



CNI



The Rev Jonny Campbell-Smyth, left, with a tempting pancake

Pancake giveaway in Ballynure and Ballyclare

Early yesterday, Shrove Tuesday, the folks from Christ Church, Ballynure, and St John's,



Undeterred by the weather at the Strove Tuesday pancake giveaway are parish treasurer Graeme Reid, Paul Reid, David McIlhagger, the Rev Jonny Campbell-Smyth, rector, and the principal of Ballyclare Primary School, Kim Mulligan.

Ballyclare, braved the weather to serve up some delicious pancakes to the local community and share God's love through a simple act of generosity.

More than 200 pancakes were given away to people going to their work, children going to school and parents leaving them off. The rector, the Rev Jonny Campbell-Smyth, said: "We could

not have imagined the response, and my thanks go to all of our willing parishioners who have given up their time this morning for this community outreach.

“Kids have been asking whether we can do this every morning, but they will have to wait. Our next community event is scheduled for Holy Week when we will give away Hot Cross buns on Good Friday!”

Pastor who was prosecuted over Islam remarks set to address Muslim leaders at conference

An outspoken cleric who described Islam as "satanic" is to attend a ground-breaking conference involving Muslim leaders, Noel McAdam reports in the Belfast Telegraph.

It is the first time firebrand preacher James McConnell has been invited to such an event, which will also include Jewish and Christian leaders.

Pastor McConnell, who is approaching his 80th birthday in May, is due to speak at the opening session of the event on Thursday week, March 9.

"It gives me an opportunity to put my views across," he said. "I have never been asked to participate in anything like this before. I was always treated like a pariah. But if I refused to go I would be accused of cowardice."

In a sermon broadcast on the internet in 2014, Pastor McConnell described Islam as "heathen", "satanic" and "a doctrine spawned in hell" and said he did not trust Muslims.

Although he later apologised amid public outcry, and said he had no intention of hurting ordinary Muslims, the Public Prosecution Service brought charges against him.

However, the Belfast Metropolitan Tabernacle leader was acquitted last year after a judge ruled that, while offensive, his remarks did not amount to being "grossly" offensive under the law. Pastor McConnell said: "People are always asking me if I am sorry for what I said and I tell them 'No, I am not sorry' because what I said is right. It is not Muslims I am opposed to, it is their theology."

"But I have always been a supporter of free speech. I might disagree with what a Muslim or a Catholic might say but they have a right to say it. We are living in a free country."



Pastor McConnell and Sheikh Dr Muhammad Al-Hussaini

One of those due to attend the so-called 'gathering of people of influence' will be Muslim cleric and Irish traditional singer, Sheikh Dr Muhammad Al-Hussaini who testified on behalf of Pastor McConnell during his court case.

"He is a Muslim cleric and intellectual and he came to court to speak in support of me and we have become good friends," the pastor revealed.

McConnell's portion of the two-day event, organised by singer Tommy Sands, is open to the public and he will be quizzed by the audience.

"I have been told to expect questions - in fact, that they are going to pepper me with questions - and I am up for that," he said.

But the second all-day section of the conference in Rostrevor is to be held in private and the veteran evangelical preacher is not sure if he will stay for that.

"I will just wait and see how it goes. If I don't like it, I will be coming home," he explained.

Issues which are to be addressed include how to exercise the "most important and hard-won right" of free speech, and rejecting "the name-calling of the past" in Northern Ireland.

Songwriter Sands approached McConnell about taking part after the pastor's autobiography, *The Good, the Bad and Jesus Christ*, was published last October. "He knows Sheikh Dr Muhammad

Al-Hussaini who is also a fine musician so they have that connection," he added.

The event, which will also include Belfast Catholic priest Father Patrick McCafferty, comes out of an annual tradition in the village since the early 1990s, called the Music of Healing seminar - based on a song of that name penned by Sands with the legendary folk songwriter, Pete Seeger.

"In the context of global insecurity, religious extremism, Brexit and the future of the Stormont Assembly, the participants will embark on a journey with people they strongly disagree with, understanding at all times that they may continue to disagree," a spokesman said.

Other Muslim guests include Sheikh Dr Umar Al Qadri and Sheikh Dr Ali Saleh, along with a delegation from Belfast Islamic Centre.

‘Holiness knows no denominational boundaries’ – annual John Sullivan Mass

The annual John Sullivan Commemoration Mass took place in Gardiner Street Church, Dublin, last weekend (Saturday February 18). The Mass was



Archbishop Michael Jackson and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin at the annual Fr John Sullivan Commemoration in Gardiner Street Church.

celebrated by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and Archbishop Michael Jackson was in attendance along with some of Fr John Sullivan's Anglican relatives. The church was filled with people from all over Ireland.

Born an Anglican, Fr John Sullivan (8 May 1861 – 19 February 1933) was an Irish Jesuit priest who was known for his life of deep prayer and personal sacrifice. On November 7 2014 he was declared to be Venerable and his beatification received the papal approval of Pope Francis on April 26 2016.

In his homily last Saturday, Archbishop Martin acknowledged Fr Sullivan's Church of Ireland roots saying that "holiness knows no denominational boundaries. The holiness of John Sullivan was the fruit of his education in both Catholic and Church of Ireland traditions... his faith was the product of two traditions and always remained so and was enriched by that fact".

In his reflection, Archbishop Jackson, highlighted the links between the modern day Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough and the Jesuits through the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion and the Come & C programme which has been worked out in conjunction with Dr David Tuohy SJ.

He said Fr Sullivan "continues to inspire adventure and ecumenism in a spirit of reformation while encouraging by his holiness and simplicity people throughout Ireland to be true to the fullness of the tradition in which they stand – in a spirit of inclusion rather than exclusion. John Sullivan was many things, but he was for part of his life Anglican and for part of his life Jesuit. Ireland today needs openness to changefulness without using: changefulness as a term of disrespect. Ireland today needs this voice. Ireland today needs this witness. Ireland

today needs a person of the grace of John Sullivan OPSJ to pull us forward through obstacles and barriers that beset and upset us daily and to show us something of the way, the truth and the life”.



Sudan refugees

Churches respond to disasters in four African countries

Churches in Ireland, Great Britain, Canada and the USA have responded to the news of disasters in parts of South Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia where two seasons of

prolonged dry spells and crop failures, which have left over 14 million people at risk.

The Church of Ireland

The Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal is encouraging people to give generously to alleviate the suffering in South Sudan. For the first time in six years, famine has been declared. Following over three years of conflict in South Sudan, 100,000 people are facing starvation, with another 1 million on the brink of famine. Ongoing fighting in the world's newest country has resulted in the mass internal displacement of people, the destruction of crops and livelihoods, a rise in food prices and the collapse of the economy.

South Sudan is in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. The people in the worst affected areas need food and safe drinking water immediately, and they also need commitment to addressing the root causes of the crisis in the long term.

Bishops' Appeal is partnering with Christian Aid and Tearfund, who are responding to this emergency but also have ongoing projects within South Sudan that seek to develop long-term



Polly Hughes/Tearfund

solutions to the conflict and the insecurity. Christian Aid's partners have been distributing farming tools and seeds as well as providing agricultural training in Unity State, to help families get back on their feet. Tearfund has recently been involved in a food distribution project in the north of the country. Parishes are asked to consider holding a church collection or giving what they can towards this cause.

Donations can be forwarded to Bishops' Appeal, Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6. Further details of how to give are on the Bishops' Appeal website:

www.bishopsappeal.ireland.anglican.org/give

The Dean of Belfast released £7,000 from Black Santa funds to Christian Aid in an immediate response to reports that South Sudan is in the grip of famine. The charity says that 100,000 people are at risk of starvation.

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Rev. Uel Marrs, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Secretary of its Council for Global Mission has described the situation as 'alarming' and has encouraged people to pray for the region.

"Three short months ago we encouraged continued prayer for South Sudan, as the United Nations had cautioned of the possibility that the world's newest nation was 'at risk of outright ethnic war and genocide being committed'. The developing food crisis in East Africa is significant and alarming," Mr. Marrs said.

"I would encourage people to pray for the region, for rain to alleviate the current drought in particular and to pray for governments and aid agencies to intervene urgently, doing all they can to help all those facing food shortages and to prevent the situation worsening.



Rev. Uel Marrs

“Sadly the famine in parts of South Sudan is clearly due to a combination of prolonged drought and a consequence of the ongoing conflict in the country, which began in December 2013. Planting and harvesting crops over many seasons has been affected and the conflict has severely hindered the economy of the world’s newest nation.”

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) has close links with the country through the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan. Its

Moderator was welcomed to Belfast for PCI's 2014 General Assembly.

Famine was declared in parts of Unity State in South Sudan earlier in February – making it the first official famine in any part of the world in the past six years. The United Nations has stated that some 100,000 people are currently facing starvation, with a further million people on the brink of famine in South Sudan alone.

Kenya's National Drought Management Authority announced last week that 2.7 million people face starvation if more help is not provided, due to poor rainfall. Somalia and parts of Ethiopia are also at risk of famine too due to the prolonged drought in the East Africa region.

“In East Africa, our church partners with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, which is based in Kenya, and the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan. I would also encourage prayer for them at this time, in particular for their leadership as they seek to help those in need and provide pastoral care to their members in difficult circumstances,” Mr. Marrs said.

The Episcopal Church in Canada- The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) is committing a

total of 50,000 US Dollars for famine and drought relief in South Sudan and Kenya – \$25,000 for each country.

The Anglican Diocese of Chichester - The Anglican Diocese of Chichester in southern England is assisting with urgent relief efforts in the drought hit Kenyan Diocese of Nakura. An emergency grant of 5000 pounds is being sent directly to the Diocese, which, in partnership with the Anglican Church of Kenya's Development Services, will buy and distribute foodstuff and other essential supplies in the most affected areas.

Prayer appeal by The Archbishop of Canterbury -

Justin Welby, has urged Anglicans to join him in praying for the South Sudanese. "We stand prayerfully alongside the South Sudanese people and their leaders – particularly those in the Church who are providing emotional, physical and spiritual support," said Archbishop Justin Welby in a post on his Facebook page. "We pray for those on the ground who are delivering humanitarian assistance, that there will be an opening up of humanitarian corridors for the aid that is so desperately needed."

STORY mission week at Queen's University

This week is the annual mission week for the Christian Union of Queen's University Belfast. The theme of the week is 'STORY' with two events taking place each day: The Lunch Story – asking the big questions of Christianity with a

free lunch and The Evening Story – Stories of lives changed by Jesus, 2000 years ago and today.

This year's President of the Christian Union and a parishioner of Knocknamuckley in Dromore Diocese, Thomas Adamson asks us to join with them in prayer this week.

“Hello my church family. If at all possible can you please remember Queen's Christian Union this week in your prayers, as we run a week of mission? We have just finished a full week of 24 hour prayer, much like the year of prayer that D&D did back in 2014. [Here is a link to this weeks prayer email](#), it will help inform you of the details. Many thanks, Thomas”

Youth ministry training in Howth

Youth leaders and those involved in youth ministry met in St Mary's Parish, Howth, on Saturday for a youth facilitation workshop run by Tearfund in conjunction with Dublin & Glendalough Youth Council. The training focused on skills, knowledge and resources which help mobilise youth groups to act for a more just and sustainable world and the day was very much enjoyed by all who took part.

The group was joined by Ephraim Kahsay, Tearfund's Country Representative in Ethiopia. Based in Addis Ababa, his passion is to see people lifted out of poverty and this shone through in his contribution on Saturday.

Ephraim has worked with Tearfund for the last nine years in the development, implementation and management of several ongoing programmes including self-help group work, church and community mobilisation, HIV/Health and livelihoods. The self-help group programme has been particularly successful and has seen over a million people lifted out of poverty in Ethiopia since 2002.

Saturday's event was the first of a two part workshop. The second will take place on March 25. Email dgyc.office@gmail.com for details.

First new monastery established in Meath since Reformation times

Bishop Michael Smith, Bishop of Meath, on Saturday presided at the canonical establishment of a new monastery at Silverstream Priory in the Diocese of Meath.

Silverstream is home to a community of eight male religious who follow the Rule of Saint Benedict. The community came from Tulsa, churchnewsireland@gmail.com



Four monks of Silverstream priory (l to r) Dom Elijah, Dom Mark Daniel Kirby, Dom Finian and Dom Benedict Andersen

USA, in 2012 and occupies the former residence of the Visitation Sisters in Stamullen, Co Meath. The monastery is contemplative in nature, with a particular focus on the Liturgy and Eucharistic Adoration. The community's constitution and canonical norms were approved by the Holy See earlier this month.

Bishop Smith signed a Decree on 25 February, "erecting the Benedictine Monks of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament of the

Altar as a monastic Institute of Consecrated Life of diocesan right in the Diocese of Meath". This Decree is believed to mark the first formal establishment of a monastic community in the Diocese of Meath since the suppression of the monasteries by Henry VIII in 1536.

Bishop Smith said, "The history of religious life has seen many developments over the centuries and I am delighted to recognise the unique presence of this new monastery in the Diocese of Meath. Through their prayer, study and hospitality, the monks are 'speaking to the heart' and their quiet witness is a reminder that the Lord continues to provide the Church with new gifts and grace."

Yesterday Bishop Smith celebrated Mass in Silverstream Priory accompanied by Very Reverend Dom Mark Kirby, Conventual Prior of the Institute.

- The Diocese of Meath includes the greater parts of the counties of Meath, Westmeath and Offaly, and a portion of counties Cavan, Dublin, Longford and Louth