

Archbishops of Armagh support Safe Church Initiative pledge against domestic violence



Shortly before the New Year, the Archbishops of Armagh, Archbishop Eamon Martin and Church of Ireland Archbishop Richard Clarke, and clergy and staff from both Cathedral parishes of Armagh took part in Onus training as part of the

Safe Church Initiative. Joining the initiative, the two Saint Patrick's Cathedrals in Armagh are now designated as Safe Churches and pledge never to commit, condone or stay silent about domestic violence and abuse and to provide support to those in need.

Archbishop Eamon Martin highlighted the issue of domestic violence as part of his New Year's Message, which he offered during Mass in Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, on the World Day of Peace, 1 January. In his message Archbishop Eamon said, 'In the face of such huge longing and need for peace at a global level, we sometimes forget that the work of peace begins in our own hearts and in our homes. If our Sign of Peace at Mass is to be authentic, then it challenges us to face the tensions and contradictions in our own personal lives and in our own families.

'We all yearn to be at peace with ourselves and with one another, but the sad reality is that many individuals struggle with inner turmoil, mental health or addiction issues and a large number of homes and families are impacted by disagreements, family rivalries, bitterness, resentment and even violence.

‘The high levels of depression, addictions and anxiety in our country, and the frightening reality of domestic violence is not often spoken about openly, but it is an indication of the huge need that exists for inner peace and family reconciliation.’

He continued, ‘Organisations like Women’s Aid alert us to the fact that at least 14% of all crime reported to the police last year was related to domestic violence with one call every 18 minutes. Just before Christmas, the Catholic and Church of Ireland Cathedral parishes here in Armagh came together for training in the Safe Church Initiative. We have pledged to play our part in raising awareness about domestic violence and abuse and in supporting anyone affected to confidentially access information. We hope to draw more attention to this initiative as we continue our preparations for the World Meeting of Families next August.’

Archbishop Eamon concluded, ‘My brothers and sisters as the New Year 2018 begins, the challenge to speak and live the message of peace remains more important than ever. My wish on this World Day of Peace is that Christians everywhere, who exchange the Sign of the Peace of Christ at the celebration of the Eucharist, will be empowered by God’s grace to

become active ambassadors for peace in the Church and in the world, beginning in their own homes, families, workplaces and neighbourhoods. In this way the Sign of Peace will avoid becoming an empty or meaningless gesture, but will rather be an impulse and driver towards reconciliation and peace building.'

Archbishop Eamon's full New Year's Message can be read on www.catholicbishops.ie.

The Safe Church Award is an initiative of Onus (NI), a social enterprise established by Women's Aid which offers a wide range of specialist services aimed at anyone affected by domestic violence or abuse. For more information on Onus and the Safe Church Initiative see www.onustraining.co.uk.

Living Worship workshops in Dublin

Church Music Dublin and announced that its Living Worship workshops will return for two sessions in January and February. Living Worship sessions explore aspects of parish church worship in an informal setting and this year will take place on Saturday January 27 and Saturday February 24.

On Saturday January 27 'An Introduction to Morning Prayer 3' will be led by the Very Revd Nigel Dunne and Peter Stobart. The session will include settings of the psalms, opening prayers, seasonal material and canticles.

On Saturday February 24 the subject will be 'Planning for Holy Week and Easter' led by the Revd Jack Kinkead. This session will provide an opportunity to consider music within the context of Holy Week and Easter liturgy.

Both sessions take place in the Mageough Hall, Cowper Road, Rathmines, beside Cowper Luas stop. They run from 10am to 12.45pm and include an enjoyable break for refreshments.

All are welcome to attend and there is a fee of €10 per person which includes refreshments. Booking is not required, simply come along.

For further information contact
honsec@churchmusicdublin.org

Church Music Dublin is an agency of the United Dioceses of Dublin & Glendalough. They aim to support music in local churches by providing information and training and by fostering a sense of community among musicians. For more see their website www.churchmusicdublin.org

Carnegie Hall date for Cork rector with West Cork Choral Singers

The Reverend John Ardis, Rector of Abbeystrewry Union of Parishes, in West Cork, who sings with the West Cork Choral Singers, will travel with the choir to New York to sing on Monday next, 15th January in Carnegie Hall. The choir has a very strong connection with Abbeystrewry Church in Skibbereen, County Cork.

The West Cork Choral Singers (WCCS) have been invited to perform in New York's prestigious Carnegie Hall as part of a 'choir of distinction.' Under the musical directorship of Diana Llewellyn, the choir have been invited to participate in a performance of the music of Sir Karl Jenkins.

A spokesperson for Distinguished Concerts International New York City (DCINY) said the performance in the Isaac Stern Auditorium at Carnegie Hall will be all the more special because it is scheduled to take place on Martin Luther King Day and will feature the world premiere of a new large work by Sir Karl Jenkins.

The four-day trip includes two half-day rehearsals with choirs from 14 countries prior to the concert, which will feature a US première of Jenkins' 'Sing! The Music was Given' (based on a poem by Thomas Moore) plus 'The Armed Man'.

Performing in this concert, as well as a huge musical learning experience, will also mean that the WCCS will be privileged to première 'Sing! The Music was Given' in Ireland at a later date.

There is, however, no such thing as a 'free concert'. To defray the costs of the trip and performance, the choir will work very hard, as it always does, to attract local mentors and sponsorship.

The Revd John Ardis reflects: 'The West Cork Choral Singers has a strong connection to Abbeystrewry Church. The choir was formed originally to sing for a carols service in Abbeystrewry Church some twenty-six years ago. Abbeystrewry Church has hosted many concerts featuring the choir over the years, so much so it is considered "home ground". It is a pleasure for me to join with two other parishioners Mrs Nuala Gibbons (a founder member) and Mrs Judy Naylor to sing at the world premiere of this fabulous piece of music in

Carnegie Hall, and I am also looking forward to hearing the Irish premiere of this in Abbeystrewry Church some time this year!’

Victims’ commissioner under fire for ‘silence’ over video



TUV leader Jim Allister has criticised the commissioner for victims and survivors for her “silence” in the aftermath of Barry McElduff’s controversial post on social media, the News Letter reports.

The Sinn Fein MP was suspended by the party after appearing to mock victims of the Kingsmills massacre.

But North Antrim MLA Mr Allister has urged the commissioner to “use her influence with the party to get them to take meaningful action against McElduff”.

In a letter to commissioner Judith Thompson, Mr Allister said: “You say on your website that your ‘principal aim is to promote the interests of victims and survivors’ yet you have been silent – just as you were after Martin McGuinness was cheered at the last Sinn Fein conference after his role in the IRA was mentioned.

“How can you claim to be representing the interests of victims and remain silent when they have been insulted in such a grossly hurtful manner?” In a statement released yesterday evening, Ms Thompson spoke of the “unacceptable revictimisation” of those who have been impacted by posts and comments on social media.

She added: “I have been aware of many instances recently where victims and survivors felt traumatised by the public reaction of those who should know better; this is yet another example of this and it has to stop.

“This is something I have fully intended to address but will do so in a way that keeps the

impact on victims and survivors at the heart of the issue and maintains respect for their experiences.

“Make no mistake, I am determined that all victims and survivors will be treated with dignity and respect and that their hurt or loss will not be minimised.”

Humanists say Catholic donations to new education secretary 'represents inappropriate influence'

Humanists UK have highlighted how several MPs, including the new Education Secretary Damian Hinds, have received money from the Catholic Bishops' Conference in return for intern placements.

As Humanists UK campaign against the involvement of religious organisations in the running of state schools, they say this money from the Catholic church "represents inappropriate influence."

Damian Hinds, the Conservative MP for East Hampshire, supports the removal of the 50% cap on religious selection at Catholic schools,



meaning he would be happy if they limited the number of non-religious pupils in favour of children from Catholic backgrounds.

Hinds' support of Catholic schools is documented **in a speech in April 2014** where he says: "If they [Catholic schools] were open to all, they would lose their distinctive character-not immediately, but over time" and "a half-Catholic school is not the same thing as a Catholic school".

Humanists UK show that the Freedom of Information website Theyworkforyou.com reveals that **Damian Hinds received**: "an educational allowance of £5,116.25 and accommodation provided for an intern in my parliamentary office for 10 months" in October 2014.

The group add that Hinds is not the only one receiving money from the Catholic Bishops' Conference, they claim Labour and the Liberal Democrats were also donated money in return for interns in their offices.

They say: "In the months prior to becoming Labour's Shadow Schools Minister in October 2016, Mike Kane was gifted £5,218.55 by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, also to cover the costs of a parliamentary intern for 10 months."

They added that Lib Dem's John Pugh, their former Education Spokesperson, was also gifted £4000.

Mothers' Union offers liturgy to help churches mark Mothering Sunday

The international Anglican mission agency Mothers' Union has released a free Eucharistic liturgy and other resources to help churches mark Mothering Sunday, which this year falls on 11 March. The liturgy has been prepared by students from St Mellitus Theology College, which was established in 2007 by the dioceses



Canterbury Cathedral is the mother church of the Anglican Communion. While traditionally Mothering Sunday is a day on which people would visit their mother church, in Europe it has become an occasion for honouring mothers in a way that Mothers' Day has in other parts of the world.

of London and Chelmsford, and includes material from the Church of England's Common Worship book.

The Mothers' Union has also released other resources, including a collection of prayers, a structured family service, and a series of activities for children.

“Mothering Sunday is a very important day in our calendar at Mothers’ Union and we provide resources on the website to help church families to celebrate, support and appreciate the role of mothers and all those who play a mothering role in their families and communities,” the MU chief executive, Bev Jullien, said.

“They are interactive, ranging from fun-packed activities for children and prayers to a beautiful liturgy written by the students of St Mellitus Theology College.

“We are very aware that, for some, Mothering Sunday can be a difficult day, and so the liturgy in particular includes material to acknowledge, support and pray for those for whom it may be a painful time”.

Traditionally a day on which people would visit their “mother” church, Mothering Sunday in Europe has become an occasion for honouring mothers in a way that Mothers’ Day has in other parts of the world.

The Mother’s Union has also produced an online catalogue of alternative Mothering Sunday gifts to raise funds for its work around the world. Gifts range in price from £6 GBP for its “greater love”, which supports projects in the UK that help

restore broken relationships in communities; to £100 for its “powerful voice”, which supports projects designed to give mothers the confidence and skills to speak out against inequality and gender-based violence.”

The Mothers’ Union says that its “truly inspiring and empowering Make a Mother’s Day gifts” will help “mothers move from life on the margins right to the heart of their families and communities. Whether that’s through enabling a mother to learn to read, become a budding entrepreneur or learn new skills that help her improve her home.”

The gifts are, in effect donations and it follows a growing trend of charities offering alternative gifts where money is provided for good causes instead of material goods.

[Click here](#) to access the Mothers’ Union Mothering Sunday liturgical resources.

[Click here](#) to access the *Make A Mother’s Day* gifts website.

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Archbishop urges churches to commemorate the “vile and shameful” holocaust

The Primate of the Church in Wales, Archbishop John Davies, is encouraging churches, parishes and chaplaincies to mark Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January. Internationally, Holocaust Memorial Day is held on the anniversary of the 1945 liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau by the Red Army. In the UK, the day not only commemorates the Holocaust of the Jewish people at the time of World War Two, but subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. It is a day on which the victims are remembered; as well as an opportunity for the living to learn lessons for the future.

“The Holocaust is certainly one of the most vile and shameful examples from the catalogue of events which disfigure the history of the human race,” Archbishop John, the Bishop of Swansea and Brecon, said. “Commemorating both it and its victims, whilst also recognising the terrifying perversity of those human minds which enabled such an atrocity to be devised and implemented is something which I wholeheartedly support.



Archbishop John Davies said that the Holocaust is “one of the most vile and shameful examples from the catalogue of events which disfigure the history of the human race”

“The persecution of any individual or group of human beings because of their race, religion or ethnic origin can never be justified.

Remembering the Nazi’s attempt, by means of genocide, to mercilessly extinguish the very existence of such a group of people from certain parts of Europe is to recall events that must continue to be brought to mind in all their detail and in all their horror. The commemoration is not only appropriate, it is essential, because those events must never be forgotten.”

Archbishop John will attend the Welsh National Ceremony in Cardiff City Hall, on Monday 29th January, and give a blessing at the end. Those attending the ceremony will hear from Lady Milena Grenfell-Baines, a Holocaust survivor, and Dr Mukesh Kapila, a former British government advisor on international aid who was part of the first British team to go to Rwanda after the genocide there; and who also worked in Bosnia where he witnessed the aftermath of the genocide in Srebrenica. The UK theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2018 is The Power of Words. Its focus will be helping people to reflect on the role words play, both to harm and to heal, to destroy and to build, in society today. Many organisations will be holding events to mark the day, ranging from simple candle-lighting ceremonies to postcard-writing activities, conferences, concerts, plays, reading events and exhibitions.

“Because religious identity has often been used to foment division and discrimination in past genocides, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust encourages faith organisations, in particular, to use the day as a means of presenting the positive values and practices they share together,” Richard Spencer, HMDT Wales support worker, said. “Whether the resulting event be a simple gathering of two or three for

quiet contemplation, or a more ambitious venture, it would mark an important point of resolution at this, the start of the New Year, and be a powerful symbol of our hopes and efforts to make a better, kinder, society.”

Denial film a focus of Holocaust Memorial Day in N Ireland

Holocaust denial - The Strand Arts centre, Belfast is screening the film *Denial* - starring Rachel Weisz. A court room drama based on the true story of David Irving's efforts to humiliate a Jewish historian and survivors, which goes badly wrong.

There will be an introductory talk by NIFI's London-based co chair, Steven Jaffe.

Tuesday 16 January 2018, 8.30pm - adm £4 at the door.

Or you can reserve a seat via the link - a small booking charge applies: <https://www.strandartscentre.com/view-all-events/>

There are 19 events taking place in Northern Ireland.

See -

www.churchnewsireland.org

NEWS January 11

<http://www.hmd.org.uk/events/find/Northern%20Ireland>

Resources for World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2018

The Council for Immigrants of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference have published their Parish Resource Pack for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees which takes place this Sunday 14 January 2018.



The pack includes:

- Pope Francis' message for the 104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees
- Immigrant Family Prayer
- Indonesian Creed

- Suggested homily notes
- Prayers of the Faithful
- Parish bulletin inserts
- Parish resources
- A migrant's testimony
- The Way of the Cross of Migrants

Please click the link below to access the resource pack:

World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2018

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