



Mary Aitkenhead

‘Saint’ status for Cork woman who was baptised an Anglican

A Corkwoman has moved a step close to becoming a saint after Pope Francis declared her venerable.

Irish Examiner - Mary Aikenhead, born in Daunt’s Square in Cork in 1787, was one of seven people to be declared venerable yesterday at the Vatican.

It is the second of four steps in the Catholic Church's canonisation process. It comes after the Pope approved permission for the person to begin the path to sainthood by declaring them a servant of God.

Mary Aikenhead was first recognised in 1921. Now, she is only two more steps away from becoming a saint. Her beatification, the next step, would be followed by canonisation.

She founded the Religious Sisters of Charity in 1815 to provide services to "the suffering poor". The order is known for its work caring for those in need, including sick and homeless people, migrants, asylum-seekers, and prison inmates. It operates in Ireland, the UK, Zambia, California, Nigeria, Malawi, and Australia.

The order has been the centre of controversy in recent years, however, when it emerged as one of four religious congregations to run Magdalene laundries — workhouses for single mothers in Ireland.

In addition to the Sisters of Charity, Ms Aikenhead also founded St Vincent's Hospital, Dublin, the first hospital in Ireland to be run by women to care for patients of all religions. It was also a place where doctors and nurses could

receive training, and today it is the principal teaching hospital of UCD.

In 1838, she sent five colleagues to Australia, where they became the first nuns to set foot in the country.

“Mary Aikenhead was a woman ahead of her time”, said Sr Mary Christian, congregational leader of the Religious Sisters of Charity.

“[Her] life was not easy, but she never lost hope. Her life teaches and inspires us to dream courageous visions, to have compassion for human pain, to analyse unjust structures which are the cause of poverty, to work with others to solve problems and to remain resolute in the face of hardship.”

Mary Aikenhead now joins another Cork woman on the path to sainthood — Ballygriffin woman Nano Nagle.

The founder of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, also known as the Presentation Sisters, Nano Nagle was declared venerable by Pope Francis in 2013.

Born in 1718, Nano Nagle established her first school in a mud cabin in Cove Lane, Cork in 1752, in defiance of the authorities.

She then built a network of schools that became the template for Catholic education in the country.

Independent - She and her Sisters were the first nuns to visit prisoners in Kilmainham Gaol in the early 19th Century.

Her institute today has its headquarters in Harold's Cross in Dublin and 400 nuns serve in Ireland, England, Scotland, Zambia, California, Nigeria and Malawi, with another 145 in Australia.

Sr Mary Christian, Congregational Leader, described Mary Aikenhead as "a woman ahead of her time".

"All around her she saw the plight of people who were poor and suffering. Her life teaches and inspires us to have compassion for human pain, analyse unjust structures which are the cause of poverty, work with others to solve problems and remain resolute in the face of hardship," she said.

Born in Cork in April 1787, Venerable Mary Aikenhead was baptised an Anglican as her father was a member of the Church of Ireland. She was later received into the Catholic Church when she was 15.

She opened her first Catholic school for poor children in Dublin's Gardiner Street in 1830. The order is still involved in education today in schools such as Stanhope Street primary school in inner city Dublin.

Mary Aikenhead died in Dublin in 1858 and is buried in the cemetery attached to St Mary Magdalen's in Donnybrook.

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/saint-status-for-cork-woman-319304.html>

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/saint-status-for-cork-woman-319304.html>

<http://www.rte.ie/news/2015/0318/687970-mary-aikenhead/>

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/commentandblogs/2015/03/19/the-pope-declaring-mary-aikenhead-venerable-is-fantastic-news-for-ireland/>

Major Irish/USA news site - Sinn Fein in sex abuse crisis are just like the Catholic Church

Irish Central, a major Irish/USA web site commented this week - "The headlines here over the past few days have not been about Renua.

churchnewsireland@gmail.com

They have been about Sinn Fein, which is up to its neck in another sex abuse controversy.

“It's a story that makes uncomfortable and depressing reading, but it cannot be avoided or ignored no matter how much Sinn Fein tries to minimize it.”

Excerpt - All of this puts the comments by Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Enda Kenny in the Dail some time ago when the Mairia Cahill case was making headlines in a new light. Kenny challenged Gerry Adams at the time to come clean about how many IRA abusers there were, how many had been moved to the south, and what information Sinn Fein had on their present locations. It now seems that Kenny and the security authorities here knew far more than we realized at the time.

The reaction of Sinn Fein to all this has been disturbing. Instead of really coming clean, as Kenny demanded, the party is trying to minimize the damage to itself.

The tactic is to accept the victims' claims of abuse and offer sympathy, but at the same time to deny much if any knowledge of the kangaroo courts and what happened at them or since.

This is accompanied by calls to anyone with any evidence of abuse to go to the police and give statements, which is sickening given what we know about how Republicans behaved when first confronted with these cases.

Sinn Fein even attempted last week to take the high moral ground by calling for some kind of north-south body to be put in place to deal with all claims of abuse.

Even for Sinn Fein this shows a level of brass neck that is truly nauseating in the circumstances. It fools no one. Nor does the Sinn Fein claim that all this is all a manufactured campaign by the other political parties to damage them in the run up to the next election. More at -

<http://www.irishcentral.com/news/irishvoice/Sinn-Fein-in-sex-abuse-crisis-are-just-like-the-Catholic-Church.html>

Churches voice concerns ahead of public rally about gay cake row

The Presbyterian Church says there is a need to provide better protection for people to exercise the right to freedom of conscience.

Belfast Telegraph - A spokesman was commenting ahead of a public rally in Belfast next week in support of a Christian bakery at the centre of the 'gay cake' row.

The rally is being organised by the Christian Institute in Belfast's Waterfront Hall on March 24, just days before the Ashers Baking Co case is listed for a court in the city.

A spokesperson for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland said: "While the Church is not actively promoting the Christian Institute event, a number of our members will no doubt be attending. As a Church we feel there is a need to provide better protection for people to exercise the right to freedom of conscience in the public square.

"A state does not act with respect for personal freedoms and diversity if it requires citizens, whether they are acting in a commercial capacity or not, to produce material which directly conflicts with their core beliefs and values."

Rev David Clements, chair of the Northern Executive of the Methodist Church's Council on Social Responsibility, said: "We issued a statement some time back supporting Ashers and that would be our position in that we would view that there should be reasonable accommodation for Christian companies who

don't want to be actively supporting, through their products, a particular view they don't agree with."

A Church of Ireland spokesman referred to a statement by the chairman of the Church and Society Commission, the Rev Adrian Dorrian, in which he said: "It seems clear that the service was declined, not because of the sexual orientation of the customer but because of the particular political message requested upon the cake. It is a serious concern that the freedom of religious conscience that the law affords to all people has been challenged by the Equality Commission's decision.

"The owners of the baking company were upholding their adherence to the traditional Christian view on marriage as being between one man and one woman. In fact this position was affirmed by a majority of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland in 2012, and is the legal position in Northern Ireland.

"It is of real concern that a conscientious choice made by the owners of a small business, which reflects such a position, has been branded discriminatory and made the subject of heavy-handed legal action."

A spokesman for the Catholic Down and Connor Diocese said that the Bishop of Down and Connor, Most Rev Noel Treanor, met politicians at Stormont in February and said afterwards: "We are glad to take the opportunity to discuss with our legislators, in a calm and respectful manner, how to find a more just and reasonable accommodation for religious belief when conflicts between goods and services legislation and freedom of conscience arise.

"It is important that our politicians accept there is a real problem here that needs to be addressed. Our laws as they stand are having an unjust and disproportionate impact on those of religious faith. It is important that they don't just ignore the situation but seek ways of addressing it and of giving greater recognition to freedom of conscience and religion as a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of a diverse and pluralist society."

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/churches-voice-concerns-ahead-of-public-rally-31075034.html>

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Mansion House hosts inter-faith forum examining religion's role in global conflict

Rabbi Zalman Lent says of an estimated 1,763 major wars in history, just 173 'are classified as being fought over religious difference'



Dr Ali Selim, Islamic Cultural Centre of Ireland, Dr Brendan Leahy, Bishop of Limerick, and Rabbi Zalman Lent, leader of the Jewish community of Dublin, at the Three Faiths Forum of Ireland event in the Mansion House

Irish Times - Anti-semitism is now a reality in 71 countries though Jews represent just 0.2 per

cent of the world's population, an inter-faith forum has been told in Dublin.

Jews “have perished through history . . . because they were different or a perception that they worshipped the same God differently,” said Rabbi Zalman Lent, leader of Ireland's Hebrew congregation.

He was speaking at a well-attended Three Faith Forum (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) discussion on global conflict and religion which was chaired by Prof Linda Hogan vice provost of Trinity College and introduced by Canon Desmond Sinnamon, honorary secretary of the forum.

The attendance included former minister for justice Alan Shatter, the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin Michael Jackson, the Israeli ambassador Boaz Modai and the Palestinian ambassador Ahmad Abdelrazek.

More at -

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/mansion-house-hosts-inter-faith-forum-examining-religion-s-role-in-global-conflict-1.2144617>

Appointment of church representatives to the new

Northern Ireland Education Authority

The Department of Education Northern Ireland yesterday announced the membership of the 20 person Board of the new Education Authority.

Included in the membership are -

(A) Four persons nominated by the NI Commission for Catholic Education to represent the interests of trustees of maintained schools -

Mrs Patricia Carville OBE lives in Lurgan and is a former school Principal. She has been a CCMS Council member for over 20 years, is Chair of the Armagh Diocesan Education Committee and the Education Curricular Committee and a Governor of a number of schools in both the primary and secondary sectors.

Sister Chris Hegarty lives in Derry and is Leader of a Religious Community. She is the former Principal of Thornhill College, Derry. She is Chair of the Board of Management, Scoil Mhuire, Buncrana, Co Donegal and a member of both the Conference of Religious of Ireland (CORI) NI Commission and the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Dr Muredach Dynan lives in Newry and is currently the Director of NICCE. He is the inaugural Chair of the Board of Directors, Edmund Rice Schools Trust (NI) since its establishment in 2006 and a former Professor of Education emeritus, Australian Catholic University (ACU).

Fr Timothy Bartlett lives in Belfast and is a Priest, Episcopal Vicar for Education, and Director of Social and Public Affairs in the Diocese of Down and Connor. He is Secretary to the Catholic Bishops of NI and the NI Catholic Council on Social Affairs, a CCMS Board Member, Chair of the Board of Governors of St Killian's College, a member of the Board of Directors of NICCE and a member of the Governing Body of the Joint Church Peace Project Steering Group.

(B) Four persons nominated by the Transferor Representatives' Council to represent the interests of transferors of controlled schools - Rev Amanda Adams lives in Coleraine and is a Church of Ireland Minister in the Diocese of Connor. She is also a Governor of two primary schools.

Rev Robert Herron lives in Omagh and is Minister of Trinity Omagh and Gillygooley Presbyterian Churches.

He has declared that he has not undertaken any political activity during the last five years. He currently holds two other public appointments; a Governor of Omagh Academy for which he receives no remuneration and Chair of the Board of the Western Education and Library Board, for which he receives remuneration of £10,000 per annum.

Mr Edgar Jardine lives in Bangor and is a retired senior Civil Servant.

Miss Rosemary Rainey lives in Belfast. She is vice-Chair of the Transferor Representatives' Council, a Governor of Grosvenor Grammar School, a member of the Management Board of City of Belfast School of Music and a council member of the NI Cancer Registry Council.

(C) One person nominated by the Governing Bodies Association to represent the interests of voluntary grammar schools -

Mr Gerry Loughran lives in Belfast and is a former Head of the Civil Service and Secretary to the NI Executive. He is currently Chair of Phoenix Gas, Forward Synthesis International, Blackstaff Publishing and Director of Leuven Institute for Ireland in Europe. He is Chair of the

Board of Governors of St Malachy's College,
Belfast.

For remainder of Board members nominated by
political parties and other interests see -

[http://www.deni.gov.uk/news/news-de-190315-
appointment-of-board.htm](http://www.deni.gov.uk/news/news-de-190315-appointment-of-board.htm)

Black Santa Appeal donates £5000 for relief in Vanuatu

The Black Santa Appeal at St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, is to donate £5,000 to provide emergency supplies for the people of Vanuatu following the devastating cyclone which hit the Pacific island chain.

Cyclone Pam on Friday March 13 was one of the strongest ever recorded in the Pacific Islands. Entire communities have been severely damaged and thousands of people are sheltering in evacuation centres.

Contributions to the annual Black Santa Sit-Out at Christmas on the steps of St Anne's are collected throughout the year and so the Cathedral is in a position to respond to crisis situations such as that in Vanuatu.

The money will be channelled through Christian Aid to its partner ACT (Action for Peace) in Vanuatu. Christian Aid has already released an initial £25,000 to its partners on the ground to provide emergency supplies including food, water and shelter in the aftermath of Cyclone Pam.

In addition to the £5,000 Black Santa donation, St Anne's Cathedral will be holding a special collection in aid of Vanuatu during its services on the next two Sundays. Donations can also be left at the Cathedral Welcome Desk over the next fortnight.

Black Santa, the Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev John Mann, said: "I heard a description from one of the Vanuatu islands as having been like Paradise the day before the storm broke, and now hardly a tree stands undamaged and many have been uprooted.

"What the affects must be on the people, their homes and livelihoods, both in the short and long term, is hard to imagine in the midst of this scale of destruction."



Pupils from Dublin National School Make their Mark at Croke Park

Pupils of St Columba's National School, North Strand, saw the culmination of nearly two years' work with the unveiling of a special mosaic in Croke Park Stadium on Wednesday (March 18). Entitled *Conas a fuair Cú Chulainn a ainm* (How Cú Chulainn got his name), the mosaic was unveiled by Uachtarán Cumann Lúthchleas Gael, Aogán Ó Fearghail.

The project was created by the children from the Church of Ireland primary school and was supported by Croke Park through its local community fund. Their mosaic is now hanging in the inner Cusack Stand concourse and will be

viewed by many thousands of visitors making their way into the stadium each year.

Speaking as he unveiled the mosaic, President Ó Fearghail said: “When you give children the opportunity to express themselves, extraordinary things can happen. The mosaic I am unveiling today is testament to this belief. The children’s eye-view and perspective of Irish heritage and myth has fused effortlessly with their modern day influences from social media and video games. It is our hope that this wonderful piece will hang in Croke Park for years to come and that many of the children here today will one day bring their own children to the stadium to see the mosaic their parents created”.

He added that the creation of the mosaic had been all about partnerships with staff from Croke Park working with the pupils and teachers, volunteers and the artists to bring the mosaic to life. He thanked everyone who gave their time to support this special community project.

Funding for the mosaic was received from the Croke Park Community Fund which allocates €100,000 each year to local community groups based within 1.5km of the stadium. Stadium Director Peter McKenna was also involved in this special community project and visited the school

last November with Galway Hurling Captain and GAA star Joe Canning. During their visit, they took part in one of the mosaic art classes and answered questions from the children.

Speaking at the launch, Mr McKenna said the mosaic gave an insight into how seriously Croke Park takes its relationship with the local community. “The Community Fund is just one of our Community Gain Initiatives undertaken here in the stadium, and since 2009, the fund has allocated nearly €600,000 to local community groups, schools, clubs and associations. Through the Fund, we have the opportunity to make a lasting contribution to the local community and we’re very proud of what local groups accomplish with our support,” he stated.

Ann Creaner, Principal of St Columba’s National School, said that the project was a symbol of all that was good in the community. “It has been a great experience working with artists Ulrika Holmquist and Fionnuala Halpin to create something special which will be a part of Croke Park for many years to come. The children and the whole school community value the relationship with the GAA. The mosaic is the product of nearly two years of cooperation between the community and Croke Park and is a

celebration of all that is good in our area,” she said at the launch.



UN welcomes Pope's historic visit

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has welcomed the announcement that Pope Francis will visit the United Nations in September to address the UN General Assembly.

In a statement on Wednesday, the United Nations also said the Pope would meet separately with the secretary-general and with the president of the General Assembly and would participate in a town hall gathering with UN staff.

Ban noted that the Pope's visit came during the United Nations' 70th anniversary, in which its members would make decisions about sustainable development, climate change and peace. He said he was confident the Pope's visit would inspire the international community to redouble its efforts for social justice, tolerance and understanding.

The United Nations did not release the detailed itinerary for the meetings, part of a larger papal visit to Washington, New York and Philadelphia. The Vatican is expected to release the official itinerary about two months in advance of the trip, unless local officials release it earlier.

In February, House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, announced that Pope Francis will address a joint meeting of Congress on September 24, making him the first Pope to do so.

The Archdiocese of Washington said it would host the Pope for his visit, but did not announce the dates. On his flight from the Philippines to Rome in January, Pope Francis said he would canonise Blessed Junipero Serra at Washington's Basilica of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

Pope Francis already had announced his participation on September 26 and 27 for the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia.

During his pontificate, St John Paul II visited the United States seven times – two of which were fuel stopovers- making the country his most frequent foreign destination after his native Poland. He addressed the UN General Assembly in 1979 and 1995; Blessed Paul VI did so in 1965, and Pope Benedict XVI addressed the assembly in 2008, during his one US visit as pope.

Media digest

Irish Examiner

More than half of pupils 'addicted' to their phone

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/more-than-half-of-pupils-addicted-to-their-phone-319239.html>

Casino brides tie the knot on Friday 13th in Cork

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/casino-brides-tie-the-knot-on-friday-13th-in-cork-319276.html>

Donations to charities at Christmas increased by more than 10%

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/donations-to-charities-at-christmas-increased-by-more-than-10-668130.html>

Irish Times

More than half of Irish parents slapped their children, poll shows

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/more-than-half-of-irish-parents-slapped-their-children-poll-shows-1.2144404>

News Letter

Commissioner's concern over young people at St Patrick's Day festivities

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/commissioner-s-concern-over-young-people-at-st-patrick-s-day-festivities-1-6641357>

Drumbeat: Bands echo in St Patrick's city

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/drumbeat-bands-echo-in-st-patrick-s-city-1-6639669>

Belfast Telegraph

The Budget: Cuts plan will be a real tester for Sinn Fein

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/the-budget-cuts-plan-will-be-a-real-tester-for-sinn-fein-31077945.html>

Ex-military concerned over NI's cut of Chancellor's payout

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/exmilitary-concerned-over-nis-cut-of-chancellors-payout-31078558.html>

Times/Express/ Christian Today/Mirror/Guard

Articles on the budget which say it includes a tripling of the £15 million Church Roof Fund to £40million. They state the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby applauded the move. He tweeted: "Trebling of money for church repairs will create local skilled jobs, improve community facilities and protect heritage, most welcome." Times columnist says it is all paid for by bankers and their Libor fines.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/business/columnists/alistairosborne/article4386262.ece>

<http://www.express.co.uk/finance/city/564944/budget-2015-george-Osborne>

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/business/budget2015/article4386383.ece>

<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/mar/18/budget-winners-beer-drinkers-farmers-charities>

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/uvsth3m/poverty-pork-scratchings-imaginary-tory-5357679>

<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/mar/18/budget-2015-jokes-george-osborne-pokes-fun-labour-ed-miliband>

BBC

Report on St Patrick's Day parades and festivities in towns and cities across Northern Ireland, which states the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, was the guest of honour in County Down, where he took part in a service at Saul Church - built in 1932 to commemorate St Patrick's first church in Ireland. The archbishop then set out on the pilgrimage walk to Downpatrick, where he laid a wreath at St Patrick's grave before joining a parade through the town.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-31909129>

Ind (yest)

Reports of research conducted by the Mothers' Union into the commercialisation on children found that more than two thirds of parents (68 per cent) believe that advertising seen by their children can be harmful. The Bishop of Truro, Tim Thornton is quoted.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/media/online/vloggers-increasingly-target-children-with-covert-advertising-10114715.html>

Tel/Guard

Reports that Lord Green, an Anglican priest and the former chief executive and chairman of HSBC, has revealed his "dismay" and "deep

regret" over the tax evasion row that has engulfed the bank. Speaking on Channel 4 News on Wednesday night he said he had always sought to follow high standards during his career and admitted that management had made mistakes during his time at the lender.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/banksandfinance/11481853/>

[Lord-Green-admits-dismay-and-deep-regret-over-HSBC-tax-row.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/banksandfinance/11481853/Lord-Green-admits-dismay-and-deep-regret-over-HSBC-tax-row.html)

<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/mar/18/former-hsbc-boss-tells-city-audience-business-leaders-should-be-more-ethical>

BBC Today Programme (yesterday, beginning 1hr 20 in)

Report on a restoration project at Winchester Cathedral that's thought to be Britain's biggest-ever single scaffolding structure. The restoration scheme costing nearly twenty million pounds is to conserve and restore lead work on the east end of the roof. Annabelle Boyes, Canon Treasurer of Winchester Cathedral, was interviewed about the project.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b055g9mq>

Tel

Report that St Mary Magdalene Academy, a Church of England-funded school in Islington has won a challenge over a Home Office

decision to invite up to 10 Chinese exchange pupils into its sixth form, so that the pupils have "live" contact with a different culture. The Home Office had ruled its plans conflicted with tough immigration policies.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/11480845/Top-London-school-triumphs-with-Chinese-exchange-pupil-plan.html>

Spectator

Quentin Letts writes that Church of England recruitment adverts are full of leftism and management speak and writes his own alternative version for the kind of vicar he would like to employ.

<http://www.spectator.co.uk/features/9473422/i-know-just-the-vicar-for-my-parish-church-pity-hes-fictional/>

Mail

Report that St John's Stoke church, in Guildford, Surrey has come under fire over plans to dig up thousands of bodies - including the founder of Western Australia - to make way for a community centre and car park in its graveyard. The scheme has led to opponents producing a 1,400-signature petition against the plans. Rector, the Revd Mark Woodward is quoted and it states plans are for remains to be placed in a memorial garden behind the new community

centre. Church leaders will take their plans to Church Commissioners on April 22.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3001156/Church-plans-dig-thousands-bodies-including-founder-Western-Australia-make-way-new-car-park.html#ixzz3UoHkIEGa>

BBC

Article on a treasurer who stole £90,000 from St Boniface Church and pre-school, in Plymouth to fund her gambling habit has been jailed for 30 months. It states Nicola Holding took the cash over a three-and-a-half-year period. Vicar Alison Shaw told the court there was a "huge sense of betrayal" and that her crimes had had a "massive impact" on the church and its community.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-devon-31949390>

Express

Further item on the Wells Cathedral cat accused of attacking dogs in the town.

<http://www.express.co.uk/life-style/life/564851/cathedral-cat-louis-wells>

Letters

Times

Letter from chairman of charity commissioners over the decision on charitable status for buildings of Plymouth Brethren Church says they

will make public the conclusions of our monitoring of those Brethren halls that they registered as charities. Other letters on the subject also.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/letters/article4386016.ece>