



Free drinks for priests following fancy dress mix up

A group of priests in Cardiff celebrating an ordination faced an embarrassing mix up over the weekend after being confused for a stag party in fancy dress.

The men were asked to leave by a bartender at the City Arms and after originally thinking it was a joke, the priests attempted to prove their profession before making for the exit. As they were leaving they were approached by a member of staff who realised they were telling

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the truth. His apology was greeted by a round of applause from locals.

Speaking to WalesOnline, Matt Morgan, assistant manager at The City Arms, said: "When we realised our mistake we quickly apologised to the priests and thankfully they were all great sports and saw the funny side of the situation.

"We offered them a free round of drinks and they were happy to stay and continue their evening in the pub.

"Our Rev James ale is one of our most popular beers so it was great to have a real-life Reverend James and his fellow priests enjoying a pint or two! In a statement, the Archdiocese of Cardiff said: "We'd like to thank the City Arms for being good sports through all of this and their kind gesture to our seminarians - and please note a number of our clergy, including the Archbishop of Cardiff, frequent your bar so don't turf any more out please!"

Dispute over plan to demolish Presbyterian Church in Mid Ulster

Castlecaulfield Presbyterian Church could be at the centre of a planning battle after Mid-Ulster

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Council backed a proposal from a Government department to have the building listed, despite preliminary plans being lodged by the church to have it demolished.

Mid-Ulster Council had previously received a preliminary notice from the church proposing its demolition, with construction of a new church across the road, to the rear of the Acheson Hall. This work would have allowed the church's graveyard to be expanded to include the ground currently occupied by the church building.

It would have also seen the construction of a new creche with additional car parking and associated landscaping.

This preliminary notice, known as a Pre-Application Discussion (PAD), has not yet been followed up with a formal planning application.

It was lodged by the church on 4th November, 2016.

However, Mid-Ulster Council has now given its support to plans to have the church building, which dates back to 1842 listed, following a request from the Department for Communities' Historic Environment Division (HED).

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The church is of a Romanesque / barn style design, with a painted, roughcast rendered walling, set within its own mature grounds.

What has attracted the admiration of the HED is that while it is "modest in appearance, with restrained detailing and simple proportions" it "is a well maintained, good example of a mid-nineteenth century rural Presbyterian architecture".

The HED report also states the building is "much enhanced by its churchyard setting, containing a variety of memorials and sandstone obelisk".

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It further says the church is "of social interest" as it "has been central to both the physical and spiritual life of the village for generations".

Councillors were asked at a meeting of its Planning Committee if it supported the proposal from the HED.

They were advised that doing so would be on the basis that it "would preserve the character and appearance of the townscape of Castlecaulfield" but were warned that "the listing of the Church would have an impact on how the site could be developed".

And Councillors were advised by the Council to support the proposal to have the building listed. (Report courtesy the Tyrone Courier).

Belfast sexton to tackle his second Everest Marathon

Ken Tate, Sexton at St George's Parish Church, Belfast, will revisit the Himalayas to take part in his second Everest Marathon this November.

Completing this challenge will be a tremendous undertaking for Ken whose last ultra-marathon was in Madagascar in 2014

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Ultra-marathon runner Ken Tate outside St George's Parish Church, Belfast, where he is Sexton. Ken is now in training for the Everest Marathon in November.

Since then, Ken has satisfied himself with walking, including a 150km hike along the Camino de Santiago, but the temptation of doing a final Everest Marathon was just too much for the Belfast man.

Ken took up running in his forties, and did his first marathon in Belfast on his 50th birthday. Since then, he has participated in various city marathons, and his adventure races and ultra-

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marathons have taken him to many international locations.

Now, despite admitting his toughest challenge ever was the Everest Marathon he completed 10 years ago, Ken is all set to do it again!

There have been 16 Everest Marathons since the first one was held in 1987. Starting at Gorak Shep at 5184m, close to Everest Base Camp, and finishing in the Sherpa 'capital' of Namche Bazaar at 3446m, this is considered the world's most spectacular race.

There is likely to be snow and ice at the start of the course and along the 26.2 mile route the terrain is very varied with boulders, grass, sandy scree, stone staircases, trails through forest and exposed paths along the mountain sides. Additional hazards include narrow suspension bridges and yak trains. The course is not marked and each runner has to learn the route on the trek up.

In order to acclimatise naturally to the high altitude, each competitor takes part a 15 day trek in the Everest region which allows time for high altitude training under medical supervision. Before the race most people will climb both Gokyo Ri (5483m) and Kala Pattar (5623m).

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Ken will be raising funds for the charity which organises this unique race – the UK-based Everest Marathon Fund. The Fund supports charities in Nepal, one of the poorest countries in South Asia. The people continue to battle the effects of the devastating earthquakes of April and May 2015.

The Fund gives its money to charities which already have a continuous development programme and work with local people at grass roots level, spending very little on administration. Since 1987, the Fund has raised more than £630,000. Learn more about the [Everest Marathon Fund here](#).

Evidence of the poverty people in Nepal live in was all around him when he was last in Nepal, and Ken said the situation had been made worse by the 2015 earthquakes.

However, deciding to enter something like this and being accepted to compete are two different things. Ken's previous participation would have stood him in good stead, but his application last November had to be supported by doctors' certificates confirming his good health and evidence that he will in fact be fit enough to compete in this challenge.

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To allow for acclimatisation, all competitors have to commit to 26 days in the region.

Ken said: “The number of runners is limited to 75 non-Nepalese with up to 20 Nepalese runners. Taking into account our non-runners and medical staff we will have a trekking group numbering around 100 plus Sherpa porters and guides.”

The challenge has many risks – one of the main dangers is Acute Mountain Sickness which can be fatal. “Our medics will have a portable hyperbaric chamber which can provide life-saving emergency treatment to those suffering from the most serious forms of Acute Mountain Sickness,” Ken said.

After completing the 2007 Everest Marathon he said he would never do it again. “To me it was a once in a lifetime experience, but then the opportunity came up again this year and as it is the last chance I will have to take part [there is an upper age limit] I decided to apply. I also felt that this would give me the opportunity to contribute something to Nepal, particularly after the earthquakes.”

He anticipates the 42km will take him at least twice as long as a normal marathon. “It is a long, long race along terrain that goes up and down,

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up and down. I think it will take me around eight hours,” he said. “In ’07 I was running with a broken shoulder and this slowed me down a little. This summer I’m staying well away from motorcycles, push bikes and skis!”

The race itself is the easy part, according to Ken. “The difficult part of the whole endeavour is getting to the start line in good health. That is why we spend so much time trekking in. It is critically important that we are properly acclimatised.

“This time round I have a good idea of what’s involved which makes what I am attempting to do even more lunatic!”

Ken, however, is no stranger to running in extreme conditions. In Mongolia, for example, the Sunrise to Sunset ultra-marathon took place during the country’s brief summer and covered 100km in one day. An adventure race in Mali, west Africa, was run over six stages on varying terrain, while a Sahara run, another staged event, had different challenges. “We had to run in deep sand on a couple of stages, while other parts were quite mountainous,” Ken explained.

You can sponsor Ken online by visiting www.virginmoneygiving.com/kentate or make a donation at St George’s Parish Church.

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Priest ordained for Derry diocese

A former speech therapist who is fluent in Mandarin Chinese was ordained to the priesthood on Sunday to serve in the diocese of Derry.

Thirty-three-year-old Fr Malachy Gallagher from Coleraine, Co. Derry is a former student of the Irish College in Rome and St Malachy's Seminary in Belfast.

His parents, Colum and Teresa Gallagher, his sister Lisa and brother Gerard attended the ceremony in St Mary's Church, Drumagarner, Kilrea, Co. Derry.

In his homily, Bishop Donal McKeown told the new priest that celibacy and simplicity of lifestyle are not the impositions of a harsh Church; rather they are an invitation from a loving God.

“Whether we are married, celibate, ordained, consecrated or single, we will be salt to the earth and light to the world only if we live as if we believed that life here is not as good as it gets.”

He urged the new priest to live “the sort of life that will inspire generous young people to do beautiful things for God” because today's culture gives young hearts little to dream about.

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“We tell them just to have fun and to do whatever you think – and each person is left to find some paltry value in a life lived without values.”

Dr McKeown told Fr Gallagher that his lifestyle would be a protest against the “stifling hedonism” that is presented as the best that can be hoped for.

The Bishop of Derry urged his diocese’s newest minister to use his talents to bring people to Jesus and not to put himself in the way.

His role as teacher, sanctifier and leader would involve “constantly getting your hands dirty and scarred”.

He appealed to him to “Labour with the sweat of your brow for only then can you have the smell of the sheep.”

Fr Malachy Gallagher qualified as a speech therapist from the University of Ulster.

He spent time as a seminarian for the Diocese of Derry in St Malachy’s Seminary, Belfast, and at the Pontifical Irish College, Rome.

He then spent some years in formation with Divine Word Missionaries in Chicago and Taiwan.

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He has spent the last year as a deacon in the Parish of Templemore in Derry City.

Parish readers commissioned for Donegal group



The Rev Suzanne Cousins, Bishop's Curate in charge of the Moville Group of Parishes, led a Service of Holy Communion in Greencastle on Sunday evening during which four new parish readers were commissioned for Moville, Donagh, Culdaff and Cloncha.

The service was held in St Finian's Church, overlooking Lough Foyle and the fishing port of Greencastle. The four new readers are all

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women: Dorothy Carey, Linda Parke, Rosina Allen and Valerie McKinlay.

The Preacher, Rev Bob Wray, commended the new readers for stepping out of “their comfort zone” and answering God’s call to serve.

He concluded, “I was told a long time ago that God does not call those who are equipped. He equips those who are called. It’s a difficult concept to accept – to step outside your comfort zone. These four people tonight have stepped out from their faith being something private between them and God into the public arena. That takes courage. That takes commitment, to stand up in front of people and say this is who I am and this is what I believe in.”

Music for the service was provided by the Northern Lights Choir.

Royal Mail’s new stamp shows WW1 life saving Bible

Britain’s Royal Mail have issued a postage stamp featuring the life-saving Bible of Private Lemuel Thomas Rees. Rees served with the 6th Battalion of the South Wales Borderers Regiment. During the Battle of Passchendaele, a

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A British postage stamp featuring the life-saving Bible of Private Lemuel Thomas Rees.

German shell landed close by, throwing shrapnel through the air.

Rees was seriously injured by the explosion, but his life was saved when a Sunday School Bible he had been given years earlier, and which he kept in his breast pocket, stopped shrapnel from

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piercing his heart. After four months in a field hospital he was repatriated back to the UK.

But it wasn't a happy ending for Rees. After returning to the Western Front, he was wounded in a gas attack and died from bronchial pneumonia and the effects of gas on 13 November 1918 – two days after the Armistice had been signed.

Vicar under police investigation dies after 'setting fire to himself'

A senior C of E vicar has died after allegedly 'setting fire to himself' in his Hampshire rectory.

Rev Martyn Neale, 60, was under police investigation and was found dead on Tuesday in the village of Hawley.

A member of the Church of England's governing general synod, Father Neale was described by colleagues as a 'thoughtful, caring man' and had worked in the parish for 20 years.

His congregation was told two weeks ago he had been suspended by the Diocese of Guildford 'as a consequence of an ongoing

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police investigation', according to the Mail on Sunday but no details were given.

The diocese said in a statement this weekend: 'We were very sorry to be informed by police late on Tuesday of the death of a man at the Rectory in Hawley, believed to be Father Martyn Neale, who was Rector of Hawley and Vicar of Minley in the Diocese of Guildford.

'Father Neale had been suspended last week as a consequence of an ongoing police investigation,' a statement confirmed.

'The Diocese of **Guildford** is giving pastoral support in the parish, and we are praying for all those who are affected by these tragic events,' it added.

Hampshire Police stated it was not conducting an investigation. Surrey Police also denied it was investigating but could not reveal which force was doing so.

Father Neale was not married, lived alone and was a member of the traditionalist Anglo-Catholic pressure group, Forward in Faith, which opposes women priests.

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Hampshire police have said the death was not being treated as suspicious and a coroner's file was being prepared and inquest expected later this week.

Pope prefers staycation over vacation

Pope Francis said he will skip luxury life in the papal villa and stay in the Vatican guesthouse instead after revealing he hasn't taken a formal holiday since 1975.

According to The Times, his last holiday was when he left Buenos Aires with a group of fellow Jesuits.

He said: "I do take holidays but in my own habitat.

"I change rhythm. I sleep more, I read things I enjoy, I listen to music, I pray more . . . and this is restful for me."

Pope Francis said he would rather stay in the Casa Santa Marta for a time of rest and relaxation.

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He explained, waking up later than his usual 4.45am, saying a private Mass, and reducing business meetings and public appearances is enough of a holiday for him.

The Times said the pope attributed his frugal outlook on holidays to the fact he didn't grow up with a silver spoon in his mouth.

Francis worked in a shoe factory during the school summer holiday and worked in a chemistry laboratory to help with living costs while at university.

The Pope is due to visit Colombia next month.

CNI