

Dolores O’Riordan ‘took a lot of influence from her spirituality’, bishop says



Dolores O’Riordan

The Cranberries’ frontwoman, Dolores O’Riordan, has been described as a woman of soul and courage by the bishop of Limerick, where she honed her musical talent at a Catholic school in the 1980s.

O’Riordan, 46, died suddenly on January 15 in London, where she had been due to record material for a new release. Police were investigating her death, calling it “unexplained.” Bishop Brendan Leahy of Limerick said her death “is such a sad loss of a young and precious life.”

“Of course, she was a superstar and an inspiration to so many people, not least from Limerick,” he said. Recalling that she grew up in the neighbouring Archdiocese of Cashel and Emyl, Bishop Leahy said, “Limerick city, all of Limerick, held her very dear in its heart. “Her rise to stardom gave a huge amount of belief to young people locally at the time,” the bishop said. “She never lost sight of who she was and where she was from.”

Recalling her deep spirituality – her mother named her in honour of Our Lady of the Seven Dolours, or Sorrows – Bishop Leahy said: “She also often spoke about her spirituality and how important that was to her and, of course, she met Pope John Paull II.

“She spoke of taking a lot of influence for her music from her spirituality. Limerick and the

world has lost a kind, soft-hearted, talented soul,” he said.

The O’Riordan family’s parish priest, Fr James Walton, said the family was devastated and the community was shocked.

“Nobody knows what to say – there’s wall-to-wall media coverage, but everyone here’s just trying to get their own thoughts around it,” he added.

O’Riordan frequently spoke about her Catholic faith and the importance of prayer in her life. Her mother had hoped her daughter would consider religious life, but while she chose a music career instead, she was still able to make one of her mother’s dreams come true.

In a 2017 interview, she recalled how she “was invited to sing at the Vatican several times; it was a real honour.”

“I was chuffed to see inside the place. But one of the best things was taking my mum to meet the late Pope John Paul II. She was blown away. He was such a good man, very kind and I loved him,” she said.

O’Riordan’s funeral is expected to take place in Limerick.

Clontarf Choral Competition to promote performance of religious songs



The first annual Clontarf Parish Choral Competition will take place on Sunday 11 March 2018 at the Church of St John the Baptist, Seafield Rd West, Clontarf, Dublin 3.

The aim of the competition is to encourage the performance and enjoyment of hymnody and religious songs, and there will be senior and junior categories (over 18 and under 18). The junior competition will take place at 3pm, while the senior competition will take place at 7pm.

All amateur choirs of at least eight members are eligible to enter and perpetual trophies will be awarded in each category. The entry fee is €30 per choir, and the closing date for entries for the 2018 competition is Sunday 18 February 2018.

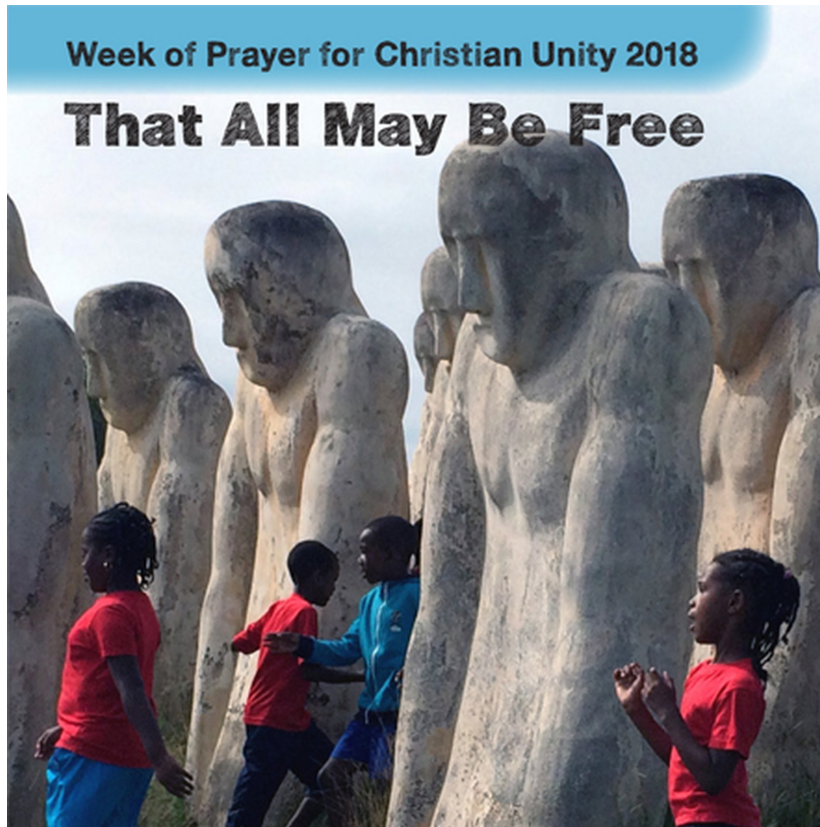
Choirs will sing two pieces. The first piece will be an arrangement of one piece from the prescribed set-list (to be found on the website) and the second piece will be a hymn/psalm/religious song of the choir's own choosing. The second piece must not be from the prescribed set-list. Choirs entering into the senior competition must sing in at least two-part harmony.

Choirs will be adjudicated by a panel of three judges and marks will be awarded for both the technical ability and overall artistic quality of the performance.

Full details and entry forms available at www.clontarfchoralcomp.wordpress.com

Dublin service for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2018 runs from Thursday January 18 to 25. This year's theme – That All May Be Free – highlights victory



over oppression and is based on material from the Church in the Caribbean which has focused on Exodus 15.

In Dublin & Glendalough the Inaugural Service takes place on Thursday January 18 at 8pm in the Church of Our Lady of Good Council, Church View Road, Johnstown (off the R118 near Killiney). Organised by Dublin Council of

Churches, the service will be attended by many Christian Church leaders from Dublin and the address will be given by Dr Jessie Rogers, a scripture scholar from St Patrick's College.

There are a number of events taking place to mark the week throughout the dioceses. Check for details locally.

As part of a new initiative Christians are being encouraged to pray in one another's churches during the week with the focus on prayers for church unity, peace and blessings for one another.

The 'Christians United in Prayer' initiative takes as its symbol the Trinity Knot and parishes are invited to display the Trinity Knot near the doors of their churches as a sign of welcome, along with a notice of when the church will be open for prayer. Those passing a church they don't normally attend will know they are welcome to pop in to say a short prayer. Visitors to churches are encouraged to bring a flower or sprig as a greeting to those of different traditions.

"As Christians, we all worship one Trinitarian God. That is what unites us. It does not matter that we have a variety of ideas about him.

Everybody is inadequate when it comes to

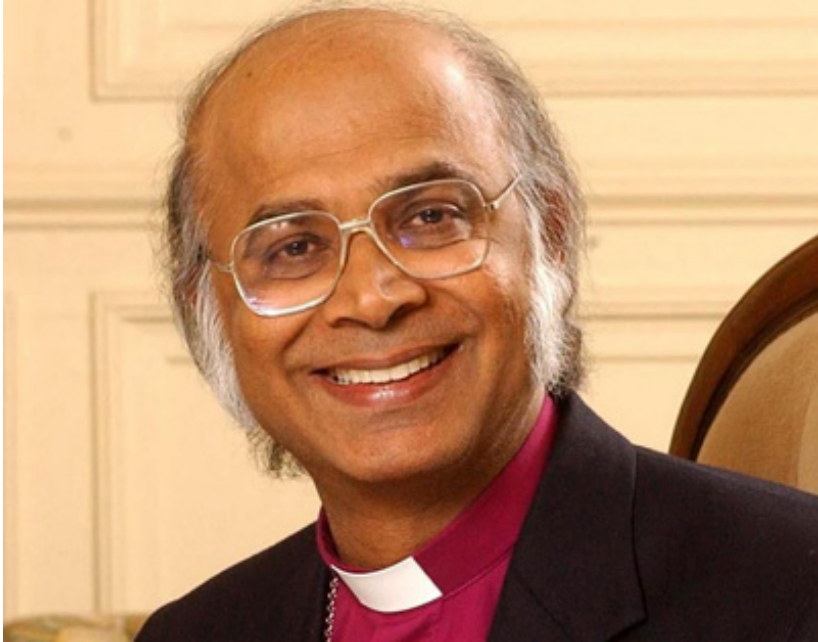
appreciating the infinite. But we all say the Our Father. That makes us brothers and sisters and our Father wants us to love our brothers and sisters. And we do. Let's show it," explains Christians United in Prayer organiser, John O'Loughlin Kennedy.

More information is available on <https://www.facebook.com/trinityknotunity/>

Belfast lecture by Bishop Nazir–Ali on confidence in Christ in multi-faith world

The former Bishop of Rochester, Bishop Michael Nazir–Ali, will deliver this year's Clive West Memorial Lecture at All Saints' Church, University Street, Belfast, on Tuesday 20th February 2018 at 7.45pm.

The lecture will be entitled, "Only one way?" – Confidence in the unique Christ in our multi-cultural, multi-faith world'. In the context of a rapidly changing world, this is a timely subject and the Trust is delighted to be welcoming such a well-respected and erudite speaker to Belfast to talk about it.



The Revd Trevor Johnston, Rector of All Saints' Church and Chair of the Clive West Memorial Trust – which was launched in 2016 to support training for ministry in Ireland – said, 'Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali is an Anglican Christian leader known and respected the world over.

“His writing, speaking and leadership are of considerable significance, especially for those living in non-Christian cultures or with an aggressive secularism nearby, which seeks to suppress Christian faith and expression.’

He continued, 'Having grown up in an Islamic home and converted to Christ, Bishop Nazir–Ali knows well the insight that Christ is the only Saviour for mankind and the implications that this has for world mission, Christian confidence and faithful, confessional Anglicanism. We are privileged and delighted to have him speak on a question which faces all Christians in both discipleship and mission: is Jesus Christ, God?'

The lecture is open to all and is free to attend. The Clive West Trust was established in memory of the Revd Clive West who was a renowned Church of Ireland pastor and teacher; the Trust has a passion for preaching and teaching the word of God, particularly within the Church of Ireland context. As well as offering financial support towards Biblical and theological training, the Trust hosts an annual biblical/theological lecture. For further information on the Clive West Trust, visit: westtrust.co.uk

Bishop accuses BBC of 'pro-abortion bias'

A Scottish bishop has criticised the BBC for being biased against pro-lifers.

Bishop John Keenan of Paisley was responding to the corporation's coverage of the appointment



Bishop John Keenan

of Maria Caulfield, a Catholic, as the Conservative Party's vice chair for women.

The bishop defended Ms Caulfield, who provoked anger for opposing a bill decriminalising abortion last year. "Read the report and you'll find yet more pro-abortion bias from the BBC with the vast majority of their quotes coming from pro-abortionists," he told the Scottish Catholic Observer.

"So let me try to provide some balance in the interest of public service. Those pushing for the decriminalisation of abortion are pressing for the

right to abort babies up to birth for any reason whatsoever.

“The present law at least puts some kind of limit on late abortions and, at least in theory, reminds society of the seriousness of taking an innocent human life.”

Bishop Keenan suggested that the BBC “seems to think it is disappointing that any woman politician should have such anxiety for the plight of unborn human beings – and for society – at the horrific proposals pro-abortionists are now seriously peddling”.

“In fact,” he added, “it is Maria Caulfield who represents the views of most UK women. Seventy-two per cent of women want abortion to be governed by a legal framework and only one per cent of women support the abortion limit being raised, according to a recent poll.

“I know a few excellent BBC journalists but this just lets us all down,” the bishop said.

The original BBC report focused on the complaints of abortion provider BPAS, which said Ms Caulfield’s appointment was unacceptable due to her opposition to decriminalising abortion. Sophie Walker, the

Women's Equality Party leader, said Ms Caulfield could "never advocate effectively" for women.

Ms Caulfield wrote in inews: "I did oppose decriminalisation of abortion because I don't believe we should be having abortions up to term. I think the 24-week limit could do with reducing with medical advances.

"Babies who are born at 22 and 23 weeks are able to survive and live long and healthy lives. The current law is a safeguard because it protects vulnerable women who might be pressurised by an abusive partner or family member to have an abortion. In my couple of years as an MP I've never had one woman come to me saying she is having difficulty accessing an abortion.

"It's not my place to judge any woman who wanted to have an abortion but when as a legislator I am concerned that a change in the law will adversely affect vulnerable women or babies that are female, then absolutely I have a right to speak out about this.

"It's a sad day in this country if you can't have a different view to someone. To say that someone who has a different view cannot represent women is absolutely ridiculous."

Pope Francis meets survivors of clerical sexual abuse



Pope Francis greets a prisoner as he visits the women's prison centRE in Santiago, Chile

Pope Francis has met in private with survivors of sexual abuse by Chilean clergy, the Vatican has said.

Spokesman Greg Burke said the Pope met with “a small group of victims of sexual abuse by priests” at the apostolic nunciature in Santiago, Chile.

“The meeting took place in a strictly private way, and no one else was present: only the Pope and the victims,” Burke told journalists that evening.

The private setting, he added, allowed the group to speak freely with the Pope and recount their sufferings.

Pope Francis “listened, prayed and cried with them,” Burke said.

[Pope Francis asks forgiveness from victims of clerical sex abuse]

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