



## **Churches condemn 'appalling' Barcelona attack**

Church leaders have condemned events in Spain after two terrorist attacks, including a van rampage in Barcelona which left at least 13 people dead.

A white Fiat mounted the pavement and sped into crowds along Las Ramblas, a busy street popular with tourists, shortly after 5pm local time on Thursday. More than 100 people were hurt. The Islamic State took credit for the attack, saying it was in response to calls for its followers to target countries participating in the coalition

trying to drive the extremist group from Syria and Iraq, the Associated Press reported.

Rev Canon Geoff Johnston Archdeacon for Spain at the Diocese of Europe told Premier local churches will be more than willing to help.

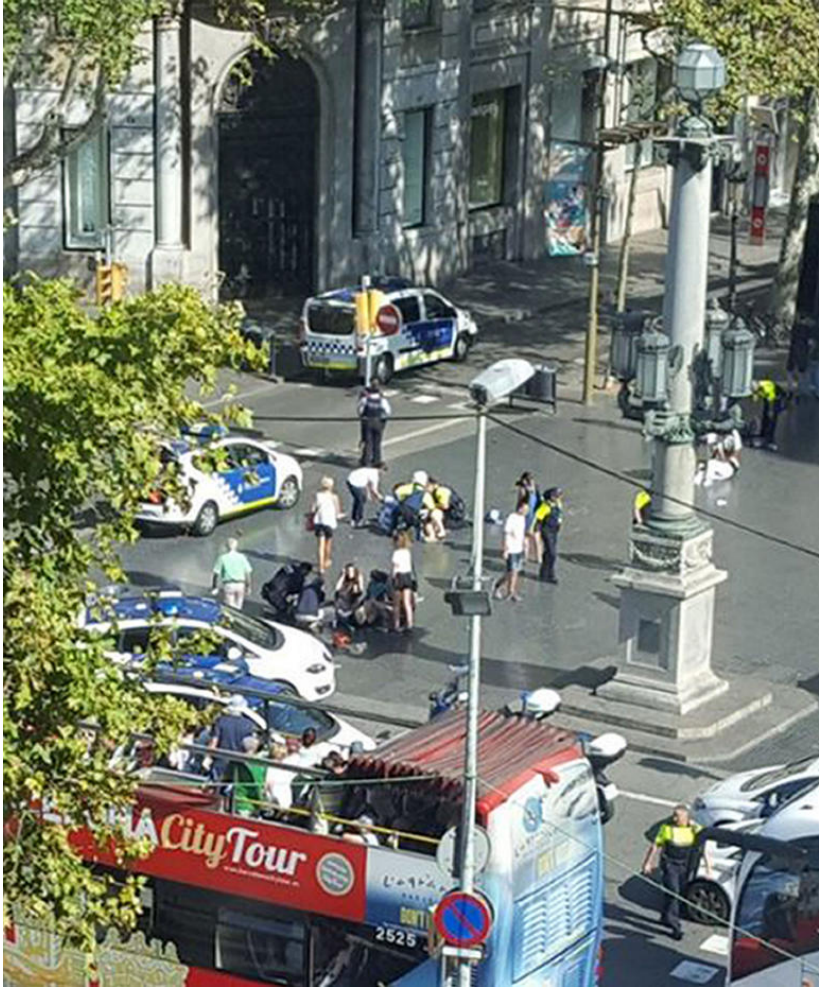
"They will be available if people want to talk to them, churches will be open for prayer as well. "Of course as time goes on people may want more deeper counselling as well."

He encouraged people to ask God to give those impacted "strength to overcome fear in the times of uncertainty".

John Carrana, a pastor at the International Church of Barcelona, said members of his congregation were close to the attack there.

"One of the girls in our church, her office window overlooks the area that was attacked. She's safe.

"Another guy in the church lives about two blocks away and he expressed the panic on the streets and what he went through but so far we haven't heard anyone directly from the church involved."



He called the attack shocking and horrifying and something that he has prayed against.

He added: "It's one of those things with the climate of what's happening in Europe and you

hear of those types of things happening in other cities, you wonder if it will ever happen in your city. I was praying and hoping that it won't."

During a second attack which struck overnight, five suicide belt-wearing terrorists used a car to ram civilians in the seaside town of Cambrils. They were shot and killed by police but not before seven people, including an officer, were hurt.

Pope Francis has offered prayers for the victims of a terrorist attack in Barcelona, Spain, that left at least 12 people dead and injured dozens of others.

"With great concern the Holy Father has learned about what is happening in Barcelona. The Pope prays for the victims of this attack and wants to express his closeness to the whole Spanish people, particularly the injured and the families of the victims," said a statement from Greg Burke, director of the Vatican press office.

On Twitter, Archbishop of Canterbury the Most Rev Justin Welby said: "Full of sorrow for those affected by the attack in Barcelona,

Christ give eternal light and peace and hope to the bereaved and injured."

Two people have been arrested over the attack in Las Ramblas and major manhunt is underway to trace the suspected van driver.

While taking refuge in a nearby church, Ethan Spieby told the BBC: "You just run in that situation... We turned and ran as quick as possible.

"The people at the church have been handing out water and food as an when they need it but it's clearly quite a distressful(sic) situation."

So-called Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack in Barcelona, which senior police official Josep Lluís Traperó described as "clearly a terror attack intended to kill as many people as possible".

General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the UK, Bishop Angaelos tweeted: "Landed back into London to heartbreaking news of #BarcelonaAttacks.

"Praying for all those whose lives have been lost and affected."

In the United States, the Catholic Church said it "unequivocally condemns this morally heinous act", while the humanitarian arm of the Episcopal Church released a prayer for those affected by the events.

## Sierra Leone Mudslides - Mothers' Union Mobilises



Mothers' Union in Sierra Leone is responding to the needs of thousands affected by the mudslides that hit the country's capital, Freetown, earlier this week. Scores of people have been killed and it is estimated that at least 600 people are missing.

Victoria Wilson, MU Diocesan President of Freetown said, “We are providing food items, clothing, toiletries and water for those hospitalised.”

She continued, “We need prayers for the victims, the various people working day and night to excavate the mud and search for dead bodies.”

MU head of Development and Policy, Nicola Lawrence, said, “This is a terrible tragedy that has hit a country only just getting back on its feet after the Ebola crisis. We are in regular contact with Mothers’ Union in Freetown and monitoring how we can support their efforts further and in the long-run. In the meantime we are praying for all those who have been affected.”

MU is urging all its members to join in a prayer for all those affected, it can be found by clicking [here](#)

## **New magazine for the ministry launched by Church of Scotland**

A new magazine aimed at connecting, encouraging and inspiring everyone involved in





the ministries of the Church of Scotland has been officially launched.

More than 1,000 copies of Ascend have been sent out to people, such as Parish Ministers, Deacons, Probationer Ministers and Military Chaplains, across the country.

The colourful, 47-page magazine includes a wide range of news, thought provoking features, picture stories and essential information about pastoral support and exciting development opportunities.

Contributors include parish ministers from across Scotland - authentic voices that provide a realistic insight into their daily lives.





Rev Dr Alison Jack, Assistant Principal of New College in Edinburgh, has written an article titled Grace: From Lost to Found.

Readers are encouraged to take inspiration from the idea of taking time to explore the core of who they are, what they are called to do and reconnect with God.

Rev Neil Glover, convener of the Ministries Council, said: “Ascend is our new central point to bring together services for support and development.

“The launch of our new magazine is to help connect and communicate more meaningfully with those in ministry.

“It brings together a range of voices from ministry – both reflecting on the challenges we face, and looking at different ways we can support one another.

“We truly believe that who you are matters and that we need to support, nurture and develop who we are to be all that we can be.”

Four editions of the free magazine will be initially published – one every quarter.

The Ministries Council is encouraging readers to provide feedback to establish whether it is a worthwhile resource.

The magazine, which takes inspiration for its title from Psalm 24, could be available in E-Reader format in the future.

## **Prayer day for healing of Ireland**

A prayer event will be held at Nutts Corner Market Area to pray for the healing of the island of Ireland on September 9 from 1-4pm.

The day has been organised for all who believe that there is a need for healing, renewal and reconciliation. A large turnout is expected on the

day for which no tickets are required and to which everyone is welcome to attend.

For more information visit  
[www.healingtheland.co.uk](http://www.healingtheland.co.uk)

## **Merry Christmas in English, Irish and Ulster Scots at Belfast City Hall**

The plans to light up with multilingual signage come after a proposal by Alliance



Visitors to Belfast City Hall this Christmas will be greeted in three languages.

Signs at the iconic building will be in English, Irish and Ulster Scots. They will read 'Happy Christmas', 'Shona Nollaig' and 'Blythe Yuletide'.

Belfast plans to light up with multilingual signage after a proposal by Alliance councillor Michael Long which received unanimous backing at today's Strategic, Policy and Resources Committee meeting.

The move will see signs on the front of City Hall in English, Irish and Ulster Scots over the festive period, an approach described as "positive" by the party in the wake of rows around language.

Mr Long, the Alliance Group Leader on **Belfast City Council** said: "After a few months of negative publicity at City Hall, I am pleased that the Christmas spirit seems to be alive and well early as all parties have agreed to an Alliance compromise on Christmas lights which will see signage in English, Irish and Ulster Scots on the front façade of City Hall.

## **Gaelic Games commentator is winner in Knock**

Speaking at the Knock novena this week was "one of the greatest honours of my life" said Gaelic games broadcaster Marty Morrissey. Addressing the annual novena, which attracts

around 150,000 people, Mr Morrissey spoke on the theme 'Living life to the full' on Wednesday.

Beginning his talk, which was interrupted by several outbursts of spontaneous applause, Mr Morrissey confessed that he had been stunned after being asked to speak at the Novena. He said he was an "ordinary Joe soap", just trying to do his best to live life to the full.

"What do we need to live life to the full?" he asked in his 30-minute talk. "There are many components, but in my humble opinion the first and most important is love. Love is the greatest power on earth and conquers all. I genuinely find that if you give positivity, you get positivity back."

Endorsing what Pope Francis wrote in *The Joy of Gospel*, the Gaelic games commentator told the congregation at Knock basilica, which was packed to capacity, that "One of the most serious temptations which stifles boldness and zeal is a defeatism which turns us into sourpusses!"

Alongside love, in order to live life to the full, came communication, he continued. "The idea of the spoken word, what we say and how we say it, is crucial. The throwaway remark, the

critical comment, can have an impact that you may never be aware of.”

But actions could be even more effective than words. “All of this brings me to the most important ingredient of living life to the full, our families.”

We all come from families and we owe it to them to live in peace and harmony, to love one another and to look out for one another. Isn't it sad that there are so many families not getting along? He knew of one family who had not spoken to each other for years over a “right of way, a piece of road that nobody uses. How sad, how terribly sad.”

In order to cultivate those relationships of peace and harmony, we need to create space in our lives, we need to make time for God, continued the sports broadcaster. “Family has always been important to me, and when I say family I also include a very close circle of friends.”

He lamented the lack of contact between neighbours nowadays. “Since my father died, I have become very aware of all of the people who are living alone in rural and urban Ireland and are very lonely. Once upon a time, when people had much less and more time, people used to visit their neighbours to make sure they were okay.

Now it's different. People are too busy or too distracted by their mobile phone, emails or Twitter. It's the way of the world right now and I am as guilty as anyone else. Loneliness is a real problem in Ireland and it's very sad."

Turning to the topic of Irish youth, often criticised for being "mad on drink and drugs", Mr Morrissey said his experience travelling around Ireland was that "we have a nation of bright, intelligent, caring and mannerly young people", and he told parents and children to give themselves a "massive applause".



**Congregation at Knock novena listening to Marty Morrissey.**



The broadcaster said Mayo supporters were the greatest in the world, and admitted that his heart was behind Mayo for the All Ireland.

“I often stop for a moment after finishing my report or after doing a match commentary in Sligo, and say a prayer at the back of the church. Many times I stay for the 7.30pm Mass. I have always wanted to keep that moment of reflection quiet, but let’s face it, my secret is out after today! I come to this sacred place to thank you Lord for what you have done for me and for the talents you have given me. I never really ask the Lord for anything, but tonight I will. Can you please, Lord, with the greatest respect to all my friends in Kerry, Dublin and Tyrone, let Mayo win the All-Ireland football final?”

He concluded his advice for living life to the full: “Enjoy every day. Put a smile on. Say ‘Hello, how are you?’ If you are having a row with somebody, get in contact and say we need to sort this out because life is short.”

Today Bishop Patrick Rooke, Church of Ireland Bishop of Tuam, will speak at the 3pm and 8.30pm Masses on ‘Reformation, Remembering and Reconciliation’, marking the beginnings of the Reformation 500 years ago.

On Monday the programme for next year's World Meeting of Families in Dublin will be launched at the shrine by Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin and Fr Timothy Bartlett, secretary general of the 2018 event.

The novena concludes on Tuesday 22 August with Maria Steen and Cora Sherlock, both well known for their roles in the pro-life movement.

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