



Martin Luther was 'obstinate, intolerant, abusive and rude'

Statue of Martin Luther, the famous Reformer and preacher. The head of his monastic order says he was 'obstinate, intolerant, abusive and rude'. See report this issue.

Christian Northern Ireland politician 'frustrated' at Stormont deadlock

A Christian MP in the Democratic Unionist Party has told Premier News he is frustrated that the deadlock in Stormont has been going on since January.

Northern Ireland's political parties have until the end of yesterday to reach a power sharing agreement; otherwise Westminster will impose a budget.

Jim Shannon told Premier the critical issue is the Irish Language Act proposed by DUP rival party Sinn Féin.

Mr Shannon said it was an "impossible request".

He told Premier: "If someone wants their child at school and wants their child to speak the Irish language, that power within that act means that school, even if it's only one person, will have to have a classroom, book work and appropriate time. There will be costs of course to the government department."

He added that the "powerful" act would mean that street signs would have to be written in Irish



James Shannon MP

and 10 per cent of all people that apply for Civil Service jobs must speak the Irish language. Shannon said these are all unfair rules.

He told Premier: "There are many people in my constituency which have an interest in it and don't see it as a problem, but the Irish language act gives them the authority to do things above and beyond any other language act would have."

Sinn Fein's Conor Murphy said while he believed a deal could still be done, it "needs to be a deal for all in our society and not just for the political leaderships of unionism".

Mr Shannon said although it will be unfortunate if an agreement isn't reached, at least other

important issues will be addressed if there's direct rule from Westminster.

He told Premier: "It's not the ideal situation. We would wish to see an accountable regional assembly, like we do have. We want to see it working. We want to see issues of education, health and roads addressed."

The last period of direct rule from Westminster ended in 2007 with Sinn Fein and the DUP's historic deal to head up a new coalition government.

Magheralin parishioner and entrepreneur shares brunch with Richard Branson

Entrepreneur and parishioner of Magheralin and Dollingstown, Dave Linton, recently found himself sharing brunch with Virgin founder, Sir Richard Branson.

Dave founded social bag brand, Madlug (Make a Difference Luggage), in 2015 after discovering that most children in care transport their worldly belongings in bin bags.

The company operates a 'one for one' model so that with every bag purchased, one will be given to a child in care.

This summer, Madlug embarked upon an ambitious crowdfunding campaign through Virgin Voom. They were in competition with other start-up companies to raise the most money and win a prize of £1,000 and brunch with Sir Richard.

Madlug set itself an initial target of £10,000 and was leading the competition right up until the very last hour until its competitors received some very large pledges to leave Madlug in 3rd position.

However, this was not the end of the story because earlier this month, Dave did get to have Brunch with Branson and share the Madlug story with him.

Even better, the Crowdfund campaign ran for another 24 days and finished at an incredible total of £24,595.

This money has enabled Madlug to give well over 1000 bags to children in care so that they don't have to carry their worldly belongings in black bin bags, as is so often the case for the 93,000 young people in care in the UK today.

The bag itself is unbranded to avoid stigma. It folds away to fit neatly into a sock drawer or a Social Worker's car boot without wasting storage space. And each bag has a label that says "You are incredible" to remind every child that they have value, worth and dignity.

For more info on Madlug go to www.madlug.com

Earth bible commentary launch in Dublin tonight

This evening a new book by the theologian, Dr Margaret Daly-Denton, will be launched in the Trinity Long Room Hub at 6pm tonight by the Revd Dr Wilfrid Harrington OP. The launch will be preceded by a public lecture on 'Plant Ethics and the Future of Food Production' by Professor Angela Kallhoff, from the Department of Philosophy, University of Vienna.

Supposing Him to be the Gardener: John – An Earth Bible Commentary is part of an effort by all world religions to mine their scriptures for resources that will inspire people of faith to respond imaginatively and generously to the ecological crisis.

This volume suggests how John's Gospel might motivate and resource a Christian response to the ecological crisis. It shows how aptly Mary Magdalene recognized the risen Jesus as 'the gardener' completing his day's work in the 'garden' of the Earth. The Johannine story of Jesus offers his present day followers a paradigm with considerable potential to inspire Earth care, sustainable living and commitment to eco-justice. The Fourth Evangelist believes that Jesus fulfils the Jewish hope for a restoration envisaged as a return of humankind to Eden. Keeping this theme continually in mind, Margaret reads the gospel with sensitivity to the role of the more-than-human world in the narrative and with particular attention to the scriptural underlay that repeatedly brings this world into the foreground. Each chapter concludes by asking how believers might do God's work in today's ecologically damaged world and by offering practical suggestions indicative of the reflection that readers of the commentary will be able to do in their own setting.

Irish churchmen renew TCD link with Fukien mission

On Sunday past Dr Kerry Houston delivered a speech at the 110th anniversary celebrations at

the Fuzhou Foreign Language School which was founded by Dublin University Fukien Mission in 1907. Dr Houston, who will be accompanied by Dr Eimhin Walsh, will meet Revd Dr Philip Wiceerki, curator of the archives of the Anglican Province of Sheng Kung Hu to assess Irish connections in that archive. While they are in Hong Kong, Dr Maurice Elliott, Director of CITI, will deliver a lecture at Ming Hua Theological College. They will all attend the ordination of Walter Lau to the diaconate in St John's Cathedral Hong Kong on All Saints' Day. Walter spent a full term studying at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute as part of his training.

Christ Church Parish, Lisburn, to celebrate 175 years of witness

Christ Church Parish, Lisburn, celebrates 175 years as a church on Monday November 20.

In this year of celebration the parish has already experienced many blessings through a third parish team visiting its link school at St Apollo in Uganda, the summer kids' Bible Club and the Harvest Thanksgiving supporting the Lisburn Foodbank and the Diocese of Luwero in Uganda.



The Dean of Connor, the Very Rev Sam Wright (front left) and the rector of Christ Church, Lisburn, the Rev Paul Dundas, (front right). Dean Wright will preach at a service on Sunday November 19 as part of Christ Church's 175th anniversary celebrations.

Preparing for the weekend of celebrations in November the parish hosted a breakfast on Saturday October 21 in the parish hall, with guest speaker Ian Stewart, principal of Central Primary School, speaking on the theme of 'dependence on God.' A sponsored walk in Moira Demesne had been planned for that

afternoon but was cancelled because of storm Brian.

On Friday November 17 parishioners will gather for a Celebration Meal at 7.30pm in the Hall with the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev Alan Abernethy, as special guest.

The evening will see the launch of a book celebrating God's faithfulness and the witness of the parish in proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This book will reflect the history of the parish and memories of parishioners and clergy.

As part of the evening, memorabilia, photographs and parish organisations' 'stories' to celebrate the 175 years will be on display.

On Sunday November 19 there will be a Celebration party at 10.30am with the parish children's and youth organisations gathering for worship and refreshments afterwards. The speaker is Jill Hamilton, Children's Project Development Officer for Connor Diocese.

The evening celebration will be attended by former clergy and parishioners, community leaders and invited guests as Christ Church Parish reflects on the 175 years and looks forward in faith to what the Lord has in store. The preacher is The Very Rev Sam Wright, Dean

of Connor and rector of Lisburn Cathedral. The parish choir and men's choir will lead the worship.

At worship over the anniversary weekend there will be a Thanks Offering for the following causes as agreed by the Select Vestry:

- Stepping Stones in Lisburn working with adults with learning disabilities and learning difficulties
- Action MS Educational schools project in Lisburn providing books ["A Fishy Tale"] for children whose parents have been diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis
- Parish Ministry development

The rector, the Rev Paul Dundas said:
"November will be a 'season' to look back over 175 years, but also to celebrate all that the Lord is doing as the parish continues to be a witness for the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the city and community of Lisburn."

Further details of these events and services can be accessed through the Parish Office on 028 92 673271 or by email paul_dundas@yahoo.com.

Rector appointed to Parish of Ballybeen

The Revd Jim Cheshire has been appointed rector of the Parish of Ballybeen in the Diocese of Down. He is currently serving as Curate Assistant in Bangor Parish.

Jim grew up in Florida where his father was the pastor of an Evangelical Free Church. He is married to Diane who is from Coleraine and they have 2 children.

After moving to Northern Ireland in 1999, Jim was led to minister in various settings, including West Presbyterian Church, Bangor, Strandtown Baptist Church, Belfast, and Holywood Parish Church. It was while he was in Holywood that he felt led to train for ordination in the Church of Ireland. Bishop Harold ordained Jim in Bangor Parish on Easter Sunday 2014. The date of the institution has yet be announced.

Belvoir Parish rector instituted

Thirteen years after he moved on to a new ministry challenge, the Revd Adrian McCartney has returned to Belvoir Parish as rector.

Adrian was appointed at the end of June and instituted by Bishop Harold Miller on Friday 27 October. He joins curates, the Revd Jeremy and the Revd Jacqueline Mould on the staff team.

Adrian's friend of 35 years, the Revd Earl Storey, preached at the service. Earl is the Editor of The Church of Ireland Gazette and was accompanied by his wife, Bishop Pat Storey.

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby's pain at broken communion

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has spoken of the pain caused by the broken communion between Christians brought about as a result of the Protestant Reformation. But, as the churches mark tomorrow's 500th anniversary of Martin Luther nailing his theses to the door of the Schlosskirche (All Saints / Castle Church) in Wittenberg, Archbishop Welby said that "we have learned once again to love one another — and to seek to bless and love the world in which we live."

Archbishop Justin made his comments in [a comment piece for London's *Evening Standard* newspaper](#). In it, he wrote about a recent Communion service he attended in the city's



The Archbishops of Canterbury and Westminster are “the closest of friends”, Justin Welby has said in an article for London’s Evening Standard newspaper; but the Protestant Reformation has damaged communion between Christians in ways which are still not healed, 500 years on.

Roman Catholic Westminster Cathedral, led by the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Vincent Nichols.

“Because of the events of the Reformation and the history since, it remains impossible for Anglicans and Roman Catholics to receive communion together,” he wrote. “At that solemn

moment in the service I lined up at the front with everyone else. But because I could not put my hands out for the bread and wine, I knelt down to be prayed for by Cardinal Nichols. He took my hand and lifted me to my feet. Both of us had tears in our eyes. We are the closest of friends, and being reminded of the divisions in the global Church pains us both very deeply.”

Describing past persecution, he wrote about a fig tree planted in 1556 in the grounds of Lambeth Palace – the archbishops’ official London residence – by a former Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Pole, “to celebrate trying his predecessor for heresy, and then having him burnt at the stake.”

It was, he said, an example that there was “much to mourn, and much for which to be sorry” about the Reformation.

“Entirely against the teaching of Jesus Christ, Christians learnt to hate and kill each other, even more than they had done in the past,” he wrote. They sought to impose faith through force when it should be a personal choice (although the Reformation eventually led to a breakdown in that coercion, it took a long time to do so).

“At the heart of the Reformation was something Luther had seen as he read the Bible. He saw that God offers forgiveness of sins, and the promise of heaven, not because we do good works but because we trust in God. There’s an old hymn that says: ‘Nothing in my hand I bring,/Simply to your cross I cling.’ That was Luther’s immense discovery: the grace and love of God for human beings in all their failings and faults.

“Tragically, those failings and faults showed themselves in the working out of the Reformation. In this year of its 500th anniversary, as my friendship with Cardinal Nichols shows, we have learned once again to love one another — and to seek to bless and love the world in which we live.”

Today (Tuesday), Archbishop Justin will preach at [an ecumenical service in Westminster Abbey to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation](#). Similar services are taking place throughout the world.

- *Read the full article by Archbishop Justin Welby on the Evening Standard [website](#).*

Head of Martin Luther's monastic order calls the reformer 'obstinate, intolerant, abusive and rude'

The head of the Catholic Order of St Augustine – of which Martin Luther was once a part – has offered a stinging rebuke of the Protestant reformer, describing him as 'obstinate, intolerant, abusive and rude'.

Fr Alejandro Moral Antón OSA, the Prior General of the Augustinian Order, wrote an **extensive public letter** to brothers and sisters of the monastic order examining the legacy of Martin Luther, who was a part of the mendicant group before finally abandoning his religious habit in 1524.

Luther's rebellion ushered in a 'true religious crisis' that 'brought about the rupture of Western Christianity', Fr Antón wrote.

'The damage done to the Order and to religious life in Germany was enormous. Luther was our brother for a time and shared our charism, but he himself stood outside the Order with his choices, his initiatives, and his decisions.'

The order has 'no reason to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation but, yes, to commemorate it.' Fr Antón listed positive consequences of Luther's reforms, such as 'the revalorisation of the individual, the reaffirmed confidence in God, the centrality of Sacred Scripture, the bringing of the liturgy closer to the people, the development of a sense of community, a healthy secularity, and the need for reform, understood as a return to the essentials'.

However, he added that Luther was also compromised by 'nationalism and anti-Semitism', both of which have 'cast their black shadow on the history of the last centuries'.

Fr Antón expanded on Luther's character flaws: 'Obstinate and inflexible, passionate and vehement, Luther used biting expressions against those who opposed him, becoming abusive and rude. Often, he was vexatious and offensive, leading to slander. The one chosen by God, the "prophet of the end times", he considered himself to have the truth and, therefore, responded in aggressive terms to any discrepancy.

'For him, retraction was not possible because he did not assume the possibility of mistake or error... His exaggerated insults and aggressions toward the Church of Rome (papist, according to the particular terminology) are truly sad.'

While the Reformation's emphases on 'always reforming' and putting Scripture in the hands of the laity are to be celebrated, the Prior General was clear that 'the breakup of the Church is an expression of failure for all Christians'.

He concluded that Luther was a 'fascinating' figure who though divisive is worthy of serious study, whose thinking 'returns us to the God revealed in Christ, who is Love and who is concretized in Love'.

Historic George Washington church to remove memorial because he owned slaves

A historic church in Virginia with connections to America's first president, George Washington, is to remove plaques commemorating him and Confederate general Robert E Lee because of their record as slaveholders.



Christ Church Alexandria is to remove memorials to George Washington and Robert E Lee because they owned slaves. Washington was a churchwarden. See report below.

Christ Church in Alexandria **has announced** it would remove the memorials, saying: 'The plaques in our sanctuary make some in our presence feel unsafe or unwelcome. Some visitors and guests who worship with us choose not to return because they receive an unintended message from the prominent presence of the plaques.'

Its statement added: 'Many in our congregation feel a strong need for the church to stand clearly on the side of "all are welcome – no exceptions.'

America's revered founder acquired slaves throughout his life and his Mount Vernon estate had 317 at the time of his death.

Other memorials to Lee and Confederate generals have been removed from public display following national unease about their link with white supremacist movements, but Christ Church's move is thought to be the first time Washington has been implicated.

In its statement the church described the decision as 'a beginning not an end'. It said: 'It is important to understand that the plaques will not be moved to a storage area. Rather, they will remain in the church until they can be relocated to a place of respectful prominence where they will be fully visible to parishioners and tourists alike. And ultimately, they will be incorporated into a more complete presentation of our long and many-faceted history.'

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