



The essential daily brief on the Irish churches

Drop Mass ban, say rural Orangemen

The first professional survey of Orangemen in Fermanagh has found considerable support for ending the ban on attending Mass.

Sam McBride in News Letter - The information-gathering exercise, run by consultancy firm Green Hat and partly funded by Fermanagh District Council, saw a survey sent to all the county's roughly 1,800 Orangemen.



A large percentage – almost a third – responded, and the results were published as a 166-page report last night.

They include a finding that almost half of those who responded believe the rule barring Orangemen from attending Mass should be changed; just 25 per cent believe it should stay.

The issue has led to a firm divergence of opinion within the Order in recent years, particularly after top UUP members and Orangemen Tom Elliott and Danny Kennedy ignored the prohibition to attend the funeral of PSNI officer Ronan Kerr.

The Mass finding may be influenced by the overwhelmingly Church of Ireland make-up of Fermanagh Orangemen, with 77 per cent coming from an Anglican background.

It also showed that 43 per cent believe shared education should be encouraged, with 30 per cent opposed and that a third of Fermanagh Orangemen do not think the Order is doing enough to promote good relations.

There are also a lot of complaints about the media, with many accusing journalists of a republican bias. Only 44 per cent believe the wider Protestant/unionist community understand them.

The survey also showed a glimpse of the Order's rural/urban split, with one member telling researchers: "No matter how we create good relations in Fermanagh we will always be let down by the hooligans in Belfast who tarnish our reputation."

The survey was run with the aim of improving relations in the Fermanagh area.



PSNI Chief Constable meets Pope

Matt Baggott was amongst the group of Chief Constables who met with Pope Francis this week at the Vatican to examine ways forward in preventing human trafficking.

Meeting four victims of human trafficking, dozens of religious sisters and senior police chiefs from 20 countries, Pope Francis praised their coordinated efforts to fight against a “crime against humanity.”

“Human trafficking is an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ,” he said.

The Pope spoke at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences earlier today to participants in an international conference on combating human trafficking, which was organised by the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales and Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster.

Human trafficking “is a crime against humanity” that requires continued global and local cooperation between the Catholic Church and law enforcement, Pope Francis said.

The twin strategies of police cracking down on the criminals behind trafficking and Church and social workers aiding victims “are quite important,” he said, and “can and must go together.”

C of I Primate on Windsor Castle reception

The Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland has commented on the recent state visit by the President of Ireland:

‘I have very much welcomed the State Visit of the Irish President, Michael D. Higgins, and his wife to the United Kingdom this week, which has demonstrated memorably the increasingly strong relationships between the people of these islands.

Moves towards improving good relations and reconciliation between people from varying traditions and backgrounds are, I believe, to be embraced.

‘Not least within that context I was delighted to represent the people of the Church of Ireland by attending a Reception with a focus on Northern Ireland hosted by HM Queen Elizabeth at Windsor Castle yesterday evening, as part



of the range of events marking the State Visit. It was a most enjoyable and exhilarating occasion.'

From Cairo to Cape Town: A hope filled safari through Africa by bike

A six month cycle through Africa undertaken by four young professionals, who all attend Holy Trinity C of I, Rathmines, is entering its final days.

Kyle Petrie, Sadhbh McKenna, Niamh Allen and Antonio Isidro Carrion Martin are cycling from Cairo to Cape Town, a distance of over 11,000 kilometres, to raise funds for Medicine Sans Frontiers and Room to Read.

Their journey is nearly complete. They have travelled through 11 countries and have only six days left before they reach their final destination, Cape Town.

The group, three from Ireland and one from Spain, left Dublin on September 18 last year and their journey has taken them through sand storms in the Western Desert of Egypt; down the Nile Valley where, in the wrong place at the wrong time, they were beaten from their bikes with wooden sticks; to the tea houses of Sudan where they were forbidden from paying for their tea by the warm and generous Sudanese; up into the highlands of Ethiopia where the feral mountain children battered them with stones; to Nairobi where they celebrated Christmas morning with a thousand singing and dancing Kenyans; pushing their bikes south through days of sand on 'The Great Road North' in



Tanzania; to relax on the untouched shores of lake Malawi; 150km and 2,000 meters up on their toughest cycling day in Zambia; to the thundering Victoria Falls where they were soaked by the sky high spray; to experience a cycle safari in Botswana, with elephants on the roadside and lions calling at night; to the wilderness of the Kalahari desert in Namibia where they were back to the desert challenge of calculating water logistics; to their final stretch, anticipating Table Mountain appearing on the horizon; the end in sight.

The theme of their journey has been the overwhelming hospitality that they have received. The people that they met took them in, gave them tea, put them up, semi adopted them, passed them cold drinks out of car windows, offered them water and enabled them to reach this final stretch of their journey.

On a continent of bad news stories these four young professionals from their post recession countries experienced a new narrative of hopefulness. Cycling through Africa they received incredible hospitality from people with so little who are content with what they have and are happy to give whatever they can to help strangers on their journey. They are coming home with a message relevant to a post Celtic Tiger Ireland – that giving and hospitality can exist no matter what the circumstance and that bad news stories can be countered by hope filled people. That is their journey, their hope-filled *safari. (**safari means journey in Swahili*).

Follow them as they count down the final days to Cape Town at www.rotharafrica.org, @rotharafrica, fb: rothar africa or rothar–africa.tumblr.com.

Dublin Training colleges outraged at 'lack of consultation' on DCU merger

Academics at three Dublin training colleges are discussing their concerns over a DCU merger today.

Irish Examiner - Staff at St Patrick's Drumcondra, Church of Ireland College of Education and Mater Dei are outraged they have not been consulted about the move.

Irish Federation of University Teachers general secretary Mike Jennings said: "Apart from short bulletins of one or two paragraphs from a body called the Joint Steering Group telling people what has been decided, there has been no actual consultation with us.

"No one has asked us for our input and no one has asked the staff to negotiate on their concerns."

New ICC President encourages Christians to shape the future

At the 91st annual meeting of the Irish Council of churches in Arklow this week the Revd Dr Donald Watts, Clerk of the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, was elected as President of the ICC.



The newly installed president of the Irish Council of Churches, the Revd Dr Donald and outgoing President, the Revd Fr Godfrey O'Donnell pictured with clergy in Arklow. L–R: Canon Nigel Sherwood, the Revd Ivor Owens, Canon Martin Cosgrove, the Revd Dr Donald Watts, the Revd Fr Godfrey O'Donnell and the Revd Michael Anderson.

This position is the most senior ecumenical role in Ireland and Dr Watts succeeds

the Revd Fr Godfrey O'Donnell of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Speaking at his installation, Dr Watts encouraged the churches to be forward looking and confident in their life and ministry. He evoked the words of Queen Elizabeth II during this historic week, in which she insisted that citizens of Britain and Ireland “no longer allow our past to ensnare our future”.

Suggesting that the churches in Ireland also take up this theme, that they cannot and must not be held by the past, Dr Watts suggested that “we, as Christian people, must be determined by the future, a future that Jesus has created for us, not one we have inherited from others”. He encouraged those present to “walk confidently and joyfully towards a future determined for us by Jesus’ death and resurrection”.

The newly installed President also spoke of his pleasure at the annual meeting being held in the Republic of Ireland. He pointed to an emerging trend of differences not only between the Christian traditions, but also within the denominations, north and south of the border, and outlined a vision for his presidency, whereby the ICC as an organisation could work towards ensuring that these divisions were overcome.

The installation took place during a service led by Arklow Presbyterian Minister, the Revd Michael Anderson. His local clerical counterparts Canon Martin Cosgrove, Roman Catholic; Canon Nigel Sherwood, Church of Ireland; and the Revd Ivor Owens, Methodist, also participated.

Afternoon discussions centred round the theme of the 'Theology of the Remnant'. Frances Young, Emeritus Edward Cadbury Professor of Theology at Birmingham University, gave the keynote address entitled, 'From Holy Remnant to Exile and Aliens'. President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Revd Dr Heather Morris, in her role as responder, urged churches to echo the character of God in the world, as "the very concept of remnant points beyond itself to something greater". Delegates then divided into groups to discuss how they might transfer the knowledge and insight gained from today's session into their own mission and ministry.

Dr Watts will hold the presidency until 2016, at which time the Rt Revd John McDowell, Church of Ireland Bishop of Clogher and current ICC Vice-President, will assume the role.

Bishop Donal McKeown Welcomed to C of I See House

Bishop Ken Good is looking forward to working for the common good with the new Roman Catholic Bishop of Derry. He expressed this hope as he and

his wife Mary welcomed Bishop Donal McKeown to the Church of Ireland See House (Derry and Raphoe) on 10 April.



Bishop Good said “I have known Bishop Donal for many years. Knowing his work to build relationships across divides I believe we will work together fruitfully for the common good. We will work to build bridges that will benefit every part of our community.”

Talking of the contribution of the Church to the community Bishop McKeown said, “I believe that it is Springtime and not winter for the Church because I see possibilities for life and growth. I believe the Church is trying to define a new role for itself in our society here. That is a process that I welcome rather than fear”. He continued “Bishop Good and I share a commitment to seeing the Church serve our community in ways that bring hope and healing for every part of it. For that reason I look forward to a future where we can work together for the common good”.

Bishop Donal McKeown was installed as Roman Catholic Bishop of Derry on 6th April. The Service took place in St Eugene’s Cathedral.

Armagh celebrations to mark Brian Boru’s death

Armagh is to mark 1,000 years since the death of High King of Ireland, Brian Boru, with a series of events from April 22 to May 4.

Portadown Times -
Brian Ború died at the Battle of Clontarf and is buried in Armagh’s Church of Ireland Cathedral.

One of the highlights will be a re-enactment of the arrival of Brian Ború’s body and will take place at Navan Centre and Fort on Wednesday, April 23.



This free event will include storytelling, blacksmith and coin making demonstrations, as well as a scale model of the Battle of Clontarf.

Loughgall Country Park will also play host to a Viking Longboat event on Thursday 24, with rowing and sailing sessions, weapon training and mock battles.

Armagh's Cathedrals will host a number of events and concluding the line-up will be a Viking invasion as over 100 warriors set up camp in a tented village on the Mall on Saturday, May 3.

Visitors will get the chance to see how life was in Brian Ború's lifetime and there will be falconry displays, story-telling, craft demonstrations, cookery displays and blacksmith demonstrations.

Prayer centenary passed in Down

It was 100 days on Thursday past when Down & Dromore diocese's year of 24–7 prayer began on the Titanic Slipway.

Since then the prayer scroll has wound its way round Belfast, Holywood, Helen's Bay, Newtownards and is currently in Bangor Primacy.

Without exception, it's been a very positive experience for all of the 22 parishes so far that have carried the responsibility for sustaining 24–7 prayer in the diocese. The prayer rooms have been places of genuine refreshment and connection with God and the issues upon his heart.

Kill O' the Grange Church's 150th Anniversary

The Bishop of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh, the Rt Revd Ferran Glenfield, returned to Kill O' the Grange Parish in Dublin where he was rector for 16 years on Sunday past for a special service to mark the 150th anniversary of the church.



The Revd Arthur Young and Bishop Ferran Glenfield at the 150th anniversary celebratory event in Kill O the Grange.

The Bishop preached at the morning service and afterwards was presented with a painting of the church by parishioner, Joy Taylor, which was commissioned for the occasion.

Following the ceremony two trees were planted one by Bishop Glenfield and the other by the Revd Arthur Young, the current Rector of Kill O' the Grange.

A large number of parishioners joined the celebration including Bishop Glenfield's son Richie who assisted his father with the tree planting.

A number of other events are planned over the coming months to mark the anniversary year.

Same sex marriage on agenda of the Church in Wales

Same-sex marriage and assisted dying are among the issues to be discussed by clergy and lay people from all over Wales at a key Church meeting.

Members of the Church in Wales' Governing Body will consider reports on the two controversial subjects during their two-day meeting at Venue Cymru, Llandudno on April 23-24.

The 144 members will be put into small groups to discuss the reports which outline the theological perspective on the issues. However, they will not be asked to decide the Church's view on either.

Also on the agenda will be discussions about guidelines to accompany the Canon to ordain women as bishops. Members will have their chance to say what they would like to see in the 'Code of Practice' being drawn up by the bishops for when the Canon comes into effect in September.

Closer relationships with other Christian churches is another key item on the agenda. Members will be asked to commend a report from the Commission of Covenanted Churches in Wales and encourage it to develop its recommendations.

Also on the agenda are:

Wednesday

- A keynote address by the Archbishop of Wales, as President of the Governing Body;
 - An update on 2020 Vision – the Church's strategy for future growth;
 - A poetry reading from Revd Peter Walker, from the H'mm Foundation.
- Thursday

- An update on the Church's bid to become a Fair Trade Province;
- The launch of the Church's mediation service to promote reconciliation for those in dispute;
- The report of St Michael's College, Cardiff;

- A motion to urge parishes to develop their active support of Foodbanks and to work for a society in which all people have a sufficient income.

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