



## US version of Ashers Bakery case heads to Supreme Court

A cake artist from Colorado has opened a case at the US Supreme Court over the right to refuse to make a wedding cake for a same-sex ceremony.

Jack Phillips from Masterpiece Cakeshop was told in 2014 by the Colorado Civil Rights Commission that it was unlawful to refuse the work and that he should re-educate his staff. Two years earlier he had declined an order claiming his faith meant he could not design a cake promoting same sex marriage.

With the backing of religious freedom charity Alliance Defending Freedom, lawyers for Mr Phillips say the government cannot coerce Phillips to create artistic expression that communicates a message with which he fundamentally disagrees.

They're calling on justices to affirm his constitutional right to refuse the order.

"Nobody should be forced to choose between their profession and their faith," said Kristen Waggoner, Senior Counsel for ADF.

"Phillips gladly serves anyone who walks into his store, but, as is customary practice for many artists, he declines opportunities to design for a variety of events and messages that conflict with his deeply held beliefs.

"In this case, Jack told the couple suing him he'd sell them anything in the store but just couldn't design a custom cake celebrating their wedding because of his Christian faith."

The case mirrors the [legal action faced by Ashers Bakery](#) in Northern Ireland.

The owners were found to have discriminated against a customer based on his sexual

orientation after they refused to make a cake which said 'support gay marriage'.

## **Ballycarry church packed for opening event in 25th Gathering**

Ballycarry's Broadisland Gathering helped celebrate 170 years of St. John's Church in the village, with one of the opening events of the festival held there for the first time, the News Letter reports.



### **Members of Larne Choral Society taking part in the event.**

The 'Recital at St. John's Kirk' saw music from Larne Choral Society, singer songwriter George

McKnight from Bangor, flautist Ami Ogilby from Carrickfergus, and readers Davy Moore, David Hume and Angeline Kelly.



**Among those who took part in the recital night were George McKnight, Angeline Kelly, Davy Moore, David Hume and Ami Ogilby.**

The church was packed for the event, which included readings from Dean Jonathan Swift to help mark the 350th anniversary of his birth. Templecorran Parish was his first appointment.

There was also recognition of the connection with the area of US President Andrew Jackson,

whose father was from Bellahill townland outside the village.

Poems from James Orr were also read during the evening and local songs including the Muttonburn Stream and Ballycarry were performed by Larne Choral Society.

The Gathering annually attracts considerable numbers of Ulster Scots and those with an interest in Ulster Scots culture.

## **Stranorlar community upset as plans to remove C of I at St Joseph's Hospital emerge**

There is anger among the community in Stranorlar as it has emerged that the Church of Ireland facility at St Joseph's Hospital is to be removed, News Highland reports.

It is understood the HSE's decision to transform the Church facility into a day room was done without any form of consultation and plans reveal that there has been no provision to relocate.



Rev. Adam Pullen, Church of Ireland Rector in Stranorlar joined Greg on the Ten To One Show today, he says it could be upsetting to members of the community.

Fr John Joe Duffy, Chair of Save Our St Joseph's Hospital says while the plans also show that the size of the Catholic Church facility within the hospital is to be reduced, the HSE's latest decision continues to portray how the situation at the hospital is being handled.

News Highland recordings of clergy interviews at:

<http://www.highlandradio.com/2017/08/31/upset-among-community-as-plans-to-remove-church-of-ireland-at-st-josephs-hospital-emerge/>

St Joseph's Community Hospital is managed by the Health Service Executive (HSE) and provides short term (respite, convalescence and rehabilitation) and long term care.

## **Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, former Archbishop of Westminster, dies**

Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor has died. The 85-year-old, who became leader of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales in March 2000 before retiring from his role in 2009 on his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, was admitted to hospital last month.

A spokeswoman for the Catholic Church in England and Wales said he died at 3.15pm on Friday following a battle with cancer.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, the current Archbishop of Westminster, said in August Cardinal Murphy O'Connor's health had "taken a defining turn".

After he became seriously ill, his successor, Cardinal [Vincent Nichols](#), wrote to bishops and priests asking them to pray for the former



## **Cleric with Irish roots was formerly leader of the Catholic church in England and Wales**

archbishop, saying his health had “taken a defining turn”.

He added: “As you will know so clearly, for Cardinal Cormac these loving prayers are a source of great strength and comfort as he calmly ponders on all that lies ahead, all in God’s good time.

“May the Lord strengthen him in faith and trust and may the prayers of the church, which he loves so much, comfort and uphold him.”

He had been Bishop of Arundel and Brighton for 22 years when he was elevated to the position of Archbishop of Westminster, and leader of Roman



Catholics in England and Wales, in 2000. He succeeded Cardinal Basil Hume. He was created a Cardinal by Pope John Paul II in 2001.

He retired as Archbishop of Westminster in May 2009 and became Archbishop Emeritus of the Diocese.

Murphy-O'Connor was one of three brothers from an Irish family who became priests after growing up in Reading, Berkshire.

His parents George and Ellen Murphy-O'Connor emigrated to England from Co Cork before the First World War.

In the Vatican, he was a close ally of fellow cardinal [Jorge Mario Bergoglio](#), who was elected as [Pope Francis](#) in 2013, although Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor was ineligible to vote as he was by then over 80.

He was also a fan of [Tony Blair](#), who converted to Catholicism six months after stepping down as prime minister in 2007. He later said Mr Blair had considered converting for many years, but he had advised the Labour leader not to rush it.



## **Tribute by Archbishop of Canterbury to Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor**

The news of the death of Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor today represents a loss to his innumerable friends, to the church and to the country, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Most Reverend Justin Welby said yesterday.

Archbishop Welby continued - Cormac was a bishop for four decades but was first and foremost a servant of God and disciple of Jesus

Christ. His humility, sense and holiness made him a church leader of immense impact. When he was called from the Diocese Arundel and Brighton to be Archbishop of Westminster, Pope St John Paul II made reference to the fact that he had already been a bishop for a number of years and that it was natural that he should turn to him to succeed Cardinal Hume as Archbishop. It was natural because in Cormac people saw something of Christ.

Cormac was a good friend to Anglicans at home and internationally. As the Catholic co-chair of the second phase of the Anglican – Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC II) he lent both his customary good humour and his theological acumen to the production of some of the most influential of ecumenical agreed texts of the twentieth century. At a time when others bemoaned the lack of instant progress in ecumenical relations, Cormac saw the work of ARCIC as an investment and a building block for future closer relations. At home he was notable for his support for interchurch families and, whilst he was Rector of the Venerable English College in Rome, for the support and encouragement of a scheme that is still going giving Church of England ordinands the opportunity to study in Rome. He cared for Anglican leaders he knew, encouraged and

supported them, drawing them into the fellowship of Christ.

He will be remembered with thanks and affection by all whose lives he touched. He was a great raconteur and story-teller, amusing, but always with a purpose. His words and his life drew people to God. His genial warmth, pastoral concern and genuine love for those in his care will be missed, but also celebrated with thanks. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

## **Bishops taken to court of appeal in Australian Anglican feud**

A feud between Australian Anglican leaders has boiled into the open with three bishops referred to an appeals court over a dispute surrounding the church's response to gay marriage.

The Archbishop of Sydney, the Bishop of Tasmania and the Bishop of Northwest Australia took part in a ceremony in June to consecrate **rebel bishop Andy Lines** offering 'alternative oversight' to conservatives disaffected by the perceived liberal drift of Anglican churches in Europe.

But fellow Australian bishops objected to their role, questioning whether it breached church law to appoint someone outside the official worldwide Anglican Communion.

Now Australia's top bishop, Philip Freier, the Archbishop of Melbourne, has referred their complaints to the church's court of appeal who will offer a legal judgement.

Urging their boss to act, the Bishops of Bendigo, North Queensland, Gippsland and Willochra, say their conservative colleague's part in the ceremony 'raises fundamental questions of ecclesiology' and threatens to make relations between bishops 'gravely impaired'.

The church's Appellate Tribunal will now give a legal view on the fallout but cannot hand down direct punishment or disciplinary action.

The legal war between the bishops is likely to overshadow the church's synod, which will meet in just a few days time from 3-9 September. It comes as Australia is split by a vicious political debate on whether to allow gay marriage.

The Archbishop of Sydney, Glen Davies, the Bishop of Tasmania, Richard Condie, and the Bishop of Northwest Australia, Gary Nelson,

were among the 11 primates, three archbishops, and 13 diocesan bishops from member churches of the Anglican Communion who participated in the ceremony in Wheaton College, Illinois, on June 30.

He was consecrated by the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), a splinter body from the official Anglican church in the US – The Episcopal Church with other leaders from around the world taking part.

Davies, justifying his role, said he felt compelled to after the Scottish Episcopal Church, another member of the 80-million strong Anglican Communion, voted to allow gay marriage.

'As you will all know, I consider such an action to be a travesty of the rule of Christ, of the doctrine of the Book of Common Prayer, and therefore abandonment of the principles of Anglican doctrine,' he wrote.

'I consider that such a departure from the teaching of Scripture, 'the ultimate rule and standard of faith', casts doubt upon the nature of our communion with the Scottish Episcopal Church.'

Condie also wrote openly before the ceremony, apologising 'for any unintended hurt caused to our collegial relationships' but saying he had to act.

'The consecration is an emergency measure to protect the precious gospel of Jesus Christ, his authoritative word in the scriptures, and faithful Anglicans who have been marginalised by this schismatic behaviour... So-called 'cross-border interventions' by bishops into other dioceses are to be shunned in normal circumstances. However, when the gospel is at risk, these kinds of unusual measures are needed.'

It comes after Freier, their superior, urged his bishops not to take part.

'I take the view that communion – koinonia, is a gift of our Lord to his Church and that in our context it is the Anglican Church of Australia, through its constitution and the framework it establishes, that determines how this is expressed in practical terms,' he wrote.

He added it was not 'for us individually, acting independently, to determine with whom we are in communion or to act unilaterally to that end. I do not think that it is for individual dioceses in the Anglican Church of Australia to determine with

whom we, as members of that Church, are in communion. We must act in accordance with the Constitution that binds us as the Anglican Church of Australia.'

Lines had his **permission to officiate withdrawn by Southwark diocese** after his consecration.

## **US Catholics and Protestants agree: 500 years after Reformation, they have more in common than not**

The theological differences that led to the Protestant Reformation 500 years ago have dwindled since in both the [United States](#) and [Western Europe](#), RNS reports.

That's the finding of [a Pew Research Center survey](#) released Thursday (Aug. 31), weeks before late October's 500th anniversary of the schism in western Christianity.

Among U.S. Protestants, many seem unaware of the differences, voicing beliefs today that are more traditionally Catholic than they are Protestant.





**A statue of Martin Luther in Erfurt, Germany.**

“I think it’s fair to say the differences between the two groups have diminished to a degree that might have shocked Christians of earlier centuries,” said Greg Smith, associate director of research at Pew Research Center.

“Maybe it’s not a huge surprise in the context of modern-day United States, but if you look back at the longer term — at the 500th anniversary of the Reformation — that would be quite surprising to a Christian of 300, 400, 500 years ago.”

Of course, Smith noted, no survey data exists to measure responses to the same questions in the 1500s.

According to the survey, more Protestants reported they believe salvation comes through a mix of faith and good works (52 percent) — the traditionally Catholic position — than through “faith alone” (46 percent). That belief — “sola fide” in Latin — is one of five “solas” that form the backbone of Protestant Reformers’ beliefs.

The same shares of Protestants also reported they believe Christians should look to the Bible, church teachings and tradition for guidance — the Catholic position — rather than the “Bible alone,” or the Protestant belief in “sola scriptura.”

Only 30 percent of U.S. Protestants affirmed both sola fide and sola scriptura. Belief in both doctrines was higher among white evangelical Protestants (44 percent) than white mainline Protestants (20 percent) or black Protestants (19 percent) and jumped even higher (59 percent) among white evangelicals who reported they attend church at least once a week.

U.S. Catholics, in contrast to Protestants, voiced beliefs more in line with the teachings of their church: 81 percent reported both good deeds and faith were needed to get into heaven, and 75 percent reported Christians should look to the Bible, church teaching and tradition for guidance.

And while differences between Catholics and Protestants once led to wars and persecution, most U.S. Catholics (65 percent) and Protestants (59 percent) now agree they have more in common than not.

The U.S. survey of more than 2,500 adults, funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, was conducted online from May 30 to Aug. 9. The margin of error for results based on each sample in that survey is plus or minus 2.9 percentage points.

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