

Blessing for Cork cows before they retire to England



A retiring farmer has managed to save her herd of 70 cows from slaughter in Ireland and arrange for them to be rehomed at a sanctuary in Norfolk.

Jill Smith, a Co Cork dairy farmer, isn't retiring, but her herd is — to a sanctuary in England, The Irish Examiner reported this week. And her Cot I rector blessed the cows as they left.

The 70-year-old dairy farmer from near Carrigaline made the momentous decision earlier this year when she was laid up for a time following a farm accident. There was a need to scale back, but the prospect of breaking up the 70-strong herd, after years of milking, was a painful prospect. And so almost all of her cows will switch to the Hillside animal sanctuary in Norfolk.

It's believed to be the first time an Irish farmer has done so, with 37 animals making the journey last week and another two consignments set to follow, in what local Church of Ireland Rector, Rev Elaine Murray, called an "inspirational" move.

Describing herself as "not a modern person," Jill said her time out of action made her consider what would happen to her beloved herd if she was laid up again. "I was back on track in February and I said 'before this year is out the numbers will have to be reduced,'" she recalled. "Help is scarce around and I can't be depending on my good neighbours forever."

The retiring of Jill's herd to the huge UK sanctuary is all the more remarkable as, instead of selling them, she had to raise the money to pay for their travel.

Hearing the sanctuary mentioned on BBC's Countrywide, Jill reached out to Charlies Equine Rescue in Co Wexford, who helped her set up a crowdfunding page.

The gofundme campaign exceeded its €6,500 target — aided by musician Sharon Shannon, to the extent where she played music to the livestock — and so Jill's cows will see out their days in luxurious Norfolk surroundings.

‘Even the first load are gone, I miss a few of the faces looking at me,’ Jill said. ‘But I feel they’re having a better life where they are now.’

She admits that some people thought she should just sell the animals, but 99% were supportive. ‘Money never worried me, thanks be to God,’ she said.

Jill has been milking cows since she was 16. She milked year round, on her own.

‘I probably pulled a lot of them into the world,’ she said, referring to the mix of shorthorns, Freisans, Jerseys and native Droimeann. Some of those rarebreed animals will stay behind, as will a pet lamb and some old cows not fit to travel.

As a working farmer, some of her animals have had to go in the lorry before — “reluctantly, without any pleasure”.

This time it was different. “It is hotel treatment, absolutely,” she says of the roaming Norfolk sanctuary, adding that the herd will remain together. “They will be pampered.

“I would love to go [and visit] when I get a chance. Cattle never forget you. They know your voice. They will remember you forever, in a nice way.

“I did shed a tear when the lorry pulled away, but they [her neighbours] comforted me. Five minutes later when it went around the corner, I was fine. and I’m still fine. I just miss their presence but I know that they are happy.”

Rev Murray, who was on hand to say a blessing as the first load of cattle took the ramp, said: “It is a lovely story and she is an inspirational woman.”

Retirement for the cattle, but it’s only semi-retirement for Jill. Will she take up any hobbies? “I am definitely going to learn how to work computers,” she said.

Presbyterian Church fears running out of ministers

The Presbyterian Church has revealed it is concerned it may not have enough ministers to serve all of its congregations across Ireland in the future, the Belfast Telegraph reports.

There are just four applicants to become new ministers starting their studies at Union Theological College, Belfast, this month.

The situation has worried the church so much that it is set to hold its first ever information day for potential applicants.

Rev Jim Stothers, Secretary to the General Council, said there is no shortage of ministers at present, but there is potential for a shortfall in the future.

"This academic year, four applicants for the ordained ministry will begin their studies at Union Theological College starting this month, bringing the total to 17 students in training at Union," he told the Belfast Telegraph.

"This is in addition to 46 individuals who have completed their academic studies and are in training as licentiates, or assistant ministers, who



Concerns: Rev Jim Stothers

are on the pathway to becoming full-time ministers. While the Church doesn't have a shortage of ministers at the moment, as there is an excess of licentiates compared to vacancies in congregations, we are aware that there will be a potential shortfall in the future.

"Bearing this in mind, we are asking ministers, elders and other leaders to identify men and women with potential ministry gifts and to encourage them to explore whether God is calling them to the ordained ministry.

"We will also be holding our first Information Day for potential ministry inquirers on December 2, to help them to consider whether God is calling

them to this important vocation," Rev Stothers added.

Meanwhile, the Catholic Church moved to quash speculation that it has a record low number of applicants this year. Just six men have begun training for the Catholic priesthood at St Patrick's College, Maynooth, this month compared with 12 admissions - including two women - to the Church of Ireland Theological Institute in Dublin. The Catholic Church pointed out that in line with the new policy from the Congregation for Clergy in Rome, a new pre-seminary (propaedeutic) year for new candidates who wish to discern their priestly vocation has been introduced.

"The 19 new seminarians that are currently in formation are in Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth (6), the Pontifical Irish College, Rome (2), Saint Malachy's, Belfast (1), the Pontifical Beda College, Rome (2) and eight have begun the propaedeutic year in locations in Ireland and abroad," a spokesperson for the Catholic Church said.

CNI

Number of new trainee priests at Maynooth hits record low

Just six men have begun training for the Catholic priesthood at St Patrick's College [Maynooth](#) this autumn, believed to be the lowest number since its foundation in 1795, the Irish Times reports.

Twice as many students started training for ministry in the [Church of Ireland](#) this month, with 12 admissions, including two women, to the Church of [Ireland](#) Theological Institute in Dublin. In total there are 34 students in training at the institute, 10 of them women.

There are 41 men studying for priesthood in Maynooth.

According to the 2016 census, 78 per cent of the Republic's population, or 3.7 million people, declared themselves [Roman Catholic](#). The census found the Republic's Church of Ireland population was 126,4 00, or 3.4 per cent of the population.

The six men admitted to Maynooth include two seminarians from [Killaloe](#) diocese, and one each from [Tuam](#), Cork & Ross, [Elphin](#), and [Kilmore](#).

In addition, two seminarians began training at the Irish College in Rome, one at St Malachy's in [Belfast](#) and two at Beda College in Rome.

Earlier this year the Congregation for Clergy in Rome issued a document, The Gift of the Priestly Vocation, which strongly recommended that bishops around the world introduce a pre-seminary (propaedeutic) year for new candidates who wished to discern whether they had a vocation. Eight men have begun this propaedeutic year in locations around Ireland and abroad.

Last year 14 men began as seminarians in Maynooth. In 2015 the figure was 17, 14 in 2014 and 20 in 2013.

Controversy

In August last year the college was at the centre of controversy when it emerged the Archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin, said he was no longer going to send seminarians there because of its “poisonous” atmosphere.

He said students were accessing gay dating apps and anonymous letters were being circulated accusing seminarians of misconduct.

The college administration said it shared “the concern” of [Archbishop Martin](#) about the “poisonous atmosphere”, created by anonymous correspondence and blogs. It added, however, there was “no concrete or credible evidence of the existence of any alleged ‘active gay subculture’,” at the seminary.

Last May it was announced a new president, Fr [Michael Mullaney](#), had been appointed at the seminary and would hold office for the next three years as the Catholic bishops prepared plans to separate the seminary from the [Pontifical University](#) there.

A rector will then be appointed to oversee the seminary with a separate office of president appointed to run the associated university.

95 attend reader training in Down Cathedral

There was a buzz in the air as Down and Dromore’s latest parish reader training got underway in Down Cathedral earlier this week.

The course is being taught by the Revd Adrian Dorrian from the Lecale Area Mission Partnership and he was introduced on the

evening by the Warden of Readers, the Revd Willie Nixon.

95 people from a wide range of ages are being trained over six sessions – 32 new readers, 25 current and 38 diocesan readers. Together they represent 43 parishes.

Parish readers and diocesan readers are authorised to lead and assist in the leading of worship, but parish readers are not licensed to preach, while diocesan readers are.

There are five more training nights to come, four of which will be hosted by Carryduff Parish with the course finishing in Down Cathedral in early December.

The Revd Adrian Dorrian gives an overview of the training: “The aim of the course is to provide training in leading services. Rooted in the liturgies of the Church, we will be examining the elements of Church of Ireland Services – particularly the Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer.

“We will also spend an evening asking what are the key things to consider when planning and leading services – whether in a formal liturgical framework or in a more informal setting.

“At the heart of all of this will be the Book of Common Prayer, the processes that brought it into being and an evaluation of the various elements against the context of day to day worship in parishes.

“The course will provide an overview of the Prayer Book, including examination of some of the less frequently used sections, before examining the church year. Specific training will also be offered in how to use the guidance notes for a Service of the Word and leading intercessions.

“The course will seek to equip trainee readers to wrestle with the theology of worship even as they engage with the practicalities of leading worship.

“Whether in formal liturgical settings or informal fresh expressions, the theology of the Church of Ireland is articulated in our Prayer Book, so we will seek to share in that sense of understanding that ‘As we believe, so we pray’ and, therefore, ‘As we pray, so we believe’.”

CNI

New awards scheme launched at service for second level students

Up to 600 students from Church of Ireland/ Protestant second level schools all over Ireland converged on St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, on Thursday afternoon, September 28, for a service to mark the beginning of the academic year.

The Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, presided at the Service of Choral Evensong which was led by the Dean, the Very Revd William Morton. The service was attended by the Minister for Education and Skills, Mr Richard Bruton, TD. This year's speaker was youth advocate and ability rights campaigner, Joanne O'Riordan.

A new awards scheme for Transition Year students, the Dean's Award for Social Justice in Action, was launched in the cathedral prior to the service. The scheme is designed to encourage students to reflect on what they have heard during the annual service and experienced during worship and to carry that forward into their lives and relate it to the wider world.

The Service is organised annually by the General Synod Board of Education (RI) in conjunction with St Patrick's Cathedral.

Asylum and refugee resource updated

The Church of Ireland's Refugee Working Groups have published an updated edition of their resource on supporting asylum seekers and refugees in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The 19–page document highlights opportunities to become more involved in this area of ministry and service. It also includes a summary of the Church's support for asylum seekers and refugees, definitions and statistics, a section on responding to fear, and information on work undertaken by ecumenical networks and associated missionary societies. The resource is available online here.

CNI

Help CNI grow
Please commend

CNI daily news to your friends

www.churchnewsireland.org

CNI