

World News

Bible readings in modern Greek

Churches in Athens have been told by Archbishop Christodoulos, head of the (Orthodox) Church of Greece, to organize Bible readings in modern Greek, following concerns that worshippers do not know the old form of the national language traditionally used in services.

Christodoulos is anxious that the young especially do not understand this form of Greek and cannot follow services, the Greek daily newspaper, *Eleftheros Typos*, reported. It said a pilot scheme would start with services in a number of churches in the Athens area.

New Testament texts will first be read in the original language, a version of Greek spoken from the late fourth century BC to fifth century AD, and will then be read again in modern Greek, after the church gained approval from its Holy Synod for the change.

This is a "major step for a Church that clings to its traditions", the English-language newspaper *Kathimerini*, said.

Tucson diocese files for bankruptcy

The Roman Catholic diocese of Tucson, in the US state of Arizona, has become the second diocese in the US to file for bankruptcy because of legal costs related to sexual abuse scandals. The first was Portland, Oregon.

The diocese is reportedly more than US\$4 million in debt. It has already settled 11 abuse lawsuits for US\$10 million but still faces 22 additional cases.

Bishop Gerald F Kicanas has said the diocese is still committed to settling the suits but that bankruptcy was the only way it can find an equitable way to do that while still continuing its religious work. The Survivors' Network of those Abused by Priests disputes this claim. "Prudent people will remain sceptical," they have said. Bishop Kicanas maintains it represents the best opportunity for healing and for the just and fair compensation of those who have suffered sexual abuse by workers for the church.

Bonhoeffer commemorated

The German Protestant theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, hanged in 1945 for his opposition to Adolf Hitler, has been commemorated in Denmark by the country's Lutheran church.

The commemoration took place on 28 August on the Danish island of Fanoe where 70 years previously Bonhoeffer had taken part in a key international church gathering which denounced the pro-Nazi "German Christians" and gave support to the Confessing Church which grouped German Protestants opposed to Hitler.

The 1934 meeting was notable for a sermon by Bonhoeffer in which he challenged the churches to take "the weapons from the hands of their sons" and proclaim "the peace of Christ against the raging world" – which five decades later inspired the World Council of Churches to launch a programme for justice, peace and protection of the environment.

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