
Vast Scientology complex to be opened in Dublin today amid mystery about what it will be used for



The Church of Scientology building in Los Angeles
The head of the Church of Scientology will visit Ireland today for the grand opening of their vast new centre in Dublin., the Irish Independent reports

Church of Scientology head David Miscavige will supervise the ceremonies to mark the launch of the new complex at Firhouse in Dublin.

The centre - dubbed an 'Ideal Org' in church language - was developed in a complex previously used as a Christian facility.

In 2013, the property involved was the focus of High Court proceedings by the Bank of Scotland over an €18m debt.

It has not been used as a religious centre for four years.

The Church of Scientology is understood to have purchased the property via a third party last year.

The complex was purchased for a reported €6m - less than half what it was valued at in 2010.

However, the future purpose of the huge complex remains shrouded in mystery, with some church experts predicting it could be used as a new European headquarters.

The 'Ideal Org' comes complete with a conference centre capable of hosting more than 1,100 members.

That is several times the total estimated number of Church of Scientology members in Ireland.



Church of Scientology leader David Miscavige speaks at a 2004 event in Madrid

Two centres are already operated at Middle Abbey Street and in Merrion Square.

It is understood that the new Firhouse complex will be operated by a staff of up to 250, all of whom will be foreign volunteers.

An official at the Church of Scientology centre in Middle Abbey Street declined to comment on the matter.

The Irish Times reports that Protesters against the Church of [Scientology](#) will demonstrate outside its new base in south Dublin today.

The church has purchased the former Victory Outreach Centre in [Firhouse](#) Road for a reported €6 million as a place for its members to study and hold meetings. Such venues are known in scientology as “ Ideal Orgs ”.

The protesters, many of whom are ex-members of the church, will gather for what they anticipate will be the opening of the centre by Scientology leader [David Miscavige](#).

The Victory Outreach Centre was formerly used as a Christian church. It accommodates 1,200 people, but the Church of Scientology has just 87 members in [Ireland](#) according to the 2016 census.

More at -

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/protests-to-mark-opening-of-new-scientology-base-in-ireland-1.3254969>

Less than half of Church of Ireland members in Cork attend services

Census figures on the level of [Church of Ireland](#) worship in [Cork](#) highlight a real challenge for local clergy as less than half of those declaring

themselves members of the church in the diocese attend services, The Irish Times reports.

That's according to the Church of Ireland Bishop of Cork, [Cloyne](#) and Ross, Dr Paul Colton who was commenting on a detailed breakdown of 2016 census data published on Thursday.

Bishop Colton said he was not surprised at the 2 per cent decline in the number of Church of Ireland members nationally – down from 129,039 in 2011 to 126,414 last year – and he attributed this to a general increase in secularisation.

But Bishop Colton, whose diocese covers all of Cork city and county as well a tiny area around [Ardmore](#) in Co [Waterford](#), pointed out that the Church of Ireland in Cork, Cloyne and Ross had in the same period undergone an increase of about 1,000 people, or 7 per cent, bucking the national trend.

“We would attribute that increase to an influx of people into Cork but we would need to look at the exact breakdown in terms of occupation and nationality to get a more accurate explanation,” he said.

The Church of Ireland population for the diocese now stood at 14,818, he said, while the census showed the average age of Church of Ireland



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members was 40.3 years, nearly three years above that of the general population.

‘At the edge’

“I’m not surprised that at the age of Church of Ireland members being older because the anecdotal evidence supports that and it’s true too of [England](#) and the rest of [Europe](#) that church adherents are largely ageing,” he said.

“In our case, it’s probably accounted for by the fact that many of our young people are away. Church of Ireland young people are no different

to young people generally and are more mobile with many heading to [Australia](#) and [New Zealand](#) for a period of time.”

According to Bishop Colton, the challenge for him and his clergy is to reach out to members of the Church of Ireland who currently don't avail of their services and perhaps only come to their attention at times of personal crisis or challenges.

“They may be at the edge of the church and not regular practitioners but they still define themselves as being Church of Ireland. They define themselves as belonging but practising their faith in another way and they have existed for as long as I have been looking at censuses,” he said.

“We have people we come across in various places and the clergy tell me that they never met them until perhaps they are admitted to hospital or find themselves in some other situation. The challenge for the clergy is to find out who they are and where they are and to look after them.”

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Seeing the impossible at Meath and Kildare Synod

Vision is the art of seeing the impossible” said Bishop Pat Storey. She was quoting the words of Jonathan Swift, as she addressed the Meath and Kildare diocesan synod. It took place in Wilsons’ Hospital School, near Multyfarnham, on Saturday 7th October. She encouraged synod members to be “a dioceses that sees the impossible”.

In her address Bishop Pat Storey she also talked of the need to step back from the immediate and look more closely at where we wanted to go as a diocese. She reminded members of the diocesan vision statement - *Together in God’s love transforming lives*. This is currently being worked out with three priorities: discipleship, taking initiatives to meet human need, as well as encouraging and equipping ministry.

Bishop Storey talked of the constant challenge to see this vision and these priorities worked out. As a step towards working out this vision she reflected on a new review initiative that will begin in the dioceses at the start of 2018. This will be undertaken in partnership with Church Army. She emphasised that it was not “an exercise in the “maudalin” or about closing churches, but



**Rev Steve Hollinghurst, Bishop Pat Storey
and Mr David Ritchie, Chief Officer of the
RCB**

about “moving forward and finding God’s will for the dioceses”. Rev Steve Hollinghurst, from Church Army, has been invited to complete the review, which will include consultations with every parish, all clergy and a wide range of other members of the dioceses, as well as those outside the church.

Bishop Storey and various other speakers talked of the success of the ‘Good for the Sole’ project. This project, in partnership with Bishops’ Appeal and The Mission to End Leprosy, has raised

funds to buy sandals to protect the feet of leprosy sufferers. It also moved on to raising money to fund many foot surgeries in Kairigiri hospital in India. Appreciation was expressed for all the fund raising initiatives, that raised over €66,000, across the dioceses over the previous two years. This included the *Food for the Sole* cookbook produced by Rhonda Willoughby. A group from the dioceses also visited Kairigiri shortly after Easter in 2017. The project will close with a special celebration service in All Saints Church in Mullingar on Sunday 5th November, at 6pm.

As well as normal business the synod was addressed by Mr David Ritchie, the Chief Officer of the RCB. He helped synod representatives to understand the structure and work of the RCB, highlighting the new Parish Resources page on the Church of Ireland website. He also talked of the strategy of the RCB, expressed in the staff Mission Statement: that they exist: “to inform; to support and to manage resources for the advancement of the mission and ministry of the Church of Ireland”.

The synod was also addressed by Rev Steve Hollinghurst. He has extensive research experience and expertise in the issue of how the Church can relate to contemporary society. As

well as talking about the review, from January to October 2018, he spoke of the work of Church Army - to enable the church to engage with the culture around it, mobilising ordinary people for ministry. He described the shape and purpose of the review - to discover how we can engage more effectively with our culture.

During the synod there were many opportunities to hear about work taking place amongst many age groups and in all sorts of contexts across the dioceses. It was also an opportunity to thank many people for the contribution they make at parish and diocesan level. As well as hearing reports of diocesan boards, such as the Board of Education, members of synod were appreciative of the various organisations that had stands and representatives present. They also appreciated the hospitality and lunch provided by Wilsons' Hospital School, as well as opportunity to share in Holy Communion in the school chapel.

Historic Lisburn quilt to be included in National Treasures archive

A handwoven quilt belonging to Magheragall Parish, near Lisburn, has captured the interest of a media production company, and will feature in a televised roadshow on October 22. The



The historic quilt from Magheragall Parish is now featured in the National Treasures archive and may be included in a TV show and exhibition next year

company issued a plea for objects that explore the role of the Anglican community over the past 100 years in the history of the island of Ireland.

This is part of a social history project in partnership with RTE and the National Museum of Ireland called National Treasures.

The Rev Nicholas Dark, rector of Magheragall, and contacted producer Ciaran Deeney about a quilt which he felt would be of interest.

Nicholas explained: “In this parish there is evidence that people made quilts in which local names were woven and then they were auctioned to raise money.”

Among the examples which have survived is a quilt belonging to Magheragall Parish which is red in colour with centrepiece that reads God save the Queen, and as it was pre partition it has a Harp in the very centre. This quilt has now been included in the digital archive.

Nicholas said: “When you think that ‘For God & Ulster’ became the slogan, it is amazing to see in 1896 in this Parish ‘God save the Queen’ woven around an Irish harp which is at the heart of the quilt.”

He relates how the quilt came to be in Magheragall Church more than 120 years after it was auctioned off. “At the auction in 1896 it was won by a local landed family who held on to it for years before they decided to give it to a woman who worked as a servant in their house because she was Church of Ireland.



Bobby (Roberta) and Miriam Wright with the white quilt woven in 1899 and now held in Lisburn Museum.

“That woman, as she approached her mid 90s, decided that if she died someone might just throw it out so she called the church and we gladly received it back after over a 100 years.”

Nicholas plans to bring the quilt along to the National Treasures roadshow taking place in the Andrew’s Gallery, Titanic Quarter, on October 22. The production company will be filming at the

roadshow for a TV show and a team of curators will be assessing objects for inclusion in an exhibition next year. Other roadshows are taking place in Dublin, Galway and Cork.

The digital archive can be viewed at www.nationaltreasures.ie

This red quilt is one of two connected with Magheragall parish with names woven on. A white quilt is held in Lisburn Musuem. It was made in 1899 and in an accompanying photograph is being held by two daughters of a former rector in the early 1960s.

They are are Bobby (Roberta) and Miriam Wright whose late father was Canon Robert Wright who died on March 14 2015.

Anyone with an object that might be of interest can visit the website or contact Ciaran at ciaran@ezfilms.ie.

Morning Service from Bangor Abbey

BBC Radio Ulster's Morning Service will be broadcast from Bangor Abbey on Sunday 15 October at 10.15 am. The Rector, Canon Ronnie Nesbitt will be the preacher. Following the

broadcast, the programme will be available on BBC iPlayer [at this link](#).

Ahoghill and Portglenone churches become Safe Spaces

Parishioners from St Colmanell's, Ahoghill, collected toiletries for Woman's Aid at their Harvest. This followed training the rector, the Rev Gary Millar, and two parishioners completed with ONUS who delivered Safe Space Training in Ballymena. St Colmanell's and Portglenone churches are now certified Safe Spaces. Safe Spaces are places where abuse or any sort is unacceptable and where those being abused may seek a welcome and help.

Cloughfern choir member's 50 years of services

A special presentation took place at Cloughfern Parish Church on Sunday October 8 to choir member Jennifer Boyd, who has notched up 50 years of service as a member of the choir. Jennifer has sung with Cloughfern Parish Choir since she was a girl and is still in fine tune.

Coming events in Down and Dromore

The Diocesan Synod will take place in Moira Parish on Thursday 19 October. The special guest will be Bishop Justin Badi, from the link diocese of Maridi, and his wife, Mama Joyce.

Revd Craig Cooney will be introduced as Minister-in-Charge of Hope Community Church, Craigavon on Tuesday, 24 October at 8.00 pm.

The Revd Adrian McCartney will be instituted as Incumbent of the Parish of Belvoir on Friday 27 October 2017 at 8.00 pm.

New Derry Canon

The Chapter of Saint Columb's Cathedral in Londonderry was brought up to its full complement on Wednesday evening when the Garvagh Rector, Rev Paul Whittaker, was installed as a Canon of the Cathedral. Rev Canon Whittaker was installed at a ceremony led by the Dean of Derry, Very Rev Raymond Stewart, in the presence of the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Ken Good. It was the Dean's first Service of Installation since being appointed to his new position six months ago.

Among those who joined the new Canon's wife, Carol, in the congregation on Wednesday evening, were parishioners from his own Errigal and Desertoghill parish, and friends from two neighbouring Roman Catholic Dioceses, Glenuillin and Ballerin. In welcoming the congregation to the service, Dean Stewart wished every blessing on the new Canon. The sermon was preached by the Archdeacon of Derry, Ven Robert Miller, who said it was "a night of celebration". The two men had studied together for three years when they both attended the former Theological Institute in Dublin and had remained friends ever since.

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