



Dogs carol service in Dublin Cathedral today

Dogs of all sizes will be getting into the festive spirit in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, on Tuesday December 12 at 1.15pm, when the annual lunchtime Peata Therapy Dog Carol Service takes place.

The cathedral will be filled with the sound of barking as Peata dogs, as well as other dogs, will be welcomed to the service during which there will be a pet blessing. Many of the people

who benefit from visits by Peata volunteers will also attend the service.

Peata is a voluntary organisation which provides a pet therapy service to caring institutions. Its visiting scheme involves approved volunteers and their dogs who generally pay weekly visits.

A collection will be taken up during the service and divided between Peata and the Peter McVerry Trust. Tea and mince pies will be served after the service courtesy of the Friends of Christ Church Cathedral.

Pope Francis appoints Bishop Brendan Kelly as Bishop of Galway

Pope Francis has appointed Bishop Brendan Kelly of Achonry, as the new Bishop of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora, succeeding Bishop Martin Drennan who retired in July 2016.

News of the appointment was announced yesterday morning and was welcomed by Archbishop Eamon Martin, President of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference.

In a statement offering his congratulations, the Primate of All Ireland paid tribute to Bishop



Kelly's contribution as chair of the Bishops' Council for Education, and the Commission for Catholic Education and Formation, as well as his role in the Council for Liturgy. He highlighted how Bishop Kelly had, in recent days, brought to completion the launch of the new altar edition of *An Leabhar Aifrin Rómhánach*, the Irish translation of the Roman Missal.

Describing it as “one of the most important recent cultural achievements in this country”, Archbishop Martin said its preparation and production was the fruit of years of intensive work and the collaboration of many individuals. “Bishop Brendan deserves great credit for delivering an Irish Missal that we can all be proud of,” he said.

Archbishop Martin described Bishop Kelly's ten years of pastoral service as Bishop of Achonry as "characterised by a natural warmth and empathy towards the people, priests and religious of the diocese, and a gentle, prayerful and caring leadership."

"Now he returns to his roots! As a native of Craughwell, and a priest of longstanding, dedicated service in the diocese of Galway, Bishop Brendan will no doubt receive a wholehearted welcome home from the clergy and faithful of his native diocese. He returns with the benefit of new wisdom and experience garnered among the faithful people of Achonry."

In the Cathedral of Our Lady Assumed into Heaven and St Nicholas on Monday morning, Bishop Kelly said he realised that there was much work to be done.

"Somewhere all of us in the Church in Ireland need renewal in faith and in prayer at this time. Pope Francis is very clear. All of us who have been baptised are missionaries and all of us must be on a continuous journey of conversion. The world needs the Good News as much or more than at any other moment in history."

"We have all, priests and people, been solemnly commissioned at Baptism to carry that Good

News to the people of our times, most particularly to those who are experiencing exclusion, isolation and rejection and who are in need of good shepherds. I invite you all to assume along with me a new determination to be those good shepherds and bearers of the Good News, priests and people together.”

He said that at the present time the Irish Church was looking forward to the World Meeting of Families in August in Dublin and particularly a visit from Pope Francis. “Pope Francis has set a very clear path for the Church in our time: he has placed the family at the heart of his programme from the start. The theme he has given for the World Meeting in Dublin is *The Gospel of the Family, Joy for the World*. We are all called to be and to build family domestically and at every level.”

“It is nothing short of tragic that in a time of unprecedented prosperity for so many, too many families are finding that there is no house for them, no room for them in the Inn.”

“Then there is our Holy Father’s focus on young people who must always be our first priority in the Church of Jesus Christ.”

“Along with family and young people, there is the critical mission in Ireland at this time that is

Evangelisation: discovering anew the wonder and gift that Jesus Christ is for ourselves and learning anew how to share this gift with others.”

“We are becoming a smaller, weaker and poorer church. This is not necessarily a bad thing. I look forward to working closely with the priests and people of our parishes and diocese, with colleagues and good friends in the other Christian communities represented in our city and beyond, and with all people of good will, men and women, both the young and those who have the wisdom of years, as we build together the Kingdom of God.”

“We must work together in new ways and as never before so that we will be a church that is open and welcoming, humble and full of mercy, and cherishing human life at its most fragile and vulnerable, no matter what the price: in other words, a church that confidently takes our stand always with the one who was crucified and whose birth outside and in abject poverty we are preparing now to celebrate again at Christmas.”

Archbishop Michael Neary of Tuam also congratulated Bishop Kelly. In a statement on Monday morning, he noted that Bishop Kelly was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Galway in 1971 and will now return as its bishop.

“As both priest and bishop, Bishop Brendan has been a much loved local pastor and a very popular shepherd to the faithful of Achonry since his ordination as bishop on 27 January 2008. His personal integrity, generosity of spirit and outstanding ministry to the people of the diocese will surely be missed. No doubt he will bring the same natural enthusiasm and pastoral leadership to the people of his diocese of origin in Galway.”

Derry parish raises 12,000 pounds for Poppy Appeal

There was a record response to this year's Macosquin Poppy Appeal with more than £12,000 raised last month for the Royal British Legion. It was the highest annual collection yet in an area that traditionally prides itself on its considerable generosity towards the Legion.

Volunteers from the village – most of them members of Macosquin Parish Church – gathered the money through door-to-door collections in the neighbourhood and by manning a stall at the entrance to Sainsbury's Supermarket in Coleraine during the first fortnight in November.



Local woman Joy White has been coordinating the village's Poppy Appeal collection for the last 40 years. She has commended the community for its generosity. Joy raised hundreds of pounds of this year's total by selling home-made jam and by allowing her garden to be used for wedding photographs.

This year's final total – £12,160 – was revealed to parishioners at a coffee morning in the Minor Hall of St Mary's Church in Macosquin on Friday morning. The Rector of the Parish of Camus-Juxta-Bann, the Rev Canon Mike Roemmele, added his appreciation for the generosity shown to the Legion. He said the Armed Forces were "like a family within the family of the nation" and were deserving of the community's support.

Canon Roemmele also expressed his gratitude to the 45-strong team who volunteer for the Macosquin Poppy Appeal. “Every year they tour the village and the houses in the surrounding area, promoting this worthy charity which supports the ongoing work of caring for former members of our nation’s Armed Forces who are experiencing hardship. The generosity of the many who contribute to the fund is extraordinary,” Canon Roemmele said, “and this is particularly true of the customers in Sainsbury’s Supermarket who contributed around six thousand pounds this year.”

Several members of the Macosquin Poppy Appeal team received Certificates of Appreciation for their years of voluntary service to the charity and one member, Sylvia Kennedy, was presented with a medal to mark 50 years’ service.

New Christmas CD from Belfast Cathedral

A new CD featuring beautiful Christmas music from the choristers of Belfast Cathedral was launched yesterday iMonday December 11, in St Anne’s

The CD *Born on a New Day* is directed by Master of the Choristers David Stevens and features the Cathedral Girls' Choir and Lay Clerks singing many seasonal favourites as well as some less well known choral Christmas songs.

The singing is all unaccompanied which is quite unusual but makes for a very pure sound. There are 17 tracks on the album. They include *Once in royal David's city*; *The Holly and the Ivy*; *Ding dong! merrily on high*; *Sleep, Holy Babe*; and Taverner's *The Lamb*.

This is the first CD to be released by the Choir of St Anne's since the arrival of Mr Stevens as Master of the Choristers in 2012. Since then the Cathedral's Music Department has been extended and now has a Girls' Choir, Lay Clerks and Scholars; a Boys' Choir and a Junior Girls' Choir.

The Cathedral's Music Department also runs a very successful cross-community Choir School, with Cathedral music tutors offering classes in choral singing to pupils in three north Belfast Primary Schools every day during term-time.

Born on a New Day was recorded in St Anne's Cathedral last June.

Dublin & Glendalough Mothers' Union vigil Against Gender Based Violence

Mothers' Union member in Dublin & Glendalough joined a global movement in tackling the stigma surrounding gender based violence at their vigil which took place as part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence. The vigil took place in the Church of St John the Baptist in Clontarf.

Mothers' Union around the world campaigns through its 4 million members in 83 countries. They engage with the global 16 Days of Activism Campaign against Gender-based Violence which runs from November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to December 10 (International Human Rights Day). Throughout the Campaign members join together with one voice, to raise awareness of and call for an end to gender-based violence in all forms and in all societies.

This year Mothers' Union focussed on the issue of stigma, where society responds negatively to, or by blaming those who are, victims of gender-based violence. Members were called upon to



Rachel Devlin, Marketing Co-Ordinator MU, Katja Murphy, Social Care Leader, Aoibhneas Womens' Refuge. Karen Nelson, Diocesan President MU, Carol Hennessy, Vice President MU, Grace McCormack, Social Care Leader, Aoibhneas Womens' & Childrens' Refuge.

challenge the myths and harmful attitudes around it. Mothers' Union is calling on people everywhere to break the silence, lift the shame and shift the blame from victim to perpetrator. Governments have an important role in preventing and ending gender-based violence and as a civil society, we can influence our leaders to do this, Mothers' Union says.

The vigil was led by Mothers' Union Vice President for Faith & Policy, Carol Hennessy. The Revd Lesley Robinson, Rector of Clontarf also took part along with Diocesan President, Karen Nelson, and other members of Trustees doing readings, reflections and intercessions.

Appropriate and uplifting hymns were sung. Members of the congregation placed prayers on the prayer wall. Mervyn Denner prayed for all who are experiencing the effects of domestic violence.

Special guest speakers included Dean Philip Knowles, who spoke about the opportunity he had while he was in Cashel of attending the Tipperary International Peace Awards event which honoured Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani teenager who had been writing secretly to the BBC about the lack of education for women and girls in Pakistan. In Pakistan, Malala was not allowed to be herself. When her identity was discovered the Taliban shot her in the head. She survived and recovered.

Dean Knowles described her as a young person speaking her heart and mind. In recovery she had the gift of courage against this evil and further threats did not put her down. She has since written a book about her experiences. Dean Knowles went on to say that in the midst

of bombings such as Enniskillen or Egypt and many others the innocent suffer. Malala has shown us that we need courage to allow our hearts and minds to speak out against the evil of gender-based violence.

Emeline Le Prince, Service Manager at Sonas Supported Housing who provide emergency refuge and other services to women and children experiencing domestic abuse also spoke. She said that the number of deaths of women from domestic violence stood at 216 in Ireland since 1996. Katja Murphy, Social Care Leader at Aoibhneas Women's and Children's Refuge spoke about the 24 hour professional support services available to those suffering abuse in the home. Mothers Union Dublin & Glendalough thanked all those who attended including Greg Heylin from the Dept of Justice, and Mary O'Faolain from the Pro Cathedral.

Bishop aims to raise £1.2 million by cycling across Canada

Rob Hardwick, bishop of the Anglican diocese of Qu'Appelle, will spend much of his four-month sabbatical – 14 May to 3 September 2018 – bicycling across Canada to raise money



Bishop Rob Hardwick, of the diocese of Qu'Appelle, has been training for three years for his 7,877 km ride across Canada.

for ministry projects within the diocese and beyond.

Hardwick plans to cycle from Victoria, British Columbia, to St John's, Newfoundland, a total of about 7,877 km [approximately 4,895 miles]. With one rest day factored in each week, the trip is expected to take 82 days, with Hardwick aiming to cover 114 km each day that he rides.

This may seem a less-than-restful sabbatical, but Hardwick says that the pedalling pilgrimage will be an “opportunity to pray – throughout the

ride – for unity and reconciliation, and also for unity across the church.”

Hardwick says, the idea of biking across the country to raise money came to him in a dream. In this dream, to raise \$1 million [CAD, approximately £1.16 million GBP] for mission and ministry across the diocese, the 7,800 km of his journey were “tithed,” with each of the diocese’s identifiable givers donating \$780 over five years.

If this dream were a reality, according to Hardwick’s calculations, this would mean that the diocese’s existing 1,553 donors would be contributing, together, just over \$1.2 million: a figure that works out to 43 cents per day, per donor.

45,000 Christians singing in the rain at Borneo Christmas celebration

Around 45,000 Christians from Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Evangelical and other Churches marched through the Borneo city of Miri on Saturday (9 December) for the tenth annual Miri Christmas March. Christians from 20 different churches processed to the Miri City Fan, an outdoor venue with seating arranged



The Bishop of Kuching, Donald Jute, preached at a Christmas celebration in Miri, Borneo.

around four sides of a square stage, where they worshipped despite heavy rainfall. The Deputy Chief Minister of the Malaysian State of Sarawak, which covers the north-western corner of Borneo, Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas, and the Mayor of Miri, Adam Yii, were amongst the VIPs who took part in the event.

Saturday's event, with the theme "Glory to God", was the biggest since the annual event began. It was a true ecumenical affair with Christmas carols from members of the Anglican churches kicking off proceedings, before a "lively" praise

and worship session led by a Roman Catholic church band; traditional dances by a group from the Borneo Evangelical Mission; a Seventh Day Adventist Choir; and a contribution by the Sarawak Baptist Church.

The Anglican Bishop of Kuching, Donald Jute, preached. The Assistant Bishop of Kuching, Solomon Cheong Sung Voon, chaired the organising committee on behalf of the Association of Churches in Sarawak.

In an address to the gathering, on behalf of the state's Chief Minister, Datuk Patinggi Abang Johari Tun Openg, Embas revealed that the government has approved the use of a 5.8 acre piece of land, adjacent to the Miri Bypass road, for a new Christian Ecumenical Centre.

"I am sure that with the approval of the land, the Christian Ecumenical Centre project will be realised, and more than 120,000 Christians from various denominations in Miri will have a comfortable venue to carry out their courses, seminars and activities," [the Borneo Post reports](#) Embas as saying.

The scheme is one of 12 that had been approved from 77 applications for grants from religious groups in the state, totalling 15 million

Malaysian Ringgits (approximately £2.76 million GBP).

In his message, the Chief Minister praised the religious tolerance in Sarawak. “This is not so in other places, especially across the South China Sea,” he said. “We Sarawakians, be they Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindu or others, have always strived to strengthen the friendship and brotherhood among ourselves because we know that unity and social cohesiveness is the pillar of our economic progress and development.

“Sarawakians may have differences in opinion and ways of looking at things, which is only natural, but these do not stop them from making serious efforts to nurture and strengthen unity among them.”

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