



Latest 'how to' book to help get churches noticed launched

Dublin and Glendalough Advent appeal for Gaza hospital

Dublin and Glendalough's 'Prepare a Place' Advent Appeal for Gaza has been formally launched. The dioceses will focus on raising €150,000 for the Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza City throughout Advent. The funds will buy solar panels to ensure a constant electricity supply for the hospital and go towards improving on-call facilities for staff.



Linda Chambers, director of the United Society in Ireland; Archbishop Michael Jackson, Mr Maher Shuhaibar from Gaza; Alan Martin, Chair of Friends of Sabeel in Ireland; the Revd Ken Rue, chair of the Dublin and Glendalough Council for Mission; and Lydia Monds, education advisor with Bishops' Appeal.

Dublin and Glendalough is inviting everyone, whether members of the dioceses or not, to 'Prepare a Place' at their Christmas table for a welcomed yet invisible guest. They can donate the cost of the meal and a gift for a loved one to the appeal. Parishes, schools, hospitals and organisations can get involved by holding an event or by donating the proceeds of their carol service collection to the appeal. All creative thinking will be appreciated.

Launching the appeal yesterday (25 November), Archbishop Michael Jackson said that 'Prepare a Place' was responding to a deep human need. He asked people, as they prepared ahead of Advent to put a particular focus on Al Ahli Hospital.

"All of us will be well aware of the events that unfolded in Gaza and the impact they have had on the people living there. We are asking everyone to focus on a simple image: the Christmas table. We all try to make Christmas special for those we love. We're asking people to bear in mind someone from Gaza also. Our target is €150,000 which is not all that much when we consider the phenomenal outlay that occurs in the run up to Christmas," the Archbishop stated.

The Revd Ken Rue, Chairman of the Dublin and Glendalough Council for Mission, said that 'Prepare a Place' was a non-political humanitarian appeal. It formed the first step in building a link with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem which covers Jordan, Palestine, Israel, Syria, and Lebanon.

The appeal is being coordinated by the Council for Mission in partnership with the United Society, Bishops' Appeal and the Friends of Sabeel. United Society's Irish Director, Linda Chambers, visited Gaza and the Diocese of Jerusalem earlier this month.

She spoke of her visit to Al Ahli Hospital which provides services to the whole community. It is the only Christian hospital in Gaza and is owned and controlled by the Diocese of Jerusalem. Staff, both Christian and Muslim, work with great ease together. Linda told stories of the people she met in the hospital and described the services provided. The hospital aims to meet the needs of the community so psychosocial services are provided for children and the hospital has a mammography programme to help with the detection of breast cancer which is the single highest cause of death in Gaza. There is also a special burns unit.

Electricity restrictions in Gaza mean that the hospital has electric power for a maximum of 10 hours each day. In a video message, Al Ahli's Director, Suheila Tarazi, said the hospital operates with power from generators the rest of the time but this is expensive with fuel costing \$4 a litre. "The solar panel project will help immensely and save money on generator fuel," she explained. During the 51 days of conflict, hospital staff lived in Al Ahli using staff facilities which have not been refurbished for 20 years. Suheila said that it was important to look after the wellbeing of staff also. "We thank the

dioceses in Ireland. Through their partnership, Al Ahli Hospital will continue its mission of love, partnership and peace,” she said in her message.

Archbishop Jackson has written a prayer for the appeal which he hopes will be used throughout the dioceses. The prayer is available to download from the Resources section of the Dublin and Glenalough website at: <http://dublin.anglican.org/resources/index.php>.

Archbishop Eamon Martin launches novel online Advent Calendar

Archbishop Eamon Martin has launched a specially commissioned 2014 Advent calendar on the homepage of the Irish Catholic bishops’ website www.catholicbishops.ie to coincide with the beginning of Advent on Sunday 30 November.

Archbishop Eamon said, “I am delighted to launch this year’s Advent calendar which each day will reveal Advent information and prayer resources by clicking on a virtual numerical door in our online calendar. For many years we have provided online resources to assist with our Advent preparations, and this year we once again offer the faithful our novel online calendar for this purpose.

“The season of Advent is a time of spiritual preparation for the Lord’s coming at Christmas. Advent also prepares us for the second coming of Christ at the end of time. As Christians, we must always be prepared for the coming of the Lord ‘You must stand ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect’ [Mt 24:37-44]. Why is the Advent calendar useful? Preparation does not happen at once but over time. Each day of Advent amounts to a period of time which allows us to journey and reflect on ‘the joy of the Gospel’.

Archbishop Eamon continued, “As we begin our Catholic new year, I invite everyone during the Advent season to visit and to enjoy the information provided on our online calendar”.

A new feature on this year’s Advent Calendar will be an audio ‘Thought for Today’ which will be voiced by a different contributor each of the days of Advent and will reflect themes of the Advent season. Contributors include Bishop Denis Nulty, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin; Bishop Kevin Doran, Bishop of Elphin; Father Michael Drumm, Chair of the Catholic Schools Partnership, as well as seasonal reflections by staff from the councils,

agencies and offices of the Bishops' Conference for example ACCORD and Trócaire and by individual students from Catholic primary and secondary schools. These audio recordings will be available on the pages of the Advent Calendar on catholicbishops.ie as well as on <http://audioboom.com/IrishCatholicBishops>.



Wife of Ulster vicar standing by her man despite his adulterous affair

Belfast Telegraph - This is the former Church of England vicar from Northern Ireland who "betrayed his church" by having an adulterous affair - and the wife he cheated on.

Stephen Vincent had sex with a female parishioner just over a month after being ordained in 2012 and has been banned from working as a cleric for eight years.

The couple and their three young children will quit their Church-provided, rent-free home by the new year after he lost his position.

Mr Vincent (40) and his wife Erin (30) - who are originally from Bangor, Co Down - have been caught up in a lurid episode that shocked their parish and nearly ended their marriage.

However, Mrs Vincent has said she will stand by her husband as "everyone deserves a second chance".

Mr Vincent admitted at a Church disciplinary hearing after a complaint of sexual misconduct was lodged against him to having a brief physical relationship with a woman he was supposed to be mentoring.

Before he was removed as assistant curate from St Giles Parish, Newcastle-under-Lyme, the disciplinary tribunal revealed in its ruling that the female parishioner, only known as X, had attended Mr Vincent's ordination service on June 23, 2012.

Catholic management welcomes continuation of minor works grant for primary schools in Republic

The Catholic Primary School Management Association (CPSMA) has today welcomed the announcement by Ms Jan O'Sullivan TD, Minister for

Education & Skills, that the recently restored Minor Works grant will continue for the current academic school year. Improvements to school buildings and grounds (replacement of windows, roof repairs, re-surfacing of school yard, plumbing and heating, re-painting and re-decorating, improving insulation standards, replacing furniture and PE equipment, purchasing and maintaining IT equipment) are ongoing challenges, and specific funding for the upkeep of school buildings and equipment is essential for the quality of life of schools.

Welcoming the announcement Father Tom Deenihan, general secretary of the CPSMA, said, “The reinstatement of the Minor Works grant will provide schools with an opportunity to address outstanding maintenance issues – issues which have been financially prohibitive in the absence of this critical funding. Many Catholic primary schools – similar to schools under other patrons – operate in sub-standard conditions which are neither conducive to teaching and learning, or to health and safety. The reality is that many parishes have had to subvent necessary local works from Sunday Mass collections. Our schools and faith communities will especially welcome Minister O’Sullivan’s announcement.

“From an operational perspective, today’s news will come as a relief to boards of management of primary schools who must meet the demands of ongoing maintenance of their school buildings. However, schools are facing further financial difficulties as the first part of the capitation grant for the school year, 2014-2015, will not be paid until January 2015. This means that many schools currently have no money and so require their local parish and bishop, as patron, to guarantee loans from financial institutions to keep schools operational. This is causing stress to the system.

“The CPSMA, along with many other parties, has campaigned for the maintenance of this grant in its *Pre-budget 2015 Submission*, and the CPSMA is delighted with the announcement and the favourable response from Minister O’Sullivan, and her officials, who have engaged fully in a spirit of partnership with management, despite the financial restraints that they operate under. It is our hope that this grant will now remain for future years” Father Deenihan said.

Canon Andrew White ordered home with \$57m bounty on his head

“It’s the end for Iraqi Christians,” writes Josh Glancy in [*The Sunday Times*](#), as he recounts the appalling horrors, heartbreaks and sheer despair of Iraq’s



Christians, many thousands of whom are homeless, destitute and traumatised, and many hundreds of whom have had their hands held and tears wiped away by Canon Andrew White, the acclaimed 'Vicar of Baghdad', who, sadly, ministers in Baghdad no longer.

He has been ordered home by the Archbishop of Canterbury. When there's a \$57m (£36m) bounty on your head (quite literally), it becomes a little too dangerous to expound the scriptures every Sunday if the demonic hordes know exactly which pulpit you'll be preaching from, at what time, and approximately for how long. With assets of £5.2bn, a few million quid wouldn't be much missed from church coffers.

But the [Government intends](#) to shed light on the grey areas and close all insurance

loopholes relating to the payment of ransoms, in order to cut a primary source of terrorist funding. So the Vicar of Baghdad is back in England, at least for the moment, for Health & Safety reasons.

He has no fear of ISIS personally, and has said so many times. He knows that at an appointed time he will go to be with the Lord in eternity, and that the jihadis can destroy nothing but his body, which is already ravaged and weary with Multiple Sclerosis. His witness throughout his own suffering has been manifest; his courage consistent; his sacrifice of love profound. His love of Jesus radiates like laser of light in a world of darkness and shadows. "I've been shot at and bombed and they've tried to blow me up," he says. "People say, 'Aren't you afraid where you are?' Never, not one day; I love it. I feel really sad that I'm not there now."

To leave the land to which God has called you to do His work must be bruising. To give up the mission He had you build is bewildering. To abandon the people you love – those with whom you eat, sleep, laugh and weep – must be a cause of deep pain, loss and distress. But the order came from his old friend, now boss, Justin Welby, and Canon White obeyed.

Archbishop Justin completes Anglican Communion tour with visit to Scotland

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, concluded a two-day visit to the Scottish Episcopal Church this week - bringing to a close his 37 visits to every Province of the Anglican Communion.

Archbishop Justin and his wife, Caroline, were hosted by the Most Rev David Chillingworth, Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld & Dunblane and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

The visit marked the last of the Archbishop's [visits to all his fellow Anglican primates](#) – the most senior of the bishops or archbishops in each autonomous Province of the Anglican Communion – during in his first 18 months in office.

Addressing the Church of England's General Synod last week, [the Archbishop said the Anglican Communion "exists and is flourishing"](#) despite its diversity of views and with many Anglicans living in places of conflict and persecution.

Yesterday Archbishop Justin visited a new Church Army project at St Luke's Church, Dundee, which he described as "inspirational".

"Here we see a community that clearly has real challenges but it has the capacity to face them which is inspirational," he said. "I think this is exactly what the church should be doing. This should be emulated around the country, both in Scotland the rest of the UK.

"I want us to be the kind of church that welcomes everyone.

"We want a world where it is not necessary for people to sleep rough in church doorways, where it is not necessary to have foodbanks or refugee camps, and there are enough resources for everyone."

Following a meeting with clergy from the Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld & Dunblane, the Archbishop joined the Episcopal congregations of Aberdour, Burntisland and Inverkeithing for worship in St Columba's Church, Aberdour. The Archbishop then met a wider group involved from the community at St Fillan's Churchhall, Aberdour.

On Monday the Archbishop met with Scotland's new First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon. He then met with representatives of other churches and faith groups in Scotland before meeting with the College of Bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church to discuss the Church's role in society and a range of matters within the worldwide Anglican Communion.

The Scotland visit was part of the Archbishop Justin Welby's [series of visits](#) during his first 18 months in office with primates across the worldwide Anglican Communion. The Communion has around 85 million members, spread across 38 Provinces in more than 165 countries. Each of these provinces is autonomous, with its own system of governance.

Methodist Church addresses mental health concerns among young people

The Methodist Church in England and Wales has launched a series of mental health [resources](#) after young Methodists raised concerns that not enough was being done by the Church to help young people struggling with mental health issues.



The series was launched at the [3Generate](#) Children and Youth Assembly at the weekend. Every young person at 3Generate received a copy of the card aimed at their age group: "Taking Care of your Feelings" for the under 12s, "Staying Mentally Healthy" for the 12 to 18 year olds and "Staying Mentally Healthy" for the 18 to 30 year olds. There is also a fourth pamphlet for youth workers called "Healthy Heads".

Gill Dascombe, Vice-President of the Methodist Church, said: "As a pharmacist working in the NHS psychiatric services, I am aware of the growing incidence of diagnosed mental health problems among children and young people. Many others struggle with educational or peer pressures in our increasingly competitive society. These helpful cards have been produced to alert and inform children, young people and youth workers of the dangers and early warning signs, and to signpost them to relevant mental health organisations."

Mental health is an issue of growing concern among children, young people and those who work with them. In response to concerns raised by 3Generate, the Methodist Children and Youth teamed up with [Young Minds](#) to provide the

series of four age-specific cards. The leaflets are available to purchase on the Methodist Publishing [website](#). The portable and pocket-sized cards are available in packs of ten and are priced £2.50 (plus p&p) per pack. Each card provides tips on how to stay mentally healthy and offers information on where to get help.

Latest 'how to' book to help get churches noticed launched

A new book offering help for churches to reach their congregations and communities – using everything from social media and mobile-friendly websites to more traditional publicity methods – has been launched today (Wednesday 26th November).

‘100 Ways To Get Your Church Noticed’ has been written by Neil Pugmire, communications adviser for Portsmouth’s Church of England diocese, and offers advice to churches on everything from creating a dynamic Facebook page to designing effective posters, and from putting together a must-read parish magazine to getting stories covered in the media.

The book is being launched by the Bishop of Portsmouth, the Rt Rev Christopher Foster, and Neil Pugmire, at St James’s Church, Emsworth, which is featured in the book.

The book is published by Church House Publishing, and includes extensive illustrations and photographs showing examples of good church publicity. Many of the examples are from Portsmouth’s Church of England diocese, but the book is designed to be used by churches of all denominations. The foreword is written by the Rt Rev Christopher Foster, Bishop of Portsmouth.

Neil said: “When I started giving advice to parishes about publicity, there was no up-to-date book on the market that I could point people to, which is why I thought of writing one in 2006. But since then, the ways we communicate with each other have transformed so much that we thought it was worth updating the entire book.

“Churches might want to think more carefully about the messages they are giving out. Does their publicity material include images of empty buildings or a vibrant congregation? Are they swamping their posters with text or communicating effectively using a single image? Are they using social media just to convey information or to have genuine conversations?

“Churches are full of fascinating people with interesting stories to tell about God working in their lives. We rarely tell those stories in parish magazines, on websites or via the media. But people like to read about other people’s lives, and it’s a great way of showing that our churches are dynamic places where lives can be changed.

"They also often rely on methods that might have worked before. It’s sometimes hard for them to appeal to a new audience who might never read a parish magazine, but would read the same story via Twitter or Facebook.”

The Anglican Bishop of Portsmouth, the Rt Rev Christopher Foster, said: “This new edition of Neil’s book brings us right up to date with the seemingly ever-growing opportunities for communicating the gospel. The book is brimming with practical pointers and insights that are shared with the simple aim of helping the Church communicate well.”

The book was originally published in 2006, but has been rewritten and expanded to include details of how churches can use social media, create mobile apps and put together websites that look good on mobiles and tablets. It also includes advice on making good use of church buildings and noticeboards, using text messages and email newsletters, taking good photographs and spreading a word-of-mouth reputation by helping out in the local community.

Alongside the book, an accompanying website – www.getyourchurchnoticed.com – features further ideas, plus the chance for churches to submit their own examples of good publicity.

Media Digest

Mail/Times/Guard/FT/BBC

Articles on a report that says overhauling the broken culture of high street banking will take a generation to achieve. The report, by the thinktank New City Agenda and Cass Business School, calculated that in the last 15 years the retail operations of banks had incurred £38.5m in fines and redress for mistreatment of customers. They state the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, who sits on the board of New City Agenda, said the fines imposed on banks this month for forex rigging showed "the length of the journey of culture change that still needs to be travelled".

<http://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/markets/article-2839913/Toxic-culture-Britain-s-banks-generation-fix-cost-staggering-38-5bn-fines-compensation-according-hard-hitting-report.html#ixzz3K9Q1viGk>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/business/industries/banking/article4278258.ece>

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/nov/26/banking-toxic-culture-generation-clean-up-thinktank>

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/01583a7c-74c7-11e4-a418-00144feabdc0.html?siteedition=intl#axzz3K9Rhi1hQ>
<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-30190753>

Tel

Report that the Bishop of Liverpool, Paul Bayes has said the fashion for e-cards and festive social media greetings is threatening the spirit of Christmas, as Facebook and Twitter messages replace traditional cards. The Bishop who is preparing for his first Christmas in the city has pledged to personally write all 600 cards he plans to send. The bishop, a supporter of the fair trade retail group [Traidcraft](#), is urging churchgoers to follow his example to prevent the depersonalisation of Christmas.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11253604/Twitter-and-Facebook-threaten-spirit-of-Christmas-warns-bishop.html>

Mail/Tel

Reports on how 11 schools have been censured by Ofsted inspectors after unannounced visits found that "pupils were not being well prepared for life in modern Britain". The Chief Inspector of Schools, Sir Michael Wilshaw, said inspectors had concerns over 17 schools, which included Catholic and Church of England schools, a Jewish school and several others with "no religious character", which were failing to teach students respect for faiths and communities other than their own.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-2848592/11-schools-rapped-snap-visits.html#ixzz3K9GCWxrW>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/11253436/Ofsted-rural-schools-failing-to-promote-British-values.html>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/education/article4277861.ece>

Times/FT/Ind/Huff Post

Reports that the Pope delivered a withering attack on the EU yesterday, telling the European parliament that the union was turning into an elderly, inhumane bureaucracy that harmed its own people and left migrants to die in the Mediterranean. In the first papal visit to Strasbourg since 1988, the Argentinian Pope told MEPs he wanted to convey a message of "hope and encouragement" to a continent brought low by sluggish growth and high unemployment.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article4278371.ece>

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/ec0503e0-749d-11e4-b30b-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3K9Rhi1hQ>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/pope-francis-calls-on-european-parliament-to-accept-migrants-we-cannot-allow-the-mediterranean-to-become-a-vast-cemetery-9881858.html>

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/11/25/pope-francis-european-parliament_n_6217178.html?utm_hp_ref=uk&ir=UK