

## Mary McAleese barred by Vatican from conference on women



**Mary McAleese was due to speak at the conference, which has taken place inside the Vatican for the last four years**

The [Vatican](#) has barred former President of [Ireland](#) Mary McAleese from taking part in a conference to mark International Women's Day which was originally due to take place in the

Holy See, patsy McGarry reports in the Irish Times.

The list of potential speakers required approval from a cardinal, but Mrs McAleese was not granted permission to participate.

As a result, the organisers have moved the “Why Women Matter” conference on March 8th to premises outside the Vatican, and have also invited Mrs McAleese to be keynote speaker. She had previously been asked to take part in a panel discussion at the event.

The conference was organised by the [Voices of Faith](#) group, which is seeking to convince the Vatican that women “have the expertise, skills and gifts to play a full leadership role in the church”.

The inclusion of Mary McAleese and two other speakers on its programme was opposed by Cardinal [Kevin Farrell](#), prefect of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life. A Dubliner who spent most of his clerical life in the US, he is the most senior Irishman at the Vatican.

Among the other speakers barred [was Ssenfuka Joanita Warry](#), a lesbian Catholic who is pioneering LGBT rights in [Uganda](#). \*

## Required approval

Chantal Götz, managing director of Voices of Faith, told *The Irish Times* that the list of speakers required approval from the cardinal.

“Cardinal Farrell sent back to me the list of names who he gave permission(for). Mary McAleese and two others were not on it,” she said. “Unfortunately, unsuccessful efforts were made to have the Cardinal change his mind.”

Rather than exclude the three women, “we decided ourselves to move the conference to a venue outside the Vatican, she said, adding Mrs McAleese was then asked to be the keynote speaker.

Ms Götz said it was the first time she had encountered any issues since the group began organising similar conferences in 2014.

Mrs McAleese declined to comment, saying she is awaiting a reply from [Pope Francis](#) to a letter she sent him on the matter.

Cardinal Farrell is the Vatican official with responsibility for co-ordinating efforts around the World Meeting of Families 2018 in Dublin next August, which will include a visit by Pope Francis.

Other sources:

Chantal Goetz, executive director of Voices of Faith, said: “It was disappointing to realise on IWD of all days, these women who have accomplished so much in their communities, could be turned away from respectfully sharing their stories and experiences as Catholics.

“This event allows us to not only celebrate the wonderful work Catholic women are doing across the globe, but also create discussion and dialogue on the current power and leadership structures of our Church today.”

## **Farrell brothers: The two most senior Irish clerics in the Vatican**

Cardinal [Kevin Farrell](#) (70) is the most senior Irishman at the [Vatican](#) and one of two brothers serving there.

His older brother Bishop [Brian Farrell](#) (73) is secretary to the Pontifical Council for Promoting [Christian Unity](#) and has worked at the Vatican since 1981.

Both are from [Drimnagh](#) in Dublin and were educated by the [Christian Brothers](#). Neither has served as a priest in [Ireland](#).



Cardinal Farrell is also the Vatican official with responsibility for co-ordinating efforts around the World Meeting of Families 2018 in Dublin next August, which will include a visit by [Pope Francis](#).

Sources have suggested that he may have played a significant role in the removal of five pictures of same-sex couples from preparatory booklets for WMoF2018, circulated to Irish parishes before Christmas.

He was born in September 1947 and joined the Legionaries of Christ in 1966. He studied theology at the University of Salamanca in [Spain](#), the Gregorian University and the Angelicum in Rome, as well as business and administration at the University of Notre Dame in the [United States](#).

In December 2001 he was named auxiliary bishop of Washington and in March 2007 was appointed Bishop of [Dallas](#).

In August 2016 he was appointed prefect of the Vatican's newly-created Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life and created Cardinal by Pope Francis in November 2016.

Bishop Brian Farrell was born in Dublin in 1944. He entered the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ in 1961 and began his novitiate in Salamanca before continuing his studies at the Gregorian University in Rome until 1966.

On January 1st, 1999, he was nominated head of the general affairs section of the secretariat of state and in December 2002 was appointed secretary to the Vatican's Council for Promoting Christian Unity. His ordination as bishop in January 2003 was attended by his close friend, the then archbishop of Dublin Cardinal [Desmond Connell](#).

With the release in 2015 of State papers for 1985 it emerged that the then Fr Brian Farrell and Msgr Giuseppe Lazzarotto of the Vatican's secretariat of state and Council for the Public Affairs of the Church opposed legislation allowing the sale of condoms in Ireland.

At a meeting with an unnamed official from Ireland's Embassy to the Holy See, they said Irish bishops opposing the law did so not just because it was against Catholic teaching but also because it was "not in the interests of the common good." Msgr Lazzarotto, as [Archbishop Lazzarotto](#), was papal nuncio to Ireland from 2000 to 2007.

## **Prayers on the Move: Dublin Commuters to be encouraged to give prayer a go**

An exciting new ecumenical campaign, Prayers on the Move, which encourages everyone to give prayer a go, will run in Dublin for four weeks from February to March 2018.

To celebrate the arrival of this campaign in Dublin, St Patrick's Cathedral is hosting a launch event on Sunday February 25 at 4.30pm, after 3.15pm Evensong. All are welcome to attend. Refreshments will be served.

Prayers on the Move is aimed at travellers, especially stressed commuters. The advertising posters on public transport and the prayer app aim to make it easier for people to pray while on the move. SPCK has already successfully trialled



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THE MOVE**

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SPCK is placing over 300 ads on the DART, buses  
and at stations to get stressed Dubliners praying.  
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**LAUNCH EVENT  
AT ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL**

**St Patrick's Close, Dublin  
on Sunday 25th February 2018  
at 4.30pm, after 3.15pm Evensong**

Refreshments will be served.

POTM is generously supported by numerous  
ecumenical partners in the City of Dublin  
[www.prayersonthemove.com](http://www.prayersonthemove.com)

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Prayers on the Move in London, Newcastle and Birmingham in 2016.

Prayers on the Move includes advertising panels displaying three different prayers, in 144 DART carriages, 150 buses and 20 poster sites in rail

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stations for a whole month; a booklet containing 31 simple prayers aimed at commuters of any faith background which can be downloaded as a free e-book or ordered online; an app containing the 31 prayers in audio, prayer alerts to remind users to pray and help them to get into the habit of regular prayer; and a website, [www.prayersonthemove.com](http://www.prayersonthemove.com), Twitter feed and Facebook page.

The Prayers on the Move Campaign has been funded by a number of individuals and churches, in particular St Patrick's Cathedral, The Methodist Church in Ireland, the Archdiocese of Dublin, the Carmelite Order and the Society of Jesus.

SPCK is the UK's leading Christian Publisher and oldest Anglican Mission Agency. It works to fulfil its vision of a world where everyone can benefit from Christian Knowledge. SPCK's mission is to lead the way in creating books and resources that help everyone to make sense of faith.

APCK is SPCK's sister organisation in Ireland. APCK acts as a publisher for the Church of Ireland, and produces books and pamphlets to help explain the Christian faith.

More details are available at [www.prayeronthemove.com](http://www.prayeronthemove.com) or from [pquantrill@spck.org.uk](mailto:pquantrill@spck.org.uk).

## **Presbyterian Moderator to visit Dublin & Munster**

Presbyterian Moderator, Rt. Rev. Dr. Noble McNeely, will see some of the work that members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland are doing in their local communities when he makes a weeklong visit to the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster, the Church's largest presbytery, which starts tomorrow, Sunday February 4.

Made up of 32 congregations of just under 4,000 members, the presbytery covers 24 counties from Kerry and Cork in the south-west sweeping up and across to the border counties of Leitrim, Cavan and Louth in the north. County Donegal is part of the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal, while the Presbytery of Monaghan is made up of that county.

The Presbytery Tour will include visits to a school, sheltered accommodation for older people and residential homes for people with a disability. Dr. McNeely will also visit nine



congregations, primarily in the south-east of the country.

“This will be my third and final Presbytery Tour as Moderator and Florence and I are looking forward to spending a week with colleagues and seeing the great work that they are doing in the name of Jesus in the communities where God has called them to serve and encouraging them in that service.

“Unlike my predecessor, Dr. Sellar, I have never had the opportunity to serve the Church in the Republic of Ireland, although in the 1970s I was involved in some evangelistic outreach in the Carlow and Athy area. I recognise now that some of what I learned in terms of how to relate to people and how to share the gospel was in

fact an important part of my preparation for what was to follow in my 35 years of ministry.

“Each of our 535 congregations across Ireland have their unique characteristics and I look forward to discovering how our ministers and their congregations are impacting their local communities. I want to encourage our ministers in their work as they often minister in isolated situations.”

Dr. McNeely will preach twice on Sunday morning, first in Malahide Presbyterian and then in Howth Presbyterian, a joint charge in County Dublin. That evening he will preach in Greystones, County Wicklow. On the final Sunday of the tour he will revisit the county preach in Arklow Presbyterian and at St. Andrews, Blackrock, Dublin.

During the week he will visit the joint charges of Enniscorthy and Wexford and Athy and Carlow, while in Dublin he will visit Abbey Presbyterian and Adelaide Road to see the work that they are doing. He will also visit Maynooth Presbyterian, one of PCI's newest congregations, which celebrated its tenth anniversary in November.

The President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, Rev. Dr. Laurence Graham, will join the

Moderator on a visit to his church's Dublin nursing home, Mount Tabor. Dr. McNeely will also see Tritonville Close, PCI's sheltered accommodation complex for 40 older people in the Sandymount area of the city and Peacehaven Trust's residential accommodation for people with a disability. He will also visit Clontarf School.

"During my visit I will be interested in seeing how the members are engaged as 'Everyday Disciples' of our Lord Jesus Christ in the increasing secular society and how community relations have developed in their towns and villages, Dr. McNeely said.

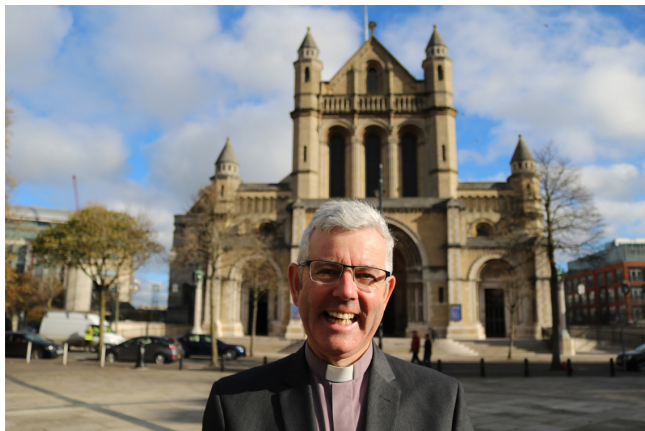
Referencing the World Meeting of Families in August, which is being hosted by the Roman Catholic Church, he said that he would be interested to see if there were ways in which local Presbyterian congregations could highlight PCI's commitment to family ministry and the support of families in a changing world. "As I said with my fellow Irish leaders in our New Year Message, it is important that we explore how we can celebrate the importance of families to our churches and the wider community, as we recognise that our pastoral care of the family is an essential part of our contribution to society. I look forward to doing that next week."

Stuart Ferguson who is Clerk of the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster and attends Adelaide Road Presbyterian Church in Dublin said that he was looking forward to the visit. “Our Presbytery is the Church’s largest geographically and last hosted a Presbytery Tour in 2011, so we are very much looking forward to welcoming Dr. McNeely and Florence.

“Their visit also comes at the time of the annual election for our Moderator, which traditionally takes place on the first Tuesday in February, when all of the 19 presbyteries meet at different locations across Ireland to elect his successor. Ministers and elders from each of our congregations in the Dublin and Munster Presbytery will gather in our newly refurbished Lucan Centre in County Dublin, where Dr. McNeely will lead the opening prayers and devotions.”

## **Installation of Dean of Belfast**

The Venerable Stephen Forde, Archdeacon of Dalriada, and rector of the Parishes of Larne and Inver with Glynn and Raloo, will be installed as the 14th Dean of Belfast at a service in St Anne’s Cathedral on Sunday February 4 at 3.30pm.



**Archdeacon Stephen Forde who will be installed as Dean of Belfast at Choral Evensong in St Anne's Cathedral on tomorrow, Sunday February 4 at 3.30pm.**

The service, in which the new Dean will also be instituted as Incumbent of the Cathedral Parish, will be attended by the Bishops of Connor and Down and Dromore, representatives of community life in the city, visiting Bishops and leaders of the other main denominations in Northern Ireland.

The service follows the order for Choral Evensong, and will be led by the Cathedral Choir and the Larne Concert Choir with the St Cedma's Singers (Larne Parish). Members of the Brass section of the Ulster Orchestra will also help to make a joyful noise. The former Dean of

St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral, Dublin, the Very Rev Victor Stacey, will read the first lesson. The second lesson will be read by the Deputy Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Sonia Copeland. The sermon will be preached by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy.

During the service, the Dean-elect will be presented for institution into the Cathedral Parish by the Archdeacon of Belfast, the Ven George Davison, and the Act of Institution will be conducted by the Bishop of Connor. Archdeacon Forde will be installed as Dean of Belfast by Archdeacon Davison, accompanied by the Bishop of Down and Dromore, the Rt Rev Harold Miller.

He will then be presented to the people by the Bishop of Connor, and welcomed by the Very Rev Martin Graham, Administrator of St Peter's Cathedral, on behalf of all the church leaders.

The formal institution and installation of the new Dean is followed by commissioning in which the Dean is presented with symbols of the teaching, pastoral and sacramental ministry of an incumbent. These will include a Bible (to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ), a container of water (recognising that the Cathedral is a place of Christian baptism), a Book of Common Prayer

(demonstrating the primary role of the Dean to lead public worship and encourage a life of personal devotion), bread and wine (the elements of holy communion), oil (symbolic of healing and reconciliation), the key to the Cathedral (as a reminder that the Cathedral is a place to be kept open for all people) and a towel (as a reminder of Christ washing his disciples' feet and of the ministry of service and support of those in need and in trouble).

Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession will be offered by clergy from the Larne area: The Rev Dr John Nelson, Ballycarry Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church; the Very Rev Aidan Kerr, PP, Larne; the Rev Chris Skillen, Larne Methodist, Fr Conor McCarthy, curate Larne; and the Rev Dr Colin McClure, First Larne Presbyterian. The Benedictine Monks of the Holy Cross Monastery, Rostrevor, will sing the responses.

During the service, there will be a collection for Belfast Cathedral's Black Santa Sit-out. Dean-elect Forde said: "With the redevelopment of the Cathedral Quarter, and the arrival of 10,000 students at the University of Ulster, this is a time of new beginnings and new horizons.

“I hope the Cathedral will be a place where people who are rushed and hassled by life’s demands will find rest and refreshment, a place of peace in a world of many pressures. I also hope the Cathedral will be a place of ecumenical encounter, a place where bridges are built and barriers dismantled. Above all, I pray this will be a place where people discover how much they matter, because they will discover how much they matter to God.

“While I am excited at these new opportunities, I am also conscious that being Dean of Belfast is a massive challenge and a daunting task. I approach this new role, knowing that will I need the prayers and support of so many others: The staff at the Cathedral, the Cathedral community who call this place their spiritual home, and also support from the wider community in Belfast, as well as from the clergy and people of the two dioceses that this Cathedral serves.

“Yet I know that the God who calls is also the God who equips. All I can ask is that people will pray for me, and work with me, to achieve God’s ambitions for this great Cathedral and to embrace all the opportunities of God’s future.”

## **Reader ministry celebrated as 26 are recommissioned in Down Cathedral**

Bishop Harold Miller of Down & Dromore has recommissioned 26 diocesan readers at a special service in Down Cathedral.

Around 200 people attended on Thursday 25 January as the readers received their new licences and recommitted themselves to exercise the ministry of leadership in worship and preaching the Word of God. Four readers were unable to attend but will also be issued with new licences.

Bishop Harold said: “The presence of the Lord was palpable at the service in Down Cathedral. It was a rich mix of formality and informality in a place deeply associated with mission and ministry in this land. I am so grateful for the work done by our readers, and pray that they will always know the power of the Word of God in their lives and preaching.”



The bishop gave the address and was assisted with the act of recommissioning by the Warden of Readers, the Revd Willie Nixon.

He said: “It was a joy both to recommission readers for the next 5 years of their ministry and celebrate the regular work they undertake in our parishes. The value of their role was evident not least in the numbers of family and friends gathered round them on this special occasion.

“These 30 readers minister regularly in 26 local parishes, as well as helping with

cover in many more. It is a key ministry and we are excited that a new generation of 34 trainee readers will be joining their ranks over the next few years.”

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