



## Retirement of longest serving Irish bishop and ecumenist



Pope Francis has yesterday accepted the resignation on age grounds of the longest serving bishop in the country – Bishop Anthony Farquhar, Auxiliary Bishop of Down and Connor diocese. Bishop Farquhar was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Down and Connor in 1983 and many of his years since his priestly

ordination have been sent against the backdrop of the Troubles.

Bishop Farquhar was ordained a priest on 13 March 1965 and his first appointment in the Diocese was to the parish of Dunsford and Ardglass that following September. In March 1966, he was appointed as Chaplain to Musgrave Park Hospital alongside Chaplaincy to Forster Green Hospital and St Patrick's Training School, Glen Road. In September 1966, Bishop Farquhar was appointed to the staff of St MacNissi's College, Garron Tower where he taught until 1970 before taking up an appointment as Assistant Chaplain at Queen's University Belfast. In 1975, he became Chaplain and Lecturer to the New University of Ulster as well as Chaplain to the Dominican College in Portstewart. On 15 May 1983, he was ordained as an Auxiliary Bishop of Down and Connor.

Bishop Farquhar has confirmed approximately 70,000 young people and would probably be best remembered for these ceremonies. He often spoke to the young people of his motto: *Sapientia Proficere* (Increase in Wisdom) or as he would frequently translate it for the young people: *Grow up and Wise Up*.

Bishop Farquhar's work outside the diocese was mostly in the field of ecumenism and he enjoyed a wide range of ecumenical friendships particularly that with the late Reverend Ray Davey who founded the Corrymeela Community which, coincidentally, also celebrated its Golden Jubilee this year.

Bishop Farquhar served as an appointee of the Holy Father as a member of the International Anglican Roman Catholic Commission on Unity and Mission (IARCCUM). Again he served as Roman Catholic Co-Chairman of the Dialogue between the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC). Bishop Farquhar chaired the Commission on Ecumenism of the Irish Episcopal Conference when he steered it to take up its associate membership of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI). He served as one of the Roman Catholic representatives at the most recent Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops from around the world (2008). In 2008 his ecumenical work was acknowledged in an ecumenical Festschrift with contributions from leading ecumenists in these islands and around the



world including a contribution by Cardinal Walter Kasper.

Commenting on his retirement, Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh said: “On behalf of the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference I wish to express best wishes to Bishop Anthony Farquhar whose resignation as Auxiliary Bishop of Down & Connor was accepted by Pope Francis today. I know from first-hand knowledge that Bishop Farquhar is held in great affection by people throughout the country. He has touched many lives since his priestly ordination in 1965, and episcopal ordination in 1983, as a teacher, lecturer, chaplain and in the area of inter-Church and inter-faith relations. At Bishop Conference meetings we shall miss Bishop Tony’s intelligent and informed contributions. A profoundly spiritual pastor, he has an innate understanding of the human condition, and his God-given gifts of warmth, wisdom and empathy leave a lasting impression on all with whom he comes in contact.”

Bishop Noel Treanor, Bishop of Down and Connor said: “On behalf of the Diocese of Down and Connor I pay tribute to Bishop Tony Farquhar on this occasion of his retirement. Bishop Tony

has served the Diocese of Down and Connor and the Irish Episcopal Conference faithfully for over 30 years, being one of the youngest bishops ever ordained in Ireland back in May 1983. He has greatly contributed towards and will be best remembered for his involvement in the field of ecumenism and the promotion of understanding and reconciliation both nationally and internationally. Indeed, it was within this ecumenical context that I first had the pleasure to meet Bishop Tony along with the late Dr David Stevens, former leader of the Corrymeela Community, having invited them both to address the European Conference of Bishops in Brussels on the subject of the role of the churches in reconciliation and peace building.

“Over the past seven years of my ministry with him as bishops of Down and Connor, from the first moment of my arrival into the Diocese, I have experienced his warm support, pastoral wisdom, guidance and insightful knowledge of the diocese. His many and impressive connections with the world of sport and the opportunities that these friendships have opened up for him were personal talents that I deeply appreciated as part of his pastoral vision.

“On this day when the Holy Father, Pope Francis accepts the retirement of Bishop Tony, together with the priests and laity of the diocese and its parishes, I thank him for his years of faithful ministry and I pray that he will have many years of good health to enjoy his time of retirement during which he will continue to grace the parishes of the diocese with his smiling and hope-filled presence.”

Speaking on the occasion of his retirement Bishop Farquhar said: “I would be the first to acknowledge the support and encouragement of the late Cardinal Daly, as Auxiliary to whom I was appointed at the same time as Bishop Patrick Walsh. I worked closely with Bishop Walsh for 25 years when the pastoral challenges that we faced together forged a close friendship which has remained. I acknowledge the support of Bishop Michael Dallat RIP, alongside whom I subsequently worked; of Bishop Donal McKeown and of course in more recent times of Bishop Noel Treanor. It is to the great family of Down and Connor, Bishops, Clergy and Laity that I would wish to acknowledge my greatest debt, to my native parish of Holy Rosary and of course to the deceased members of my family and my sister, Anne. I am pleased that I have been able

to maintain my interests and hobbies – perhaps most of all my interest in student sport and university football in particular.”

Archbishop Eamon concluded by assuring Bishop Farquhar of his prayerful support and wishing him “the best of health, a long retirement and God’s blessing now and always”. Archbishop Eamon said “Bishop Tony’s loss to the Bishops’ Conference is the gain of Irish sport as he will have more time now in his roles as president of Queens University Association Football Club and as patron of the Irish Universities Football Union, not to mention his beloved Dundee United!”

## **1916: Presbyterians to hold major reflective conference in January**

Two seminal events in Ireland’s history, the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme, will be the focus of a major conference - *‘The Future of Our Past: Remembering and Reassessing 1916’* - to be held in Belfast by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) in the New Year.

The Republic of Ireland’s Minister of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys

TD, will join former Presbyterian Moderator and minister in Co. Dublin, Dr. Trevor Morrow for the event. Leading Irish history academics Dr. Fearghal McGarry and Professor Keith Jeffery from Queen's University and author and commentators Dr. Ruth Dudley Edward and Eamonn Mallie will seek to explore the events of 100 years ago and discuss how they came to exert such a central place in how Ireland views its past and present. The conference will also look at wider questions around current relationships in Ireland that have been shaped by the events of 1916 and address ways in which conversations about the future can be reformed.

## **Ecumenical Carol Singing at The Mansion House Dublin 2015**

The Annual Ecumenical Carol Singing on the steps of the Mansion House, Dawson Street, (organised by the Diocesan Council for Mission and the Archdiocese Office for Evangelisation & Ecumenism) will take place on Saturday December 12th at 2.30 pm. The singing will be led by Crumlin Community Choir ([St. Agnes' Community Centre for Music and the Arts](#)).

There will also be seasonal readings given by The Lord Mayor, Eileen Dunne (RTE), Ger Brennan (former Dublin Inter-County Player and All Ireland Winner) and Iva Beranek (Church's Ministry of Healing).

Everyone is invited to come and join in the singing of favourite carols and seasonal songs. This all takes place beside the Live Animal Crib.

## **Derry Door of Mercy opens for Holy Year**

Bishop Donal McKeown will open the Holy Door in St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry, on Sunday 13th December 2015, at 12.30pm. Everyone is invited to be present at the solemn opening of the Holy Door. In the words of Pope Francis - the Holy Door will become a Door of Mercy through which anyone who enters will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons, and instils hope.

Everyone is invited during the Holy Year to make a pilgrimage to the Cathedral to enter through the Holy Door. A Jubilee Indulgence will be gained by those who make pilgrimage through the Holy Door.

Speaking about the Jubilee Indulgence Pope Francis says - "A Jubilee also entails the granting of indulgences. This practice will acquire an even more important meaning in the Holy Year of Mercy. God's forgiveness knows no bounds. Despite being forgiven, the conflicting consequences of our sins remain. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, God forgives our sins, which he truly blots out; and yet sin leaves a negative effect on the way we think and act. But the mercy of God is stronger even than this. It becomes indulgence on the part of the Father who, through the Bride of Christ, his Church, reaches the pardoned sinner and frees him from every residue left by the consequences of sin, enabling him to act with charity, to grow in love rather than to fall back into sin."

## **Methodist President Condemns Proposed Protest**

The Rev. Brian Anderson has issued the following statement in the light of the planned protest against refugees by a 'Protestant Coalition':



"As a Christian leader, I am calling on the organisers, even at this late date, to reverse their decision to hold this protest. At the heart of the Protestant faith there is God's grace and love which we are called to demonstrate in our words and actions. A constant reminder in the Bible is God's call to 'welcome the stranger and seek their welfare' and in accepting refugees into our country we are doing just that.

“Along with other right thinking people I utterly condemn the proposed protest meeting organised by 'The Protestant Coalition'. What would Irish people seeking to escape the Great Famine would have done if people in the countries to which they went seeking a new beginning had told them to 'go back we don't want you here', or how would America have become the 'melting pot' of nations."

## **Community Christmas Tree Festival - a first in Maynooth**

This year the spirit and goodwill of Christmas is coming early to Maynooth. It comes in the form of a Christmas Tree Festival to be held in St Mary's Church of Ireland, Maynooth from the 25th to

29th November. It is the brainchild of Church of Ireland churches from Dunboyne, Dunshaughlin and Maynooth.

This will be the first time such an ambitious event has been held in the area and it will involve the whole community. The Festival, which in some ways could be compared to a flower festival seeks to tell the story of Christmas and the story of the local community through the medium of Christmas trees. Visitors can journey through the Christmas story as well as the story of the local community as told through the medium of Christmas trees.

Each tree will be uniquely made or decorated to tell its part in the Christmas story. One of the most exciting aspects is the way it involves the whole community in finding a new way to tell its story.

Not only will the three host Churches provide trees, other local Churches will also take part. As well as that local schools, businesses and community organisations will also be taking part, to create something eye catching. Imagine a bookshop that creates a tree made of books or a garage producing a tree made of tyres.

The aim of the Christmas Tree Festival is to create a community celebration, at the same time as raise funds for the host Churches as well as helping with charitable giving. There is no Admission charge but visitors are invited to give a donation.

Santa's Grotto and a Nativity scene add to an air of celebration. The Festival opens with an opening Service on the Wednesday evening at 8.00 p.m. The church will be open for viewing on Thursday and Friday from 2.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. Alongside the trees there will be a mini-Christmas market on the Saturday from 10.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m., as well as live music at various times throughout the Festival.

The Festival concludes with a Christmas Songs of Praise on Sunday afternoon at 4.00 p.m.

## **Oxford diocese's suggestions for a manly Christmas don't go over well**

Yesterday, the Diocese of Oxford in the Church of England (#nottheonion) posted a list entitled

“Ten Tips for a Man-Friendly Christmas Eve Service,” bylined the Reverend Paul Eddy, who attempts to address the problem of male attendance at worship – “less than 30 per cent of the adult attendance in a typical Anglican congregation,” except when Christmas Eve rolls around, and hence the opportunity to reel them back in. He offers 10 suggestions, including:

1. Keep the sermon/talk brief. No more than 15 minutes. Tell a great story.

5. Talk about the adventure and danger of the Mission Christ had. Tell the story of a martyr.

7. Employ masculine imagery and language.

8. Play a video clip from an action film as a metaphor.

10. Present Christ the man rather than Christ the infant, and focus teaching on Christ’s power and mission, rather than just his meekness and gentleness.

Plus an extra suggestion:

Oh and one big mistake: Many churches build their Christmas Eve services around adorable

little children dressed as angels. Parents crowd the stage area, snapping pictures. 'it's for the children,' is the message given. Well, maybe, but it is also for mum AND dad. We need to be careful that the annual visit to church by men doesn't perpetuate their myth that Church and faith is for women and children. This is NOT to say that some Christmas cuteness will drive men out the door – of course not. Dads also like to see their children engaged and having fun – just let's not overdo it!

By this morning, the post had disappeared, replaced by the message "Well, this is embarrassing"

## **Poor and homeless get star treatment at Vatican movie premiere**

The usual fanfare that comes with the world premiere of a movie is pretty standard: the lights and cameras, the celebrities walking down the red carpet and screaming fans trying to catch a glimpse of their favourite actors. At the Vatican, however, a movie premiere is not your typical star-studded event.

The world premiere of Call Me Francesco, the first film based on the life of Pope Francis, took place in the Vatican audience hall and those considered celebrities in the eyes of the Pope were in attendance.

“To this exceptional premiere, the Holy Father wished to invite the poor, the homeless, refugees and the people most in need, together with the volunteers, religious and lay people, who work daily in charity,” a statement from the papal almoner’s office said.

David, one of the thousands of homeless people attending the premiere, said that it was “truly emotional” to see the path followed by Pope Francis. “His way of being close to the poor, close to people in need and the endless struggle against evil” was particularly moving, he told CNS.

Of the many groups at the premiere, one stood out in the crowd, holding a large colourful banner with the words, “Thank you, Pope Francis!” The banner belonged to a group of refugees from Eritrea who were invited to attend.

A young refugee who wished to remain anonymous told CNS that he was happy to see the film and that the Pope's life showed that prayer can be a powerful solution, even in the most difficult circumstances.

"Some of us will continue to other countries, others will stay here in Italy. We are refugees," he said. Pope Francis's story, he continued, gave him hope that "everything will be all right for us."

## Media digest

### Ruling 'opens up abortion to under-16s'

Belfast Telegraph

Rev Adrian Dorrian, chairman of the **Church of Ireland's** Church and Society Commission, said it appeared to go beyond recent consultation from the ...

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/health/ruling-opens-up-abortion-to-under16s-34251577.html>

### Allegations of sexual abuse being reported promptly, says audit

Irish Times

An audit of 20 religious congregations by the Catholic **Church** child protection ... The average age of the congregation's priests based in **Ireland** is ...

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/allegations-of-sexual-abuse-being-reported-promptly-says-audit-1.2451997>



## Lack of trust in the laity 'ironic' – claim

The Irish Catholic

Writing in **Ireland** & Vatican II, Fr Rafferty said that calls by some churchmen in more recent years for a partnership between ... motif in the theology of Vatican II was to emphasise the role of the non-ordained in the **Church**,” he said.

<http://www.irishcatholic.ie/article/lack-trust-laity-%E2%80%98ironic%E2%80%99-%E2%80%93-claim>

## Fr Gerry Reynolds was a 'radical saint', celebration hears

the Irish News

Other people who took part in Wednesday night's service included Rev Paul Jack from the **Church of Ireland**, Billy Gallagher from the Tres Dias ...

<http://www.irishnews/news/2015/12/03/news/fr-gerry-reynolds-was-a-radical-saint-celebration-hears-342006/content.html>

## Vandal throws drink at charity carol singers

Belfast Newsletter

A **choir** singing carols in Victoria Square was left startled when a vandal ... A security man later told the **News** Letter that CCTV did not capture the ...

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/northern-ireland-news/video-vandal-throws-drink-at-charity-carol-singers-1-7097576>

## BBC/Tel/Times/Guard/Mail/Ind

RAF Tornado jets have carried out their first air strikes against ISIS in Syria. The strikes came hours after MPs voted by 397 votes to 223 for UK action in Syria after a

10-hour Commons debate. The *Telegraph* report quotes the Archbishop of Canterbury's remarks made in the House of Lords (17.10) saying the criteria for a just war have been met.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-34992032>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/12028313/syria-airstrikes-vote-live.html>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/defence/article4631021.ece>

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/02/syria-airstrikes-mps-approve-uk-action-against-isis-after-marathon-debate>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3342813/Mission-creep-lead-British-boots-ground-Corbyn-warns-faces-criticism-Labour-MPs-pacifism.html>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/syria-airstrikes-mps-vote-overwhelmingly-in-favour-of-bombing-isis-in-syria-a6758111.html>

### **Christian Today**

Report on start of Archbishop of York's six month pilgrimage of prayer, witness and blessing around the diocese of York.

### **BBC/Mail**

A derelict building considered by some a modernist masterpiece has been chosen to help launch Scotland's Festival of Architecture next year. St Peter's Seminary in Cardross was designed and built in the 1960s as a training college for priests but has not been used since the 1980s. The A-listed building, near Helensburgh in Argyll, is now a ruin. In March, it will host Hinterland - 10 sound and light shows to mark the start of the eight-month long festival.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-34964485>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3343388/Dilapidated-former-seminary-transformed-living-sculpture-architecture-festival.html>

**Guardian:** A correspondent notes that on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Philip Larkin, a memorial to the poet is has been unveiled in Westminster Abbey.  
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/dec/02/philip-larkin-grave-left-forlorn-on-30th-anniversary-of-his-death>

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