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

**Worship the
Lord with
banjo and
accordion -
Northern
Ireland
gospel band
takes No 1 on
i-tunes chart**

**Where King David
worshipped with
flutes and lyres,
Rend Collective
uses banjos,
accordions,
mandolins,
ukuleles, and
something called a “Jingling Johnny.”**



“It’s crazy loud, but it sure is celebratory,” lead singer Chris Llewellyn said of the instrument that resembles a pogo stick, but with some pie pans and a bell.

The band from Northern Ireland has swept the United States with its foot-stomping, Mumford-y worship music. The Rend Collective recently released its fourth album, *The Art of Celebration*, which hit No. 1 on iTunes charts, as well as No. 13 on the Billboard charts. I spoke with Llewellyn about how his

band formed, the purpose of its new album, and creating music for the congregation.

How did Rend Collective come about? We began as a Bible study and church movement for college-aged people. We were just chasing after community and faith and God. Together, we studied the Bible, we went out and did evangelism; it was a very simple movement. We didn't play any music, really. We didn't write our own songs. We realized five years in that we had gathered quite an amazing collective of artists, and really it was a waste of talent not to come together and do at least one project. We put together what we called the *Organic Family Hymnal*. It was, remarkably, picked up by a record label, now known as Integrity, and we toured that for a little while in the U.K. and the island. And all of a sudden we got an email from Chris Tomlin asking if we want to tour with him.

Hallelujah: singing priest in talks with record labels

A singing priest who became an overnight internet sensation will hold talks with a number of major record companies this week. If all goes well, Fr Ray Kelly, based in Oldcastle, Co Meath, may be set for global stardom.

Irish Independent - Fr Kelly became an international internet hit when his version of the Leonard Cohen classic 'Hallelujah', sung at a wedding ceremony, was uploaded on to YouTube.

Fr Kelly, who is a parish priest, confirmed he would be "having a chat" with various music industry executives in the coming days.

"There have been a couple of approaches made from big record companies," he said. "I'll sit down and talk to them and see what they have to offer. They have ties in Ireland, the UK and worldwide."

Fr Kelly says he has an appointment with Sony this week and also has to make contact with Universal.

After shooting to stardom, he also performed the specially reworded version of the song on 'The Late Late Show'.

"I knew I could sing – and that I had a voice – but I never thought I'd be in this league. As a young lad I always dreamed about hitting the big time. But not many people get there.

"It's kind of like somebody winning the Lotto – and then all of a sudden their life changes forever. Somebody even compared me to a male Susan Boyle." More at -

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/hallelujah-singing-priest-in-talks-with-record-labels-30203164.html>

Statement 'could stop march protest'

A nationalist residents' group has said it would hold no more protests against loyalist parades if march organisers made a statement confirming they would abide by Parades Commission rulings.

BBC News - Carrick Hill Concerned Resident's Group made the remarks as an Apprentice Boys feeder parade passed a north Belfast flashpoint without incident.

One band marched to a single drum-beat past St Patrick's Catholic Church.

The Donegall Street flashpoint was the scene of disorder and arrests in 2012.

On Monday, there was a heavy security presence in the area as the band passed the church on both its outward and return route to the main Apprentice Boys parade in east Belfast.

The Parades Commission had placed restrictions on the Apprentice Boys of Derry Faith Defenders Clifton Branch, ruling that "only sacred music" should be played as the band passed the church.

However, the band played no music and instead marched to a single drum-beat on that part of its route.

Read more:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-27102371>

Queen's Students Holy Week witness

A team of students and interns from The HUB at Queens, together with the Anglican and Methodist chaplains, Barry Forde and John Alderdice, came to work in St Andrew's Glencairn on Passion Sunday and during Holy Week 2014. They helped to lead worship and to run a Kids' Club, and they took part in other parish Activities.

Brass Band Concert will aid Africa project

A Brass Band Concert will take place in Rathfarnham Parish Church, Dublin, on Sunday April 27 at 6.30 pm in aid of the parish fund for Kwasa in Africa. The concert will feature St Nicholas Brass Band from Cork and St George's Brass Band from Dublin. The compere for the evening will be Sandy Metcalfe. Tickets cost €10 each.

Sandymount Organ restoration

The Church of St John the Evangelist, Park Avenue, Sandymount, is marking its Patronal Festival and dedication of the restored organ on Sunday May 4 at 6.00 pm with Solemn Mass of the Patron. The preacher will be Canon Adrian Empey. There will be refreshments afterwards.

Cardinal calls for 'respect' in immigration debate

The leader of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales has called for more "realism" and "respect" in the debate about UK immigration.



BBC News - Cardinal Vincent Nichols [told the Daily Telegraph](#) language on the subject should not be "alarmist".

He said most immigrants add to the UK's "wellbeing" and the nation should value the "richness" immigration brings.

His comments come a day after a Labour MP said new posters from UKIP were "racist" - a charge the party denied.

Cardinal Nichols did not single out any political party in his call for more measured discussion.

"What I would appeal today is that the debate about immigration is done with a sense of realism and a sense of respect - and that it is not cushioned in

expressions which are alarmist and evocative of anger or of dismay or distress at all these people coming to this country," he said.

"We have to grow to appreciate the richness that immigration brings.

"The reality is that the vast majority of migrants to this country add to our wellbeing."

'Profound uncertainty'

Cardinal Nichols spoke after he and Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, visited Giuseppe Conlon House, a Catholic-run refuge in London. More at -

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-27107166>

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