



Armagh Presbyterian minister to be canon of city's Cathedral

At a service of Choral Evensong at 3.15 p.m. on Sunday 12th November, the Revd Tony Davidson will be installed as an Ecumenical Canon of St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral.

Tony Davidson has been Minister of First Armagh Presbyterian Church since 1994. He is well-known across the City for his work with the other Christian Churches, and across the community. He is a former President of the Irish Council of Churches, and, within the

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Presbyterian Church, was convener of the Irish Church Relations Committee from 1995 to 2002, Inter-Church Relations Board from 2002 to 2004, and Church Relations Committee from 2004 to 2007. As an Ecumenical Canon, he succeeds the Revd Dr Donald Watts, a former Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

At the same service, Martin White will be conferred with the title of ‘Organist Emeritus’ of the Cathedral. Martin was Organist and Master of the Choristers from 1968-2002. During this time he maintained and developed the choir of men and boys through the worst years of the ‘Troubles’, as well as inspiring countless young people through his educational work at the Music Centre in Portadown.

Looking forward to the service, the Dean of Armagh, the Very Revd Gregory Dunstan, said, “Following our Service of Remembrance on Sunday morning, this will be an occasion to mark and honour two very fine examples of Christian ministry. Tony’s contribution to the life of the City, not least through his preaching and poetry, is widely recognized. The news of his appointment has been warmly welcomed by the Cathedral congregation. Martin brought to the music of the Cathedral a deep commitment of

faith, and, in spite of continuing work as a music examiner, which has taken him across the world, still worships with us regularly.” Everyone is welcome to attend the service and to refreshments afterwards in the Synod Hall.

Down Cathedral welcomes two new canons

The Dean of Down, The Very Revd Henry Hull, has installed Revd Bryan Follis (rector of Hillsborough) and Revd Chris Matchett (rector of Newtownards), as canons in Down Cathedral.

Canon Chris Matchett becomes Prebendary of St Andrews, replacing Jono Pierce who becomes Canon Treasurer. Canon Bryan Follis becomes Prebendary of Dunsford, replacing Revd Mark Harvey who moved to Dromore Diocese.

Before the service, Dean Hull also installed Canon Ken Higgins as Chancellor, following the retirement of Revd Tom Keightley.

As well as welcoming Chris and Bryan to the Cathedral Chapter, Dean Hull said: “I’m

particularly delighted that we have the Choir of St Mark's, Newtownards here supporting their rector and taking part in the service. We're also renewing the Cathedral's long association with Hillsborough Parish through Bryan and of course by having the former rector and Dean of Down, the Very Revd John Dinnen, as our preacher."

Bryan Follis became rector of Hillsborough in 2014, prior to which he spent 13 years as rector of All Saints' Church, near Queen's University Belfast. He has also written two academic books along with a number of booklets aimed at the 'person in the pew'.

A civil servant before his ordination in 1998, Bryan is married to Eleanor, who works part-time as a community midwife in Belfast, and they have two daughters.

Chris Matchett is a native of Londonderry, and worked as an accountant before training for ordination. He met his wife, Ali, whilst at Theological College and they have three children.

Chris was also ordained in 1998 and served two curacies in Down and Dromore before returning to the Diocese as rector of Newtownards in 2011. This followed more than 7 years as rector of Magheracross in Clogher Diocese.

Archbishop of Canterbury urged to abandon Church insurers over 'derisory' settlements to abuse victims

The Archbishop of Canterbury is being urged by a clerical abuse survivor to abandon the Church's insurer in the wake of a scandal over its 'derisory and heartless' treatment of victims.

It comes after three bishops urged the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group (EIG) to review a settlement of £35,000 that was offered to Gilo, whose surname is withheld to protect his identity, saying they were 'very concerned about the way in which the claim was handled at the time'.

The Bishop of Durham, Paul Butler, the Bishop at Lambeth, Tim Thornton, and the Bishop of



The Archbishop of Canterbury is being urged to abandon the Church's insurer.

Buckingham, Alan Wilson, expressed their concern that 'horse-trading' between lawyers about settlement figures had 'little concern for the impact' on the survivor.

Now Gilo is urging the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, to review the settlement offers made by EIG to abuse survivors and relieve the company, which is partly controlled by the Church, of its responsibility to reach settlements.

'The way the Church and its insurers has treated survivors institutionally compounds the abuse we have already suffered,' he wrote in the letter to Welby.

Gilo said he suffers from long-term bi-polar disorder and long periods of severe illness as a result of the abuse he suffered at the hands of Garth Moore in the 1970s. Gilo told numerous figures within the Church, including three bishops, of his abuse over a period of four decades but none of the senior figures he told say they have any recollection of his disclosures and no records were kept.

'The effect on my quality of life and relationships has been substantial,' he said. 'And despite being reasonably intelligent, the long term impact on my employability and earning power has been considerable. Relative to this, the sum I received from EIG was by any standard of pastoral care, derisory and heartless, especially when delivered through the bewildering legal games that EIG plays out.'

He warns the settlements are offered 'under duress' because survivors know they cannot afford to challenge the amount in courts.

At the time EIG said they had no basis to revisit Gilo's settlement and insisted they had dealt with his case with 'with patience and sensitivity'.

In a statement, the EIG said: 'As independent insurers, we are not responsible for the abuse perpetrated by those for whom the church is accountable. Our role is to handle insured claims for financial compensation fairly for these acts of abuse.

'We and other insurers are bound by comprehensive, industry-wide regulation that oversees the way we operate and handle claims, and by the civil justice system.

"It is not in our gift to change civil law, which defines the claims process. Negotiations between lawyers – characterised in the bishops' letter as 'horse trading' – are a normal part of that process. So are full and final settlements, which bring certainty to all parties within the civil justice system.

'It is, however, in the Church of England's gift to provide further compensation as well as ongoing pastoral care to victims and survivors of clergy abuse if it so wishes.'

The Bishop at Lambeth, Tim Thornton, who was one of the bishops Gilo said he told of his abuse, spoke to Gilo earlier today to acknowledge receipt of the letter and said the Archbishop of

Canterbury was in Nigeria but would respond when he returned.

More questions over priestly celibacy: Make your case, Pope tells Amazon diocese

Pope Francis is making the first steps towards allowing married men to become priests in the Amazon jungle.

The pontiff has asked for a debate on whether to partially lift the ban on married men being ordained after a request by Cardinal Claudio Hummes, the president of the Episcopal Commission for the Amazon, who said there was a shortage of priests willing to work there, according to the **Telegraph**.

A discussion and possible vote by Brazilian bishops will question whether to allow so-called *virī probati* – married men of great faith – to minister in the Amazon where evangelical Christians and pagan sects are displacing Catholicism due to a lack of ministers, according to sources quoted in Il Messaggero newspaper. In some areas of the Amazon region, there is just one priest for every 10,000 Catholics



The Cardinal's request was backed by Monsignor Erwin Krautler, the secretary of the Episcopal Commission, who Pope Francis told to 'speak to the bishops and tell them to make valid proposals', according to the Austrian KNA news agency.

It comes after the pontiff said earlier this year the Church should consider permitting married men to become priests in some special circumstances. 'We must consider if viri probati is a possibility. Then we must determine what tasks they can perform, for example, in remote communities,' he told German newspaper Die Zeit.

There are already a small number of married Catholic priests such as Anglican ministers who defected to Rome and some Coptic Catholics and members of Eastern Catholic Churches.

The Pope's backing for more married men to become priests in areas of shortage does not detract from his preference that priests be unmarried and celibate. But he said it was an issue of discipline not of church dogma, meaning it is open for discussion.

Ugandan Mothers' Union leader helps overcome HIV

A lay Anglican woman in Uganda is helping to build an HIV competent community and church, in a country where the epidemic is still a big challenge. Josephine Kasaato is president of the Mothers' Union in the Namirembe Diocese in the capital of Uganda, Kampala. She is using her position to create awareness and educate the community about HIV and Aids. Her voice is often heard across the diocese's 65 parishes where she censures stigma, discrimination and denial – key challenges in the struggle against the virus.



Namirembe diocesan Mothers' Union president Josephine Kasaato.

A mother of four, Kasaato has been outspoken against sexual- and gender-based violence and HIV, and has also been identifying critical areas, such as increased rape cases and violence against girls, and moves to create awareness among church and community leaders.

“We are targeting zero by 2020. I believe we shall have success stories to tell by then,” says the professional teacher, designer and evangelist.

Five years ago, she joined the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical HIV and Aids Initiatives

and Advocacy (WCC-EHAIA) reference group as the eastern Africa representative.

Starting in Maganjo, a small parish in the diocese, the “fire” has spread across five dioceses.

“The five bishops support our work, including the archbishop,” Kasaato says.

The first year’s work revolved around sensitising the people, church leaders and the community, with the union developing visit teams, carrying out home visits and creating home cells. “The aim was to see how we could do more and fight HIV and Aids better,” she says.

The second year focused on eliminating mother-to-child transmission, with the union joining with the first lady, Janet Museveni who was implementing a similar project. The group targeted eliminating stigma, shame, discrimination, denial, inaction and mis-action – intertwined “evils” which experts say are crucial in understanding and overcoming the epidemic.

Alongside this, the union promoted Save (safer practices, access to medicines, voluntary counselling and testing, and empowerment), an approach positive touted as a replacement for ABC (abstain, be faithful and use a condom).

This year, the union has been working on creating a safe space for people to be screened fully on HIV, with focus on youth. Since February, each deaconry has been running a contextual Bible study on this area. “We have been visiting the groups and doing the Bible study with them,” says the leader, whose activities end each year with drama and a music competition.

Kasaato says she is inspired by the people – like Canon Gideon Byamugisha and the Revd Rahab Wanjiru Kariuki – who are living a positive life and working to end HIV, despite their positive status.

“They (people living positively) have stood and said ‘no discrimination; we have to carry on the struggle’. That inspires me a lot,” she says.

For her, the people are a shining light that helps to increase HIV disclosure and encourage the continued uptake of anti-retroviral treatment.

“If more people who are living a positive life can take a leading role, I think that can take us to another horizon,” she adds.

Their work is also often misinterpreted, with the people wrongly believing westerners have given them extensive funds to carry out the

campaigns. But sometimes it gets dry, she explains, such that funds to facilitate the very basic tasks of visiting vulnerable people – like grandmothers taking care of HIV orphans – are unavailable.

“I can’t visit with the Bible only. I need to carry some sugar or some clothing. Some areas are also remote,” says Kasaato.

Recently, she has taken on the fight against misleading faith healing.

“The truth is people are being paid to say the Holy Spirit has healed them. Unfortunately, they eventually die,” she says. “We are speaking to Ugandans and telling them not to believe these lies. I encourage them to take anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs). I say to them Jesus is the healer through ARVs.”

She has also reached out at the Interreligious Council of Uganda over the issue.

“We told them (healing pastors) after you pray, you prove by testing,” she says.

Meanwhile, the leader is concerned that the church is meeting only 30 per cent of the work

and leaving the congregation to find out the remaining 70 percent on their own.

“I think the church should rise up and use what it has. It has a platform and the pulpit every Sunday,” says Kasaato, explaining that the pastors and the clergy should take the lead because they have authority.

Still, she challenges church leaders and pastors to know the status of their congregations to ascertain sustainability in their lives.

“Will they be giving the offertory and the tithes ten years to come? Will they have the money or will they be spending it on drugs only or will they still be alive?” she challenges the leaders.

For her, the global campaign against HIV and Aids is on course, but the world has to consider how it is reaching the zero target, and whether the eyes are on the solutions or the problems.

Book Spot: Knowing God Through the Year by J. I. Packer

J. I. Packer has been theologian emeritus of the Anglican Church in North America since its inception in 2009. The essence of this book is

drawn from his earlier book *Knowing God* (1973). It provides reading for six days of the weeks of the year, arranged in a simple order of weeks, rather than by the more familiar canonical calendar.

There is no reading for Sundays as he assumes his readers will be at the services of their own churches on the Sunday. It does have to start in the New Year, the buyer can begin on the Monday of the week after they purchase it. Being based on quotations from the Old and New Testaments it provides a series of reflections which will be found of service to many Christians in other traditions.

Among the writers who profoundly influenced his ecumenical spirit was C. S. Lewis. (Hodder, £5.99)

Press Watch: Denis Bradley: As the world turns its back on religion, Churches are being pushed closer together

There isn't that much wrong with kicking the Pope. The wisecrack in our house, every July 12th, was that if the Pope hadn't been there in



the first place he wouldn't have got kicked, Denis Bradley writes in *The Irish News*.

However, there is a lot wrong with narrow minds that are ignorant of history and ignorant that world religions have changed enormously when it comes to kicking the Pope.

The issue arises because this is the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation as instigated by Martin Luther. There is presently a very interesting examination of the causes, the events and the consequences of the theological differences that led to the beginning of Protestantism. The level of discussion and analysis has been very informative and encouraging.

There is an extra edge to the discussions here in the north because of the probable visit of the Pope next year. As an aside, I think most Catholics will understand the political rationale of the grandiose statement by Jeffrey Donaldson that most Protestants would welcome the Pope's visit but, by god, how patronising can you get?

It might help if we stopped imagining the two religious traditions as monoliths opposing each other in fair or foul weather. Protestantism stopped being monolithic almost from the hour it began, way back in 1517. Fragmenting, dividing and subdividing before it even got out of the cradle – take a walk around the village of Ahoghill, up in County Antrim, if you want to see those divisions in full technicolour.

Globally, those Protestants who still carry the name and still worship in Lutheran Churches are around 80 million in number. Theologically, Lutheran churches cover the full gamut from very conservative to surprisingly liberal. In liturgy some of their churches have a strong emphasis on Holy Communion and refer to that sacrament as 'the Mass'. Some of them have bishops and some don't. There are tensions about sexual and gender issues. Some of them ordain women priests, some ordain people who are in same sex

relations and provide blessings for same-sex couples. Some see those practices as completely unacceptable.

Internal relations are probably more strained than relations with Catholicism. One commentator put it best in observing that Protestants and Catholics are finally burying the hatchet with most agreeing that the hole is dug even if the hatches are not fully decommissioned.

At the Catholic end of the spectrum, the monolith might seem to be more intact. But you don't have to dig too deep to detect the range of divisions and tensions within that church. A bit like the Nolan Show, numbers were always important. As long as Catholicism was the biggest show in the country, there was little need or energy for self-reflection. Disgruntled Catholics have little tradition of forming new churches – you won't find 1st Catholic and 2nd Catholic around the corner. They just walk away and call back now and again for the big life and death occasions. It is said that in Dublin the numbers who practice have fallen to single percentages. One of the leading monks in the country has recently said that within a decade Catholicism, in Ireland, will be reduced to a sect.

It was the nature of faith that was at the core of Luther's theology and the split that happened within Christianity. 'Justification by faith alone' was, simplistically, the issue that brought about the split. And yet five hundred years later most ordinary people and even the most learned in theology would be pushed to explained the differences between the churches.

And all the churches are being pushed into each other's embrace as the world turns its back on religion and in the likelihood of life after death.

And yet faith is the seedbed of so much of today's anxiety and division. Its absence results in so much vacuousness, loneliness and depression. Its fraudulent manifestation in fundamentalism and religious superiority, leads to division, hatred and violence. The churches, if they are to have a future, need to become the font of the search for a faith that is embedded in hope but conscious of the presence and the rightfulness of doubt.

Mature faith is likened to the man who jumps off a high cliff in the hope that there is someone at the bottom to catch him. But you just never know.

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