

# Church News Ireland

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DUP MP hailed as unlikely ally by right-wing Catholic traditionalists - Belfast Telegraph

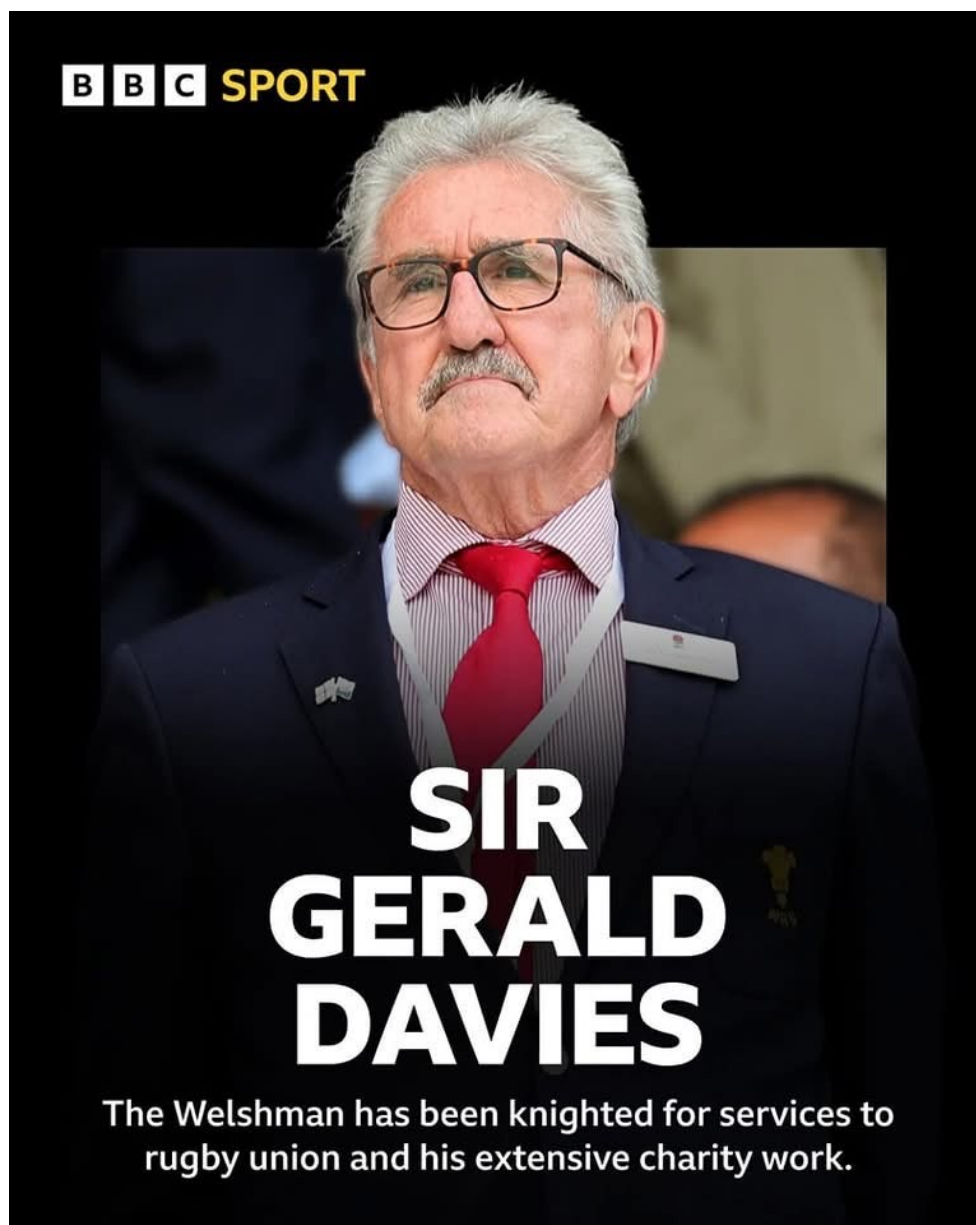
TUV attacks 'spin' from church leaders welcoming the fact Stormont is up and running again - News Letter

### **Speaking to the soul -**

Short reading and a prayer daily on this site

## Image of the day – Congratulations

Congratulations to the Royal Irish's **Pipe Major Colour Sergeant Alan Taggart** on being awarded the King's Volunteer Reserves Medal in the New Year Honours' List. Very well deserved.



**A Welsh rugby legend and Vice President of Morriston Orpheus Choir** was rightly honoured with a Knighthood in this year's New Year's Honours.

**Sir Gerald Davies** - "A true gentleman. We couldn't

be more proud to have such strong bonds with this superstar. Richly deserved, Sir Gerald. Congratulations". - **Morriston Orpheus Choir**

## News

### **Christmas insights in Down from Multan diocese in Pakistan**

**The Diocese of Down and Dromore delighted to receive some photos from Bishop Leo Paul in their link diocese of Multan in Pakistan.**

A photo gallery on the D & D web site shows : young students enjoying Advent celebrations with Bishop Leo and his wife Honey at the B.N. Paul Bible School; pastors holding copies of the lectionary outside the Cathedral of St Mary's The Virgin; nativity scene at the Cathedral following the Christmas Cricket Competition for Women; releasing balloons with a Christmas greeting and finally Bishop Leo addresses a large Christmas March rally at the Cathedral. See -

[\[https://www.downanddromore.org/news/2024/12/advent-and-christmas-celebrations-in-multan\]](https://www.downanddromore.org/news/2024/12/advent-and-christmas-celebrations-in-multan)

### **Archdeacon moved by support for fire struck Antrim church**

**Archdeacon Dr Stephen McBride, Vicar of Antrim said the parish had been delighted to welcome local MP, Robin Swann, to the service held in the Parish Centre on the Sunday after the fire.**

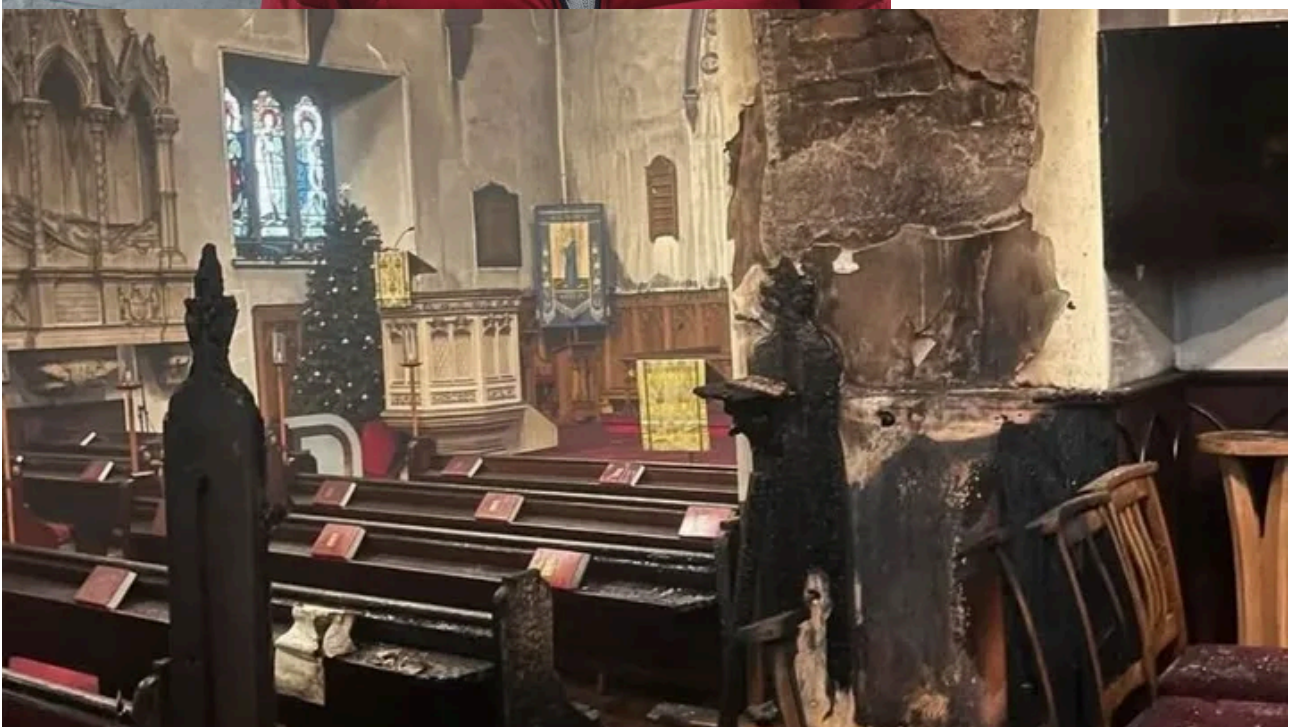




Archdeacon McBride commented; “When Robin came in through the door on Sunday morning and hugged me, it is a moment I will never forget.”

He added: “The messages of support have been so encouraging and uplifting and help ease our pain.”

The fire was



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discovered on Friday December 27 when one of the parish flower arrangers went into the building to put in some flowers for the Sunday services.

To make a donation to the All Saints' Fire Damage Repair Fund click this link.

[\[https://www.gofundme.com/f/all-saints-parish-church-antrim-repair-fund\]](https://www.gofundme.com/f/all-saints-parish-church-antrim-repair-fund)

## Cathedral Calls

### Armagh Men's Shed's cathedral model to feature on 'Your Place and Mine'

**The six-foot long model of St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral, lovingly created by members of the Armagh Men's Shed group, will be featured this Saturday morning (4th January) on BBC Radio Ulster's Your Place and Mine. The programme will be broadcast from 8.05am and available afterwards on the BBC website at this link.**

The model, which also includes the Crypt, was created over the last year and designed using photographs and drawings of the building following numerous site visits. It is 6 feet and 3 inches in length and 4 feet and 6 inches wide, and has working internal lights, and is on display in the Cathedral on the Hill of Armagh – a place of Christian worship since the





5th century when the site was given to St Patrick for building his 'Great Stone Church'.

Armagh Men's Shed has also created models of other famous churches in Armagh, including St Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral; the group is a community-based



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organisation with a focus on providing a safe, friendly and inclusive social environment for men of all ages.

The programme on BBC Radio Ulster will be broadcast from 8.05am and available afterwards on the BBC website at this link.

[<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0026mxw>]

## Clergy and ministry

### Are you Armagh folk in the habit of making New Year Resolutions?

**Maybe it's a bit early to be thinking about what you might change in 2025! But here's something to think about now, to pray about, and to respond to early in 2025.**

Is God calling you to serve in some way in his Church. Do you sense that you would like to return the love of Jesus by following him into his service? If so, even if you have only started thinking this way, come along to our 'Exploring Ministry Group', the Armagh Diocesan Fellowship of Vocation.

It's a bit of a mouthful, but basically it's an opportunity to come together with other like minded people to chat about ministry in your parish, our diocese or indeed the wider Church of Ireland.



You may sense a call to ordained ministry, to lay ministry, to pastoral ministry, or just aren't sure. Come along to Castlecaulfield Parish Hall on Thursday January 9th at 7:15pm. We know this may mean putting yourself out a little, but ministry is about serving God and others, and involves a little sacrifice.

A request was made for these meetings also to be held via zoom, but perhaps an online gathering would present less opportunity to get to know people, chat intimately and support each other. So this ,meeting is in-person. But please do make it known if the absence of a zoom gathering is preventing your attendance

If you've queries, speak to your Rector or contact Colin Darling, Diocesan Director of Ordinands or Gary McMurray, Warden of Readers. Contact details are on the diocesan website: <https://lnkd.in/eSuCH8Pn>

## Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

### A Christmas bedtime story

**Willowfield Church, in the Diocese of Down and Dromore, has produced a very special bedtime story first shared on Christmas Eve, which can bring a smile to everyone this season.**



Wriggle into your PJs, cuddle up with your favourite teddy, drink some hot chocolate and listen as Craig Knight reads A Very Noisy Christmas.

[<https://youtu.be/daZWJbKR8Ag>]

## Heritage

### Littlecote Roman Villa

Another large Roman villa has been excavated near Hungerford, Berkshire. It had more than sixty rooms, many with hypocaust heating. It also had two thermae and several detached workshops and barns. It is now known as Littlecote Roman Villa.

The villa was discovered in 1727 by a landowner who was digging postholes. He eventually uncovered a beautiful



mosaic floor before burying everything again. In 1976, the mosaic was rediscovered, removed and restored. It is called the Orpheus mosaic and is one of the finest ever found in Britannia.

## In the media

### **DUP MP hailed as unlikely ally by right-wing Catholic traditionalists**

*Orangeman says people shouldn't be shocked by his Latin mass stance*

**A veteran DUP MP and Orangeman is being hailed by right-wing Catholic traditionalists after he pressed the**

## **Westminster Government about its attitude to the Latin Mass, Sam McBride writes in the Belfast Telegraph**

Strangford MP Jim Shannon — whose party founder mocked transubstantiation during a ferocious Oxford Union debate in 1967 — asked the Foreign Office if it would raise with the Vatican the future of the Tridentine Mass pilgrimage to the French city of Chartres amid fears that it would be stopped.

In an illustration of how dramatically NI has changed, Mr Shannon said he had raised the issue on behalf of Catholic constituents and he didn't think people should be shocked by his interest in the Catholic theological debate.

In a written Parliamentary question tabled last month, the Strangford MP asked Foreign Secretary David Lammy “whether he has had discussions with the Holy See on the future of the Tridentine Mass at the Chartres pilgrimage in France”.

Last summer saw 18,000 pilgrims walk from Paris to Chartres Cathedral — a 20-hour journey — to demonstrate their devotion to what had once been a declining aspect of Catholicism.

A revival in the popularity of the historic ceremony has not been universally welcomed within a church which since the reforms of the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s has been attempting to modernise its services.

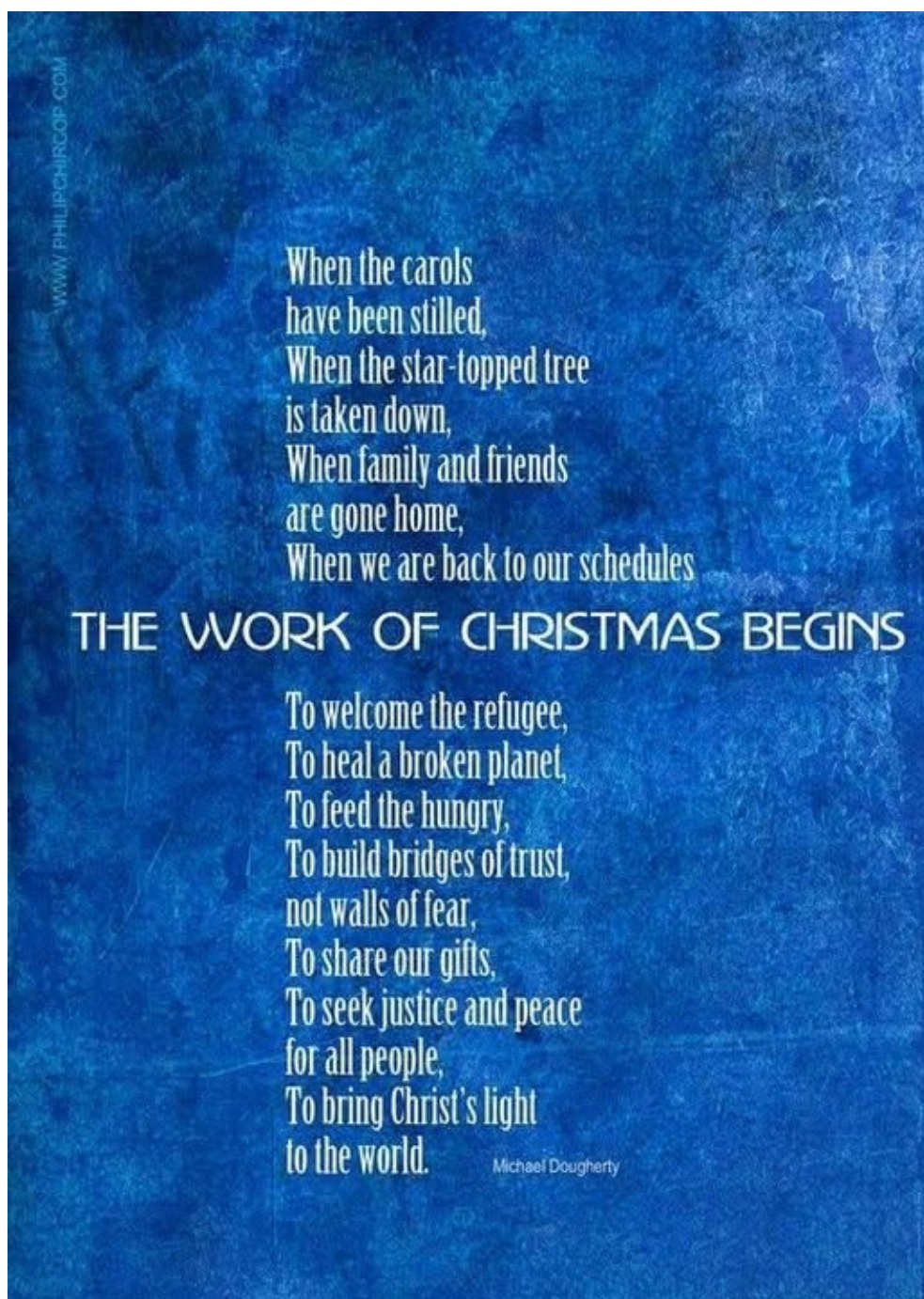


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In 2023, the liberally-minded Pope Francis restricted use of the ancient liturgy because he said it was “being used in an ideological way” and involved “a nostalgic disease”.

The Vatican is reportedly considering a sweeping ban on the Latin Mass, prompting dismay from traditionalists.

Last March, the Tory peer Lord Moylan, a traditionalist Catholic, said after attending “a wonderful Tridentine



Maundy Mass” that he wouldn't say where it was lest the church authorities have it stopped.

He said: “I'll just say that English Catholicism has a centuries-old tradition of underground Masses. All that has changed is who's persecuting us.”

Damian Thompson, another devout Catholic who is an associate editor of the Spectator, said he couldn't understand why Lord Moylan was “the only parliamentarian drawing attention to this mean-spirited persecution”.

Now the issue has been raised from the unlikelyst of quarters, to the bafflement and delight of some conservative Catholics.

Mr Shannon told the Belfast Telegraph: “We've had lots of correspondence on this.

“I don't really understand why people should be shocked by it. I chair the All-Party Parliamentary Group For Freedom of Religion or Belief so it's not unusual for me to ask a question which is pertinent to that.

“There are [in Strangford] many devout Roman Catholic constituents and many of them vote for me. They asked me this question, I asked the question...my job is to represent them and I try to do that.

“I've always prided myself in working for everybody; it's who I am.”

Mr Shannon, who described himself as “a fair-minded unionist”, said that he believed the issue of abortion — on which the SDLP and Sinn Féin have shifted radically in recent years — has significantly increased his support from traditional Catholics who otherwise would not be supporting him.

He said that in last year's General Election he was surprised to see the number of votes which he was getting from several areas.

He said that over the last 10 years he had increasingly been told by some Catholics that on “moral issues where they and I would share the same commitment and belief, they feel that I probably better represent them on those things”.

Mr Shannon's intervention has made him an unlikely hero to those keen to retain the Latin Mass.

The US-based conservative Catholic website LifeSiteNews reported that a “Protestant politician from Northern Ireland asked the British Government in the House of Commons if they would intervene with the Holy See about the future of the Latin Mass”.

Given that the issue is a religious one, the Foreign Office response to Mr Shannon's question said little, diplomatically telling him: “This is an internal matter for the Catholic Church. We continue to engage the Holy See regularly bilaterally and in multilateral fora on areas of mutual interest.

“Most recently, on 27 November Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner met Cardinal Parolin, with whom she discussed homelessness, inter-faith dialogue and climate.” Nevertheless, LifeSiteNews hailed it as “a noteworthy development” and commenters on the site expressed admiration for the DUP man.

One said: “It seems we now have to pin our hopes on Protestants to save Catholicism”. Another said: “That a Protestant politician seemingly holds the Latin Mass in higher esteem than some Catholics is an eye-opener.”

Two years ago, Mr Shannon secured a Westminster debate on the persecution of Christians in parts of Africa, Asia, the Middle East and elsewhere.

Writing on the website of the cross-party Parliamentary group which opposes religious persecution, Mr Shannon said that although he is a Protestant Christian, his concern is that those of all faiths or none should be free to live in peace.

He said: “In my role as chair of the all-party group on international freedom of religion or belief, I campaign on behalf of all who are persecuted, not just Christians, because I am a Christian and I believe that my God loves everyone.

“That is why I, and all [MPs] present, believe that it is our duty to speak out not only for those of Christian faith, but for people of any faith and of course, just as important, those who do not profess a faith at all.”



## **TUV attacks 'spin' from church leaders welcoming the fact Stormont is up and running again**

**The TUV has attacked a joint statement from Northern Ireland's main churches, which welcomed the return of Stormont, Adam Kula reports in the News Letter**

The party suggested that the statement might as well have come directly from the Northern Ireland Office, which has long taken the view that a restored Stormont is a must.

The joint church statement was signed by the leaders of the Catholic Church in Ireland, the Presbyterian Church, Church of Ireland, and Methodist Church, as well as the president of the Irish Council of Churches – an umbrella group encompassing all the above churches, and more.

Issued as a New Year's message, it read: "In Northern Ireland we are grateful to have witnessed the restoration of devolved government in the last year, with the Executive and the Assembly sitting once more at Stormont. To govern means making decisions and often difficult choices."

The restoration of Stormont was a controversial move on the part of the DUP in January 2024, because some unionists remained unsatisfied with the ongoing existence of the Irish Sea border under the Protocol.

Then-leader Sir Jeffrey Donaldson argued the party had secured enough concessions (in the form of the Safeguarding the Union deal) to warrant the move –

something what was and remains strongly opposed by the TUV, which argues that Northern Ireland remains a “colony” of the EU under the deal.

In response to the church joint statement, the TUV said: “In light of the fact that the Northern Ireland Office has been using the four main churches as subcontractors for their press work since at least the 1980s there is nothing terribly surprising in this statement.

“For that reason alone one suspects that few will pay any attention to what they have to say.

“However, if one were to look at the substance of the message it will be noted that they say that to govern is to take responsibility and make difficult choices.

“The reality is that just a few weeks ago the majority of MLAs voted to shirk that responsibility and surrender control of 300 areas of law to people no one in Northern Ireland votes for.”

This is a reference to the vote on December 10 in the Assembly, which voted 48 to 36 to continue the status quo regarding trade arrangements for at least another four years.

The chamber was split along the lines of unionists who opposed the plan, and the SDLP, Alliance and Sinn Fein who supported it.

The TUV concluded: “Regardless of what the church leaders say, there are many who see through the spin and

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recognise the fact that disenfranchising the younger generation by taking away the rights their parents had to influence the laws to which they are subject by way of elections does not represent progress.”

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## Church News Ireland

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