

Teddy bears used to display plight of South Sudan child refugees



The steps of St Paul's Cathedral were unusually crowded yesterday (Thursday) morning - not with people but teddy bears!

Christian charity World Vision UK's #BearsOnStairs campaign displayed 700 donated second-hand and new soft toys to highlight the devastating effect the conflict in South Sudan is having on the nation's children.

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Each bear represents the number of these child refugees who arrive in Uganda each week.

Tim Pilkington, CEO of Christian charity World Vision UK commented on what inspired the idea.

He said: "The attempt here is in a gentle way to raise the profile of something that people don't always know about and is really serious.

"The reason for 700 teddy bears is that 100 of those every day who arrive in Uganda are unaccompanied children.

"If you think of the most vulnerable people, they're the people who sort of suffered war and

famine and then the most vulnerable of those are probably the children. And the most vulnerable of the most vulnerable of the most vulnerable are the children who are actually alone, who are travelling alone, who aren't in family groupings."

More than 150,000 child refugees in mass settlements in northern Uganda require therapy after fleeing violence in neighbouring South Sudan.

Psychologists and child welfare experts working in the Imvepi and Bidi Bidi refugee settlements of Uganda said most of these children have suffered and witnessed terrible brutality as the fighting intensifies in the East African country. An alarming 60 per cent need urgent specialist therapy to treat the effects of conflict-related stress disorders.

Carey Lodge, media officer at World Vision UK, recently went to Uganda and told Premier the difference a simple teddy bear can make for the children.

She explained: "Our child-friendly space experts are saying they're really excited because you know, just giving these kids a space to play, be kids again after they've experienced such

traumatic things is so important and we're hoping these teddy bears can make a tiny difference."

The international charity which aims to improve the lives of the most vulnerable children plans to send the toys to the child refugees in South Sudan.

Pilkington said there are a number of ways people can help the children, including using social media to spread awareness about the crisis.

Archbishop of Canterbury visiting Sudan to see refugee crisis and to start new Anglican province

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, will make a trip to Africa this week with a focus on the South Sudanese refugee crisis and to inaugurate a new Anglican province.

Archbishop Justin will travel to Sudan this weekend to inaugurate a 39th province of the worldwide Anglican Communion. The service will be held in the nation's capital of Khartoum on Sunday.

Since the creation of South Sudan six years ago, the Sudanese Anglican church was controlled from Juba, the capital of South Sudan.

The province of South Sudan, which has a predominantly Christian population, requested the Anglican Consecutive Council (ACC) start a new province in Sudan.

The move has been in the works since April 2016 when the ACC sent a team to Sudan to check if a new province would be pliable.

The new Sudan province, which has mostly Muslim residents, is carved out of what was formerly called the Episcopal Church of South Sudan and Sudan.

Archbishop Ezekiel Kondo will be enthroned as the new leader of the province.

While in Sudan, Welby will also visit one of five dioceses in Sudan which has seen the most violence in the country's conflict. An office in Kadugli was destroyed years ago because of conflict, and the archbishop will celebrate the opening of a new one in its place.

After the ceremony, Welby will travel to Uganda and visit two refugee camps which house around 900,000 South Sudanese refugees. Welby will be hosted by the primate of Uganda and will meet with government leaders.

The trip will be used as an opportunity to bring the plight of the refugee crisis to the international community and encourage and reconciliation.

Archbishops encourage Christians to not condemn gay people



Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York have released a joint statement on the 50th Anniversary the law which decriminalised homosexual acts in the UK.

This comes after the majority of the leading Archbishops of the whole global Anglican



Communion affirmed in January 2016 that diminishing and criminalising homosexual people is wrong.

In the statement, Archbishops Justin Welby and John Sentamu said the Church is usually known for what it condemns but not what it supports.

They said: "The Church is called more to be identified by what it loves, most of all by its pointing to Jesus Christ, not merely by what it condemns.

"Many people who have nothing to do with the institutional church and who seldom, if ever,

attend it, nevertheless see in Jesus Christ someone of startling and extraordinary attraction. "Many homosexual people follow Christ, drawn to him by his love and his outstretched arms welcoming all those who turn to him."

The Church of England leaders used Matthew 11:28-30 to encourage people to lay their burdens on Jesus and said that sin is the heaviest of burdens and "is not a characteristic of a particular group of people", but the same for everyone.

They continued: "This day of anniversary of the 1967 Act is one when the Church in this land should be conscious of the need to turn away from condemnation of people as its first response.

"When we rightly celebrate what happened 50 years ago today, we do so best by turning to him and saying, 'Yes, we take your yoke on our shoulders with you'".

New Dublin Youth Ministry officer

Dublin & Glendalough Youth Council has announced the appointment of Susie Keegan as t



the new Dublin & Glendalough Diocesan Youth Ministry Development Officer. She will take up the role in August.

Susie comes to the post with lots of experience having volunteered as a parish youth worker at St Catherine's Church before assisting with 3 Rock Youth (which preceded Dublin & Glendalough Youth Council), where she particularly focused on school retreats and

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confirmation events. For the past three years, she has been the Lay Church of Ireland Chaplain at DIT Aungier Street, a position which she has really enjoyed.

She also brings many different talents in the areas of creativity and lots of contacts throughout the wider Church as well as within the Church of Ireland. She brings a real vision to the post and is very much looking forward to working with young people again. Having had the opportunity to journey with third level students has highlighted the importance of youth work, Susie says, adding that journeying with young people from an early age through the many issues that they face is very important.

The post of Youth Ministry Development Officer focuses particularly on enabling young people to grow in their Christian faith within their local parish context. To that end, Susie will be seeking to support those who are working with youth in parishes as well as supporting new developments. “I am looking forward to starting this new role and working with and supporting youth workers, clergy and young people,” she comments. “It’s all about creating community and collaboration.”

Susie will be commissioned on October 1 so save the date to join the celebrations. More details will follow nearer the time.

Derry City Manager signs for Maghera Parish for one day only

The Derry City manager, Kenny Shiels, will be turning out for his local parish, Maghera, this weekend when he takes part in a penalty kick competition to support his parish.

The spot kick competition is one of many of the features in a Garden Fete and Vintage Rally in the Rectory Grounds on Saturday. Kenny will be the goalkeeper for the shoot-out. At 12.30 pm Country music star Ritchie Remo will be putting in a guest appearance, and there will be Irish and Scottish dancing and Ulster-Scots features.

The fete is part of a weekend of activities organised by the United Parishes of St Lurach's, Maghera and Killeleagh. The highlight will be Sunday morning's special All Age Worship Service in a Marquee – again in the Rectory Grounds – with praise led by the Eden Accordion Concert Band.



esports/ie 13 March 2017, Derry City Manager Kenny Shiels during the SSE Airtricity League Premier Division match between Derry City and Donkalk at Maginn Park in Buncrana, Donegal. Photo by Oliver McVeigh/Sportsfile

The Rector of St Lurach's, Maghera and Killeleagh, Rev Terence Kerr, says he is looking forward to the weekend immensely. "We're pulling out all the stops for the weekend and it's shaping up to be a great occasion for our parishes. It'll be a great opportunity for the community in Maghera and Killeleagh – and beyond – to come together, have some fantastic fun, enjoy great fellowship, and to praise God. What better way to spend a weekend?"

Rev Kerr says he is grateful to all those who will be taking part – members of the various bands who will be performing over the two days,

including stall-holders, those who will be providing food, people organising the various displays. “I’m particularly looking forward to trying to beat Kenny Shiels in the penalty shoot-out. Kenny’s a parishioner of mine, and I’ve never managed to ‘get one past him’ before. So history could be made in the Rectory Grounds on Saturday afternoon.”

For more information, call 028 7954 9290 or (after 6pm) 07729 195132.

Inaugural West Cork History Festival

The inaugural West Cork History Festival, of which one of the patrons is the Right Rev. Dr Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, will take place from 28-30 July, at Rosebank just outside Skibbereen.

The Festival, which is being organised by Simon Kingston, will feature talks, debates, and film screenings on a host of topics and periods. It is aimed at the interested layperson and will offer a chance to listen to some of Ireland’s leading historians in an informal environment. The subjects will range from the medieval to the



Simon Kingston whose idea it was to inaugurate and organise the West Cork History Festival

modern and will be local, national, and international in nature.

he opening speaker will be Roy Foster, authorised biographer of Yeats and the preeminent Irish historian of his generation. He will be followed by a mix of academics, diplomats, journalists and others, discussing everything from the Knights Templar to Ireland and the First World War.

Some items which illustrate the diversity of the programme are HE Dan Mulhall, soon to begin his new role as Irish Ambassador in Washington



Michael Dobbs of House of Cards fame

DC, on AE and Francis Ledwidge; Dr Connie Kelleher, of the State Underwater Archaeology Unit, speaking about piracy off the West Coast; and Lar Joye, of the National Museum, talking on the history of duelling in Ireland.

Of particular interest will be David Fitzpatrick discussing aspects of the Protestant experience of the revolutionary period in Cork. There will be a dinner on the Saturday night with food by Carmel Somers and her team from Good Things Café, for those who want to continue the conversation with the speakers informally. The closing 'act' will be Michael Dobbs writer of

House of Cards on the inspiration behind the drama. All the details and booking facilities are on the website.

New stage of Camino Santiago de Compostela launched in Waterford

Under new Camino rules, the Waterford stage is added to the 75 km walk from A Coruña to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, and pilgrims can get the Camino certificate of completion (Compostela) for a full 100 km.

A group of 40 walkers completed the first leg of their Camino de Santiago pilgrimage in Ireland thanks to a new rule.

The group completed a 25 km walk from Dungarvan to Kilmacthomas on the newly opened Waterford Greenway, and had their Camino passports stamped.

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Our Irish ancestors were no strangers to this route, according to Garvan Cummins, who runs a bicycle hire business and is also known as ‘the Greenway Man’.

“It is the route that Irish and English would have used in medieval times. They would have got on a ship in Waterford, Dingle, Galway or Dublin to the nearest port in Spain which was A Coruña,” he told Catholicireland.net.

He explained that until now Irish pilgrims who started from A Coruña were not given the

certificate of completion as they had only walked 75 km.

“It was decided that they can do 25 km here in Ireland,” he said. “They have the pilgrim passport and get a stamp in Dungarvan or Kilmacthomas or Waterford.”

He added that the Waterford Greenway is an approved certified route, and there are others such as the Kerry Camino, which ends in Dingle – also a port of departure for Spain in the past.

The walking group, organised by Follow the Camino, carried the Galician flag and were delighted to get their pilgrim passports stamped by Garvan Cummins. The stamp will be recognised and valid for one year in Santiago for the certificate of completion.

This was all made possible after a delegation from Spain, including the Mayor of A Coruña, visited Ireland earlier this year and approved it. They also agreed that the ancient route known as the Camino Ingles or English Way, can also be called the Celtic Way. This will help revive the lesser used route.

“People say ‘can’t you do another Camino [stage in Spain] that is 100 km in length?’ but from a historical point of view it [Camino Ingles] is the route that Irish pilgrims would have taken during the 12, 13, 14 and 1500s,” said Garvan Cummins.

A former Mayor of Waterford James Rice walked the Camino twice in 1483 and 1493 and is buried in Christchurch Cathedral. His tomb has the Camino shell sculptured into it.

Garvan Cummins has done the Camino in Spain twelve times himself and he likes the idea of spirituality, pilgrimage and following in the footsteps of those who have gone before.

“I suppose the spirituality of it [attracts me], and the fact that people have been doing it for a thousand years,” he said.

“I would be more into spirituality though I respect Roman Catholicism very much as the religion of Ireland and Spain and the traditions around it. The history of the churches along the way [of the Camino in Spain] are absolutely fascinating. A lot of them are a thousand years old. There is darkness in a lot of the churches, which has its own mystique as well.”

Garvan Cummins is one of the Déise Greenway group. He loves long distance walking and is a leisure cyclist. As well as being a frequent Camino de Santiago walker, he is a regular on walks such as St Declan's walk from Cashel to Ardmore, The Wicklow Way, and Hadrian's Wall.

The launch on the Waterford Greenway as an official Celtic Camino route took place during the week of St James's Day (which falls on 25 July) and raised money for both the local hospice and the regional hospital.

See: www.followthecamino.com and www.deisegreenway.com

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