

**The essential daily brief  
on the Irish churches**

## **Cathedral brings colour to city life**



*Painting the town red, and every other colour of the rainbow, are two of the youngest 'Easter Bunnies' from the congregation taking part in Lisburn Cathedral's Big Church Serve, Lucy (aged 3) and Lauren (aged 4) Harper from Lisburn. It is hoped that this unique event will bring colour and love to Lisburn City Centre and Hill Hall Estate this Easter.*

**Lisburn Cathedral pulled out all the stops to bring colour and love to the local community during the Easter period.**

Ulster Star - Supported by Lisburn City Council and coinciding with the City's Easter 'Eggstravaganza' featuring the Circuit of Ireland and the Power Stage,

'The Big Church Serve' saw a 200 strong squad of local people aged three - 83 take part in the four day project.

There was a huge range of activities for all the family taking place in both Lisburn City Centre and Hill Hall.

The aim of the project was to bring colour back to the city and the local community.

Vicar, Simon Genoe, said: "We have been inspired by the good book which asks us to express our faith through love by bringing colour to our city, so that's exactly what we are doing.

"We handed out flowers door to door to all 400 homes in the Hill Hall area, handed out over 300 Easter Eggs and balloons to shoppers and visitors in the City Centre, all the while wearing ridiculously hi-vis vests with 'The Big Church Serve' on the back so no-one could miss us.

"Our hope is that we can simply say 'Hello' to and engage with those who either live in the area or who are enjoying a day in town."

Businesses were included in the festivities with a team of workers hand delivering free hot cross buns to workers, reminding them to take a moment and enjoy the colours of the city this Easter.

The event also saw the group showing their love of the city in more practical ways by helping to clean up some of the areas which have been identified by Lisburn City Council, Lagan Valley Regional Park, the Canal Trust and Lisburn's City Centre Management.

The Bishop of Connor, The Rt Rev Alan Abernethy led the Walk of Witness which took place in Lisburn City Centre on Good Friday.

Representatives from Lisburn Cathedral and from all the other churches across the city came together to showcase the Cross and the celebration of the Good Friday message.

The Big Church Serve saw new planted areas at the Treatment Works, litter collected in the Blue Bridge area and even a fabulously artful and tasteful mural created by the Hill Hall Community in conjunction with a local artist over the four day period.

For Further information along with everything else happening at Lisburn Cathedral you can visit the website at [www.lisburncathedral.org/bigchurchserve](http://www.lisburncathedral.org/bigchurchserve).

## **Dissident murder: Priest calls on community not to let fear after ‘public execution’ win**

**The priest who gave the last rites to a prominent dissident murdered in Belfast early on Friday evening has called on the community to speak out against the killers and help bring them to justice.**

News Letter - Fr Tony Devlin said Tommy Crossan’s murder shortly before 5pm in a busy area of west Belfast was “a public execution calculated to bring death and fear to the community”.

The parish priest of St Paul’s in Belfast described the scene he found when called on to anoint the 43 year-old former Continuity IRA leader as shocking and greatly distressing to anyone who witnessed it, including children in a nearby park.

Speaking to the congregation at the Easter vigil mass on Saturday night Fr Devlin said the fear those responsible wish to create in the community cannot be allowed to win.

“As a parish, we have experienced many fruits of the ‘Peace Process’ but yesterday we witnessed evils return with this brutal murder,” he said.

“The people and children of this parish deserve better. They deserve peace but the price of peace involves standing up to criminal and violent ways by firstly speaking out against it and then if possible to help to bring to justice those who carried out this brutal act.

“We must not let the fear these people wish to put us under triumph.”

Fr Devlin added that the “price of peace” in the local area will involve speaking out against the murder and “if possible to help to bring to justice those who carried out this brutal act”.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with this man’s family today and all who are victims of violence,” he said.

## **List of victims who died in Northern Ireland Troubles read out at service**

**The names of the more than 3,500 people who died in the [Northern Ireland](#) Troubles were read, carefully and patiently, in a quiet event at the Unitarian Church in Dublin last week**

Irish Times - Now in its 14th year, this is the first in a number of years that no new name was added to the sad litany.



*Rev Bridget Spain: "It does underline very movingly, I think, the frailty of life and the randomness of death in conflict."*

Last year was added that of [David Black](#), the prison officer who was murdered as he drove to work along the M1 in Co Armagh in November 2012.

The first name was Anthony Abbott, a soldier from Manchester who was shot dead by the IRA in Ardoyne in north Belfast in 1976. The last names, read at 3.10pm, were William and [Letitia Younger](#), an elderly Protestant man and his daughter, who were beaten, stabbed and shot by intruders in their home in Ligoniel, also in north Belfast, in 1980.

Chronologically, the first death is listed under 'S', being that of [John Patrick Scullion](#), a Catholic storeman shot by the UVF in Belfast in 1966.

Some 18 people took just over three hours to read out each name in alphabetical order. As the names began to be read out – "Anthony Abbott, Alexander Abercrombie, Colin Abernethy, Kieran Patrick Abram, Alfred Acheson, Kenneth J Acheson, [Joseph Adair](#)." one was struck by the anonymity of these names to anyone beyond those who had known and loved them personally.

There was no indication of the circumstances of each of these people's deaths, where they had lived, what they were doing or their age. Each might have been an infant or elderly person and anyone listening was aware of them for a just few seconds .

"No we don't go into details at all," said Rev Bridget Spain after the ceremony. "Just the names and it does underline very movingly I think the frailty of life and the randomness of death in conflict.

“A few names will jump out, the high-profile names that are familiar – [Marie Wilson](#), [Robert Nairac](#), Airey Neave – but there are just so many that are remembered publicly here for a few seconds and then, well, it’s almost as if that’s all that’s left.” More at -

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/list-of-victims-who-died-in-northern-ireland-troubles-read-out-1.1767270>

## **Grand master faces expulsion after conviction for ban breach**

**The most senior member of the Royal Black Institution in Belfast could face expulsion after being convicted of knowingly breaching a ban on loyalist bands playing music outside St Patrick's Church.**

Irish News - William Mawhinney, who is the order's Belfast county grand master, was one of five senior members of the institution found guilty when they appeared in court earlier this week.

It is understood to be the first time Royal Black members have been convicted in relation to the parades dispute at St Patrick's.

The charges related to a parade past the Donegall Street church in August 2012.

Violence flared after a number of loyalist bands ignored a ban on playing music outside the place of worship.



***Lisburn city centre ministers leading the annual Good Friday Carrying of the Cross Walk of Witness in Lisburn.***

Tensions had been raised after the Shankill Road-based Young Conway Volunteers Flute Band was filmed walking in circles outside the church while playing the sectarian *Famine Song* on July 12.

That band also defied a ruling not to take part in the controversial march.

Dr Noel Treanor, the Catholic bishop of Down and Connor, later asked the PSNI to explain why "no visible effort appears to have been made to enforce the lawful restrictions" placed on the parade.

As well as being the leader of the Royal Black Institution in Belfast, Mr Mawhinney is also the Orange Order's Belfast county secretary and has played a central part in demonstrations connected to the loyalist protest camp in the Twaddell area of north Belfast.

Last year he was branded "extremely irresponsible" for calling on loyalists to escalate protests in north Belfast by engaging in civil disobedience in support of Orangemen banned from passing nationalist homes in Ardoyne.

The 67-year-old has also been selected to stand as a candidate for the Progressive Unionist Party in Belfast in next month's local elections.

A spokesman for the institution last night said the case of Mr Mawhinney and those found guilty with him will be discussed by the institution's ruling body.

"The matter will be discussed at the grand council of the institution which will meet in June," he said. "For people who have been convicted in court, the penalties can include suspension or expulsion from the institution."

Those found guilty with Mr Mawhinney were Thomas Foster (60) of Woodvale Avenue, Alan McIntosh (60) of Kilcoole Park, Raymond Spiers (56) from Castlereagh Road - all in Belfast - and Brian Kerr (42) of Fairview Gardens in Newtownabbey. The case against another man, Thomas hefferon (55) of Derrycoole Way, Newtownabbey, was dismissed. Each of the men were fined £150 with an additional £15 offender levy.

## **Ballyholme Inter-Church prayer room shared for Holy Week**

**The prayer room at Ballyholme Parish became a focus for interdenominational community prayer over Holy Week and the Easter weekend.**

Every year St Columbanus shares Holy Week services with Ballyholme Methodist Church at Brooklyn Avenue and Ballyholme Presbyterian Church with input and support from the Roman Catholic congregation at Sheridan Drive. And whilst Ballyholme Presbyterian is the host church this year,



*L–R: Canon Simon Doogan, Revd John Montgomery (Ballyholme Methodist) and Revd Peter Lyle*

St Columbanus had the 24–7 prayer scroll which is circulating in Down & Dromore diocese so the three congregations took the opportunity to pray together for Ballyholme.

The rector, Revd Canon Simon Doogan, explains how it worked:

“In terms of 24/7, we set up a room for quiet prayer and a room for activity prayer and then in our Kajiado Room short prayer services were held at 8.00 am, 12 noon and 12 midnight.

“The clergy and others led the prayer services but people from all our congregations came and went through the week to pray more widely for our local community.

“Before going to the cross, Christ prayed fervently for the unity of his disciples. At one level, coming together for 24/7 in Ballyholme this Easter was about honouring one of the dying wishes of the Saviour.”

The Revd Peter Lyle, minister of Ballyholme Presbyterian said, “It’s significantly powerful when we do things together – as well as being a good witness to the local community.”

The congregations also met for worship each evening of Holy Week and this year the guest preacher was Prof Drew Gibson of Union Theological College.

## **Bishop on BBC Sunday Show**

**Bishop Harold Miller was interviewed by William Crawley on The Sunday Show on Radio 4 in a special edition from Belfast.**

The Bishop speaks about the role of the church in our society as we seek to build a shared future in Northern Ireland.

The interview is at the top of the programme and you can listen again by visiting the Sunday Show website [here](#).

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qnb>

## **‘The Priests’ for Ballymena**

**Ballymena Borough Church Members Forum have invited ‘The Priests’ to headline a cross-community concert on Friday, June 6, at 7.30 pm in [St. Patrick’s Church of Ireland church, Castle Street](#).**

The Priests are a renowned classical musical group made up of three Roman Catholic priests all from Northern Ireland.

Fr. Eugene and his brother Fr. Martin O’Hagan are originally from the village of Claudy while Fr. David Delargy is from Ballymena. After signing a deal with SonyBMG in 2008 the priests recorded their debut album in Northern Ireland and Rome, with the unusual honour of having been allowed to record in St. Peter’s Basilica, The Vatican.

Tickets for the local concert go on sale on Monday, April 7, at 9am and can be purchased by going to <https://aneveningwiththepriests.eventbrite.co.uk>.

After expenses the funds raised from ticket sales will go to the cross-community team going from Ballymena to Ethiopia in July with Habitat for Humanity NI.



## Successor to Archbishop Brady would 'love to see visit by Pope'

**The future leader of the Irish Catholic Church has said he "would dearly love" Pope Francis to visit Ireland and will "support any invitation".**

Irish Independent - Archbishop Eamon Martin, who has been selected to lead the church when Cardinal [Sean Brady](#) retires, also admitted that the "awful and terrible crimes and sins of child abuse brought us [the church] to our knees."

He said he felt the church was now recovering in part due to the 'Francis Factor' and that the bishops "have a long outstanding invitation to the Holy Father to return to Ireland".

Speaking in Armagh, where he is coadjutor archbishop, he explained that the hierarchy feels that the visit by [Pope John Paul II](#) in 1979 "was incomplete"



because the Pontiff was unable to go north of the border.

"I believe Cardinal Brady, as president of the Irish Episcopal conference, has already said to Pope Francis that we would love him to come," Dr Martin said.

Referring to last month's motion by [Belfast](#) City Council inviting the Pope to visit the city, as well as Senator [David Norris](#)' Seanad motion in February, the archbishop said: "I do think that across Ireland, North and South, people would dearly love to see a visit from Pope Francis."

He underlined that if any visit were to go ahead it "would be important that the State – both North and South – would co-operate with us [the church] in arranging it. Because it would be a wonderful thing for Ireland."

But he sounded a note of caution, referring to Pope Francis' age. The Pope is 77.

"Realistically we're probably one of a multitude of nations that has asked the Pope to come and visit," he said.

More at -

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/successor-to-brady-would-love-to-see-visit-by-pope-30199830.html>

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