



DRUMBEG SWITCHES ON FOR CHRISTMAS

Drumbeg Residents' Association hosted the annual Christmas Carol Service and Switch-on of the Christmas tree lights at Drumbeg on Tuesday 5 December. Revd Willie Nixon (Rector of Drumbeg Parish) led the short service with festive music provided by First Old Boys Silver Band conducted by Stephen Cairns. Following the service, Councillor Hazel Legge (Deputy Mayor of Lisburn & Castlereagh

City Council) switched on the Christmas tree lights before Santa arrived with gifts for the children.

Nine lessons and Carols in Irish in Belfast parish church

The Service of Lessons and Carols, in Gaeilge, will take place in St. George's Church, Belfast, on 10 December at 5.00pm. The Rev Canon Robert Jones, St John's, Malone, will preside and Wallace High School Honours Choir will sing carols in Irish and Latin at the service. Everyone is welcome.

Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise (The Irish Guild of the Church) has also published the videos on students' views of the Irish language and Irish school songs workshops, which are both available on its YouTube channel.

Beidh Seirbhís Charúil na Nollag i dTeampall Naomh Seoirse, Dé Domhnaigh, 10 Nollaig ag 5.00pm. Beidh an Canónach Robert Jones, Teampall Naomh Eoin, Maigh Luain i mbun seirbhíse agus beidh Cór Ardscoil Wallace i Lios na gCearrbhach ag canadh iomainn i nGaeilge. Fáilte roimh chách.

Seirbhís Charúil na Nollag, 10 Nollaig, Teampall Naomh Seoirse, Béal Feirste, ag 5pm / Service of Lessons and Carols, The Parish Church of St George's, Belfast 10 December, at 5pm

Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise: The Irish Guild of the Church was founded in 1914 to (1) promote all that tends to preserve within the Church of Ireland the spirit of the ancient Celtic Church and to provide a bond of union for all members of the Church of Ireland inspired with Irish ideals, (2) promote the use of the Irish language in the Church, (3) collect from Irish sources suitable hymns and other devotional literature, (4) encourage the use of Irish art and music in the Church.

Spirit of Cork Award 2017 Presented to Bishop Paul Colton

At a dinner hosted by the Cork Civic Trust in the Clayton Hotel in Cork City, the Spirit of Cork Award 2017 was presented to the Right Reverend Dr Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross. This is only the third time that this award has been presented. The inaugural recipient was Dr Edward Kiely of Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, and in 2015 the late Cork man and leading sports broadcaster and businessman, Bill O' Herlihy, was the recipient.

Introducing the 2017 awards ceremony, the Chairman of Cork Civic Trust, Michael Mulcahy,



An Tánaiste presents the Spirit of Cork Award 2017 to Bishop Paul Colton.

said that Bishop Paul Colton was being presented the award:

- To honour him as Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross for the 18 years that he has served in Cork

- To recognise his outstanding leadership of people
- To recognise the affection that the people have for him as a person and Church leader
- To recognise his inclusiveness for all in our society
- To recognise his ability to speak out and be heard in Civic, Church and State matters
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The Chairman of Cork Civic Trust said:

Through Spirit of Cork, our city and county has the opportunity to honour and recognise people who have made a real difference to Cork and her people. Spirit of Cork is an honour and recognition for people that we are proud to be part of our Cork family. Be they in Cork or in any part of the world where Cork is recognised, we wish to acknowledge them and their exceptional contribution to Cork.

The presentation of the award was made by An Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Simon Coveney TD, who spoke about Bishop Colton's contribution to the life of Cork.

Greetings and messages of appreciation were read from the Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland, An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, T.D., and

from David and Victoria Beckham at whose wedding the Bishop officiated in 1999.

Earlier, the Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr Tony Fitzgerald, the Deputy Mayor of Cork County, Cllr Susan McCarthy, and Bishop John Buckley, Bishop of Cork and Ross, paid their tributes.

The awards ceremony was presided over by PJ Coogan (96FM) and Bibi Baskin.

The Colton family, Bishop Paul, Susan, Andrew and Adam, were joined by family, friends and colleagues as well as members of the Church of Ireland community and many members, past and present of the Cork Civic Trust. Grace before dinner was said by the Bishop's Chaplain, the Reverend Elaine Murray. Archdeacon Adrian Wilkinson spoke on behalf of the clergy and people of the Diocese. A second presentation was made by the Lord Mayor on behalf of the citizens of Cork later in the evening, and further tributes were paid by Senator Jerry Buttimer, Michael McGrath, T.D., former Senator John Minihan, Robin O'Sullivan, Finbarr of Shea, and John X. Miller, CEO of Cork Civic Trust.

Bishop Paul and Mrs Susan Colton, and every guest present were presented with a print of an original painting called 'Spirit of Inclusiveness'

by 14 year old Malika Benhaffaf, sister of 8 year olds Hassan and Hussein. Mrs Susan Colton



The Colton Family (l-r) Adam, Bishop Paul, Susan and Andrew.

was presented with flowers and with a gift on behalf of everyone present, by Bibi Baskin.

Among the distinguished guests present were: Senator Jerry Buttimer (Leader of Seanad Eireann), Senator Colm Burke, Deputy Michael McGrath TD and Sarah McGrath, Elected Members of Cork City Council, elected Members of Cork County Council, Prof. Patrick O' Shea

(President of University College Cork), Bill O'Connell (The President of Cork Chamber of Commerce) and Aileen O'Connell, William Cuddy (President of Little Island Business Association) and Valerie Cuddy, Dr Chris Coughlan (Adjunct Professor of Management at NUIG) and Joan Coughlan, Commodore Hugh Tully (Flag Officer Commanding the Naval Service) and Margaret Tully, Lt. Col Michael O'Connor (The Defence Forces) and Claire O'Connor, Chief Supt Barry McPolin (An Garda Siochana) and Crena McPolin, Bill Holohan (Chairman of The Chartered Institute of Arbitrators in Ireland), Dominic Daly (Honorary Consul of Belgium), Sir Freddie Pedersen (Honorary Consul of Denmark), John X Miller (Honorary Consul of Hungary), Michael Barry (Honorary Consul of Mexico), Frances Lynch (Honorary Consul Emeritus of Brazil), Michael Mulcahy (Honorary Consul Emeritus of Poland) Former Government Minister Kathleen Lynch, former TD Noel O'Flynn, David O'Brien (Chief Executive of St Luke's Charity, Cork), and Trevor Dunne (President of the Incorporated Church of Ireland Cork Young Men's Association, Garryduff Sports Centre).

In addition to the current Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, also present were former Lords Mayor and Lady Mayoresses who served in office over

the past nearly 19 years that Bishop Colton has been Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross: Cllr Tom O' Driscoll, Cllr John Buttimer, Cllr Terry Shannon and Ursula Shannon, Cllr Chris O' Leary and Angela O' Leary, Mr Jim Corr, Senator Colm Burke, Mr and Mrs Joe O' Callaghan, Mr Brian Bermingham and Elma Bermingham, Mr Michael Ahern and Eileen Ahern, Mr Donal Counihan and Breda Counihan, and Mr Tim Falvey and Abina Falvey.

A musical tribute after the meal was performed by Ireland's *Bella Voce* Amanda Neri. Music during the drinks reception beforehand was performed by *Tr3ble Clef*, and during the meal guests were entertained by *Bob Seward and the Clubmen*. Throughout the evening photographs were taken by award-winning photographer Erich Stack.

Responding to the presentation of the Spirit of Cork Award, Bishop Colton said:

... that Michael Mulcahy will attest to the fact that I was a reluctant recipient, and had to be persuaded. ... I can think of 1000s of others who fit the bill of The Spirit of Cork; some of you are sitting here, most are not – people who have done this city and county great service, publicly and privately, some who have carried the weight and innovation of charitable and voluntary

response to the pressing needs of our time, and some who, in their own lives, have been exemplars of human fortitude and self-sacrifice.

Bishop Colton shared memories of growing up in Cork in the 1960s and 1970s and then referred to the changed religious outlook since then:

I grew up with a version of Christianity that, by and large, looked in on itself, or rather, when it looked out, it sought the company of people like ourselves, or who were prepared to become like us, to think like us, to marry us and to perpetuate our way. We were taught to lie low and to get on with it in our own minority way.

There were reasons for that, not all of them without foundation. Protestants were not alone either in their insularity.

When it came to religion, the Cork I grew up in was more fort than frontier. Everything outside was risky. I soon discovered, and still believe, that life is more exciting when you take down walls rather than build them. Instead of pulling up bridges over moats to leave them down and to go out and start coming and going. Our children, rightly, have no truck with now with the world of circled wagons, nor do the majority of people.

Besides, there are more than two versions of Christianity in the village now, and there are many other faiths, philosophies and outlooks.

We live in a world where there's room, enough room. That brings its own challenges and opportunities; learning about one another, and building discourses of mutual understanding and common purpose.

I've a lot of contact with people who don't really like the Church or institutional religion, but I've found that many are quite religious, and very keen on the message and person of Jesus Christ. There we've found common ground and made common cause. Many of them have heard of the Jesus who, in the Gospel, turned water into wine, but have been wounded by a church that turned their good wine back into water. I am keen to show, and to encourage others to show, how broad and wide and inclusive the love of God is.

I've never been interested in the sort of Christianity that, as I say, builds battlements, pulls up drawbridges, or circles wagons. There's room for doubt and uncertainty. There's room for questions. The wounds and injuries of history run deep; it falls to us to heal and reconcile. The love of God embraces and includes; it does not push people away. And that is why I will keep

doing what I do, and saying the things I say, even when, or perhaps especially because, it leads us into vigorous dialogue with one another.

Fraudsters swindle £20,000 from church



The Police Service of Northern Ireland have sounded a warning following the scam

The PSNI have issued a scam warning after a church was swindled out of £20,000 by an internet fraudster.

While the police service did not say which church lost out, they did explain that the ruse involved

an email being sent to a church official purporting to be from a pastor.

The email, sent to the treasurer, asked for two invoices to be paid urgently.

Over £20,000 was paid out to the heartless scammers.

In a warning posted on social media by the PSNI, a police spokesperson said: "A scam targeting a church official has just been brought to our attention.

"A treasurer received an email from a person, pretending to be the pastor, instructing them to pay two urgent invoices. Over £20,000 was paid before it became clear this was a scam."

The spokesperson added: "An investigation is underway but we need your help in raising awareness. If you know someone who manages the finances of a religious organisation or any organisation, club or society, please share." Detective Constable Stephen Crooks, of the PSNI's Economic Crime Unit, said: "These emails appear to be very convincing, however do not be fooled into giving out personal or banking

details via email. Be sceptical, if something is suspicious about the correspondence, it usually is a scam.”

He added: “We all need to be vigilant of any contact from an unsolicited source, whether that is from doorstep callers, telephone, mail or online.” Report courtesy the News Letter

Christian Aid pays £844k to exiting workers

The number of staff employed across Europe by Christian Aid has fallen by almost nine-per-cent following a restructuring operation.

The worker head count for offices in the UK, Ireland and Spain fell from 556 to 508 in the last financial year, the charity's latest annual report and accounts information show.

Bosses say the outcome of the European Union membership referendum in June 2016 and the end of a five-year UK Government contract worth £36.2 million were two attributing factors.

Chief executive Loretta Minghella said: "The drop in the value of the pound since the Brexit vote and the completion of our most recent Programme Partnership Agreement with the



Department of International Development has meant that we have had to undertake a restructure to achieve substantial cost savings."

Taking into account individuals who work part-time or are in job share agreements, the full-time equivalent figure declined from 507 to 462.

The relief and development agency, which operates across the Americas, Africa, the Middle East and Asia, spent £884,000 on redundancy and termination payments during the year - an increase on £335k the previous year.

Among other measures taken has been a recruitment freeze.

Loretta Minghella added: "Our finances are now more resilient to the type of exchange rate shock that followed Brexit [the referendum vote] and we have secured a number of new institutional grants for programmes which commence in the current year."

Meanwhile, Christian Aid boosted its international-based staff from 402 to 423 - easing the overall headcount loss figure for 2016/17, which stood at 27.

Pope urges dialogue amid Jerusalem controversy

Pope Francis has stated his "concern" over US president Donald Trump's expected decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

The Pope said he "cannot keep silent" over the "situation that has arisen in recent days", and called for respect for the "status quo of the city, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations".

“Jerusalem is a unique city, sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims, who venerate the Holy Places of their respective religions, and has a special vocation to peace.



Pope Francis has urged President Trump to respect the status quo in Jerusalem

“I pray to the Lord that this identity would be preserve and strengthened for the benefit of the Holy Land, the Middle East and the whole world and that wisdom and prudence would prevail, to avoid adding new elements of tension in a world already shaken and marked by many cruel conflicts.”

President Trump was expected to announce that the United States recognises the city as the Israeli capital, and that the US will relocate its embassy there from Tel Aviv.

Although the embassy move will take several years, Trump has directed the US State Department to “start the process”.

One US official said: “US policy is going to be honest about a reality that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. It has been the capital of the Israeli people since ancient times. It’s undeniable, it’s just a fact.”

The status of the city remains disputed. Palestinians insist there is no hope of a peace agreement unless they can use the east of the city as their capital, but the Israelis claim the whole city as their own.

A spokesman for Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas described the move as “unacceptable”.

Mr Abbas is also understood to have called Pope Francis to express his concerns about the move.

Leaders from the Arab League and from Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Iraq have called on President to Trump to reconsider.

US Supreme Court ‘divided’ over gay wedding cake case

The U.S. Supreme Court seemed equally divided in the long-anticipated oral arguments about the baker who refused to make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple because of his religious beliefs.

Even Justice Anthony Kennedy’s comments went right down the middle, from expressing concern for those who would be shut out of services to later stressing that “tolerance is a two-way street” and saying the state of Colorado, where the bakery is located, seemed to be “neither tolerant or respectful” of the baker’s views.

The case, Masterpiece Cakeshop v Colorado Civil Rights Commission, pits anti-discrimination laws against freedom of speech and freedom of religious expression.

It drew strong feelings on both sides long before the court heard the arguments with the filing of 100 friend-of-the-court briefs months ago and the

crowds lined up for days hoping to get into the court during the arguments. Crowds also gathered on the Supreme Court steps under cloudy skies and warm temperatures, chanting



and holding aloft placards such as “Justice for Jack” (the baker) and “Open for All.”

The U.S Conference of Catholic Bishops filed a friend-of-the-court brief in support of the baker joined by the Colorado Catholic Conference, Catholic Bar Association, Catholic Medical Association, National Association of Catholic Nurses-USA and National Catholic Bioethics Center.

And after the hour and a half of oral arguments, chairmen of three USCCB committees issued a statement saying: “America has the ability to serve every person while making room for valid conscientious objection.”

It also said it hoped the court would continue to “preserve the ability of people to live out their faith in daily life, regardless of their occupation,” noting that artists “deserve to have the freedom to express ideas — or to decline to create certain messages — in accordance with their deeply held beliefs.”

The statement was issued by Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, chairman of the Committee for Religious Liberty; Philadelphia Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, chairman of the Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth; and Bishop James D. Conley of Lincoln, Nebraska, chairman of the Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage.

The case before the court at the end of 2017 was five years in the making, beginning in 2012 when Charlie Craig and David Mullins asked the Colorado baker, Jack Phillips, to make a cake for their wedding reception. Phillips refused, saying

his religious beliefs would not allow him to create a cake honouring their marriage.

The couple filed a complaint with the Colorado Civil Rights Commission, which decided the baker's action violated state law. The decision was upheld by the Colorado Court of Appeals. The Colorado Supreme Court wouldn't take the case, letting the ruling stand. The U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear the case.

During oral arguments at the high court, many questions came up about what constitutes speech, since the baker claimed he should have freedom of speech protection.

Justice Elena Kagan asked if a florist, chef or makeup artist also should have the same protection and other roles also were called into question such as tailors, or invitation designers, as were other cakes; pre-made cakes, for example, would not be an issue of compelled speech.

And as Kristen Waggoner, the Alliance Defending Freedom attorney representing Phillips, said "not all cakes would be considered speech."

Amid the back and forth between what could be considered artistry and questions about how artists could be compelled to convey messages they disagree with, Justice Stephen G. Breyer asked: “Well, then, what is the line? That’s what everybody is trying to get at.”

“Obviously, we want a distinction that will not undermine every single civil rights law,” he added.

The bulk of the defense for the baker focused on his freedom of speech rights, which attorneys argued would be violated by forcing him to make this cake.

Waggoner said the court was saying it had the discretion to decide what speech is offensive and what isn’t, but it didn’t “apply that in a fair way to Mr Phillips.” She also said that “what’s deeply concerning” is how speech could be compelled of “filmmakers, oil painters and graphic designers in all kinds of context.”

The arguments against the baker questioned if failing to provide services to same-sex couples was discriminatory.

David Cole, a lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union, defending the couple, said discrimination against the couple who wanted the cake consigned them to “second-class status.”

The last minutes of the oral arguments boiled down to the opposing views but also didn’t reveal a clear path forward.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor said the nation’s views about interracial marriages “didn’t change on its own” but because of “public accommodation laws that forced people to do things that many claimed were against their expressive rights and against their religious rights.”

“Whatever it is you choose to sell, you have to sell it to everyone who knocks on your door, if you open your door to everyone,” she added.

In response, Waggoner said it would be a grave offense to the First Amendment to “compel a person who believes that marriage is sacred, to give voice to a different view of marriage and require them to celebrate that marriage.”

Sotomayor suggested not participating in weddings or creating neutral wedding cakes but

that refusing to offer goods to some goes against public anti-discrimination laws.

Waggoner in her last allotted minute said: “A wedding cake expresses an inherent message that is that the union is a marriage and is to be celebrated, and that message violates Mr Phillips’ religious convictions.”

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