

## **Point out what is right and wrong, Archbishop tells grandparents in Knock**



Grandparents are in a unique position to offer loving advice and even correction, said Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh in Knock on Sunday, CIN reports.

The Archbishop was speaking at the annual pilgrimage of grandparents to Ireland's national

Marian shrine, and before the event he had done some research, asking people about what it was like being a grandparent.

He said: “Bridging the generation gap as a grandparent isn’t always easy, especially knowing when to speak and what to say. Every new generation brings change, new challenges, and different ways of thinking. Older people can be labelled as being ‘un-modern’, not ‘with-it’, and even accused of ‘interfering’. It can be difficult to connect with your children and grandchildren in their struggles to cope with the pressures of today.”

Among the people he talked to was a grandmother who had asked him to pray for her daughter and son-in-law because, although they lived in a lovely four-bedroom house with all mod-cons, work demands were putting their relationship under pressure. The granny was looking after the grandchildren four days a week, as well as doing babysitting on Saturdays “because the parents feel the need to relax with friends after the exhaustion of their busy week”.

The granny was also taking the children to Mass and was helping with one child’s preparation for First Communion.



These children all had their own rooms, TVs, iPads and headphones, and she told the Archbishop: “It was so different when we were growing up. Everyone seems so isolated today.”

The Archbishop told the grandparents assembled in Knock: “Perhaps some of her story is familiar. I encouraged her to keep on loving and talking to her children and grandchildren, gently seeking moments to bring them together. Although family is all about relationship, it can still be difficult to make connections in a generation which can be so individualistic,

emphasising ‘me time’, my space, my needs, my independence, my rights.

“What’s needed of course is opportunities together as a couple and family, to work on our needs, our future, our happiness. It is true heart-to-heart communication like this that builds and holds family together.

“Sometimes, as grandparents, you may wish to step in and say something, to point out gently and in love what you think is right and wrong. You want to offer the wisdom and even the pain of your own life experiences, especially when you are worried that your children and grandchildren could be putting the future of their family at risk.”

The Archbishop said he believes it is possible to offer correction and point out what is right and wrong, but he warned: “Unless we do so with love, tenderness and mercy, we will simply be seen as interfering, we will be told to ‘back off’ and our efforts will fall on deaf ears. To correct with love – that’s where you grandparents come into your own. You are not, of course, there to replace the consciences of your children and grandchildren, but neither should you shy away from helping them to form their consciences. Saint Paul in today’s Second Reading has good

advice for all of us: 'Love is the one thing that cannot hurt your neighbour; that is why it is the answer to every one of the commandments'.

“As grandparents, you are in a unique position to offer loving advice and correction, even. By word and example you can teach your children and grandchildren that families are built on mutual love, respect, loyalty, sincerity, trust and cooperation.”

## **Church volunteers hope for a Lidl help from community fund**

Enniskillen Food Bank is one of the worthy organisations from Co Fermanagh in the running to win

When Sharon West looked down her daughter's school shoes it was a heartbreaking moment as she realised her daughter had outgrown them.

But for the devoted mum it was more than realising her little girl was growing up too fast – she knew she had no money to buy a new pair.

“I remember looking at my daughter and we'd bought her new shoes when we had a bit of



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money but by the time the school term came her feet had grown by a size and a half and we had no money to get shoes,” she recalled.

It was a devastating moment as the proud mum faced up to the fact she couldn't provide for her young daughter. Just months earlier such a prospect would have been unthinkable. Sharon had a great paying job, two houses and life was financially secure, however a back injury put paid to Sharon's comfortable life.

“When I hurt my back I worked for a good job and was on a lot of money but because I couldn’t do the job anymore I ended up losing my job. Because I lost my job then I had to declare myself bankrupt. I had a house in England and a house over here and we lost everything,” she explained.

“It really was a traumatic time but when you come out the other side I realised that I was working 24/7 and I wasn’t seeing my daughter.”

The future may have looked bleak for Sharon but it was the kindness of a volunteer at the Enniskillen food bank who recognised she was in trouble that has lead to her to now helping others at The Lakes Vineyard Church.

“My husband and I were going through a tough time a few years ago and someone from the food bank heard we were having a hard time and they brought food to us.

“As soon as we got back on our feet we donated food to them and I just got more and more involved.

“I came in here to donate food and then I ended up volunteering and now I’m running it,” she said.

“We can give people four weeks of food if they need and it gives them that breathing space to get money sorted out while feeding their children.”

The Enniskillen woman says the food bank sees a wide spectrum of people needing help from those struggling with addiction to working families on the breadline to those who have lost their job through ill health.

Many of those needing a hand up are faced with unenviable decisions and often find it difficult to walk through the church’s doors to ask for help.

“When you’re looking at your children and oh man there’s nothing here to feed them – you would rather feed your children and pets before you feed yourself.

“We had a gentleman in here and he had three heart attacks –one after the other-and he found himself out of work. He had three children and was on his own. It shows just how it can happen to anyone.

“There’s a statistic that says (on average) we’re all only three pay slips away from bankruptcy,” she claimed.



“Today we’ve been really busy with walk-ins because people are paying for school uniforms and paying for heat.

“You see people and your heart just melts – it doesn’t matter what predicament they are in.

“When you see the joy that they get when they get a bit of help – it’s like they have a little bit of hope – it’s so good. It’s very, very rewarding.”  
Summing up how the food bank helps those in need she said: “It’s a bit of help and hope.”

The food bank is open at The Lakes Vineyard Church, Enniskillen on Wednesdays and Fridays between 10 and noon. If you would like to volunteer send a message to their Facebook page [\*\*@EnniskillenFoodBank\*\*](#)

[View the full list here](#) before you vote from the shortlist in your local Co Fermanagh Lidl store .

Each of Lidl’s 38 stores in Northern Ireland will make £6,000 available - £4,000 for the winning group while two runners-up will receive £1,000 each.

That’s £228,000 of local funding to community groups and projects in your area! Entries close September 17, 2017.

## Church hall daubed in anti-police graffiti

An investigation has been launched after graffiti was sprayed on the wall of Stoneyford Parish Church. In the early hours of Monday morning vandals carried out a graffiti attack on the church writing anti-PSNI slogans on the hall.

It has been suggested that the graffiti is believed to be a response to the PSNI display at the recent community fun day.

Local Ulster Unionist Councillor Alexander Redpath has condemned the attack, he said: "It is absolutely sickening that an attack like this could be carried out on church property.

Stoneyford Parish Church work tirelessly for the community and make their hall available to a wide variety of community groups. The church hall is very much at the centre of the community and this sort of wanton vandalism is an attack upon the whole community.

"I am equally disgusted that the the PSNI were specifically targeted in this instance. Any threat to the safety of our police officers has to be treated with the utmost seriousness. The brave men and women of the PSNI put themselves in harms way on a daily basis. They do this to keep us safe and to protect the communities they



**The graffiti which appeared on a church in Stoneyford.**

serve. To be repaid in this way is appalling and I am sure the entire community will unite with me to condemn this attack and make clear their support for policing in our community.”

Ulster Unionist MLA Steve Aiken said: “Any statement that threatens anyone is to be roundly condemned. That this graffiti threatens our brave serving police officers and has been scrawled on the walls of church property, a place that should be afforded respect, is simply appalling. I urge anyone with information to speak to the PSNI.”

Police are appealing for anyone who witnessed the incident or anyone with any information that can assist with the investigation to contact officers in Lisburn on 101 quoting reference 208 of 11/09/17. Information can also be passed anonymously via Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

## **Hurricane Irma: Statement from Mothers' Union in the Province of the West Indies**

The Provincial Council of Mothers' Union in the Province of the West Indies has released the following statement in light of Hurricane Irma:

"We the Provincial Council of Mothers' Union in the Province of the West Indies, representing the Dioceses of Barbados, Belize, Guyana & Suriname, Jamaica & The Cayman Islands, North Eastern Caribbean & Aruba, Trinidad & Tobago and the Windward Islands, wish to send this message of prayer and solidarity to those in our province and beyond affected by the devastation of Hurricane Irma.

We have heard with great sorrow news of how the islands of the north eastern Caribbean have



been devastated like never before. We mourn with all those who have lost loved ones, especially with one of our own delegates who has lost a family member in the British Virgin Islands.

Mothers' Union and Church teams on the ground in the Diocese of North Eastern Caribbean and Aruba (NECA) are assessing and monitoring the situation as it develops and will be identifying how they can respond. Grants are being considered from the Mothers' Union Disaster Fund in the Province of the West Indies and the worldwide Mothers' Union Relief Fund once plans have been made.

We continue to ask for prayers from Mothers' Union members and the Church around the world for all those who have been affected by this tragedy and for all those who are acting to respond in the relief effort. We ask for prayers too that Hurricane José, currently gathering strength and predicted to hit the very same islands in the next few days, will dissipate so that communities already suffering will be spared further destruction."

Prayers for all those affected by Hurricane Irma can be found here

## **Installations at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin**

A new Precentor and Canon were installed at Christ Church Cathedral on Sunday (September 10). Canon Roy Byrne was installed to the position of Precentor while Canon Sonya Gyles was installed as Twelfth Canon.

The Dean, the Very Revd Dermot Dunne, presided and the service of Choral Evensong was sung by the Cathedral Choir.

The positions arose in the Chapter following the retirement of Canon Neil McEndoo.





Canon Byrne is Rector of Monkstown and has been a Canon of Christ Church Cathedral since 2012 and a board member in 2014. He has been involved with the cathedral's library and archives committee with special responsibility for the cathedral's extensive plate collection for many

years and has curated a number of historical exhibitions during his time there.

The Revd Sonia Gyles is Rector of Sandford and St Philip's, Milltown. She was appointed to the Chapter by the Archbishop of Dublin.

## **Bangor Abbey broadcasting on Sunday next**

BBC Radio Ulster's Morning Service will be broadcast from Bangor Abbey on Sunday, 15th October, at 10.15am. Canon Ronnie Nesbitt will be the preacher. The programme is also available on BBC iPlayer following the broadcast.

## **Scottish faith groups give equivalent of £100m in time and resources**

Churches and Christian charities in Scotland will be praised in the Scottish Parliament for giving almost £100m worth of time and resources to social action projects every year.

Drawing on research published by the Cinnamon Network, the figure is calculated from 9,028 social action projects, 4,535 paid staff activities,





74,544 volunteer roles, 2,212,491 paid staff hours and 9,012,457 volunteer hours.

If applying the current Scottish living wage of £8.45, it is thought this figure would exceed £100m. This generosity will be commended by Christian MSP Kate Forbes in Holyrood late Tuesday afternoon.

She will open the debate by commending and encouraging 'Serve Scotland', a body of Christian organisations, who have contributed to 9028 social action projects.

Forbes told Premier: "The vast majority of churches have projects to meet social needs, putting it into figures just highlights how much they're doing.

"I think if you look back at the history of Scotland at the way Christian groups have been behind education reform and relieving poverty, you can see that on a much grander scale Christians have led the way in transforming Scottish society to a place where there is more help for the marginalised".

Forbes said the actions of these churches "follows a long tradition of faith-based community work with roots in theology".

"Throughout the Old Testament we see God again and again condemning his people for not caring for the widow or the fatherless, for not bringing an end to injustice," she said.

Forbes added that the volunteer hours have made a big impact in Scottish communities.

She told Premier News: "You'd only need to ask the specific individuals or families who've benefited from this work to realise that even if one person has been helped by this work, it hasn't been in vain.

"The great hope in all of this is of course that God's name will be honoured and glorified".

## **Christian charity galvanizing support for worst victims of Hurricane Irma**

The Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF) has launched an urgent appeal calling on people across Scotland to help some of the world's poorest communities devastated by the aftermath of Hurricane Irma.

Residents have been allowed to return to some islands in the hurricane-slammed Florida Keys as officials try to piece together the scope of Irma's destruction and rush aid to the drenched and debris-strewn state.

Two days after the storm roared into the Keys with 130mph winds, the full extent of the destruction is still a question mark because communications and access are cut off in many areas.

The Lower Keys - including the chain's most distant and most populous island, Key West, with 27,000 people - are still off-limits, with a roadblock where the single highway to the farther islands was washed out.



Seven deaths in Florida have been blamed on Irma, along with two in Georgia and one in South Carolina. At least 35 people were killed in the Caribbean.

SCIAF said it will respond to the needs of people worst hit by the storm and are urgently in need of donations to make sure people have access to clean water, food and shelter.

Haiti, the poorest nation in the western hemisphere, is one of the areas badly affected with damage to infrastructure and flooding. It was one of the most vulnerable islands in the path of Irma.

The Scottish charity said has a long-standing relationship with the people of Haiti and has been helping families rebuild their lives, especially after the deadly earthquake in 2010 and Hurricane Matthew last year.

SCIAF's head of communications, Charlotte Hull, said the charity is already on the ground in Haiti but relief efforts need to be international otherwise the situation could get worse. She added: "We are part of the Caritas global network and will continue to assess the situation in the poorer areas affected by this latest catastrophe.

"A lot of the places where we work, Haiti in particular, are very rural and so we are struggling to get detail of the full extent of the situation because of the damage to communications and infrastructure.

"We need to make sure everyone understands the human impact of something like this and that we can all do our bit to help our brothers and sisters devastated by this latest hurricane and help them to build their resilience for when the next hurricane strikes."

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