

Inter-church service to mark 45th anniversary of Claudy bombs



The aftermath of the Claudy bombing in July 1972

Monday, July 31 marks 45 years since three IRA bombs ravaged the small Co Londonderry village, murdering nine innocent people and injuring many others.

On Monday a service of remembrance and thanksgiving will be held at 7.30pm in the car park which houses the memorial to the Claudy victims.

Clergy from the Catholic Church, Presbyterian Church and Church of Ireland will facilitate the service, with the involvement of family representatives.

A youth choir from victims' group South East Fermanagh Foundation will also perform at the event. It will be comprised of young people whose grandparents and other relatives were murdered through terrorism.

Families and friends of the victims will gather together on the anniversary to remember loved ones.

The victims included William Temple from Donemara, Co Tyrone. The 16-year-old was a milkman's helper and his round included the village of Claudy. He had been injured by the first explosion, but was killed instantly in the third.

William's brother David has called for a fresh investigation as the 45th anniversary of the atrocity approaches. He said the pain of losing him is as fresh today as it was 45 years ago.

He added: “When Martin McGuinness died earlier this year refusing to provide any accountability around Claudy, many feared that the truth of Claudy may be buried with him.

“But there remains within our community those who are clear on what happened in Claudy and they must make themselves known.”

Police suspended their investigation into the bombing in 2013, telling relatives of the victims that their inquiries would not resume unless new information or evidence is received.

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Mr Temple said the Historical Enquiries Team review of Claudy was “totally inadequate”, leaving families “with more questions than answers”.

He added: “The Claudy families have been treated with contempt down the years; we simply have not factored in the priorities of those who should be there to do what is right by us.

“My family want Claudy to be given the focus and priority that it never has been. We want a

proper investigation which has a starting point of going to and uncovering the truth of what happened.

“I want those who carried out the bombings to be held publicly accountable for their actions.”

SEFF is helping to organise the commemoration event, which will take place in the village on Monday at 7.30pm. (Based on News Letter report).

McGuinness a ‘funny kind of Christian’: IRA victim’s sister

A high-profile IRA victims’ campaigner has said Martin McGuinness was a “funny kind of Christian”, after a Catholic church in the heart of Washington DC offered a homily in tribute to him, the News Letter reports.

Ann Travers voiced disappointment in relation to the memorial Mass for the former IRA man-turned-politician on Tuesday, attended by Gerry Adams among others.

A statement from a member of St Peter’s church in Capitol Hill – where the United States Congress is based – said its priest’s homily had



Martin McGuinness pictured during a visit of US bishops to Londonderry in 1984, the year when Mary Travers was murdered leaving Mass in Belfast

spoken of his “unique life and work in the context of his identity as a Christian”.

Ms Travers – whose sister was murdered by the IRA as she and her parents left mMass in south Belfast in 1984 – suggested that those behind such sentiments had swallowed “fairytales” from Sinn Fein.

The practising Catholic told the News Letter: “Well, he’s a funny kind of Christian.

“I was brought up to believe the 10 Commandments, [including] ‘Thou Shalt Not Kill’.

“The IRA murdered my own beautiful sister Mary as she walked home from Mass, and attempted to murder my parents.

“It’s just a shame Martin McGuinness didn’t show a bit more Christianity within his life, and give answers to victims – and indeed not be involved in taking any one person’s life, or supporting the taking of any one person’s life.

Top papal advisor silent as he enters Melbourne court facing charges of sex abuse

Cardinal George Pell, the Pope's financial adviser and highest-ranking figure in the Australian Catholic Church, was silent yesterday morning as he entered Melbourne Magistrate's Court where he faces charges of historic sex offences.

Pell announced late in June that he was taking leave following historic allegations of sex abuse.



Vatican Treasurer Cardinal George Pell is surrounded by Australian police and members of the media as he arrives at the Melbourne Magistrates Court in Australia, July 26, 2017.

Pell, 76, is the most senior Vatican official to have faced charges of sexual abuse. At a Vatican press conference in June, he strongly denied the accusations and plans to clear his name from the charges. 'I am looking forward finally to having my day in court. I am innocent of these charges. They are false. The whole idea of sexual abuse is abhorrent to me,' he said.

Yesterday, he entered silent, surrounded by a gaggle of press and onlookers, into Melbourne Magistrate's Court, where the small courtroom was also packed with reporters, according to The Sydney Morning Herald.

The details of the charges against Pell are still unknown to the media, though police confirmed last year that the prelate was under investigation for historic offences in the state of Victoria in the 1970s. There was no trial today, the meeting only set a date for evidence to be served on Pell's legal team on September 8, and for Pell to return to court for a hearing on October 6.

Pell's defence barrister Robert Richter, QC, told the court: 'For the avoidance of doubt ... Cardinal Pell will plead not guilty to all charges, and will maintain the presumed innocence that he has.'

Pell has recently faced criticism for his handling of the clerical sex abuse scandal in the Australian Catholic church, after an independent inquiry uncovered unprecedented levels of child abuse. Pell said that the Church had made 'catastrophic choices' in its dealing with the scandal, and admitted he could have done more to investigate claims of abuse.

Church service marks anniversary of Fr Jacques murder

Commemorations took place yesterday to mark the one year anniversary of the murder of Father Jacques Hamel in a church near Rouen in France.

The 85 year old was killed by two Islamist armed gunmen who entered the church in Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray in Normandy.

Father Hamel was holding Mass for a small gathering of people when the two assailants entered and took four people hostage. Local police reported that the priest's throat was slit in the attack.

At the time, Pope Francis issued a statement condemning the "absurd violence" and said during a Mass in September that Father Hamel "is blessed now".

Since his death on July 26th 2016, Islamic leaders throughout France encouraged Muslims to attend mass as a sign of solidarity.

The Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack, saying that the two gunmen who were



shot dead by the police were "soldiers" retaliating against a US led coalition fighting the group in Iraq and Syria. To commemorate the anniversary, the Diocese of Rouen held a special Mass at the church of Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray, at the same hour as the Mass he was celebrating when killed.

Afterwards, the community erected a stone in memory of Father Hamel to promote peace and fraternity. The event was celebrated by Archbishop Dominique Lebrun, attended by French President Emmanuel Macron, and broadcast throughout the country.

Christian Legal Centre 'grateful' for employment tribunal ruling

The Christian Legal Centre has welcomed the Supreme Court's ruling that fees for taking claims to an employment tribunal are unlawful.



The government now faces refunding tens of millions of pounds to those charged over the last four years.

The public sector union, Unison, won the landmark court victory against the government after arguing they discriminated against women and other groups of workers.

Roger Kiska, Legal Counsel for the Christian Legal Centre told Premier that the courts are for the benefit of all people.

During News Hour he said: "If you look at the number of cases that were filed before 2013 compared to after 2013 when the fee schedule fell into place, it was less than half.

"So these fees really did have a chilling effect on people seeking their rights in the employment tribunal."

As a result of the Supreme Court unanimously ruling the government was acting unlawfully and unconstitutionally, the government will have to take immediate steps to stop charging the controversial fees of up to £1,200 for taking a case to tribunal.

Unison said the government will also have to refund more than £27 million to the thousands of people charged for taking claims to tribunal since July 2013, when the Lord Chancellor at the time, Chris Grayling, introduced the fees.

The Trades Union Congress' general secretary, Frances O'Grady said of the ruling: "This is a massive win for working people.

"Too many low-paid workers couldn't afford to uphold their rights at work, even when they've faced harassment or have been sacked unfairly."

Kiska told Premier News that yesterday's move will help many Christians who've had their rights 'violated'.

He added: "We're grateful to the court for the decision. We believe that access to justice at an affordable rate is important so we stand by the court in its decision."

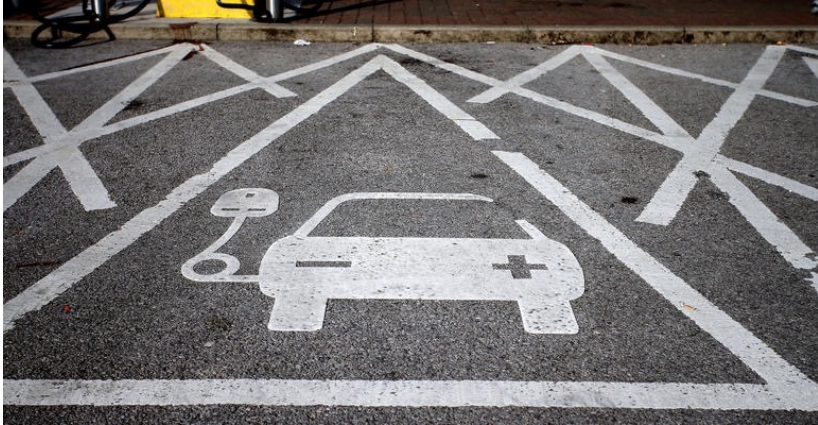
Christian charity welcomes ban on petrol and diesel cars



Christian environmental charity Arocha UK has welcomed a government announcement which will see the sales of petrol and diesel cars banned in the UK from 2040.

Ministers say it's part of their plans to cut down on pollution.

Speaking on BBC Radio 4's Today programme, Environment Secretary Michael Gove said: "We can't carry on with diesel and petrol cars, not just because of the health problems that they



cause, but also because the emissions that they cause would mean that we would accelerate climate change, do damage to our planet and to the next generation."

He also pledged to work with local authorities developing "value for money and appropriately targeted" diesel scrappage schemes.

Speaking on Premier's News Hour, Andy Lester from A Rocha UK said: "The reality is this is important, if we are going to take pollution seriously we are going to have to look at alternatives to traditional combustion.

"Electric or even hydrogen-powered cars are the future, the sooner we move towards that the better, but it is going to take time to take place, it's not going to be an overnight change."

Some have suggested the government could have gone further while others have suggested the 2040 date may be unrealistic.

Andy Lester thinks it will be a seamless transition.

He said: "Over the next 10 years we will see all the leading manufacturers vying for position on alternative energy vehicles," he said. "As that becomes more competitive, so the prices will drop for the consumer."

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