



**Image of the day**  
**Derry Bishops take part in Black History month**

## News Reports

### Derry Bishops take part in Black History Month



**The Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Andrew Forster, was one of a number of church leaders who addressed the ‘Black History Month Summit’ in Londonderry on Saturday.**

The event – at the City Hotel in the city centre – was also attended by the Bishop of Derry, Dr Donal McKeown, and the chairperson of the Irish Muslim Peace and Integration Council, Shaykh Dr Umar al Qadri.





The conference was organised by the North West Migrants' Forum to draw attention to the remarkable, and often tragic, history of the African people; highlight some of the key issues facing our Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities; and celebrate the rich and varied culture of people of African descent living in Northern Ireland.

A distinguished cast of speakers addressed delegates, including: the Chairperson of the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, Dominique Day; the author and academic, Professor Verene Shepherd, from the University of the West Indies; Patrick Corrigan, from Amnesty International; Dr Livingstone Thompson, Chairperson of the African and Caribbean support organisation; and the North West Migrants Forum's Director of Programmes, Lilian Seenoi-Barr.

Among the politicians there to lend support were the Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Alderman Graham Warke, the DUP Junior Minister, Gary Middleton, and councillors from different parties on the Council. Mr Middleton addressed the conference in person while his fellow Junior Minister, Declan Kearney of Sinn Féin, spoke to delegates virtually.

Bishop Andrew told delegates there was a question asked of Jesus in the New Testament – ‘Who is my neighbour?’ – to which Jesus gave the broadest possible answer. “Here we are as neighbours today,” Bishop Andrew said, “and I hope today’s a very significant day not just for us in the North West but across our region, across the island, as we celebrate Black History Month, as we celebrate the contribution that different people from different backgrounds, different races, different cultures [have made] – the richness that they bring to all that we do here in the city and beyond.”

Bishop Andrew told the conference that Senator George Mitchell – the American politician who chaired the peace talks that led to the Good Friday Agreement – said the Irish were very welcoming towards visitors but very suspicious of each other. “I think that was true 20 or so years ago,” the Bishop said, “but maybe our welcome towards visitors who are now ‘us’ – who are now part of ‘us’, are part of our community, who live with us as equals – maybe we’ve become suspicious rather than welcoming. Today is a day that helps us break down some of those divisions and helps us celebrate who we are as people made in the image of God. So, I’m thrilled to be part of today.”

## **Victims group remembers Shankill bomb casualty 13 year old Leanne Murray**

**Last weekend victims group SEFF remembered Leanne Murray who was one of nine murdered in the Shankill bomb on 23rd October 1993, an attack by Provisional IRA terrorists upon Frizzell's fish shop.**

Leanne was a child of 13 at the time when her innocence was stolen away from her.

Leanne is remembered by her family as a lovely little girl who was very calm in life. She enjoyed netball in school, coming home and as her brother Gary fondly recalls, arguing with him over little silly things about who would do the dishes for their mum or whose turn it was to do the housework.

Leanne was known as a very outgoing person who loved life. Her hair was very long and it took her hours to wash and brush it. Leanne had been on cross-community trip to America only six weeks before she died. On that trip she met another little girl called Roisin from Ligoniel who she became very friendly with.

Roisin came down to the family home before the funeral. Leanne went shopping with her mum on the Shankill every Saturday. When the bomb was detonated, Leanne died instantly; she had gone to buy whelks in the fish shop.

Leanne's Mum Gina painfully recalls that day.



Leanne Murray remembrance includes her school crest - Belfast Girls Model School

Gina who has "lived two separate lives" said recently in an interview with The Belfast Telegraph:

"There's the life I had before Leanne was murdered and the one after her death," she said.



"That day is always at the front of my mind. It will stay with me for the rest of my life."

Gina had popped into a fruit and veg shop while Leanne had gone into Frizzell's fish shop to buy whelks just before the blast.

"I used to call her my brown-eyed girl because she had brown eyes like me," she recalled.

"After the explosion I couldn't find her anywhere. Panic and trauma set in; I spent so long searching. I didn't know what to do. I was yelling her name but it was no use. I didn't know it then, but my little daughter was dead."

The grandmother-of-four added: "Eventually two CID officers took us to the mortuary. It was terrible. She was in a black bag. I was crying and screaming."

Leanne is remembered on SEFF's Memorial Quilt - A Patchwork of Innocents; her patch is included within a heart shaped centerpiece remembering children of the terrorist campaign.

## **"Our faith does not permit us to stand by": Quakers' statement ahead of COP26**

**Quakers in Britain are calling for just solutions to the climate crisis and encouraging Friends to join the global day of action on Saturday 6 November, in a statement published in advance of the UN COP26 climate negotiations.**



## Heading for COP26: Bristol and North Somerset pilgrimage.

The statement draws on minutes from this summer's Yearly Meeting Gathering – Quakers' decision making body – as well as suggestions from young Friends and from Meeting for Sufferings. It calls for loss and damage finance and a global just transition beyond fossil fuels, and clearly articulates a core principle of climate justice: “Rich countries like the UK have done the most to cause the climate crisis, and owe the rest of the world an immense 'climate debt'.”

We are part of a mass movement of people that will not be defeated.

- Statement from Quakers in Britain

As well as criticising the UK government's approach to climate action and its broken promises around access to COP26, the statement is a call to action for Friends, for “[o]ur faith does not permit us to stand by while the



splendour of the world is destroyed for short-term profit." It invites Friends (as Quakers refer to each other) to join a meeting for worship on Sunday 31 October as COP26 begins, as well as the global day of action for climate justice on Saturday 6 November.

On 6 November, Quakers will be joining the 'faith and belief bloc' as part of the marches in Glasgow and London, to which everyone is welcome. Marchers in Glasgow are invited to gather at the Stewart Memorial Fountain in Kelvingrove Park at 11.30am, while the faith and belief bloc in London will be meeting outside St Michael Cornhill Church on Cornhill at noon. Both marches will conclude with a rally from 3.00-4.00pm, on Glasgow Green and in Trafalgar Square. Glasgow and Westminster meeting houses will be open for people to drop in for hot drinks.

Olivia Hanks, Economics & Sustainability Programme Manager for Quakers in Britain, said: "COP26 is a huge moment for the UK climate movement, and Quakers around the country are very much part of that. It has been amazing to see such creativity and passion for climate justice as Quakers prepared for COP26. They have been involved in pilgrimages, vigils, banner making, political advocacy, knitting, and all kinds of other actions to build a strong movement and call on our governments to take this crisis seriously.

"As today's statement says, Quakers cannot and will not stand by and see everything we love destroyed. We know COP26 will not deliver climate justice – this is a long struggle. But when we take action together, we are powerful,

and we are part of a mass movement of people that will not be defeated."

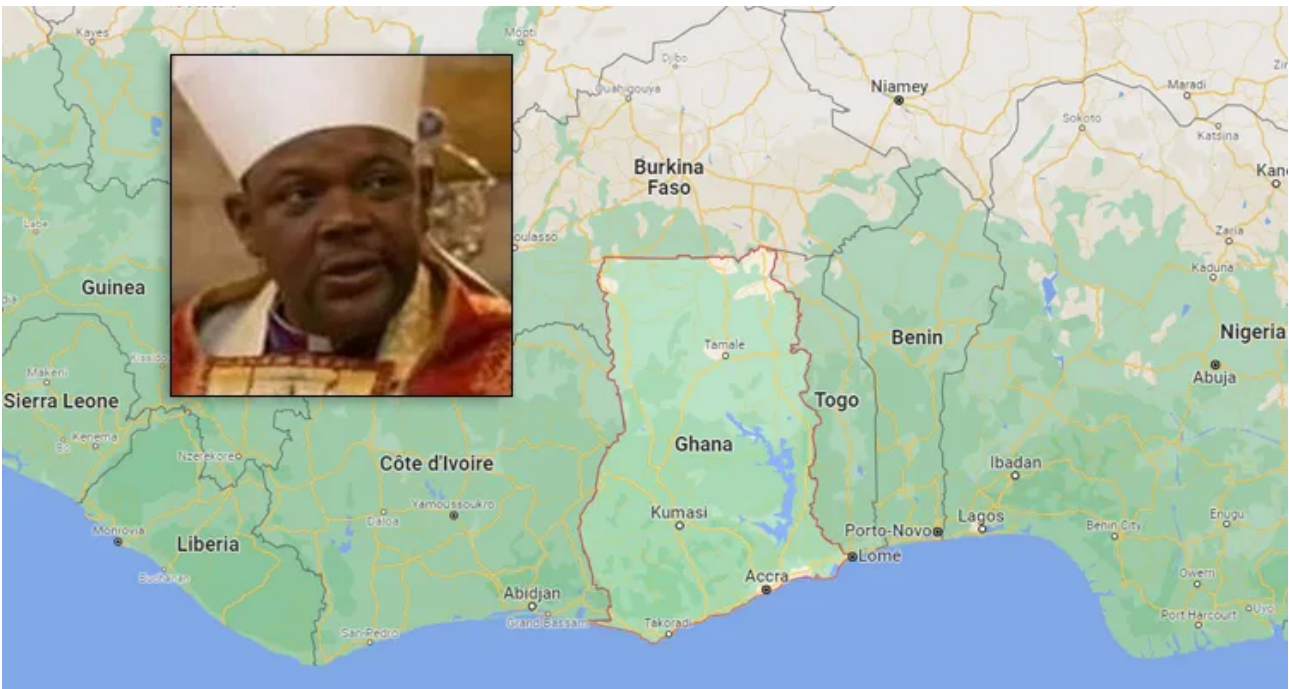
## **Bishops in Ghana endorse anti-gay bill**

**The House of Bishops of the Anglican Church in Ghana has endorsed the passage of a proposed law that would subject anyone who self-identifies as LGBTQ to a prison term of up to five years, according to reports in the Ghanaian news media.**

“Advocating for LGBTQ+ rights would also be illegal under the bill, with activists facing [between] five and 10 years of jail sentences,” the reports said. The penalties for self-identification and advocacy are as strong or stronger than the five years prescribed for consensual same-sex physical acts.

The Ghana News Agency reported that a statement advocating for the bill was signed by the Most Rev. Dr. Cyril Kobina Ben-Smith, metropolitan archbishop of the Internal Province of Ghana, which is part of the Anglican Province of West Africa.

“The support of the church for the Anti-LGBTQI Bill is borne out of the belief that the practice is unbiblical and ungodly,” the statement said. “We see LGBTQI as unrighteousness in the sight of God and therefore will do anything within our powers and mandate to ensure that the bill comes into fruition.”



Archbishop Cyril Kobina Ben-Smith

“Leviticus 20:13 clearly declares that, a male lying with a fellow male is an abomination and punishable by death,” the statement said.

Despite calling for criminal penalties for LGBTQ identification and advocacy, “the church does not condemn persons of homosexuality tendencies but absolutely condemn the sinful acts and activities they perform,” the statement said, adding that LGBTQ supporters should not be harassed or subjected to violence, “but rather, see them as potential souls to be won for Christ.”

“We will gladly open our counselling and support centres for the needed transformation services required by these persons or groups,” the statement said.

The Telegraph of London reported that, according to some critics, the proposed law “could be the most draconian anti-LGBTQ legislation on earth.”



The Anglican Province of West Africa includes 11 dioceses in Ghana and six dioceses scattered across seven other countries: Cameroon, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Senegal, and Sierra Leone. The Ghanaian dioceses are organized as the Internal Province of Ghana, which is seeking status as a full-fledged province of the Anglican Communion. Wikipedia, without citing a source, says “Today, there are over one million Anglicans out of an estimated population of 35 million in the countries that form the province.” An undated web page of the World Council of Churches lists a membership of 300,000, also not citing a source.

## People and places

### C of I Student Readers commissioned

**Four Ordinands at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute were commissioned as Student Readers this week by the Archbishop of Dublin.**

Cameron Mack (Connor), Caroline Brennan (Dublin and Glendalough), Daniel Flemming (Cashel, Ferns and Ossory) and Michael Buchanan (Armagh) are first year Student Ordinands at CITI. Archbishop Michael Jackson presided at the service in the College Chapel on Wednesday October 20.

The students were presented to the Archbishop for licensing by the Revd Dr Patrick McGlinchey who coordinates student placements. Student readers are called to lead worship,



Newly commissioned Student Readers Cameron Mack, Caroline Brennan, Daniel Flemming and Michael Buchanan are pictured outside CITI with Archbishop Michael Jackson and the Revd Dr Patrick McGlinchey.

proclaim the word and assist in the distribution of the bread and wine of Holy Communion.

The Ordinands were being commissioned to a ministry of accompaniment in a time when many of the survivors of the pandemic were already starting to forget the past trauma, the Archbishop said in his sermon.

“This is a vital ministry for our times. This is a traditional ministry in uncharted times. You are the cohort who carry this ministry of accompaniment. It is an urgent need for people inside and outside the church in these times of easing, times that many find already to be quite exhausting

and quite overwhelming. Restrictions are going; Personal Responsibility is taking centre stage,” he said.

In the week in which St Luke’s Day was celebrated, Archbishop Jackson drew on St Luke 24.32 – “They said to one another, Were not our hearts on fire as he talked with us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?”

“Accompaniment, neighbourliness, helping, encouraging – these are now urgent gifts of The Spirit in times of re-opening. You are this generation of ordinands. May the example of the two young apostles in the village of Emmaus lead you forward and send you out,” he said.

You can read the Archbishop’s sermon in full. Link here  
[[ <https://dublin.anglican.org/news/2021/10/22/new-student-readers-commissioned-at> ]

## **First Catholic cathedral to install columbarium**

The first Catholic cathedral in Ireland to install a columbarium — a place where cremated human remains can be interred — has been consecrated by Catholic Bishop of Killaloe Fintan Monahan.

On November 6, the first interment of ashes will take place during a ceremony at the new facility, which has been developed in the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Ennis, Co Clare.



The columbarium has capacity for 240 urns, and 104 niches have already been reserved.

## **Death of noted organist Baron George Minne**

A native of Ghent in Belgium, who came of an honoured family of artists and sculptors and a prizewinning organ student at the Conservatoire de Musique, Baron Minne was the last of a second generation of Belgian organists to arrive in Ireland. In 1952, he was appointed organist and choirmaster in Roscrea and in 1956, moved to the parish of Kilrush after a short spell teaching in Stonyhurst, England. George with his wife Jeannie and his young family left the diocese of Killaloe in 1959 for the position of Organist in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh where he inherited a rich tradition of sacred music. Apart from his duties as organist and choirmaster in the Cathedral and teaching positions in St. Patricks Grammar School and St. Catherine's College, George was in high demand as an organ recitalist across the country. It was through national radio broadcasts of George's recitals that enabled his playing to reach such a wide audience and exposed many for the first time to continental organ repertoire. Until his retirement as Cathedral Organist in 2005, Baron Minne played at all major liturgical events and was honoured by His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, being awarded the 'Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice' medal in October 2004, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the musical life of the Cathedral. George's passing is deeply mourned by his loving wife, Jeannie, sons Joris and Patrick, daughters Carine and Sheelagh, sister Terese and his five grandchildren.

## Perspective

### Cynical boycotts will not make partition history by Sam McBride

*Sinn Féin's late refusal to attend last week's solemn service to mark the island's partition has hindered chances of the very thing they want: reunification*

Accepting the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1995, Seamus Heaney defined the central problem of his homeland as two-fold: the ongoing partition of the island and "an equally persistent partition of the affections in Northern Ireland between the British and Irish heritages".

Three years before the Good Friday Agreement, the poet had hoped for a future where partition would be "a bit more like the net on a tennis court: a demarcation allowing for agile give-and-take, for encounter and contending".

For many years that dream seemed to have been progressively realised. The Troubles ended, cross-Border relations improved and previously unthinkable gestures were made. Ian Paisley presented Bertie Ahern with a musket at the site of the Battle of the Boyne. In Dublin's Garden of Remembrance, Queen Elizabeth paid her respects to those who fought for Irish freedom. Martin McGuinness shook the Queen's hand. The easy give-and-take prefigured by Heaney had become the norm.

But this year, the centenary of partition has exposed not only how reconciliation is now in reverse but how popular that stance is.

Last Thursday morning, 14-year-old schoolboy Seán McCourt-Kelly addressed the ecumenical centenary church service in St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral in Armagh and appealed for "courageous leaders" in Northern Ireland.

Within minutes of the service's conclusion, Sinn Féin's Michelle O'Neill tweeted three words: "Make partition history." As her considered response to the service, that simplistic sloganeering was a striking contrast with what had gone on in Ireland's ecclesiastical capital.

Sinn Féin's refusal to attend the service came relatively late and only after President Michael D Higgins had rejected his invitation. For months, there had been contact between Catholic and Protestant church leaders — who were organising the service — and officials in Dublin and London. A symbolic act of reconciliation involving the Queen and the President had been worked on. Even a decision around the timing of their entrances had been discussed — the Queen and the President were to walk in together, rather than the Queen taking precedence.

Several months ago, someone with knowledge of the plan told me that the Taoiseach, prime minister and leaders of every Stormont Executive party would attend.

It was to have been the high point of a muted centenary year. Those plans fell apart last month when the President



said he could not attend because the title of the event ("A service of reflection and hope to mark the centenary of the partition of Ireland and the formation of Northern Ireland") was "politicised". On Wednesday, the Queen pulled out for health reasons.

Sinn Féin described the service as a "celebration" of partition. As well as misrepresenting what the churches had said about the event (that it was deliberately not a celebration), that pointed to a shallow understanding of how unionism views 1921. Yes, many unionists love Northern Ireland and want to celebrate both the aspects of it that they cherish and the fact that it has endured for 100 years.

But that celebration is tinged with regret — not just for the gross errors made by unionist governments in the years after 1921, but in the bloody destruction that has marked much of the last century. Too many people lie in premature graves for this year to have been a jingoistic carnival. There is a deeper nuance.

Far from being a triumph, partition was a messy compromise in response to the fact that unionists wanted to keep the entire island British but failed to do so.

Northern Ireland's first prime minister, James Craig, described acceptance of the Border as a "supreme sacrifice in the interests of peace". Unionists in the other 26 counties were abandoned; some of their descendants still speak of betrayal by their own tribe.

In the event, and in line with what I had been told months ago, the service was as neutral as anything here can be.

From the first bars of the Irish Cantilena on the cathedral organ, the mood was contemplative. Rather than celebration, there was solemnity.

Together sat black and white, Protestant and Catholic, British and Irish, exemplifying how the Northern Ireland of 2021 is not that of 1921.

Catholic Archbishop Eamon Martin spoke of his "deep sense of loss and sadness" at partition.

Protestant clerics expressed regret and sadness before a collective confession that "we have wounded each other and our communities in the past".

There was a welcome in the Irish language, Irish-language prayers, Irish music and an Irish blessing.

A black African-born cleric, Methodist church president Dr Sahr Yambasu, preached the sermon, highlighting how St Patrick came to Ireland as a slave but, rather than hating the country of his captivity, he responded with love. He said the service was "an opportunity to lament; to say sorry".

If that is a celebration, then a funeral is a wedding. Sinn Féin knows it was not a celebration, but if it admits that, how would it explain what was so offensive?

Was it school children singing about their hopes for the future or Troubles victims leading prayers? Was it the point that churches once so divided had come together?

Snubbing the service was a calculated decision that is part of a wider Sinn Féin strategy. On the day of the service, they

vetoed Belfast City Hall being illuminated for the centenary. In May, a Sinn Féin minister rejected a request for a centenary rose bed in the Stormont Estate. The party also vetoed a simple centenary stone at Stormont, paid for by unionist parties.

Sinn Féin faces a conundrum. Such pettiness is undermining the trust necessary to persuade those who currently support the existence of Northern Ireland. But electoral considerations contradict that — these actions are popular with its base, just as the President's refusal to attend was popular. Sinn Féin turned on its rivals who did attend — Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the SDLP.

If this event had happened a decade ago, Martin McGuinness would almost certainly have been there, as would then-president Mary McAleese. But, facing a choice between winning the next election and doing the work to win a Border poll, Sinn Féin is prioritising the former.

Last month, the perceptive Northern nationalist Denis Bradley wrote in the Irish Times: "The President correctly remarked that the current reconciliation traffic was mostly one way, from South to North. But it shouldn't be forgotten that nationalism is wooing unionism and the wooer always must do the bulk of the running."

There is also an intellectual contradiction in Sinn Féin's approach. Although the party rejects the Border, in 1998 it accepted partition's legitimacy.

The Good Friday Agreement states that a majority in Northern Ireland support partition, their view is "legitimate"

and it would be "wrong" to remove the Border while that is the case.

Partition happened, and those who want to undo it need to make compelling arguments if that division of the island is to be reversed. Counterintuitively, republicans marking partition would make it — very slightly — more likely to be ended.

Courtesy Sunday Independent 23 October 2021

## Poem for today

### Postscript by Seamus Heaney

And some time make the time to drive out west  
Into County Clare, along the Flaggy Shore,  
In September or October, when the wind  
And the light are working off each other  
So that the ocean on one side is wild  
With foam and glitter, and inland among stones  
The surface of a slate-grey lake is lit  
By the earthed lightning of a flock of swans,  
Their feathers roughed and ruffling, white on white,  
Their fully grown headstrong-looking heads  
Tucked or cresting or busy underwater.  
Useless to think you'll park and capture it  
More thoroughly. You are neither here nor there,  
A hurry through which known and strange things pass  
As big soft buffetings come at the car sideways  
And catch the heart off guard and blow it open.



If only,  
Two simple words,  
but they have such power over our lives.  
Merciful God, forgive us,  
Release us from all that holds us captive  
And open our hearts to your gift of life.

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