

## English bishop: you cannot be Catholic and support abortion



**Bishop Michael Campbell of Lancaster said it was a 'foundational issue' for the faith and there is 'no getting around it'**

Catholics cannot claim to be true to their faith if they do not support Church teaching on abortion, a bishop has said.

Bishop Michael Campbell of Lancaster said abortion was a “foundational issue”, quoting

Pope Francis who said: “We are called to defend and safeguard human life, especially in the mother’s womb, in infancy, old age and physical or mental disability.”

“Sadly,” Bishop Campbell added, “The price of admission into mainstream British life has meant that we somehow keep the Catholic brand name and tribal loyalty, but are content to live a mix of nostalgia and generic good will and ‘keep our heads down’ in the public sphere.”

True Catholics, on the other hand, have a duty to “sanctify and humanize” the country, and lead to towards Church teaching.

As Britain approaches the 50th anniversary of the Abortion Act, he added, Catholics must remember opposition to abortion is integral to the faith. “There’s no way around it. It’s the cornerstone issue for any society because it deals with the most basic human right of all – the right to life.”

The bishop also criticised Catholic publications that fail to defend Church teaching on the issue.

“Some Catholics – including some periodicals and newspapers who claim to use that name –

seem simply embarrassed by the abortion issue,” he said.

“The abortion struggle gets in the way of their natural political alliances. Others don’t really agree with the Church’s teaching, or don’t accept the personhood of the unborn child. Others just want a respectable way to explain away this issue and get on with what they regard as the ‘real’ work of the Church!”

Bishop Campbell concluded by saying overturning the Abortion Act is achievable, although it could take decades as it “challenges the moral premises of a society”.

“Let us work and pray under God for this intention – especially with the Rosary this October – always with the compassion of Christ,” he said.

## **Ireland’s main opposition party votes to keep Eighth Amendment**

Members of Ireland’s main opposition party have voted overwhelming to oppose the repeal of the Eighth Amendment to the country’s constitution, which protects the life of the unborn.



## **Fianna Fáil leader Micheál Martin has yet to say whether he backs the vote**

Fianna Fáil members voted at the party's Ardfeis – or conference – to back a motion calling for the preservation of the amendment. At the same time, they rejected a motion calling for its repeal.

Ireland is due to vote next year in a referendum on repealing the Eighth Amendment.

Although Fianna Fáil's representatives in the Irish parliament are not bound by the conference's decision, the move from the country's second largest party is hugely symbolic.

The Irish Times **reports** the majority of delegates spoke in favour of protecting the right to life of the unborn in the country's constitution.

One delegate, Martin Breen, said he and his wife were told their child would not survive and they should seek an abortion abroad. However, his daughter was born in November 2014 with Down syndrome and is “a perfectly healthy girl”.

Máire Hocht, a former member of the Irish parliament, criticised Fianna Fáil members of the parliamentary committee on abortion for failing to speak up for the rights of the unborn.

Former senator John Hanafin also spoke in favour of keeping the amendment, accusing the country's media of being skewed towards the abortion lobby.

Fianna Fáil governed Ireland from 1997 to 2011 under the leadership of Bertie Ahern and Brian Cowen.

The party's current leader, Micheál Martin, has yet to declare which side he supports in the referendum debate.

## Wholeness and Healing theme of Dublin service

The Dublin & Glendalough Diocesan Service of Wholeness and Healing took place in the Church of St John the Baptist in Clontarf on Sunday afternoon (October 15). The service was led by the Rector, the Revd Lesley Robinson and the preacher was the chairperson of the Dublin & Glendalough Committee of the Church's Ministry of Healing, Ireland, the Revd Bruce Hayes, Rector of Dalkey.

During the service prayer ministers and members of healer prayer unions renewed their commitment to the ministry and there was an opportunity for members of the congregation to receive healing prayer and be anointed with oils.

In his sermon the chairman spoke of the challenges and privileges of the healing ministry. He said he had always found it a tremendous privilege to share in the breadth and depth of the ministry and said it was important to remember the importance of the ministry at the core of all Christian faith and ministry.

He said that the healing ministry also came at a personal cost to those involved. "If we are to

protect the vulnerable, the hurt and the suffering, whilst encouraging an openness to God's presence in people's lives, our own stories, the rich tapestry of our life, must be unfolded. Because only then will a sceptical people know that our ministry is above all a spaciousness in the heart; an awareness that there is a space, inside every human being, where God dwells," he said.

"I personally have always found the Healing Ministry exceptionally difficult, and I imagine I am not alone in this. In the ministry of healing we have little option but to come honest about ourselves: events lay us bare. But you have to dig deep. Because you mustn't settle for a shallow relationship with God," Mr Hayes added.

He said those involved in the healing ministry had a high calling but it often came with a sense of failure. He urged those present to remember that none of them were here by their own merit but were doing God's will. The Healing Ministry isn't about personal success or failure, he said. Rather it is the story of Christ, lived with one another in local parishes.

He said that St Luke's Day was synonymous with giving thanks for the Healing Ministry and wondered what made St Luke change from

physician to evangelist. “I wonder what he found that was so important? I imagine it was something about the experience of being with suffering; did he find in his faith the depths necessary to sustain the care of those in pain over the long term. For it is no easy matter to be with the ill, especially when we cannot do much for them other than simply be present.

Luke must have realised that prayer was not a supplement to his medical knowledge. Neither was it an insurance policy for when his medical knowledge ran out. St Luke must have realised prayer was the means that we have to make God present whether medical skill is successful or not,” he said.

## **Down & Dromore course for Pastoral Carers**

Knocknagoney Parish will host a 10 session Pastoral Carers Course on behalf of Down & Dromore diocese in the New Year. This highly regarded course will be facilitated by Pastoral Care NI and take place on successive Tuesdays beginning on Tuesday 16 January.



The course will enable participants to develop their understanding of pastoral care from a Christian perspective and to become more effective in relating to and caring for the people and communities around them.

Who is it for?

- those who see themselves helping others informally in their daily relationships and who desire to learn more about pastoral care generally without being part of a pastoral care team.
- those who may be members of a pastoral care team and who desire to learn more about pastoral care in order to help others both informally and formally.
- those in church leadership or who have specific church roles and who desire to develop their awareness of pastoral care in order to support those for whom they have responsibility.
- those who wish to help others in specific community and workplace settings and desire to learn more about pastoral care in outreach and mission.

- those who desire to explore a call to pastoral care.
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How to participate?

The course will appeal to many, but spaces are limited. If you're interested, please discuss it with your rector as they will need to recommend you by letter or email. The cost (subsidised) will be £50 per person.

This training is part of the diocese's "Life Changing Leadership" initiative coordinated by Diocesan Development Officer, Andrew Brannigan.

## **Award winning director honoured by his former Cork school**

Peter Foott, past-pupil of Ashton School, Cork, award-winning director, producer and screenwriter, including of 'The Young Offenders' fame, was the guest of honour and speaker at his old school at prize day on Friday last, 13th October. Ashton School is a Church of Ireland comprehensive school under the co-patronage of the Bishop of Cork, and the Cork Education and Training Board.



**Head Boy, Zac Lumley, with Peter Foott, Dr Colton, and Head Girl, Emma Wilkinson**

Mr John Deane, Chairperson of the Board of Management welcomed everyone before Mr. Adrian Landen, Principal, outlined the year's activities and achievements in all areas of the school curriculum, including extra-curricular, complementing the commitment and dedication of staff and students.

Guest Speaker Peter Foott, Film Director and Producer of 'The Young Offenders' congratulated students and presented award winners with their prizes. Mr. Foott outlined to students the importance of the ability to acknowledge change in career direction

positively, and being prepared for challenge in the world of film, and work in general.

He acknowledged the changes that have taken place in Ashton since he was been a student, with a completely new school building, and congratulated everyone involved in their endeavours.

In his interview with Ms. Burke English Teacher, he regaled the audience with the stories of 'fun' along with very long hours and hard work involved in all aspects of film-making, inspiring student listeners, and keeping everyone rapt with attention.

The Ashton School Hall of Fame Award was presented by Mr. John Deane to Peter Foott for his contribution to film production.

## **New pilgrimage route launched in Scotland**

A new Pilgrimage route that travels through coastal scenery from North Berwick to Lindisfarne in Scotland was launched on Sunday morning.



As one of five long distance Pilgrim Ways currently under development in Scotland, the Forth to Farne Way will take modern-day pilgrims along pathways and through places linked to Christianity's earliest days in Scotland.

Several of the ancient Celtic saints are connected to places along the Forth to Farne Way including St Baldred, St Cuthbert, St Aidan and St Ebba.

Lord Wilson of Tillyorn, Patron of the Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum and former Lord High Commissioner of the Church of Scotland, formally opened the new route at a service in St Mary's Parish Church, Whitekirk.

Rev Joanne Evans-Boiten, Minister of Athelstaneford, Whitekirk and Tynninghame, who initiated the effort to develop the new route, said



## **Pilgrims at Old St Andrews Kirk North Berwick**

Whitekirk is one of many sites along the route that attracted pilgrims in the late Middle Ages.

She added: “Thousands of people came to Whitekirk because of a very famous holy well. That is why we have such a large church in such a small place.

“The story is that Agnes Countess of Dunbar had sustained injuries defending Dunbar castle when it was under siege. She visited a hermit living near Whitekirk and he told her to go to the holy well and drink the water.



“After visiting the well the Countess was healed and she went on to put up a chapel here that became famous throughout Europe. We have a record of the story written by one of the pilgrims who visited here and who later in his life became Pope Pius II.

“After the Reformation people changed their ideas about pilgrimages and holy places so Whitekirk was no longer considered an important place to visit. Sadly we don’t now know where the well was. We have looked but so far no-one has managed to find it. Maybe it will be rediscovered in the future.”

In medieval times pilgrims travelled the coastal route from Lindisfarne to St Andrews crossing the Firth of Forth by ferry from North Berwick.

The 72-mile pilgrim route follows parts of three well-marked designated footpaths: the John Muir Way, and the Berwickshire and Northumberland coastal paths.

A steering group of local volunteers has identified 11 stages that vary from 2 miles to 13 miles where they hope to site waymarkers and support services.

Currently chaired by Jimmy McGuinness, the group has also produced a leaflet about the route and a booklet that tells the stories of the saints.

Nick Cooke, secretary of the Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum SCIO praised the volunteers who have been working to develop the Forth to Farne Way for the last three years.

He added: “The next stage will be to develop waymarking and interpretation to tell the stories of these special places as well as provide accommodation for pilgrim walkers making this journey.”



Among the many places of interest along the route are: St Abbs harbours, the Scottish Seabird Centre, Preston Mill, Fast Castle, Lindisfarne causeway and Priory and St Andrews Kirk in North Berwick.

## **Anglicans and Protestants welcome Pope Francis' visit to Myanmar**

Anglicans and Protestants in Myanmar are looking forward to Pope Francis' visit to the country next month. Pope Francis will visit Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw at the end of November, ahead of a visit to Bangladesh. Nant Myat Noe Aein, a 21-year-old youth leader in the Church of the Province of Myanmar, [told AsiaNews](#) that “the apostolic journey of Pope Francis to Myanmar, a Buddhist majority country, shows that its society is more open now than before.

“Our country used to be a closed society for decades. With the new democratic government since last year, society is gradually opening up for change. And the visit of Pope Francis is a blessing.”



## **Pope Francis will visit Myanmar in November**

The Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC) unites the Anglican Church of the Province of Myanmar with a number of other Christian denominations in the country. Its general secretary, Lal Puia, also welcomed the Pope's intended visit, saying that it "has put Myanmar in the limelight of the world, which is interested to know more about the country and its people.

"The country faces many problems," he said. "With the visit, Pope Francis will urge all to work for the progress and prosperity of the country. I have registered to attend the function of Pope Francis in Yangon. I will take part in his Mass. I am excited about the event."

MCC's president, Patrick Loo Tone, said: "Many people in the country do not know much about Christians in the country. With the Pope's coming, both inside and outside, people and the world are interested to know about the nation, people, and their issues and concerns."

Myanmar is a Buddhist-majority country, with adherents making up almost 89 per cent of the population. Christians make up around 6.3 per cent of the population while Muslims account for 2.3 per cent.

The Pope's visit next month will be the fourth significant Christian event in the country in two months; and it follows the [Asian Mission Conference](#), the diamond jubilee celebrations of the [Christian Council of Asia](#), and the Bishop's Meeting of the [Council of the Church of East Asia](#).

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