



## Reaction flares up to Moderator's lecture on city life

Speaking on Thursday evening at the 2016 Ulster University Chaplaincy Lecture at its Belfast campus, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), Rt. Rev. Dr. Frank Sellar, offered an alternative to today's secular commentary as a way for the city and its people

to live in hope and truly flourish. Dr. Sellar also spoke of the churches' contribution to the city and its people.

The lecture, entitled 'A City of Hope, Leadership & Compassion', was part of the Moderator's tour of PCI's North Belfast Presbytery, where approximately 13,000 people attend its 24 congregations. Dr. Sellar visited local congregations, community groups, local police and interface areas as part of the tour this week.

During his lecture Dr. Sellar contrasted the difference between optimism and hope, paraphrasing the German theologian Jürgen Moltmann who distinguished optimism as the unfolding of what is already here, which makes us 'optimistic' - and hope that "...has to do with good things in the future that come to us from 'outside', from God. The future associated with hope is a gift of something new.

"Belfast has increasing reason to be optimistic. Interface violence has considerably dissipated; there has been movement in the situation around Twaddle Avenue. We've experienced three relatively peaceful summers. We have the best

working example of how to police a divided community,” Dr. Sellar said.

“Urban renewal is evident...Northern Ireland is officially – according to the Office of National Statistics regional poll - the happiest place to live in all of the UK! We have every reason to be optimistic. But what of hope?”

Referencing Moses, who encountered the Living God through an unconsumed flourishing burning bush, Dr. Sellar said that the encounter was not one of ‘optimism’. “This was ‘hope that comes from outside,’ from the Divine...pointing forward to a vibrant and flourishing people released from the shackles of the past and liberated for the freedom of a future in a promised land.”

Dr. Sellar went on to say that an increasing number of people in society maintain that such liberation can only come “if we abandon, or privatise, ideas of the divine and supernatural...” However, quoting Augustine in his classic book ‘City of God’, the Moderator said that “a flourishing life consists of love of God and neighbour, and enjoyment of both...It is a key claim of the Judaeo-Christian tradition that to flourish we must live in relation to the Creator

and Sustainer, as this is what gives meaning and orientation to our endeavours.”

Dr. Sellar made the point that “human flourishing and true happiness is when, like Moses, the heart is captured by an affection beyond self to loving God and our neighbours more than anything else.”

He spoke of the many people that he had met since taking office in June who had demonstrated that love and compassion, “This City is peppered with people of hope who unobtrusively pour their lives into caring for relatives, friends and strangers. I've visited them in nursing homes, drug rehabilitation centres and post prison residential units.”

The Moderator also spoke of initiatives in his own east Belfast congregation and one particular congregation in north Belfast, Fortwilliam and Macrory, that enabled young men from the New Lodge and Tiger’s Bay areas “to rub shoulders together and to flourish within a safe shared space.” But these were not the only “shining stars in the night sky,” he said.

“It is often forgotten, or overlooked, that churches together contribute massively to the social well-being of society, often plugging gaps in areas of real human need...The church’s temporal influence may not be what it once was, but in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, the challenge is to do what we were always meant to be: To be people of flourishing generosity, vulnerability and community. To be those who pray and point people beyond themselves to the Divine...”

“To be those who take care of the vulnerable, while recognising that we too are vulnerable and to be those who acknowledge that the common good is not only pursued individually but collectively and corporately,” Dr. Sellar said.

## **Politicians criticise Moderator on bonfires**

Belfast Telegraph

Moderator attacked for saying that bonfires are passing on 'the sins of our fathers'

Speaking at the 2016 Ulster University Chaplaincy Lecture in Belfast, Dr Frank Sellar described the annual events in loyalist and



republican communities as "toxic" for both the environment and community relations.

"Dotted over this city at certain times of year in both communities are bonfires, which give off the toxic fumes of heat rather than light," he said.

The leader of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has been criticised after he condemned community bonfires as sinful.

Speaking at the 2016 Ulster University Chaplaincy Lecture in Belfast, Dr Frank Sellar described the annual events in loyalist and republican communities as "toxic" for both the environment and community relations.

"Dotted over this city at certain times of year in both communities are bonfires, which give off the toxic fumes of heat rather than light," he said.

"Given our history and fortress mind-sets, while celebrating and commemorating the past

divisively, they are also a danger to the environment, property and human well-being.

"They are not bonfires fuelled by inclusiveness, respect and healing, but a means by which we pass on to succeeding generations the sins of our fathers."

He told the Stephen Nolan show on Radio Ulster on Friday morning he stood by his comments.

DUP MP Sir Jeffrey Donaldson is a Presbyterian, but questioned whether the matter had been raised in the right way.

"The moderator is someone I have great respect for, but I am not sure that these comments help address and resolve the issues around bonfires," he said.

The Lagan Valley MP urged "tolerance and respect" for how unionists celebrate their culture "rather than suggesting that they should find a different way of expressing it".

"If we take a more positive approach, we will get a more positive outcome," he added.

North Belfast DUP MLA Nelson McCausland described the comments by Dr Sellar as "ill-considered and inaccurate".

Mr McCausland said traditional 'Eleventh Night' bonfires, lit every July, celebrate King William of Orange's arrival in Ireland and the subsequent Glorious Revolution.

"Is he suggesting that these historic events were 'the sins of our fathers' and that they were somehow sinful?" he asked.

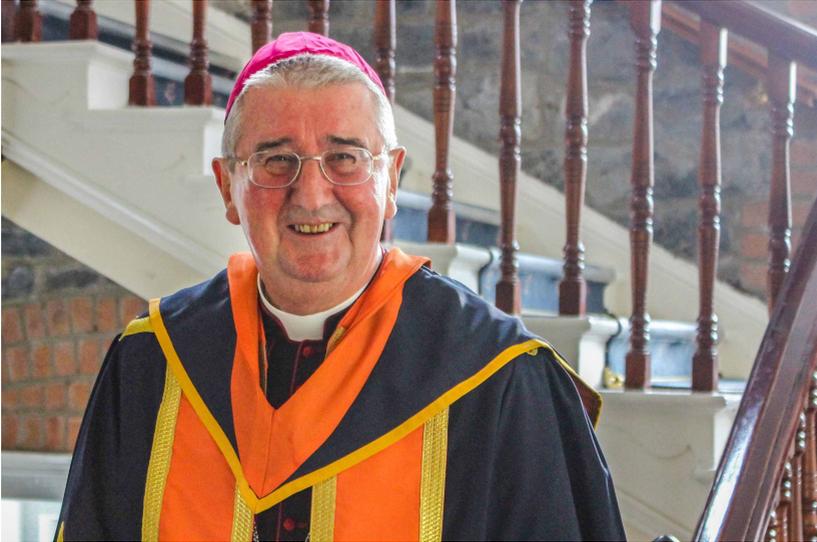
There was strong criticism of some loyalist bonfires this July when one in the Shankill area caused £90,000 worth of damage to five terraced homes in Hopewell Square. Lily Turtle (73) and her two-year-old granddaughter Skyla were asleep upstairs when their house caught fire.

And in August, republicans in Londonderry were also criticised from within their own community after a massive bonfire was built across a main arterial route in the city. More at -

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/moderator-attacked-for-saying-that-bonfires-are-passing-on-the-sins-of-our-fathers-35206149.html>

## **Griffith College honour local boy, Diarmuid Martin**

The Archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin, has



been named an honorary fellow of Griffith College because of his “outstanding contribution, at home and abroad, to Ireland’s moral ethos.”

Speaking at an awards event at the college on Dublin’s South Circular Road, Dr Martin said it was a special pleasure because of his connection with the area.

“I was born in the Old Coombe Hospital and my mother’s family history was deeply entwined with the south inner city. I lived right opposite Griffith College for many years and my brother lives just 200 m from here still today,” he said.

The archbishop continued: “The values which impregnated my life from my early

years were the values which I inherited from the people and the community of this part of Dublin. They were values of honesty and integrity, good neighbourliness and hard work and fair play, as well as a quick sense of humour, a sense of not taking oneself too seriously, but also a deep sense of the personal worth of and the value of investing in the capacities of young people. Families gave so much so that their children could do better than they did.”

The award received by the archbishop is described as “an annual award made to men and women from the island of Ireland who have within the context of their own profession pushed forward the boundaries of academic interaction and educational development.” Recipients are viewed as “role models for the Irish youth of today.”

Accepting the honour, Dr Martin said: “As a religious leader in a society which is more and more secularised I have to reflect on how faith can contribute to this process of education and the grounding of values. The debate between faith and culture is not something esoteric for the experts. It is vital for the healthy growth of a pluralist society.

“There are some who would look on the introduction of faith into debates about educational policy in more secular societies as an obstacle to common reflection. For them it would be the introduction of a divisive element. But we should also remember that a certain sense of narrow secularism can indeed become hostile to pluralism.

“In a pluralist society the Church cannot claim establishment privilege. Believers and the Church must not however feel or be told that they must retreat from a robust presence in the public square.

“Not too long ago I received a letter from a diplomat with whom I had to engage over years in robust dialogue and robust difference of position. We never fully agreed on a common position, but we came nearer on many things. I was really pleased with the final comment of his letter: ‘We never came to agreement, but I want you to know that you were always our favourite enemy.’”

Archbishop Martin said that “Difference should not lead to antagonism.  
Working together to seek the values which

underpin our human interaction is vital, especially in the current international climate.”

## Oireachtas na Samhna', a major festival of Irish language, music and dance



***Group at the Service (from left to right):  
Caroline Nolan , Development Officer CGnE,  
Daithí O Maolchoille Vice-Chairman  
CGnE, ,Bláthnaid O' Brádaigh (Pobal an  
Aifrin), The Rev. Tony Murphy, An t Ath.  
Frainc Mac Brádaigh (Pobal an Aifrin), Mary  
Healy (St Mary's Carrigaline), Risteard Mac  
Annraoi (St Anne's Church, Shandon)***

***Oireachtas na Samhna', a major festival of Irish language, music and dance, which was attended by 10,000 people took place recently in Killarney.***

As part of the Festival, Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise (the Irish Guild of the Church) in conjunction with Pobal an Aifrinn, organised a Reflective Service which was conducted by the Reverend Tony Murphy from the Church of Ireland Diocese of Cork.

Is i gCill Áirne a reachtáladh 'Oireachtas na Samhna', féile mhór ceoil agus rince, i mbliana. D'fhreastail breis agus 10,000 daoine air. Mar chuid de na h-imeachtaí d'eagair Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise agus Pobal an Aifrinn seirbhís mhacnaimh. Is é an tUrr. Antóin Ó Murchú a bhí ina bun.

## **Organ recitalist returns to Armagh**

Orly Watson will give an organ recital on Sunday 20 November 2016 at 4.15pm in

St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral, Armagh. Orly, who has participated in previous recital series, will return to play the third recital in the current series which is in memory of Mr Theo Saunders, the former Director of Music.

Orly read Music at Somerville College, Oxford, before training as a pianist at the Royal Academy of Music in London. His teachers have included the distinguished pianist Michael Dussek, composer Simon Mawhinney, and the organists Theo Saunders and George Minne. He spent three years as a member of the Choir of Somerville College, Oxford, with whom he made a professional recording for Stone Records and travelled to the USA for a concert tour. Whilst still at school, Orly was a member of the Choir of Armagh Cathedral, with whom he performed for the Queen and the President of Ireland. He has given many solo piano and organ recitals around England and Northern Ireland, has appeared as a concerto soloist with the Orchestra of Trinity College, Oxford, and is much in demand as an accompanist and private teacher.

Speaking of his forthcoming recital programme, Orly said, “This recital will feature several popular favourites including the famous Toccata and Fugue in D minor by Bach, and César Franck's Pastorale, Op. 19. It will also include a rarely heard major work, the Fantaisie No. 3, Op. 157 by Saint-Saëns. Written near the end of his life, this contains some of his most progressive music but has been inexplicably overlooked.”

The Very Revd Gregory Dunstan, Dean of Armagh, said, “It will be a great pleasure to welcome Orly back to the Cathedral, and to the organ that he knows so well. Since his last recital here, Orly has been appointed organist of Dromore Cathedral. We look forward to his programme.”

As with all the recitals in this series, admission is free. The retiring collection will go towards the cost of a new piano for the Cathedral Choir’s rehearsal room.

## Ex-C of I volunteer jailed for sex assaults on boys

A former lay worker with the [Church of Ireland](#) has been jailed for 13 years for raping and molesting 14 boys over 40 years, the Irish Times reports.

Patrick O'Brien (76) pleaded guilty at Dublin Circuit [Criminal Court](#) to 48 sample counts of indecent assault and three counts of sexual assault between 1974 and 2013. The abuse occurred at many locations throughout the State, including on a boat at [Loughrea](#), Co Galway, and at St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, where he worked as a volunteer.

He has one previous conviction for sexually assaulting another boy in 1989, for which he got a one-year suspended sentence.

A judge previously ruled that O'Brien, of Knocklyon Road, [Templeogue](#), Dublin, could be identified following an application by [RTÉ](#) at the District Court. All of the victims wish to preserve their anonymity.



***Patrick O'Brien of Knocklyon Road, Templeogue in Dublin. Judge Melanie Greally said his actions had a severely damaging impact on his victims***

Judge Melanie Greally said O'Brien's actions had a severely damaging impact on his victims. She noted he had no support in court, and said for all intents and purposes he was alone in the world.

One man described in his victim impact report how his biggest fear over the years was that he might end up abusing his daughter. He had read many cases about abused children becoming abusers themselves and "it frightened the crap out of me".

One of O'Brien's youngest victims, who was raped when aged nine, described himself in his victim impact report as "a lion without a roar". He developed a shell to bury this "violent secret" inside. O'Brien made him feel like the abuse "was almost a rite of passage".

Det Garda Anthony Maloney told Anne Rowland, prosecuting, that various victims told gardaí they had made efforts to avoid O'Brien as children.

One victim cycled to his local Garda station to report O'Brien a day after he tried to rape him. When he arrived at the station he got "cold feet", was worried about the consequences and decided to put the abuse to the back of his mind.

O'Brien continued to abuse the boy in the months afterwards until the boy threatened to report or kill him if he touched him again.

Some victim said they felt they were being threatened by O'Brien, while others described him as being like an uncle to them and was a trusted family friend.

The men also told gardaí that O'Brien gave them gifts such as sweets, toys and cash.

Det Garda Maloney said all the men were badly affected by the abuse. Two victims told gardaí they were very worried when they learned about Aids on the news as children and were terrified they were going to die.

In April 2014, O'Brien made a voluntary statement in which he agreed with the statements of his victims. He said he had been abused himself and told gardaí "I would like to say how sorry I am for causing these lads such distress and apologise to them all absolutely". Seán Guerin SC, defending, told Judge Greally his client had written a letter in which he wanted to apologise "unreservedly" for the breach of trust and the suffering the victims and their families endured. He acknowledged his "deep heartfelt regret and shame".

Counsel said O'Brien had completed 312 hours of group psychotherapy treatment since April 2014, which he said was a practical indication of remorse and efforts at rehabilitation even at this stage of his life.

Mr Guerin said his client's plea of guilty and admissions were of substantial value in the case, having regard to the victims, many of whom indicated "a fear of being disbelieved".

## **C of I Statement regarding sentencing of Patrick O'Brien**

Following sentencing in the case of Patrick O'Brien, the Church of Ireland issued the following statement:

‘St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin, and the wider Church of Ireland community have been deeply dismayed at the nature and extent of the offences which have been brought to light in the case involving Patrick O’Brien, who was sentenced today. The Church commends the courage of Patrick O’Brien’s victims in coming forward.’

## **Solar suitcases bring light and life to mothers and babies in Mozambique**

The overseas development arm of the Anglican Church of Canada is helping to save the lives of new-born babies in Mozambique through the provision of “solar suitcases.” One nurse in the country reported using the light from a mobile phone held by her mouth to deliver babies born



***A new mother rests with her baby at a PWRDF-funded health centre in Mozambique. The baby was born unresponsive, but was resuscitated at the health centre.***

electricity. The solar suitcases contain 80 watts solar panels, a 12 Ah lithium ferrous phosphate battery, medical lights, battery chargers and a foetal Doppler.

The Primates' World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) are providing the solar suitcases as part of a five-year programme part-funded by the Canadian government's Global Affairs Canada unit to provide maternal and child health

support to 350 villages in Burundi, Mozambique, Rwanda and Tanzania.

The director of the development partnership program for PWRDF, Zaida Bastos, visited Mozambique recently to provide training in the use of solar suitcases and saw first-hand the dangers facing new mothers in the country. A young woman had gone into labour and the baby had started to emerge, but became stuck because his mother was too exhausted to push, she told the [\*Anglican Journal\*](#). When the baby finally came fully out, he was blue and unresponsive.

“I could see in the faces of the mother, the nurse and the grandmother that they had given up,” Bastos said. “It was like, that’s it.” But she called for the paediatrician, who was helping to install the solar panels on the clinic’s roof, to help.

“He worked for 40 minutes trying to resuscitate the baby . . . and at the end of the 40 minutes – that was an eternity – finally the baby began to breathe and a little cry came, and we were all exulting,” she told the *Anglican Journal*.

By the time they left, the baby seemed normal and was being nursed by his mother, she said.

- *This article is based on a fuller in-depth report about the PWRDF's national gathering in Toronto by Tali Folkins for the Anglican Journal. [Click here to read the full report.](#)*

## **News links to reports on faith, politics and education**

### **Protestants 'intimidated' by 10ft statue of armed terrorist in Derry cemetery**

Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/protestants-intimidated-by-10ft-statue-of-armed-terrorist-in-derry-cemetery-35205614.html>

### **East Belfast hosts array of arts events in memory of CS Lewis**

Belfast Newsletter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/whats-on/arts/east-belfast-hosts-array-of-arts-events-in-memory-of-cs-lewis-1-7675443>

### **NI students have loan offers for postgraduate study withdrawn due to 'human error'**

BBC News

Over 30 NI students have offers of loans to fund their postgraduate study withdrawn, the BBC learns.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-37943386>

## **Priest showered with glass after vandals target Clonard**

Irish News

Fr Noel Kehoe, rector of the west Belfast monastery, described the incident as "very frightening"

<http://www.irishnews.com/paywall/tsb/irishnews/irishnews/irishnews//news/2016/11/11/news/priest-showered-with-glass-after-vandals-target-clonard-monastery-779363/content.html>

### Christian Today

Reports that Christians can seek to be "calm and peace" in a world coming to terms with the result of the US election, the Archbishop of Canterbury said (see above). In a live Facebook discussion on the Bible story of Jesus calming the storm in Mark's Gospel, Archbishop Justin said people had been asking how they can "bring reassurance and hope" to those in the US who feel they are in a storm. And he prayed that, "In this week of huge changes in one of the most powerful countries on earth, that there the whole country may know your peace, the knowledge of your sovereign will for the world, and may trust you, whether they feel part of a great movement forward, or part of being caught in a storm."

### Press Gazette

[churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)

Reports that the Archbishop of Canterbury has appointed Mail on Sunday religion and education correspondent Jonathan Petre as Head of Media (see above). Archbishop Justin said, “Jonathan is an experienced and seasoned journalist with a strong background in reporting religious affairs both on the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion. I am delighted he has chosen to use his obvious skills to serve the Church and we are all looking forward to working with him.”

### **Exp/Star/Mail**

Reports that Prince Harry and the Duke of Edinburgh paid their respects to Britain’s war dead at Westminster Abbey's Field of Remembrance. The members of the Royal family met veterans, including one of the last survivors who fought in France for the SAS during World War Two.

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/royal/730842/Prince-Harry-public-engagement-confirming-romance-actress-Meghan-Markle-suits>

<http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/560943/Prince-Harry-Remembrance-Service-Westminster-Abbey>

### **BBC**

Reports that more than half of the 1,188 head teachers who replied to a survey by schools management service *The Key* say parents' online social media behaviour is a problem. And 15% say they have themselves suffered from negative behaviour. The NASUWT teachers' union says the online bullying of teachers by pupils and parents is a growing trend. However, the article quotes Andrew Teale, head of St Paul's C of E Primary School in Hereford of said that, properly used, social media can be an "enormously positive force" in schools.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-37940465>

## **Mail**

Report that 50 war memorials have been given listed status to mark Armistice Day, part of a programme by Historic England using public nominations to ensure 2,500 are listed by the Government in time for the centenary of the war's end in 2018. Among the war memorials listed is the one at Holy Trinity Church in Guildford, Surrey, which was erected in 1922.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-3925832/Fifty-war-memorials-given-listed-status-mark-Armistice-Day.html>

## **Ind**

Report that a Daily Mail front page with the headline 'Enemies of the People', criticising the High Court judges who ruled that Parliamentary approval is needed before Article 50 can be triggered, starting the process of leaving the EU, has received more than 1,000 formal complaints so far, according to the newspaper regulator Ipso. The Independent quotes remarks by the Bishop of Leeds, Nick Baines.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/media/daily-mail-nazi-propaganda-front-page-ipso-complaints-brexiteu-enemies-of-the-people-a7409836.html>