

## Derry Somme mural reinstated after vandals ripped it down



**Councillor Graeme Warke (right) at the replacement mural in the Fountain Estate. Included (from left) are Eddie Doherty, NIHE area manager; Katelyn Warke, Cathedral Youth Club; Dean Raymond Stewart, St Columb's Cathedral; Jeanette Warke, Cathedral Youth Club; Britney Hetherington and Alexis Curry, Cathedral Youth Club**

A Battle of the Somme mural - which had been ripped off a wall in Londonderry's Fountain

Estate and destroyed by vandals last year - was replaced on Monday by a replica several times the size of the original, the Belfast Telegraph reports.

In November, the destruction of the large mounted mural paying tribute to those lost in the First World War, which had been situated on the railings outside the Fountain's Cathedral Youth Club, was treated as a hate crime by police.

Yesterday an identical artwork to the ruined mural was unveiled on the gable wall of the youth club.

DUP councillor and former soldier Graham Warke said he was proud to see the mural back where it belonged.

"Back in November the community here were rightly outraged by an act of vandalism," he said.

"This mural was put up to remember all the men from our city who paid the ultimate sacrifice at the Somme.

"It beggared belief that some insensitive idiot would rip it down.

"We were disgusted and devastated by that act.

"Seeing it back up is a proud moment for me and for the young people of this community," the councillor added.

"Now it's back up and it's bigger and it will stay there for many more years.

"It will teach young people the history of what happened and how it was both sides of the religious divide who left this city to fight in France."

Church of Ireland Dean of Derry Raymond Stewart was on hand to welcome the reinstated mural and said that he hoped "it would be able to stay".

The Housing Executive supported the Cathedral Youth Club in getting the mural back up on the wall.

The Housing Executive's Eddie Doherty was at the Fountain Youth Club for the unveiling and said it was important to have cultural identities back where they should be.

"The Housing Executive is involved in a wide range of community projects throughout the city," he said.

"And we were bitterly disappointed to hear that the memorial mural here had been destroyed.

"We were very keen to engage again with members of the Fountain community and to get this reinstalled.

"Because we know it's important for us, but it is also so important for the community to have these cultural identities installed back in the way that they should be."

## **Sinn Féin TDs who vote against abortion "will be disciplined" says new leader**

**The other parties are allowing a free vote, as is the norm in the UK.**

SPUC reports that Sinn Féin TDs will not be allowed a conscience vote on abortion and anyone who deviates from the party line [will be disciplined](#), the party's new leader Mary Lou McDonald has said.

"It's a matter of private conscience but it's also a matter of public policy," Ms McDonald, who replaced Gerry Adams as President of Sinn Féin on Saturday, [told RTÉ's The Week in Politics](#)

on Sunday. Asked if TDs could vote in accordance with their conscience, she said: "They do have to respect and uphold and vote in accordance with Sinn Féin policy."



**Mary McDonald and Michelle O'Neill (vice President of Sinn Féin and party leader in Northern Ireland) celebrate their election.**

Asked if failure to do this could result in disciplinary action she replied: "To be frank, yes."

### **Forbidden from upholding current law**

Two of the party's TDs, Peadar Tóibín and Carol Nolan, are known to be against repealing the Eighth Amendment and legislation that would

allow unrestricted abortion 12 weeks into pregnancy.

The other major political parties, Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil, are allowing free votes for their TDs. In Britain, abortion is always considered a matter of conscience, and is not subject to political whipping.

Ms McDonald did not specify what form any disciplinary action would take, but Mr Tóibín was previously suspended for six months for going against the party position in a Dáil vote relating to abortion.

### **At odds with own party**

Sinn Féin policy favours repeal of the Eighth amendment and the legalisation of abortion in cases of rape, fatal foetal abnormality and where a woman's mental or physical health is "under serious threat". It remains opposed to abortion on request without reason. However, Ms McDonald supports the findings of the Oireachtas committee, which recommended the legalisation of abortion up to 12 weeks in pregnancy.

Ms McDonald said "the party is not in policy terms in line with that at the moment", but said a policy paper was "close to completion" which

may lead to a change in the party's policy. A special ard fheis (party conference) is being planned to consider the matter, and it is seen as likely to change its position.

In 2013, Sinn Féin politicians in Northern Ireland [were accused of betrayal](#) for blocking a motion that would have closed a Marie Stopes Centre in Belfast.

## **Father Dermot Meehan elected Diocesan Administrator of the Diocese of Achonry**

Father Dermot Meehan, Parish Priest of Swinford, Co Mayo, has been elected Diocesan Administrator of the Diocese of Achonry. This follows the installation of Bishop Brendan Kelly as the new Bishop of Galway, Kilfenora and Kilmacduagh last Sunday.

In his new role Father Meehan assumes responsibility for the day-to-day running of the diocese and will represent the diocese at the quarterly plenary meetings of the Irish Episcopal Conference (Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference) in Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth.

Father Meehan will continue in his ministry as Parish Priest of Swinford and asks the people of the parish and diocese for their prayerful support as he assumes this additional role. Father Meehan will work with the priests and people of the diocese to ensure the continuation of all diocesan ministries and initiatives.

- Father Dermot Meehan was born in Ballymote, Co Sligo. He was ordained a priest in 1985. Father Meehan has served on teaching staff of Scoil Muire agus Padraig, Swinford, and in the parishes of Killasser, Ballaghaderreen and Swinford. He also served on the formation team at the national seminary in Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth.
- The Diocese of Achonry includes parts of counties Mayo, Roscommon, and Sligo. The Patron Saint of the diocese is Saint Nathy. The diocese has a Catholic population of 34,826 and consists of 23 parishes and 48 churches. There are 30 diocesan priests in active ministry in the diocese and 8 others who are currently working in other dioceses, retired, on study or on sick leave.



## Victim of paedophile priest secures biggest ever pay-out

A victim of a paedophile priest who taught at Co Down school has secured what is thought to be the biggest ever pay-out in a historical abuse case in Northern Ireland, The Irish News reports.

Fr Malachy Finnegan worked as a teacher in St Colman's College in Newry from 1967 to 1976 and was president of the grammar school from 1976 until 1987.

The victim, who was 11 years old at the time of his abuse, secured a six-figure compensation sum, a letter of acknowledgement from Bishop of Dromore John McAreevey and an agreement that the Church pay for ongoing therapy sessions.

Also included is an opportunity for the victim to attend the school in an attempt to "exorcise his demons".

Dr McAreevey has said he made an "error of judgement" by officiating at Fr Finnegan's funeral and revealed there were a total of 12 allegations made against the priest.

The first came to light in 1994, the second was made in 1988 and was not related to his tenure at St Colman's, while the others emerged after his death in 2002.

An elaborate headstone placed on his grave, paid for by the Catholic Church, has since been removed.

The boy, a boarding pupil at St Colman's College when the abuse took place, was said to have suffered "violent sexual and emotional" abuse which "caused him to be permanently scarred".

Malachy Finnegan was a Latin teacher at the school at the time. He was later appointed parish priest in Dromore and held the position of parish priest in Clonduff until 1995.

## **Churches urged to set up cafés for people with dementia**

A church has seen massive growth of their memory café to help older people as analysis has revealed thousands of people with dementia aren't given a care plan.

Rev Steve Morris from St Cuthbert's church North Wembley told Premier News they opened



a memory café to fill the gap left by follow-up care.

It caters for older people who have dementia, and their carers, and those who could be isolated without the social interaction.

Held every Thursday, guests are provided with tea and cake and are given the opportunity to play quizzes.

Rev Steve Morris told Premier: "The basic idea is about hospitality and doing memory games and we now think it's a phenomenon that's going to sweep across the country. There are memory cafés using our pattern opening everywhere; you can come and visit us and then they go and set them up. They are so simple but so wonderful."

Rev Steve said sometimes he thinks it's so simple he gets frustrated: "Why isn't every

church doing this? Any church in the country, you knock on the doors ten either side of where the church is you will find in at least four of those houses people who don't see a living soul all week and I just don't think we can close our eyes to this problem anymore."

Rev Steve encouraged others to take their model and do the same.

"I think every single church in the country should start a memory café...It is the simplest thing you'll ever do, all you need is a kettle and a warm welcome".

## **Nun's recovery recognised as 70th Lourdes miracle**

A French bishop declared Sunday that the recovery a long-debilitated nun made after she visited the shrine in Lourdes was a miracle, the 70th event to be recognised as an act of divine intervention at the world-famous pilgrimage site.

Bishop Jacques Benoit-Gonin of Beauvais proclaimed the miracle nearly a decade after Bernadette Moriau attended a blessing of the sick ceremony at the Lourdes sanctuary in southern France. The Bishop of Lourdes, Nicolas



**Disabled pilgrims face the Basilica of the Rosary during a Mass for the sick celebrated by Benedict XVI in Lourdes in 2008**

Brouwet announced the declaration during Mass at the shrine's basilica.

The shrine in southern France where apparitions of Mary, Jesus's mother, reportedly appeared 160 years ago to a 14-year-old girl is considered a site of miraculous cures. Water running from a spring in the sanctuary's Grotto of the Apparitions is purported to have curative powers and millions of pilgrims visit the sanctuary every year.

Moriau's experience underwent extensive studies and tests by the International Medical Committee of Lourdes. The bishop has the last word on whether to approve a reported cure as a miracle.

Moriau had four operations on her spinal column between 1968 and 1975 and was declared fully disabled in 1980. One foot was permanently twisted, requiring her to wear a brace and use a wheelchair. She took what she said were significant doses of morphine for pain.

"I never asked for a miracle," the nun, now 79, recounted of her July 2008 pilgrimage to Lourdes.

After returning to her home convent near Beauvais and praying in the chapel, "I felt a (surge of) well-being throughout my body, a relaxation, warmth....I returned to my room and, there, a voice told me to 'take off your braces,'" she said in a video posted on the Beauvais diocese web site. "Surprise. I could move."

Moriau said she immediately did away with all her aids, from braces to morphine — and took a 5 kilometer hike a few days later.

The bishop said the nun's "sudden, instantaneous, complete and durable change"

alerted him to a possible miracle. The Lourdes medical committee said the changes were unexplainable “in the current state of our scientific knowledge,” he added.

A miracle at Lourdes last was declared in 2013. It involved an Italian woman who visited Lourdes in 1989, suffering severe high blood pressure and other problems.

Not all declared miracles pass through Lourdes. A French nun, Marie Simon-Pierre, was declared cured of her Parkinson’s disease after praying to the late Pope John Paul II, who suffered from the same neuro-degenerative disorder. That helped fast-track the Pope’s canonisation as one of the two miracles needed for him to become St John Paul II in 2014.

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