



***Very Rev John Mann is leaving St Anne's Cathedral***

## **Dean of Belfast to take up post in England**

The Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev John Mann, has announced that he will be leaving St Anne's Cathedral at Easter to take up a post in England, UTV reports.

The Dean has been appointed team rector of the Parish of Swanage with Studland in the Diocese of Salisbury.

Making the news public on at the 11am Sunday service in St Anne's, Dean Mann spoke of how hard it had been to make the decision to move back across the water having lived most of his adult life in Northern Ireland.

"My wife Helen and I have been privileged to serve in four parishes in the Church of Ireland, as well as St Anne's Cathedral, and have seen great change in the community," Dean Mann said.

"Our children were both born here and had much of their education in Belfast. We will be leaving with fond memories and with the intent of being back as often as is practical."

Dean Mann said the decision to move across the Irish Sea had been weighing on him and Helen for some time, and had been taken for several reasons.

But the main reason, he said, was because St Anne's is passing from one phase of transition, into which he was appointed, to another, as the Cathedral Quarter approaches very significant change.

“St Anne’s will rise to the opportunities and challenges that will face a new Dean and the Cathedral Board over the next five years,” Dean Mann said.

“It is from this perspective a good time to go.

“We will also be moving closer to our family and I look forward not only to that, but to returning for a few years to my primary calling as a parish clergyman. It is a time to look forward for us all.”

## **Mary Peters and George Jones present Good Samaritans cheques from Belfast Cathedral’s 40<sup>th</sup> annual Sitout**

Representatives of around 200 charities from across Northern Ireland gathered in St Anne’s Cathedral yesterday Sunday February 5 when more than £220,000 raised at the 40th anniversary Black Santa Sit-out was distributed.

Special guests at this service were Dame Mary Peters and entertainer George Jones, who handed out the grants ranging from £200 to £5,000, with a grant of £30,000 for Christian Aid projects overseas.

Dame Mary won Britain's only athletics gold medal for the pentathlon in the Munich Olympics in 1972. That same year she was also voted BBC Sports Personality of the Year.

She established a charitable Sports Trust in 1975 to support talented young sportsmen and women, both able-bodied and disabled, from across Northern Ireland. The Trust, now known as the Mary Peters Trust, helps aspiring young athletes realise their maximum potential by assisting them in both a financial and advisory capacity.

Dame Mary was appointed MBE in 1973 for services to athletics, CBE in the 1990 Birthday Honours for services to sport, Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire (DBE) in the 2000 Birthday Honours for services to sport and to the community in Northern Ireland, and Member of the Order of the Companions of Honour (CH) in the 2015 New Year Honours, also for services to sport and the community in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland's main athletics track is named the Mary Peter's Track.

Dame Mary is a former Lord Lieutenant of the City of Belfast, (2009-2014) and has long been a friend of St Anne's Cathedral, helping launch the

## Cathedral's Choir School Project in November 2013.

George Jones is one of Northern Ireland's most accomplished all round entertainers. Best known as a showband legend, TV and radio presenter, comedian and after dinner speaker, he began his career as a member of the band the Monarchs

George is a natural comic with a very unique and distinctive style of wit. He has vast experience as a radio presenter and currently hosts Downtown Radio's Drivetime Show.

In addition to his many stage and radio successes, George has also hosted BBC Northern Ireland's television game show – 'Town Challenge,' and for over 15 years was compere to the very successful 'Do You Come Here Often' show, the tribute to the showband years.

He was recently back in the theatre celebrating the 40th anniversary of Clubsound and he also played a new character in the stage version of 'Give My Head Peace.'

George supported the special sit-out at the cathedral following the tsunami disaster in SE Asia by organising collections during his shows at the Waterfront arena.

The Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev John Mann, said the charities who gathered in St Anne's on Sunday represent a huge amount of voluntary and community work.

"This service was a celebration of much that is good and praiseworthy in our community, and an opportunity to thank those who turn money into action and goodwill into improving the lives of others," the Dean said.

Writing in his blog, Dean Mann states, "This is the 40th anniversary of the foundation of this Belfast tradition and quite coincidentally I came across a yellowing Belfast Telegraph article of 11th March 1981 whilst clearing things at the deanery the other day. A smiling Sammy Crooks, the first Black Santa, is up on the roof of the cathedral as the photographer asks him for a thumbs-up for the ending of the building work on the north transept. Behind and below him there are two storey houses and car parks and derelict land, as the cathedral soars high above the surroundings. Now with the MAC and St Anne's Square, the new University buildings and plans for yet more development, St Anne's is a great deal more enclosed. There is much more change to come.

“The building programme in March 1981 was £325,000 in debt. What a huge amount that must have been 36 years ago. He spoke of the festival that was to happen that summer with a concert by the Ulster Orchestra and “Murder in the Cathedral” being performed by students from Stranmillis College, all in keeping with, and I quote, “the Church’s policy that St Anne’s should be a cathedral for all the people of Belfast”. Somethings do not change!”

## **Dublin parishes ‘vibrant’ – Archbishop Diarmuid Martin**

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin has said there is a new “vibrancy” in the parishes of his Archdiocese of Dublin.

Interviewed on RTÉ Radio’s Today with Seán O’Rourke in the wake of the Irish bishops’ ad limina visit to Pope Francis in Rome, Archbishop Martin was pressed on the question of lower Mass attendances since the last ad limina 10 years ago and asked if he accepted this as a sign of decline in the Irish Church.

“If you define decline in numbers, yes,” Dr Martin responded, “but if you define decline in terms of quality of Church life, the majority of parishes in



Dublin have never been as vibrant as they are today. And that's a big change."

Recalling the period immediately before the abuse scandals which rocked the Irish Church, the archbishop said, "I think our numbers fooled us and we thought our strength was in numbers. We thought because there were so many people, we could occupy all sorts of areas in society."

Questioned further on the phenomenon of churches "half full for Mass" by O'Rourke, Dr Martin suggested this was merely a symptom of an issue to be addressed.

"We have too many Masses," he said. "We should be concentrating on having a principal

Sunday Mass in which all the elements of a believing community come together and share and worship.”

Turning attention to the proposed visit of Pope Francis to Ireland in 2018, O'Rourke asked if there was a risk that unfavourable comparisons would be made to the numbers that turned out for St John Paul II in 1979.

“If you have Mass in the [Phoenix] Park and you have...one less than in 1979, then people will be making comparisons,” Dr Martin pointed out. However, he added: “This is a very different Pope. This Pope knows what he wants to do himself. He doesn't want to repeat what others have done...he's unpredictable...he'll do his own thing when he comes.”

Pressed on the idea of a “big Mass”, the archbishop said, “There will be an interest in a large Mass as part of the world gathering of families, but if you get out the plans from 1979 and start to execute them...that's not what [Pope Francis] is going to do. There will be a qualitative difference and he will address the changes that are there since then.”

## 4Corners, Derek and Dave on the bench in Ballyhackamore



***From left, Chris (aka Derek) Lesley and Ross (aka Dave) on the bench in front of two of the festival's organising committee, the Rev David Campton (left) and Fr Martin Magill.***

An all-age audience filled the church hall at St Colmcille's, Ballyhackamore, on Saturday evening to watch 'Derek and Dave – In Search of  
[churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)

a Bench', a one act play written and performed by the drama company 'Play it by Ear'.

Devised especially for this year's Four Corners Festival, the fast-moving drama gave familiar stories from the gospels a contemporary spin, setting them in the Botanic Gardens in south Belfast. The three actors – Lesley Donaldson, Ross Jonas and Chris Neilands – portrayed a host of characters. There were moments of humour, moments of pathos, moments of choice, moments of change – all pointing to Christ's impact on ordinary people's lives.

This was the fourth event in a wide-ranging programme on the theme, 'Our wounded and wonderful city', which began on Friday morning when 80 Year Ten pupils visited the Ulster University's Belfast Campus on York Street.

Designed to 'inspire people across Belfast to transform the city for the peace and prosperity of all', the programme offers a further ten events including an evening of 'Harmony and Healing' in Belfast Central Mission's Grosvenor Hall on Tuesday 7 February, bringing together people of different faiths.

The festival will end on Sunday 12 February with an event in the Skainos Centre in East Belfast

Mission when festival-goers will be challenged, inspired and encouraged to live lives of healing.

## **Archdeacon encourages church members to Refuel spiritually**

Archdeacon David McClay of Willowfield Parish, Belfast, was the speaker at Refuel '17 – a day conference attended by some 260 church members from across the denominations in south Belfast and further afield.

The event, organised by church leaders in Finaghy and hosted by Lowe Memorial Presbyterian church, had been designed to encourage Christians to be filled with the Holy Spirit and move out to win others to Christ in the year ahead.

In the three sessions – two before and one after lunch – Archdeacon McClay focused on 'The life God wants is to live', 'The Church God wants to build' and 'The legacy God wants us to leave'. Also participating was a team from New Wine Ireland.

Among those who took the opportunity to refuel spiritually for the days ahead was a group from Finaghy Methodist church with their minister, the

Rev Colin Gracie. All spoke appreciatively of the value of the day.

## **Church of Scotland's first ever digital minister**

A former Moderator has officially become the Church of Scotland's first ever digital minister.

Very Rev Albert Bogle will use his ground breaking new role to create an online Kirk congregation, made up of people who may never set foot in a "real world" church.

He hopes to vastly increase the number of congregations that use social media and other online apps because at the moment only around 20 out of more than 1,300 congregations stream their services online.

Mr Bogle, whose weekly 'Sanctuary First' podcast on faith has a global audience, was officially welcomed into his new role by Falkirk Presbytery this week.

The 69-year-old, who was Moderator of the General Assembly in 2012-13, said: "This role is about getting online worshipers to attend church

and also to support those who have no intention to go on a Sunday.

“There is a growing Christian audience online who seek quality content to nurture their faith.

“My role is about helping to provide an online community for those who have left the buildings and committee structures far behind but not the Church.”

### **Fulfilment**

Mr Bogle, who stood down from St Andrew's Parish Church in Bo'ness in 2015, said every minister should be equipped with digital media skills but acknowledged that every congregation would have different needs.

He added that there is “a God shaped blank in all of our lives” and recognised that many people are seeking spiritual fulfilment online.

Mr Bogle said he plans to meet with congregations across Scotland and urged parishes the length and breadth of the country to reach out for his support.

He will also be holding offline ‘touching places’ where people can join him for Bible study, music, poetry and prayer.



***Very Rev Albert Bogle will use his ground breaking new role to create an online Kirk congregation, made up of people who may never set foot in a “real world” church.***

Three years ago when he was Moderator, the Church of Scotland's Principal Clerk, Very Rev Dr John Chalmers, challenged the Kirk to find 100,000 new members by 2025 through the power of online platforms.

He said he “greatly admired” Mr Bogle's energy and enthusiasm in developing a new form of ministry.

Dr Chalmers, who preached at Mr Bogle's 'service of introduction at Trinity Church in

Falkirk, said: “What comes next for the Church is fraught with difficulties and it will be scoffed at by some.

“But we cannot dodge the column and avoid a serious discussion about what we mean by ‘being a member’ and about how we add to our membership people who do not connect with what is our existing, traditional pattern of Church.”

Dr Chalmers said Sanctuary First helped people “live balanced lives” and allowed people to “deepen their discipleship without bashing them into the shape of the church of the past”.  
[www.Sanctuaryfirst.org.uk](http://www.Sanctuaryfirst.org.uk)

## **Pope names his personal delegate to Order of Malta**

Pope Francis has named a top Vatican archbishop as his special delegate to the troubled Knights of Malta and given him “all necessary powers” to help the sovereign religious order reform its constitutions and elect a new leader.

Archbishop Angelo Becciu is the No 3 official in the Vatican's Secretariat of State.

In a letter, Pope Francis said that Archbishop Becciu would act as his “exclusive spokesman” with the order, confirming the marginalisation of Cardinal Raymond Burke, the conservative American — and a critic of Francis — who technically is the papal envoy to the order.

## **News briefs**

**+++ Tribute to Bishop Daly** - a tribute concert to the late Bishop Daly was held on Saturday last. The C of I Bishop of Derry, the Rt Revd Ken Good was present.

**+++ World Day of Prayer TV service** - Yesterday's service on RTE 1 television was led by a World Day of Prayer team. The theme this year is 'Am I being unfair to you' and the service for 2017 was prepared by Christian women from the Philippines.

**+++ Archbishop's Sunday** - Yesterday The Archbishop of Dublin was the preacher in the Chapel of Trinity College and in the evening, Dr Jackson attended the Come&C Songs of Praise in Templecarrig School, Greystones. The focus

of this service will be a reflection on the Five Marks of Mission.

### **+++ QUB Annual Theological Lectures -**

Tonight and Tuesday the Annual Theological Lectures will be held in Queen's University, Belfast, in the Isdall Courtyard of the Riddell Hall. To mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation the 2017 lectures will be delivered by Professor Mark Noll, Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History at Notre Dame and a leading authority on the history of Christianity in North America. Professor Noll will be speaking on the topic 'Sola Scriptura'. The lectures will run from 6pm to 8pm. On Monday Prof. Noll will deliver his lecture and on Tuesday 7th, he will be joined in conversation by Bishop Brendan Leahy (Catholic Diocese of Limerick, and previously Principal of Maynooth College. Tickets are available via Eventbrite.

**+++ Fundraiser for cancer charity -** Killead Presbyterian Church & Boys Brigade recently organised a craft fair & coffee morning for Cancer Fund for Children

### **+++ New youth Mission Resource from MCI -**

All In' has arrived - the new mission resource from the Methodist Church in Ireland is here and ready to be used! 'All In' is a 5-week mission

resource for 11-18-year-olds that explores mission in the every day. Whether you want to use it in youth fellowship, small group, BB & GB, Scouts, or a Bible class, this resource is accessible for all young people. If you wish to receive a copy of the printed resource, please email [leannehill@imycd.org](mailto:leannehill@imycd.org). This project was created in partnership with [IMYC](#), [Methodist World Development & Relief](#) and Methodist Home Mission Ireland.

### **+++ Director sought for Scripture Union NI -**

The General Director will head up the Scripture Union Movement in Northern Ireland. We are looking for a leader with wisdom, vision and a passion for Biblical Engagement with children and young people. Are you someone who could:

- Bring inspirational leadership to staff and volunteers?
- Develop and deliver effective strategy?
- Be passionate about helping children, young people and adults engage with the Bible?
- Understand the challenges of leading the movement given the church, educational and societal contexts of Northern Ireland?

Contact [Joanne Coulter](#) for a job description and application form. A copy of the [job description](#) is

available online. Closing date for receipt of all applications is **Thursday 9th February at 12 noon**. This post was previously advertised. All applicants should be in full agreement with the [Aims, Beliefs and Working Principles](#) of Scripture Union.