



Image of the day
Bossanyi window, Canterbury Cathedral



Archbishop Martin cautions against rush to polls

Archbishop Eamon Martin, the leader of the Catholic Church in Ireland warned of rushing to the ballot box for a border poll, saying the conversation had yet to begin on what a reunified island would look like, Jonathan Bell reports in the Belfast Telegraph.

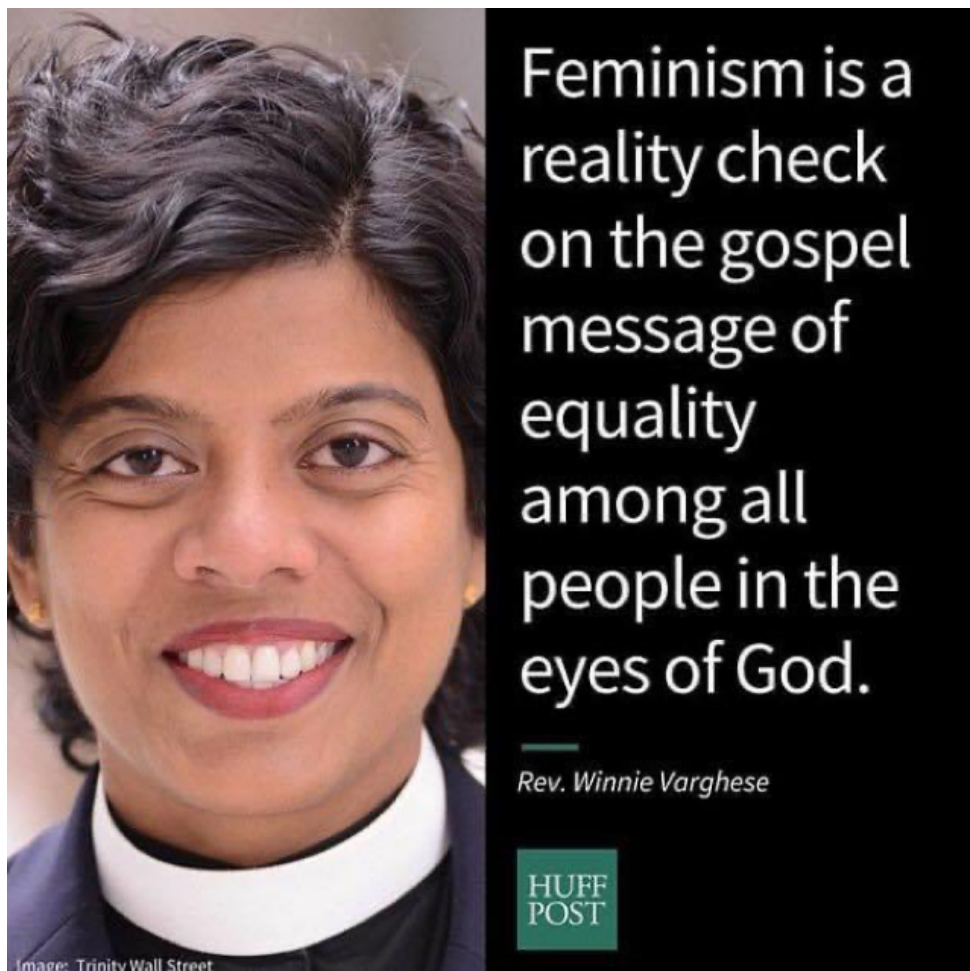
He told the BBC's The View programme: "I think back to the last big poll we had for Brexit were essentially we all made a vote one way or the other before we really had any understanding in Ireland or on these islands as to what that would actually mean.

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"I actually feel there is a huge amount to be done in terms of conversations on health, education, infrastructure on this island on the way we can cooperate better. We are seeing this through the Covid pandemic.

"Conversations have not even begun in any real manner and I would be encouraging people to think, converse, to share their differing perspectives.

"Have we even begun to think what would be the opportunities, the threats, the hopes the fears connected with whatever changes might happen on this island and indeed in the whole recalibration of relationships between these islands that has to happen from Brexit?"



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"How can we even think of going to polls before we have those conversations. That is what I mean by a cautious approach. I think if we could begin those conversations in a mature manner it would be good for all of us."

The senior cleric said the centenary of the formation of Northern Ireland was not an opportunity to be dismissed.

"People from my tradition and my own upbringing and my own nationalist views, we find it impossible to celebrate what happened in 1921," he added.

"At the same time, if we are going to build a future on this island we need to accept people have legitimate aspirations that people may wish to make the importance of the foundation of the state of Northern Ireland.

"It is heartening to have those conversations where we can hear people coming from very different standpoints, for people to grow in our mutual understanding if we are going to build peace and shape a future on this island we need to understand each other, to seize this moment this opportunity that looking back on 1921 will provide us.

He said, after looking through church archives, he found the period of 1921 a polarising moment in Irish history, and which was the beginning of "the heartache and violence and loss of life that was to occur in later decades".

"This is a hinge moment, an opportunity for us to look to the future to look to greater cooperation and understanding between our diverse opinions."

Report extract courtesy The Belfast Telegraph, 29.01.2021

Ian Paisley Jr criticised for linking IRA activities to Catholicism



Ian Paisley stood over his remarks about the Catholic IRA

DUP MP Ian Paisley Junior has faced criticism from counterparts in the UK House of Commons after linking activities by the IRA with Catholicism.

Paisley's reference to the sectarian murder campaign by the "Catholic IRA" drew critical responses from fellow members of the parliament's Northern Ireland Affairs Committee.

Paisley was questioning Northern Ireland Secretary Brandon Lewis on legacy issues and was asking him if he was going to push the Irish Government to do more to

secure justice for IRA killings in border areas during the Troubles.

“Today is Holocaust Memorial Day where we remember victims of Holocaust and also other genocide around the world and in Northern Ireland of course we remember the border campaign and the genocide of sectarian murder where the IRA, the Catholic IRA, murdered Protestants at the border,” the North Antrim MP said.

“And we’ve been pushing for over a year now for the Irish government to move beyond lip service that they would address issues to do with the unsolved 500 murders on the border that were of British people in their jurisdiction and then dumped on our border.”

In response, Lewis said he supported DUP First Minister Arlene Foster’s request for Taoiseach Micheál Martin to fully investigate allegations that former Garda members colluded with the IRA during the Troubles.

At the conclusion of Paisley’s questioning, Alliance MP Stephen Farry criticised the remarks.

“I want to very much disassociate myself from the comments about the Catholic IRA,” he said.

He added: “IRA terrorism and indeed sectarian murders were strongly condemned by the Catholic Church, it’s nothing to do with Catholicism.”

Committee chairman and Conservative MP Simon Hoare also expressed concern at the comment.

“I appreciate how incredibly sensitive this is and I appreciate the huge problems and fear for their lives that the Paisley family have gone through but as a practising Roman Catholic myself I would also just like to note that I didn't think the way that that question was phrased was conducive to trying to move things forward.”

Paisley attempted to interject to respond to the remarks of Hoare and Farry, but the chairman would not let him and instead asked the Alliance MP to move to his substantive questions to Lewis.

The Secretary of State was facing committee questions on the Government's yet to be published revised plans for dealing with the toxic legacy of the Troubles.

In March last year, Lewis announced that only killings with “compelling” new evidence and a realistic prospect of prosecution will receive a full police re-investigation.

He said most unsolved cases will be closed after a review exercise and a new law would prevent those investigations into the decades of violence from being reopened.

The written statement to Parliament marked a dramatic step away from mechanisms agreed by the UK and Irish Governments and main Stormont parties in the 2014 Stormont House Agreement.

The Stormont House proposals included a new independent investigation unit to re-examine all unsolved killings.

In a further statement in January, in response to an examination of legacy issues by the NI Affairs Committee, the Government said it wanted to place “information recovery at the heart of any new legacy system”.

It said the current “divisive cycle of reinvestigations and civil action” as a primary route to securing truth recovery was failing to obtain answers for a majority of victims.

Ireland: All-Party Oireachtas Life and Dignity Group set up

The new All-Party Oireachtas Life and Dignity Group set up by pro-life TDs and Senators is a follow on from the Oireachtas Human Dignity Group which was established in 2008 by Senator Rónán Mullen and others.

The All-Party Group's mission is to promote an authentic vision of human rights in the Oireachtas and in civil society, emphasising the right to life and dignity of every human person, Matt Moran writes.

Co-chaired by two Members of the Oireachtas, the objectives of the group include the:

Promotion of an authentic human rights agenda in the Oireachtas

- Hosting information events for all Members on relevant issues



- Encouraging discussion among Members relating to human dignity, and
- Promoting a society that values people of all abilities, both intellectual and physical.

The inaugural co-chairs are Deputy Carol Nolan and Deputy Peter Fitzpatrick. Carol Nolan said the Group will stand up for "the right to life and the dignity of people - young and old, born and unborn. Issues around the right to life at all stages will be paramount and indeed we won't be shying away from any contentious issues that go with that. Other issues will include human trafficking, modern day slavery, quality palliative care, freedom of conscience and disability rights."

She says the group will provide a voice for Christian and social-conservative values. "We have a responsibility as Christians to challenge every injustice and what's

happening unfortunately is that Ireland is turning to a culture of death. I think now more than ever it needs to be challenged, we need every voice there to raise these issues and work with our Group."

The other co-chair, Peter Fitzpatrick TD, says: "What we want to do is talk about the born and the unborn, young people and old people. We want to look at the quality of palliative care and disability rights. All these things that come under freedom of conscience."

Senator Rónán Mullen says that there is an urgent need for people who support life and dignity to raise their voices. "There's the tendency in some quarters to think that the pro-life side of the argument lost in 2018... that somehow it's our duty just to shut-up and crawl under a rock and get on board with whatever the majority thinks or appears to think and never put out a contrary view. Or that it's not the duty of the media to cover such contrary views. But of course, that's not the case. We must make our voices heard in public life and the media. Forming this All-Party Group is one way to ensure that happens."

The first initiative of the Group was to publish a report on Late-Term Abortion and Foetal Pain. The report quotes a 2020 article, published in the influential Journal of Medical Ethics, where the authors say there is now "good evidence" that the brain and nervous system, which start developing at 12 weeks' gestation, are sufficient enough for the baby to feel pain. In the article, Professor Stuart Derbyshire and Dr John Bockmann say research indicates unborn babies might be able to feel "something like pain" as early as 13 weeks.

The report says: "The refusal to extend even a morsel of compassion to these babies as they breathe their last breath in this world is the most forceful and ringing evidence that we are losing our empathy and way as a society. Enshrining protections in law to ensure unborn babies receive pain relief before a late term abortion wouldn't save the baby's life but it would at least introduce a degree of humanity into the law and ensure that no baby suffers a harrowing and painful death that could easily be avoided.

"Instead of looking for excuses not to introduce humane pain relief amendments to the new abortion law [in Ireland], we need to acknowledge the growing scientific evidence in this area and come together as a society to guarantee the passage of these reasonable amendments without delay. The emerging evidence highlighting foetal pain is something that any society wishing to call itself civilised cannot ignore."

The report can read on the Group's website -

<https://lifeanddignity.ie/>

Report courtesy of Independent Catholic News

Irish civilian dead of WW2 to be recognised as Commonwealth casualties

Concentration camp victim among 52 people to be remembered in Westminster Abbey. Irish civilians who were killed during the second World War will be



recognised as Commonwealth casualties and included on a roll of honour.

The aftermath of the bombing of the North Strand by the Luftwaffe, 1941

Fifty-two civilians will be included both online and later in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission civilian roll of honour held in Westminster Abbey.

They will join the names of 67,852 civilians who were killed during the war, most of them during German bombing raids in Britain. The dead are recorded in 10 leather-bound volumes. A new page is opened on it every day.

The 52 Irish civilians comprise of three who were killed when a lone German bomber dropped bombs on a co-op in the County Wexford village of Campile on August 26th, 1940.

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The 28 people who were killed when the Germans accidentally bombed the North Strand of Dublin on the night of May 31st, 1941 are remembered along with the 19 who died at Ballymanus Strand, Co Donegal on May 10th, 1943 when a sea mine that was being dragged ashore exploded.

Two other men are being remembered. Patrick Scanlon died on December 3rd off Tuskar Rock in Co Wicklow on December 3rd, 1941 when a sea mine exploded.

Robert Armstrong is the only Irish civilian of the 52 on the roll of honour who died outside Ireland.

A first World War veteran, he joined the Imperial War Graves Commission (later the Commonwealth War Graves Commission) in the 1920s. He used his status as a gardener from a neutral country to join the French Resistance where he helped smuggle Allied airmen out of France and Belgium. He was captured by the Germans, sentenced to death.

The original death sentence was commuted to 15 years imprisonment, and he was deported to Germany, dying at Waldheim concentration camp, Saxony, in December, 1944.

For his help to Allied escapees he was posthumously awarded the Médaille de la Résistance française, and a tablet in his honour was erected in the French town of Valenciennes.

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The names will be included on the roll because Éire, as it was known then, was part of the British Commonwealth until 1949.

The inclusion of the 52 names following lobbying by the In From the Cold project, a UK organisation which seeks to remember mostly Commonwealth servicemen, but also civilians who died in the two world wars and are not memorialised anywhere.

To date they have found the names of 7,000 individuals whose deaths went unrecorded in the official records.

In From the Cold Project co-founder Terry Denham said it had never been the intention of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) to deliberately exclude Irish civilians on its roll of honour. It had been an oversight.

“The commission looked at our submission and agreed with it very quickly. There will be a whole section now under the heading Ireland,” he said.

“All our submissions will be accepted and included. Any future civilian name IFCP submits will be treated under the same criteria as all other Commonwealth individuals as Ireland was still in the Commonwealth until 1949.”

Those included on the roll of honour must be Commonwealth citizens who died between the qualifying war dates between September 3rd, 1939 and December December 31st, 1947.

Broadcasts, resources and webinars

RTÉ Service on Sunday with RSCM Ireland - RTÉ's Service on Sunday on 31st January 2021 will be led by Mark Bowyer, a diocesan reader in the Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough, and sung by choristers representing the Royal School of Choral Music (RSCM) Ireland.

The choristers will be directed by RSCM Ireland's Director of Music, Blánaid Murphy, and accompanied by David Grealy. The service will be broadcast at 11.10am on RTÉ One television and RTÉ Radio 1 Extra, and will be available after broadcast.

Children's Ministry and Youth workshop on anxiety -

These last few months have been extremely trying for children and young people – as well as adults – as they wrestle with the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on homelife and education.

Derry and Raphoe Diocesan Children's Ministry, SEEDS, has combined with the board of Derry and Raphoe Youth to organise a FREE training event for parents and leaders, looking at anxiety in children and young people. They are organising a Zoom session with Tom Tate from WhyMind on Thursday 4th February at 7.30pm. Tom is an accredited counsellor and psychotherapist, and – in addition to his professional qualifications – holds a Bachelor of Divinity from QUB.

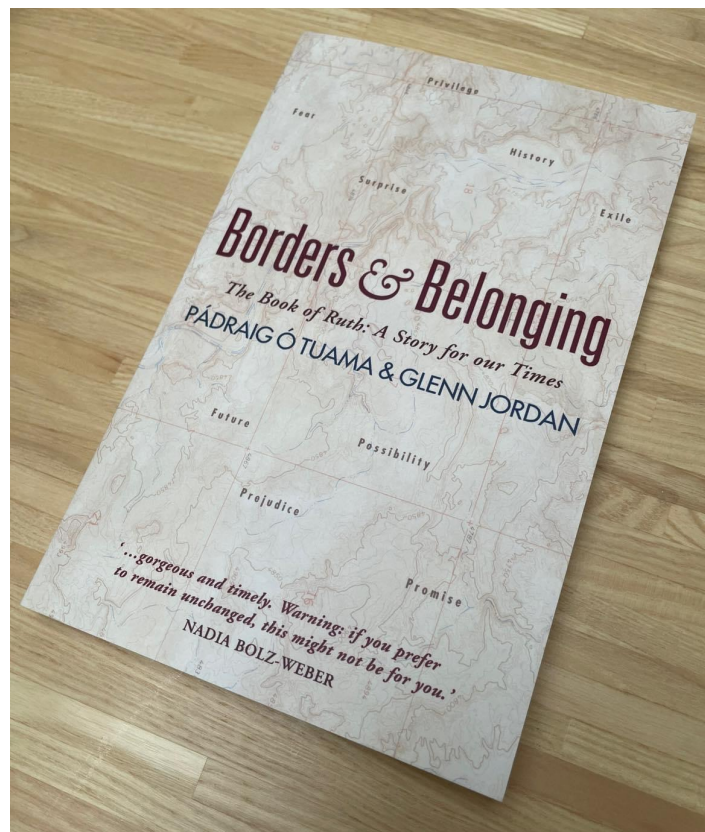
There is no charge for this event. To register, email kirsty@derryandraphoe.org and resources

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Southwark Cathedral Sunday invite - Join us online this Sunday for our Candlemas Eucharist at 11am as we not only bring to close the season of Christmas and Epiphany but we will also be celebrating the installation of our new Canon Precentor Reverend Andrew Zihni. How to join us at link 👉

cathedral.southwark.anglican.org/worship-and-mu...

Webinar Borders and Belonging - An evening with Pádraig Ó Tuama and Guli Francis-Dehqani



The ancient story of Ruth tells of an outsider, a migrant facing uncertainty in a strange land, whose life shapes a new future for the people she chooses as her own.

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Join Pádraig Ó Tuama and Guli Francis-Dehqani as they discuss borders, belonging, and how timeless bible stories can help us respond creatively to current issues.

Tickets to this event are FREE. Information on how to view this event via YouTube will be sent to registered attendees before the event.

Date: Monday 15th February

Time: 7pm GMT/2pm EST/11am PST


<https://canterburypress.hymnsam.co.uk/events>

A Theory of Everything (that Matters) - by Alister McGrath (Hodder, £9.99 (£8.99); 978-1-529-37796-5). New in paperback

“On 29 May 1919, British astronomers tested Einstein’s theory of relativity by measuring the path of the stars travelling near the sun during an eclipse. On 7 November 1919, the results of that experiment were announced in London, proving Einstein’s theory of relativity. A Theory of Everything (that Matters) has been written in celebration of this 100th anniversary. With the confirmation of Einstein’s theories at the beginning of the twentieth century, our understanding of the universe became much more complex. What does this mean for religious belief, and specifically Christianity? Does it mean, as so many people assume, the death of God? In A Theory of Everything (that Matters) Alister McGrath - Professor of Science and Religion at Oxford University - explores these questions, giving an overview of Einstein’s thought and scientific theories, including his nuanced thinking on the difference between the scientific enterprise and beliefs outside its

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realm. This groundbreaking book is for anyone intrigued by Einstein as one of the twentieth century's most iconic figures, who wants to know what his theories mean for religion, and who is interested in the conversation between science and religions more broadly.”



Reconciling God,
We pray for Your World.
May all that is divided
by doctrine or politics,
class or nationality,
be united in Your praise.

Pointers for prayer

We remember with thanks the numerous Mothers' Union members who, over the years, have used their God-given

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gifts to change the world. We pray that, in our day, we'll also be willing to use our gifts to help transform lives and communities

Today we pray for Mozambique. A cholera outbreak combined with a growing humanitarian crisis after fighting in a northern province displaced more than 500,000 people last year has led to the UN calling for help in the region.

Today we give thanks for those raising awareness of leprosy around the world. It's World Leprosy Day next week, when advocates challenge myths and spread awareness about leprosy, which is totally curable, globally.

We pray today for the church across the world, especially in places where they are experiencing hardship and persecution. We stand together with our sisters and brothers and pray for God to bring relief from their circumstances.

Lord Jesus, you prayed that we would all be united together so the world would believe and experience your love. Help us to put aside that which keeps us apart and work together to share your love through our actions and our lives.

Let's remember and thank God today for friends and connections with different church traditions, and pray that we'll fully embrace and enjoy the richness of diversity that we all bring to worship and service.

Today we pray for those facing food insecurity globally. Coronavirus, conflict and cuts to UN funding are increasing

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the risks of food insecurity and malnutrition in 2021, in particular in South Sudan.

Prolonged restrictions and times of isolation can lead to a loss of confidence in venturing out and interacting with others. We pray for all who are experiencing this and ask God to help us gently reach out with encouragement and understanding.

Speaking to the Soul

God uses us to spread the knowledge of Christ everywhere, like a sweet perfume. Our lives are a Christ-like fragrance rising up to God. But this fragrance is perceived differently by those who are being saved and by those who are perishing.

2 Corinthians 2:14-15 NLT

Smells are powerful aren't they? I can still remember some of the smells from my childhood. Many of them are associated with summer holidays when we went to the Isle of Wight and smelt the sea, the wild flowers and the beautiful fresh bread. Most of the smells that I recall were sweet although I can't quite get over the boyhood memory of the smell of a French fish market! I love the idea that as we speak about Jesus we are spreading around sweet perfume.

When a Roman general won a military victory there would be a triumphal procession through the city. The general wore a crown of laurel and a specially embroidered purple

and gold toga. He rode in a four-horse chariot through the streets in a procession with his army, prisoners and spoils of war. Along the route of the triumphal procession perfumes were sprinkled, which were a sweet smell of victory for those on the general's side and a smell of death and defeat for those he had beaten. Paul uses this powerful picture to remind his readers that as Jesus leads us in triumph his fragrance can be smelled. A smell of triumph and joy for those who found salvation in him, and a smell of death for those who rejected him.

As we live for God today our prayer must be that there will be many who will smell the fragrance of Jesus through our kindness, understanding and compassion. We ourselves have no lovely fragrances to share but as we live closer and closer to Jesus people will not fail to pick up the sweet smell of Jesus.

QUESTION

What are you going to smell like today?

PRAYER

Lord God our Father, in a world which so often smells badly, help us today to share the fragrance of Jesus. Amen.

