

Priest's horror at Donegal hospital plans to axe C of I church



Rev Adam Pullen in the under-threat Church of Ireland room in St Josephs Hospital, Stranorlar, Co Donegal. Also pictured is the stained glass window donated by Lady Hayes. Pic: Anne McMenamin, Finn Valley Voice

A Catholic priest in Donegal has expressed “horror and embarrassment” that a Church of

Ireland church that has been in Stranorlar Community Hospital for over 50 years is to be axed under plans for a new building, the News Letter reports.

Fr John Joe Duffy, of the Church of Mary the Immaculate in Stranorlar, contacted the News Letter to express his concerns. The hospital has contained both Catholic and Church of Ireland churches for decades, he said, and a smaller Catholic facility is being retained in the new plans – but the Anglican chapel has been axed without consultation.

“I am very annoyed and very angry about it to be quite honest – that our friends in the other church would be treated in such a manner by a government agency of the sort that is there to serve the community,” Fr Duffy said.

A public consultation meeting with the Health Service Executive (HSE) was held on June 22 at the hospital, which was attended by Fr Duffy, Rev Adam Pullen and a range of other community stakeholders.

“However, the plans for the new building were too small to decipher, so I got a full copy of the plans from a third source about 10 days ago,” the priest said.

Fr Duffy said the Church of Ireland church in the hospital had been there for over 50 years – and that there had been a Protestant church on the site for around 150 years.

“There is embarrassment right across the Roman Catholic community that this should happen, because we work so well together and they are colleagues.”

Fr Duffy said the plans were publicly approved at government level several months ago. HSE consulted with Catholic clergy and the action group about plans to reduce the size of the Catholic chapel by two-thirds, but there was “absolutely no consultation” with reformed clergy about the closure of the Church of Ireland church, which is to be replaced by a day room, he said. Church of Ireland members are also concerned about what will become of a stained glass window in the hospital church, which was donated by Donegal resident Lady Hayes.

Fr Duffy said that HSE released a statement to Highland Radio stating that the plans had only been “a discussion document”.

“They are now running for cover as they have made a colossal mistake. HSE officials were previously heard to say the CoI church was not

being used.” Rev Adam Pullen said the HSE had informally told him the same thing.

He said: “The hospital has about 18 long-term Protestant parishioners and I would hold regular services for them there. I am upset that they did not consult us and that this would be done to some of the most vulnerable and most needy people.” The HSE had not offered any comment.

Number of trainee priests at record low in Maynooth's 222-year history

The number of trainees for the priesthood at Maynooth has dropped to a record low this year.

Just six first year seminarians are expected to be enrolled when classes resume later this month, according to figures obtained by The Irish Catholic.

The publication believes it is the lowest number on record in Maynooth's 222-year history.

Responses from 25 of Ireland's 26 dioceses show that while 15 men have begun studying for Irish dioceses this year, many will be doing in a so-called propaedeutic or preparatory year before in anticipation of starting in the seminary in 2018.

The drop in numbers at the national seminary follows the Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin's decision to send its apprentice priests to the Irish College in Rome.

While the archbishop said he had "his own reasons" for the move it came amid growing unease over accusations of inappropriate behaviour among seminarians in Maynooth and claims some had been using the gay dating app Grindr.

A spokesperson told The Irish Catholic it expects to have new seminarians and will confirm numbers this week.

Also a factor is understood to be the presence of a number of mature students this year, who will be formed at the Pontifical Beda College in Rome which specialises in priestly training for older candidates.

However, 15 dioceses have no new students either entering seminary or participating in the preparatory year.

Killaloe diocese will send two new seminarians to Maynooth, while Tuam, Elphin, Kilmore and Cork and Ross diocese will send one student each.

Two students from Derry will complete their formation year in their home diocese and one Down and Connor student will begin his preparatory year at St Malachy's College in Belfast.

One more will attend the Pontifical Irish College in Rome, two will attend the Beda there.

Last year a member of the Association of Catholic Priests warned Archbishop Martin's decision to transfer three seminarians to Rome could be extremely damaging to Maynooth.

Fr Brendan Hoban said it was "unfair" and said amid "consistent criticism" of St Patrick's College for being unorthodox or not traditional enough, the real issue of vocations was not being addressed.

Founded in 1795, Maynooth College was once the largest seminary in the world.

It was built to train 500 Catholic priests every year but numbers have plummeted to around 60 in recent years.

Vocations had been expected to receive a boost following the ordination of former Manchester United footballer Philip Mulryne last year.

Fr Mulryne, who is reported to have once earned £600,000 a year as a professional footballer, returned to St Oliver Plunkett in Lenadoon in west Belfast for a special Mass just two days after he was ordained into the Dominican Order in Dublin.

He went to the Pontifical Irish College, in Rome to study theology for one year at the Gregorian University before entering the Dominican Novitiate House in Cork in 2012.

Brothers make history in Derry Cathedral

History was made in St Columb's Cathedral last Sunday night as Rev Malcolm Ferry was installed as a Canon of the Cathedral Chapter, joining his brother, David, who had been installed eleven years earlier.

It is only the second time since records began that two brothers have served simultaneously as canons in St Columb's Cathedral. Last night's service also saw Mr David Bell commissioned as a Diocesan Reader.

The Service was conducted by the Dean of Derry, Very Rev William Morton, who welcomed

members of the Ferry family, including the new Canon's wife, Carol. Members of the Canon's current parish, St Augustine's, and previous parishes were also welcomed.

The Preacher, Rev Mervyn Peoples, pointed out that the installation was happening on the Feast of the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He suggested that Canon Malcolm and David Bell had much in common with Mary; both of them had been entrusted with a priceless treasure. "But such a treasure brings responsibilities and challenges," he said.

"Mary's life changed following the angel's visit. She devoted her life to the task God had given her but we know that along that road there were many ups and downs. She sacrificed much to be obedient to her role as the mother of Our Lord."

Rev Peoples said Canon Malcolm and David had sacrificed much to follow God's call. Few people apart from their families appreciated the commitment that was required from someone involved in ministry. "Yet, like Mary, they understand the treasure that has been given to them.



European Heritage Open Days in NI Presbyterian Churches

The 20th European Heritage Open Days programme in Northern Ireland is being held on Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th September 2017. The [EHOD 2017 Brochure](#) (pdf) gives details of the 300+ properties and events due to open to the public free of charge. Several Presbyterian Churches are included in the properties due to be open.

- May Street Presbyterian Church, Belfast
- Sinclair Seamen's Presbyterian Church, Belfast
- Townsend Street Presbyterian Church, Belfast

- Shaftesbury Square Reformed Presbyterian Church
- Dunmurry Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church
- First Presbyterian Church, Belfast
- First Presbyterian (Non-Subscribing) Church, Holywood
- Comber Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church
- First Bangor Presbyterian Church
- Rademon Presbyterian Non-Subscribing Meeting House
- First Presbyterian Church, Saintfield
- Armagh First Presbyterian Church
- First Derry Presbyterian Church

Take this opportunity to find out about the history of these buildings and congregations that use them.

Also open

- The Old Meeting House, Ahoghill
- College Square Buildings including Christ Church
- Young and Mackenzie Buildings including Assembly Buildings
- Walking Tour of the churches of Enniskillen including Enniskillen Presbyterian Church (Saturday)

Check for any updates and amendments to the EHOD 2017 programme - on Twitter [#ehodni](#).

See also the [EHODNI Facebook](#) page for photographs and more details on many of the venues and events.

Nigerian primate to boycott meeting with Archbishop of Canterbury

The leader of Anglicans in Nigeria has confirmed he will boycott next month's meeting of worldwide Anglican leaders because of his perceived lack of progress on the issue of sexuality.

The Primates from the 39 provinces will gather in Canterbury at the request of Justin Welby.

It'll be the first meeting of its kind since the January 2016 meeting in which there was said to be much conflict on the issue of sexuality.

In that meeting the **US Episcopal Church was suspended** from full participation in the Anglican Communion because of its decision to allow clergy to conduct gay marriages.



Critics claim that the discipline hasn't really changed anything.

In a letter to members of the conservative Anglican group GAFCON, Most Rev Nicholas Okoh Primate of All Nigeria said: "I attended the Canterbury Primates Meeting held in January 2016 because I believed it might be possible to make a new start and change the pattern of repeated failure to preserve the integrity of Anglican faith and order. I was disappointed."

He goes on to say that nothing has changed since 2008 when the debate on the issue began. Archbishop Nicholas claims the beliefs of he and his colleagues aren't being respected and false teaching is not being corrected.

"In these circumstances," he said. "I have concluded that attendance at Canterbury would

be to give credibility to a pattern of behaviour which is allowing great damage to be done to global Anglican witness and unity. Our energies in the Church of Nigeria will be devoted to what is full of hope and promise for the future, not to the repetition of failure."

Christian Aid gives first-hand account of 'devastating' floods in India

As flooding continues to take its toll on large areas of Asia, attention is turning to the longer-term needs of those affected.

Forty million people across Bangladesh, India and Nepal have been affected and 1,200 people have died. With crops destroyed, there's concern for how farmers and their families will manage.

Ram Kishan is from Christian Aid and has been working with emergency relief in Bihar, which is one of India's state worst hit by the disaster.

He told Premier News the flood has been devastating and intermittent rain has made matters worse.



“Particularly there are 32 million people that are affected,” he said.

“Those who are affected are faced with the challenges of meeting the food needs and meeting needs for shelter.

“There are emerging needs for water and sanitation. We do not have access to clean water. We do not have access to sanitation facilities.”

Kishan said it was disheartening to see children living without protection and support as rain flooded into fields and villages.

He told Premier: “After 1988, this is the worst flood. Many, especially the young generation, haven’t seen a flood in several years.

“This was an unexpected flood. People were taken by surprise and that’s one of the reasons why the devastation has been much higher.”

Kishan said India’s government has said it can’t handle the effects of the monsoon and has asked the international community to help in anyway it can.

Christian Aid has launched an emergency appeal to help those in need get food, shelter and medical help to fend off disease and start to rebuild their lives.

Pope calls for prayer as he heads to Columbia

Pope Francis has asked for prayer as he works to promote "peace and reconciliation" in Columbia.

The pope will be visiting Colombia from 6th September until 11th September, which will be the country’s first visit by a pope in over 30 years.

Catholic humanitarian charity CAFOD has welcomed the pope's visit as Columbia deals with almost 60 years of internal armed conflict.



Clare Dixon, CAFOD's Head of Region for Latin America, said: "There is ongoing violence by the ELN and paramilitaries groups that continues to displace communities.

"In some parts of the country the conclusion of peace talks with the FARC and demobilisation of guerrilla members has created a power vacuum.

"Territory previously under influence of the FARC guerrillas is now being taken over by paramilitary groups and drug traffickers.

"We support community leaders and human rights defenders who are essential for achieving peace, yet despite the peace deal with the FARC, violence against them is increasing."

CAFOD said 51 human rights defenders were killed in the first six months of 2017, a 30 per cent increase from the same period in 2016.

The charity said Columbia's mining and energy-based economic model has displaced millions of people from their land and targets the poorest of the country's population.

CAFOD has called for a more inclusive discussion about how the government can ensure the economy serves the people and not vice versa.

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