

Canon converting gun store to church hub



The limestone-built 14,700sq ft former Gun Store has been bought by the Carrigrohane Union of Parishes.

Set to move from war-mongering and munitions provisioning to worship and prayer is the former Gun Store, a relic of Cork's Ballincollig Gunpowder Mills, The Irish Examiner reports.

The 19th century military building housed weapons and explosives, as well as stabling British cavalry horses, is to be converted to a church and parish hub, under the guidance of a pacifist canon.

The limestone-built 14,700sq ft former Gun Store has been bought by the Carrigrohane Union of Parishes.

New uses for the Church of Ireland Anglican community will include church services, youth and children's activities, meetings and events, as well as daycare for the elderly, according to the union's rector, Canon Ian Jonas.

He confirmed the purchase of the building which had been part of the Ballincollig Royal Artillery Barracks, which supported and protected the gunpowder mills, which were at their height during the Napoleonic Wars, and in which up to five million civilians and soldiers perished.

The Gun Store was taken, peacefully, by the church after being withdrawn from a July Allsops auction, when it had a guide price of €1.2m-€1.3m.

It was sold off by the giant US private equity group Blackstone, who gained it as part of its

€1.1bn purchase of O’Flynn Construction assets from Nama.

Blackstone this week has prepared to sell a further €24m of Ballincollig Barrack Square office assets.

The Gun Store sale price isn’t confirmed, but Canon Jonas said the Carrigrohane Union of Parishes (St Peter’s Carrigrohane, Inniscarra and Blarney) was “blessed with its assets,” and was able to cover the cost of the purchase and fitout over the next year due to a sale of development land at Carrigrohane/Model Farm Road.

Property sources say the church got as much as €3.5m, from the sale of 4.6 acres of land, just gone ‘sale agreed’ via Savills.

Commenting on the change of use from War to Peace — and ironically the Gun Store had been described as being in ‘shell’ condition by Allsops — Canon Jonas quotes Isaiah 2:4 ‘He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks...’

And, on learning that brimstone refining was an activity carried out at the mills to make

gunpowder, Canon Jonas promised “we’ll use it sparingly”.

Presbyterian seminar series on Reformation will feature Catholic contributions

October 31 marks the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther nailing his famous Ninety-five Theses on the door of All Saints' Church in Wittenberg, an act which is widely regarded as triggering the start of the Reformation, the Irish News reports.

It is a significant milestone for one of the most epochal movements in world history - the Protestant schism from the Roman Catholic Church - and a prompt for much reflection and assessment.

Among this is a series of four seminars organised by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Union Theological College in Belfast, with speakers from the Reformed and Catholic traditions looking at different aspects of 'The Unfinished Reformation'.

Dr Francis Campbell, from outside Rathfriland, who is the UK's former ambassador to the Holy

See and the current Vice-Chancellor of St Mary's University, Twickenham, will address the subject of 'The Roman Catholic Church and Reformation' on October 2.

A week later Fr Tim Bartlett, Secretary General of the World Meeting of Families which takes place in Dublin next year, will take a joint seminar with the Rev Trevor Gribben, General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and Clerk of the General Assembly.

They will speak about 'Presbyterians and Catholics: Areas of common concern'.

The two other sessions will be taken by Union College staff.

Professor Laurence Kirkpatrick will speak on 'The Presbyterian Church in Ireland: A Reformed Church and Always Reforming?' this Monday, September 25.

Dr Marty Cowan and Dr Zach Cole will close the seminar series on October 16 with 'The Reformation Continues: By Grace Alone, Through Faith Alone'.

Union College principal Prof Stafford Carson said the seminars were an opportunity to further explore the question of whether the Reformation

has any continuing relevance for Churches today.

"One of the slogans of the Reformation was 'The Church reformed and always reforming'," he said.

"We will look at what areas has the church continued to be reformed in since the 16th century, and in what areas does it still need to be reformed," he said.

"The speakers that we have brought together will help us reflect on these questions from their different perspectives.

"I hope in running this series it will create a greater awareness of the Reformation, its meaning and ongoing legacy, especially in Ireland.

"We also wish to affirm that the insights of the Reformers have a continuing relevance for key Christian doctrines and continue to provide the Presbyterian Church in Ireland with important biblical guidelines as it undertakes its mission and ministry in the contemporary world."

:: The Unfinished Reformation series will be held in Union Theological College, Belfast at 7.30pm on four consecutive Monday evenings from

September 25 to October 16. Each seminar costs £7.50 or tickets for all four cost £25. For more information visit www.union.ac.uk

Lady Eames urges Mothers' Union members to put faith into action

More than four hundred people – the vast majority of them women – crammed into Christ Church, Strabane on Wednesday evening for the Mothers' Union Derry and Raphoe Festival Service which celebrated 130 years of Mothers' Union in Ireland.

The Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Ken Good, officiated, along with the Bishop's Curate in Camus–Juxta–Mourne, Rev Mark Lennox, who led the worship. The Chaplain of the Diocesan Mothers' Union, Rev Canon Harold Given, also took part in the service.

During the service, the Diocesan President of Mothers' Union, Mary Good, presented Canon Given with a basket of items including a trauma teddy, a neo–natal knit, a Bible, a purple and yellow ribbon and a Foyle Child Contact Centre leaflet as symbols of initiatives that Mothers' Union had undertaken in the diocese and beyond. The address was given by a former



Rev Mark Lennox (Bishop's Curate), Mrs Mary Good (Diocesan President, Derry and Raphoe Mothers' Union), Rt Rev Ken Good (Bishop of Derry and Raphoe), Lady Eames (former Worldwide President, Mothers' Union), Rev Canon Harold Given (Diocesan Chaplain, Derry and Raphoe Mothers' Union).

Worldwide President and Derry and Raphoe Diocesan President of Mothers' Union, Lady Christine Eames.

Lady Eames paid tribute to the Mothers' Union's founder, Mary Sumner, who she said was "far ahead of her time" – and to Annabelle Hayes who brought the Mothers' Union to Ireland. Lady Eames said the organisation founded by Mary Sumner was now a large, international organisation of Christian women. "Around the

world,” Lady Eames said, “the global organisation is alive and thriving and bringing the Christian faith and the Christian gospel to many thousands of people in such a diversity of situations.”

“When we celebrate an event such as this,” Lady Eames said, “where people are at the very centre of it, it’s people who are Christ’s hands and his work in this organisation.”

The congregation were invited to consider how Mothers’ Union had evolved since its foundation and of the changes that had confronted the organisation over that time. “Think not even of 130 years but of five years, ten years,” Lady Eames said, “think of the technology and the totally different world we live in today. Think of the world that our grandchildren, our children, our young people inhabit with such ease, and think of how we are so stretched to meet them in that technology and in that world. The wars, what that meant to families, how families were disrupted, how faith was tested to its limit – all those things form the backdrop for this organisation we celebrate today”.

Lady Eames suggested that a celebration was empty if it didn’t look at least a little bit to the future. “What is the future for the Mothers’ Union?”, she asked. “What is the future for it as

a worldwide organisation with such diversity of membership, in such different corners of our world? What has the member in a refugee camp or a member in a camp for displaced persons got in common with you and with me, as we worship the same God in this church tonight? What unites us?”

When they left Christ Church after the service, Lady Eames said, the rectors and the clergy and the bishop would go back to their work, and to their roles of leadership of the Church, but what would the congregation do to try to take something of the essence of the service back with them into their everyday lives? What did faith in action really mean, she asked?

Lady Eames said they could all do something to put faith into action. “It doesn’t have to be very big. It doesn’t have to be huge. It doesn’t have to be a great big project. Projects that touch you and me can be just small, simple things: asking someone lonely to our own homes for a cup of coffee, a cup of tea; not being impatient in a supermarket when the person in front of us seems to go on and on talking to the girl at the check-out.

“Faith in action doesn’t have to be about great big actions but those actions are rooted and

grounded in our faith”. Lady Eames said the lessons in the Bible readings were very uncompromising – “there are no ifs and buts” – but she asked that faith would spur them to action as they left Christ Church and went back out into the world, knowing they were part of a living movement and of a living, loving church.

During Wednesday evening’s service, Bishop Good commissioned seven members to office in the Mothers’ Union, including three vice-presidents: Kay Clarke, Elsie Stewart and Jean Thompson. “This is a joyful and important occasion,” the Bishop said. “Each office carries great responsibility, for the Mothers’ Union is a worldwide society within the church with special concern for all that strengthens and preserves marriage and Christian and family life”.

The service was a colourful affair, with banners from more than 30 local branches paraded into Christ Church at the beginning of the service and out of the church again after it had ended. In between, members prayed – among other things – for all those who had been affected by hurricane Irma in the Virgin Islands, the Caribbean and southern states of the USA. They prayed, too, for the people and parishes in Derry and Raphoe that had been affected by the recent flooding.

The Festival Service was a special occasion in more ways than one: the MU Diocesan choir performed publicly for the first time, conducted by Jacqui Armstrong and accompanied by May Boyd on the piano. Music was also provided by the Britannia Concert Band, under the baton of Stewart Smith.

After the service, members of the congregation repaired to the adjoining parish hall for refreshments. Lady Eames and Bishop Good cut a cake which had been baked specially to mark the occasion. Mrs Good recapped on an active and successful year for the Diocesan MU. The Worldwide and Irish presidents, Mrs Lynne Tembey and Mrs Phyllis Grothier, had both visited the Diocese for the MU Way service in May, and members had also taken part in five Agape meals in various parts of the diocese in the earlier part of the year.

Archbishop Justin excited by prospect of “extraordinary” Primates’ Meeting

The Archbishop of Canterbury has been speaking of his excitement at the prospect of next month’s Primates’ Meeting. Archbishop



Justin Welby visited refugee camps in Sudan before appointing the country's first Archbishop and new primate earlier this year.

Justin has invited primates and moderators from around the Anglican Communion to Canterbury for the meeting, which runs 2 – 6 October. The gathering gives Anglican leaders an opportunity to discuss major issues within their provinces, broader topics affecting the whole Communion and more general global matters.

“I am greatly looking forward to the Primates meeting,” the archbishop told ACNS. “It’s an extraordinary feeling to have the leaders of all

the provinces gathering together to pray, to encourage one another, to weep with one another, to celebrate with one another.”

The final agenda will be agreed by the primates themselves at the beginning of the meeting. But it is expected to include sessions on mission and evangelism; reconciliation and peace-building; climate change and environment; and migration and human trafficking.

This is the first time that the primates have met since their meeting and gathering in January 2016. In a video for ACNS, Archbishop Justin described that as “one of the most memorable weeks of my life”, saying that it had been “demanding and extraordinary”.

The key thing that had emerged, he said, was the unanimous vote from those present to “walk together” even though that might be at a slight distance. A Task Group, set up after the last primates’ gathering to examine a range of issues including the restoration of relationships and the rebuilding of trust within the Communion, will present a preliminary report to next month’s meeting.

Archbishop Justin spoke of there being an “energy in the room” when issues such as

evangelism, the environment, war and peace and refugees had been discussed in 2016. He said he'd emerged from one meeting saying "this is why the Communion' exists."

Sixteen new primates have taken office since the last meeting. One of them, Archbishop Ezekiel Kondo, will be representing the newly-created province of Sudan. Archbishop Justin the presence of the new primates was particularly exciting. "There will be a whole lot of fresh energy and fresh excitement – and, no doubt, some tough questions ... I think that's going to be fabulous."

A small number of primates have indicated that they won't be attending, for a variety of reasons. "We will miss those who are not there," Archbishop Justin said, "miss them very much."

The archbishop urged the Communion around the world to pray for the meeting – that the primates would be caught by the Spirit, would find unity in Christ and be able to walk onwards together.

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Pope vows 'firmest measures' to deal with abusive priests

Pope Francis has vowed to respond with the "firmest measures possible" against priests who rape and molest children.

The pontiff also said bishops and religious superiors who cover up for them will be held accountable.

Francis met for the first time with his sex abuse advisory commission, a group of outside experts named in 2014 to advise him and the Catholic Church on best practices to keep pedophiles out of the priesthood and protect children.

The commission has held educational workshops in dioceses around the world, but has faced such stiff resistance to some of its proposals at the Vatican that its most prominent member, Irish abuse survivor Marie Collins, resigned in frustration in March.

The commission's statutes and membership are up for review, and it remains to be seen if survivors of abuse will be included in the new membership.



Cardinal Sean O'Malley, the archbishop of Boston and head of the commission, told the pope the commission had "benefited greatly" from listening to survivors, but made no mention of whether any were under consideration for membership.

On the membership front, he said only that the commission was seeking "representatives from churches in different parts of the world".

Currently, non-church experts fill the ranks, including noted sociologists and psychologists in the field of abuse and child protection.

In his remarks, Francis renewed his pledge of "zero tolerance" for sex abuse. He stressed his "profound pain" and shame that children were harmed by priests and those "who should have been the most worthy of trust".

"I repeat today that the church will respond with the application of the firmest measures possible against all those who betrayed their call and abused children of God," Francis said, adding that such sanctions must be applied to all those who work in church institutions.

He recalled that he had approved new rules to sanction bishops who covered up for paedophiles with negligence.

Left unsaid was the fact that Francis scrapped a proposed tribunal to prosecute such bishops canonically, which had been a key proposal by his advisory commission.

The tribunal was ditched after Vatican officials raised a host of legal and procedural problems that had simply never been worked out before the tribunal section was announced to great fanfare by the commission.

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