



All Saints Parish Church, Antrim

Parents to get involved in Catholic religious education

Parents will be asked to get more involved in their children's education as Catholic bishops take a stronger line on the teaching of religion in primary schools.

Independent - And church leaders hope the announcement the next World Meeting of Families will be held in Dublin in 2018 - with a likely visit from Pope Francis - will help to renew family commitment to religious education.

The church is urging parents to engage with their children in weekly homework that pupils will bring from school, under a new programme published yesterday.

However, families can opt out of receiving the homework page if they are not of the Catholic faith.

For the first time in the history of primary religious education, the bishops have published a structured curriculum for schools to observe.

The new curriculum also brings - for the first time in Catholic primary schools - the allocation of time to learn about other faiths during religion classes.

From first class onwards, pupils will have classes in inter-religious education, starting with

two-and-a-half hours over the year. The time allocation will increase as they move up through senior classes.

The Catholic Preschool and Primary School Curriculum for Ireland (2015) will be rolled out in all Catholic primary schools on the island over the next four years.

Alongside that, a new religious education programme called Grow In Love has also been published to guide teachers in their approach to delivering the curriculum.

The Grow In Love syllabus, the introduction of which started with junior and senior infant classes this month, is more specific about teaching Catholicism from the first days in school than the previous Alive O series.

The Grow In Love textbooks are designed to be used both in school and at home. Each week, families are asked to help their children to do something related to Grow In Love for homework.

In the face of moves, albeit slow, to increase diversity of patrons at primary level, the new approach to religious education by the bishops marks a determination to ensure that their

schools deliver an education grounded in Catholic principles.

Bishop of Limerick and chair of the Council for Catechetics of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, Dr Brendan Leahy, delivered a challenge to parents to parents to engage.

"We cannot outsource education in Christian faith to teachers alone. Family involvement is crucial," he said.

He added the "homework" element of the programme provided opportunities for parents to review and chat with their children about the themes that have been covered "and continue what was done in school".

Dublin discussion on future of denominational education

An event is being held in Dublin next month to discuss denominational education in Ireland which at present faces numerous challenges.

The organisers, the Iona Institute state - "In an increasingly secular environment it is becoming more difficult to maintain the ethos of

denominational schools in a meaningful way. The enrolment policies of Church–run schools are attacked as ‘discriminatory’ as is their employment policy. Some people believe that public funding of denominational schools should be ended entirely.

“There is a debate about the divestment of Church schools to other patron bodies. How many schools should be divested and how fast? Can Church–run schools teach what they believe in such areas as the family and sexuality in a way that is both true to their ethos and pastorally sensitive?

“These questions and the underlying issues in regard to defending and promoting Catholic Education in a secularist cultural context will be considered by Professor Eamonn Conway. Dr Ken Fennelly will respond to Professor Conway.”

Prof Conway is a priest of the Tuam diocese since 1987. He was appointed Head of Theology and Religious Studies at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick in 1999 and in 2000 he also became co–director of the Centre for Culture, Technology & Values & Values. He is the author or editor of several books as well as

publications in international journals, and has lectured widely internationally.

Dr Fennelly is Secretary to the General Synod Board of Education of the Church of Ireland and its Education Officer. A native of Kilkenny, Dr Fennelly has extensive knowledge of the field of Protestant Education. He holds a Bachelor of Theology degree from St Patrick's College, Maynooth, and an MA from NUI Maynooth. He obtained a PhD from NUI Maynooth.

The chair for the night will be Dr Martin Mansergh who was a senior adviser to three former Taoisigh. He was Fianna Fail TD for Tipperary South from 2007 to 2011. He was a Senator from 2002 to 2007. He was Minister of State at the Department of Finance and at the Department of Arts Sport and Tourism. Dr Mansergh was educated at The King's School, Canterbury and Christ Church, Oxford. He is a member of the Church of Ireland.

Where: The Alexander Hotel, Dublin 2 (behind the Davenport hotel)

When: Thursday October 15, 2015 at 8pm

Admission: Free

If you are interested in attending please email info@ionainstitute.ie

Please note that places will be more limited than usual so it is important to book in advance.

Bishop's Council to be formed for Meath and Kildare

It was a full house as members of the Dioceses of Meath and Kildare gathered for their Diocesan Synod. This year it took place in Wilson's Hospital School, near Mullingar on Saturday 26 September.

Bishop Pat Storey highlighted a wide range of issues in her address, at what was her second Synod as Diocesan Bishop. She talked about how life in a Diocese or Parish was like any relationship. Coming with the recognition that people have different views on issues, both big and small, she talked of the importance of respectful listening to one another. This was true whether the issues were of major importance to the Church of Ireland as a whole or more local.

During the past year a conversation has begun in the diocese about how the church can continue to thrive, both now and in the future. This has involved clergy, lay readers and leaders and the



Ken Gibson (The Leprosy Mission Ireland), Lydia Monds (Bishops' Appeal), and Bishop Pat Storey

Diocesan Council. The ‘conversation’ is an opportunity to reflect on our purpose, whether as a diocese or in our parishes and how the challenges and opportunities in a rapidly changing Ireland can be met successfully.

Out of this conversation three priorities have emerged for the Dioceses in the coming three years. These include:

1. To develop discipleship that includes owned personal faith and commitment to service.

2. To develop different models of ministry that include training and encouraging leaders.
3. To deliver practical action in our local communities delivered across the diocese.

In her address Bishop Storey announced the setting up of a Bishop's Council. This is a small group made up of a range of office holders in the diocese. It will work on developing practical action on each of the priorities.

Bishop Storey also talked of the need to respond to the human needs emerging with the refugee crisis in Ireland. One of the new reception centres will be in Monasterevin, in the dioceses. She talked of how the Church of Ireland is currently working to respond to the crisis – finding a way to do the right thing in the right way.

Speeches throughout the day saw thoughtful reflection not only on church life but also on other issues. This included matters such as education and the human challenges faced by others, including those in the midst of the refugee crisis. Synod members had an opportunity to share in a Holy Communion Service before having lunch together.

The Diocesan Synod provided an opportunity for the Bishop and members to recognize and record appreciation for the work of all those who maintain church life. This was noted by many and illustrated in the words of one speech, appreciating the work of so many committed people “who keep worship alive ... and keep the church alive”. This included work of clergy, office-holders, parishioners and so many people who give their time with a good heart.

Bishop Pat and Synod members had an opportunity to welcome Emma Rothwell as Wilson's Hospital School Chaplain & Diocesan Youth And Children's Officer as well as Rev Trevor Holmes who was recently priested. They also expressed their thanks and good wishes to Ruth Jackson and Canon Peter Rutherford who are moving to new parishes in other diocese.

During the afternoon session Synod members heard how the diocesan ‘Good For the Sole’ project has already raised €14,000 – well on the way to the target of €25,000. One of the effects of leprosy is often damage to a person’s feet. The disease causes them to lose sensitivity in this area, making the individual more prone to injury. The Leprosy Mission has been involved in developing a cost-effective sandal that can protect the wearer from such harm. Reaching

the target will buy 10,000 pairs of sandals in Karigiri in Tamil Nadu, India. The diocesan project is in partnership with The Leprosy Mission Ireland and Bishops' Appeal,

One of the most encouraging aspects of the Synod was a sense of preparing for the future with hope and creativity. This was well illustrated by the words of Albert Thompson, in seconding the Report of Diocesan Council, who talked of this being a "time to invest resources ... to maintain our Christian church and enhance ministry".

Preaching in Belfast - Sermons from St Anne's in 1747 published

The Four Courts Press have published a collection of sermons by James Saurin, Vicar of St Anne's in the 18th century.

In 1747 James Saurin, a descendant of a prominent Huguenot family, was appointed as vicar of Belfast. One of his first acts was to write a series of sermons that he preached to his congregation over his long tenure as vicar. Many he recycled a number of times since they were, for him, fundamental statements of belief and its meaning in the contemporary world.

Some fifty-five of these sermons have recently been discovered in St Anne's cathedral in Belfast, having been preserved and used by Saurin's son and his grandson for their preaching.

This edition collects some twenty of the sermons. They reflect on a wide range of questions. How did one maintain social order in a rapidly changing town? What did it mean to be part of the religious establishment in a town where the Church of Ireland was a minority? What political positions might the inhabitants of radical Belfast assume and how did a preacher deal with the needs of his flock through Christmas, Easter, Confirmations and other key moments in their lives?

This unique collection of sermons provides a vivid insight into the mind of a Church of Ireland clergyman in a rapidly changing provincial town at the middle of the eighteenth century and illuminates many of the key issues of the world of provincial Ireland.

The editors and compares are - Raymond Gillespie who teaches in the Department of History, Maynooth University, and Roibeard Ó Gallachóir, a recent graduate of the MA in Historical Archives, Maynooth University.

<http://www.fourcourtspress.ie/books/2015/preaching-in-belfast/>

Healing Ministry's service to support persecuted church

There will be a service on behalf of the persecuted Church in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, on Monday, October 19th at 8pm. This will be organised by Divine Healing Ministries and Open Doors, which works with the persecuted church worldwide. All proceeds collected at the event will go to those who are suffering terribly.

Within Syria itself, 7.6 million people are internally displaced. Nearly 2 million Syrians have fled to Turkey, and another 2 million to the Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq. A large percentage of these people are Christian, and because of what is happening to them the Church in Middle Eastern countries is being decimated.

One of the organisers of the event, Brother David Jardine, says: 'We have all been horrified at the pictures on our televisions of the suffering that so many people, mostly from the Middle East and Africa, are going through.

‘Most of us feel helpless to influence this situation, but the service on October 19th will be an opportunity to make a contribution – by showing our concern, making a financial donation and praying for those being persecuted.’

This special service on October 19th will be held in the context of the normal Monday evening healing service, so personal prayer and anointing with oil will be available. There will be a special speaker who has wide experience of the persecuted church.

Belfast's annual Legion of Mary Rosary procession

This coming Sunday the 4th of October at 3pm, the annual Legion of Mary Rosary procession takes place. This is the 13th annual procession. The procession leaves Saint Johns Church on the Falls Road at 3pm and makes its way up the Road and Andersonstown Road to Saint Michael the Archangel Church.

The organisers state - “We will be carrying a beautiful statue of Our Lady and reciting the Rosary along the way. There will be a short



service of benediction on arrival in Saint Michael's, followed by light refreshments.

“Please come along to join in. We are fortunate that we are able to hold a public procession of our faith on the public highway in spite of the increasingly secular world in which we live. So please come along and demonstrate our continued trust in Our Ladys intercession in our lives and our love for her and the rosary. If anyone would like to have a turn carrying the statue let one of the stewards know.”

BBC and Methodist support for Kerygma choir concert

Will Leitch, senior broadcast journalist and presenter at BBC Northern Ireland will host Down & Dromore's Kerygma choir concert on Saturday 7 November in St Anne's Cathedral.

Will will be joined by former Methodist President, Revd Dr Heather Morris. Heather will bring a short reflection during the programme.

The organisers state, "the concert will be a joyful blend of performance and worship in the spirit of Songs of Praise and with a real sense of celebration. The choir will perform anthems in a variety of Christian music styles accompanied by orchestra and praise band, and there will be opportunity for audience participation to join in the singing of some favourite hymns and worship songs.

Media digest

What is World Meeting of Families planned for Dublin? - Irish Times

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/what-is-world-meeting-of-families-planned-for-dublin-1.2369833>

Mixed response to claims Pope Francis could visit Ulster in 2018 - News Letter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/northern-ireland-news/mixed-response-to-claims-pope-francis-could-visit-ulster-in-2018-1-6982253>

Jarlath Burns: GAA can reach out to Protestants - Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/jarlath-burns-gaa-can-reach-out-to-protestants-31563403.html>

Ind/Premier

Further articles that Church of England schools are struggling to recruit head teachers in some areas. The draft Needs Analysis document says that the situation is particularly acute in rural and coastal regions. The Church of England's Chief Education Officer, Nigel Genders is quoted.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/church-of-england-schools-increasingly-failing-to-appoint-heads-of-the-same-faith-says-study-a6670661.html>
<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/CofE-schools-struggling-to-find-Christian-headteachers>

BBC

A Church of England deacon has appeared in court charged with sex offences. Peter Keeley-Pannett, 71, of Brighton, is facing eight charges which Sussex Police said are all related to the alleged use of a webcam. Mr Keeley-Pannett was a non-stipendiary deacon at the Diocese of Chichester until his arrest in November.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-sussex-34384396>

Exp

Updated report from Sunday that Christians are being targeted by Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. The article says that despite the Archbishop of Canterbury raising concerns, the plight of Christian refugees is being ignored. The report includes graphic photos.

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/608224/christian-martyrs-George-Weidenfeld-Patrick-Sookhdeo-Syria-Barnabus Fund-relocate-charity>

Mail

Article about a Scottish school which has brought in a plan to get its pupils to run a mile a day in a bid to cut childhood obesity. It says Thorner Church of England primary school in Leeds is also planning to introduce the exercise programme.

churchnewsireland@gmail.com

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3252793/Primary-school-makes-pupil-run-mile-day-drive-cut-childhood-obesity.html>

Metro

Picture story about the migrant camp in Calais which shows how the refugees have turned it into a 'village' with shops and a church.

<http://metro.co.uk/2015/09/28/refugees-have-set-up-shops-restaurants-schools-library-and-churches-in-the-calais-jungle-5411054/>

Times/BBC/Mail/Guard

Further reports on the Pope's visit to the US. The BBC and the Times speculates that the Pope is planning a trip to Ireland in 2018.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/irishnews/article4570828.ece>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34378359><http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3251886/Govt-workers-right-refuse-gay-marriage-licenses-pope.html>

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/28/pope-government-workers-right-refuse-gay-marriage-licences-kim-davis>

Guard

Article about teaching Black History month offers resources for schools. The first black Church of England bishop, Wilfred Wood, is mentioned.

<http://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2015/sep/28/how-to-teach-black-history-month-2015>

Obituary Times

Obituary on Colin Platt, a historian and writer, in which it states he had an interest in churches. He maintained that the history of a church was as much about its social setting than the style of building.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/obituaries/article4570378.ece>

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