

Church services in Dublin mark start of new Legal Year



Archbishop Diarmuid Martin: ‘We need unequivocally to reject a culture of violence: the violence of criminal drug gangs, the exploitation by gangland criminals of fragile young people who have fallen victim to their business of death.

Speaking at the annual Michaelmas New Law Term Service in St Michan's Church, Dublin, on Monday, Diarmuid Martin referred to the violence

of drug cartels, gangland criminals and moneylenders.

He also warned about the "violence of homelessness" and stressed that public policy "must always have a special focus on those who are poorest".

"We need unequivocally to reject a culture of violence: the violence of criminal drug gangs, the exploitation by gangland criminals of fragile young people who have fallen victim to their business of death," Archbishop Martin said in his homily.

"We have to overcome the violence of moneylenders."

He warned that "violence in the home, violence against children, sexual violence and violence against people because of their sexuality, violence and hate talk about immigrants" must also be addressed openly.

Archbishop Martin also referred to "violence and character assassination perpetrated under the anonymity of social media", saying violence was not just physical.

There was also "violence of exclusion and the frustration of not being able to exercise one's

basic rights and achieve basic aspirations and hopes", he said.

"There is the violence of homelessness and the violence against the hopes of those who seek asylum from violence," he said.

Archbishop Martin also used his homily to stress that public policy must always focus on the poorest.

"A special focus on the needs of those who live in poverty and are victims of exploitation is a foundational dimension of the administration of justice.

"The formulation and the application of principles of law must always be focused on curbing the arrogance of the powerful and protecting and fostering the rights of those who are on the margins of society and cannot speak for themselves," he added.

Dr Laurence Graham, president of the Methodist Church in Ireland, at a service in St Minchin's Church, took the opportunity in his sermon to give thanks that the country has "proper law" where "anyone can have a hearing, where anyone can have the opportunity to defend themselves".



The Choir of the King's Hospital School singing at the New Law Term Service.

The Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, officiated and with him were the Deans of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin and St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh and the Archdeacon of Dublin. The choir of the King's Hospital School led the singing.

The congregation included politicians and members of the Diplomatic Corps including the Australian Ambassador to Ireland. There were visiting judges from the UK and Northern Ireland as well as members of the Irish judiciary, representatives of An Garda Síochána and the Defence Forces.

In his sermon, Dr Graham, gave thanks for the law and said it was crucial for the proper functioning of a society and for the defence of

people's rights. But, he said, when it came to our relationship with God we needed to think beyond the law.

"Let us thank God that we live in a country where no one can be told you have no right to speak in your defence," he said.

"We all know that in some places around the world that is not the case and large numbers of people are voiceless with little or no chance to defend themselves," he said.

Dr Graham added: "Law is crucial for the proper functioning of any society and for the protection of the rights of everyone, especially the weakest in society.

"Let us give thanks for law as we remind ourselves that it is crucial for the proper functioning of a society and for the defence of people's rights."

Drawing on the readings [Deuteronomy 26: 16 – 19 and Romans 8:1–5] he said that in Deuteronomy the people, having been redeemed by God, committed themselves to keep the law but they could not as it was to God's standard and people could not reach it. In Romans 8:3, he pointed out, it says "what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh..."

“That is the key issue when it comes to our walk with God. We cannot keep His standard. We cannot make ourselves worthy of salvation. We can never be good enough to be in personal relationship with a holy and perfect God,” Dr Graham stated. However, he added:

“God knew that we could not keep the standard. God knew that us trying harder would never make us good enough. The law was powerless in regard to our salvation. But what the law was powerless to do God did by sending His own Son. God came and lived amongst us in Jesus Christ. God lived a life that was perfect and that was beyond condemnation. Jesus completely fulfilled the law but then on the cross He took upon Himself the condemnation of a law breaker. He went through separation from a holy God. He went through judgement if you like so that we need not do so”.

This, Dr Graham explained, mean that the way for us to come to God personally was made open. “No longer do we have to keep an impossible set of rules and laws. No longer do we have to meet a standard that we cannot meet. Now the way to salvation is simply to throw ourselves upon the grace of God,” he said.

In conclusion he urged the congregation to “do good law, but don’t apply it to your salvation and your relationship with God. That can only happen through God’s grace”.

You can read Dr Graham’s sermon in full [here](#).

Linen Hall library hosting Reformation exhibition

Belfast’s Linen Hall library is hosting an “expansive and thought-provoking” exhibition marking the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. The display of memorabilia and literature relating to Martin Luther is open throughout the month of October, the News Letter reports.

The Orange Order said the display is the highlight of a programme of events it has organised in the city to commemorate the theological milestone.

The free exhibition contains a number of historical pieces, including two extremely rare books provided by the library. They are Luther’s Divine Discourses, dated 1652, translated from



Ron Johnstone with a copy of Luthers Divine Discourses, dated 1652, which is one of the most notable exhibits at the Luther exhibition, hosted at the Linen Hall Library in Belfast.

German to English, and Luther, a play by John Osborne first performed in Paris in 1961.

The theological display was officially opened by Belfast's High Sheriff, Alderman Tom Haire.

Grand Chaplain, Rev Dr Ron Johnstone, said the purpose of the presentation was to aid a greater understanding of Luther and the legacy of the Reformation. He said: "The Co Grand Orange Lodge of Belfast is indebted to the Linen Hall

Library for facilitating this exhibition. Our public display aims to provide an informative insight into the historical context of the Reformation and how its powerful legacy, and the actions of Martin Luther, impacted and inspired future generations.

“One cannot understand the modern benefits enjoyed in Belfast politically, educationally, scientifically, religiously, musically, socially and linguistically without recognising the influence of Luther upon our everyday life.”

Julie Andrews, Linen Hall Library director, said: “The Linen Hall Library is delighted to host this expansive and thought-provoking exhibition about one of the most significant moments in social and theological history. “Included in our archives are many valuable religious texts, bibles and general books about the Protestant Reformation which will complement Luther 500 for those seeking more information about this period of history.”

Alderman Haire said: “This is a truly fascinating exhibition which gives extraordinary insight into Martin Luther and the legacy of the Reformation – a legacy that is still felt today across many aspects of our everyday life.

“I’m delighted that it is being hosted at the Linen Hall Library and I’d encourage people to stop by and take a look if they are in the city centre.” The exhibition launch included a talk on Martin Luther by Dr Ian Brown, a lecturer in historical theology.

Later this month, Rev Johnstone will deliver a separate lecture on the relevance of Luther today. The talk at the library takes place on Friday October 27 at 1pm. The Linen Hall Library is open Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5.30pm, and on Saturday from 9.30am to 4pm.

Church leaders’ prayers for Las Vegas victims

The senior archbishops of the Anglican Communion began their 2017 Primates’ Meeting by sending a message and letter of condolence to the Bishop and People of Nevada following the mass-shooting at Las Vegas, which has so far claimed the lives of some 58 people and left more than 500 people requiring hospital treatment.

A period of silence was held at the start of evensong in Canterbury Cathedral and the



Archbishop Michael Curry led prayers in Canterbury Cathedral.

Presiding Bishop of the US-based Episcopal Church led the congregation in prayer.

The primates spent Monday morning in a spiritual retreat inside England's Canterbury Cathedral, the mother church of the Anglican Communion, before the formal start of the business-side of their meeting this afternoon. The shooting in Las Vegas was one of the first items the primates discussed.

In a message to the Bishop of Nevada, Dan Edwards, the 34 primates gathered in

Canterbury expressed their concern for the victims of the attack, their families and friends.

“We were greatly distressed to learn of the dreadful events in Las Vegas last night,” the statement said. “The scale of the loss of life and the numbers of injured is truly shocking. We are sending our deepest condolences to you and to the people of your diocese – in particular, the people of Las Vegas.

“We are praying for the families and friends of those who have died and for the many people who have been wounded. We remember, too, everyone else caught up in this tragedy – including the emergency services (first responders). We pray that the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ will be with the people of Las Vegas as they endure this trauma.”

Pope Francis sent a telegram of condolences to the Bishop of Las Vegas. In the message sent on the Pope’s behalf by Vatican Secretary of State, the Pope assures those suffering of his prayers, thanks those responding to the tragedy and commends the souls of those who died to the merciful love of almighty God. ‘Deeply saddened to learn of the shooting in Las Vegas, Pope Francis sends the assurance of his spiritual

closeness to all those affected by this senseless tragedy'

Walkout at Primates' Meeting threatened

Conservative Anglican church group GAFCON has said some Primates may walkout out the Anglican Communion Primates' Meeting over the issue of same-sex marriage.

During a press conference in Canterbury yesterday (Tuesday), GAFCON spokesman Rev Andrew Gross said some Primates will ask that the Scottish Episcopal Church be required to repent for its decision to let clergy conduct same sex weddings last June.

Rev Andrew said if there's no repentance "I'm not sure if they can remain in the room" but he said it's up to the conscience of the individual Primate on what their reaction is.

He warned against "punitive sanctions" for the SEC like those that were taken against The Episcopal Church in the United States (TEC) in January 2016.

The Anglican Communion decided not to remove the TEC from the group after its decision to allow same-sex marriages. It limited their role in the Communion for three years instead.

Gross said the SEC must submit to God's truth, seek forgiveness and work toward restoring its relationship with the Church in order for any sanctions to be effective.

The Archbishops of Nigeria, Rwanda and Uganda refused to attend this week's Anglican Primates' Meeting over what they deem as a weak stance on the issue of sexuality in the Church.

Possible sanctions for the SEC were expected to be announced yesterday (Tuesday) evening.

500 people gather for annual Faith and Life Convention in Down and Connor

On Saturday 30 September, more than 500 people gathered for the fourth annual Faith and Life Convention in the Diocese of Down and Connor. Held in Our Lady and Saint Patrick's College, Knock, this initiative arose out of the

Diocesan Pastoral Plan and saw people from across the Diocese and further afield turn out with great enthusiasm to hear the keynote speaker Cardinal Kevin Farrell who was recently appointed by Pope Francis to head the new Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life. This Convention focused on the theme of 'faith in the family' and marked the beginning of a series of diocesan events leading to the World Meeting of Families next August.

The recently professed adoration sisters, Sr Martina Purdy and Sr Elaine Kelly, opened the day in prayer with the specially commissioned World Meeting of Families Icon which will be in Belfast during this week.

A key component of the day was the opportunity to reflect and have conversations on the theme of 'faith in the family' and a vibrant panel discussion chaired by Prof. Peter Finn of St Mary's University College enabled the assembly to ask a range of questions related to Pope Francis's letter *The Joy of Love*.

The discussion panel included Cardinal Farrell, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, Julieann Moran (World Missions Ireland) and Sharon Haughey (St Mary's University College). Each panel member shared in an honest, personal and humorous

manner the reality of their own family experiences, and addressed questions on how our parishes can develop as places of support for those experiencing difficulties within marriage and communities of welcome and belonging for everyone.

Over lunch the conversations continued. After lunch, participants engaged in a range of workshops to look at more focused areas around 'faith in the family'. There was great variety of workshops covering topics ranging from the Benedictine Tradition, Gender Theory, Human Rights, Parenting skills, Martin Luther and looking at the the early Church Fathers.

Bringing the Convention to a conclusion, Bishop Noel Treanor and Cardinal Kevin Farrell led the assembly in prayer, for families experiencing difficulties, for the families of all gathered, praying for Pope Francis and the forthcoming World Meeting of Families which will be held in Dublin in August 2018. Bishop Treanor paid tribute to the ongoing work of the Living Church diocesan programme of renewal.

CNI

Belfast church charges £150 to get married and doubles price of candles

Parishioners have expressed concern over the growing cost of being a worshipper at a famous Belfast church following a steep rise in the price of weddings and prayer candles, the Belfast Telegraph reports.

Church leaders at St Patrick's Parish have been criticised for introducing a £150 flat rate fee for couples seeking to get married in the 140-year-old iconic building, a move which comes just three months after the cost of candles more than doubled from 20p to 50p.

Fr Eugene O'Neill announced a multi-million pound scheme to "refresh the fabric" of the Donegall Street building earlier this year, and now church members fear the elderly are being forced to help foot the bill.

"When we first heard about it we couldn't believe it, especially after everything else going up, like the candles," one parishioner told the North Belfast News. "It's mostly pensioners lighting them and if they have



Parishioners have expressed concern over the growing cost of being a worshipper at a famous Belfast church following a steep rise in the price of weddings and prayer candles

a large number of grandkids, it will cost them a lot of money.”

Another member of the congregation complained that the hefty wedding fee “for people who have lived in the parish their whole lives is too much”.

Parishioners first felt the pinch several years ago when the cost of placing an urn in the church’s columbarium increased from £800 to £900.

But the church has defended the significant hike in prices which it claims is necessary to pay for the £2m restoration project already underway.

“The running costs of St Patrick’s are over £500 a day and over the past few years we have had to raise funds to address these issues. All the changes are appropriate and commensurate to the work,” a spokesperson for Down and Connor Diocese said.

“St Patrick’s is a very important parish in the heart of the city and it is important to maintain it so that it remains accessible to the people of the parish and the wider city.

“We understand these measures are difficult but it’s important for the proper management of the church.”

The minimum 50p cost of a prayer candle is in stark contrast to the price at the nearby Anglican parish where they cost as little as a penny. A church official at St George’s Church on High Street confirmed prayer candles can be obtained for a donation “based on what people can afford”.

“It could be a penny or it could be a pound, whatever your conscience allows,” they added.

The price of lighting a candle in St Mary's, the city's oldest Catholic parish, is 20p.

Neither church was able to confirm the cost of a wedding, citing "individual particulars" as factors which affect the price tag.

Traditionally the fee has been determined by the bride and groom who are expected to deliver a cash envelope to the officiating clergyman following the ceremony. St Patrick's Church declined to comment on the fee.

Chief Scout Bear Grylls makes pitch for cash at Tory conference

Bear Grylls has made a £50 million pitch for the Government to back the Scouts, telling the Tory Party conference: "If you ignore young people, you perish."

The TV adventurer said if he was prime minister, he would make the "relatively small investment" in scouting - which would represent the "best money I've ever spent".

The Chief Scout added that the financial help is needed to ease the 55,000 waiting list of young people from all backgrounds.



Bear Grylls at the Conservative party conference at the Manchester Central Convention Complex in Manchester

Speaking in Manchester on the main stage, Grylls praised the Scout movement for bringing a "sense of belonging" to different communities.

He said: "We have young Muslim men and women joining our ranks in the thousands. "In fact, we're experiencing such overwhelming demand that even as a leading UK youth charity, as Scouts we cannot keep up - not by a long margin."

"Currently there are 55,000 young people - black, white, Muslim, Hindu, Christian, all British - just on the waiting list to join the Scouts.

"And I'm here to show you - the Government of our nation - that the truth is there is a sea of young people out there desperate for the British scouting values that we provide. "Yet we have no choice every day to say to the mosques, to the Imams, to the hard-working families with hot-headed teenagers that we cannot fulfil this demand - but we can with your help."

Grylls, who was wearing his Scout uniform and joined by two Scouts on stage, said there is an "unprecedented" opportunity to take Britain forward in a "way none of us have seen for generations". But he said young people, rather than Westminster, are the "engine house".

He went on: "It's their courage, their optimism, their energy that will dictate government and will shape our future. Truth. "If you ignore young people, you perish. If you embrace them, these guys will show us all how to prosper."

Grylls pressed the Government to "support and resource" the Scouts, adding: "When we unite young people and lead them, excite them and empower them, those people - you've all seen

them, they're often hurting, angry, lonely - they become engaged, emboldened and full of hope."

But he said there are thousands of young Muslims who want to enjoy opportunities provided by scouting. Grylls added: "With your help, we can answer that plea." He said his experiences had taught him to fight for what he believed in, telling the conference: "If I was prime minister, and I could make a relatively small investment in scouting, that £50 million would be the best money I've ever spent. Truth.

"We would bring in 55,000 young people into that family. We'd reach out to another 500 of the toughest communities that want those British scouting values. That is my mission, that is our goal.

"And until together we achieve that, we will never, ever give up." Grylls began his appearance on stage by encouraging Tory members to stand up and stretch their legs.

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Bishop who warned cervical cancer vaccine could lead to promiscuity apologises

A Catholic bishop in Ireland has apologised after warning that a cervical cancer vaccine could lead to promiscuity.

Bishop of Waterford and Lismore Phonsie Cullinan last week hit out at efforts to prevent the human papilloma virus (HPV) among women by saying "we have to do better than to give our boys condoms and our girls injections at the age of 12".

After being roundly criticised by the country's Health Minister and medical chiefs, the senior cleric issued a statement accepting that he had not been fully informed.

"I wish to apologise for contributing to any misinformation, or indeed for causing upset to anyone, concerning use of the human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccines," he said.

Bishop Cullinan said he initially spoke out after parents had raised concerns with him about the HPV vaccine.



"My intention was solely motivated to protect people from the HPV," he said.

"I was not fully informed about the vaccination programme and I can see now how HPV vaccines can contribute greatly to lowering the rate of cervical cancer.

"As I have learnt, possession of full information is paramount on this vital health issue."

Health Minister Simon Harris had described the bishop's initial remarks as "ignorant".

The country's Health Service Executive, which has previously warned parents about conflicting and misleading information, said his criticism of the vaccination programme could endanger women's lives.

The HPV vaccine used in Ireland is Gardasil. It is said to protect against two high risk types of the virus, one of the most common sexually transmitted infections.

It prevents HPV 16 and 18, which cause 90% of genital warts, and is used in more than 25 European countries, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Vaccinations against the HPV virus fell by half last year in Ireland amid scares over side-effects but the uptake has since stabilised.

Since 2010 more than 230,000 girls have been vaccinated, with about 1,000 reporting adverse reactions.

Most commonly, people fainted when injected or showed gastrointestinal symptoms, malaise, headache, dizziness and injection site reactions.

Other allergic-type reactions have been reported, including skin rashes, hives and flushing and isolated reports of more severe hypersensitivity-type reactions and some reports of persisting or chronic fatigue.

Ireland has one of the highest cervical cancer rates in Europe with more than 90 women dying

from the disease every year and more than 280 others needing surgery, chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy.

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