

## **This isn't Anglican, this is the work of the spirit: Justin Welby on success of global prayer initiative**



Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby has relaunched the global prayer initiative Thy Kingdom Come with an open call for churches of all denominations to get involved.

The project, which runs between Ascension and Pentecost, aims to encourage Christians to pray that others would come to know Jesus.

This year churches across the world will hold events from 10th-12th May.

Speaking to church leaders at Lambeth Palace of Wednesday, he said: "The wind of God's spirit has blown this out of the Anglican system. It's not a Church of England project.

"It's something God has done in which we happen to have a role and that is how it should be."

Having started in 2016, Thy Kingdom Come has seen huge growth with Christians in 85 countries around the world taking part.

Hundreds of thousands have received resources in numerous languages while millions have engaged through TV and radio.

This year sees the Catholic Church and the Methodist Church take a greater role in the project and it's hoped Christians of all backgrounds will get involved.

Speaking at the launch, Justin Welby pointed to violence in DR Congo and sexual misconduct in the UK news headlines as evidence of the growing need for more of God around the world.

"It's about an absence of the Kingdom," he said. "Our first reaction is quite rightly to be horrified, say 'that's terrible' but our second reaction must be [to remember] what is in you is the witness of Jesus Christ because that's going to change people's hearts."

Those wanting to find out more about the initiative are being invited to the Thy Kingdom Come website for free resources.

## **US companies seek removal of Ireland's school 'baptism barrier'**

The American Chamber of Commerce [Ireland](#) has sought the removal of the "Baptism barrier" from access to schools on the basis that it would make Ireland more attractive for a multinational workforce, The Irish Times reports.

In a submission to the Department of Education, the chamber – which represents 700 US firms such as [Facebook](#) and [Google](#) – said it was vital that Ireland attracts talent to fill the growing number of opportunities within its companies.

"Now, more than ever, we must showcase our warm welcome and openness to the world. Ensuring that our education system has an access for all approach and barriers are removed



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are integral to highlighting our inclusive society,” the chamber said.

Minister for Education [Richard Bruton](#) is planning to remove religion as a factor in most school admissions by prohibiting Catholic primary schools from giving enrolment priority to baptised children in cases where they are oversubscribed.

However, minority faiths, such as the [Church of Ireland](#), may continue to prioritise members of

their religion to protect their ethos in cases where they are oversubscribed, under the proposals.

Legislation providing for the changes is due to be debated in the [Oireachtas](#) shortly.

Coffee and discussion about death, anyone? A slice of grave cake to go with that? All in a friendly atmosphere? Then please take a seat...

## **Carmelite prior installed as an ecumenical canon at C of I cathedral**

The Prior of the Carmelite order in Ireland has described his installation as an ecumenical canon of St Patrick's Cathedral Dublin as a "tremendous honour".

Fr Brian McKay was speaking after Choral Evensong at the Church of Ireland cathedral on Sunday.

He is the third Roman Catholic to be installed as an ecumenical canon since 2007, when a bill was passed by the general synod allowing St Patrick's appoint two ecumenical canons in addition to 26 other canons.

Fr McKay follows in the footsteps of Professor Enda McDonagh, who was appointed as the very first Roman Catholic ecumenical canon in 2007.

After Fr McDonagh's five years were completed, the Cathedral appointed Augustinian Dr Kieron O'Mahony as the next Roman Catholic ecumenical canon.

"I was elected to succeed Kieron O'Mahony on 6 November and I will be in the role for five years," Fr McKay explained. He is now referred to as Canon McKay in St Patrick's Cathedral and he also has a Carmelite habit bearing a canon's seal in the Cathedral's robing room.

Speaking after the ceremony, Canon Charles Mullen, who preached the sermon and is Prebendary of Rathmichael parish, said it was "a great privilege to have Fr Brian McKay, long time and well-known Carmelite in Dublin, installed as a canon of St Patrick's Cathedral."

Explaining what the role entails, Canon Mullen said the role of cathedral clergy mainly relates to services and offices.

Ecumenical canons, he said, are "fully canons" and can vote and "get to do exactly the same

things as the Church of Ireland canons". He added, "We make absolutely no distinction."

In his sermon, Canon Mullen noted how Canon McKay's connections with St Patrick's Cathedral date from the late 1970s when he studied organ under John Dexter.

The Carmelite was a musician at St Mary's Pro-Cathedral and as a tribute to that, the Palestrina Choir joined St Patrick's Cathedral Choir for Evensong on Sunday.

## **Pop-up Death Cafe in Tinahely starts the conversation**

That's what was on offer in Tinahely's Courthouse Arts Centre on Thursday, February 18<sup>th</sup> last.

While the event was organised by Canon Ruth Elmes and Fr Chris Hayden (Parish Priest of Coolafancy and Shillelagh) during Christian Unity Week it was not a religious event. The clergy were not touting for business, they said. Nor would a funeral director be 'sizing people up'!

No, joking aside – and the event was laced with laughter, despite the serious subject matter – it

was about opening up the discussion about death – a certainty in everyone’s lives – and about us all facing up to end-of-life issues that often get shoved under the carpet until it’s too late.

- Does your family know your funeral wishes, for example?
- Have you made a will?
- Do you want to be cremated rather than buried?
- Ever heard of power of attorney?
- What are your wishes if you become very ill – do you want to be resuscitated if you go into cardiac arrest, for instance?
- Do you want to be PEG fed and kept alive that way when you can’t swallow anymore?
- Who do you want to organise your funeral?
- Have you recorded your wishes around these topics so that your family will know what to do should such a circumstance happen?

These are all big questions but did you ever think that the sooner you’ve thought about them and made decisions around them the sooner you can get on with making the most of the rest of your life?



The Death Café movement wants you to do just that.

Fr Chris Hayden spoke about the objectives behind the concept. “Death café – put the resonances of both those words together,” he said, “and you get a phrase with an interesting twang to it – serious issues mixed in with the café resonances of cup of coffee, upbeat, uplifting, lifeline...”

Canon Elmes agreed that the title is straight and a bit blunt but that it’s important to name it.

“Let’s not pretend we are going to be talking about something else here! It has to be confrontational,” she said. Let’s just take the last taboo – death – acknowledge it and plan for it. There is a feeling that talking about death causes something awful to happen. It doesn’t. Talk about death, it won’t kill you!”

She points out that Death Cafes are not depressing places.

“Laughter dissipates stress...there often a lot of laughter around death. While death is a difficult thing for people to confront, doing so is very worthwhile.”

She went on to outline how the Death Café movement started in Switzerland in 2004 and how it is simply an opportunity to talk about the sort of issues that don't get talked about.

“We know from our pastoral ministry backgrounds that those who cope best in the immediacy of a crisis or bereavement are those who know what their loved ones want. It's as simple as that.”

A top table at the event had useful pieces of paper for attendees to take away with them, for example tips on making a will and a simple form where you can write down your funeral and burial wishes. The information sheets provided are a shortened version of what the Irish Hospice Foundation has on its website [www.thinkahead.ie](http://www.thinkahead.ie). Donor cards were available too.

“The death café has no agenda,” she said. “We are not prescribing what you should talk about except we are here to talk about end-of-life issues. Tolerance, respect, listening and awareness for other people's views is important.”

Two general questions were thrown out to get the coffee morning started. Those were:

“What single object would you pick to represent you when you die and what object do you think your family would choose?”

Conversation buzzed immediately, individual stories surfacing about why such and such objects would be picked – flowers, books, a pen, a glass of water to symbolize a fulfilled life – very soon everyone had their object. Guessing what family would pick was a different matter, however, with some sure that objects would be the same, others unsure as they tried to think of what aspects of their personality their children would zoom in on.

Discussions broadened out from that to topics like ‘do I get cremated or not’, how do I decide where to be buried – with my husband and his family or can I go back to my birth family’s graveyard, would there be any point in donating my organs if I’m old... are coffins recycled after cremations (they’re not – they go into the cremator with the body).

The ‘get cremated or not’ discussion led to wondering if every graveyard in Ireland should have a columbarium wall or area where caskets with ashes could be stored/buried with a small inscribed plate over them. It was felt that it would be a space-effective way of burial and

give families of those created a place to focus on in the future, if they wanted to, in a person's own parish and provide an alternative to scattering ashes.

Afterwards the overall response to the two-hour event was that it had been very useful with attendees saying that they were glad they had come and that they'd learned a lot and that they would be bringing the discussion home. At the end of both sessions attendees asked if it would be run again and said that they would encourage friends and family to come along if it was.

Donations went to the *Kevin Bell Repatriation Trust*

## **Fewer Catholics seek marriage annulments in Northern Ireland**

The number of Catholic marriage annulments in Northern Ireland has plummeted by around two thirds over the last 20 years, it can be revealed, Alf McCreary reports in The Belfast Telegraph.

Figures obtained from the Armagh Inter-Diocesan Marriage Tribunal show that the number of applications has fallen from 315 in 1995 to a current total of around 100 — despite new rules to speed up the process. The Armagh



Tribunal covers the Dioceses of Clogher, Derry, Down and Connor, Dromore, Kilmore, and Raphoe, and the Archdiocese of Armagh.

The figures cover Northern Ireland and some nearby areas in the Republic.

Many Dioceses record their own statistics, but the reduced applications recorded by the

Armagh Tribunal almost certainly reflect the overall picture across Ireland.

A similar decrease has been experienced in the UK. At the start of 2016 there were 639 annulment applications being processed in England and Wales, and 144 in Scotland. Some 75% of these were granted.

The numbers in the UK have also decreased because of the large drop in Catholic marriages in England and Wales — from 15,181 in 1995 to 7,798 in 2014.

Fr Joseph Rooney, who is the Judicial Vicar with the Armagh Tribunal, commented: “A number of factors may explain the decrease in applications, not excluding the growing secularization of society where there are fewer church marriages.

In previous years when the applications for nullity were much higher, there was a large number of teenage marriages. In more recent times, people are marrying at a later age, which suggests a greater maturity.

“We are also in a sociological situation where some people whose church marriage has broken down are happy to proceed with a civil ceremony when they get married again.”

It is understood that there were around 90 applications for annulment last year from Catholics in the six Dioceses which are covered by the Armagh Tribunal, of which some 70 were successful.

In 2015, Pope Francis set out ways to simplify the Tribunals’ decision-making, and in certain

cases enabled Bishops to step in to speed up the process.

Fr Rooney added: “The new measures have been found helpful not only by members of Tribunals but also by the people applying for annulments and seeking our help.”

## **Launch of this year's 4 Corners Belfast Festival programme**

Fr Martin Magill, Joint Secretary Kevin Conmy and Rev Steve Stockman at the of launch this years 4 Corners Festival Belfast Programme to the press and distinguished guests at the Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Blessed are the Peacemakers'is a discussion panel (February 4) Contributors will include Rev Dr Heather Morris, secretary of home missions and former Methodist President, Rev Steve Stockman, minister of Fitzroy Presbyterian and co-founder of the 4 Corners Festival, Fr Brian Lennon SJ, one of the founders of Community Dialogue and Karen Sethuraman, pastor of the Down Community. It will be hosted by Dr Gladys Ganiel with musical performances from Caroline Orr.

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'Those You Pass on the Street' (February 5) is a hard-hitting play that explores the legacy of the conflict; when Elizabeth, an RUC widow, walks into a Sinn Féin office seeking assistance with anti-social behaviour in her area, she strikes up a friendship with community officer Frank. This friendship challenges their personal preconceptions and beliefs as well as their family and political loyalties.

The play contrasts political positioning with individual's needs, challenging the view that any mechanism for dealing with the past is simply about 'whose side gets what'.



The performance will be followed by a panel discussion with playwright Laurence McKeown, Debbie Watters of NI Alternatives, SDLP assembly member Claire Hanna and PUP spokesman Winston Irvine.

'The Boy Who Gave his Heart Away' (February 7) is a must-see event.

Award-winning author Cole Moreton will be reading from his book of the same name which tells the true story of two families who are drawn together when one son becomes the heart donor for the other son.

Moreton is also guest speaker at the 4 Corners Banquet for organ donors and those living with transplants.

Do consider coming along to support the festival, which is going to be the biggest yet.

There are musical contributions from Iain Archer, Ursula Burns, Joby Fox and Ricky Ross, discussions with authors including Tony McAuley and Philip Orr, incredible life stories from Alan McBride and Stephen Travers, as well as discussions with Monica McWilliams, Rev Dr Heather Morris and Fr Brian Lennon SJ.

This year's programme is at - <http://4cornersfestival.com/festival-2018/>



## **Team from Colombia to speak at Belfast church services**

A team from Colombia will be speaking at the Divine Healing Ministries services on Monday 5th at St. Anne's Cathedral and Tuesday 6th February at St. Finnian's, Cregagh Park. Both services begin at 8pm.

Pastor Hendrik Hoere from Colombia is the senior pastor of Al Abrigo church and is an accomplished musician/songwriter.

On this visit he will be accompanied by four others from his church in Cali. Pastor Hendrik and his team will share from their experience of how the Lord is leading them in their church in Cali.

## Prominent Clogher cleric to retire



The Chancellor of Clogher diocese, Rev. John Stewart, Rector of Derryvullan South and Garvary for the past 28 years, has announced his retirement from full time ministry.

Chancellor Stewart, whose home parish is St. Elizabeth's, Dundonald, celebrated his 40th anniversary of ordination for the Church of Ireland last summer.

On Sunday June 26, 1977, John Wesley Stewart was Ordained Deacon in Down Cathedral, by the Rt Rev. George Quinn, Bishop of Down and Dromore. John was ordained with Robert Neill and Kenneth Good (now Bishop of Derry and Raphoe). At his ordination, John had the honour of reading the Gospel.

Chancellor Stewart's first curacy was the parish of Seagoe, Portadown, in the Diocese of Dromore with Archdeacon Jack Shearer as his Rector. He then served in Christ Church, Lisburn, where Canon Arthur Noble was Rector.

In 1985 he became Incumbent of the Ballybay Group of Parishes, Co. Monaghan, Diocese of Clogher. In 1990 he became Incumbent of Derryvullen South and Garvary Parishes and remained in Clogher Diocese.

While in Clogher Diocese he served as Canon of Tyholland, Domestic Chaplain to Bishop Hannon, Rural Dean, examining Canon in Clogher Cathedral and until recently Glebes Secretary and Diocesan Registrar. He also served on the

Standing Committee in Dublin. He was made Chancellor of the Diocese in 2015.

## **Christian charity CAP urges UK government to appoint minister for food poverty**

A Christian charity has urged the government to appoint a minister for food poverty.

A report, backed by charity Church Action on Poverty, recommends five things to be done to tackle hunger.

It was presented to parliament yesterday, Wednesday.

The charity's director, Niall Cooper, stated why the appointment is necessary.

He explained: "When we had the Olympics for instance there was a minister for the Olympics - totally different kind of issue but cuts across half a dozen different departments.

"What we really want is someone within government who's going to champion the issue



and say 'actually it is the role of government to do what we can to end hunger'."

Cooper said there are gaps in our laws which mean food poverty doesn't fall under anyone's department.

The report states that since 2000 there has been a proliferation of charitable emergency food provision in the United Kingdom, which has expanded particularly fast since 2010.

A testimony in the report from Brian Wilson and Dawn Lumb who spoke at a drop-in centre in Leeds reads: "We come here on Mondays and Tuesdays, and sometimes on other days, and on Fridays we come for a meal and to see if there's a class on.

"We mostly come for the meals and to talk to people."

Cooper said this is becoming an all too familiar story.

The report was produced jointly with Dr Hannah Lambie-Mumford at the University of Sheffield and asked the government to take the following five key steps:

- 1 Appoint a minister or department charged with responsibility for coordinating a policy response across Government.
- 2 Measure household food insecurity each year.
- 3 Free people from the threat of food insecurity.
- 4 Listen to people with first-hand experience of hunger and use their experiences, as well as informed research, as the basis for policy.
- 5 Lead the way in ending hunger and household food insecurity.

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