



CNI

Obituary: Bishop Henry Richmond



Church of England Orangeman who championed gay rights and religious integration - The Irish Times

Bishop Henry Richmond, who has died in his 82nd year, was a retired Church of [England](#) bishop and Fermanagh Orangeman, an adviser to the Lesbian and [Gay](#) Christian Movement, an advocate of the [Orange](#) Order talking to the North's Parades Commission and to nationalist

residents' groups, and a unionist who said his prayers every day in Irish.

He believed the Church of England had to reassess its attitude to sexuality. For him, it was unacceptable for Christians to be excluded from their church because of their sexuality. His help for the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement was financial and moral.

That help began discreetly, in the background. However, as he became increasingly convinced of the need to embrace lesbian and gay Christians, he became more prominent.

He was an Orangeman all his adult life. As soon as he was 18 he joined Wattlebridge Lodge, of which his father was master. The Orange Order in his home area respected him and Wattlebridge Lodge appointed him as their chaplain. Later, he became chaplain of [Newtownbutler](#) District.

Reaching out

He was willing to tell his brethren what some did not want to hear: that they should engage with the North's parades commission, and with nationalist residents' groups. He believed the order had to reach out to Catholics, as the [Catholic Church](#) had accepted much of the Reformation's teaching. He was critical of the old

unionist regime in the North, calling it a “dynasty.”

He was also a supporter of integrated education “where faith should be cherished but not isolated”.

Richmond had learned Irish at primary, then secondary, school. He prayed in the language, he said, because it was his country’s ancient language.

His home area suffered in the Troubles, and several friends were murdered. He recognised republicans had made sacrifices, but asked “how can we bring home to those who approve of these acts that they inflicted an immeasurable amount of sacrifice and suffering, not only on their victims, but also on the communities to which the victims belonged?”

[Francis Henry Arthur Richmond](#) was born in early January 1936, with his twin Evelyn third and fourth of seven children to Francis Richmond, a farmer, and his wife Lena (née Crawford). Both parents were natives of Co Cavan. The family lived in the townland of Clonkee, south of Newtownbutler near the Border with Monaghan.

He was educated at [Drumully National School](#) in Co Monaghan, [Sligo Grammar School](#), [Portora Royal School](#) in [Enniskillen](#), [Trinity College Dublin](#), and the University of Strasbourg. After ordination, he served in Yorkshire, then was warden of [Lincoln Theological College](#), before becoming Bishop of Repton, as the Suffragan Bishop of Derby was titled.

Retirement gave him more time to visit his beloved Fermanagh, and he regularly attend its '12th' celebrations.

He is survived by his wife, Caroline, daughter Harriet, sons Patrick and [Gerald William](#); and sisters Florence (Lowry), Winnie (Morton) and Elizabeth (Mackarel). He was predeceased by his twin Evelyn (Johnston) and brother Jim.

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