



Church leaders and NI political leaders meet

The leaders of the main Churches in Ireland met with leaders and representatives of the five main political parties in Northern Ireland yesterday (Friday 28 September) at the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Assembly Buildings in Belfast.

The meeting was an opportunity for the Church leaders to discuss their concerns over the impact of the absence of

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devolved government in Northern Ireland and to explore ways in which they as Church leaders might be of assistance to political representatives in facing the challenges that lie ahead.

The Church leaders affirmed the vital place of political leadership in democratic societies and the significant level of personal commitment which that entails for those who seek to serve society in this essential way. In seeking to meet with the politicians, the Church leaders said, “In times of increasing global uncertainty, local leadership is vital to protect employment and essential public services, to give our communities – and especially our young people – a sense of confidence about the future.”

There was a wide-ranging conversation around the need to restore public confidence in the political process and institutions. Major themes arising from this morning’s conversation included the importance of relationships and trust. Leaders reflected on the need to create the space to allow for more constructive public discourse and for new relationships of trust to develop.

The Church leaders present were: Right Revd Dr Charles McMullen (Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland), The Most Revd Eamon Martin (Catholic Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland), The Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke (Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland), Revd William Davison (President of the Methodist Church in Ireland), Revd Brian Anderson (President of the Irish Council of Churches).

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The political leaders and representatives present were:
DUP: Mrs Arlene Foster MLA and Dr Philip Weir; Sinn Fein: Mrs Michelle O'Neill MLA and Mr Conor Murphy MLA;
SDLP: Mr Colum Eastwood MLA and Ms Nichola Mallon MLA; UUP: Mr Robin Swann MLA and Mr Robbie Butler MLA; Alliance: Dr Stephen Farry MLA and Mr Trevor Lunn MLA

Churches must stop patting ex-terrorists on the back

Kenny Donaldson, a spokesman for Innocent Victims United, has appealed to the churches to “speak from a Biblical perspective on matters connected with victims and survivors, and that they should not stray into the role of becoming quasi-politicians.” His challenge to the churches is regarding their submissions to the NI Office legacy consultation and he points especially to three key areas.

In a press statement, Mr Donaldson said -

Innocent Victims United (IVU) has a history of engagement with our churches around victim and survivor-related issues.

Our core message has remained constant throughout: we have insisted the churches must speak from a Biblical perspective on matters connected with victims and survivors, and that they should not stray into the role of becoming quasi-politicians.

Over the recent NIO legacy consultation period (due to expire on Friday, October 5) we have met with, and/or engaged through written communication, with the denominational leaderships and/or working groups responsible for responding to the proposals, and many individual clergy. Notwithstanding the individual proposals and ideas respective denominational churches may put forward, we lay down a challenge to each of them that each of their responses must include the following (which, incidentally, are issues that each

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**An IRA
gunman
displays M60
Machine
Gun on
streets of
Londonderry
in 1978**



have agreed
in private
discussions
with us).

1. The necessity for a change to the current legal definition of victim, and the development of an alternative definition which provides no moral equivalence between perpetrators and the innocents harmed by their actions.

2. The necessity for acknowledgement statements of wrong to be made at the beginning of any new suite of legacy institutions, stating categorically that in the context of Northern Ireland, and notwithstanding grievances experienced or perceived, that there was never justification for the use of criminal violence in the pursuance of or defence of a political objective. This broad acknowledgement statement must be committed to by both the UK and Republic of Ireland and all terrorist organisations and their political annexes.

3. The churches must profess reconciliation can only happen in the context of remorse being expressed, repentance sought, and thereafter a commitment to restitution for what has been stolen away.

Each of the denominational churches must state very clearly these three fundamental points within their respective responses. Without this, there is no foundation which can be built on which can be durable and lasting.

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IVU appeals to the leaderships of the churches, individual clergy from across the Christian denominations, and other spiritual and religious leaders, to advocate for what is right, to advocate for the innocent, and cease being caught up in the merry-go-round of patting people on the back for stopping what they should never have been involved with in the first instance.

Moderator to honour courage and bravery of police and Irish WW1 VCs

In two separate services that will take place in Belfast this weekend (Sunday 30 September) the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Rt Rev Dr Charles McMullen, will honour the courage and sacrifice of police officers from around the United Kingdom and Irish First World War holders of the Victoria Cross.

Recognising the courage and dedication of police officers from across the UK, Dr McMullen will give the sermon at the National Police Memorial Day Service that will take place at the Waterfront Hall. Attended by serving and retired police officers of all ranks, family members of those who lost their lives in the line of duty, civic and government representatives, it will be the fourth time that the service has taken place in Belfast since the inaugural commemoration at St Paul's Cathedral in 2004.

Dr McMullen's final event on Sunday will be to lead a special act of worship to commemorate the Irish recipients of the Victoria Cross won during the First World War. Organised by the Northern Ireland First World War Centenary Committee, the service will be attended by the

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Rifleman William McFadzean (left) from Lurgan and Captain Eric Bell from Enniskillen will be among over forty commemorated at the service

families of the VC holders, veterans' groups, government and political representatives, members of the armed services and forces chaplains.

Speaking ahead of a busy weekend, Dr McMullen said that both services would be poignant occasions. "It is in John's gospel that we find these words of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends'. While his was a unique sacrifice with a unique purpose, the spirit of that selflessness will be remembered at both services this Sunday.

"As they leave their police stations every day, police officers put their lives on the line. Coming together to mark National

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Police Memorial Day, it will be a humbling experience to join with others to acknowledge the courage and ultimate sacrifice of men and women in police forces throughout the United Kingdom in such a special way.

“At the same time, in this centenary year of the ending of the First World War, it is also a privilege to have been asked to take part in this special service of remembrance as we honour the valour of those from this island who won the Victoria Cross during the Great War.”

Brexit at a border diocese synod

In the course of his address to Clogher Diocesan Synod, Bishop John McDowell addressed an issue of immediate and possibly ongoing import - Brexit

He said, “I now want to mention the big word of the moment...Brexit. What I don't want to do is to give you yet another opinion on the subject itself. There are plenty of opinions around about whether it is a good thing or a bad thing and on whether it should be implemented this way or that way. I have tried to keep myself informed as much as I can about the technicalities of what is going on but, the complexities of the subject and the confusion in political life are so great that precise predictions are futile. I know all about Canada++ and about the European Economic Area. I have read far too many books and articles about the European Court of Auditors and the terms on which The World Trade Organisation allows countries to trade with one another. But after reading all that I still don't know what price a drop calf will be in Clogher or Clones Mart this time next

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year never mind at the end of the transition period in December 2020.

“However one thing is certain. One way or another Brexit will be a very significant development which will take many years to work through. It has particular importance for people who live in Fermanagh, Tyrone and Monaghan not simply because these are Border counties but because they are counties of small farmers and small businesses who have only very limited resources to respond to a period of economic adjustment. It is important that communities help one another through what might be a bit of a bumpy ride and that our very particular needs as a region living right on the edge of the United Kingdom, Ireland and the European Union are borne in mind.

“As with all unprecedented and complex processes there has (in my own opinion) been a strange mix of both

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exaggeration and complacency in the claims and discussions around the whole subject. But one undoubted danger is that the relationship between the two governments under whose care the different parts of this diocese sit, and for whom we pray week by week, will become much more strained. The peace which we enjoy in NI today is to some degree dependent on the improvement which took place in UK–Irish relations at government level dating back over forty years. The fact that both countries also belonged to the same trading block no doubt helped to align our interests and the United Kingdom and Ireland were usually strong allies when arguing their case in Europe. They had the same set of interests in trade and had many other things in common. To adapt an old proverb, familiarity with one another bred “consent”.

“It is impossible to say at this stage exactly how divergent or similar that trade policy will be in the future. But however close or far apart it ends up, the well being, material and otherwise, of the people of this diocese will remain tied up together across different jurisdictions. Remember it is more important that we have a future than that we had a past and that as a Diocese which has a permanent presence on both sides of the Border we should do our best, by the words we use and the gestures we make, to bring a distinctive Christian contribution to the whole matter. A contribution that recognises that the spiritual life needs some sort of a material basis on which to live and that our overwhelming vocation is to reflect the character of God as revealed to us in Jesus Christ in all that we say and do.”

The full text of Bishop McDowell’s address is available at -

[September 29, 2018](https://www.ireland.anglican.org/news/8299/clogher-diocesan-synod)

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New Organ Recital Series at Armagh

On Sunday 14 October 2018, Dr Stephen Timpany will give the first in the new organ recital series in St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral, Armagh. Stephen is the Director of Music and Master of the Choristers at the Cathedral. His forty-five minute recital will start at 4.15pm. Admission is free, with donations to the Choir Fund greatly appreciated.

Stephen's programme will include Concerto in C BWV 594 by Johann Sebastian Bach, Pastorale by César Franck and Variations on 'The Old Hundredth' by Denis Bédard. In speaking about his choice of music, Stephen said, "The recital will consist entirely of pieces by European composers, J S Bach and Franck representing Germany and France, with a slight imposter Bédard, who is French Canadian. Incidentally Bach's Concerto in C is actually his arrangement of a piece by Vivaldi, so Italy is represented as well! While J S Bach and Franck are mainstays of the organ repertoire, Bédard is a contemporary composer who combines the best of the German and French traditions with his own unique style."

As Director of Music at Armagh Cathedral, Stephen has invited organists to take part in the new recital series which will run until May 2019.

The Dean of Armagh, the Very Revd Gregory Dunstan, said, "Stephen's choice of music for the opening recital of the

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2018-19 season fits very well into this autumn of the European Year of Cultural Heritage. His inclusion of work by Bédard also recalls a concert by the Allegra Singers of Vancouver in July, who brought a distinctly Canadian voice to music in the European tradition. We look forward to the craftsmanship and sensitivity that is a hallmark of all Stephen's playing in the Cathedral."

The next recital will be given by Revd Dr Peter Thompson on Sunday 25 November 2018.

Border parishes fear Brexit will lead to dark days of past warns Archbishop Martin of Armagh

Ireland's border communities fear border structures and barriers becoming magnets for violence in the wake of a hard Brexit, the Primate of All-Ireland has said.

Speaking to The Irish Catholic about his trip to Poland this month for the Council of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe, Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh said several of his fellow bishops expressed their concerns about Brexit and he had explained how crucial the European movement has been to Ireland's peace process.

In his comments, the archbishop tried "putting a human face on the sort of high level senior negotiations" that took place between EU leaders in Salzburg last week, he said.

Dr Martin had explained how "the solidarity of other European countries formed a very important backdrop and canvass upon which the Irish peace process was written",

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he said, noting how John Hume had understood this especially well and had “effectively used the European platform to bring us beyond the kind of squabbles and narrow understanding of nationalism which could itself engender strife and division”.

Struggles

“Hume was very much somebody who spoke about our common belonging to Europe as something that lifted us beyond the interior strifes and struggles that could happen between near neighbours. In other words, he was about bridges rather than borders,” he said.

The archbishop said he has used the theme of bridges not borders in speaking to his fellow European bishops

The October issue of the Methodist Newsletter is now available



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about solidarity, noting how he had grown up close to two of Derry's major border checkpoints between the North and the Republic, "which were heavily fortified and which themselves became symbols of division and therefore attracted violence, attacks, and indeed death and destruction".

"I therefore expressed the nervousness of the communities that live on the border that any return to border structures and barriers could attract violence and could become sparks or tinderboxes for strife once more," he said.

Dr Martin noted that his own Archdiocese of Armagh is divided by the Irish border, with roughly 40% of his flock living in the Republic and 60% living in the North. Other bishops, he said, were intrigued by this and by how there are Irish parishes divided by the border, with this being "quite unusual" in Europe.

The gathering in Poznan was attended by bishops from 39 European bishops' conferences. Report courtesy The Irish Catholic

Moderator's 'Criminal Justice Day'

For the first time, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's (PCI) principal partners in its work in the criminal justice system came together recently to look at different aspects of the Church's work in this important area.

The 'Moderator's Criminal Justice Day' brought together the Head of the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS), the Deputy Governor of Maghaberry Prison and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland's (PBNI) Assistant Director and

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The Moderator Dr Charles McMullen with Ronnie Armour Director General of the Prison Service (left) and Governor Dave Kennedy (right) at Maghaberry Prison

Director of Rehabilitation. The aim of the day was to strengthen relationships while providing an insight into the work of each other's agencies in the context of PCI's engagement at specific points in the criminal justice system.

Hosted by the Moderator, Rt Rev Dr Charles McMullen at [Thompson House](#), the denomination's approved hostel for offenders in north Belfast, those attending then spent the afternoon at HMP Maghaberry.

“For me personally it was an unforgettable day, as we were with many people in the system who society would probably rather forget. It was also eye-opening to see a side of the work and ministry of our Church that I hadn't

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fully appreciated, and most of us never see,” Dr McMullen said.

“The commitment of the staff at Thompson house in supporting ex-prisoners, working in partnership with the prison and probation services was impressive. I was so struck by how the team there looked at the whole person offering, in a non-judgemental way, practical support alongside the hope that comes with the love of Christ. I also valued the opportunity meet with some of the residents.”

During the afternoon, the Moderator accompanied by his

wife Barbara, travelled to Maghaberry in County Antrim and met with the prison governor, senior staff, prison officers and prisoners - along with members of the chaplaincy team led by PCI’s new lead chaplain, Rev Graham Stockdale.



100th Anniversary WWI
Celebration Concert
Friday 9th November 2018
Waterside Theatre : 7.30pm
Featuring
Swingtime Starlets - 40's Wartime Hits
The Soda Popz - 50s/60s Tribute Band
The Iconettes - 70s Motown
Rev David McBeth - Country Music Hits
Kildoag Pipe Band - World Champions
Hamilton Flute Band - 3 Times Flute band of the year
Tickets Available from Waterside Theatre

Followed by an Act Of Remembrance
Conducted By Royal British Legion

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seeing the work of the chaplaincy team, there was a great sense of purpose and pastoral care which has given me a deeper appreciation of prison chaplaincy and the good that it does. Having met the governor and prison officers I was also impressed by their commitment and the fact that chaplaincy is very much a part of the prison service and in some respects a 'failsafe'. It was also a privilege to be permitted to pray for a number of the prisoners.

"Being inside the prison also reminded me that we are all prisoners until we experience the release and freedom that we find at the foot of the cross. It was a memorable day all round," Dr McMullen said.

The Church, through its [Council for Social Witness](#), seeks to deliver an effective Social Witness service on behalf of the denomination. Council Secretary, Lindsay Conway, who accompanied the Moderator, said that the main aim of the informal gathering at Thompson house was to strengthen the already existing good relationships that exist between PCI, the prison and probation services.

Registered with the Criminal Justice Inspectorate, which undertakes regular inspections, Thompson House provides supported housing to 19 male offenders who are referred by the Probation Board as being in need of approved accommodation. At the hostel behaviour can be managed and monitored in the interests of public safety until permanent accommodation can be sourced.

"The Criminal Justice Day, the first of its kind, afforded us an opportunity to bring together colleagues in both services and talk about the common aspects of our work. We also

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discussed the volunteering programme, Fresh Start that is being introduced in Magherry and Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre near Bangor” Mr Conway said.

“As a Church we have a long association with the prison service and the probation service and there is a genuine mutual respect for the work that one another does in the criminal justice sector. It was therefore appropriate that we met at Thompson House, where many aspects of that work come together.”

News briefs



At the institution of the Rev Canon Stephen Fielding as rector of St John's, Malone, are: From left, the Rev Kevin Graham, South Belfast Rural Dean; the Rev Canon Stephen Fielding; the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, Bishop of Connor; the Rev Clifford Skillen, Bishop's Chaplain, the Ven Dr Stephen McBride,

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Archdeacon of Connor; the Rev Canon William Taggart, Diocesan Registrar, the Ven Paul Dundas, Archdeacon of Dalriada, and the Rev Canon Gary Hastings, preacher.

+++Institution at Malone - The institution of the Rev Canon Stephen Fielding as rector of St John's, Malone, Belfast, took place on Wednesday September 26. The preacher at the well-attended service was the Rev Canon Gary Hastings, rector of Holy Trinity, Killiney, and Canon Treasurer of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin. Stephen was previously rector of Agherton Parish, Portstewart. A native of Londonderry, he has a degree in Economics and Geography from the University of Ulster at Jordanstown, and worked as a geological technical assistant in London before studying theology at Trinity College, Dublin. After his ministry training he was nominated to the parish of Bangor Abbey, Diocese of Down, and served as a curate there for four years. In 1997 he was appointed rector of the parishes of Templepatrick and Donegore, Connor Diocese. He moved to Agherton Parish in April 2007. Stephen was a Minor Canon of St Anne's, Cathedral, Belfast, from 2002 until his appointment as a Canon of the Cathedral earlier this year. He is married to Julia and they have two children, Christopher and Sarah.

+++Christ Church, Derry, thanksgiving - The vandalism attack on a Church of Ireland church in Derry last year which left an organ and an ornate stained glass window extensively damaged was disgraceful in every way. Widespread support was offered to the congregation at Christ Church on Infirmary Road in the wake of the outrage and a major renovation programme was quickly organised. All the work has now been completed and a special service of thanksgiving, to be attended by the Church of Ireland

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Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rev Ken Good, will take place weekend.

+++Revised history for Jordanstown Parish 150th anniversary - St Patrick's Church in Jordanstown started to commemorate a major milestone with the launch of an updated version of the church's history last night. The book, which reflects 150 years of worship and praise in Jordanstown, was launched on Friday, September 28. The Church of St Patrick was consecrated on August 15 1868 by the Right Reverend Robert Knox, Church of Ireland Bishop of Down, Connor and Dromore. The church has been described as an architectural gem and it is built in the Celtic tradition reflecting the origins of Christianity on this island. Much has happened since 1868. Jordanstown has changed from a place in the country into a virtual suburb of Belfast. Once a close-knit community, it is now a very diverse neighbourhood. A beautifully illustrated history of the church and parish has been updated for the major anniversary. The book was launched in the main church hall at St Patrick's on the Jordanstown Road, in the presence of a number of distinguished guests including the Bishop of Connor, and the Mayor and Chief Executive of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council.

+++Derry and Raphoe Diocesan Synod - The Derry and Raphoe Diocesan Synod will take place in An Grianan Hotel, Burt, Co Donegal, on 24th October 2018. Proceedings will commence with a service of Holy Communion at 2pm, with Synod Business starting immediately afterwards at 3 pm. It is expected that the day's business will be completed by 9pm.

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+++Publication on Catholic hot-button issues - David Quinn reviews 'How to Defend the Faith Without Raising your Voice: Civil responses to Catholic hot-button issues' by Irish Catholic Editor Michael Kelly and Catholic journalist Austen Ivereigh (Columba Books, €14.99).

It is available for purchase here: <https://columbabooks.com/.../how-to-defend-the-faith-without.../>

+++Christ Church, Strabane to celebrate link with Cecil Frances Alexander - will celebrate its close links with the renowned hymn-writer and poet, Mrs Cecil Frances Alexander, at an evening of music and song marking the 200th anniversary of her birth. The evening of music and song will begin in Christ Church at 7.30pm on Friday October 12th. Music will be led by Mr Roy Adams MBE, and everyone is welcome to attend. The great East Window in Christ Church was dedicated by Mrs Alexander and her siblings in memory of their mother and father. She married her husband, Revd. William Alexander, in the old parish church at Patrick Street in 1850. The couple's marriage certificate and the communion chalice used at their wedding remain in the parish to this day. A hymn used at the consecration of the current parish church, on the Bowling Green, in 1879, was penned by Mrs Alexander.

+++Limerick Diocesan Schools' Service - The Diocesan Schools' Service was held in Saint Mary's Cathedral, Limerick, on Wednesday 26th September at 11.00 a.m. and was extremely well attended by over 300 pupils and teachers from schools throughout the United Diocese. The theme of the service was 'You are the Light of the World' and in the sermon given by the Revd Canon Peter

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Campion, Chaplain to The Kings' Hospital School, Dublin, we were reminded to think about the value and importance of being lights in the world and showing others the good that we do. The theme of the service was further reflected in the readings, prayers, music and songs recited and performed by the children. Pupils from all 11 schools participated in the service and the preparation and time given by the teachers and pupils alike in rehearsing for the service is greatly appreciated by the committee. During the service a collection was taken up in aid of Barnardo's amounting to over €400. Following the service and lunch, the pupils had an opportunity to explore the Cathedral in detail.

Mr Peter Barley provided the musical accompaniment.

+++Belfast Pets Service - Belfast Cathedral will once again open its doors to animals, birds and insects of all shapes and sizes when it holds its second annual Pets' Service on Sunday September 30 at 3.30pm. Daft dogs, curious cats, beautiful budgies, pretty parrots, gorgeous guinea pigs and all creatures great and small are welcome
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to bring their owners along to this service which will feature a special blessing of the pets. The Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev Stephen Forde, explained that the service is being held close to St Francis of Assisi Day, traditionally celebrated on October 4. The service is inspired by St Francis' love of animals. "In today's technological world, it's easy to forget how important animals are for so many people," Dean Forde said. "A guide dog is a blind person's eyes. Hearing dogs can be an essential companion for those who are deaf. Rescue dogs play a critical part in finding survivors lost on the mountains or trapped after an earthquake." The Dean added: "The benefit of pets visiting those living in residential homes is also increasingly recognised. Pets provide a real source of companionship for people who live alone, or simply a reason for exercise for those who need to walk more! "In all these ways, pets and animals are a blessing to us as humans. So it's right for us to celebrate the part they play in our lives at this year's Pets' Service, and to share God's Blessing with the animals of God's good creation." This will be a short service featuring appropriate music on the organ and from the Cathedral Choir. There will be readings, and each individual pet will receive a blessing. It will be a relaxed and fun service. Pets shouldn't stress if their owners misbehave! At the service the welfare of the animals is the owner's responsibility. Free parking is available beside the Cathedral for anyone attending the service.

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