



## **Down Cathedral preparing for 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of restoration of present building**

Down Cathedral is preparing to mark an important anniversary – in 2018 it will be 200 years since the building was restored and reconsecrated.



Dean of Down, the Very Revd Henry Hull has been speaking to the BBC...

“We will have a special service to celebrate the bicentenary of the building being reconsecrated,” he said. “We have a reference from a man called Pilsen, a local resident who kept detailed diaries of the history of Downpatrick, that on 23 August 1818 the

building was ready for public worship, and certainly worship has continued since that date.”

Churches and abbeys have been on the site of Down Hill, where the current cathedral stands, as far back as the 5th Century. The present site was built in 1183 by Benedictine monks from Beck in Normandy. The monastery was used by the monks until 1543, but the site was subjected to numerous attacks over the centuries.

Dean Hull said: “The building began to fall into decay and in 1609, King James I granted a Royal Charter to install a dean and a cathedral. However for the next 200 years the building continued to be a ruin which was used for consecrating bishops and for burials.”

It wasn't until the 18th Century that funds were raised by local families and King George III to restore the site, and in 1818 the building was ready again for public worship.

It is estimated that 60,000 people from around the world visit the cathedral every year, some on pilgrimage, others to find out more about St Patrick.

Dean Hull said he was honoured to serve at the cathedral. “One of the great privileges of ministering here is to know people have been on

this site praying and worshipping over the centuries,” he said.

“Although this building has gone through various changes, there is something constant that remains and we pray that will continue into the future.”

[Read the full article on the BBC News NI website.](#)

## **Archbishop of Canterbury : use new year to focus on compassion, not horror**

People can choose whether to be defined by the horrors and difficulties of today’s world or the compassionate response of communities coming together, the archbishop of Canterbury has said in his new year message.

Justin Welby delivered his message for 2018 from the London ambulance service’s special operations centre, which responds to major incidents in the capital. Its staff took hundreds of calls from members of the public caught up in the [London Bridge and Borough Market terrorist attack](#) in June.



## **Justin Welby has praised the compassion shown by communities facing tragedy**

As well as atrocities and tragedies in London and [Manchester](#) in 2017, “all over the world we witnessed the horror and devastation caused by terrorism”, Welby said.

He recalled the “desperation and sorrow” he witnessed when visiting [Grenfell Tower](#) on the day of the fire.

“Then there are those whose suffering will never make the news,” he said. “People who are struggling to find work or relying on food banks. Those who are bereaved, or coping with poor mental health or physical illness.”

In such difficult times, “there are often questions which hang in the air: is there any light at all? Does anyone care?”

Recalling the words of the Bible, “the light shone in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it”, Welby spoke of the light of resilience, heroism and compassion.

“We see [this light] in the faces of the hundreds of volunteers who turned out after Grenfell, simply to help strangers in need,” the archbishop said.

“We see it in the heroism of the ambulance crews, police, fire service and security forces. I will never forget the image of a group of unarmed police officers sprinting flat-out towards Borough Market, as so many people were running in the opposite direction.”

In the past year, “the depth of suffering was matched by a depth of compassion as communities came together”.

People could choose which stories defined them, he said. “The horror? Or the response? The darkness, or the light?”

Welby’s message was broadcast on BBC One at 1pm on Monday.



## **Pope Francis offers advice on how to start 2018**

Pope Francis is advising people to jettison life's "useless baggage" in 2018, avoiding the "banality of consumerism" and "empty chatter."

Francis offered his reflections on how to savour the real meaning of life as he celebrated New Year's Day Mass in St Peter's Basilica.

His recipe for getting down to the essentials includes setting aside a moment of silence daily to be with God.

He said doing so would help “keep our freedom from being corroded by the banality of consumerism, the blare of commercials, the stream of empty words and the overpowering waves of empty chatter and loud shouting.”

Pope Francis recommended leaving behind “all sorts of useless baggage” to “rediscover what really matters” — and start over from that.

## **Church minister rendered “speechless” on knighthood award**

Church of Scotland minister, The Very Reverend Professor Iain Richard Torrance said he was “literally speechless” when notified he would be knighted in the New Year’s Honours list. Professor Torrance has been honoured with a Knights Bachelor (Kt) for “services to Higher Education and Theology”.

Professor Torrance served as Moderator of the General Assembly in 2003-04 and has been the Pro Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen since 2013.

A former Territorial Army Chaplain, Professor Torrance was ordained as a minister of





Northmavine Parish Church, Shetland in 1982, a position he held until 1985 when he first moved into academia at Queen's College and then the University of Birmingham.

Professor Torrance, whose father Very Rev Thomas F Torrance was Moderator in 1976-77, has also been recognised for his work on interfaith dialogue with Jewish and Islamic communities.

Very Rev Dr John Miller, Moderator of the General Assembly in 2001-02, said: "It is very unusual to find a church minister exercising these gifts both in the church and in society at large.

"Iain has been influential through his work as a Chaplain working on the importance of moral values in military training.

“He has been valued in the university sphere, as Professor of Theology and as an administrator when Dean of the Faculty of Arts in Aberdeen.”

Professor Sir Ian Diamond, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen – where Professor Torrance first started teaching in 1993 – welcomed the news.

“Professor Torrance has made an enormous and outstanding contribution to higher education, both as one of the UK's leading theologians and also as a university leader in Scotland and in Princeton, USA,” he said.

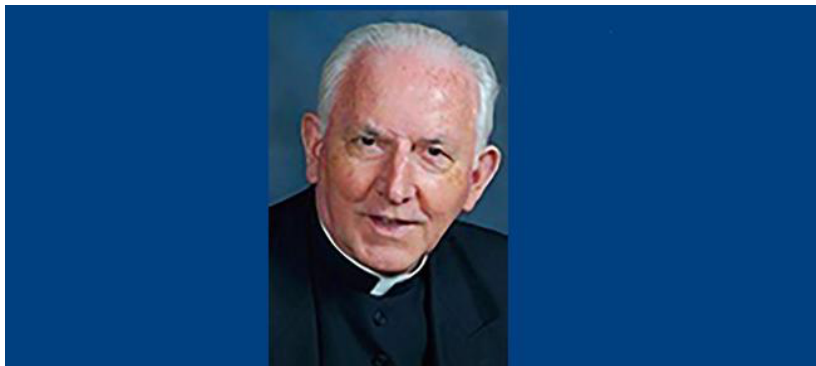
“We are hugely privileged to have him as our Pro Chancellor.”

The 68-year-old is married with two children.

## **‘Prayer answered’ as priest wins €0.5 million on lottery**

A Florida-based Irish priest at home on holidays for Christmas has won €500,000 in the EuroMillions Plus draw.

Monsignor John Delaney scooped a huge €500,000 with a quick pick ticket while at home f



or Christmas in Ireland in Donnybrook Fair in Malahide.

The minister is originally from Farmhill, Crossboyne in Co Mayo, but has now retired and lives in Florida,

Msgnr Delaney joked that God must be listening to his prayers - because this is not his first lottery win.

He said that he had previously won £15,000 Irish pounds on the old Irish Sweepstakes. According to Dublin Live, he had also won amounts of \$3,000 and \$5,000 over the years in lotteries in the States.

Describing how he learned of his win, he said that he heard on Saturday that one of two



winning EuroMillions Plus tickets was purchased in Donnybrook Fair in Malahide.

He added: "I didn't get too excited when I heard this first. I went back to the shop and gave the ticket to the same girl I had purchased it from to be checked.

"Lo and behold there was a message on the system to contact the National Lottery! So I knew at that stage I had won."

Delaney regularly visits Ireland and said he spent a lovely Christmas Day with relatives in Dublin.

He said: "I am a big believer that what goes around comes around. This is a huge amount of money and I look forward to giving some back."

Msgr Delaney told The Irish Times: “God gave it to me for some reason and I will give it away.” He has promised that he will share his winnings with those in need.

## **Government report acknowledges the importance of English cathedrals**

A new report commending England’s 42 Anglican cathedrals for their continued importance as places of worship, their wider community work and their commitment to promoting local economic growth has been published today by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The report, “Cathedrals and their communities”, is the culmination of a year-long tour which saw the Minister for Faith, Lord Bourne visit all of England’s 42 Anglican cathedrals to better understand their continued importance both to local communities and wider society.

The report highlights cathedrals as diverse churches that are not only important sacred centres of worship but also places of valued

social support and community and interfaith engagement.

Minister for Faith Lord Bourne said: “There is no better time to remind ourselves of the strong role cathedrals play in our national life than at Christmas, as worshippers gather in naves across the country to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

“This year-long tour has given me a real understanding of how the innovation and vibrancy displayed by cathedral staff and their congregations is ensuring that these important churches continue to play a crucial role at the heart of local communities now and for centuries to come.”

The Very Reverend Adrian Dorber, Chairman of the Association of English Cathedrals, also added:

“Lord Bourne’s report is a really helpful endorsement of all that our English cathedrals are trying to be and do. We want to continue as places of welcome and be able to offer spiritual hospitality and friendship to all. We’re grateful to the Government for taking the time and trouble to conduct such a thorough programme of visits and investigation and for finding out what we do

and what our ambitions for the future are. I hope the report will be widely read.”

## **Morning Service from Helen's Bay**

1BBC Radio Ulster's Morning Service will be broadcast from Helen's Bay on Sunday 14 January 2018 at 10.15 am.

The rector, Canon Timothy Kinahan, will lead the service and give the address.

Following the broadcast, the programme will be available on BBC iPlayer.

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