



## Woodbine Willie, WW1 Chaplain with Irish roots honoured

### Business and church figures in talks call

News Letter -  
Leading church,  
business and trade  
union figures have  
launched a  
campaign to put  
pressure on  
politicians to reach  
an agreement as  
part of the Stormont  
talks which began  
last week.



An advert in newspapers including the News Letter urges those involved in the talks — which involve the five Executive parties, the government and, to a lesser extent, the Irish government — to “resolve” the issues facing them.

However, the group does not present any prospective resolution of its own.

The talks are examining a host of issues including welfare reform impasse, the inability of Stormont to balance its budget without a Treasury bailout, the future of parading, the legacy of the Troubles, the use of flags in public places in Northern Ireland and the possibility of reforming Stormont’s structures.

A joint statement is signed by senior religious figures, including Church of Ireland primate Richard Clarke, Roman Catholic Archbishop Eamon Martin, Presbyterian Moderator Michael Barry, Methodist President Peter Murray, Ardoyne priest Fr Gary Donegan and Peter Lynas of the Evangelical Alliance.

Business figures including Bro McFerran of Alstate Insurance and Paul Terrington of the Institute of Directors have signed the statement, as has ICTU assistant general secretary Peter Bunting.

The joint statement says: “We believe that the current talks process offers an important opportunity for our politicians, and all those with a shared responsibility, to resolve and agree some of the very difficult issues facing our community.

The joint statement says: “We believe that the current talks process offers an important opportunity for our politicians, and all those with a shared responsibility, to resolve and agree some of the very difficult issues facing our community.

“We recognise that significant progress has been made over the past years, and we also acknowledge that there are still many challenges ahead.

“We have come together to offer our encouragement and support to all of those involved in the process.

“We accept that the range of outcomes will probably involve accommodations along the way.

“However, through agreement we firmly believe that these talks provide a critical opportunity to move forward together in the interests of our community, and to secure a better future for all.”

The statement urges members of the public to sign a statement at <http://www.makeitwork.today>.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/business-and-church-figures-in-talks-call-1-6366670>

BBC - Leaders of Northern Ireland's four main churches meet political leaders at Stormont

Read more:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-29680097>

## **Principled compromise and accommodation are not weaknesses - C of I's Northern Ireland Community Relations Working Group**

*The Rt Revd Harold Miller, Bishop of Down & Dromore, Chair of the Working Group stated:*

The members of the Church of Ireland's Northern Ireland Community Relations Working Group wish to add our encouragement to political representatives from all parties and to the British and Irish Governments as they engage in talks to try to resolve the many issues which are preventing progress being made in society in Northern Ireland. They are in our prayers each day.

It is our hope that the talks are entered into wholeheartedly as the matters to be discussed are too serious and too complex to be addressed in any other spirit. The task of those involved in the talks is not an easy one and everyone in Northern Ireland needs to accept some responsibility for creating an atmosphere where our elected representatives can find it difficult to make courageous and tough decisions.

Arriving at sound, long term decisions in a divided society which still carries a great deal of pain and darkness from the past is incredibly difficult. Deepening financial pressures only add to the complexity. There will be many areas where it may seem safer to do nothing. However, principled compromise and accommodation are not weaknesses in the political world and we encourage all involved in the current talks to work beyond a state of semi-permanent impasse, which leads to further disillusionment and deepening distrust.

## **Priest awarded 27pc share of cottage he shared with clerical lover**

Irish Independent - A priest who sued his former lover over ownership of a Co Donegal cottage has been awarded a 27pc share in it. Fr Gabriel Rosbotham, a curate in Ballina, Co Mayo, was given the award at a sitting of Donegal Circuit Civil Cour. Judge Keenan Johnson said former Franciscan friar Hugo Crawford was entitled to a 73pc share in the property known as Rose Cottage in the town land of Letterbarrow, near Mountcharles. Fr Rosbotham had sought a 50pc share of the house.

The court had heard that the two had been partners and had each paid costs towards the mortgage and upkeep of the house.

However Mr Crawford, who left the Franciscans in 1990s and bought the house in his name in 1994, had defended the claim. The men had become partners around 1986 when they met in the Franciscan Order in Dublin.

The judge said he had found both witnesses to be "very credible and honest".

He went on: "They are both clear very decent men who still have considerable regard for each other. They have dedicated their lives to helping others, Fr Rosbotham as a priest and Mr Crawford as a carer.

"I think it is unfortunate that this matter had to be aired in court and it certainly strikes me as a case that was tailor-made for mediation. Had the parties agreed to mediation, the matter could have been dealt with in private, with each of the parties retaining ownership of the ultimate resolution."

Judge Johnson had calculated Fr Rosbotham's contribution to the home as €22,579, with Mr Crawford's contribution at €51,193.

Rounding to the nearest percentage, the Judge made his order.

He refused an application on behalf of Mr Crawford for a stay on the judgement and no order for costs was made.

Judge Johnson asked that a new valuation of the property be undertaken

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/courts/priest-awarded-27pc-share-of-cottage-he-shared-with-clerical-lover-30671797.html>

## **Woodbine Willie, WW1 Chaplain with Irish roots, honoured**

Trinity College Dublin graduate, Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy, son of a former curate assistant of Ballymena was remembered at a ceremony in Worcester.

A BBC report on the unveiling of a plaque remembering army chaplain 'Woodbine Willie' who was awarded the Military Cross in World War One states C Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy, vicar at St Paul's Church in Worcester, volunteered as an army chaplain. Nicknamed Woodbine Willie, he was well-known for going into no-man's-land to comfort wounded soldiers and hand out cigarettes. Unveiling the memorial outside the church on Sunday, his grandson Nigel said it was "a great honour".

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-hereford-worcester-29681275>

## **Churches asked to join in International Day of Prayer for Climate Justice**

- Christians worldwide to pray for climate justice on 1<sup>st</sup> November -

Churches across Ireland are urged to join in an International Day of Prayer for Climate Justice on 1<sup>st</sup> November.

Christians throughout the world will be taking part in the a global prayer event and Eco-Congregation Ireland (ECI) hopes that churches in Ireland will participate by including prayers for the environment at all services during the weekend of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

“There has surely never been a more critical time to pray for the environment,” says ECI chairman Ven Andrew Orr. “God has asked us to care for the living earth and to love our neighbours; we haven’t exactly been doing well at this up to now.

“We owe it to future generations and to those already impacted by climate change, especially those in developing countries, to do all in our power to reverse climate change – by taking action and by praying to ensure that world leaders agree a meaningful treaty. The climate negotiations in the coming 14 months, culminating in the COP21 climate summit in Paris in December 2015, will be the most important climate negotiations of our generation.

“We hope that, by joining in the International Day of Prayer for Climate Justice on 1<sup>st</sup> November, churches in Ireland will play their part in creating a global wave of prayer that will bring about a powerful force for change.”

Prayers for the environment may be found online at <http://www.ctbi.org.uk/678> and <http://www.prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk/resources/>.

ECI is a project of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting that encourages churches to adopt an eco-friendly approach to worship, lifestyles, property and finance management, children’s and youth work, community outreach and contact with the developing world.

Members of Eco-Congregation Ireland will be leading prayers in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, at 12 noon on 1st November ... All welcome! For further information, see [www.ecocongregationireland.com](http://www.ecocongregationireland.com).

## **Presbyterian Chaplaincy in the First World War**

The Rev Dr Victor Dobbin, CB, MBE., former Chaplain General, will be the speaker at the Presbyterian Historical Society’s meeting on Thursday 20 November 2014 in Malone Presbyterian Church, Belfast, at 8pm

The theme is - Presbyterian Chaplaincy in the First World War

<http://www.presbyterianhistoryireland.com/index.php?id=events1314>

## New Principal Appointed for Midleton College

Dr Edward Gash, who currently teaches in the Science Department at Bandon Grammar School has been appointed new Principal of Midleton College, County Cork. Midleton College is Church of Ireland, co-educational day and boarding school which was founded in 1696.



Dr Gash (39) is a native of Cork where he attended St Luke's National School, Douglas and afterwards Ashton School, Cork. He studied for the degree of Bachelor of Science at University College Cork, receiving a first class honours degree, and the award of College Scholar in his chosen discipline of physics. He was awarded his doctorate (PhD) in physics at UCC for his thesis entitled 'Unusual time-dependant oscillations in naphthalene buffer gas systems following UV flash photolysis measured using Cavity Ring-Down Spectroscopy'. He taught for a time at third level and from 1998 to 2002 was a course coordinator in the physics department at UCC. During that time also he lectured in the graduate course in computer interfacing of experiments. As a TEFL teacher (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) he worked with NASC Ireland (the Irish Immigrant Support Centre) teaching English to refugees and asylum seekers between 2001 and 2003. From 2004 to 2005 he taught Maths in Christchurch, New Zealand.

He then fulfilled a long-held desire to teach at the formative, second level of education. He completed his Post-Graduate Diploma in Education and subsequently returned to UCC to complete a Masters of Education degree. He has been a teacher at Bandon Grammar School from 2006 until the present, and served for a time also as an assistant housemaster in the school's boarding section. He teaches maths, applied maths, science, physics and computers. Also at Bandon Grammar School his extracurricular responsibilities include Tech club, Young Scientist, and he is a coach of both hockey and cricket. He has played both sports himself locally and at interprovincial level. He was Manager of the Irish under-18 hockey team and head coach of the Irish National under-15 talent group.

Between 2006 and 2008 he was a site director and assistant site director at the Centre for Talented Youth at Dublin City University. He has a particular interest in ICT and computer technology.

The Chairperson of the Board is the Right Reverend Dr Paul Colton.

## **Singaporean Methodists visit Athlone**

Recently Athlone Methodist Church welcomed a group of 27 Methodists from Singapore who were in Ireland visiting places where John Wesley had preached. The group included Bishop Emeritus



of the Methodist Church in Singapore the Rev Dr Robert Solomon who led a service in the church. Dr Solomon was first elected bishop in 2000 at the age of 44 and is one of the youngest pastors to be elected bishop of the nearly 40,000 Methodists in Singapore. He was re-elected in 2004 and served his third and final term from 2008-2012. In coming to Ireland, the Singaporean group ensured that they would be able to sing familiar hymns wherever they went, bringing with them their own organist and hymn sheets. Tea and coffee were served after the service and the group blessed their hosts with a generous contribution to the church repair fund.

## **Archbishop Diarmuid Martin on “extraordinary” address by Pope Francis**

The Archbishop of Dublin has welcomed the publication of the final text at the closing of the Synod of Bishops in Rome this evening. Archbishop Diarmuid Martin said the text must be read in the context of Pope Francis’ extraordinary final remarks to the Synod, after which the Pope received a five minute standing ovation from those present.

Pope Francis warned Bishops of the temptation to a hostile rigidity that forces people to lock themselves into the letter of the law, he also criticised the temptation to “come down from the cross to please people and disregard the

deposit of faith.” However he said there cannot be a “false sense of mercy which wants to bind up wounds without really caring for them”

Archbishop Martin said tonight “ The Pope from the very beginning wanted openness he trusted those present at the synod to take the discussions as far as they could and in all honesty. Sometimes people in the face of these challenges tended to overlook the Holy Spirit, the guarantor of the process. The biggest challenge remains; as to how in today’s complex cultural situation the church can open a dialogue with men and women and young people where they are and lead them to a better idea of the Christian understanding of marriage ; this will involve a radical rethinking of the churches pastoral care for marriage and catechises among young people.”

Archbishop Martin said Pope Francis helped everyone understand the direction in which he wished the Synod process to progress , when he mandated publication of details of the votes in the Synod Hall, paragraph by paragraph in a welcome gesture of transparency. He said this Synod has been radically different as thanks to the Pope, it has led to open dialogue and genuine debate.

The report of the Synod, described by the Vatican as a “work in progress” will be sent to all Bishops Conferences as the first working paper for next year. Archbishop Martin represented the Irish Bishops Conference at the Synod which ran for two weeks.

## **Ann Widdecombe: Church’s ban on Communion for divorced and re-married is ‘unduly harsh’**

The ban on remarried divorcees receiving Holy Communion is “unduly harsh”, one of Britain’s most famous converts has declared.

Former Conservative Party minister Ann Widdecombe has entered the row over Catholic teaching on the indissolubility of marriage just a day after a “mid-term report” at the synod of the Family in Rome appeared to signify a softening in attitudes among the bishops to the treatment of divorced, homosexual and cohabiting Catholics.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that the faithful who divorce and remarry without an annulment are living in “situation of permanent and public adultery” and are disqualified from receiving the Blessed Sacrament because they cannot be in a “state of grace”.

But Miss Widdecombe, a former Anglican who joined the Catholic Church in 1993 in protest at the ordination of women as priests, said she was concerned the teaching was causing “huge distress” among growing numbers of Catholics who marry for the second time.



Speaking to the Catholic Union of Great Britain in London on Tuesday, she said she expected the synod to establish “great generosity” to those in irregular unions without any major shifts in doctrine.

“I am particularly concerned about divorced Catholics,” she said. “In some cases their being barred from communion is causing huge distress and I do ask myself, ‘is divorce really much worse than the many other sins which don’t bar you from the communion table, is it so much worse?’”

She added: “You can say that if you allow divorcees at communion you will be condoning divorce. You allow thieves and murderers at communion but you are not condoning theft and murder.

“I think that one of the problems at the moment is that we single out one sin – and it is a sin and we can go on teaching that it is a sin – as a complete bar to the fellowship of communion and I think that is unduly harsh.”

Miss Widdecombe also said she was in favour of the relaxation of the rule imposing celibacy on Catholic priests.

Edward Leigh, the Tory MP for Gainsborough and incoming president of the Catholic Union, an organisation set up to advise Parliament on matters of Catholic interest, said that marital breakdown was at the heart of 90 per cent of the problems of people who sought his advice at his surgery.

He said it was vital that Catholic teaching on indissolubility of marriage was maintained to prevent the “opening of the floodgates” to further family breakdown.

He warned Miss Widdecombe of succumbing to “wishy-washy liberal views”.

More at -

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2014/10/15/ann-widdecombe-churchs-ban-on-communion-for-divorced-and-re-married-is-unduly-harsh/>

## **Messy Explosion in Welsh diocese!**

The number of Messy Churches being run in the Llandaff Diocese has more than doubled in the last eighteen months – with many more on the way.

Messy Church, which celebrates its tenth birthday this year, has many variations but basically centres on adults and children gathering together to do arts and crafts, enjoy a short story, song or prayer and then eating together. Each session follows a theme which is reflected in the arts and crafts and the story, song or prayer.

“Messy Churches are rapidly spreading across the UK and the world and here in the Llandaff Diocese there has been a phenomenal growth in the last 18 months. There were eight Messy Churches in January 2013 and now there are 20 with another seven being planned,” said Mrs Lesley Cox, the

Regional Co-ordinator for Messy Church and Children's Adviser to the Diocese.

“The Messy Church format is flexible and can be used to reflect the tradition and needs of any group of Christians. Churches already have the skills to run Messy Church – there is nothing complicated about it and it really makes a difference.

“Existing Messy churches are attracting many people who do not attend our traditional church services. I've been told about one lady who took her son along to one session, but watched from the entrance saying she didn't 'do church'. The following month she also took her daughter, but again watched from the distance but in the third month joined in herself, which involved listening to the Easter story for the first time,” said Lesley.

“The essential thing with Messy Church is that it is a 'Fresh Expression' of church, meaning that it is Church in its own right. It is not intended as a bridge into traditional church. It is mission, as it is intended for those currently on the fringe of the church or for people who never come to traditional church at all.

“It is for all ages – mums and dad, grans and carers – never just children on their own. Messy Church is certainly different. It is often noisy and frequently messy. There is a tremendous excitement and enthusiasm pulsing through Messy Churches as they witness God at work in our diocese.”