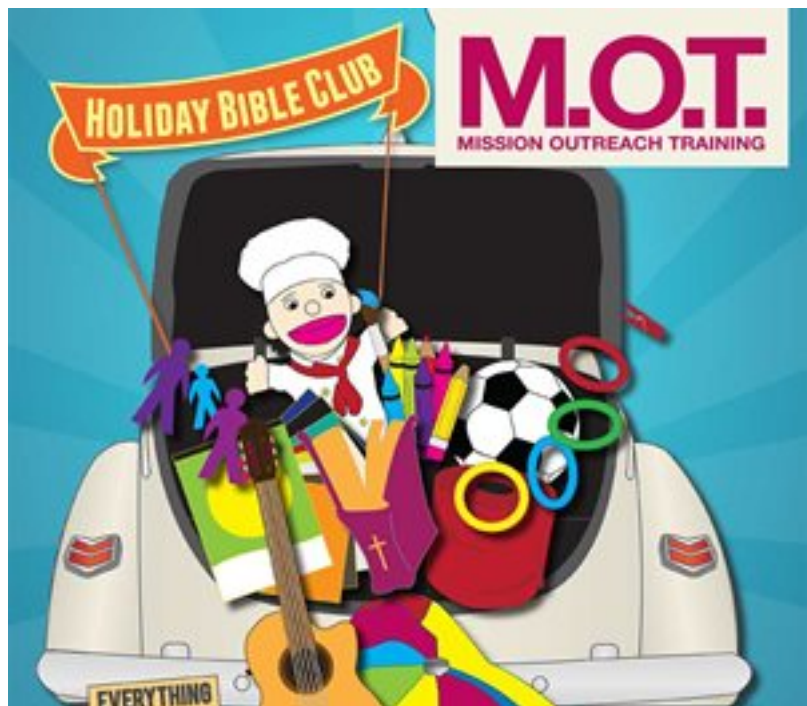




The essential daily brief on the Irish churches

Presbyterians in training to be a people of service and outreach this summer

The Board's Youth Development Officer Graeme Thompson said, "MOT aims to give everything our leaders and helpers need to reach out to children and young people over the summer months."



On offer is a range of seminars and workshops to assist every volunteer, whether they've been faithfully helping for years or serving for the first time.

"Some of the training delegates are only 15 and 16 years old and we are delighted to have them onboard and hopefully they will be motivated by the teaching at the conference. The Bible teaches that when we are called, we are also equipped and we see the MOT as an important means to equip our members and help them be effective in their service."

Rev. John Woodside, minister of Drogheda Presbyterian Church will be the guest speaker reflecting on his experience with both mission projects at home and abroad.

Seminars will look at effective communication with children, encouraging spiritual health in mission teams, connecting holiday Bible clubs into the

congregations and putting the gospel in context, ensuring the audience understands the message.

Interactive and practical workshops will focus on relationship building with young people, effective visual presentation and inspiration for craft ideas as well as child protection guidelines.

The day will conclude with a service of commissioning at 4pm for anyone involved in outreach to children and young people this summer, including the YAC Summer Teams, worship and tech camps and the overseas team to Romania.

The Moderator, Dr. Michael Barry, will preach during the service. "As I said at the opening ceremony at the General Assembly, we live in a society of 'me first' mentality so it is a blessing to have 200 people, of all ages, willing to give up of their time and talents to serve God over the summer.

"With our current theme, 'A people of service and outreach', it is fantastic to see our young people participate so enthusiastically and lead by example. I will be encouraging the delegates to serve in the strength of the Lord and be guided by the heart that Jesus had for His people."

Sun shines and spirits high as Novena begins

The sunshine brought re-cord numbers of worshippers to the first day of the annual Novena at Clonard on Wednesday.

Irish News - Carrying parasols and armed with bottles of sun cream, many visitors opted to sit outside, in the grounds of the west Belfast church to enjoy the sessions as the summer sunshine embraced the first day of the popular nine-day event.

The Clonard area had been decorated in the familiar yellow and white novena bunting to welcome the up to 15,000 people expected at yesterday's 10 sessions, which began at 6.45am and ended at 11p.

The Redemptorist community said the early morning session had been attended by "the biggest" crowd ever witnessed.

While the inside of Clonard church was packed for each of the sessions, many visitors decided to sit in the cool surroundings of the church corridors while others sat in the gardens and in a marquee where a large screen

showing the sessions had been set up. Held in honour of Our Mother of Perpetual Succour, around 300 volunteers will work alongside the Redemptorists during the nine-day event, which consists of special prayers and services.

Fr Michael Murtagh, Rector of Clonard, said the first day of the event had been "wonderful".

"It has been a great beginning," he said.

"The weather is fantastic. The crowds are amazing. People's faith again is pouring forth and having this effect on others."

Fr Murtagh said people were drawn to the event because of its "mystery".

"People get something from it," he said.

"People come back to it to thank for favours received as it becomes a custom to do it. People come because they are in need with their own present-day situation and crisis when they are seeking some comfort.

"It is a festival of faith. It's a time we celebrate our faith. If we are not going to do it when the sun is shining and the spirits are good, there's no other time to do it, it's the best time to do it."

TimeTable

This year's Novena includes three sessions for the anointing of the sick on Saturday, June 21 and a session for the Blessing of Babies and small children and expectant mothers on Sunday, June 22.

The Clonard solemn Novena can also be watched live on: www.clonard.com
Daily sessions will take place Monday to Friday at 6.45am, 8.15am, 9.30am, 11am, 2pm, 3.30pm, 6.15pm, 8pm, 9.30pm and 11pm. Sessions on Saturday and Sunday will take place at 6.45am, 8.15am, 9.30am, 11am, 12.30pm, 2pm, 3.30pm, 5pm, 6.30pm and 8pm.

Community Relations Council Awards for Exceptional Achievement

Decades of tireless work to deal with issues like interface trouble, Loyalist feuds, and the breakdown of the IRA ceasefire have been recognised with a prestigious award from the Community Relations Council (CRC).

Chris O'Halloran and Mary Montague, who have for years worked behind-the-scenes to manage some of the most difficult issues emerging from the conflict, have been presented with the Community Relations Award for Exceptional Achievement.



Mary Montague has been involved in peace building since 1975, including working with ex-prisoners, victims groups, and families from all sides of the community in Northern Ireland who have directly suffered due to the violence. She co-founded and is currently operations director of TIDES Training, which provides community relations and conflict management training programmes.

Mary has been closely involved in supporting the development of relationships across interfaces in East and North Belfast, including at Tigers Bay / Parkside. In earlier times, she worked tirelessly during the breakdown of the IRA ceasefire to counteract the impact on communities, and was closely involved in supporting families during the Shankill feud.

Chris O'Halloran has been involved in community relations work for more than 20 years. As Director of Belfast Interface Project (BIP), he facilitated engagement across the divide, present often at the interfaces at night to help prevent trouble and ensure the safety of residents.

Over many years, Chris has constructed an archive of everything written about and relevant to interfaces in Northern Ireland, and he wrote the first ever module on interfaces and division for the University of Ulster. In 2004 he developed BIP's 'Strategy for the Interface', launched and adopted by Belfast City Council.

CRC Chief Executive Jacqueline Irwin says: “Chris and Mary have each made a very significant contribution to community relations work during some of the most tense periods in our conflict. In highly stressful, difficult, and violent situations their wisdom, skill and bravery, enabled real progress to be made. They have been instrumental in easing tensions and in creating situations where dialogue was possible and people felt able to move forward. Both have worked to pass skills in conflict resolution to the next generation to ensure that in the future we find better ways to resolve our differences. All of this has been done quietly, with dedication, and out of the spotlight. The Community Relations Council is delighted to shine a light on Mary and Chris’s achievements.”

The Community Relations Award for Exceptional Achievement has been presented annually since 2006 by the Community Relations Council as a mark of recognition.

This year’s award was presented as part of Community Relations Week, which features some 200 events this week under the theme ‘Building a United Community’.



Pictured(left to right) are conference speakers Eileen Gallagher ISE and Dr Johnston McMaster, with Dungannon Area Churches Forum members (front) Mary Trainor, Isobel Holmes, Josie Mason, (back) Don Attridge and Joan Armstrong. Report follows.

It was presented following the annual David Stevens Memorial Lecture at the Stormont Hotel. The lecture 'Religion and Politics in a Changing Northern Ireland' was delivered by John Brewer, Professor of Post Conflict Studies at Queen's University.

Further information about Community Relations Week is available at:
www.nicrc.org.uk

Dungannon church group at 'Lest we Remember' event

The Irish School of Ecumenics (ISE) hosted a conference in Community Relations Week on the theme 'Lest We Remember: Ethics, Memory and the Great War with Dr Johnston McMaster as keynote speaker.

Mid- Ulster Mail - The Connect conference also examined the implications and impacts of the new council structures for church organisations.

Taking part were representatives of church fora and interchurch groups from across Northern Ireland.

The Connect conference is among over 200 events in Community Relations Week, organised by the Community Relations Council on the theme 'Building a United Community'.

Glencraig Parish welcomes its new rector

The parishioners of Glencraig in the Diocese of Down, have welcomed Revd Simon Richardson as their new rector. Bishop Harold Miller instituted Simon whilst Revd Graham Spence, a friend and former parishioner of Hillsborough Parish, gave the address at the service on 18 June.



Simon Richardson was born in Bedford, and expected to live his whole life in England; but while studying theology in Durham, he met Moyra Gray,

daughter of the late Revd Henry Gray, a Presbyterian minister from Belfast, and they have been married for sixteen years, with two children, Erin (13) and Patrick (11).

Although not from a Christian background, Simon has always had an awareness of and relationship with God, and became a Christian when he was 21. Having worked as a nurse, and in hospitality and in an office environment, he trained for the ministry at Wycliffe Hall in Oxford, and has also studied theology in Canterbury and Belfast. Having served a curacy in Kent, he was (to his surprise) invited to be curate in Hillsborough, later becoming Rector. He went to be curate in Holywood to facilitate post-graduate study focussing on the Temple of Zion, and is embarking on a PhD studying Carl Jung's theory of archetypes and the collective unconscious, and how this could promote communication of the Christian faith to the unchurched in the 21st century.

Simon is genuinely thrilled to be the new Vicar of Glenraig. "I am looking forward to engaging with traditional Anglican life and worship in Glenraig Parish Church, but also to connecting with those living in Craigavad and beyond who do not yet know the Lord Jesus, helping the parish to express His love for them, and enabling different opportunities to experience the call to conversion that God extends to those he is calling."

Poverty Sunday – dealing with deprivation on the doorstep

Churches are being urged to renew efforts to tackle deprivation this Poverty Sunday (June 22).

The C of E's Church Urban Fund has released a resource which reveals the levels of poverty in every parish.

Statistics showing the number of adults with no qualifications, poverty among working age adults and child poverty can each be found for every parish, and as an average for each diocese.

The Bishop of Manchester, David Walker is calling for prayer and a pledge to act in support of the Poverty Sunday campaign being run by CUF.

Through a nationwide network of joint ventures with dioceses CUF is offering fresh ways of both supporting churches in their practical activity in local communities and providing them with the tools they need to speak up and

speak out with real traction about what is happening locally.

The resources include the *Poverty Look Up Tool*, which provides information about a variety of poverty indicators for every parish throughout England. The tool is available online at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/poverty> and as a mobile app for iOS and Android devices.

The statistics show there are people struggling with poverty in areas of every diocese - often with parishes within miles of each other showing great disparity.

The Bishop of Manchester, Rt Rev David Walker, a trustee of CUF, said:

"The widespread effects of poverty can be felt in every parish in this country. For this reason, I'm urging the church to pray and pledge to act this Poverty Sunday.

"Whether it's struggling with benefits and having to rely on foodbanks, or coping with isolation and low self-esteem, the church has a vital role to play in addressing the needs of so many in our society."

The Rev Paul Hackwood, Executive Chairman of CUF, said:

"Poverty Sunday is an opportunity for the Church to reflect on one of its primary callings, to show compassion to the poorest in society.' All Christian people are called to take poverty seriously and we hope that these resources will equip the Church to effectively reach every community to tackle poverty."

The *Poverty Look Up Tool* is available online at the link below, and available on the app store for iOS, and Google Play for Android-equipped devices:
www.cuf.org.uk/poverty

Church Urban Fund is about Christians tackling poverty together to transform the lives of the poorest and most marginalised in England. It was established in 1987.

Church Urban Fund works with over 300 community projects. These projects offer debt counseling, family support, children's after-school and breakfast clubs, parenting advice, addiction advice and residential treatment, mental health support, food banks, help with re-housing, advocacy, befriending and mentoring with young people, job clubs and skills training, community development and support for elderly or disabled people.

Further resources including prayers and sermon outlines will also be available on the Church Urban Fund website, at:

www.cuf.org.uk/

Martyrs and youth the focus of Pope's visit to South Korea



The Pope will beatify 124 Korean martyrs and attend a festival for young Asian Catholics

during his four-day visit to South Korea later this year, the Vatican has announced.

Pope Francis will also meet President Park Guen-Hye and celebrate a Mass for peace and reconciliation in Seoul's Myeong-dong Cathedral.

The visit will take place from August 14-18 and is the Pope's first papal visit to Asia.

The last papal visit to the continent was in 1995, when St John Paul II gathered with millions of young Catholics for World Youth Day in Manila, the Philippines.

The beatification Mass for Paul Yun Ji-chung and 123 companions will take place in Seoul on August 16.

The Pope will also meet young people at a shrine in honour of St Andrew Kim Taegon, the first Catholic priest in Korea. He was canonised by St John Paul II along with 102 fellow martyrs on the former pope's 1984 visit to Seoul.

Around 2,000 young people from 30 countries are expected to gather for the sixth Asian Youth Day, a regional event similar to World Youth Day, which is being held in the diocese of Daejeon.

The Pope will celebrate Mass in Daejeon's World Cup Stadium and have lunch with young people on August 15. He will also celebrate the festival's closing Mass on August 17 at Haemi Castle, the site of the Donghak Peasant Revolution in 1894.

The visit will close with the Mass for peace and reconciliation. It is currently unclear whether North Korean Catholics will be invited to attend the Mass.

Highlights of Pope Francis' visit to Korea include:

Thursday, August 14

- 3.45pm: Welcome ceremony in the Blue House and private meeting with President Park Guen-Hye

Friday, August 15

- 10.30am: Mass for the Solemnity of the Assumption in Daejeon World Cup Stadium followed by lunch with young people
- 5.30pm: Meeting with young people at Solmoe shrine to St Andrew Kim Taegon

Saturday, August 16

- 8.55am: Visit to shrine of the Seo So Mun martyrs followed by Mass and beatification of Paul Yun Ji-chung and 123 companions in Seoul
- 4.30pm: Visit to the "House of Hope", a centre for people with disabilities in Kkottongnae

Sunday, August 17

- 11am: Meeting with Asian bishops at Haemi shrine
- 4.30pm: Closing Mass for Asian Youth Day at Haemi Castle

Monday, August 18

- 9.45am: Mass for peace and reconciliation in Myeong-dong Cathedral, Seoul, followed by farewell ceremony and departure.

"An unconventional Christian": the career of Jean Vanier of L'Arche

The Canadian philosopher Jean Vanier, founder of [L'Arche community](#), has lived and worked with people with intellectual disabilities for almost 50 years, influencing thousands of people of faith, including the late Henri Nouwen. In [this interview with the UC Observer](#), he talks about his work:

Q You've lived alongside people with intellectual disabilities for nearly 50 years now. What have they taught you about God?

A There is a mystery behind people with disabilities. I find that in many ways, they are a presence of Jesus. We see their fragility, their pain — and yet at the same time, we can say that they speak of God. As we enter into relationship with them, they change us.

I spent a year living in community with a man named Andrew. One day, he went to see a cardiologist. When he came back, I asked him what had happened. He said, "The doctor looked into my heart." I said, "Well, what did he see in your heart?" Andrew said, "He saw Jesus, of course." Then I said to him, "What does Jesus do in your heart?" And Andrew said, "Jesus rests there." In French, the phrase is "Il se repose" — the sense is "He takes his quietness there."

and

Q Someone once described you as an unconventional Christian. What do you think they meant by that?

A I don't know. What is conventional and what is unconventional? What I can say is that there's something happening here in L'Arche that hasn't yet been fully understood in the church. See, St. Paul says that God has chosen what is weak and foolish to confound the intellectuals and the powerful. He wasn't speaking about the intellectuals and powerful outside the church: he was speaking about the intellectuals and powerful inside the church.

The church frequently intellectualizes faith. But to love is to let the other rest in your heart, as Andrew put it. How many people would say that? And yet it's right at the heart of the mystery of all the Gospels. The whole vision of Jesus is there: to live in us as we live in him.

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