

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

**Pope welcome to  
Belfast, says Church  
of Ireland cleric**

**One of Belfast's most senior Protestant clerics has said he would welcome a visit from Pope Francis.**

News Letter - The Very Rev John Mann, Dean of Belfast, has also offered to lead a cross-community service should the [pontiff](#) include a trip to Belfast on any visit to Ireland.



In a letter to all 51 elected representatives on Belfast City Council, the Rev Mann said: “As Dean of Belfast Cathedral, I would be very happy to facilitate an ecumenical and cross-community service at St Anne’s, at which Pope Francis could be invited to address the churches of Belfast and share something of our journey of hope and reconciliation.”

The issue is due to be debated at Belfast City Hall next week.

SDLP councillor Pat McCarthy, who tabled the motion asking the council to formally invite [the Pope](#) to Belfast, said endorsement from everyone would send out a positive message.

Some unionists have voiced opposition, claiming a papal visit could heighten sectarian tensions.

In his letter, the Rev Mann encouraged elected representatives to “look favourably” on the motion.

He added: "I feel sure that he (Pope Francis) will have positive things to say to us, whilst demonstrating understanding and compassion in the context of Belfast today." More at -

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/regional/pope-welcome-to-belfast-says-church-of-ireland-cleric-1-5968535>

## **'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.](#)**



Ballymena Times - 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.

## **Churchgoers helping to make a difference as Street Pastors**

**It's been a busy year for the Newtownabbey Street Pastors - a group of local churchgoers who walk the borough's streets on Friday and**

## **Saturday nights offering a helping hand to anyone in need of assistance.**

Newtownabbey Times - The first Street Pastors, easily recognised by their [blue](#) uniforms and baseball caps, hit the streets of Glengormley 12 months ago. Since then they have grown in number and extended their patrols into parks and residential areas, as far as Rathcoole and New Mossley.

The Newtownabbey Street Pastors are a voluntary group of people who are nominated by their respective churches. Each Street Pastor goes through a 50-hour training programme before they can go out on the streets at weekends as part of a team of three or four.

Around a dozen local churches are currently involved in the cross-community venture, with some 40 trained Street Pastors actively working in the Newtownabbey area.

Brian Mullan, treasurer of the group, stressed that the Street Pastors aren't there to police the streets, rather their role is about "listening and caring".

"The role of the Street Pastors is to engage with the community, young and old, and to care for and to listen to people who ask for help and to help get them home safe.

"We work to help improve the safety and wellbeing of the community in all areas and help reduce anti-social behaviour, fear of crime and older people's concerns," he explained.

Brian, who also serves as vice-chair of Newtownabbey Policing and Community Safety Partnership, added: "From the reports and feedback we have had from local [businesses](#), the council, councillors and the community it is clear that we have contributed positively and helped the local community." More and a video at -

<http://www.newtownabbeytoday.co.uk/news/your-community/down-your-way/video-churchgoers-helping-to-make-a-difference-1-5961752>

## **Priest cleared of abuse resigns**

**A priest who was acquitted in 2012 of sexual assault charges has resigned from ministry in the Diocese of Derry, just two weeks**



**after resuming his duties.**

BBC News - A priest who was acquitted in 2012 of sexual assault charges has resigned from ministry in the Diocese of Derry.

Fr Eugene Boland, a parish priest in Cappagh, County Tyrone, stepped aside four years ago while allegations were investigated.

He had resumed his duties just two weeks ago, after it was confirmed legal proceedings and church processes had been completed.

The priest's resignation was announced in a statement issued by the Diocese.

The statement said Fr Boland had offered his resignation and that a new parish priest would be appointed in "due course".

Read more:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-26809868>

## **Irish church support on 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of genocide**

**Mary Munyangaju (Parish of Killyleagh) and Jane Corbett (Dromore Cathedral) between them will be visiting Burundi and Rwanda from 26 March – 29 April.**



This year sees the 20th Anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide and they will be attending commemorative events in Kigali.

Jane travelled to Burundi on 26 March where she is spending time with Alison Gill who is serving in a trauma and healing ministry. For eight years Alison has trained and ministered to pastors working in an area of Burundi which has suffered much from tribal killings. Jane will have time to listen to and pray for Alison and her colleagues as they work in these very demanding circumstances.



She will also take the opportunity to meet with the Guillbaud family and to travel north to Musinga for two nights to meet, pray and encourage different folk working amongst Batwa Pygmies, Miners and Muslims. Jane is carrying donations of baby clothes and will distribute these among needy mothers with children.

Jane and Mary will meet up in Rwanda on 4 April and they will be based at [Bird of Paradise Ministries](#) in Kigali which was set up by Mary and her husband Jerome (rector of Killyleagh) in 2011. BPM is home to four homeless elderly people and a carer. But for the ministry, these residents would be on the streets and in the villages begging to keep themselves alive.

As well as attending genocide commemorative events, visiting the elderly and spending time with the Mothers' Union in Rebero Diocese, Mary and Jane will travel east to see the beautiful Lake Muhazi and visit Gahini, the birthplace of the East African Revival. At the invitation of the Bishop they will visit Kibungo Diocese and see Rusoma Falls at the Rwanda/ Tanzania border.

Jane leaves on 15 April whilst Mary remains in Rwanda until 29 April.

## Institutions

The Revd Gerald Macartney, will be instituted as incumbent of the grouped parishes of Drumgath, Drumballyrone, Clonduff and Drumgooland in the Diocese of Dromore on Friday 30 May 2014 at 8.00 pm. Please check back for confirmation of the venue.

The Revd Simon Richardson will be instituted as incumbent of the Parish of Glenraig in the Diocese of Down on Wednesday 18 June 2014 at 8.00 pm.

## Northern Ireland Friends of Israel spring bulletin

**NIFI's spring bulletin is out crammed full of positive stories of co-operation between Northern Ireland and Israel.**

Which Ulster celebrity helped raise thousands of pounds for disadvantaged children in Israel?

An incredible invention by a Jerusalem Mum is now being manufactured in Northern Ireland - the story of this incredible device brings hope to the world!

Ulster Hall crammed for a Taste of Israel.

All this and much more at -

<http://nifriendsofisrael.wordpress.com/nifi-newsletter-march-2014/>



## **Martin Callinan thought his friendship with Shatter would save him - He was wrong**

**Damien Kiberd writing in The Journal.ie - The ex-Garda Commissioner was hung out to dry in the most contrived way – but the Taoiseach’s handling of GardaGate was razor sharp.**

Ex-Garda Commissioner Martin Callinan learned a hard lesson last week. If you hang around for long enough in your local barber shop, then sooner or later you’ll get a haircut.

Callinan may have imagined that his friendship with the political elite in general and the Justice Minister Alan Shatter in particular would immunise him against the vicissitudes of political life. He was wrong.

His controversial [evidence to the PAC](#) concerning penalty points suggests he values loyalty to his senior officers greatly and expects loyalty from them. Now he knows that in politics there is no loyalty, or real friendship either.

Callinan has been hung out to dry in the most contrived way. Even if you believe the government's official version then the following is still true: More at -

<http://www.thejournal.ie/readme/damien-kiberd-martin-callinan-alan-shatter-1386889-Mar2014/>

## **Obituary: Rev Dennis Cooke was cross- community pioneer of peace**

**Born on the Caribbean island of Grenada, the Rev Dr Dennis Cooke went on to become one of the most influential Methodists in the whole Irish church.**



News Letter - The son of missionary parents who had gone to preach in the West Indies, he returned with them to Ulster when he was aged about seven.

As well as following them into a life of theology, he also went on to become a writer whose work included a book on the Rev Ian Paisley.

Called *Persecuting Zeal* and published in 1996, it was described by one contemporary as an attempt to understand Paisley's unyielding religious outlook – something which clashed harshly with the author's own.

Both before and during the Troubles, Dennis Cooke devoted much of his energy to trying to overcome religious differences in the Province; something which began early in his career. According to his eulogy, as a mere 21-year-old curate in Castlederg he had made a point of inviting Catholic counterpart Eddie Daly (later the bishop of Derry) for a cup of tea.

This seemingly innocuous gesture was said to have produced quite some upset among fellow Methodists, and shortly afterwards he was moved to Enniskillen.

Despite criticism for his ecumenical stance, he was undeterred.

Among the initiatives he went on to found were an inter-church action group in Portstewart during the late 1960s and early 70s, which provided holidays on the north coast for both Catholic and Protestant children from disadvantaged areas of Belfast.

He became interested in the Corrymeela project, a cross-community retreat based in Ballycastle, and went on to help found the Glenree Centre for Reconciliation, a similar enterprise, which is located in Co Wicklow.

He married Joan Edwards, a nurse, in 1968, and later attained a doctorate in church history.

In July 1980 he was appointed Senior Tutor at Edgehill College – the institution in Belfast for training Methodist clergy – becoming its principal four years later.

It was a post he then held for 20 years, making him the longest-serving principal in its history.

The college's tribute upon his retirement in 2004 hailed his "faithful and distinguished service", adding that its members owe his wife Joan a "deep debt of gratitude" too.

A former student of Methodist College, the 75-year-old had also been a school governor for 14 years.

In 2005 he published another book – this time about a man closer to his own heart than the Rev Paisley.

Focussing on the life of a fellow Ulster Methodist leader, it was titled *Peacemaker: The Life and Work of Eric Gallagher*.

In around 2007 he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

Although he had retired in 2004, and despite his advancing disease, he went on to preach a final sermon on the morning of Sunday, July 10, 2011.

His friend and colleague the Rev Robin Roddie recalled that, despite his advancing illness, he delivered the reading from the Book of Job with power and clarity.



Born on December 3, 1938, Dennis Cooke died on March 13 at the Ulster Hospital.

His funeral was on Wednesday, March 19 at Knock Methodist Church, east Belfast. He was cremated.

At time of his death he had lived in east Belfast. He is survived by his wife Joan, three children, Jacqueline, Stephen and Peter, and grandchildren.