

Mothers' Union offers Grenfell families support through its Holiday scheme

As part of a united and co-ordinated response from members in Dioceses across the country, Mothers' Union is planning to support families who were affected by the Grenfell Tower tragedy in June by offering holidays under the charity's Away From It All (AFIA) scheme.

Margaret Blazey, Diocesan President for Mother's Union in the London Diocese, said, "We are working with the Bishop of Kensington's office in co-ordinating plans to help as many families as possible through our AFIA project who have been caught up in this terrible tragedy."

AFIA is funded by Mothers' Union members to help people who are experiencing stress in their family life to enjoy much-needed family time together. The cost of the holiday or travel expenses are met by Mothers' Union.

In 2016 Mothers' Union provided 3,400 people across the UK and Ireland with a much needed break. The holidays take many different forms. Some are specially organised family weeks where a number of families and a team of volunteers go away together with activities and outings arranged. Others may take place in a holiday home owned by Mothers' Union, usually sited near a beach. Some holidays take the form of day trips.

Mothers' Union's CEO, Bev Jullien, said, "It is hard to imagine what these families are currently experiencing and what they have gone through. At Mothers' Union we thought about how best we could support them." She continued, "We have been running AFIA holidays for more than 50 years. These holidays reflect the heart of who we are by showing practical support where it is needed most."

Mothers' Union Dioceses across the length and breadth of the United Kingdom are offering their support.

The charity recognises that this is not a short term issue and that the impact of this tragedy will continue for many years to come. Mothers' Union is inviting families to apply for a holiday at

a time that best suits them, whenever that might be.

Mothers' Union continues to pray for the families and all of those affected. Prayers can be found here

To find out more about AFIA Holidays click here

Former missionary to South America key speaker at diocesan Bible Week

The 11th Annual Bible Week in Down and Dromore diocese will be held from Tuesday 29 August – Friday 1 September 2017 with Bishop Greg Venables.

Taking the title, *Accept No Imitations*, Bishop Greg will teach in Romans 5–8 and explore some of the passages which inspired the Reformation. The venue is Shankill Parish Church, Lurgan, and we will begin each evening at 7.45 pm.

Greg Venables is much in demand as a Bible teacher and is a leading theological conservative in global Anglicanism. He and his wife Sylvia

have been missionaries in South America for almost 40 years.

Born and raised in England, Greg was a computer systems officer and a school teacher before beginning his ordained ministry in 1984 and serving with the Anglican Church in Paraguay, Bolivia and Argentina. He was headmaster of St Andrew's College, Asuncion, from 1978 until 1989 and was ordained to the episcopate in 1993 when he became the Auxiliary Bishop of Peru and Bolivia.

Greg served as the Primate of the Southern Cone in South America from 2001 until 2010 and has been diocesan bishop of Southern Argentina since 2002.

He and Sylvia have been married since 1970 and they have one son, two daughters and seven grandchildren.

The Bible Week is four nights of Bible teaching, worship and ministry for the Diocese of Down and Dromore but anyone is welcome to come along and there is no charge.

The event is timed to bring encouragement from the Word of God as parishes prepare for the busy autumn term and is well supported. If you

have never been, we would love to see you there!

29th Cursillo Walk from Derry to Knock



The Final Mass in Knock Parish Church - July 2015

The 29th Derry Cursillo Walk to Knock leaves Termonbacca Retreat Centre, Derry on Wednesday morning after 9am Mass and heads the 127 mile route to Knock.

The Walk will arrive in Knock at approx. 1pm on Sunday for Mass in the Parish Church at 3pm.

The intention of the Walk is to pray for peace in our Hearts, our Homes our Country and in the World.

There's no doubt this walk has played its part in bringing about the peace we enjoy today through the prayer and the conversion of many who have found peace for their hearts through Cursillo.

Three other walks will also leave on Wednesday from Belfast, Dublin and Cork. Keep all who are on the Walks in your prayers in these days as they will you in theirs.

Church of Scientology set to expand with new base In Firhouse

The Church of Scientology in Ireland is reported to be planning to expand with a new European base in South Dublin.

The organisation is reported to have spent money to refurbish a state of the art community centre in Firhouse.

The centre was passed to NAMA a number of years ago, but *The Journal* reports that the movement has invested in the Victory Centre property on the Firhouse Road.

Local Councillor Brian Lawlor is disappointed that the centre wasn't bought to cater for a new school in the area.

He said there is a need for a secondary school in the area, and officials are trying to locate a site.

"I believe this would have been an ideal location for the school site," he argued. "The Church of Scientology have the site now - so it's a wait and see."

New sign on Pope's door bans whining

Pope Francis has stuck a large sign on the front door of his Vatican apartment that reads: "No complaining" in Italian.

The sign - given to the Pope by Italian psychologist Salvo Noe - explains "violators are subject to a syndrome of always feeling like a victim and the consequent reduction of your sense of humour and capacity to solve problems".

The notice, in large white letters on a red background, appeared in recent days on the door that leads to the Pontiff's private rooms in



Casa Santa Marta, where he lives in the shadow of St Peter's Basilica.

It is not clear who the notice is aimed at but it has been suggested cardinals, priests and members of his staff could be the main target of his anti-whining sign.

For anyone caught whining in front of children, "sanctions will be doubled".

The sign continues: "To get the best out of yourself, concentrate on your potential and not on your limitations.

"So stop complaining and act to change your life for the better."

The arguably well-humoured notice corresponds with the Catholic leader's leadership style that

has encouraged a more lenient approach on issues such as divorce and homosexuality.

He has also encouraged the world's billion-plus Catholics to be more joyful.

A few months after he was elected in 2013, Francis told a gathering of faithful: "Sometimes there are melancholic Christians with faces like pickled peppers, such long faces, rather than being joyful for the beautiful life they have."

Insight from Killarney on an ageing church

The recently published 2016 census results showed that among the large towns (i.e. those with a population of 10,000 or over) Killarney (with an average age of 40.9 years) had the the 'oldest' population.

Archdeacon Simon Lumby, Rector of St Mary, Killarney, responded to the census' findings in an RTE interview asking about the impact this 'ageing of the population' has on the work of the church.

"Actually, older people tend to become receptive to spiritual things and to thinking about their life's work and achievements in the greater

scheme of things. This means it is easier to open up for them a relationship with God that may have lain dormant for some years. Our work among the tourists and the tourism industry in Killarney is built upon the fact that many older people visit and stay in Killarney. We open up for them the idea that their visit, and especially the feeling of uplift they have in their heart, is a direct communication with the divine. This gives them access to a type of relationship with God they may never have perceived or thought possible.”

A strong theme of the work in both Killarney and other churches within the Diocese of Limerick and Killaloe is the development of ‘Spiritual Tourism’, offering people (of all ages, actually) the opportunity to enjoy God’s creation not just in the beautiful surroundings of the Kingdom of Kerry but also in its deeply spiritual history, tradition and culture.

Calling views extremist is unhelpful, survey finds

More than half of the general public think using the word "extreme" isn't helpful in social and political discussion, according to a new study.

The poll conducted by ComRes and commissioned by the Evangelical Alliance and a coalition of organisations found that while 54 per cent found the word an unhelpful "description when discussing political or social opinions", 32 per cent believed it was a helpful description and 14 per cent didn't know if it was.

Dr David Landrum, director of advocacy for the Evangelical Alliance, agreed with the majority polled.

He said: "The language of extremism is a recipe for chaos and division. This poll shows the scale of moral confusion in our society with the public having no way of deciding whether something is extreme or not. It also shows the division that might ensue if the government persist in trying to use extremism as a way of regulating peaceful ideas in society.

"Detached from terrorism and incitement to violence, extremism does not work as a litmus test for judging peaceful beliefs and opinions. Indeed, the government have tried and failed over the last two years to define extremism with any precision and this poll shows that the public share that confusion."



The survey shows that there is widespread confusion and diverging opinions on the definition of extremism.

Of the 2,004 adults questioned, statements around political debates were considered by many as extreme, however, almost half the public disagreed it was extreme to believe animals have the same rights as humans.

The survey found that people were less divided and confused as to whether leaving the European Union (EU) is an extreme idea or not. Asked if it was extreme to believe the UK should

remain in the EU, 30 per cent said it was, whereas 36 per cent said it was extreme to believe the UK should leave.

Landrum added: "Ideas which I would expect to be uncontested - such as paying women the same as men - were classed by many as extreme. The willingness to classify political views which should be respected, such as leaving or staying in the EU, as 'extreme', shows the danger of focusing the extremism debate on beliefs we may find uncomfortable or disagree with, rather than on actions that threaten lives."

The Evangelical Alliance and the other groups who commissioned the poll are calling for the government to approach the use of the word "extreme" with "extreme caution". They have also called for any future extremism commission to include the widest possible range of groups - including those of faith to be involved.

Landrum concluded by saying: "The government have failed to define extremism, and the public are clearly divided about which ideas are extremist.

"It therefore seems unlikely that a newly established quango, such as an extremism commission, will solve such problems. It is not

wise to foster a society where volatile public opinion can be used to determine what might be extreme or acceptable views."

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