

Church Missionary Society Ireland links inform today's prayers for South Sudan and the Republic of the Congo

Following updates from its global partners, Church Missionary Society Ireland is echoing a call from Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury to pray and fast for South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo today Friday, February 23.

CMS Ireland partners with three dioceses in DR Congo and four dioceses in South Sudan. Currently, 26 Church of Ireland parishes and two dioceses are involved in partnership links with one or more of these dioceses. This has included the attendance by the Revd Andrew Rawding, Rector of Brackaville, Ballyclog and Donaghendry, at the consecration of the Most Revd Masimango Katanda, as Archbishop of the Province de L'Eglise Anglicane du Congo, in 2016.



Archbishop Masimango Katana with the Revd Andrew Rawding, Rector of Brackville in Armagh diocese

The mass movement of people within and outside these two countries is not stopping. Over many years, sustained violence and insecurity in both places resulted in huge numbers of people leaving their homes in search of safety and refuge. Following a recent, tentative peace agreement in South Sudan, some people have begun to return home, but this brings with it its own problems.

In encouraging prayer for DR Congo, Archbishop Masimango Katanda says: “With Christ, let us learn that active non–violence is a force that can transform society when it denounces time and

time again the situations of injustice and exclusion that violence feeds. May our families be places where we learn to resolve conflicts in a non-violent way. Every Friday of Lent, I invite you to fast so that God will expel from our hearts and men's hearts any desire for violence and make them welcoming to his forgiveness."

Archbishop Masimango has suggested the use of the following prayer: God who watches over our world, look at the country where you gave us to live. Grant to all its inhabitants to seek the common good, to those who govern us to do it wisely, so that there is among us more justice, and in the whole world more happiness and peace.

Trócaire Lenten Campaign to support over two million people in 2018

The annual Trócaire Lenten Campaign, Ireland's largest fundraiser began on Ash Wednesday, 14 February. This year, funds raised by Trócaire will be used to support over two million of the world poorest and most vulnerable people around the world.



Featured on this year's Trócaire box is seven-year-old Kumba, from Sierra Leone (above). This week marks the six month anniversary of the devastating mudslide that destroyed her home and killed over 1,000 people in the area of Freetown where she lives. Only one fifth of Kumba's community survived the mudslide. Launching the Lenten campaign, Eamonn Meehan, Trócaire's executive Director warned that growing numbers of people are being trapped in humanitarian crises.

"At the age of just seven, Kumba has already survived an Ebola outbreak that killed 4,000 people and a mudslide that killed 1,000 people,"

he said. “Her young life has been spent in an almost constant state of crisis. Tragically, she is far from alone. A seven-year-old in Syria has never known peace; a seven-year-old in Gaza has survived two separate wars; a seven-year-old in South Sudan has experienced both famine and civil war in their short life.

“The Lenten campaign comes at a time when conflict in many parts of the world has left millions of people at risk of famine and disease.”

“The work Trócaire does promoting human rights, women’s empowerment and access to resources such as land and water is key to building strong and peaceful societies. That work is powered by our annual Lenten appeal. We will use donations to our campaign to support over two million of the poorest and most vulnerable people around the world this year.”

“We are incredibly grateful for the support we receive from parishes, schools and families all over Ireland, without whom this work would not be possible” said Eamonn Meehan.

For more information about Trócaire’s 2018 Lenten campaign, please visit www.trocaire.org.

Carrigaline C of I school once again supports Cork Penny Dinners charity



For the fourth year now, the children from St Mary's Church of Ireland School, Carrigaline, County Cork, have collected non-perishable

food and cleaning items for the well known local charity Cork Penny Dinners.

The idea is to 'love your neighbour for St Valentine's Day' and the children know that some of their neighbours who are experiencing hard times use the wonderful facility that is Cork Penny Dinners in Little Hanover Street, Cork.

Each child in the school brings in something from home: a tin of beans, a packet of soup, toilet rolls, washing up liquid etc. These are piled up on the stage in the Canon McCrea Hall in the school until they are gathered up during the mid-term break by the Rector, the Revd Elaine Murray.

A parishioner, Rowland Newenham, very kindly loads up his van and drives into Cork City with all the goods. The volunteers who work in Penny Dinners are always delighted to see the full van arriving and complain that they haven't enough room to store everything!

Board of Global Catholic Climate Movement meets in Maynooth

The board of the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) gathered in Ireland this week

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to promote their mission to bring Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'* to life in the Church. Yesterday, Thursday 15 February, the board met in Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth, with the *Laudato Si'* working group of the Irish Council for Catechetics to explore the work of GCCM and climate initiatives happening here in Ireland.

The GCCM is a global network dedicated to promoting Pope Francis' call to action in *Laudato Si'*. The board includes Chairperson Amy Woolam Echeverria, international coordinator for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation for the Missionary Society of St

Columban; Tomás Insua, CEO of GCCM; Lorna Gold of Trócaire; Michel Roy, secretary general of Caritas Internationalis; Amanda Hanley, co-director of the Hanley Foundation; John O'Shaughnessy, CEO for the Franciscan Sisters of Mary; Yeb Sano, executive director with Greenpeace; and Josef Sayer, former CEO of Misereor.

Speaking ahead of yesterday's meeting, Tomás Insua said, 'We are delighted to be having our in-person board meeting in Maynooth this year. 2018 is a very important year for implementing international action on climate change. Momentum is building around action, particularly in relation to fossil fuel divestment and it is key that this continues to build.'

'Catholics everywhere have a key role to play in bringing about positive change, particularly in response to Pope Francis call for an "ecological conversion". We look forward to meeting with representatives of local church groups involved in climate change action and learning about the preparations for Pope Francis' visit in August.'

The group began their visit this week with a spiritual retreat to Glendalough in Co Wicklow on Monday 12 February, where they took part in a

guided walk led by Father Michael Grogan of the Tearmann Spirituality Centre.

Yesterday afternoon a joint meeting took place between the GCCM and the *Laudato Si'* working group of the Irish Council for Catechetics in the Columba Centre, Saint Patrick's College Maynooth. The theme of the meeting was 'How are we Caring for our Common Home?' and participants reflected on the message of *Laudato Si'* and how it is being received in Ireland and internationally, especially in light of the World Meeting of Families in Dublin in August of this year. The meeting closed with Mass celebrated by Father Sean McDonagh SSC.

Lorna Gold of Trócaire said, 'It is significant that the Global Catholic Climate Movement chose to meet in Ireland at the start of 2018. This meeting comes a week after a bishops' retreat in Knock focusing on *Laudato Si'*. It also comes as the Irish parliament voted to end climate damaging fossil fuel exploration. It will be exciting to see what new initiatives arise. Trócaire, as a partner of GCCM, is delighted to have the chance to welcome the board to Ireland.'

The Global Catholic Climate Movement is a global network of over 400 member organizations and a community of thousands of

Catholics responding to Pope Francis' call to action in *Laudato Si'*. The GCCM aim to enable an ecological conversion of the Catholic faithful, to help the Catholic family lead by example and dramatically shrink its collective carbon footprint and to promote renewable energy. For more information, visit the GCCM website [here](#).

'Conversations' underway about a UK service to remember Rev Billy Graham

Deliberations have been taking place about whether a service of thanksgiving should be held in the UK to remember the late Rev Billy Graham, states Premier News

In the same interview, a former colleague of the US evangelist, [who died at his home in North Carolina at the age of 99 yesterday](#), also dismissed the idea of unveiling a statue in his honour.

Harvey Thomas, who spent 15 years working on Graham's evangelistic events around the world, told Premier: "Billy would not want any kind of physical memorial in that sense.



"I think he would rather see a service of thanksgiving for what God has done than a memorial service for what Billy Graham has done - he was very definite on that."

While suggesting St Paul's Cathedral could be a fitting setting for the memorial ceremony, Mr Thomas added that "nobody knows" so far whether it will come into fruition.

He added: "Whether things will happen, I have no idea at this particular point because I think it would probably depend entirely on Franklin Graham or the family as to what they wanted to do, or the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association maybe."

Thomas said that he wanted to see other preachers learn from Graham's strong work ethic and the trust he showed that God would meet the financial needs of any work He called him to.

Thomas added: "We worked like Trojans.

"Billy used to say to us 'you [ought to] believe that nothing happens unless God does it but you work as though there is no God' - and that's the bit that's missing in today's world and that's why there's so little in terms of real evangelism.

"Billy started from the point of view 'God is calling me to a crusade or a mission in this place and, if he's calling me... he will provide the funds'."

"Today, it starts with the point of view 'can we get enough money to do a mission here or there?' It's completely reversed."

Catholic Church leader: Syria deaths 'a grievous offence to our common humanity'

A senior Catholic Church leader has expressed his sorrow of the amount of people that have

been killed in the Syrian government's bombing campaign.



Syrian paramedics treat a kids who was wounded during airstrikes and shelling by Syrian government forces, at a makeshift hospital, in Ghouta, suburb of Damascus, Syria.

Doctors in Syria's rebel-controlled suburbs of Damascus have said they cannot keep up with the number of casualties, amid shelling by government forces.

The bombing campaign has targeted hospitals, apartment blocks and other civilian sites, killing and wounding hundreds of people in recent days.

The bombardment has forced many among the nearly 400,000 residents to sleep in basements and makeshift shelters, and has overwhelmed rescue workers who have spent days digging out survivors from the wreckage of bombed buildings.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for an immediate suspension of "all war activities" in the rebel-held Damascus suburbs known as eastern Ghouta where he said 400,000 people are living "in hell on earth".

The UN chief said a suspension of fighting must allow for humanitarian aid to reach all in need and the evacuation of some 700 people needing urgent medical treatment.

Bishop Declan Lang, Chair of the Bishops' Conference Department for International Affairs, has called the killing of civilians in Eastern Ghouta a "grievous offence to our common humanity".

He said: "Their suffering underscores how over seven years of conflict in Syria, the international community has failed to protect the innocent.

"In this dark moment I urge Catholics in England and Wales to pray for the people of Eastern Ghouta and Syria; to encourage our own

government to help end the violence; and to support generously those humanitarian agencies that are bravely working to save lives."

The UN human rights office said in a statement on Wednesday that at least 346 people had been killed in eastern Ghouta since the Syrian government and its allies escalated their offensive on the region on 4th February.

At least 92 of those deaths occurred in just one 13-hour period on Monday, it said, adding that the toll was far from comprehensive, documented in the midst of chaos and destruction. Another 878 people have been wounded, mostly in air strikes hitting residential areas. Sweden and Kuwait have called for a vote on a UN resolution ordering a 30-day cease-fire throughout Syria to enable delivery of humanitarian aid to millions of people in acute need, and the evacuation of the critically sick and wounded.

Barbara Dickson to sing at at Dunfermline Abbey

Scottish singer songwriter Barbara Dickson is performing a special homecoming rendition of "Scots Wha Hae" at Dunfermline Abbey.



She is leading a reprise of the famous Robert Burns' song on March 10 to mark the 200th anniversary of the discovery of the remains of King Robert the Bruce.

Ms Dickson, who grew up in the Fife town, said she was very "excited" to be performing at the end of a new play, titled "Bones, Bogles and Coronets".

Written by local playwright Diane M. Stewart and directed by Catherine Exposito, it is a theatrical reconstruction of the "tumultuous time" between the re-discovery of the grave of the victor of Bannockburn and the laying of the foundation

stone for the new Abbey Church just three weeks later.

A legendary discovery

The play sweeps to its finale with a re-enactment of the March 10, 1818 ceremony, which featured a community singsong of “Scots Wha hae”, which was written by Scotland’s national Bard in 1793.

The event was witnessed by an estimated 10,000 of Dunfermline’s citizens and punctuated by rousing expressions of “patriotic enthusiasm” and “peals of loud and reiterated huzzas.”

Ms Dickson said: “How exciting to be commemorating the discovery of the original tomb of King Robert at Dunfermline Abbey in 1818.

“I remember growing up and knowing that ‘a man had put a spade in the ground and hit a lead coffin with cloth of gold and chain mail inside’.

“Now, I am not sure if any of that is fact, but we all had that legend in our collective memory.



“I have always loved Dunfermline Abbey and as a keen amateur historian, I am fascinated with the story of my ancient home town.

“Nowadays, Dunfermline is much ignored and since the emphasis in Fife shifted to the east of our beloved city.

“People pass us by but they should stop and breathe in the same air as the kings and saints we, as natives, love so much.”

The first in a series of events to mark significant milestones in the history of the church was held on February 18 with a service led by Right Rev

Dr Derek Browning, the Moderator of the General Assembly.

The service was followed by a bicentennial congregational lunch in the Glen Pavilion to launch a fund-raising appeal in aid of direct refugee relief and the Abbey restoration fund.

In the words of the organisers, the celebrations will mark the “historic importance of this discovery and its profound effect on the Abbey, on the building of the current Abbey Church and on the people of Dunfermline.”

The play starts at 7pm and tickets are now available, priced £15 for adults and £10 for children/concessions, from ‘Sew, Yarn, Crafty’ in the High Street; from Dunfermline Abbey before and after Sunday services, or via the Dunfermline Abbey website.

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