



***Bishop of Derry, Donal McKeown, said the churches in Londonderry have been working together for a long time***

## **Catholic bishop's 'lovely' day with Apprentice Boys in Londonderry**

A Catholic bishop has told how he and a fellow clergyman walked around the streets of

Londonderry meeting Apprentice Boys on Lundy Day, earlier this month.

News Letter - Bishop of Derry, Donal McKeown, said he has “walked out to meet and greet marchers twice” since his installation in the Maiden City in April last year.

“A priest in the city Father Michael Canny and myself simply walked up around the Diamond when the bands were coming through and we stopped and talked to people,” he said.

“There was no tension or stress or anything at all. It was lovely.

“I felt no hostility that day. In December afterwards we met a senior PSNI officer and sat in one of the hotels looking out on the street and had a coffee together. That might not be possible elsewhere but it certainly is here.”

The Co Antrim-born senior cleric said “that is what the atmosphere is like in the city”.

“We have had a lot of discussions in the city over the years which has made all of these things possible,” he added.

“There have been lots of conversations between people and people are able to meet and leave space for one another so the conversations have clearly worked.

“I claim no credit for it,” he added.

“I give the credit to the people who have gone along before me, people working quietly in the background.”

Bishop McKeown said in Londonderry “churches have been working together for a long time”.

“Bishop Edward Daly (former Catholic Bishop of Derry) and Dr James Mehaffey (former Church of Ireland Bishop of Derry and Raphoe) got Freedom of the City of Derry before the move to the new council and the church leaders meet here once a month for a working breakfast. In fact we are working on a project for 2016 for the centenary of 1916. There is also a joint churches foodbank in the city.”

Meanwhile, Bishop McKeown on Sunday began the Catholic Church’s Year of Mercy by attending a service in the nearby Protestant church.

Dr McKeown joined the congregation in the Church of Ireland’s Christ Church at 11am for the [churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)

start of what was believed to be a unique ceremony culminating in the opening of the Holy Door at nearby St Eugene's Cathedral.

Bishop McKeown said that Pope Francis's declaration that the next 12 months should be a year of mercy was part of the pontiff's desire to reach out to people in pain and distress.

## **Dublin joins Paris in mourning terror attack victims**

"Today we still mourn". These were the words of the French Ambassador to Ireland who spoke at a service of remembrance for the victims of the Paris atrocities in Dublin on Sunday.

Herald - it is exactly one month to the day since the terror attacks which left 129 people dead and 352 injured.

Ambassador JP Thebault told the congregation in the Sacred Heart Church in Donnybrook, Dublin that they were commemorating the "innocents - those who should never have died".



***At the memorial service in Donnybrook were (from left) Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin and Glendalough, Most Rev Michael Jackson, the Papal Nuncio to Ireland Archbishop Charles Brown, the French Ambassador Jean Pierre Thebault, and other guests and concelebrants***

He thanked the people of Ireland for the solidarity and love they expressed in the aftermath of the attacks.

He said the challenge today was to be ready to stand by the values of freedom, equality and fraternity and to become "peace-keepers".

In his address, the Church of Ireland Primate, Archbishop Michael Jackson, told members of the French community in Ireland as well as ambassadors from around Europe that the challenge was not to "capitulate to the change in the climate of respect by retaliation" with a "downward slide of disrespect to dehumanisation".

Dr Jackson told the Herald that as refugees start arriving in Ireland, people must not "tar them with the brush of a kind of radicalism which is simply that of terrorism".

"One of the important things for us in this country as we move towards Christmas .. [is to] hold our nerve and open our hearts," he said.

"I think we need to dig deep into what makes Christmas 'Christmas' in Ireland and make room for people for whom it will be their first Christmas here and who would really rather be at home."

Mourners also gathered in the streets of Paris to mark the one-month anniversary.

A colourful collection of flowers and candles formed a makeshift monument for the victims at the Place de la Republique.

## **Archbishop Jackson's address:**

<http://dublin.anglican.org/news/2015/12/Courage-in-a-Time-of-Fragility--Archbishops-Address-at-Memorial-Service-for-Paris-Atrocities>

## **Women from Northern Ireland had more than 4,600 abortions in England and Wales over the last five years**

Figures from the Department of Health in London revealed 4,652 women and girls from Northern Ireland have travelled to have abortions in England and Wales over the past five years.

In addition 19,947 women and girls from the Republic of Ireland also made the same journey for an abortion. The data also reveals that 152 terminations were recorded for girls aged under 16 from the Republic of Ireland and 69 for under 16s from Northern Ireland

The figures were obtained by Belfast-based journalism project Detail Data who also revealed the individual clinics the women attended, as well as data about the number of children under 16



who have travelled to the UK to access abortion services.

Unlike other parts of the UK, the 1967 Abortion Act does not extend to Northern Ireland where abortions are banned except where the life or mental health of the mother is in danger.

Anyone who performs an illegal termination could be jailed for life.



These are minimum figures, based upon the numbers of patients who disclosed Northern Irish addresses to clinics - the true number is likely considerably higher.

The data also reveals that 69 terminations were recorded for girls aged under 16 from Northern Ireland.

Amnesty International's My Body, My Rights campaigner Grainne Teggart said: "These findings once again prove that restrictive abortion laws in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland don't prevent women and girls from having abortions.

"Abortions not being lawful doesn't mean that women and girls don't have abortions, it means that they either resort to desperate, sometimes dangerous, measures or they seek those services elsewhere at great financial and emotional expense."

At the end of November a landmark legal challenge to relax Northern Ireland's strict abortion laws was successful.

The challenge was brought by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC),

which wants access to legal terminations in cases of rape, incest or fatal foetal abnormality.

Colm O’Gorman, Executive Director of Amnesty International Ireland added: "Abortion laws in both jurisdictions fall desperately short of even the minimum standards required by international human rights law.

"They violate the human rights of women and girls, forcing those who can travel to go overseas and seek compassionate, professional care outside their own country.

"It’s time for governments north and south to end the hypocrisy of laws which criminalise women at home and don’t even meet their stated aim of preventing abortions. They can no longer turn a blind eye to the human rights abuses caused by those very same laws."

**[See also - Kathryn Torney - The Detail: Abortion exported: the women travelling for terminations](https://www.thedetail.tv/articles/abortion-exported-women-travelling-for-terminations?utm_source=mailinglist&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=42-abortion-exported-the-women-travelling-f)**

[https://www.thedetail.tv/articles/abortion-exported-women-travelling-for-terminations?utm\\_source=mailinglist&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=42-abortion-exported-the-women-travelling-f](https://www.thedetail.tv/articles/abortion-exported-women-travelling-for-terminations?utm_source=mailinglist&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=42-abortion-exported-the-women-travelling-f)

## **Pastor McConnell's declaration that he doesn't trust Muslims was 'grossly offensive', court hears**

An evangelical Belfast preacher was grossly offensive in making a pulpit declaration that he doesn't trust a single Muslim, a court heard today.

Belfast Telegraph - Prosecutors claimed Pastor James McConnell's "unrepentant" characterisation of an entire religion has no legal protection.

The 78-year-old clergyman has gone on trial over the contents of an internet-broadcast sermon where he branded Islam "satanic" and "heathen".

More than 100 of his supporters packed a public gallery at Belfast Magistrates' Court for the start of the hearing.

The preacher denies improper use of a public electronic communications network, and causing a grossly offensive message to be sent by means of a public electronic communications network.

Both charges centre on comments made at his Whitewell Metropolitan Tabernacle in north Belfast in May last year.

He defended his views at the time but following a public outcry he later apologised for any offence or distress caused.

As the case opened defence barrister Philip Mateer QC called on the prosecution to identify the specific alleged offence.

He said: "My client should not be at the start of his trial in a state of mystification as to precisely what it is within the sermon that's supposed to be criminal."

Prompted by District Judge Liam McNally, prosecution counsel David Russell claimed the clergyman had made remarks aggravated by hostility.

He pointed to portions of the sermon where Pastor McConnell referred to Allah as a "heathen", "cruel" and "demon" deity.

According to Mr Russell a minister is entitled to speak in those "trenchant terms" during the course of a service.

More at -

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/pastor-mcconnells-declaration-that-he-doesnt-trust-muslims-was-grossly-offensive-court-hears-34285213.html>

**Pastor James McConnell has claimed that his prosecution over a highly-controversial anti-Islamic sermon offers a chance to display “true Protestantism” - News Letter**

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/pastor-james-mcconnell-trial-chance-to-display-true-protestantism-1-7114211>

## **Schools wrong not to stage nativity plays says first Irish-born Muslim cleric**

The first Irish-born Muslim cleric has said schools who do not stage nativity plays or put up Christmas trees “are wrong”.

News Letter - Ibrahim Michael Noonan from Co Waterford, who was born into a Catholic family, said while Muslims do not celebrate Christmas he “does not get offended by it”.

News Letter - “We hear of schools not having nativity plays and putting up Christmas trees for fear of offending non-Christians and I think this is

shocking personally,” he said on BBC Radio Ulster’s Sunday Sequence.

“I actually think the schools are wrong in doing this.”

He added: “Ireland, Northern Ireland, southern Ireland and the whole of the island of Ireland is predominantly Christian and they have their right to celebrate what they believe in.

“For example my own family, my parents, brothers and sisters, I will probably be visiting them over those few days and I am going to walk into a house full of decorations and I am not going to turn around and say I am offended. That is their faith and that is what they believe.”

The imam – now living in Omagh – added: “I do appreciate that schools are conscious of this (Muslim faith) but I do think it is wrong and if they want to put a Christmas tree up it is a Christian country.”

He added that any Muslim who would insist on a school not celebrating a Christian Christmas is “absolutely going against the teachings of Islam”.

More at -

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/schools-wrong-not-to-stage-nativity-plays-irish-muslim-cleric-1-7114103>

## **Vicar and Star Wars-mad children make hilarious spoof of the C of E's Lord's Prayer advert**

- East London vicar Cris Rogers made parody of Church of England Lord's Prayer advert banned from being shown in UK cinemas
- But Sony Music clamped down on home movie filmed on mobile phone
- Rev Rogers made 72-second clip with children Isaac, 11, and Daisy, 8
- After an appeal, [YouTube](#) reinstated the video to its site

Daily Mail - When vicar Cris Rogers and his [Star Wars](#)-mad children learned the Church of England Lord's Prayer advert had been banned by cinemas, they retaliated by making their own spoof version – and posting it on YouTube.

But, almost before you could say 'May the Force be with you', it was also banned... by entertainment giant Sony Music



***Rev Cris Rogers and his children Daisy, eight, and Isaac, 11, pose as characters from Star Wars***

Rev Rogers, rector of All Hallows Church in Bow, East [London](#), produced the video with his children Isaac, 11, and Daisy, eight.

In the hilarious home movie clip, Isaac played Luke Skywalker, a Jedi Knight and a Stormtrooper, and Daisy took the roles of Princess Leia, a hooded Jawa and Darth Vader. as they gleefully recited the Lord's Prayer.



Rev Rogers recorded it all on his mobile phone, set it to music from Return Of The Jedi and posted the 72-second clip online.

Video at -

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3357861/Vicar-Star-Wars-mad-children-make-hilarious-spoof-Church-England-Lord-s-Prayer-advert-Sony-ban-copyright-infringement.html#ixzz3uJ3UbRLK>

## Media digest

### Twitter

#### **Paddy Anglican**

Apparently some bloke knocked other bloke out last night in 13 seconds and it was watched by 10s of millions of insomniacs §funnyoldworld.

### **BBC Radio 4**

The importance of faith groups can't be underestimated when it comes to the Paris Agreement

### **Nelson Jones @ Heresy\_Corner**

Case against Pastor McConnell seems utterly absurd and trivial. So he will probably be convicted.

## Bishops open cathedral doors for Year of Mercy

Irish News

Catholic bishops have pushed open their cathedral and **church** doors as part of the Year of Mercy. Pope Francis has requested that every diocese ...

<http://www.irishnews.com/paywall/tsa/irishnews/irishnews/irishnews//news/northernirelandnews/2015/12/14/news/bishops-open-cathedral-doors-for-year-of-mercy-353389/content.html>

## Case study: 'It felt like a punch in the stomach. I knew we had lost'

Irish Times

As with 96 per cent of Irish primary schools, the patron of her local school in Killiney is a religious body, in this case the **Church of Ireland**. Because her ...

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/case-study-it-felt-like-a-punch-in-the-stomach-i-knew-we-had-lost-1.2465409>

## Exp/ITV

The Archbishop of Canterbury has urged Britain to "demonstrate our shared humanity" by welcoming more refugees. Writing in the Big Issue magazine, Justin Welby said Britons have a "long and wonderful history of offering shelter" and hoped the Government would be "just as generous again" to help desperate migrants. He said, "The families coming to us from Syria will

be among the most vulnerable and traumatised people affected by this crisis."

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/626517/Archbishop-of-Canterbury-refugee-crisis-Syria-David-Cameron>

<http://www.itv.com/news/2015-12-13/archbishop-of-canterbury-urges-britain-to-demonstrate-our-shared-humanity-and-welcome-more-refugees/>

### **Equality & Human Rights Commission**

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has announced that the issues raised by Digital Cinema Media's (DCM) decision not to show a Church of England advert about the Lord's Prayer in cinemas, will be examined as part of a major Commission report. The report, examining the adequacy of the law protecting freedom of religion or belief, will be published early next year.

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/statement-freedom-expression-and-lord%E2%80%99s-prayer>

### **BBC/Guard**

Reports that a senior clergyman has been refused permission to officiate in Winchester diocese after he married his gay partner. The Revd Canon Jeremy Davies served as Canon Precentor at Salisbury Cathedral for 25 years and has taken services at Winchester Cathedral. Canon Davies married his partner of 30 years in

2014. A Winchester diocesan spokesman said: "Due to the Church of England's position on same sex marriage, as set out in the House of Bishops Pastoral Guidance, Canon Jeremy Davies has been informed that his application has been unsuccessful."

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-35087134>

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/dec/13/jeremy-davies-gay-clergyman-banned-from-taking-services-after-marrying-partner>

## **Tel**

Reports on a study conducted by Dr Abby Day, a sociologist and expert on religion in society at Goldsmiths, University of London into the support and influence of women born in the 1920s and 30's to the CofE and its sister churches in the USA and Canada. She concludes that the full extent of the contribution of the "silver ladies" of parishes, has been consistently underestimated and overlooked, going far beyond filling the pews on Sundays to organising and facilitating the day-to-day-life of most parishes. Their absence will, she concludes, trigger an "inevitable acceleration" in the long-running decline in numbers for the churches.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12046913/How-the-passing-of-the-coronation-chicken-era-spells-the-end-for-Church-England.html>

## **Times**

The Church of England could agree to the genetic modification of human embryos, its medical ethics adviser has suggested. The method known as germline editing could be used to cure inherited diseases and treat infertility. There have been concerns, however, that the changes are passed on to future generations. The CofE might accept changes to the germline if questions about their safety, effectiveness and fairness were addressed, the Revd Brendan McCarthy, its health policy adviser, said.  
<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/science/article4640063.ece>

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