

## 'NO POPE HERE!' SAYS McCREA

25 September 2009 'NO POPE HERE!' SAYS McCREA

DUP Mid Ulster MLA Ian McCrea has responded to speculation that the Pope of Rome may visit Northern Ireland next January.

Mr McCrea said: "I am opposed to any possibility of a visit to Northern Ireland by the Pope of Rome and I believe a visit from the Pope should be vigorously opposed for a number of reasons, first of all the majority of people in Northern Ireland are Protestant and belong to denominations that hold to the belief that the Pope is the Antichrist and by his titles and claims he blasphemes Almighty God. A visit from the Pope should also be opposed as many Roman Catholic people feel that the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic church have been complicit in abuse cases over many years and in light of the recent inquiry into child abuse in Roman Catholic institutions, such a visit would be very insensitive not only on the part of the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State who arrogantly issued an invitation for a Papal visit to Northern Ireland, but also on the part of the Pope himself. I have been made aware, that should there be a visit from the Pope to Northern Ireland it will face the vent of Protestant opposition and therefore I believe that it would be detrimental to community relations and, on those grounds alone, I would urge the Pope of Rome not to come to Northern Ireland."