



***Fr Joseph Gunn, parish priest of St Comgall's Church, Bishop Harold Miller of Down and Dromore, Bishop Noel Treanor of Down and Connor and Canon Ronnie Nesbitt, rector of Bangor Abbey at a service commemorating St Columbanus on Saturday 20 June.***

## **Saint Columbanus 1400 anniversary celebrated**

On Saturday 20 June celebrations centred on Bangor beginning with an ecumenical morning prayer service in Bangor Abbey followed by a civic reception in the Town Hall. The service was attended by some 200 visitors from Italy who were visiting Bangor as part of their celebrations to commemorate the 1400th anniversary of the death of St Columbanus.

In the afternoon there was a varied programme of activities for Irish visitors and the many dignitaries visiting from abroad. The programme included Cardinal Tomás O’Fiaich films, displays on the life of Saint Columbanus, a lecture given by Father Sean McDonagh, an opportunity to hear the history of the formation of the Knights of Saint Columbanus as well as many other activities and street performers.

The 1400th anniversary of the death of Saint Columbanus (also known as Saint Columban), one of the greatest of the Irish missionary monks, was marked also with a national Mass of Thanksgiving on Sunday 21 June in Saint Patrick’s Cathedral, Armagh with Archbishop Eamon Martin presiding.

Archbishop Martin especially welcomed, “  
Cardinal Brady, His Excellency Archbishop

Charles Brown and the visiting bishops, religious superiors and congregational leaders present. To the Columban fathers and sisters, to the Knights of St Columbanus and other members of the Columban family as well as people, priests and religious from Armagh and other parts of the country, thank you for joining us today. I greet the pilgrims from places associated with Columbanus in Ireland, including the groups from Cleenish and Bangor. To Archbishop Richard Clarke and our brothers and sisters from other Christian traditions, you are especially welcome here among us.”

Father Neil Collins, SSC, preached the homily. During the Mass Archbishop Eamon blessed and commissioned young pilgrims from the Archdiocese of Armagh who will be going on pilgrimage to Rome and Taizé during the summer months.

At the conclusion of the Mass Archbishop Eamon blessed the congregation with the Relic of St Columbanus.

Born in Leinster around 543 and having studied in the monastery on Cleenish Island, Co Fermanagh, Saint Columbanus entered the monastery in Bangor, Co Down and was later principal teacher there. In 591, desiring to ‘go

on pilgrimage for Christ', he set out with twelve companions and travelled to Burgundy. He established monasteries at Annegray, Luxeuil and Fontaine. Later he founded Bregenz in Austria and his greatest foundation at Bobbio, near Genoa, where he died in 615. He is remembered as one of the greatest of the Irish missionary monks and revered across parts of Europe.

Whilst the weekend's celebrations focussed on Bangor and Armagh, there were also pilgrim walks and gatherings in many parishes and communities across Ireland to honour Saint Columbanus.

A new pilgrim walk entitled *The Way of Saint Columban* has been prepared by the Columban Missionaries as an ecumenical pilgrimage with nine steps along a selected route in a local parish. Each step consists of: a reading from Scripture, the words of St. Columban, a brief reflection, and, the Our Father. The nine steps conclude with the litany of Saint Columban, prayers of intercession, prayer of Saint Columban and a shared Blessing.

For more information on the Pilgrim Way of Saint Columban as well as other resources including prayers and reflections by Saint Columbanus,

see a special feature on -  
**[www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie)**.

BBC NI recorded service at -  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05zlm0d#auto>

## **Connor Streetreach team commissioned at Belfast cathedral**

The Diocese of Connor Streetreach team was commissioned in St Anne's Cathedral on Saturday June 20 in preparation for its outreach in north Belfast at the beginning of July.

Around 40 young people will spend three days in the Glencairn and Whiterock areas, delivering a wide variety of activities and connecting with people of all ages. Activities will include gardening, street cleaning, a community carnival, Victorian tea for the elderly and a community barbecue.

Zara Genoe and Sharon Hamill, co-chairs of Engage Connor Youth, the youth council for the diocese, said: "Ultimately this opportunity seeks to bring God's love and share his joy on the streets of north Belfast."

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***Connor Pioneer Evangelist Stephen Whitten spoke during the Day of Prayer in St Anne’s Cathedral, when the Streetreach team was commissioned.***

The Streetreach committee is very grateful to the staff team based in Glencairn and Whiterock for its direction and support.

“The Streetreach team is excited and encouraged as the City Council and community groups in both areas embrace this community missional experience. There is great excitement as Streetreach supports the vision and ministry of two local churches,” said Sharon and Zara.

“This is the first of many Streetreach opportunities, engaging young people in mission. We look forward to 2016 and the possibilities of another parish willing to engage in mission.”

The team was commissioned during a Day of Prayer the renewal and revival of the faith in this land organised by Divine Healing Ministries.

The day completed six years of a seven-year cycle of prayer, and the theme this year was ‘Healing through Forgiveness.’ There was a range of speakers for each half hour, and two hours were led by young people including representatives of Connor Youth Council, Stephen Whitten, Pioneer Evangelist in north Belfast, and Lucy Burden, Lisburn Cathedral.

Streetreach runs from June 30-July 3. Each day, the young people will be transported to Glencairn and brought back to their base at Queen’s University in St Anne’s Cathedral’s choir minibuses. The Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev John Mann, who commissioned the Streetreach team, said: “They have agreed that they should be expected to sing on the buses both ways!!”

At the commissioning the Dean left them with the thought that together in Christ they should aim to “live the present moment with those you

love, and love those with whom you share the moment.”

Streetreach is an initiative generated from Summer Madness, the long established Christian youth festival that takes place at the beginning of July every year. In recent years it moved from the King’s Hall to Glenarm.

When Streetreach ends on Friday July 3 the young people will be transported in the St Anne’s Choir minibuses to Glenarm, taking with them the experience of their days of mission in Glencairn.

## **Priest concerned for Croagh Patrick’s future**

The annual Reek Sunday climb of Ireland’s holy mountain Croagh Patrick in Co Mayo will go ahead this year despite concerns over the state of conservation of the mountain and the impact of so many climbers.

Retired Westport parish priest, Fr Tony King, has called for the annual Reek Sunday climb to be suspended for three years to conserve the sacred mountain.



In his homily last Sunday, the former long-time Administrator of Westport parish said that the annual Reek Sunday pilgrimage, which attracts some 30,000 pilgrims and climbers over the last weekend of July, should be suspended until a proper conservation plan is devised to tackle the erosion of the mountain which is 764 metres high.

Speaking at 12 noon Mass in St Mary's Church in Westport Fr King said, "Croagh Patrick is our holy mountain. It is a sacred place."

"The footprints of pilgrim people on that path carry the faith story of generations. The evidence of what is happening on the traditional pilgrim path of this mountain is disturbing. The impact

can only be described as devastation due to erosion and neglect.”

“A lot of the damage I am told is due to it being used as a sky track for fitness by super-athletes. To look at the Reek from Liscarney, what was once the pilgrim path now appears as a broad dark gash ripping the side out of a beautiful mountain.”

He added, “The tragedy of what is happening is stunning. Future generations will look back in anger and haunt us for the way it is being neglected.”

Speaking about the future of climbing on the mountain he said, “I honestly feel that this holy mountain should be declared ‘off limits’ from above the statue of St Patrick to the summit for the next three years.”

Furthermore, he said consideration should be given to the suspension of the national pilgrimage for the same period until a proper environmental protection policy with regulations is put in place to protect and conserve what is a sacred place.

Referring to Pope Francis, Fr King said “People occasionally forgive us but nature never does.”

However, local parish priest Fr Charlie McDonnell has confirmed that “This year’s pilgrimage would go ahead.”

## **Parish worships in former church at Folk Museum**

The old Kilmore Church in the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum was full on Sunday 21 June when Kilmore & Inch parish held their special Father’s Day service there.

Bishop Harold Miller joined the rector, Revd Stephen Smyth, and parishioners in the Georgian church and afterwards for lunch. Everyone with a ticket was also free to enjoy the Folk Museum for the rest of the day.

About 39 years ago the church, which was built in 1792, was carefully dismantled, stone by stone and reassembled at Cultra. It took its place there alongside a school from Ballycastle, a rectory from Duneane, Co Antrim and a row of houses from Sandy Row, Belfast.

‘After 184 years a church moves on’ was the headline in the local press on 6 May 1976. Accompanying the story was a photo of Bishop George Quin with the parishioners,



wardens and rector, Revd H G B Forde, gathered at the gates for the act of de-consecration.

After the building of the current church in 1870 which was erected to cope with a growing congregation, the church was used as a school and parochial hall. Rather than let it fall beyond repair, when the museum approached with the plan to preserve and re-locate the building, all parties, including the RCB, eventually agreed.

The rescued church is regarded as an excellent example of Georgian architecture and great care was taken to restore it as closely as possible to its original state.

## **One year on - Edinburgh church recovering from congregational split over the ordination of gay ministers**

Last May St Catherine's Argyle in Edinburgh experienced the painful event of a congregational split over the ordination of gay ministers. One year on, its locum minister, Rev Jane Howitt, describes how the church has recovered.

"It is one year now since the congregation of St Catherine's Argyle has been meeting and worshipping in its new format. It was an important milestone to mark in some way. As the elders reflected on the last year, it soon became clear that the appropriate thing to do was hold a Thanksgiving Service to acknowledge the goodness and faithfulness of God to the congregation over the year. We have also appreciated help and support offered to us from the wider Church during this time.

"Those who remained at St. Catherine's Argyle have discovered that for any old friendships that changed or were lost, many new ones were



***Rev Jane Howitt, locum minister at St Catherine's Argyle, describes how the church has recovered.***

made. People have got to know each other better and those relationships have gone deeper than ever before. A real sense of family has evolved within the congregation. God has released fresh gifts amongst those who have remained and enabled many to step into roles that had previously been filled by others. This has led to many more being able to use their gifts in worship, service and in pastoral care for one another.

"We have been delighted to welcome folk into membership over the last year, to see elders ordained, children baptized and to be able to open up our halls far more to the local

community. Scouts have joined us for a Remembrance Day service and we have hosted the Bethany night shelter twice over the winter.

"Although it will always take time to rebuild and grow as a congregation, we have clearly seen God's blessing upon us through the year and are full of thankfulness to him. Several members spoke during the service of the good things they'd experienced in Church over the last year and a special thank offering was given. One member commented that he thought of the church as having been re-booted since the split.

"Re-booted for what though - that's the question. We like to think we have been re-booted for fruitfulness as we seek to reach into our Parish and community with the good news of Jesus Christ. With the theme re-booted for fruitfulness in mind we planted out some wellies with strawberry plants and dug them into the garden! We're looking forward to seeing the fruit that God will give - the strawberries first, but even more importantly the longer term fruit that he will surely bring through the faithfulness of the congregation of St Catherine's Argyle."

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## **Jazz sounds a note of hope – Archbishop of Wales**

Jazz shows us how to improvise, be creative and get around the discordant notes life throws out way, the Archbishop of Wales said at the Vale of Glamorgan's first Jazz Festival last weekend.

Dr Barry Morgan officially opened the Vale Jazz Festival in Barry town centre on Friday and preached at a Festival Service on Sunday at St Mary's Church, Barry.

About 22 jazz acts performed in 20 venues around Barry and all the events were free, thanks to sponsorship from local businesses and the Arts Council of Wales.

Before the event, he Archbishop said "I am delighted to be opening the festival and am looking forward to the service on Sunday. Christianity's links with jazz go back a long way – the music came from slaves suffering in the southern states of America when they expressed their feelings by using Biblical imagery and African rhythmic music with hymns such as 'Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord' or songs such as 'When the saints go marching in'.

“So jazz speaks to those who are broken and crushed and borne down by life. But it speaks too of a hope and a longing that somehow God will rescue them. It teaches us to be creative and to improvise – to make the best of the hand we have been given and to cope with the discordant notes that are thrown at us.”

## Media digest

### **Early fears over paedophile priest - Belfast Telegraph**

There was suspicion that Fr Brendan Smyth, who went on to sexually assault hundreds of children, had abused a boy while training in Rome during the late 1940s.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/early-fears-over-paedophile-priest-31319683.html>

### **Dr Jensen spoke about the Bible - News Letter**

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/dr-jensen-spoke-about-the-bible-1-6809766>

### **Ireland's Shadowlands - a journey to sites of abuse - Guardian**

- Haughton's landscapes capture the beauty of Ireland. ... the church at the failure of the Roman

Catholic hierarchy in Ireland to deal with evidence of ...

<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/jun/21/kim-haughton-sexual-abuse-ireland-catholic-church-photographs>

## **Queries on ‘different’ treatment of ‘hate’ cases - News Letter**

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/queries-on-different-treatment-of-hate-cases-1-6809270>

## **BBC**

Report that the new Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich has been enthroned at Bury St Edmunds Cathedral. It states Martin Seeley formally took up his position in Suffolk following his consecration as a bishop at Westminster Abbey last month. Some 900 people attended the service.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-suffolk-33215473>

## **Tel/Eve Standard**

Articles on how two men scaled Westminster Abbey in a Father's Day protest, for **New Fathers4Justice**. The group said Bobby Smith from Stevenage and James Dennis from Bishops Cleeve, Gloucestershire, scaled the church and

unfurled three banners on top of scaffolding which stood against one side of the building to highlight campaigns for the **rights of fathers to see their children**.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/11690353/Fathers-stage-protest-at-Westminster-Abbey.html>

<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/fathers4justice-protesters-climb-westminster-abbey-as-nation-celebrates-fathers-day-10335306.html>

### **Mail/Times/Guard/Mirror/Tel/Star/Ind/BBC**

Reports on the first service at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, after a gunman killed nine people last week. They say the service sent a message of faith to demons in its midst, as hundreds gathered at the church on Sunday and visitors from across the country remembered the lives lost in the wake of the tragedy.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-3134032/Thousands-gather-Arthur-Ravenel-Bridge-solidarity.html#ixzz3dIRB6ZiK>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/americas/article4476333.ece>

<http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/video/2015/jun/22/charleston-shooting-emanuel-ame-church-service-video>

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/charleston-church-shooting-dylann-roof-5925741>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/11690265/Church-bells-ring-out-for-Charleston-victims.html>

<http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/449428/Charleston-worshippers-packed-out-church-first-service-since-shooting>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/charleston-shooting-emanuel-african-methodist-episcopal-church-holds-first-service-since-the-killing-of-nine-of-its-members-10335189.html>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-33214205>

### **Guard/Tel/Mail/Metro**

Reports on comments by BBC's political correspondent, Nick Robinson, talking about his new book on politics following his treatment for cancer. They say he claimed David Cameron threatened to "close down" the BBC. He is quoted saying, "The Tory's attitude and Cameron's in particular is rather like their attitude to the Church of England. They are delighted it exists and regard it as vital to the fabric of England, but they also find it really annoying."

<http://www.theguardian.com/media/2015/jun/21/nick-robinson-bbc-lung-cancer-cybernats>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/bbc/11689611/David-Cameron-threatened-to-close-down-BBC-Nick-Robinson-claims.html>

[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3133427/Cameron-threatened-close-BBC-row-election-claims-political-editor-Nick-Robinson.html?](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3133427/Cameron-threatened-close-BBC-row-election-claims-political-editor-Nick-Robinson.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

[ITO=1490&ns\\_mchannel=rss&ns\\_campaign=1490](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3133427/Cameron-threatened-close-BBC-row-election-claims-political-editor-Nick-Robinson.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

<http://metro.co.uk/2015/06/21/david-cameron-said-he-wants-to-close-down-the-bbc-claims-nick-robinson-5256505/>

## **BBC**

Report that renovation work to Derby Cathedral has discovered remains of the previous church, long thought lost. The six-month, £670,000 project will upgrade heating and electrics, as well as seeing large areas repainted. It states the 14th Century church was demolished and rebuilt in the 1720s and it was believed all trace of the older building had gone. But builders have uncovered a piece of ancient brickwork which it is hoped can be put on display.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-derbyshire-33173218>

## **Times**

[churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)

Column by Libby Purves on the RSPCA and animal welfare mentions that the Archbishop of Canterbury declined to be patron and expresses her reservations about the election to the charity's ruling council of campaigners with extreme views, saying they put the organization at risk.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/article4476259.ece>

### **Express**

Article on the history of the Parachute Regiment's Red Devils display team mentions that in 2008 the Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, then 58, also jumped with the team.

<http://www.express.co.uk/life-style/life/585992/Amazing-red-devils-history-elite-group>

### **Exp/Star**

Further reports that former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, has intervened to ban an all-male Cambridge University drinking society from staging 'sexist' female jelly-wrestling competitions.

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/586021/Jelly-wrestling-banned-by-former-Archbishop-of-Canterbury-at-Cambridge-University-club>

<http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/449400/Archbishop-bans-bikini-clad-jelly-wrestling>

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