we should not be surprised that Kent Police has judged the same provision for the security of people needs to be made at significant sites in their own area."

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3812713/The-alarming-sight-capturing-visitors-attention-Canterbury-Cathedral-Armed-police-officers-patrol-grounds-following-jihadi-attack-French-priest.html>

BBC/ITV

Report that the Special Air Service (SAS) is to be honoured with a £1m memorial to mark a city's long association with the elite fighting force. A stained glass window made of 3,000 pieces of coloured glass, along with a sculpture, will be unveiled at Hereford Cathedral in April 2017. The work by John Maine will display the SAS motto, "Who Dares Wins". The Cathedral's Dean Michael

Tavinor said it would be "one of the most important pieces of new cathedral art in the world".

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hereford-worcester-37487222>

<http://www.itv.com/news/central/2016-09-28/new-1m-sculpture-dedicated-to-sas-to-be-installed-in-midland-cathedral/>

BBC/Northern Echo

Reports that the funeral of former Bishop of Durham Dr David Jenkins has taken place at the city's cathedral. The 91-year-old, who challenged some of the fundamental beliefs of Christianity, died earlier this month. Senior C of E figures, including the Archbishop of York, attended the service. In an address, the Bishop of Ripon, James Bell, spoke of his commitment to the church and his often unorthodox approach to his ministry.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-37492691>

Comment

Mail: Stephen Glover writes, "Sorry, but machine gun police guarding Britain's most sacred cathedral is a victory for the terrorists." (See Canterbury Cathedral story above)

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3812714/Sorry-machine-gun-police-guarding-Britain-s-sacred-cathedral-victory-terrorists-says-STEPHEN-GLOVER.html>

News from the Archbishop of Canterbury

Archbishop of Canterbury pays tribute to Shimon Peres

<http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5778/archbishop-of-canterbury-pays-tribute-to-shimon-peres>

News from the Church of England

Harvest Festival services boost food banks and homeless charities

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2016/09/harvest-festival-services-boost-food-banks-and-homeless-charities.aspx>

A Growing Church

The fourth Renewal & Reform vision and narrative short film has been launched, looking at how in a world crying out for God's love, we can once again become a growing church for all people in all places. Watch the film:

<https://youtu.be/cVt-SfM930k>

Blogs

Brightest Day: Making Jesus a priority

<https://bengarry.wordpress.com/2016/09/27/1448/>

Think Theology: Complementarity and creation

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

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