



## **US politicians bestow rare honour on Billy Graham**

Members of the public will be able to pay their respects to Rev Billy Graham when his body lies in honour in Washington D.C. next week.

The US evangelist's coffin will be placed in the dome-covered central rotunda of the iconic

United States Capitol government building for two days.

Graham, **who died on Wednesday**, will become only the fourth person to lie in honour at the rotunda since the tribute began 20 years ago for two police officers who died while on duty.

Politicians from both chambers of the US Congress - the Senate and the House of Representatives - will attend a service marking the arrival of Graham's body next Wednesday.

The idea of having Graham's body lie in honour at the rotunda was put to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association by the House of Representatives speaker Paul Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

In a statement, Mr Ryan said: "Members of the public and Capitol Hill community are invited to pay their respects to the late reverend while he lies in rest."

Graham met every single US President inaugurated since the Second World War. He worked especially closely with Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon.

Every living current and former US President is being invited to attend Graham's funeral at the Graham family home in Charlotte, North Carolina next Friday. His son Franklin will lead the eulogy and Rev Graham's four other children will also pay tribute to their father. The Rev Graham was born in Charlotte.

## **Archbishop of Canterbury's 'somewhat mysterious' visit to Belfast**

The leader of the world's Anglican community has been invited to "pray for responsible leadership in politics" by the rector of Belfast's Clonard Catholic monastery during a visit to the city. Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby journeyed to the west Belfast monastery on Thursday, having apparently been in the Province since at least Wednesday, the News Letter reports

His visit is somewhat mysterious however; he arrived without any fanfare, and details of the trip – including exactly when he arrived and when he will leave – have not been revealed by the Church of England. Following the visit to Clonard, located in the city's republican Falls



**Published on Twitter, February 21, 2018 (by @ACCMartinPSNI) this image shows (L-R) canon David Porter, archbishop Justin Welby, chief constable George Hamilton, bishop Tim Thornton, and assistant chief constable Stephen Martin, at PSNI Headquarters in east Belfast**

Road heartland, the monastery's rector father Noel Kehoe issued a statement in which said that the archbishop had been accompanied by 60 members of the Church of England as part of his "private pilgrimage" concerning "peace and reconciliation".

Praising the "peace-building" legacy of priests Alec Reid and Gerry Reynolds, Father Kehoe

said that “our welcome to you today is not a mere formality, or good etiquette – rather, it is an invitation, a prayer, that in the short time you spend with us today, we may be deeply conscious that Divine friendship makes of us friends and fellow pilgrims”. He also said: “At the heart of our division is a question of identity. I am British, I am Irish, my culture, my tradition, my language, my flag, my tribe. But a great number of those people who would lead us to exclusive camps also identify themselves as Presbyterian, Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist. “Our churches have a great responsibility, that requires leaders to risk.” He asked the Archbishop and the pilgrims “to pray for responsible leadership in politics and pray for courageous leadership in the churches”.

Archbishop Welby was presented with a hand painted icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help (Virgin Mary), and the archbishop in turn presented the community with an illustration from a 9th century Irish book of the Gospels that hangs in Lambeth Palace. Prayers were offered for both communities, for victims of violence, for peacemakers, and for those who “we call enemies”, the statement on behalf of the monastery said. Asked about the itinerary of the archbishop’s trip to Northern Ireland, a spokeswoman Lambeth Palace (representing the

Anglican leadership) would only say that the trip was “private”, so it could not disclose any information. It is believed that even within the Church of Ireland little had been known about the details of the visit.

However, PSNI assistant chief constable Stephen Martin posted a message on Twitter on Wednesday, showing the archbishop meeting both him and the chief constable George Hamilton.

He said that the archbishop visited the PSNI’s east Belfast-based headquarters, and had attended the RUC George Cross’ Garden of Remembrance. The DUP, the Province’s largest political party, is not believed to have any scheduled meetings with the archbishop. The Northern Ireland Office said it had no involvement in the trip.

## **UN report on horrifying war crimes released as day for prayer for Sudan and Congo is held**

Christians across the world from many denominations prayed yesterdayday (Friday) for peace in South Sudan and the Democratic



**UN Police officers rescue an elderly woman who was stabbed in a machete attack on the DRC city of Kananga in Central Kasai in March last year. She was taken to the city's General Hospital for treatment.**

Republic of Congo following an invitation from Pope Francis, supported by Anglican and other Christian leaders including the World Council of Churches.

The need for prayer was highlighted by investigators from the UN's Human Rights Council, who said yesterday that they had "identified more than 40 senior military officials who may bear individual responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity in South

Sudan.” Meanwhile, the UN Children’s Fund, Unicef, reports that “at least 1.3 million people, including more than 800,000 children, have been displaced by inter-ethnic violence and clashes between the regular army, militia and armed groups in . . . in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo”, making the DRC “home to one of the largest displacement crises in the world for children.”

The UN investigators’ report on South Sudan details “appalling instances of cruelty against civilians who have had their eyes gouged out, their throats slit or been castrated,” the Human Rights Council said in a statement. “Children have been recruited by all sides in the conflict and forced to kill civilians; in many cases they have watched loved ones raped or killed. Children are also thought to make up a quarter of the sexual violence victims in a conflict where rape has reached grotesque levels. If the fighting continues unabated, only one in thirteen South Sudanese will finish primary education, blighting a whole generation.”

It is a similar situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where “hundreds of thousands of children in the region no longer have access to health care and education, while many have suffered atrocities at the hands of



combatants,” Unicef’s country representative Dr Tajudeen Oyewale said. “It is simply a brutal situation for children with no end in sight.” The agency reports that “Children in eastern DRC are also being sexually abused and recruited to fight. Unicef and its partners have identified more than 800 cases of sexual abuse, although the true scale of sexual violence being perpetrated against children is believed to be much larger.”

The call to set aside today as day of prayer and fasting for the two countries was made by Pope Francis during his Angelus address earlier this month. In doing so, he called on the ecumenical community to join in, saying: “I also invite non-Catholic and non-Christian brothers and sisters to participate in this initiative in the ways they consider most appropriate, but all together.” Anglican leaders including the Archbishop of Canterbury, the chair of the Anglican Consultative Council, the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, and the leaders of the Anglican provinces in South Sudan and Congo, have joined leaders from a large number of other denominations in supporting and echoing Pope Francis’ call.

In addition to private prayer and fasting, a number of corporate prayer events have taken

place and have been planned for the coming days.

Anglican Communion staff in London prayed for the two countries during worship at the chapel in the Anglican Communion Office yesterday morning. Prayers were also said in the chapel of Lambeth Palace, the London office and official residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Joining staff there, was Bishop Emmanuel Murye of the South Sudanese Diocese of Kajo-Keji who is visiting London. Afterwards, in a video posted on the official Lambeth Palace Twitter feed, he said: “The prayer that world has today for DCR and South Sudan will be of great importance, which if God responds to it – and I am sure God is going to respond – it will be a great relief. And I think this a first move.

“I want to appreciate the Pope and I also want to appreciate our archbishops of the Anglican Communion,” he said.

## **Church must consider deferring Confirmation, Bishop of Limerick**

In the wake of a lively debate in a Wexford parish over whether children should be confirmed when

their parents never bring them to Sunday Mass, the Bishop of Limerick, Brendan Leahy, has stated that the Irish Church should explore “deferring Confirmation to a later age”.

“My reason is simply that we need to get beyond the ‘package deal’ approach to Confirmation,” he said in an interview with the *Irish Catholic*.

“What I mean by that is, we need to move beyond the cultural practice in Ireland that when you are around 12 nearly everyone automatically makes his or her Confirmation.

“At a later age, there would be more choice involved. Not all would make their Confirmation, but at least then we would be indicating Confirmation isn’t something we just slide into. Of course, I recognise the sacraments are always a gift and don’t depend on our merits or choice as such,” he added.

Bishop Leahy pointed out that the Orthodox tradition confers confirmation (along with baptism and Eucharist) to infants. “I also recognise that Confirmation ceremonies in Ireland are lovely and really well prepared, and we would lose something if we let go of what we have now. But maybe it’s a step we have to take.”



In the February 4th parish bulletin of St Senan's parish in Enniscorthy, Wexford, the parish administrator, Fr Patrick Banville had complained that the "majority of Confirmation parents and children have been absent from Sunday Eucharist since the start of the school year in Sep 2017".

"Indeed, they have been absent for many years. Nothing new there, you might argue," he continued, but this year though the absence was "more significant because I've made it abundantly clear that for Confirmation families, participation in Sunday Eucharist is not optional, it's absolutely essential". Fr Banville said that he had been "largely ignored".

"Approximately – and this is upwardly generous – no more than 10 Confirmation childrens'

families have been attending Mass in St Senan's Church over the past number of months (years!),” he wrote. “It seems the majority of parents have refused to enter the struggle to participate in Sunday Mass, but they will still present their children for Confirmation in March! This suggests that for the majority of Confirmation parents, Mass is not valued, it's not a love-thing, a matter of attraction and encounter, and this absence (or at least the refusal to enter the struggle to get to mass as a family) suggests that Confirmation is without a context.”

The administrator of St Senan's parish opened the question to “anybody with an interest”, inviting them to a meeting in the parish centre last Thursday 15th February, “and join in the conversation”.

However, in a message posted on the parish's Facebook page on 15th February, Fr Banville said that in the light of the “very intensive – and unanticipated – media interest” he was cancelling the meeting. “The proposed ‘faith formation conversation’ I initially envisaged is, I believe, an important one and it does need to occur,” he wrote, but to properly occur, it needed to proceed in a “more structured and shared manner” without “making individuals the subject

of publicity or attention. I readily recognise that parents want the very best for their children, so do I, and so does the parish and the church. This was – and is – my goal as a fellow pilgrim”.

Fr Banville said he would consider how “better this conversation might be organised and how I and others – including parents and parishioners – might fruitfully participate”.

## **Hundreds already booked for Bible Comes to Life exhibition in Enniskillen**

Hundreds of schoolchildren have already booked to attend ‘The Bible Comes to Life’ exhibition promoted by Clogher Diocesan Board of Mission in St Macartin’s Cathedral Hall, Enniskillen, from Thursday 8th March to Sunday 11th March 2018.

This unique exhibition returns to Enniskillen after 25 years and it is the only location in Ireland staging the exhibition during 2018.

The exhibition which introduces an understanding of Biblical Jewish life, culture and religion and helps in understanding the roots of Christianity, will be attracting schoolchildren,

youth groups and their leaders, churches and the public.

Promoted by The Church's Ministry Among Jewish People, an Anglican church mission society which has been active since 1809, the exhibition contains a significant collection of historic artefacts with the emphasis on exploring Judaism.

Entrance to the exhibition is free!

The exhibition is open to the public during the following times:

Thursday, 8th March and Friday, 9th March;  
3pm–5pm and 6.30pm – 9.30pm

Saturday, 10th March; 9.30am – 5pm;

Sunday, 11th March; 11am – 12.30pm  
(incorporating Morning Service) and 3pm – 7pm  
followed by a closing service.

## **Online resource pack for Prayer for Young People and Youth Ministry**

The fourth Day of Prayer for Young People and Youth Ministry organised by the Church of Ireland Youth Department (CIYD) took place on Sunday, 11th February. The House of Bishops

has approved the Sunday before Lent as a day on which dioceses and parishes across the island of Ireland can focus on the needs of young people – both within the Church and in society more generally – and those working with them.

Bishop Pat Storey, President of CIYD, said: ‘Young people have a lot going on in their lives and face the huge challenges that social media brings. Their faith is crucial to them and they often seek, and need, older disciples to mentor them and walk with them. This is where every single person can help, for example by praying for a young person whom you know; or an organisation that helps with young people; or a person you know who works with young people. Please also pray for our staff at CIYD – Simon, Steve and Barbara. Our role is to support those who serve in youth ministry and to watch out for ways in which we can make a difference to a young person whom we know. May they know that we love and care for them.’

A resource pack for the day of prayer, including interactive prayers with accompanying Bible verses and inspirational quotes, is also available for use at an alternative time or at other events, as appropriate, to encourage continued prayer



support for youth work. The pack is available at the following link: <http://bit.ly/2E2gPDh>

## Death of Belfast Cathedral stalwart

Belfast Cathedral member, Sir Donald Bruce Murray died, aged 95, on 20th February in the hospital. He was a former [Lord Justice of Appeal](#) of the Supreme Court of Northern Ireland. Educated at Belfast Royal Academy, he was one of many choristers of St Anne's who came from that school and formed a life time's allegiance to the Cathedral. He served as a member of the Cathedral Board for several decades. He was an active member of the Academy's Old Boys' Association and the Past Choristers' Association. He took a keen interest in cricket.

His wife pre-deceased him. They had three of a family, two sons and a daughter. A Thanksgiving Service will be held on Friday 9th March at St. Anne's Cathedral.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald\\_Murray\\_\(judge\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald_Murray_(judge))

# CNI

## **Report shows Ireland is among bottom four countries of 15 European nations on sustainable progress index**

Ireland is performing in the bottom half of 15 similar European countries on a range of important UN backed indicators covering Economy, Environment and Society, according to a new report. The Sustainable Progress Index for 2018 was launched at a seminar on Tuesday, organised by Social Justice Ireland, to examine Ireland's progress in implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

These 17 UN goals seek to achieve over 150 targets aimed at ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring prosperity for all people by 2030. They expand on the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were established in 2001 and expired in 2015.

The Index compares 15 EU countries across a range of areas based on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Ireland sits in the top third of rankings among the EU states for quality of education (SDG 4) and Life on Land (SDG 15), the report found.



However *Measuring Progress: Economy, Society and Environment in Ireland*, written by Professor Charles Clark , Dr. Catherine Kavanagh and Niamh Lenihan, puts Ireland's overall ranking in the Sustainable Progress Index at 11 out of the 15 countries analysed. The countries, going from top to bottom of the index are: Sweden 1, Denmark 2, Finland 3, Netherlands 4, Germany 5, Austria 6, United Kingdom 7, France 8, Belgium 9, Luxembourg 10 and Ireland 11. Only Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece ranked worse than Ireland.

According to the 65 page report, Ireland's worst performance on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is on the Environment, Gender Equality, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action,

## Affordable Clean Energy, Reducing Inequality and International Partnership on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The report was launched on 20<sup>th</sup> February to mark the United Nations World Day of Social Justice. Among the speakers at the event were Dr Catherine Kavanagh, co author of the report, of University College Cork, Dr Sean Healy of Social Justice Ireland, Michael Taft, Economic Analyst and Niamh Garvey, Head of Policy and Advocacy at Trócaire.

The report highlights Ireland's particularly poor performance on low pay, long term unemployment, household debt and GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions suggesting "Ireland needs to drastically change its waste-based consumption patterns and recognise that short term economic growth policies are unsustainable".

Positive elements in the report underline how Ireland is in the top third of rankings for quality education. "However, our particularly bad performance on Environment and inequalities emphasises the need for these Sustainable Development Goals to become an integrated part of policy formation across the board," said Fr Séan Healy.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals are “becoming a part of the political reality facing policy makers”, he noted. “We need to understand that the rising tide only helps those with strong boats. We need to use data like this to start working towards a more sustainable future.”

It is broadly accepted that if we were to cut down forests for economic growth without replanting in a sustainable manner, we would be hit twice as hard down the line on both environment and economy. We need to start looking at short term economic policies that damage families and promote inequality in the same way, he added.

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