

Calling All Pilgrims for the 2017 Camino de Glendalough



The 2017 Diocesan Camino de Glendalough will take place on Sunday September 10. As with last year, pilgrims will be welcome to join the Camino at any point during the day and can choose to take the full 30 kilometre pilgrimage

following St Kevin's Way from Hollywood in West Wicklow to Glendalough or a shorter route.

The day will start with a Service of Holy Communion and Pilgrim blessing in St Kevin's Church in Hollywood at 9.00 am on September 10. There will be a service in St John's Church in Laragh at 9.30 am.

Once again, St John's in Laragh will act as a hub during the day with buses available to ferry people to the Wicklow Gap for shorter walks.

The day will conclude with a short service at the Upper Lake in Glendalough and those who undertake the full camino will receive their medals there.

The first Camino de Glendalough took place last November and attracted pilgrims from all over Dublin & Glendalough and beyond. The idea arose from the diocesan Come & C discipleship programme and has sparked a lot of interest both locally and internationally.

A special booklet was compiled to assist reflection during the day. It can be downloaded the Camino de Glendalough page on this website.

Eugene Peterson retracts statement affirming gay marriage: He said 'yes' but now he says 'no'

Top evangelical Bible scholar Eugene Peterson **has retracted** his controversial statement that **he would conduct a same-sex wedding** if asked.

Peterson, author of *The Message* translation of the Bible and *As Kingfishers Catch Fire*, says in a statement circulated by the Alive Literary Agency that he wishes to change his response to hypothetical question that was posted to him by a journalist as to whether he would perform a wedding ceremony for a gay Christian couple if he were pastoring today.

His original answer to the question was a simple: 'Yes.'

But now Peterson, who is 84 and has not been active in a pastoring ministry for more than a quarter of a century, says that having engaged in 'further reflection and prayer', he wants to change his answer to: 'No.'



The acclaimed retired theologian Eugene Peterson has retracted his statement that he would conduct a same-sex wedding.

The agency said the recent interview he did with Religion News Service was on topics ranging from his mortality, current events and homosexuality.

Peterson was taken by surprise by the query about whether he would do a gay marriage, but that after a long and awkward pause, he responded with an uncharacteristic and simple 'yes'. He now wishes to 'clarify and change his response'.

Peterson was a pastor in the Presbyterian Church (USA), which recently affirmed homosexuality and began allowing its clergy to perform same-sex weddings.

In his new statement, he states: 'I affirm a biblical view of marriage: one man to one woman. I affirm a biblical view of everything.'

In his 29 years as a pastor, and in the years since then, he has never performed a same-sex wedding and nor has he been asked to.

'Frankly, I hope I never am asked,' he says.

He continues: 'This reporter, however, asked a hypothetical question: if I were pastoring today and if a gay couple were Christians of good faith and if they asked me to perform their wedding ceremony – if, if, if.

Pastors don't have the luxury of indulging in hypotheticals.

'And to be honest, "no" is not a word I typically use. It was an awkward question for me because I don't do many interviews at this stage in my life at 84, and I am no longer able to travel as I once did or accept speaking requests. With most interviews I've done, I generally ask for questions in advance and respond in writing. That's where I am most comfortable.

'When put on the spot by this particular interviewer, I said "yes" in the moment. But on

further reflection and prayer, I would like to retract that. That's not something I would do out of respect to the congregation, the larger Church body, and the historic biblical Christian view and teaching on marriage.

'That said, I would still love such a couple as their pastor. They'd be welcome at my table, along with everybody else.'

He also told the reporter that there are gay and lesbian people who 'seem to have as good a spiritual life as I do'. He says he meant that statement.

'But then again, the goodness of a spiritual life is functionally irrelevant in the grand scheme of things. We are saved by faith through grace that operates independent of our resolve or our good behaviour. It operates by the hand of a loving God who desires for us to live in grace and truth and who does not tire of turning us toward both grace and truth.

'There have been gay people in a variety of congregations, campuses, and communities where I have served. My responsibility to them was the work of a pastor – to visit them, to care for their souls, to pray for them, to preach the Scriptures for them.'

The people of a congregation are not abstractions, they are people, and a pastor does a disservice to the people in his care when he indulges in treating them as abstractions, he says, regretting 'the confusion and bombast that this interview has fostered'.

From now on, he concludes, he will limit his statements to private letters as opposed to public statements and will do no further interviews, 'preferring to be remembered not for this matter' but for his life's body of work and teaching.

Families 'absolutely delighted' at support from Baby Basics Belfast

Baby Basics Belfast, launched in January 2017 by Connor Diocese's Centre of Mission, has already helped a number of families.

Baby Basics is one of a number of projects run by the Centre of Mission located in the Connect Base on the Shankill Road.

The project is being led by Jill Hamilton (Diocesan Children's Officer) and Karen Webb (Church Army Evangelist).



The Rev John Rutter, Glenavy Parish, presents Jill Hamilton with some items for the Baby Basics project. Glenavy took part in the four week challenge earlier this year.

The Belfast branch is one of a growing number of Baby Basic Branches across the UK. For more information about Baby Basics see <http://www.rippleconnor.org.uk/baby-basics-belfast/> or check out the main Baby Basics website at <http://baby-basics.org.uk/>

Jill has provided the following update on Baby Basics Belfast:



In the first few months of Baby Basics Belfast we established links with health professionals in the area and now we are linked with Sure Start, NHS health visitors for the Belfast area and Family Nurse Partnership (an intensive programme of support for teenage mums run by the Belfast Health Trust).

We also partnered with two churches in Connor Diocese both of which took on our four week challenge.

Glenavy Parish supported us throughout March and Drumaul, Duneane and Ballyscullion Parish supported us throughout May. We were really delighted and amazed with how generous both parishes were and with the quality of the donations we received.

We have also received knitted items including teddies, blankets and clothing from St.

Matthew's Parish and donations of clothing and toiletries from Mossley Parish.

So far, we have given out six starter packs which include a range of essential clothing, bedding and toiletries for baby and parents and five other packs tailored to the specific needs of the family in question.

Here is some of the feedback we have received from the health visitors.

I gave A her Baby Basics basket and she was absolutely delighted, very appreciative of everything. She looked at everything supplied during my home visit with her. A's mother was impressed that "there are some really thoughtful and generous people out there." So thanks again!

D was delighted with the bag of supplies and found it hard to believe that people could be so generous. D was grateful to have her name added to your prayer tree and said how important that was to her.

Thank-you so much for the fabulous pack for R. I delivered it this morning and she is absolutely delighted with it!!

We have had interest from other churches willing to be involved in our four week challenge and we will be in the position to take up their offers very soon as the donations already given are being distributed fast! Would your church like to get involved? If so check out our four week challenge below!

The four week challenge works like this:

The church receives a visit from us (either at the Sunday morning service or at a Church group whatever is most suitable). We share the vision behind Baby Basics, what it aims to do and who it aims to support as well as giving information about how the congregation can support the project.

We ask the congregation to help by collecting donations of essential clothing and toiletries for the family of the new born baby. We provide a leaflet for everyone in the congregation to take away with them detailing what is needed. We also very much appreciate donations of money as we have to buy some new items e.g. mattresses, bedding, containers and other items.

The donations are collected over the next four Sundays in church and at the end of the month, we come and collect all the items. The items are sorted and stored in the Connect Base ready for

distribution to families who need them in the coming weeks.

As the feedback shows, people we have supported so far have been overwhelmed that others are willing to help them and want nothing in return. Baby Basics is a great example of how the church cares for the needs of people in the community by blessing them and showing God's love to them through the giving of these practical gifts. The Health professionals are also very impressed with Baby basics and enjoy giving out the packs and seeing the reaction of the mums as they receive them.

If you think your church would be interested in supporting Baby Basics Belfast email Jill at jillhamilton@connordiocese.org or phone or text on 07885897022.

Mothers Union family friendly facility at Cork Show

The Mothers' Union in the United Dioceses of Cork, Cloyne and Ross enjoyed a really busy weekend last month at the Cork Summer Show (17-18 June), in the lovely sunshine.

They provided a baby change facility and colouring for kids space – with plenty of room for



Making good use of the Mothers' Union facilities at the Cork Summer Show.

parents and carers to rest or feed babies. This was so much appreciated, and judging by the use made of it, was very popular! Everyone was so busy and the amenity stayed open an extra 2 hours on Sunday – lasting until everyone was packing up!

Thanks to the lovely family with 8 week old twins and big sister, for giving us permission to share the photo of them as they rested and fed the babies!

Meath & Kildare Leprosy Mission reunion



Members of the dioceses who visited India in April of this year had a reunion dinner at The Bishop's House on Wednesday 5 July. It was hosted by Bishop Pat Storey.

The team had visited Karigiri to view some of the work that The Mission to End Leprosy is partnering in with local agencies.

As the team gathered on Wednesday 5 July they were delighted to be joined by Dr Mannam Ebenezer, Sathish Kumar Paul as well as Ken Gibson from The Mission to End Leprosy.

Dr Mannam is an orthopedic surgeon, involved in treating those who suffer from leprosy. Sathish is a physiotherapist who is developing special footwear for those who have feet affected by leprosy.

Derry and Albany youth link visit a success

There were tears aplenty at Faughanvale Presbyterian Church Hall on Saturday afternoon as U.S. participants in Derry and Raphoe Youth's 'On the Move 2017' said farewell to their Northern Irish counterparts. Around 30 young people – from both sides of the Atlantic – had descended on the village of Eglinton, in St Canice's Parish – over the previous week, to take part in the initiative.

Participants are invited to put their faith into action by performing chores such as litter-picking, garden-weeding, fence-painting, and street cleaning. In the process, the young people forge new friendships and get to worship with fellow participants. Diocesan Youth Officer Martin Montgomery oversaw the week-long programme on behalf of Derry and Raphoe Youth (DRY) and Rev Naomi Quinn (Castlederg) led the daily devotions.

On their last day together, the young people were visited by the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Ken Good, and by the Minister of Faughanvale Presbyterian Church, Rev Lindsay Blair. The churchmen joined members of the group for lunch and chatted to them about their involvement in 'On the Move'.

The American contingent came from the Diocese of Albany, which has developed a special relationship with 'On the Move' – participating in the initiative every second year. The foreign visitors were led by Mrs Karen Love, whose husband is the Bishop of Albany, Rt Rev William H. Love.

'On the Move' is the highlight of DRY's calendar. "This event creates lifelong friendships," Martin says, "and at the same time really helps bring faith alive to young people." Martin congratulated the young people who took part in this year's 'On the Move'. "This is a great group of young people," he said. "Their energy and commitment was an inspiration to older members of our team. They have done fantastic work for our host community; they've worked hard; they've had fun; most importantly of all. I hope their faith has been deepened and enriched."

The DRY team thanked Faughanvale Presbyterian Church – and especially its minister, Rev Lindsay Blair – for being such generous hosts, and the community in Eglinton for supporting the initiative.

Mill Hill Fathers are leaving Kilkenny

The Mill Hill Fathers are leaving Kilkenny, having had a presence there and within the Diocese of Ossory since 1932.

“There is a deep regret in the Diocese at the departure of the Mill Hill Fathers. I know the faithful will miss the quiet ministry that was characteristic of the House,” said Mgr Michael Ryan, Administrator, Diocese of Ossory in a statement issued 12 July 2017.

“We appreciate that a Religious Order has to look at its resources of personnel from time to time – the age profile of the members and the shortage of Vocations – and to try to continue to be faithful to the charism of the Order in the prevailing circumstances.”

Mgr Michael Ryan, in association with retired Bishops Laurence Forristal and Seamus Freeman, and on behalf of the priests, religious



and people of the diocese, thanked the Mill Hill Fathers, who are also known as St Joseph's Missionary Society.

FitzGerald Auctioneers and Lisney Auctioneers have put up the "For Sale" notices and the house on the Waterford Road, Kilkenny, is available for viewing. The sale is by private treaty with an asking price of just under €1 million.

The remaining priests – Frs Doyle, O'Connell, McGill and Harney – are expected to move out by the end of September. The *St. Joseph's Advocate* publication has been produced in Kilkenny and dispatched from there. Autumn and Winter issues and the annual calendar are

currently being processed in Kilkenny but will move to Dublin in the coming months.

Back in 1932 Bishop Patrick Collier welcomed the Mill Hill Fathers to open the then Junior Seminary in Uppercourt, Freshford. The seminary remained open for almost 60 years and educated more than 150 young men who completed secondary education and then went on to other houses of formation for their studies for the priesthood.

When the seminary closed the college continued as a post primary school and boarding school which was famous for its annual musicals.

The building and grounds were sold a number of years ago and in 2005 were put up for sale by consultant surgeon Paul O'Byrne, who also operates out of Barringtons Hospital, Limerick. It was described as a 17-bed Georgian mansion that had been partially renovated.

In 1989 the fathers moved to St Joseph's on the Waterford Road in Kilkenny city – the house they are now leaving. As well as producing and distributing their missionary magazine from there, the priests were also available to the diocese to help with the celebration of masses in the city and around the diocese.

“The priests of the diocese, I know, would wish me to thank the Fathers, in particular for their availability (often at short notice) to help with the celebration of masses,” stated Mgr Michael Ryan.

At the time of their Assembly in February 2017, there were 36 members of the Mill Hill Fathers living in the Irish Region.

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