

## **DUP MP Sir Jeffrey Donaldson welcomes prospect of visit by Pope Francis**



**DUP MP Sir Jeffrey Donaldson has welcomed the prospect of a papal visit to Northern Ireland.**

A senior DUP has welcomed the prospect of a visit by Pope Francis to Northern Ireland, saying that he is "looking forward" to what the pontiff

"has to say...on moral issues.", The Irish News reports.

Pope Francis is set to visit Dublin next August for the World Meeting of Families, and is expected to attend an event in the north. Pope Saint John Paul II did not travel across the border during the last papal visit to Ireland in 1979.

Sir Jeffrey Donaldson, the Lagan Valley MP and DUP parliamentary chief whip, told The Irish Catholic: "When we look at the moral issues of today, I'm looking forward to what Pope Francis has to say about those because I think that the debate has become very secular.

"It saddens me at times that the Church leaders do not speak out enough and with the same unequivocal approach to those moral issues.

"If Pope Francis decides to visit Northern Ireland as part of his visit to the island, I don't think there will be a negative reaction from the Protestant community.

"There is a recognition that Pope Francis is the head of the Catholic Church and that a very substantial portion of our population adheres to the Catholic Church," added the DUP MP.

Last November, a spokesperson for the then First Minister Arlene Foster said she would meet the Pope in his capacity as "head of state" if he came north.

However, in December 2016 Ballymoney DUP councillor John Finlay called on all evangelical Protestants to "speak out clearly" against the planned trip.

"Despite all the pandering to the Pope by senior figures in the main Protestant denominations, the fact remains that many within the Presbyterian, Church of Ireland and Methodist churches are totally opposed to the Pope's claims and teachings, and to any visit," he wrote in The News Letter.

"He claims to be Vicar of Christ on earth, but the Reformers and Puritans correctly identified him as an enemy of Christ and of the Gospel."

The late Ian Paisley, one of the founders of the DUP and the Free Presbyterian Church, famously interrupted Pope Saint John Paul II at the European Parliament in 1988, calling him the "Anti-Christ".

Upon the death of Pope John XXII in 1963, Mr Paisley reacted to the news by remarking that "this Romish man of sin is now in hell".

Prior to the visit of Pope Benedict to Britain in 2010 - whom Mr Paisley said "should not be invited" - former Mid-Ulster MLA Ian McCrea was one of several DUP elected representatives who added their support to a Facebook page entitled 'No Pope Here.'

Video of Sir Jeffrey Donaldson's interview at -

<http://www.irishnews.com/news/2017/10/27/news/dup-mp-sir-jeffrey-donaldson-welcomes-prospect-of-visit-by-pope-francis-and-says-reaction-from-protestants-will-not-be-nega-1172535/>

## **Church 'cannot stand by' and let religion be removed from schools**

Archbishop Martin of Armagh claims State seeking to dilute right to access school with faith-based ethos.

The Catholic primate has expressed concern at the prospect of "a generic model of primary education" being promoted in [Ireland](#). Catholic schools "cannot stand back and allow faith and religion to be sidelined or privatised out of the realm of schools and education," he said.



Archbishop [Eamon Martin](#) told a conference in Dublin on Thursday that religion in a Catholic school was “not an added extra to be fitted in during break time or twilight hours or during registration. Everything that happens in the school community is rooted in the Gospel values,” he said.

Principals and boards in Catholic schools would “ensure that Religious Education is given a high priority in curriculum planning and resourcing”.

It was “important that there is a strong catechetical component to Religious Education so that all pupils can systematically learn the truths of the Catholic faith, be instructed in all aspects of the moral life and grasp the essentials of Catholic social teaching,” he said.

## **Derry clerics concerned at impact of 'highly dangerous' Halloween festivities on young**

The renowned Halloween festivities in Londonderry have been criticised as having become "highly dangerous" by Church of Ireland ministers, the Belfast Telegraph reports.

One of the clergymen claimed the annual festival is becoming like a "cult" and also questioned why Derry City and Strabane District Council is promoting it.

The ministers were speaking during the annual synod of the Dioceses of Derry and Raphoe, which was held at An Grianan Hotel in Co Donegal.

Rector of Taughboyne, Rev Canon David Crooks told the assembly: "Halloween is turning into this ridiculous nonsense. In shops all over the place, we see all these accoutrements of witchcraft and all that kind of horrible nonsense. People say, 'Oh, it's just for the children'. Well, I think it's sending the wrong message to children - it's actually highly dangerous. It can lead children to start looking at the internet and finding things like tarot cards and seances. It's highly



## **Rev Canon David Crooks**

dangerous stuff and I think that church leaders of authority should speak about it."

Canon Malcolm Ferry said: "It's not accidental that the shops in the city are decorated - the council are promoting it. This is a problem, and maybe the Diocese would need to think that if this is council's strategy, we need to have a strategy."

Rector of Ardstraw, Rev Ivan Dinsmore also spoke out. "It's really good to hear church leaders speaking up on this subject and coming out against this festival of paganism that is so popular now within our community," he said.

Rev Mark Lennox agreed, and claimed he'd seen a shop in Derry that was selling ouija boards for children.

He said: "We as a church do need to speak out against this and educate our people that these things aren't just fun but are actually opening the doors to the principalities and the powers that we read about in the Book of Romans and other parts of Scripture."

## **Dean of Limerick installed**

On Saturday afternoon, 21 October, in the middle of Storm Brian, Canon Niall Sloane was instituted as rector of Limerick City Parish, and installed as Dean of St. Mary's Cathedral, Limerick, by Bishop Kenneth Kearon.

Due to the severe storm, numbers were fewer than expected. Nevertheless many people braved the elements to be there.

The service of Choral Evensong sung by the choir of St. Mary's, under the directorship of Peter Barley, did not disappoint. The choir sang Stanford's Magnificat in B flat and also Stanford's setting of the Nunc Dimittis. The magnificent Psalm 122 was sung to a setting by H. Ley in D.



The guest preacher was the Right Reverend Patrick Rooke, Bishop of Tuam, Killala and Achonry. Drawing upon the Old Testament reading of the story of God calling Samuel, and the New Testament reading of the story of the Widow's Mite, Bishop Patrick gave a powerful sermon exegeting these two passages.

Speaking about Samuel's response to God's call, he began by giving us some background information on Canon Niall, speaking about his approachability, dependability and excellent pastoral care – always willing to go the extra mile. However, he warned that Dean Niall thrives on order and is a stickler for detail!

Bishop Patrick Rooke cautioned us that we need to allow Dean Niall to develop and use his particular gifts, and not to expect him to do everything. As part of the ministry of the whole people of God, we all need to develop our God-given talents, playing our part to the maximum. God uses each and every one of us in the building up of his kingdom. He reminded us that, in giving God her all, the widow's humble gift was appreciated above and beyond all others, and urged us to do likewise.

Our love for God means we should listen for God's voice and follow his direction. "Come, follow me, and give the best you can," to which

our response should be: “Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.”

## **Belfast sexton to take part in Everest marathon again**

Ken Tate, a sexton at St George’s Parish Church in Belfast, is on the final countdown to leaving for the Himalayas where he will take part in his second Everest Marathon on November 27.



**Ken Tate, outside St George’s Parish Church where he is a sexton, is all set for next month’s Everest Marathon.**

Ken, who is aged 65, will be in the Everest region for three weeks, trekking to the start near

Everest Base Camp. This gives him and the other competitors time to acclimatise to the very high altitude, something Ken will not be taking lightly – he did his last Everest Marathon 10 years ago.

Today Ken told Good Morning Ulster all about the challenges he faces, and you can [listen to the interview](#) (Ken is featured 2 hours 20 minutes into the show).

To get a visual impression of just what Ken is undertaking physically and mentally the Everest Marathon featured in a recent BBC 2 documentary [Mountain – Life at the Extreme](#). (The Everest Marathon features from 37 minutes – 43 minutes).

Read [Ken's full story](#) where you can also learn how to sponsor Ken who is raising money for the Everest Marathon Fund's work on the ground in Nepal.

## **Archbishop of Galway condemns attack on C of I church**

Following the attack on the Holy Trinity Church in Errislannan, Clifden in Co Galway, Archbishop Michael Neary issued the following statement:

“The attack on the church in Errislannan is an act of persecution against all Christians.

“Over the last 12 months there has been high profile media coverage of the desecration of Christian churches in Iraq and in the Philippines. These actions are a physical threat to worshipping Christians anywhere in the world.

“The violent images of the devastation in the Holy Trinity Church in Errislannan are distressing: the Holy Bible thrown out the window; the Cross being used as a weapon to smash items; overturned and broken pews; damage to the altar; the pulpit; the organ; and the lights ripped out. This damage is not just a criminal act, rather it is an act motivated by anti-Christian sentiment and is a challenge to freedom of religious expression in Ireland today. Religious freedom is at the heart of human rights and not without cost. In too many countries, places of worship are being destroyed and people are being killed and persecuted for their religious beliefs.

“At this difficult time for the local congregation, I wish to offer my prayerful solidarity and extend my support to Bishop Patrick William Rooke, the Church of Ireland Bishop of Tuam, Killala and Anconry, and to Reverend Stan Evans, for his

bravery and perseverance in the wake of this threatening development.”

## **Reformation 500th anniversary: Lessons are loud and clear**

All this week, the Belfast Telegraph is carrying a series of articles to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Yesterday, Rev Catherine Simpson, Curate Assistant in Seapatrick Parish Church of Ireland, gave her reflections

What do you want to be when you grow up? It's a question we ask often of those of a certain age and, if we think back, a question we have been asked.

In many ways the Reformation was a 'growing up' of the Church, which is continually growing. The Protestant Reformation offered five Solas (Scripture alone, Faith alone, Grace alone, Christ alone, to the Glory of God alone), the first of which was a stronger emphasis on the Bible, a call to realign our faith with Biblical teaching. This refocus on the Bible is as relevant today as it was 500 years ago.

The question is: what did the Reformation bring to the church here in Northern Ireland? If we

skim across the surface, it brought the Bible in English, enabling people to read for themselves and encouraging them to do so.

As a consequence, the Reformation left its mark upon society, bringing about our education system: initially as hedge schools and Sabbath schools, later as Sunday schools. It brought a variety in worship styles and music; it brought clergy families; and every-member ministry as



### **Rev Catherine Simpson, Curate Assistant in Seapatrick**

para-church organisations were formed, from uniformed organisations such as Girls and Boys Brigade, Church Lads Brigade and Girls Friendly Society, to the Scouting and Guiding

movements. It brought more significant roles in ministry for women, and mission societies and agencies were born, and a great movement of missionaries sent out across the world. The emphasis on the 'priesthood of all believers', the call for every person - male or female - to take up their role as disciples making disciples, equipped the church to engage at ground level in its community. Flowing from this, the church began to lead the way with social justice movements. For example, in the 1790s, evangelical Anglicans founded the Clapham Sect, which began a social action campaign pushing to have slavery abolished.

The question still remains, how has the Reformation changed society today in 2017? Do we, as evangelicals today, fully understand what Scripture says, and are we doing enough to share the message of reconciliation with God and others?

The problem in our society here in Northern Ireland is that reconciliation has become a politically-loaded term, when in reality it is about the saving power of Jesus Christ. At this anniversary of the Reformation, let the Church reclaim what was rediscovered at the Reformation; let the Church retake the Reformation by explaining to all what true

reconciliation is - that Christ died to save each and every one of us. Let's continue the legacy of the reformers from 500 years ago, and those from 200 years ago, who picked up the Reformation mantle and pushed to have slavery abolished. Let's have the perseverance of the Clapham Sect.

Let this 500th anniversary be a reminder not to lose heart, but to keep contending for truth and righteousness in our society. While people like Luther and Wilberforce are singled out for remembrance, each of their movements succeeded because of close teamwork. And so the lesson for us in this generation is that collaborative ministry has worked in the past: Jesus gathered his team, Luther and Wilberforce followed his example. We, as a society, are in desperate need of collaborative work here in Northern Ireland.

Let the lessons of the Reformation speak loud and clear to us today. Let's be part of the church growing up today, as we grow in Christ, inspired by the example of those who have gone before us. As we respond to the command to 'go and make disciples', use Scripture alone to explain faith alone, offered by grace alone, through Christ alone to the Glory of God alone; but don't go alone, go as a team!



This article is from a series of contributions on the Reformation curated by Evangelical Alliance which can be viewed at [www.reimaginingfaith.com](http://www.reimaginingfaith.com)

## Upcoming events

### The Catherwood Lecture

Contemporary Christianity's annual Gatherwood Lecture is being delivered by Dr Michael Schluter and is entitled "Changing the terms of Christian public engagement". Dr Schluter will set out fresh thinking to enable Christians to change their approach to engaging in the public square. November 2 2017. Location: SKAINOS 241 Newtownards Road, Belfast. BT4 1AF. A meal will be served from 6 and the programme will start at 7pm. You can [book your place here](#).

### A Better Story

Join Love For Life over a series of Wednesday nights at Belfast Bible College, as they delve in and dig deep, asking what is God's better story for our relationships and how can His ways be Good News for all of us? This event will feature Both Lives Matter. Find more information [here](#).

## **Scripture Union 150th Anniversary**

Join SU in celebrating 150 years of Scripture Union's ministry in Northern Ireland and around the world. Let's give thanks to the God of the Good News, and for His equipping for the future of SU's ministry here in Northern Ireland and internationally. Date: 18 November 2017, 7pm  
Location: Waterfront Riverside, Belfast, Find more information [here](#).

## **Bible Sunday**

It's not too late! [Get your online resources ahead](#) of Sunday's celebrations, including sermon notes, children's activities and a drama sketch.

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