

## **Statement by the Select Vestry of Holy Trinity Woodburn, Diocese of Connor**

The Select Vestry of Holy Trinity Woodburn wishes to make the following statement as a result of the recent confirmation that a member of the clergy of the Church of Ireland has entered into a same-sex civil partnership.

We acknowledge that every person is a child of God and is therefore deserving of respect, love and a welcome in the church that God has called us to be. None of us are without sin. We are all dependent on the love, grace and mercy of God expressed in the forgiveness which He freely offers to a fallen sinful world through His Son Jesus. Everyone is welcome at Holy Trinity Woodburn.

However we believe that the Bible is clear on the issue of human sexuality and that God's design and correct place for sexual activity is within the context of a faithful marriage relationship between a man and a woman. Anything outside of this is outside of God's purposes for humankind and is as the Bible states sinful. This is what the Scriptures clearly teach and this has been the historical teaching of the Church for two millennia. This is the doctrine and the teaching of the Church of Ireland also.

The message of the gospel of Christ Jesus is one of transforming grace through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus. This transformation of life, through the power of the Holy Spirit, enables men and women to grow not only in faith but also in holiness of life.

We regret that those called to lead the church of God would wish to espouse, or live, a patently unbiblical way of life. We are deeply hurt and offended by the actions of dean Tom Gordon and further distressed that this step was taken with the apparent knowledge and tacit approval of the Bishop of Cashel and Ossory. If, as dean Gordon has stated, Bishop Burrows was fully aware of the Dean's way of life and gave approval for his entering into a civil partnership he has departed from the teaching of the Church. This we consider to be a grave matter and one which seriously questions the unity of the Church of Ireland. This decision, if not repented of and turned away from, will, in our humble opinion, inevitably lead to the breaking of fellowship and to division. This matter cannot be ignored by us as a church fellowship nor by the wider Church of Ireland.

We call on all members of Holy Trinity Woodburn to diligently pray for godly leadership in the church; for repentance on the part of those who have so publicly fallen and departed from the apostolic faith; and call on the bishops of the Church of Ireland and those who sit in the councils of the church to reaffirm and to work for the restoration of the biblically orthodox position on human relationships which heretofore existed.