

Northern Ireland Mixed Marriage Association

PRESS RELEASE

**Enquiries about this release should be made to
Paul McLaughlin on 07706285042.**

19th March 2009.

Mixed marriage information in demand

There is an identifiable need for support and information about mixed marriage and baptism in a society still dominated by sectarianism, according to Ken Dunn, chairman of the Northern Ireland Mixed Marriage Association (NIMMA).

In his report to the 2009 NIMMA conference, Ken Dunn writes that “The need for NIMMA as a support and information provider for those couples either in or contemplating mixed marriages has never been more apparent.

“Our society remains divided along religious lines and the traditional difficulties of mixed marriage and the baptism of children – more often than not difficulties imposed from outside the relationships in question – will be with us for a long time to come.

“Enquiries to our office about mixed marriage and baptism are on the increase and as mixed marriages now make up more than one in ten of all marriages and young people begin to meet socially as never before in the past 30 years, it is to be expected that this figure will increase substantially.”

“NIMMA’s main role has been to share the experience and knowledge that we have garnered over the years with those in need of information and support. It remains pivotal and that sense of sharing just as vibrant as in the dark days of the 1970s.”

The Northern Ireland Mixed Marriage Association (NIMMA) hosts its 34th annual conference at St John’s Church of Ireland, Osborne Park, Malone, on Saturday 21st March.

The theme of the conference is inter-church spirituality and guest speaker Fr. Tom Layden, who heads the Society of Jesus community in Belfast, will speak on the shared spirituality in mixed marriage.

NIMMA chairman Ken Dunn describes the timing and content of the 2009 event as “particularly relevant to this time of year”.

mf.....

He said: “We will have just celebrated St Patrick’s Day and the saint’s central role in the shared spirituality of all Christians on this island, so it appropriate that Fr Tom’s talk will focus on the sharing of the roots of our faith and their importance in mixed relationships”.

The conference, which is being held in St John’s for the first time, features the main morning lecture and group discussions, but children from the Bright Lights dancing school will entertain guests with a display of Irish and Ulster Scots dance in the afternoon.

The conference is supported by the Good Relations Unit of Belfast City Council and starts at 10.30am.

ends

Notes to editors:

Children from the Bright Lights dancing school, in full costume, will be available for photographs from 1.45pm until 2.15pm on Saturday 21st March. NIMMA members will be available for interviews/photographs throughout the day.