



4 Corners Festival organisers dismayed at attack on Belfast Catholic church

The organiser's of the 4 Corners festival in Belfast have condemned the arson attack on St Patrick's Catholic church in the city

They state, "Just days before the start of this year's 4 Corners festival we are dismayed to hear of the arson attack on St Patrick's Church. The Festival seeks to inspire people from across Belfast to transform the city for the peace and prosperity of all. As a society seeking a way out of our sectarian past it is vital that we condemn in the strongest terms such attacks whether on Catholic Churches, Protestant Churches, Jewish synagogues or indeed Orange Halls. We must declare that this is not being done in our name.

"St Patrick's is also closely involved in the origins of 4 Corners Festival. In the first four years of the Festival we have held events in St. Patrick's twice. Last year we used it for "Captured By a Vision," when Rev Dr Ken Newell came to read from his memoir of that name. On this occasion, we chose the venue carefully. In his book Ken speaks of being sectarian in his early life and that it was during an Orange Lodge march that stopped outside St Patrick's that was one of the moments that started to change his mind. He glanced into the Church as he walked past and saw Catholics in prayer. It sparked thoughts within his soul."

Festival Co-Founder Rev Steve Stockman also has personal connections to St Patrick's. He recalls, "It is the first Catholic Church that I ever took part in a service in. In 1998 at the Jesus In the City Conference I was involved in the closing act of worship and asked if I would pray. I decided that I would write a prayer for the entire city. I therefore imagined standing at City Hall and looking out... north, south, east and west. I was uneasy praying in a Catholic Church that evening, but actually it was a helpful event in shifting my heart, that was hardened by peer pressure to never pray or read or preach in Catholic Churches. That evening in St. Patrick's was a significant moment in my journey of faith."

The Prayer for Belfast also eventually inspired the 4 Corners Festival

Ministry of Canon Tom Keightly celebrated by Belvoir Parish

Belvoir Parish in Down and Dromore diocese, had a busy weekend of special celebration services to mark the retirement of Canon Tom Keightly who has served in the parish for over 30 years.

Below parishioner Lynne Hamilton reflects on the events of the weekend and shares how faith, family and friendship have been at the centre of Tom and Meta's ministry over the years.

What a special weekend at our church. Around October time, can't remember the exact date, Tom announced from the pulpit his plans to retire in the New Year, 2017. Coming on top of his son Thomas's recent illness, the congregation let out a collective gasp, it just seemed too much to take in all at once and now Tom was moving on. No one could deny he needed this, both he and his lovely wife Meta needed time out, time to reflect, relax and renew . Time to be themselves and to gain strength to continue being the support to their family that they knew was vital in the challenging times ahead.

Fast forward to the weekend of January 27th, 2017. Tom and Meta's farewell . What we had all talked about and wondered about since knowing he was going, had at last arrived. I admit to personally wishing it was all over and I was only serving the tea ! Now that it is all over, what a weekend it was for everyone concerned.

The "This is your life " theme of Friday night's concert was brilliant, and we saw some photographs of a very handsome young Tom



that had the ladies swooning. We enjoyed hearing about him joining the Church Army, and then moving back to N. Ireland. Settling in Portadown for a few years before moving to Belfast, and Belvoir. We were entertained by the children from Sunday Club , the choir who sang wonderfully and last but not least the personal tributes that members of the congregation made to Tom. Not an easy task, as each and every one of them described the impact he had on their lives both personally and as their minister and mentor. I can genuinely say there wasn't a dry eye in the church by the time everyone had spoken. The Church Family then joined with Tom and Meta's family to share friendship and

fellowship in the hall, and have a chance to chat with him and wish him well.

Sunday was his last formal day as our minister, the church was packed to the rafters and he would have been delighted to see “no woodwork” on show. It was an emotional day, but also a day where all of us in Belvoir felt surrounded and uplifted by the love for this man and his family, and for the support he has shown to us through the years. It was our chance to repay that by being together, and praising our Lord and Saviour. Of course, we had to have finish off with yet more tea and buns !

Tom leaves a gap in our church that is unique to him. He is an amazing man, a big man, with a big heart and a capacity to embrace and enfold the lonely, the weary, the insignificant the down trodden and the marginalised with a love that exceeds all boundaries. He leaves his mark wherever he goes, whether it be at home in a living room, in Church, in a prison cell, or in India where the hospital he had the vision to build is growing by the day and will be there as a testament to his faith and tenacity in making it happen. He inspired us all to achieve things we never thought possible. He seen in people, gifts they didn't even know they had, and with gentle nurturing, he enabled everyone to go further than

they ever intended to go, without even realising they were doing it.

Faith Family and Friendship are very important to everyone, and none more so than Tom. Seeing him surrounded by his family at the weekend, loved by them, and by his congregation, this is a true man of God and a man of Faith. He reaches out his hand of friendship to everyone, and there are no strangers to him, I just hope that we as a congregation can continue to do him proud, honour his life long work and make sure there is no woodwork showing on a Sunday morning.

I hope his legacy will continue in Belvoir,.

Catholic bishops' welcome for Minister Bruton's statements on sacramental preparation

Bishop Brendan Kelly on behalf of the Bishops' Council for Education has welcomed the statements made on Monday, and last Friday, and published by the Minister for Education & Skills, Mr Richard Bruton TD, in relation to the teaching of religion with sacramental

preparation in Community National Schools, and concerning the plurality of provision of schools.

Bishop Kelly said, “The Council for Education will study these proposals and, in the meantime, will continue to engage with Minister Bruton, his departmental officials and with the Education and Training Boards.”

Patsy McGarry in The Irish Times on Monday, Jan 30, reported “

Catholic schools are already committed to genuine pluralism and inclusion, respectful of the beliefs of all parents and pupils, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin Denis Nulty has said.

In an address on Sunday for Catholic Schools Week, he noted how in Portlaoise, Co Laois, where he was speaking, “as in every urban parish, there are pupils attending our Catholic schools of every creed and none, from every continent and every social class”.

Schools under Catholic control were already committed to pluralism and inclusion “by virtue of being Catholic”, he said.

Dr Nulty was speaking ahead of an announcement by Minister for Education Richard Bruton of a new strategy aimed at divesting hundreds of schools from Catholic ownership.

The current approach for the transfer of patronage – launched five years ago by former minister Ruairí Quinn – has resulted in just 10 transfers from religious to multidenominational patrons to date.

Mr Bruton said the new process would learn from this experience by seeking “live transfers” of schools rather than closure and the opening of a new school.

The Education and Training Boards will also play a key role in identifying towns or areas where there is demand from families for greater diversity.

Mr Bruton said demand for greater diversity was evident from indicators such as opinion polls and a rise in the number of civil marriages, which now account for one third of all unions.

He said it was clear that there were not enough multidenominational schools to meet demand among parents.



Bishop Denis Nulty: “There are pupils attending our Catholic schools of every creed and none, from every continent and every social class”.

“This new process for supporting transfers of schools to multid denominational patrons, in response to the wishes of local families, is based around principles of transparency and co-operation,” he said.

“Where the need for a transfer to a multid denominational patron is identified by surveys, the existing landowner, in co-operation with the local school community, will decide what multid denominational patron to transfer to,” he said.

He said the transfer would be by way of a “live school transfer”, with existing staff remaining in place, where this was the wish of the parties involved. In most cases the new patron would lease the building from the landowner.

Education and Training Boards Ireland general secretary Michael Moriarty welcomed Mr Bruton’s plans.

“In the main and by agreement, the school to be divested would be under the patronage of the local bishop,” he said.

“I hope that, where demand for denominational education is proven, the ETB and the diocese can engage constructively to reflect more diversity in school patronage which will provide for the needs of 21st century Ireland.”

There has been resistance among some clergy to the divestment of local religious schools, which prompted Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin last year to criticise elements of the church for “dragging their feet” over the issue.

Emphasising of the value of Catholic education, Dr Nulty said there were 2,880 Catholic primary schools in Ireland and 341 Catholic post-primary schools, and that “identity is important to all of us and parish gives us that sense of identity”.

“Many of the Catholic schools established all over Ireland were founded with a mission to serve and educate the poor. Today we owe a huge gratitude to the religious of Ireland who responded to this need, often at enormous personal cost to the individual, to the community or to the congregation. Catholic education must still reach out to the poorest of the poor,” he said.

Catholic Schools Week was first introduced into the United States in 1974 and this was the ninth year of its celebration in Ireland. It “gives us the opportunity to celebrate the unique contribution that both primary and post-primary schools make to our local parish faith communities and indeed to the wider society. This contribution is a significant one,” Bishop Nulty said.”

Senior C of I Bishops blast Trump's refugee ban

Senior Church of England bishops have broken their silence to condemn Trump's ban on refugees entering the US.

The Archbishop of York, the second most senior Anglican in the UK, was joined by the Bishop of



Dr John Sentamu, Archbishop of York

Liverpool, Rt Rev Paul Bayes, in branding the policy unchristian and extraordinary.

President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Friday that suspended the US refugee program and banned people from seven Muslim majority countries from entering America.

Those fleeing the war in Syria and indefinitely blocked from the US with others from Iraq, Iran, Sudan, Somalia, Libya, and Yemen are barred for 90 days.

The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, said it was "extraordinary" that any civilised country

would ban anyone from receiving humanitarian protection.

"There is a valid question as to whether Christians, Yazidis and other religious minorities in the Middle East have so far had adequate access to such protection," he said. "However a blanket ban on any individual group is bound to undermine the fundamental principles of asylum. In Christ, we are called to welcome the stranger especially when in desperate need."

The Bishop of Liverpool lambasted executive orders in particular as "an unseemly way" for the leader of the free world to conduct business. "I am deeply disappointed by this way of governing," he said. "The US will not be made safer if hurting and displaced people are ignored or rejected." Trump has insisted Christians and other religious minorities fleeing persecution would be exempt from the ban.

Canadian Anglican bishops offer prayers for Muslim victims in Quebec

The Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, has said that Sunday

night's shooting at a mosque in Quebec has left "a neighbourhood traumatised, and a nation horrified." Six people were killed and others were injured when gunmen opened fire in the Grande Mosquée de Québec in the Sainte-Foye area of the city as around 50 Muslims were saying prayers at around 8.00 pm EST on Sunday 29 January (1.00 am, Monday 30 January GMT).

"My heart, indeed the hearts of all people of good will, goes out to all Muslims across Canada as they struggle with this terrible attack," Archbishop Hiltz said. "We hold in our prayers those who have died, for their families and for their imams who care for them in their grief.

"We also pray for those who have been injured and for those tending them. We remember too the police, and all others whose daily work is to 'serve and protect'.

"At moments like this, people of faith must stand together in solidarity for those values common to our respective religious traditions: the adoration of God, the respect we owe one another as fellow human beings, and the care with which we tend the earth, our common home."

The local Anglican bishop, the coadjutor Bishop of Quebec, Bruce Myers, has said that he grieves with his Muslim neighbours following the attack, which the Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, confirmed was a “terrorist attack on Muslims in a centre of worship and refuge.”

Bishop Bruce is currently in Canterbury, England, attending the annual Anglican Communion training conference for newly ordained bishops. He took to Twitter to express his concern, in both English and French, saying: “Whoever the perpetrator of this violence, I grieve with our Muslim neighbours in Quebec City and commit to work for peace.”

The Bishop of Montreal, Mary Irwin Gibson, is also in Canterbury. She Tweeted that “The Anglican bishops gathered for training from around the world send their sympathy and prayers for the people of Québec.”

Pope Francis concerned by ‘haemorrhage’ of priests and nuns from Church

Pope Francis says he is concerned about what he calls a “haemorrhage” of priests and nuns from the Church.



The Pope on Saturday told participants at a Vatican gathering on religious life that the loss of clergy is weakening the Church.

First among the factors he cited as causing nuns and priests to quit their vocations is a society that discourages lifelong commitments. Francis lamented that many conduct their lives based on “a la carte” choices.

For decades, the Catholic Church in many developed countries has seen the number of priests and nuns on the decline.

“There are many factors which affect fidelity [to one’s vocation] in this era of change, which is not only a changing era, in which it is difficult to assume responsibilities which are serious and definitive,” Pope Francis said, according to Vatican Radio.

He added: “This culture induces the need to always have ‘side doors’ open to other possibilities; it feeds consumerism and forgets the beauty of a simple and austere life, and in many cases causes an existential void.

“It has also produces a powerful practical relativism, according to which everything is judged in terms of a self-realisation which is often extraneous to the values of the Gospel.”

News briefs

+++New Honorary Secretary for C of I General Synod - Ms Hazel Corrigan (Cashel) was elected as a lay Honorary Secretary for the Southern Province, following the retirement of

Mr Sam Harper. Her nomination was proposed by Mrs Joan Burton and seconded by Mr Richard Codd. Ms Corrigan has served as a member of the Representative Body for the last two years and was formerly a member of Standing Committee between 2012 and 2015. A businesswoman in the agri-food sector, she is also a previous World Secretary of the Girls' Friendly Society.

+++ New Chair of C of I inter-church group -

The Anglican & Ecumenical Affairs Working Group met on Monday 23rd January 2017 at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute. Canon Ian Ellis became the Working Group's convener, Bishop Michael Burrows having stepped down from the role, while remaining a member of the Working Group. The Working Group considered resolutions 1–5 of ACC–16, with a particular focus on the Intentional Discipleship document, and the Porvoo Communion's Riga report. Recommendations were later presented to the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue.

+++ Lisburn Day of Prayer - There will be a Day of Prayer to find God's peace and healing in Lisburn Cathedral on Saturday February 18 between 10am and 5pm. This follows on from the Day of Prayer in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, last September organised by the

interdenominational Divine Healing Ministries, who say this day will be an opportunity to help people to find God's peace personally and also to pray for the nation as Northern Ireland approaches an election. The organisers says that this is a very significant time for people to come together and to seek God's help and direction.

+++ New chapter at St Catherine's, Dublin -

The Revd Eoghan Heaslip, his wife Becky and their three daughters received a warm and enthusiastic welcome to St Catherine's Church, Thomas Street, on Sunday evening (January 29). Eoghan was introduced as the new Minister in Charge of the church by Archbishop Michael Jackson. A large congregation was in attendance and introducing the service, the Archbishop described St Catherine's of a beacon of openness and welcome in the heart of the city. He said that while they celebrated the arrival of longstanding friend, Eoghan, they also celebrated the presentation of Jesus at the temple by Mary and Joseph. The preacher, the Revd Dr William Olhausen, took the theme of Candlemas. He suggested that there was a manifesto for the church in the story of the presentation of Christ in the temple as told in Luke's Gospel.

+++ Mothering Sunday resources - Do you want ideas for Intercessions, Sunday schools, service outlines and talks on Mothering Sunday? Well the Mothers' Union has it organised to save you some time. Just go to the Mothering Sunday resource page on their website <http://www.mothersunion.org/resources#overlay-context=our-focus/mothering-sunday> If you would like to 'Make a Mothers Day' by buying an ethical gift for your mother or any family member or friend (who is like a mother to you) or in memory of your mother, here is the link: <http://www.makeamothersday.org/> When you donate you will receive a card to pass on, or have your mother's name written in a book in the chapel at Mothers' Union headquarters.

+++ Luther 500 liturgical resources - The Joint Liturgical Group of Great Britain was asked to prepare an Order of Service and Resources commemorating the Quincentenary of the Lutheran Reformation in October 2017. This material has now been published and may be found on the Joint Liturgical Group's website, where a pdf version can be found via a link at <http://www.jlg.org.uk/Resources/Luther.shtml> or directly at <http://www.jlg.org.uk/Resources/Luther-500.pdf> Churches and congregations are free to re-produce any original material, without

permission, but with appropriate acknowledgement to the Joint Liturgical Group.

+++ Conference on Pioneer Ministry - A conference, Pioneer Ministry – Striving to do it well is being organised by the Church of Scotland along with others and is mainly for those involved in and supporting the development of Pioneer Ministry in Scotland. However, it will be of wider interest to anyone interested in exploring how lessons learnt from church planting help to inform developments within existing churches. It is being held in Glasgow on Wednesday 1 March 2017 (Ash Wednesday), from 2pm-9pm. Ticket options are for the full day (£20) or just the evening (£5). Full details available at:-
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pioneer-ministry-how-do-we-do-it-well-tickets-30515316132>

+++ New bishop of Sheffield - The traditionalist Anglo-Catholic Philip North is being promoted to be the new Bishop of Sheffield, Downing Street has announced. Currently Bishop of Burnley, Rt Rev Philip North, 50, will replace Steven Croft, now Bishop of Oxford, and will be consecrated at Sheffield Cathedral in July 2017. Known for his strong opposition to women priests and bishops,

North's appointment will be seen as the Church strengthening relations with its conservative Catholic wing. Diocese of Sheffield announcement:
<http://www.sheffield.anglican.org/news/next-bishop-of-sheffield-announced>

+++ Diocesan communications staff sought -

The Diocese of Down & Dromore is seeking to recruit a part-time Communications Officer to its ministry team at Church of Ireland House located in Belfast. The successful candidate will coordinate the Diocese communications activities in support of the Bishop and the Church ministry. Applications are invited from suitably qualified and experienced candidates. Candidates should have: A minimum of 3 years Relevant experience working in a communications role; A working knowledge of social media including websites and, Good standard of education and ability to write in an engaging manner. The successful candidate will act as a representative of the Church in communicating with the public, outside bodies, parishes and clergy, and will be expected therefore to be committed to working within its Christian ethos. Post: Part Time Diocesan Communications Officer. Salary £21,000–£24,000 per annum pro rata 20 hours per week. [Download a job description here.](#) [Download](#)

[application form here.](#) The closing date for applications is Friday 24th February 2017 at 4pm.

+++ Community & Family Worker part-time -

Sydenham Methodist Church intends to employ a part-time (15 hours/week) Community & Family Worker. For a job description, terms and conditions and an application form, please contact the Rev Robin Waugh, preferably by e-mail (rwdwaugh@gmail.com), or by telephone (028 90471782). Fully completed applications for the post are required to be received by 5pm on Tuesday 28 February 2017.