

# **Court rules pubs in Irish city can open Good Friday for rugby match**

DUBLIN, Ireland - Pubs in the Irish city of Limerick will open their doors and serve beer for the first time on Good Friday after a landmark court case.

Traditionally the sale of alcohol has been illegal in Ireland on Christmas Day and Good Friday. However, Judge Tom O'Donnell ruled March 25 that pubs could open this year on Good Friday, April 2, because a key rugby match is scheduled in the city.

Police and government attorneys opposed the move. However, the judge ruled that pubs can open from 6 to 11:30 p.m.

O'Donnell said he was making the ruling in the interests of health and safety since some 26,000 people are expected to converge on the city for the match between bitter rivals Leinster and Munster. Pub owners had argued they stood to lose a serious amount of revenue by having to remain closed.

Irish Minister of State Martin Mansergh said the ruling represented "a sad day." Independent Sen. David Norris told Catholic News Service, "I am sorry this has happened and I call into question the decision of the rugby authorities. It is outrageous to schedule such a match on Good Friday."

Franciscan Friars of the Renewal based in the city of Limerick have appealed to rugby fans to boycott the match to protest its scheduling on a religious holiday.

Pub owners in other towns and cities are now expected to challenge the ban on Good Friday drinking.

The sale of alcohol on Good Friday is permitted on trains, and revelers frequently charter special trains to host parties on that day.