



Churches help perpetuate injustices against LGBT people, says C of I Bishop



There should be no doubt that the churches have been complicit in perpetuating injustice against LGBT people, including among their own members, the [Church of Ireland](#) Bishop of Cork has said, the Irish Times reports. Paul Colton said it was clear “that some in the church hope that LGBT people might go back into the closet and stay there”.

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“That’s not going to happen. None of us should be under any doubt about the turmoil and damage this causes, and I worry especially for the well-being of young gay people hearing and witnessing all of this,” he said.

“We are going to have to find a way forward, even if the situation in a variety of churches, not only ours, seems to be becoming more polarised, not less so. I am conscious that not everyone sees this as a matter of justice and injustice.”

He told the diocesan synod in Cork that “none of us should be in any doubt either that we in the churches are complicit in the hurt, and in perpetuating the injustice being caused to LGBT people, including the many fellow LGBT members of our churches”.

[Bishop Colton](#) recalled how last year “I referred to the fact that two days before our synod, our sister church in [Scotland](#), the Scottish Episcopal Church, had decided to alter its canon on marriage by removing the doctrinal clause which states that marriage is between a man and a woman. Clergy who wish to conduct same-sex marriages will have to opt in, and no priest is to be compelled to do so”.

He had suggested “that the Scottish approach may represent a way forward for us too and that it is worth considering in our debate here in [Ireland](#) also. Some outside the Church of Ireland picked up on this suggestion but virtually no one of any outlook within the church picked up on it, and so it gained no traction. I do hope as an option it might seriously be looked at, or that some will come forward with another option for moving ahead”.

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The “horrific truth” was that, alongside the good done, institutional religion had been “complicit in so much of the damage, hurt and injustice that has been done to ordinary people including the most vulnerable people in our society,” he said.

Church of England sexuality debate off the cards until 2020

Proposals for same-sex blessings or official prayers for gay couples are off the cards until at least 2020, the Church of England confirmed today.

A raft of motions calling for a shift in the Church's ban on official liturgy for same-sex couples will be shelved until bishops formally announce their stance in two years time.

The confirmation comes after [Christian Today revealed](#) the CofE would ignore any calls for change to give bishops time to write a new teaching document on sexuality, not expected until 2020. Instead of formal debates or legislation, any synod discussions on sexuality will take place behind closed doors in group settings, avoiding publicity around a head-to-head debate, [Christian Today reported](#) last month.

Confirming the stance today Canon Sue Booy, who sets the agenda for the ruling general synod, said: 'After due consideration, the Business Committee has come to a mind that the various PMMs [private member's motions] and DSMs [diocesan synod motions] relating to the matters



The General Synod will meet for five days in York next month.

which are intended to be addressed by the proposed House of Bishops Teaching Document on Human Sexuality will not be scheduled for debate until that document has been published. 'This decision was taken on the understanding that the work on the Teaching Document will be completed by 2020.'

She added that members of the national synod, which meets twice a year and is made up of bishops, clergy and ordinary churchgoers elected from around the country, will hold private seminars at its next meeting in York in July to discuss divisions over sexuality. 'For some time the Committee has pondered the desire of members to discuss matters in a less binary fashion than our debating structure allows,' said Canon Booy.

Irish Catholic announce a new Council for Life

At the Summer 2018 General Meeting of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, which concluded on Wednesday 13 July in Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth, bishops announced plans to establish a new Council for Life. The role of the new council will be to advise and advocate for the Catholic Church in Ireland on a consistent ethic of life and care for those most at risk.

Praying for Ireland during their meeting, bishops remembered mothers, fathers and their unborn children, and especially mothers experiencing crisis pregnancies.

In their statement following the meeting, bishops said, 'With the repeal of the Eighth Amendment a new situation now exists in Ireland. It is essential for us as a Church which cares passionately about the gift of life, and wants to support both mothers and their unborn children, to seek better ways of responding to this new and very challenging reality. We intend to establish, by March 2019, a new Council for Life whose role will be to advise and advocate for the Catholic Church in Ireland on a consistent ethic of life and care for those most at risk. In preparation for the establishment of this Council, bishops will consult with those already committed to, and engaged with, upholding the sanctity of life in Ireland.

'We wish to acknowledge and pay tribute to all those who campaigned and voted to protect the lives of both mothers and their unborn children in the recent referendum. We

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appreciate that this is not an easy position to hold in our contemporary culture. We are seriously concerned that making abortion so freely available



will desensitise people to the value of innocent human life and will result in more abortions in Ireland.’

They continued, ‘During the referendum debate we heard many stories of immense pain and distress experienced by women who found themselves in a crisis pregnancy. Their stories touched us all. Often they felt overwhelmed and very alone. In the aftermath of the referendum it is clear that we all need to foster a culture of care, a society of support, so that when a woman finds herself in a crisis pregnancy she may find practical assistance and care.

‘The word “compassion” was regularly used in debates leading up to referendum day. We feel that it is important to recognise that those who worked for the retention of the protection of the right to life of the unborn in our Constitution did so out of a spirit of compassion for both the pregnant mother and her unborn child. True compassion is at the heart of the Christian Gospel and it continues to motivate us. It values and protects every human life from conception to natural death.’

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Bishops added, ‘For healthcare professionals, the right of conscientious objection must be respected. It would be a great injustice to require doctors and nurses to participate, even by referral, in the provision of services which would be a serious violation of their conscience. This would only be “a way of pretending to respect freedom of conscience while actually requiring one person to cooperate in what he or she sincerely believes is the wrong-doing of another. Such a presumption is at variance with the right to conscientious objection” (cf. *Code of Ethical Standards for Healthcare*, Dublin: Veritas, 2018, 8.19).

‘We encourage politicians who courageously defended the right to life of the unborn child before the referendum to continue to do so as a matter of principle.’

The full statement following the Summer General Meeting of the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference can be found on www.catholicbishops.ie.

Habitat for Humanity Builds Shacks in Belfast

Habitat for Humanity Northern Ireland built temporary shacks across Belfast City Centre at the weekend (Saturday 9 June), to launch the Build Solid Ground campaign.

Habitat volunteers visited well known sites to build temporary shacks similar to those found in slums across the world.

Approximately 1.6 billion people live in slums and by 2030 this is expected to increase to 2 billion. The campaign aims



Habitat for Humanity Northern Ireland temporary shack at Belfast Cathedral

to highlight land and housing problems in both developed and developing countries and inspire authorities, governments and the public to find solutions.

Jenny Williams, Habitat NI Chief Executive, said, 'Access to land lies at the heart of ending poverty. Without land, there can be no housing and housing is the key to stability and opportunity.'

To support the Build Solid Ground campaign, sign the petition online at habitatni.co.uk/petition and tweet using [#BuildSolidGround](https://twitter.com/BuildSolidGround) or telephone Habitat for Humanity Northern Ireland on 028 92 635 635.

World Meeting of Families will debate child safeguarding and respect for LGBTQI+ people

The first-ever debate on child safeguarding in the 25-year history of the Catholic Church's World Meeting of Families will take place in Dublin in August, it has been learned.

The RDS debate, "Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults", will include [Marie Collins](#), who quit the Vatican's child protection commission last year in protest at the frustration of its work by [Vatican](#) officials.

The Dubliner, who was abused in the 1960s by a priest, will be joined by Cardinal Seán O'Malley, president of the Vatican's Commission for the Protection of Minors.

Meanwhile, the liberal American Jesuit Fr [James Martin](#) will speak on the need for the church to show respect for LGBTQI+ people and their families.

His 2017 book, Building a Bridge (between the [Catholic Church](#) and members of the LGBTQI+ community) attracted widespread praise at senior levels in the church.

There can be no doubt that Fr Martin's inclusion is a response to anger at the removal of same-sex images from preparatory booklets for the World Meeting of Families (WMoF2018) and the editing of a video dealing with same earlier this year.

Speakers will include 13 cardinals, George Mitchell, Mickey Harte and Anna May McHugh.

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Good year for BB in Tralee

The Parents' Evening marked the end of another action-packed session for the 1st Tralee BB Company as the Boys and Girls demonstrated

their marching skills, physical activities and games to their families and friends.



The Captain, Mrs. Collette Price thanked all the Leaders for their time and commitment – Mrs. Dawn Darcy, Messrs. Danny & Rory Giles, Mr. Gerhardt Maritz and Mr. David Tough. As both Dawn and Gerhardt are leaving this year as Leaders an appeal was made for new Leaders to continue the good work of the Company.

Rev. Jim Stephens also thanked the Leaders in particular the Captain who puts so much work into the varied programme each week.

During the year, Rev. Jim enrolled the Company at St. John's Church, Tralee and the Boys and Girls produced a "Fruit and Vegetable People Display" for the Harvest Thanksgiving Service.

A varied programme of Physical, Spiritual, Community, Interest and Adventure activities was carried out during the

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year including Cooking, Easter Arts & Crafts, St. Patricks' Day Parade, Car Wash fundraising for Parish Youth Club, Sunday Club and Parochial School, a Family Hike and barbeque with visits to the Pantomime and Fenit Lifeboat Station.

At the Parents Evening, all the members received various badges. Congratulations to Iona, Emmet and Graham on Best Attendance Award, Sarah Lynn, Kayla and Lee on their Friendship Badges and to Rourke for Overall Friendship Award. Congratulation also to Billy on receiving the Captain's Prize and to Isaac who received the Anchor Boy William Fitzell Cup, and Rohan who received the Junior Section Pam Cooke Trophy.

Belfast Cathedral celebration of Midwives Act in Ireland

Midwives from across Northern Ireland attended a special Choral Evensong in Belfast Cathedral on Friday June 8 celebrating 100 years of the Midwives Act in Ireland.

Around 150 serving and retired midwives, family, friends and others connected to midwifery, attended this very happy service.

Organised by the Royal College of Midwives, this service was one of a number of events celebrating this milestone in the history of midwifery and giving thanks for midwives everywhere.



The address was given by the Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev Stephen Forde, and Gill Walton, Chief Executive of the Royal College of Midwives, read a lesson.

There was music from the Choir of Belfast Cathedral. During the service a candle was lit in memory of all Irish midwives who have died. Intercessions were led by serving and former midwives.

Those attending the service enjoyed the opportunity to browse an exhibition of memorabilia of midwifery in Ireland over the years.

Belfast Cathedral parishioner Hazel McCalister, a midwife of 40 years, was one of the organisers of the Midwives 100 service. She said that midwife means 'with women.' "I love

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the privilege of being present for new life. It is such a privileged job,” she said.

News briefs

+++Church leaders endorse Season of Creation in rare ecumenical joint letter

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby has joined leaders of other Christian churches in [a joint letter](#) encouraging participation in the Season of Creation. The annual celebration of prayer and action to protect the environment emerged from a proclamation by the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I in 1989. He called on Orthodox Christians to observe Sept. 1 each year as a day of prayer for creation. Many churches across the world from different traditions began celebrating a Season of Creation between that date and 4 October 4 – the feast of St Francis of Assisi. Read the [entire article here](#).

+++Irish Methodist Conference

Conference has appointed Rev Dr Tom McKnight as Secretary of Conference for the Connexional year 2018-2019.

+++Independence Day recital at St Patrick's

Time to book your seats for St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, ever popular Independence Day recital (July 4 at 6.15pm) which this year is in aid of Clowns without Borders (a group of professional circus performers who bring smiles and laughter to children and their communities who are in crisis

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both in Ireland and across the globe.) So go online and get your seats booked for free

https://stpatrickscathedral.digitickets.co.uk/event-tickets/13300?branches.branchID=1045&_ga=2.182751398.1234785102.1528927478-126924114.1505854435

+++Mission to Seafarers' annual Tea at Sea

The Mission to Seafarers' annual Tea at Sea event takes place at the Flying Angel Centre, Princes Dock Street, near the main gate to Belfast Port, on Friday June 29. Afternoon tea, including scones, jam, cream, sandwiches and tray bakes will be served on 2.30pm – 4.30pm, and all funds raised will support the essential work carried out by Mission to Seafarers, Belfast, with seafarers from all over the world. Group bookings are welcome, call Doreen on 9075 1131 or email her on doreen@missiontoseafarers-ni.org. (Cost £6pp). So get those sea-legs ready and enjoy a cup of tea in aid of this vital mission.

+++Annual Derry Fan the Flame Mass

The Annual Fan the Flame Mass for all the children who have received the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Diocese of Derry during the past year was celebrated in Celtic Park GAA Ground on Thursday June 7. The Mass also marks the end of the primary education of these young people, an important milestone in their lives. Around 2700 young people from Derry City, Counties. Donegal, Derry and Tyrone attended, many wearing T-Shirts they had designed, reflecting the gift of the Holy Spirit in their lives and the upcoming celebration of the World Meeting of Families in Dublin in August. The main celebrant was Most Rev Donal McKeown, Bishop of Derry. In his homily Bishop McKeown told the young people that the gift of the Sacrament of

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Confirmation tell us a story about who we are, each one made in the image and likeness of God.

+++Help from Employability Project Team

From EBM - the East Belfast Mission - Having trouble looking for work? Call our Employability Project Team, we can help with CVs, interview skills, support with after interview feedback... give us a call on 02890458560



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