

Will Pope Francis appoint a female cardinal? Not as crazy as it seems

Irishwoman shortlisted as a potential nominee by prominent American priest

That question may not seem as fanciful in the months ahead, with a trail-blazing new pope leading the way for the world's Catholics.



Linda Hogan, an accomplished professor of ecumenics at Trinity College Dublin (TCD), listed as a possible choice for a female cardinal by top theologian

[Pope Francis](#) has often said he wants to see greater roles for women in the church, and progressive Catholics are arguing that he could take a significant step in that direction by appointing the first women to the College of Cardinals.

Known as the 'princes of the church', historically it's an exclusively male group that casts secret ballots in a conclave to elect each new pope.

But just last year, New York [Cardinal Timothy Dolan](#), the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops who is known for his conservative outlook, was asked during an interview on Catholic television whether a woman could be named a cardinal. Dolan agreed that it was 'theoretically' possible, adding:

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'You know, in fact, get this, and I've heard it from more than one person, that one time somebody said to Blessed John Paul II, 'You should make Mother Teresa of Calcutta a cardinal.' And the pope said, 'I asked her. She doesn't want to be one.'

If Pope John Paul II could consider it, it seems likely that Francis could do likewise, assuming he that finds a woman willing to say yes.

Speculation began last month when an article in a Spanish newspaper written by Juan Arias, a former priest who writes from Brazil, claimed that the idea 'is not a joke. It's something that Pope Francis has thought about before: naming a woman cardinal.'

Arias quoted an unnamed Jesuit priest (Francis is himself a Jesuit) who said: 'Knowing this pope, he wouldn't hesitate before appointing a woman cardinal... And he would indeed enjoy being the first pope to allow women to participate in the selection of a new pontiff.'

Those comments are how the speculation began. The the Catholic media in Italy wrote that in the months since Francis' election, he has demonstrated that he's a dramatic departure from his more conservative predecessors.

Responding to the building momentum Father James Keenan, a fellow Jesuit at Boston College, started a post on his Facebook page recently by reportedly soliciting nominees for the first female cardinal.

According to the National Catholic Reporter (NCR) one of the top names on Keenan's list is Linda Hogan, an accomplished professor of ecumenics at Trinity College Dublin (TCD).

Hogan was appointed to the position in September 2011 and also has overall responsibility for education and research at the university. She coordinates strategic planning, research, undergraduate and postgraduate education, quality and the student experience.

The TCD Professor reportedly teaches on a range of modules including Ethics in International Affairs; Human Rights in Theory and Practice; Gender, War and Peace and Ecumenical Social Ethics.



Two new representative canons have been appointed to the chapter of St Patrick's cathedral. Dublin. The Dean of Derry, the Very Revd Dr William Morton, has been appointed to represent the Diocese of Derry & Raphoe in succession to the Ven. Scott Harte, and Canon Patrick Harvey, Rector of Abbeylax, will represent the Diocese of Cashel, Ferns & Ossory, in the place of the Very Revd Dr Philip Knowles.

RM Stratford, took part in the service as did his children with his daughter, Amy reading a lesson.

Dublin ordination

The Revd Niall Stratford was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Michael Jackson at a service in St Matthias' Church in Killiney-Ballybrack, on All Saints' Day, November 1.

Niall serves as a curate (NSM) in the parish and parishioners, family and friends filled the church to wish him well on the next stage of his ministry. His father, the Ven



The Archbishop preached the sermon and focused on the call to ministry and journeys in faith. He said the process of discernment could be a long one and should be undertaken with "eyes open and ears pricked up".

He said there were wonderful journeys of faith in where people "develop and blossom, where they find a rhythm of life which is both priestly and human, where God works through people who remain like us. And yet they do things with and for people in ways whereby they are not better than others, but in ways whereby



they show the grace of God in a style and shape which is authoritative and changes lives of individuals and cultures for the better”.

“This is the overwhelming story of calling, equipping and serving to which so many committed people, lay and ordained, give voice country-wide, hour by hour and day by day,” he added before sparing a thought for those for whom it did not happen.

Following the service, the rector, the Revd William Olhausen, said it had been a joy to work with Niall and to celebrate his ordination with him. He said that Niall’s first celebration of Holy Communion would be on November 10 at 10.30 am after which the parish would make a presentation to him.

Niall said thanked all who had been part of his journey to ordination, reserving special mention for his family, children and wife, Vivian. He thanked all who had prayed for him along the way and all who were involved in yesterday evening’s service.

Training for healing ministry

‘Divine Healing Ministries’ will hold a training course for those who would like to be involved in the healing ministry on five Thursdays in May 2014 (1, 8, 15, 22, 29) at 8.00 pm.

Training will be led by Brother David Jardine and team. There will be no charge, but on the last night people may give a voluntary donation

churchnewsireland@gmail.com

Venue: St. Anne’s Cathedral Hall, Donegall Street, Belfast.

Early enquiries are welcome. Please telephone (028) 9031 1532 or email: divinehealing@live.co.uk

Renaissance’ in concert at St Finnian’s

‘Renaissance’, directed by Ian Mills, will be giving a concert in St Finnian’s, Cregagh, at 7.30 pm on Saturday 9 November.

Suggested donation £10.00. Refreshments will be served.

All proceeds in aid of the Building Fund and the Church Choir, to include refreshment afterwards. *You are warmly invited.*

‘Which Way?’ Mission

St Jude’s, Ballynaveigh, welcomes Roger Murphy as the guest speaker at their ‘Which Way?’ Mission from 2–10 November 2013.

As a Church Army Captain and an evangelist with ‘Through Faith Missions’, Roger frequently leads missions across England and Ireland and is familiar to many in the diocese. Roger’s family roots are in Coleraine but he lives in Warwick with his wife Jill.

The parish has put together a great programme of events to bring the gospel message to as many people as possible.

Choral Evensong tomorrow live from Canterbury Cathedral

BBC - Wed 6th November (rpt Sun 10th November)

Introit: There is an old belief (Parry)

Responses: Richard Lloyd

Psalms: 32, 33, 34 (Hurford; Buck; Parry; Vann; Atkins)

First Lesson: Proverbs 3 vv27-end

Canticles: Gray in F minor

Second Lesson: Matthew 18 vv21-end

Anthem: Lord, thou hast been our refuge (Vaughan Williams)

Hymn: Earth's fragile beauties (Kingsfold)

Organ Voluntary: Adagio in E (Bridge)

David Flood (Organist and Master of the Choristers)

David Newsholme (Assistant Organist)

Alex Caldon (Trumpet)

Priest prayed with Disappeared man hours before he was 'executed' by IRA

The first Disappeared victim whose body was found 24 years after his murder prayed with a pair of rosary beads given to him by the man in charge of those who would soon execute him, it has been revealed.

Aine Fox in the News Letter - Martin Molloy, the brother of north Belfast man Eamon, who was killed in Co Louth in 1975 by the IRA who claimed he was an informer, has spoken of his meeting with priest Fr Eugene McCoy who was called to hear Eamon's confession before he was murdered.

In a moving recollection Martin, speaking to the BBC, said Fr McCoy, who met the churchnewsireland @gmail.com

family when Eamon's body was discovered in 1999, told them of the 21-year-old's final distressing hours in a mobile home in a field in Louth.

He had asked to see a priest and have his last confession heard, and Fr McCoy had been invited to the scene under the auspices that there had been an accident.

When he got there Fr McCoy saw some men in the group outside playing football, and found Eamon in the caravan lying with his hands and feet bound.

Martin said Fr McCoy had argued with the IRA to let Eamon go, saying he was innocent but that "fell on deaf ears".

The priest recalled how one of the men, who seemed to be the commander of group of 12-13 people present, had taken a pair of rosary beads from his pocket and given them to the priest so they could say the rosary.

When Eamon's body was found he was clutching a cross in his right hand, Martin said, adding that the knowledge a priest had been with him near the end had given the family some consolation.

Eamon had written two letters, one for his mother and one for his wife, and asked that the family were assured he was innocent of the IRA accusation.

Martin said the thought of why the Fr McCoy had not gone to police at the time had "crossed my mind" but he realised it "wasn't easy for the priest".

"I'm sure he (Fr McCoy) went through his own turmoil and struggle of being in a situation not of his making. I think it had an impact on him," he added.

Fr McCoy died 10 years ago. A major new documentary on The Disappeared was broadcast on BBC One last night.

Blasphemy offence should be replaced in the Constitution, says Convention

The Constitutional Convention has voted for the replacement of the offence of blasphemy in Bunreacht na hÉireann with a general provision to include incitement to religious hatred.

The Journal.ie - Following meetings over the past two days, the Convention's 100 members voted by 61 to 38 against keeping the offence of blasphemy in the Constitution as it is currently worded, with 1 per cent undecided.

Rather than removing the offence altogether, the members voted by a margin of 53 to 38 to replace it with a general provision to include incitement to religious hatred which would protect religious minorities.

Asked if there should be a legislative – as opposed to a constitutional – provision for the offence of blasphemy, members voted by 50 to 49 against this with one person undecided.

Members were also asked that if the Convention favoured legislative provision should it be the existing provision – controversially put into law four years ago – or a new set of provisions to include incitement to religious hatred. They voted 82 to 11 in favour of the latter.

Members heard from academics and legal experts over the weekend with roundtable discussions and feedback sessions.

Interest groups such as Atheist Ireland, the Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland and the Irish Council for Civil Liberties were also heard from.

A report will be now compiled and presented to government which will then be required to make a decision on what action to take and whether to hold a referendum within four months.

The Convention also considered what issues it should next examine on foot of public submissions and the outcome of a series of public meetings currently taking place.

The issues arising from the submissions and meetings include the environment; economic, social and cultural right; Church and State; political and institutional reform; the family, and issues of morality; and a Bill of Rights.

Retailers oppose church shop plan

Independent retailers have formally objected to part of a major development being planned by a Ballymena church.

BBC News NI - Green Pastures church owns a 97-acre site at Ballee, on the edge of the town, where it has proposed a scheme to include houses, a hotel, a nursing home and a 67,000 sq ft supermarket.

The NI Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA) has said it "strenuously objects" to the retail element of the scheme.

In a letter to the Planning Service, NIIRTA stated that the proposal would damage the town centre as well as other village centres in the Ballymena area.

NIIRTA said the supermarket would most likely be occupied by Asda, as Ballymena already has large Tesco and Sainsbury's stores.

Its letter claimed that the retail scheme breached several planning policies, mainly those aimed at protecting town centres...

....However a retail study compiled for Green Pastures said that the scheme would "enhance choice and competition" and that the loss of trade experienced by the town centre will be "within acceptable limits".

It estimated that the development would "divert" about £8m annually from the town centre - equivalent to about 6% of trade.

It added that the development's main impact would be on the nearby Tesco and Sainsbury stores, estimating a diversion of about £20m - equivalent to about a third of their trade.

Project Nehemiah

The Green Pastures church was founded in 2007 by Pastor Jeff Wright, a member of the Ballymena bus-building family.

It has a regular congregation of about 900 people.

The new complex will be known as Project Nehemiah, named after the Old Testament figure who rebuilt Jerusalem.

Read more:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-24805406>

Switchers' schism a divine Irish mystery

The row over 'polyester Protestants' reveals the bizarre nature of our nation's religious life, writes Eilis O'Hanlon in the Sunday Independent.

There are times when the only honest response is to throw up your hands in bewilderment and admit that you haven't the faintest notion what's going on. Sunday Independent- That's very much how it was all last week with the ongoing row about so-called "polyester Protestants". What decade is this again? The Fifties? Who even talks like that any more?

The answer, at least according to Church of Ireland prelate [Michael Jackson](#), is: Plenty of members of his own church. Writing in the Irish Times recently, the archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough even claimed that there was a "cultural apartheid" still at work in Ireland and that too many Protestants were dismissive of Catholics, more dismissive still of former

Catholics who joined the Anglican church, and unkind to fellow Protestants who married outside the faith.

Suddenly those nice Protestants don't look so charming anymore. Visions of a militant wing of the Church of Ireland, hunting down apostates, swim into view. They're the new IRA: Irish Revolutionary Anglicans. Seizing power in Ireland with a vicarage tea party in one hand and a bring-and-buy sale in the

other. No surrender to polyester. They'll be starting internecine feuds with the Baptists next.



St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin - The National Cathedral

It's almost tempting, in fact, to suggest that this picture is so removed from reality that the Fermanagh-born Jackson must be mixing up his native [Northern Ireland](#), where sectarianism remains the one sport followed enthusiastically by both traditions, with the more sedate 26 counties, where that sort of open hostility between Christian factions hasn't been in vogue for decades.

I certainly have no personal experience of such attitudes south of the border. In the North, my children went to a Catholic primary school. Down here they went to a Church of Ireland one. Nothing was ever made of my own Catholic background, or the fact that they, not being baptised at all, belonged to no faith whatsoever.

The subject of religion never came up in the playground. Or anywhere else. Families were a mix of Protestants, Catholics, bit-of-both, others, none of the above. Either the Protestants I know must be very mild-mannered, or they've been keeping their bigotry well-hidden. As for Catholics down here, they're surely too busy fighting with their own church to have energy left over for despising anyone else's.

Nonetheless, it would be patronising to suggest the archbishop doesn't know what he's talking about – though that didn't stop many indignant Protestants writing to the Irish Times last week to do just that. If Michael Jackson insists there's still a disdainful attitude towards "polyester Protestants" within the Anglican tradition, we'll just have to assume that he's seen and heard it with his own eyes and ears.

If so, it's a depressing indictment of those who feel this way that they're still allowing prejudices long past the sell-by date to poison their thinking. Unless, that is, the real cause of tension is not religion at all, but snobbery?

Some certainly seemed to be suggesting last week that any disdain for lapsed churchnewsireland@gmail.com

Catholics drifting into Protestant denominations out of a lack of sympathy with their own church's views on homosexuality, the ordination of women, and so on, really comes down to middle-class Protestants in higher-end housing not wanting their refined little world messed up by Christianity's answer to the Bash Street Kids.

Even that doesn't seem to make much sense, though. Most of the switchers from Catholicism to Anglicanism tend to be the ones in high-end housing, with children in private schools, themselves. They know what fork and spoon to use. They read the Irish Times. They play rugby. They holiday in Tuscany. They'd fit in fine. They wouldn't ruin the neighbourhood.

Working-class Catholics, by contrast, have either abandoned the church altogether, or stuck with it through thick and thin. Mere snobbery is no explanation.

Perhaps the real mistake is in trying to make sense of it at all. If you're outside the tent of any particular religion, understanding the strange goings on beneath the canvas must always be an impossibility. Other people's religious sensibilities are as bizarre as their political preferences.

More so, because tastes in religion, even more than politics, so often come down to temperament rather than logic, inclination instead of argument. Within those distinct groups, tensions can run very high for reasons that are not immediately apparent to outsiders.

Much hatred, little room.

It is worth noting, however, that the few examples of open disdain towards members of the same church last week came not from Protestants contemptuous of their polyester brethren, but from Catholics irritated by those leaving Rome for a new home.

One letter in the Irish Times even hoped that rebel priest Fr Tony Flannery would set up his own sect so that Catholics who weren't really Catholics at all would go forth and multiply there. That way, it said, "the Olivia O'Learys of Ireland would have somewhere more welcoming to go on Sunday between Sunday Miscellany and The Marian Finucane Show." What on earth was that all about? What had O'Leary done to suddenly become the public face of dissatisfied liberal Catholics?

Again, it felt like being in a town where everyone speaks a different language and you don't even have a dictionary on hand to translate and understand the wild passions which seem to be erupting over nothing.

Never more so than when a former Dean of St Patrick's (another Northerner, interestingly)* wrote to the Irish Times in defence of his archbishop and said that it was time for Protestants to "have done with religious segregation and participate fully in public and political life".

I'm lost. Isn't that what they're doing anyway? You know, out here in the real world? I'm certainly struggling to identify any of these Protestants apparently keeping their heads down, staying schtum, for fear of not being accepted into Irish life.

I'd say such Protestants were a figment of the imagination, were it not for the fact I now realise the religious life of this great nation of ours is as mysterious and beyond understanding as quantum physics.

Perhaps we just all need to get out a bit more? It's worth a shot.

**CNI note - whilst Dean Victor Griffin is resident in Northern Ireland, his roots were firmly in the Republic*

Prayer for Today

God of truth, help us to share your wonderful story no matter how difficult it can be sometimes. Amen.

– Eternity for Today