



Golf Club venue for Mothers' Union Prayer Breakfast on gender violence

Mothers' Union in Down and Dromore has organised a special Prayer Breakfast focusing on the worldwide campaign, *16 days of Activism against Gender Violence* which runs from 25 November.

The keynote speakers at the event in Rockmount Golf Club on Saturday 18 November, will be two ladies who work in senior roles for PSNI with victims of domestic violence.

June Butler, the Diocesan President said, "We don't imagine that it will be a "comfortable" morning but we in Mothers' Union are eager that these critical matters are brought to the attention of everyone living in Northern Ireland.

"I was fortunate to be selected by Mothers' Union to be one of its delegates at this year's UN Commission on the Status of Women and I was disturbed that every event I attended turned to the topic of violence against women, whether at work, at home or in a social environment."

The campaign

Mothers' Union campaigns around the world for an end to gender-based violence – violence carried out most often against women and girls because of their gender.

Each year the organisation engages with *16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence*, which runs from 25 November (the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) and 10 December (International Human Rights Day). Throughout the campaign, members join together with one voice, to raise awareness of and call for an end to gender-based violence in all forms, and in all societies.

This year, Mothers' Union is focusing on the issue of stigma, where society responds negatively to, or by blaming those who are, victims of gender-based violence.

Find out more on the MU website here.

Details of the event are available through MU branches. Alternatively, to register your plan to attend, please contact June on (028) 9751 1021.

Bishop's PA to retire after a lifetime's service to C of I

Mrs Rosemary Patterson, Personal Assistant to the Bishop of Connor, is to retire next year after devoting her entire working life to the Church.

Rosemary has been full time Secretary / PA for Bishop Alan Abernethy since he became Bishop



of Connor 10 years ago, and was part-time secretary to his predecessor, Bishop Alan Harper, for three years before that.

Rosemary's career with the church began in 1965, when she worked with Church Mission Society (CMS) Ireland for four years before moving to the diocesan office for Connor and Down and Dromore, then based in May Street, in 1969.

In 1976 she took some time out following the birth of her daughter Helen. Rosemary returned to work in diocesan office in 1989, and since then has worked in Stewardship, Board of Education and with the Bishops.

Rosemary is married to Jim, Connor Glebes Secretary and a member of Diocesan Council. Their daughter Helen currently works as a receptionist / administrator with Connor Diocese. Rosemary is mother-in-law to Chris and grandmother to Andrew and Rebekah.

She will remain as Bishop's PA until March 2018.

Bishop Alan said: "Rosemary has served the Church of Ireland in various capacities, stewardship office, education office, diocesan office and Bishop's personal assistant. She has given nearly 40 years of faithful and dedicated service.

"Since I became Bishop of Connor she has been a great support to me. Her loyalty, confidentiality, encouragement and discernment are great gifts to me. She has been able to organise my diary but above all she has looked after 'me.' I will be forever grateful for her care and friendship."

Church of Ireland cleric admires James McClean for poppy stance

A Canon of the Church of Ireland's National Cathedral has called Irish soccer star James McClean a "national hero" over his decision not to wear a poppy.

Canon Peter Champion, whose grandfather and two great-uncles fought at Gallipoli, said the poppy was "a symbol of memorial of the grim reality of the terrible loss of life".

Canon Champion was speaking at the annual national service of remembrance at St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin.

He said he admired Republic of Ireland soccer star James McClean for refusing to wear the poppy and said football fans' heckling of him was "disgraceful".

In his sermon, Canon Champion said: "So why do I admire rather than just respect James McClean? It isn't for his gritty toughness which makes every member of the opposition team look over their shoulder, wondering where he is on the pitch. No, it is because he chooses not to wear a poppy.

"In the last ten years everyone on British television, whether delivering the news, commentating on sports, X Factor judges and contestants, Strictly Come Dancing performers, you name it, are ostentatiously wearing their poppies. It would be hard to find a public figure in England not wearing a poppy; someone not wearing a poppy stands out like a sore thumb.

"James McClean falls into that category. Playing for West Bromwich Albion, he came on as a substitute last week only to be booed by visiting Manchester City fans and by some home fans as they were playing in the Hawthornes.

"I think that is disgraceful. He has never made an issue of it but others have made it an issue. When questioned about his decision not to wear the poppy, he says that being from Derry, Bloody Sunday is still a reminder to him of the painful presence of British soldiers at that time.

"James McClean may not have been alive in 1972, but it would be very much part of his family narrative growing up. He shows great restraint, strength and integrity in enduring these annual taunts, but it must be very difficult and hurtful for him nonetheless," he told the congregation, who included President Michael D Higgins who laid a wreath at the war memorial in the cathedral.

For the first time, a member of Sinn Féin attended the ceremony at the Anglican cathedral.

Sinn Féin deputy leader Mary Lou McDonald told the Irish Independent she was there because "I believe in respect and honour for our dead and I believe in forging ahead now in a very thoughtful,

considered and determined way to unite people and to build reconciliation."

President visits vandalised church

Gardaí in Clifden are following a number of lines of inquiry into the extensive damage that was caused to the Holy Trinity Church on the Errislannan peninsula in West Connemara.

It's understood that Gardai have spoken to two 16-year-olds as part of their ongoing investigation into the incident which has horrified the local community and church leaders of every religion.

It is estimated that around €70,000 may be needed to repair the Church of Ireland property that attracts 30 regular parishioners and hosts evening services during July and August.

The church is located in a remote area and was subjected to an attack by vandals which resulted in windows being smashed, electrics ripped out of the walls, and the pulpit, pews and organ being destroyed.

At the time of the attack two weeks ago, Canon Stan Evans, who is in charge of the parishes of Errislannan, Clifden, Roundstone and Moyard,



expressed shock and sadness by what had happened.

He described it as the worst experience that he ever had during his ministry and said the actions of those responsible were “horrendous”. He pointed out that every pew was overturned and smashed and he could not see any gain to be achieved by those responsible.

Since the incident, Gardaí have carried out extensive inquiries in the immediate area of the church and earlier this week concentrated their attentions on two teenagers.

Both teens have been questioned and released pending further investigations. It is understood that the two have since returned to secondary school.

Support came from Catholic Archbishop of Tuam while a local fund was set up to help towards the repairs of the church.

President Michael D Higgins visited the church to inspect first hand the vandalism. The President walked through the church with Mr Evans, accompanied by Cathaoirleach Galway County Council, Eileen Manion. Together they examined the interior of Holy Trinity in its present state which, far from being restored, is now at least in a less chaotic condition than it was a fortnight ago.

The President met with a group of people who will undertake the repairs and refurbishment. He spoke with Joan Johnson of the Friends of St Flannan's, a benevolent association which has contributed to the life of Holy Trinity for the past 51 years. Ms Johnson is a member of the Society of Friends (Quakers), a body of Christians who have had a long connection with Errislannan.

President Higgins was clearly moved by what he saw. He expressed his compassion for the local community and offered words of great encouragement and support as they begin their work towards the day when Holy Trinity will once again be open for worship.

As The President and his wife left the Errislannan Peninsula, the Very Revd Stan Evans commented: 'The outpouring of support for the Church community in Errislannan following the vandalism at Holy Trinity church has been quite incredible.

'From small donations from pensioners, to whole congregations of all denominations raising funds across the country, our hearts have been lifted by this outpouring of generosity and solidarity. We thank everyone for their support.

'The church will be totally restored ready for the summer services and without doubt there will be large numbers of people who will wish to view the restoration.'

Rector of Wicklow & Killiskey appointed

The Revd Jack Kinkead has been appointed Rector of Wicklow & Killiskey. Jack has been Priest in Charge of the parishes since July 2015.

Jack grew up in Lisburn and studied history in Trinity College Dublin. He was Lay Vicar Choral and worked as retail manager in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, before entering the Church of Ireland Theological Institute. He was ordained in

2010 for Curacy in Cregagh Parish in Belfast in the Diocese of Down. He moved to become senior Curate in Taney Parish, Diocese of Dublin in 2013.

Jack has been married to Rachael, a primary school teacher in Powerscourt National School, since 2013. Since arriving in Wicklow he has focused on ministry to children and young people, developing opportunities for the whole family of God to enter into worship together.

“I am thrilled to be appointed Rector of Wicklow & Killiskey, and have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know the people of the parish over the past two and a half years. I am excited for continued development in the parish and the opportunities that will lie ahead to work together in service of God and the wider community,” he said.

PRESS WATCH:

Remembrance events need to be more inclusive, Tom Kelly writes in The Irish News

Each year I attend the Remembrance service at Belfast City Hall on behalf of the government of

Malta. It's an incredible event and one, which I didn't attend until 2008.

It's run with great precision and professionalism by both the staff at City Hall and the British Legion. For a Catholic with a nationalist background the service is still strangely alien – although it must be said with the regular attendance of the Irish foreign minister and usually the participation of a senior Catholic clergyman it is a much more inclusive event than it would have been in 2008.

The atmosphere is very solemn and dignified. Former servicemen from the Second World War are noticeably decreasing in numbers. They are frail in their wheelchairs but their medals are proudly worn across their blazers. A few wear the berets from their regiments. Rows and rows of organisations line up to lay wreaths. The attendance of so many of the loyal orders is incredible but it also makes the event seem very one sided.

Obviously Remembrance Sunday is hugely important to unionists and ever since the horrific massacre at Enniskillen in 1987, it has taken on an even greater poignancy and cultural significance.

Each year I have this internal debate about whether or not to wear a poppy to the ceremony. It's not an act that comes naturally. I mostly opt to wear it only for the ceremony and then take it off. It's always a balance between wanting to show respect to the past fallen and not wanting to be caught up in an act that supports all British army activities.

It's quite easy for me to go to the ceremony without feeling in any way compromised. I am there representing a country which was bombarded during World War Two, a commonwealth country and one which collectively holds the George Cross, just like the RUC.

But I also had a grandfather and two great grandfathers who served throughout the Great War – one in the Irish Fusiliers and two as pioneers in the Royal Engineers. Two received injuries from the conflict - one shot and the other gassed three times. Bizarrely they both were sent back to the front despite being hospitalised. Going to Remembrance Sunday is about them too. This is a heritage that I as a nationalist co-own.

Given the numbers of nationalists who joined up in the First World War, there's hardly a family who doesn't also have a war hero in their history. Despite genealogy sites being swamped with interest in old soldiers and their records, Catholics/nationalists still recoil from joining their unionist neighbours in going to go the Cenotaph and sharing something that is in joint ownership.

There's no doubt that the service is very British in orientation but it makes you wonder does it have to be so as the Irish section of the British Legion host events in a much more inclusive way. Even the trendy Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, was sporting an Irish shamrock poppy in the Dail last week. Thankfully he spared us novelty socks with poppies and shamrocks.

However, those who criticise him for wearing the shamrock poppy better start getting real. If unionists are ever to be persuaded that their ultimate destiny is in an united Ireland, as Sinn Féin and the SDLP believe, then there's going to have to be much more of a diverse crossover in official Ireland so that space is given to the unionist identity and culture.

One suspects that most unionists in Northern Ireland are quite happy with the overtly British displays at Remembrance Sunday throughout

our towns and villages. What should be concerning them is the attendance of certain bands and organisations like the UDA, which have no place there at all.

As we grew up, a unionist lady who lived on the Armagh Road went around her mostly Catholic neighbours and sold her poppies. And for as long as I can remember we always took one and it was placed discreetly behind the clock above the fireplace. I remember too in June at the annual blessing of the graves ceremony being fascinated with the headstone of the neighbouring grave, which was engraved with a regimental crest to the memory of a soldier who died in the Great War.

Someone who didn't forget each November tenderly placed a poppy cross on that grave. By June it was worn, wilted and torn from the ravages of the weather but it still clung on amongst the weeds awaiting its replacement. Reminding us lest we forget.

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