
Bishop Donal McKeown in international delegation of bishops to meet young Palestinians and Israelis in the Holy Land



Bishop Donal McKeown, Bishop of Derry, along with bishops from across Europe, North America and South Africa will meet in the Holy Land over the coming days to promote dialogue and peace, while meeting young people.

This annual visit was set up 20 years ago at the invitation of the Holy See with the aim of visiting and supporting the Holy Land's local Christian communities as they experience the political and socio-economic realities of living in Israel and Palestine.

This year the focus of the bishops' pilgrimage will be on education and young people. It will involve a series of meetings and visits to promote the value of education for young people and the importance education has in building peace in the region. In addition to meeting students and young people from Gaza, Bethlehem and Jerusalem, the bishops will also meet the *Parents Circle – Families Forum*, a body which brings together more than 600 Israeli and Palestinian families who have lost a relation due to the prolonged conflict and who today, through various initiatives, support peace, reconciliation and tolerance.

The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem will also present to the bishops their aim to promote education as an instrument of peace and justice, followed by a series of visits to Christian schools administered directly by the Latin Patriarchate. In Emmaus-Qubeibeh, the bishops will visit a home for the elderly and will meet some young volunteers working there. Brother Peter Bray,

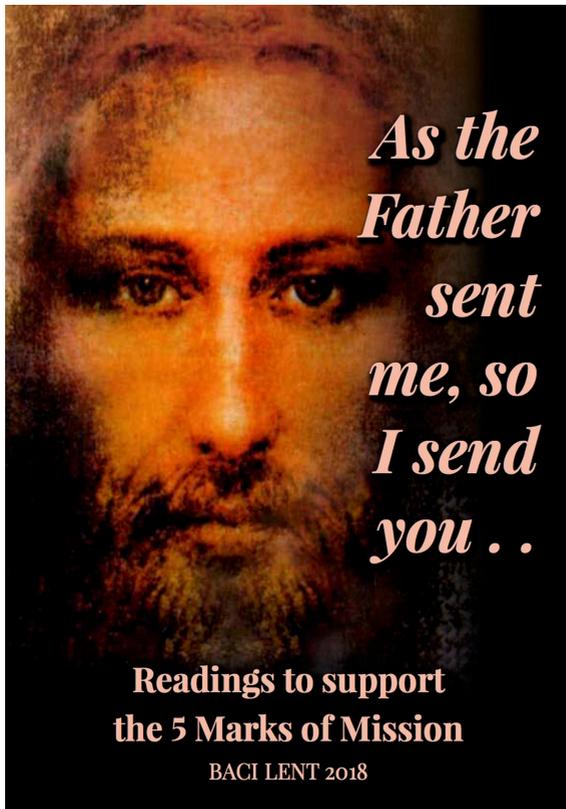
Vice-Rector of the University of Bethlehem, will present the *Qubeibeh Nursing Programme* (QNP): a programme which offers job opportunities for young people in a largely rural area, with high levels of unemployment and many social and political problems.

This year the Holy Land Co-ordination 2018 will celebrate Sunday Mass on 14 January with the small Christian community in Gaza, followed by a visit to the House of Peace run by the *Missionaries of Charity*; a brief meeting with young Christians and a pastoral visit to the sick in the community.

The meeting is organised by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

C of I Biblical Association Lent Studies 2018 focus on the Five Marks of Mission

The Biblical Association of the Church of Ireland (BACI) will launch its Bible studies for Lent 2018 on Tuesday January 23 at 1.15 pm in Church House, Dublin. The 2018 Lent Studies have been designed to foster a biblical approach to the Five Marks of Mission, originally formulated in the



Anglican Communion back in 1984 and much emphasised in the Church of Ireland in recent years.

Titled “As the Father sent me, so I send you” (John:20.21) the five studies focus in turn on the TELL, TEACH, TEND, TRANSFORM, TREASURE aspects of mission, moving from the teaching and pastoral care required after initial conversion to the wider social and environmental

challenges of the Gospel. The writers are the Revd Jack Kinkead, the Revd Lesley Robinson, Mr Philip McKinley, Canon Paul Houston and Mr David Ritchie of the RCB.

The Introduction, by the studies' editor Canon Ginie Kennerley, emphasises the importance of approaching the studies in a spirit of sincere discipleship: "Mission is being sent out, not by any human authority, but by the Lord himself. We are to go in His peace, and we are not to go until animated by the Holy Spirit."

The studies will be launched by Archbishop Michael Jackson. Copies will be available at the launch at a 10% discount in bundles of 10 copies. The retail price per copy will be £2.25 or €2.50, obtainable from the larger cathedral bookshops or by post from the Book Well in Belfast or Biblical Association for the Church of Ireland treasurer Barbara Bergin in Dublin berginba@gmail.com.

Interdenominational Service as Gaeilge

An tSeirbhís Idirchreidmheach, 19 Eanáir 2018
ag 8.00pm

Interdenominational Service, as Gaeilge, Christ Church Cathedral Dublin, 19 January at 8.00pm
Seachtain na hAontachta Chríostaí 2018 / Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Seanmóirí / Sermon:

An tAth Leon Ó Giolláin SJ

Ceol / Music:

Coimhdeach Cóir Ardteampall Chríost agus Cór Ghaeilscoil na Cille, Cill Dhéagláin, Co na Mí.

Consort of Christ Church Cathedral Choir and the Choir from Gaelscoil na Cille, Ashbourne Co. Meath.

An tEaspag Dónall Caird

Beidh óráid ghairid ann i ndiaidh na seirbhíse ag tabhairt chun cuimhne an tEaspag Dónall Caird a bhí chomh dílis don tseirbhís idirchreidmeach i rith a shaol. Tabharfaidh Aonghus Dwane, údar Donald Caird, *Church of Ireland Bishop; Gaelic Churchman; a Life*, óráid ómóis Dhónaill Caird agus beidh an tUrr Trevor Sargent, Cathaoirleach Chumann Gaelach na hEaglaise, ag labhairt ar son an Chumainn.

There will be a short address after the service to remember the late Bishop Donald Caird.

Aonghus Dwane, author of Donald Caird, *Church of Ireland Bishop; Gaelic Churchman; a Life*, will

deliver the address and the Revd Trevor Sargent, Chairman of Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise, will introduce the talk with some opening remarks on behalf of the Cumann.

Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise / The Irish Guild of the Church

Cúlra

Bunaíodh Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise sa bhliain 1914 chun (1) meon na Sean–Eaglaise Ceiltí a choimeád beo in Eaglais na hÉireann agus baill na hEaglaise a chuireann spéis sa Ghaelachas a bhailiú le chéile, (2) úsáid na Gaeilge a leathnú san Eaglais, (3) iomann agus ábhar diaga eile a bhailiú ó litríocht na Gaeilge agus (4) ceol agus ealaíon Éireannach a chur ar aghaidh in imeachtaí na hEaglaise.

Background Information

Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise: The Irish Guild of the Church was founded in 1914 to (1) promote all that tends to preserve within the Church of Ireland the spirit of the ancient Celtic Church and to provide a bond of union for all members of the Church of Ireland inspired with Irish ideals, (2) promote the use of the Irish language in the Church, (3) collect from Irish sources suitable hymns and other devotional literature, (4) encourage the use of Irish art and music in the Church.

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Belfast Cathedral's farewell to organist Ian Barber

Organist Ian Barber's contribution to the life of Belfast Cathedral over 35 years was recognised at a special Choral Evensong in St Anne's on Wednesday evening.

Ian was at organ for the service, and many warm tributes were paid to him afterwards.

Dean's Vicar, the Rev Canon Mark Niblock, said: "I have only been in the Cathedral a short time but it has been a great privilege for me to work with Ian at regular services and also at special events which his playing has made extra special.

"Someone described Ian's playing as 'swimming in sound,' that sums it up, he has that touch that makes you inhale the music."



The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, announced that Ian Barber was to be made Organist Emeritus of Belfast Cathedral.

Canon Niblock thanked Ian on behalf of present and past clergy for this ministry and his music with the Cathedral and the people of Belfast City and beyond.

He read some words from former Dean John Mann and his wife Helen who said it had been a privilege to know Ian as an organist and a friend.

Dr Michael Callender, a member of the Cathedral's Music and Worship Committee, pointed out that Ian had been making music on

‘this quite ancient instrument’ for a full third of the life of the organ. He said Ian’s contribution to music in St Anne’s had been recognised when he was made an Associate of the Royal School of Church Music some years ago.

He paid tribute to Ian’s steadfastness, the way nothing ever bothered him, and described him as ‘a musical fixed point in a world of change at St Anne’s.’

“With Ian, we got the impression that the organist plays anything, no matter how complex, but clear preparation was the key before both daily Evensong and great occasions, including playing for the Queen on her golden jubilee,” he said.

Dr Callender also paid tribute to Ian’s wife Jean, who faithfully turned the pages for him at every service.

There were also tributes from Mr Philip Prosser, a former Lay Clerk in the Choir, who presented Ian with a gift of a mounted organ pipe, and Mrs Joan Thompson made a presentation on behalf of the Friends of Belfast Cathedral.

The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, quoted from John 1, describing Ian as ‘a man in whom there is no guile.’ He paid

tribute to his ability, his humility and his incredible faithfulness.

The Bishop said the Cathedral wished to honour Ian by making him Organist Emeritus and presented him with a Certificate and Medal.

In response Ian thanked the choir, the musicians and everyone present. He said much had happened in his time at St Anne's and recalled services which particularly stood out for him, including the Kegworth Memorial Service, as well as happy Christmas and Easter times.

“Thank you to Jean because without her I could not have done this,” Ian said. “A page turner is a very demanding job, you have to concentrate, and Jean is wonderful in this respect,” he said.

Ian said he had been organist in St Anne's under four different Deans. “I feel very lucky to have been here and thank you for the opportunity you have given me,” he said.

Son of a Church of Ireland clergyman, Ian grew up in Holywood and attended Campbell College. He cut his teeth on the organ in the parish of St Philip and St James, and won a scholarship to the Royal School of Church Music. He progressed to the Royal College of Music in London and after graduation was made a Fellow



Chorister Meghan presents flowers to Mrs Jean Barber following the Choral Evensong on January 10

of the Royal College of Organists (FRCO) with a choirmaster's diploma.

He moved to Canada to play the organ in St Mark's Church in Ottawa. After two years he went to the Bishops' University in Quebec to take a Degree in Theology and Clergy Training and when he qualified he moved to St Catharine's, Ontario, as an organist.

Illness forced Ian to return to Holywood, and he was quickly snapped up by St Columb's Cathedral in Londonderry as organist and

choirmaster. After two years he moved to Ballywalter, and also taught at Victoria College and later Strathearn School, where he was Head of Music for 21 years.

In 1983 Ian was appointed assistant organist at St Anne's Cathedral, a post he held until 2010 when he was recognised as organist and choirmaster. With the appointment of David Stevens as Master of the Choristers in April 2012 Ian resumed his role of organist.

In September 2014, the Cathedral's new chamber organ was dedicated and named The Barber Organ in honour of Ian.

Church of England's Christmas Campaign reached 6.8 million people

The Church of England's #GodWithUs Christmas campaign has reached more people than ever before, new figures have revealed.

A total of 6.8 million people **engaged with the campaign** through print and digital media, which was aimed at encouraging people across the country to start or strengthen their faith journey. In 2016, 1.5 million people were reached.



The Church released three videos throughout December to showcase some of the many services that took place during Advent and Christmas.

A series of reflections called "Your Christmas Journey" were printed and published online to help people think about Advent and Christmas and 2018.

Adrian Harris, head of digital communications at the Church of England, told Premier the Church is "really pleased" with the numbers.

The "Your Christmas Journey" reflections were seen a total of 844,000 times across social media, email and by text message, with over 2 million video views across reflections and services.

Church House Publishing sold 80,000 copies of the booklet to churches to share with congregations and 18,000 were distributed free to clergy.

The Church also welcomed figures which suggest its new digital strategy could have helped contribute to the increased number of people engaging with #GodWithUs.

In a statement, the Church said: "We're delighted that the campaign brought more people into relationship with God and the Church at this key moment in the Christian year and our prayer is that we build on the successes and learnings to do more for Lent and Christmas 2018."

Catholic Church in England and Wales launches app to help discover vocations

The Catholic Church in England and Wales has launched an app designed to help users deepen their faith and discover their vocations.

The "God Calls" app was commissioned by the National Office for Vocation of the Bishops'



The app has been launched by the Catholic Church in England and Wales to help Catholics deepen their faith and discover their vocations

Conference of England and Wales as a “spiritual toolkit.”

The app includes daily prayers and meditations on the Gospel and the lives of the saints, as well as a news section and Twitter feed to connect users to the life of the church.

It also includes a journal so that users can monitor their spiritual growth and understand more clearly how God might be calling them.

The vocations office said that Catholics would see their faith grow if they used the app regularly.

“Gradually – God never pressures – you’ll discern the divine calling he’s crafting for your future, your happiness, your soul,” the vocations office said.

The app is available for download free of charge on iPhone and Android devices from the God Calls website at www.godcalls.co.uk.

Sr Elaine Penrice, a Daughter of St Paul who serves as the religious life promoter of the vocation office, told Catholic News Service that the app was proposed two years ago as part of a strategy to help “build a positive vocations culture in our local church.”

“This means that everybody should feel called by God,” she said, “firstly to universal holiness, and in a particular way of life or work. We believe that in order to hear and understand God’s call in our lives, it is helpful to immerse ourselves in our relationship with God.

“We were aware that to communicate this idea, it is important to get the message to as many people as possible,” she said. “The app was one

of the ways we thought we might be able to help people – especially young people – to think about their relationship with God, and how to make that relationship concrete every day.”

Sr Penrice said the app had been well received “in these early days of its existence,” adding that she would be glad “if many people all over the world are able to use it”.

“We have no specific targets of how many downloads we seek but, of course, more is better, so that the word of God goes to the ends of the world,” she said.

She said she hoped those already discerning God’s call would “find it helpful to join a virtual community of seekers all over the country, or even the world.”

Pope invites homeless to night at the circus

Prisoners, refugees and the homeless are among more than 2,000 people invited to a circus being organised by the Pope last night.

Pope Francis has financially supported the Circus of Solidarity event, which is being staged



at the French Medrano Circus in north Rome for vulnerable people.

Archbishop Konrad Krajewski, the Vatican's Almoner - the person who oversees giving to the poor - said: "This gift... will hopefully become for our poorest brothers and sisters an encouragement to overcome the bitterness and difficulties of life, which often seem insurmountable."

Guests were also treated to supper, as well as the care of doctors and nurses supported by the Holy See's mobile health clinic.

The Pope said during one of his recent General Audience speeches: "Circus performers create beauty; this is good for the soul, for we greatly need beauty!"

Circus of Solidarity has been supported by businessman Fabrizio Grandi and directors of the Medrano Circus, the Casartelli family.

Braian Casartelli said Thursday's event was "a marvellous evening in honour of the many people of Rome who live in difficulty."

World Council of Churches begins its 70th anniversary with celebration in China

The World Council of Churches has begun a year of celebrations to mark its 70th anniversary with a celebration in China. The general secretary of the WCC, the Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, preached in one of the oldest Protestant churches in China last Sunday – Chongwenmen Church in Beijing – on the theme “Jesus Christ, the Joy of the World.” And he took with him a message of greeting from what the WCC describes as “the living fellowship with 348 member churches worldwide.”

Chongwenmen Church was built by American Methodists in 1870; but was destroyed in the Boxer Rebellion of 1900. It was re-built in 1904 but was closed during the Cultural Revolution. It



A service in Beijing's Chongwenmen Church to mark the start of the 70th anniversary of the World Council of Churches. The Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit preached during the service.

reopened in 1980 and is now a point of reference for thousands of Christians. They celebrate five worship services every Sunday with many young participants. Today came approximately 1 000 to the worship service to pray together.

Churches in China are in what the WCC calls “a post-denominational period.” In 1949 there were approximately 700,000 Protestant Christians in China. In response, Chinese Christians established the “Three-Self Movement”. Through

the principles of self-governance, self-support and self-propagation, Chinese Christians set out on to build the church. Churches were closed during the Cultural Revolution between 1966 to 1976; but began to re-open from 1979. Today there are more than 16 million Protestant Christians in the country.

“We are called to share the good news of God’s love and God’s peace for all people, whoever they are, whatever people they belong to,” Tveit said in his sermon.

“The ecumenical movement is built on the perspective for ‘all the people’. The joy of Christmas is at the heart of the work and the call of the World Council of Churches as we now, on this day of Christmas, and here, in Beijing, China, begin our celebration of the 70th anniversary of the WCC.

“This joy of Christmas can continue to bring us together as churches and as human beings, in a world that is both able to improve and still very divided and fragmented. Even if many have been brought out of poverty, like in your country, many people in the world are still suffering from poverty, uncured illnesses, conflicts, fear, loneliness, even hopelessness.”

Tveit spoke about the role of churches in China, saying: “We continue sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with all the people. Among the very good news in the family of the World Council of Churches has been the news about the life and the growth of the church in China.

“Your Christian witness, during and after very difficult times for your church, has given hope to many in the world,” he said.

Sunday’s service marked the start not just of the WCC’s 70th anniversary year, but also of a WCC delegation’s visit to member churches in China, which continues until next Tuesday (16 January). They are meeting with the WCC Asia President, Dr Sang Chang, and their programme executive for interreligious dialogue, the Revd Dr Peniel Rajkumar. They will also visit Shanghai and meet with the China Christian Council and the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, as well as with the leadership and students at the East China Theological Seminary. The delegation will also meet with Chinese religious leaders and representatives from the State Administration for Religious Affairs in Beijing.

The WCC visit to China is “a historic journey in many ways, and comes as a follow up to the meeting of the Executive Committee in 2016,” Dr

Tveit said. “I am eager to meet more representatives from churches, particularly students and youth who represent the church of the future.

“As we begin the year of the WCC’s 70th Anniversary in China, we show that the WCC is a living fellowship with a rich legacy now active and open for the calling of the ecumenical movement in the 21st century.

“China has the world’s largest population and is very significant partner in addressing the global challenges of our time,” he said. “The church in China has a very significant role in shaping the Christian witness and service in our time, both in China and in the global fellowship.”

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