

Former Green Party leader is now a C of I deacon



Former Green Party leader Trevor Sargent has been ordained a deacon in the Church of Ireland Diocese of Cashel, Ferns & Ossory.

On Saturday in Shillelagh parish church, Co. Wicklow, the Bishop of Cashel, Ferns & Ossory ordained Trevor Sargent to the diaconate to serve in the Tullow group of parishes with the Rector of Tullow, the Ven. Andrew Orr. As well as preparing for his ordination, Mr Sargent has

been studying for a Masters degree in Theology at Trinity College Dublin. The former TD for Dublin North, 57, was appointed Minister of State for Food in the Fianna Fáil/Green Party coalition. He resigned in 2010 and lost his seat in the 2011 election.

Connor Deacons



At the ordination of Deacons in Connor are, from left: Archdeacon Stephen McBride, Ian Mills, the Rev Stephen Fielding (Agherton), Bishop Alan Abernethy, the Rev Clifford Skillen (Bishop's Chaplain), Heather Cooke, Archdeacon Stephen Forde, Canon James Carson (Minister in Charge, Lower Shankill).

Two new Deacons were ordained in Connor Diocese at a service in All Saints' Parish Church, Antrim, on Thursday 24th August 2017.

The new Deacons are Ian Mills, who was ordained for the Internship in the parish of St John the Baptist, Agherton, and Heather Cooke, who was ordained for the Internship in the parishes of St Michael, St Stephen and St Luke, Belfast.

Ian grew up in Derry where he was a Chorister in St Columb's Cathedral. He has a PhD in Music from Queen's University, Belfast, and before studying at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute he was Organist and Master of the Choristers in Derry Cathedral. He also worked as a freelance recitalist and accompanist, and taught in St Malachy's College and Methodist College, Belfast.

Heather is originally from Carnmoney, Newtownabbey, and now lives in Carrickfergus. Her home parish St Brigid's, Mallusk. A former primary school teacher, Heather is married to Edwin, and they have four children

Ian and Heather were ordained Deacons by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Revd Alan Abernethy, Preacher at the service was the Ven Dr Stephen

McBride, Archdeacon of Connor and vicar of Antrim.

Kill O' The Grange institution

On Friday evening at 8pm the Revd Alan Breen will be instituted as Rector of Kill o' the Grange by the Archbishop of Dublin. Mr Breen, who was ordained in 2014, has been curate of Greystones and chaplain of Temple Carrig school since 2015.

Mossley institution

The institution of the Rev Peter Jones as rector of Mossley Parish took place in the Church of the Holy Spirit on Wednesday evening, 23rd August 2017.

Peter was curate assistant in Drumglass Parish, Armagh Diocese, before his appointment to Mossley. Aged, 35, Peter is married to Kim and they have two young children, Timothy and Hannah.

Originally from Tobermore, Peter is a former pupil of Rainey Endowed School in Magherafelt, and read History at the University of Ulster in Coleraine. After graduating, he did a PGCE and



taught History for eight years at Lisneal College in the Waterside, Londonderry. He was involved in administration and pastoral care and was a Year Head. He was also a Principal Examiner in GCSE History.

Peter trained at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute and was ordained a deacon in 2013. He served an internship in Maghera Parish and after being ordained a priest in 2014 he was curate assistant in Drumglass.

Peter said he and Kim were looking forward to getting to know the people in Mossley parish and ministering to them. 'We felt a real strong sense of God's call,' he said.

Peter was instituted as Rector by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy. Preacher at the service was the Ven Andrew Forster, Rector of Drumglass and Archdeacon of Ardboe.

St Oliver Plunkett: Head of Irish church thanks Germans for key role

While the head of St [Oliver Plunkett](#) is safe in [Drogheda](#), Archbishop [Eamon Martin](#) on Saturday gave thanks to the Benedictine monks in [Germany](#) who guarded the Irish saint's body, The Irish Times reports.

On Saturday, Archbishop Martin, the primate of all [Ireland](#), and 20 Irish pilgrims took part in a special procession and Mass in Lamspringe, Lower Saxony, to celebrate two centuries of reverence for the former Archbishop of [Armagh](#).

"I get a sense of great pride to have been the keeper of the relics for 200 years," said Archbishop Martin, St Oliver Plunkett's modern-day successor. "I feel as if the people here are our cousins and we have a common ancestor."

Oliver Plunkett was ordained a priest in 1654 but lived in exile after the Cromwellian conquest of



A procession in which St Oliver Plunkett is venerated in Lamspringe, Lower Saxony, Germany, pictured in late August 2013.

Ireland. Appointed Archbishop of Armagh in 1669 and consecrated in Ghent, he returned to Ireland the following year.

In 1678 he was arrested and accused of plotting a French invasion, but his first trial in Ireland collapsed. After a second and third trial in London he was found guilty of high treason and condemned to death.

On July 1st, 1681, aged 55, he was hung, drawn and quartered - the last [Roman Catholic](#) martyr to die in [England](#). While his head founds its way to Rome - and later to Armagh and finally St Peter's church in Drogheda, in 1921 - the rest of his remains, minus head and forearms, were exhumed in 1683 and transported to Lamspringe, 80km south of Hanover, in Lower Saxony.

The 1683 transport was organised by Fr [Maurus Corker](#), president of the English Benedictines, who had visited the Irishman in prison and ensured he was allowed to celebrate Mass in the last fortnight of his life.

Memory venerated

Through the penal era of Catholic oppression in Ireland, Benedictine monks in Lamspringe venerated the memory of the Irishman - a practice that continues to this day.

Saturday marked the annual St Oliver Fest, the high point of which is a procession of relics of the Irishman through the town. "What is amazing is to travel to a different part of the world and see pictures and paintings of Oliver Plunkett all around, as well as a very beautiful altar and shrine," said Archbishop Martin, on his first

pilgrimage to honour his predecessor, who was beatified in 1920 and canonised a saint in 1975.

He said he sensed a “common journey in the faith” with locals in the diocese of [Hildesheim](#), also struggling with the impact of secularisation and a decline in vocations.

Great ‘puzzlement’

He said there was great “puzzlement” over Brexit and concern over its impact on [Northern Ireland](#) and his diocese, which straddles the Border.

At Mass on Saturday afternoon, he honoured St Oliver as a “great symbol of peace and reconciliation”. “From his tragic death came a period of peace and the beginnings of reconciliation,” he said.

After the Lamspringe monastery was dissolved in 1803, most of St Oliver Plunkett’s remains were moved to Downside Abbey in England, though some relics remain in Germany.

Archbishop Martin thanked the German congregation for keeping alive the memory of St Oliver Plunkett during difficult times in Ireland, and invited them to next August’s World Meeting of Families 2018 in Dublin.

Bishop Miller thanks those who prayed for him during cancer battle

In a message posted on the Down and Dromore web site, Bishop Harold Miller thanks people for their prayers for him during recent treatment for cancer.

The Bishop writes, “A very big ‘thank you’ to all who have prayed for me and sent good wishes, during the time of my treatment for prostate cancer.

“I am very glad to say that the treatment is completed and the prognosis is very good indeed. It has taken a little bit out of me, and I get more tired than would have been the case, but energy levels are returning gradually.

“People in the diocese and beyond have been so kind and supportive, without ever being invasive. I have so often heard others say how they were upheld by prayer during illness, but this is my first personal experience.”

In a report in the Belfast Telegraph by Noel McAdam, Bishop Harold Miller said it was his first personal experience of being "upheld by prayer" during illness. The report continues: The 67-year-old said: "It has taken a little bit out of me."



Church of Ireland Bishop Harold Miller said he's on the mend

The Bishop of Down and Dromore made clear that the prognosis is good and his energy levels are returning.

His struggle over recent months had not been widely known and he had made no public comment.

But in a statement, the bishop, who was baptised in a Methodist church, said: "A very big thank you to all who have prayed for me and sent good wishes during the time of my treatment for prostate cancer.

"I am very glad to say that the treatment is completed and the prognosis is very good indeed. It has taken a little bit out of me and I get more tired than would have been the case, but energy levels are returning gradually."

The bishop, whose interests include music, travel, wine-making and phillumeny - the hobby of collecting different match-related items such as matchboxes and matchbox labels, said people in the diocese and beyond had been "so kind and supportive, without ever being invasive".

"I have often heard others say how they were upheld by prayer during illness, but this is my first personal experience," he added.

"I thank God for every remembrance of you and for the privilege of being bishop of Down and Dromore."

Bishop Miller - whose middle name is Creeth - has also said he does a little bit of gardening and takes exercise in a local gym to keep fit.

He was baptised a Methodist and grew up in the Shore Road area of north Belfast before studying English and philosophy at Trinity College Dublin.

This is where he met his wife Liz (nee Harper) - the mother of their four children.

He was baptised in Jennymount in Belfast, where the father of Archbishop Robin Eames had been minister.

It is believed to be the only Methodist church to have provided a Church of Ireland archbishop and bishop.

Derry church leaders take part in Tour de Foyle

Leaders of the four main Christian churches in Derry-Londonderry have taken part in the annual 'Tour de Foyle 10:80' charity event.

The 'Tour', which is now in its fourth year, is organised by the North West Methodist Mission and the Churches Trust. All proceeds go to support welfare projects delivered by the two charities to the most vulnerable people in the community.

This year – for the first time – there was a newly-designed medal for participants who completed



the event. Those taking part had the option of walking or running a '10k' or doing an 80 kilometre cycle.

The Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Ken Good, gave a blessing to the walkers and runners before their event began.

They were sent on their way by the Superintendent of the Methodist Mission, Rev Peter Murray.

Both churchmen completed the walk along with the Bishop of Derry, Dr Donal McKeown and the Clerk of the Derry and Donegal Presbytery, Dr Robert Buick.



NSPCC: Church youth workers should follow same sex abuse laws as teachers

The NSPCC, a child abuse prevention charity, said it should be illegal for religious leaders to have sex with older teenagers in their care.

The organisation told the Sunday Telegraph that 16 and 17 year olds in the UK are legally banned from having sex with teachers, youth justice staff and social workers to prevent abusing a “position of trust”.

It suggested that it’s unacceptable that church youth workers, sports coaches and army cadet leaders are not covered by the same legislation. The NPCC said they should be all held to the same standard.

The charity is concerned that the law is allowing paedophiles to groom children at an early age before starting to sexually abuse them when they turn 16.

This call for a change in law comes after recent reports from The Daily Telegraph that found the Catholic Church and the Government tried to use claims that child sex abuse victims consented in order to repel compensation cases.

In July a coalition of charities said freedom of information requests revealed The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) refused payments to almost 700 child victims, even if their predators were jailed.

In response to the findings, a CICA spokesperson said: “Our guidelines are intended to make sure that controlling and abusive behaviour is taken into account when handling compensation applications.

“We are urgently reviewing our guidelines to ensure they are robust enough to deal with cases where grooming may be a factor.”

Alumudena Lara, head of policy for the NSPCC told the Sunday Telegraph that the NSPCC has learned of several cases where a teenager in a

sport or youth work setting has been groomed as a child and an adult would “take advantage of them as soon as they turn 16”.

She said: “Safeguarding in children’s clubs should not suddenly end at 16.”

WCC leaders meet Pope Francis in Rome

In an audience with Pope Francis in the Vatican, the World Council of Churches Central Committee moderator, Dr Agnes Abuom, and WCC General Secretary, Revd Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, discussed how Christian unity is vital in bringing a true sense of justice to issues the world is facing today.

In his remarks Revd Olav said, “We are very grateful for the very constructive and fruitful meeting with Pope Francis today. We are living in a time when the purpose and the objectives of the ecumenical movement are highly relevant. Based on these realities, there is a need for a new search for unity, he said. “Through the many dimensions of its work, the WCC contributes to the unity of the church, and the unity that the WCC is able to express, in turn, contributes to the unity of humankind.”



Revd Olav added: “There is a willingness in the WCC constituencies and beyond, in the Roman Catholic Church, to seek a united witness and a common service for those who need us to unite our agendas and resources for those who need our attention the most.” Revd Olav added: “We have a common view of the role of the ecumenical movement and the needs of the churches in a divided and fragile world.”

Dr Agnes Abuom underlined: “The unity of the church and the unity of humankind are interconnected,” adding: “The ecumenical endeavours cannot be successful without a deep understanding of what it means to live together in the body of Christ, in the love of

Christ. We are working, walking and praying together.”

“The many expressions of polarisation, greater gaps between rich and poor, extremism and violence, worries about the future of the planet Earth and withdrawal of accountability for our common home and future create a constant call upon what we stand for,” Dr Abuom reflected.

Along with emphasising the important role of faith leaders in seeking solutions to conflicts in the world, both leaders also spoke about issues of climate change and economic justice as major concerns in the pilgrimage of justice and peace.

“The future of humanity is threatened; the poorest among us are already feeling the worst consequences of them. We encourage you and the Roman Catholic Church to be with us in mobilising a real change of mind, heart and priorities,” Revd Olav said.

The meeting with Pope Francis included common prayer for unity, peace and reconciliation. The audience concluded with a collective wish to explore opportunities to meet in 2018.

The visit to Rome was hosted by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. A special

meeting took place with Cardinal Kurt Koch on the joint working group with the Catholic Church and the WCC.

The WCC delegation also met Dr Flaminia Giovanelli, under-secretary at the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the main focus of the discussion was on climate justice and COP23 in Bonn, nuclear weapons, an upcoming consultation on migration and xenophobia in December, and peacebuilding initiatives.

On Wednesday Dr Abuom and Revd Olav also visited the Community of Sant'Egidio.

Revd Olav said: “We met with four young men in Rome who have come to Italy as refugees through a dangerous journey at the Mediterranean Sea. Two Christians, two Muslims.”

He added, “Through participation in the programmes of Sant'Egidio they have learnt Italian, been involved in voluntary work, and now have jobs.”

Revd Olav expressed his concern that “many in Europe today see people like them as four problems - even risks. They are four human

beings. Four lovely, strong young men who contribute to Europe doing work needed.

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