

Mothers' Union use 16-Days to Break the Silence, Lift the Shame, and Shift the Blame



The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby is urging Christians to “stand up and speak out for justice and dignity for all” in support of a Mothers’ Union campaign against gender-based violence.

The Mothers' Union (MU), a cutting-edge global Anglican mission agency, is taking part in the annual international 16-Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, which runs from International women's Day on 25 November and runs through to Human Rights Day on 10 December. As part of it, the MU is asking people all over the world to take part in a symbolic "Global Moment" on 26 November.

"One of the most important things that churches and communities of faith can do is to stand up and speak out for justice and dignity for all," Archbishop Justin said in support of the campaign. "Gender-based violence has blighted societies from the earliest times, and continues to be one of the greatest injustices in the world today.

"No society is immune to it, and all too often, women and girls, against whom acts of violence or abuse have been committed, are unable to speak out because of stigma placed on them.

"Mothers' Union has one of the widest and most effective reaches across communities, seeking to share the Gospel of reconciliation and transform the world in which we live. Together in the power of the Spirit, we can break the power of silence."

This year's campaign focuses on combatting the stigma surrounding gender-based violence (GBV) by breaking the power of silence, lifting the shame placed on survivors and shifting the blame for the abuse from victim to perpetrator.

“Stigma around GBV can take many forms and be multifaceted,” the MU said in a statement. “In some areas, women who have been raped as part of violent conflict or war are shunned by their families and husbands. Some women and girls who have been victims of human trafficking, particularly for sexual exploitation, are then rejected by their families and communities and not allowed to return home, even if they do manage to escape their captors.”

The MU is asking people to take part in a symbolic Global Moment at any time of the day on 26 November – or at any point during the 16-days. The symbolic act calls people to link hands with one another to represent unity in ending GBV; reach out hands to represent connection with those around the world affected by, or campaigning against GBV; before lifting hands up as a sign of prayer for an end to GBV.

“The 16 Days Against Gender-Based Violence campaign is one our most important campaigns of the year,” the MU's chief executive Bev Jullien

said. “Violence against women and girls does not respect borders. Members in all of our 83 countries around the world engage in various ways from marching on the streets, to holding prayer vigils, donating to women’s refuges or writing to politicians calling for them to take action to combat GBV.”

The statistics on gender-based violence are staggering: at least one in three women globally will experience some form of gender based violence at some point in her lifetime. Globally, women between the ages of 15-44 are more likely to be maimed or die as a result of male violence than through cancer, malaria, traffic accidents or war combined. In England and Wales seven women a month are killed by a current or former partner.

To help generate further awareness, the Mothers’ Union asks those taking part in the Global Moment on 26 November to share details on social media, using the hashtags #letstalkaboutit, #mu16days, #endstigma, and #endgbv with the Mothers’ Union Twitter handle [@mothersunion](https://twitter.com/mothersunion).

- [Click here](#) for a range of Mothers’ Union resources related to the 16-Days.

Inter-church 'get together' for flood victims in Eglinton, Derry

Around 200 people affected by August's flooding in Eglinton gathered in Faughanvale Presbyterian Church Hall on Monday evening for a communal 'get together' organised by the three main local Christian churches. It was arranged, they said, to let the flood victims know that they hadn't been forgotten in the three months that had passed since the downpour.

Volunteers from the Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and Church of Ireland churches prepared a meal for scores of families – many of whom are still displaced as a result of August's deluge. There was a huge range of ages represented in the hall, from babes in arms right up to a lady of 99 who has had to provide temporary accommodation for her son and daughter-in-law.

Entertainment was laid on for all age groups; the children each received a selection box and afterwards each family was presented with a food hamper. Among those performing on-stage were Faughanvale Deacon, Rev Stuart Reid, and local man, Peter McKeever, whose brother is among those rendered temporarily homeless.

Peter has produced a CD of music which is now

on sale throughout the village; all proceeds are going to the Eglinton Flood Appeal.

The Rector of Faughanvale, Rev Paul Hoey, said there was a great deal of help available to the local community in the immediate aftermath of the flooding. Since then, however, they had experienced “a difficult period”, during which things “tailed off” as people waited for their houses to dry out.

“We wanted to let people know that they haven’t been forgotten,” the Rector said. “We wanted them to know that we are here to try and support them. People are dispersed to all parts of the county and beyond, in temporary accommodation, and therefore are not seeing their next-door neighbours or other people in similar situations. So, we just thought, get everybody together, share their stories, [let them] see maybe that things are not as bad as they had imagined – there are other people in similar situations or even worse – and let them know that we are here for them.”

Welcoming the community to his Church Hall, the Minister of Faughanvale Presbyterian Church, Rev Lindsay Blair, told them: “After all that you have been through in recent weeks – the trauma and the struggling – we felt it would

be good to have an opportunity to bring you all together here. On behalf of the local churches we want you to enjoy this evening.” Rev Blair then led those present in a prayer of thanksgiving.

The Parish Priest of Faughanvale, Fr Noel McDermott, thanked those who prepared and served the “incredible” food that was dished up, and thanked Rev Blair for making his hall available.

“One of the tragedies of the flood,” Fr McDermott said, “was that many in the community were dispersed. But, out of this tragedy has also come – not a new sense of community, because there’s always been a sense of community between the churches in this district – but I think it has been renewed by this tragedy and it has reminded us of the importance of community, and of keeping together and working together and helping each other – especially in times of difficulty. So, we thank God for that lovely, renewed sense of community”.

Monday evening’s event allowed long-time neighbours to renew acquaintances, among them Sylvia Thompson and Gillian Lamrock. Sylvia was out of her home for a week and a

half; Gillian, her husband and young son are still out of theirs. They hope to move back in early December. “Our whole ground floor was flooded,” she said. “It just came in. There was nothing we could do. We had no sandbags that night. We got the silicon gun out – battens off the fence – tried our best, but once it started to come in there was no stopping it. We just moved as much stuff upstairs as we could. The X-box went up first, I think, my granny’s Singer Sewing Machine went up after that. We’ve been out of the house since the next day.

“It still ‘hasn’t happened’. It’s not real,” Gillian said. “It is still very surreal. But the kitchen’s going in today. We’ve a kitchen, we’ve a bathroom. If we can get a cooker delivered and a fridge delivered we can work around that.” Both Gillian and Sylvia were full of praise for the churches for organising Monday’s get-together. “I wouldn’t know a whole lot of people in here,” Gillian said, “but to think that we’ve all got this in common...I spoke to a girl I’ve never met before who was sitting beside me, we shared stories and exchanged information and hints and tips to try and keep each other right, and provided a wee bit of comfort for each other.”

Pearl and Clifford Parkhill were at the get-together with Clifford’s mother, Matti, who is 99

years old. Pearl and Clifford were forced out of their home by the flooding and have been staying with Matti ever since. “I lost a lot of stuff,” Clifford said, “stuff I can never replace. It’s terrible. I’m pushing and pushing to get back into our house but there are so many people affected.” “As long as there was nobody injured,” Pearl interjected. “It’s only a house. There’s little in it now – nothing in it – but there are people worse off.”

St Canice’s Church was the place of worship worst-affected by the August flood. Repair work is still being carried out and Rev Hoey does not expect to be back in the church until after Easter. The Parish Hall, which was also severely damaged, will take even longer to put right. In addition, the Rector estimates that up to 20% of his congregation have been badly affected by the flooding. “We could sit here and look at ourselves and say, ‘Oh we need to raise money for our church’, but to give our congregation credit, they’ve recognised that supporting others in the community is our primary calling. That’s been our focus. Everything else is following on after that. We still obviously have things to think about but we’re pleased that people are responding well to what we’re offering as a Church.”

Presbyterian Moderator in solidarity visit to Egypt

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Rt. Rev. Dr. Noble McNeely has returned from Egypt having taken part in a weekend of events in Cairo (17-20 November), joining as an act of solidarity with Christians in their country's main celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

The celebration was one of the largest Christian events to take place in the Middle East in recent years and was organised by the Protestant Churches of Egypt, which represents 16 officially recognised reformed denominations in the country. Together with the Coptic Orthodox Church, the largest church in Egypt, and the Roman Catholic Church, they make up the Christian witness in Egypt.

Dr. McNeely's visit follows his predecessor's participation in the Reformed Church of Hungary's celebrations earlier in the year, when Dr. Frank Sellar attended events in Debrecen in eastern Hungary. In Ireland, upwards of 1,000 people attended PCI's three special celebrations last month that took place in Dublin, Londonderry and Belfast.

Speaking on his return from the Egyptian capital, Dr. McNeely said, “In the midst of the many invitations the Church received during this special anniversary year, it was felt that it was important to attend the Reformation events in Egypt.

“Together we share a rich heritage that comes directly out of the Reformation and Martin Luther’s momentous discovery that a person’s salvation was secured by simply believing in and trusting in Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. For many Christians of all denominations across the Middle East, the outworking of their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ has resulted in violence, death and general persecution on a scale that has not been witnessed in many years.

“It was therefore important for the Church to be represented in Cairo last weekend as we wanted to demonstrate our compassionate solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Christ, both in Egypt and across the Middle East in the face of ongoing persecution.

“The main celebration service was held in Kasr El-Dobara Evangelical Presbyterian Church in the capital. It was a moving service and one Irish Presbyterians would have felt at home in. The

visit was also a good opportunity to hear what the Egyptian church is doing and how mission remains at its heart, with new congregations being planted and people coming to Christ.”

During his visit Dr. McNeely, along with other members of the delegation, also met with political leaders and representatives of other churches, including the Coptic Church of Alexandria’s Patriarch, Tawadros II.

Earlier this year, following bomb attacks on Coptic Christians in the country, Dr. Sellar as Moderator was able to express his solidarity with the Patriarch at an event in Dublin.

Dublin organists’ success in Church Music Course

The latest graduates of the Archbishop’s Course in Church Music were presented with their certificates during Choral Evensong in Christ Church Cathedral on Sunday. The course, which supports parish organists, is run by Church Music Dublin.

Jonathan Stanley (Bray), Caroline Richards (Christ Church Cathedral), Thomas Maxwell (Taney), Margarita Vilkoviskaia (Mount Argus),

Christopher May (St Bartholomew's), Adam Behan (Three Patrons) and Emma Norse (Tullow Group of Parishes) have all received certificates.

Chairperson of Church Music Dublin, Archdeacon Ricky Rountree, told the congregation that the organization was formed in 1990 with the first students on the Archbishop's Course in Church Music starting in 1991. Since then 90 students have undertaken at least one year of the course and 45 students have completed all three years.

“The idea of the course is to encourage and maintain church music and many parishes, including my own, are indebted to the course,” he stated.

The presentation of certificates takes place each year on the Sunday closest to St Cecilia's Day, the patron saint of music.

Down director for film about Irish war hero priest Willie Doyle

A Co Down man has been chosen to direct a ground-breaking docudrama about the bravery of an Irish Jesuit priest who saved the lives of

members of the original Ulster Volunteer Force during the First World War.

Bravery under Fire documents the life of Fr Willie Doyle, an army chaplain who repeatedly went into no man's land to drag soldiers back to safety during the Great War.

The tale is directed by Newcastle man Campbell Miller who is filming on location in Passchendaele, Ireland and England.

In April 2018 for the first time the events of Fr Doyle's extraordinary life will be brought to the big screen and will include readings from his personal diaries, historical footage and re-enactments of his many brave actions.

Mr Miller said: "I accepted this project as I believe Fr Willie Doyle is a forgotten hero" While other soldiers have got the Victoria Cross for showing one act of bravery, Fr Doyle

performed miraculous acts of bravery each day he was on the front line.

"In this secular age there is a lot to be learned from his actions, his teachings and his respect for all others regardless of their creed."



Fr Doyle was born in Dalkey outside Dublin and was the youngest of seven children. He was ordained as a Jesuit priest in 1907 before serving in the Army chaplains' department of the British Army during the war.

He was killed in the Battle of Langemarck in Belgium in August 1917 when he was hit by a German mortar when trying to save injured soldiers from the 36th Ulster Division, which was made up of members of the original UVF.

There have been recent calls for Fr Doyle, who was ordained as a priest along with Fr John Sullivan, to also be made a saint.

The high budget docudrama, produced by EWTN Ireland, will also bring significant job opportunities when it goes into production in

Ireland next month. It will be shot in London and Belgium, with the majority of its First World War re-enactments taking place in Ireland on locations in Templepatrick and at Castlewellan Castle.

Aidan Gallagher, chief executive of EWTN Ireland, said: "We are absolutely delighted to be producing this movie. It will bring the story of Fr Doyle and his selfless heroism to a wider audience. It is a new opportunity for EWTN and I wish Campbell every success." The docudrama is due to be screened in Dublin and Belfast next year. Mr Campbell, who studied film at Ball State University in Indiana, has more than a decade of experience directing documentaries and short films. Report courtesy of Belfast Telegraph

Christian Aid calls for stricter tax avoidance rules after new poll

Humanitarian charity Christian Aid has urged the government to crack down on tax avoidance after a new poll found 89 per cent of British

adults say tax avoidance by large companies is morally wrong even if it's legal.

The findings of the ComRes study commissioned by Christian Aid have been

published ahead of the Budget on Wednesday, which is expected to include new measures against tax avoidance following further revelations made in the Paradise Papers.

The poll also found that more than four in five Britons agree that large companies in the UK can avoid tax too easily and that large companies should pay their fair share of tax in developing countries.

Simon Kirkland, Christian Aid UK parliamentary and political adviser, said: "Tax havens cost the UK economy billions of pounds in lost revenue each year.

"They also cost developing countries hundreds of billions of pounds that could instead be used to tackle poverty.

"But Government appears to have developed a tin ear to overwhelming public opinion. It appears to be complacent on the issue and has introduced measures that are often too little too late."

Christian Aid has called for immediate action from the Government. It suggested that Ministers insist that companies publish the taxes they pay in every country they are represented

in. It's a rule that the government had the authority to put into place in June 2016, "but have done very little to make it a reality".

Kirland added: "Given the scale of tax avoidance linked with the UK's tax havens, the Prime Minister should set a deadline for the UK's Overseas Territories to adopt the same transparency on true company ownership as the UK. We also want to see the UK committing to further leadership at the global level to ensure stronger global coordination and action to ensure that the poorest, most vulnerable, countries do not continue to be hit the hardest by tax avoidance."

Archbishop Justin Welby on Russia visit



The Archbishop of Canterbury has embarked on a three-day visit to Russia, a stay described by Lambeth Palace as "pastoral, ecumenical and political".

Most Rev Justin Welby will attend a formal meeting today, Tuesday, with Russian Orthodox Church leader His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

The gathering follows the attendance of Patriarch Kirill to a private reception at

Archbishop Justin's official residence in October 2016.

He will also visit the multi-national English-speaking congregation at the 19th century Anglican Church of St Andrew in Moscow.

St Andrew's recently welcomed a new chaplain, Rev Malcolm Rogers, whom Archbishop Justin will introduce to Patriarch Kirill the Archbishop's representative - or Apokrisiarios - to the Russian Orthodox Church.

During the visit, the Archbishop will also meet senior Russian political figures and give an address at the residence of the British

Ambassador to the Russian Federation, Dr
Laurie Bristow CMG.

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