

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Mothers' Union founder Mary Sumner remembered

August 14, 2023

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Mothers' Union founder Mary Sumner remembered

Last Wednesday Worldwide President of the Mothers' Union, Mrs Sheran Harper, visited Winchester

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Cathedral, home and final resting place of the Mary Sumner, the founder of the Mothers' Union.

Mrs Harper attended the monthly service of prayers at the cathedral before visiting Mary Sumner's grave in Paradise, outside the east end. She then took refreshments with MU members in the Wessex Learning Centre.

The Mothers' Union is the biggest Anglican aid partnership organisation, which transforms the lives of women and their families across the world – and it all started here in Hampshire, with Mary Sumner.

Canon Roland Riem, Vice-Dean of the Cathedral, who welcomed all those attending the service, including the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress of Winchester, said, 'Having Mrs Harper with us in the Cathedral and the Close underlines the worldwide nature of the movement that started right here in 1876, and reminds us all of the courage and conviction of Mary Sumner and her associates.'

Mary formed the very first Mothers' Union and this is marked by a day of remembrance of her life every year on 9th August.

The words below are from Wikipedia: -

Mary Sumner was the founder of the Mothers' Union, a worldwide Anglican women's organisation. She is commemorated in a number of provinces of the Anglican Communion on 9 August.

Early life

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Mary Elizabeth Heywood was born on 31 December 1828 in Swinton near Salford, Lancashire, the third of four children. Her father Thomas Heywood was a banker and keen antiquarian; and her mother was a woman of personal piety. The family moved to Colwall near Ledbury, Herefordshire, in 1832, where Sumner's mother held mothers' meetings. A year after their arrival in Herefordshire, Sumner's six-week-old brother died. Her mother's faith, her women's meetings and her brother's infant death may have all inspired Sumner decades later to begin the Mothers' Union.

Educated at home, young Mary learned to speak three foreign languages and sing well. To complete her musical education, she travelled with her mother and elder sister to Rome. Whilst there she met her future husband, George Henry Sumner, the son of Charles Richard Sumner, the Bishop of Winchester and a relative of William Wilberforce.

The couple were married in Colwall on 26 July 1848, 18 months after George's ordination as an Anglican cleric. They had three children: Margaret, Louise and George; the latter became a well known artist.

In 1851, Rev. George Sumner received the living of Old Alresford, Hampshire, in his father's diocese. Sumner dedicated herself to raising her children and helping her husband in his ministry by providing music and Bible classes.

In 1876, when her eldest daughter Margaret gave birth, she was reminded how difficult she had found the burden of motherhood. Inspired, Sumner publicized a meeting of mothers in the parish to offer mutual support. Her plan was

quite radical in its day as it involved calling women of all social classes to support one another and to see motherhood as a profession as important as those of men, if not more so. The first meeting was held in Old Alresford Rectory, but Sumner was so overcome by nervousness that her husband had to speak for her and invite the women to return next week. At that second meeting she had gathered enough courage to lead her own meeting.

The nascent Mothers' Union was limited to Sumner's parish. However, in 1885, she was part of the audience in the Portsmouth Church Congress, some 20 miles from her home. The first Bishop of Newcastle, Ernest Wilberforce, had been asked to address the women churchgoers. He felt that he had very little to say to women and invited Sumner to speak in his stead. Although nervous once again, she gave a passionate address about national morality and the importance of women's vocation as mothers to change the nation for the better. A number of the women present went back to their parishes to found mothers' meetings on Sumner's pattern. The Bishop of Winchester, Edward Browne, made the Mothers' Union a diocesan organisation.

The Mothers' Union concept spread rapidly to the dioceses of Ely, Exeter, Hereford, Lichfield and Newcastle and then throughout the United Kingdom. By 1892, 60,000 members lived in 28 dioceses, and by the turn of the century, the Mothers' Union had grown to 169,000 members. Annual general meetings began in 1893, and the Mothers' Union Central Council was formed three years later. Sumner was unanimously elected president, a post she held into her nineties. In 1897, during her Diamond Jubilee, Queen Victoria became patron of the Mothers' Union, giving it an

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unprecedented stamp of approval. The Mothers' Union set up branches throughout the British Empire, beginning in New Zealand, then Canada and India. Sumner lived to lead the Mothers' Union to act in rebuilding the heart of Britain after the First World War and saw the first Mothers' Union Conference of Overseas Workers in 1920.

Sumner died on 11 August 1921 at the age of 92, and is buried with her husband, who had died 12 years before, in the grounds of Winchester Cathedral.

The inscription on their tomb (from Revelation 14:13) reads:

I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me
Write Blessed are the dead which died in the Lord from
henceforth.

Here, saith the Spirit, they may rest from their labours,
And their works do follow them.

People and places

Mary Sumner Day Prayer Walk in Bangor

Down & Dromore Mother's Union held a Prayer Walk on Mary Sumner Day - Wednesday 9th August. It was organised by Down & Dromore MU Faith & Policy Team.

Around 45 members went to the Walled Garden at Castle Grounds, Bangor. Supper was provided by Bangor Abbey branch.

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Church of Ireland Heritage Week events

In Dublin, Christ Church cathedral is offering lunchtime tours at 1pm.

On Monday Stuart Kinsella will give a tour of the cathedral, on Tuesday Rory Treanor will lead a tour of St Michan's and on Wednesday Michael O'Neill will give a tour of Sr Werburgh's. Places for these tours and for bell ringing and workshops must be booked at ruth.kenny@christchurch.ie

Heritage tour of 'Kisse arsse lane' and 'Coffin Street' at St. Audoen's -

During the second weekend of Heritage Week you'll have another chance to catch some of the special themed tours and talks at St. Audoen's Church, Dublin

Saturday 19 August at 11.00: 'The Ancient Bells of St. Audoen's & Dublin's Medieval Belltowers' - guides Tony & Benedetta talk about the history of the church bells and about medieval church belltowers in Dublin.

Saturday 19 August at 14.30: 'A Guide Around St. Audoen's Park' - guide Paula takes you on a tour of eight centuries of history in the park surrounding St. Audoen's Church, between 'Kisse arsse lane' and 'Coffin Street'.

Sunday 20 August at 11.00: 'St. Audoen e la Mura Medievali' - guide Benedetta delivers an Italian-language tour of St. Audoen's Church and Dublin's medieval city walls.

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Stewards and clergy at St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin meet their visitors

... and are remind that “we are a house of prayer for all nations”. Recently the Gander family, visited from Vienna, Austria. It was their first time in Ireland as a family and

they spent three days in Dublin before exploring the rest of the country. They remarked on how the food has been really nice and that people are so friendly, and joked how they are easier to understand than they were expecting. They really enjoyed their visit to the cathedral and were pleasantly surprised by the nice statues, which they said is not so common in churches and cathedrals back home.

Heritage Week

.... All these events are free, with no booking required. In St Patrick's cathedral there will be lunchtime lectures at 1.15pm by Clark Brydon, Dr Ann–Maria Walsh, Aaron Hoey, Adrian le Harivel, and Dean Wiliam Morton. At 2pm there will be tours, while on Monday evening at 6.30pm Albert Fenton will give a lecture in the Order of Str Patrick on the 240th anniversary of its founding. For information about how to book, please visit the events page on the Cathedral website – www.stpatrickscathedral.ie Michael O'Neill's recent book, An Architectural History of the Church of Ireland (available from <https://>

A poster for a Healing Service. The background is a light grey with a faint, large white cross. In the top right corner, there is a gold logo of a cross with a flame above it, and the letters 'DHM' below it. The main text is in bold black font. A circular portrait of a man in clerical attire is on the right side. At the bottom, there is a large white cross with a dotted pattern inside it.

Healing Service

7.30pm Thursday 24th August

St. Patrick's Church of Ireland
220 Newtownards Road
Ballymacarrett
Belfast

Br David Jardine

Prayer Ministry and Anointing with Oil

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store.ireland.anglican.org) has pointed up many of the Church's architectural gems while David Lawrence's splendid Gloine website (www.gloine.ie) has made available the rich heritage of stained glass.



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**Down & Dromore
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Prayer Walk on Mary
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St Mary's Maynooth hosts closing worship for international liturgy conference

230 delegates from around the world gathered in St Mary's Maynooth at the conclusion of a four-day liturgy conference in St Patrick's College.

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From left to right: Rev Philip McKinley (Curate, Dunboyne and Rathmolyon Group of Parishes), Rev Dorothea Haspelmath-Finatti (Preacher) and Rev Prof E. Byron Anderson (Presider)

The conference was organised by Societas Liturgica, an ecumenical organisation which was founded in 1965 by a Dutch Reformed Pastor, Wiebe Vos.

In keeping with the tradition of the society, the closing Eucharist was celebrated in the tradition of its President, which this year was the United Methodist Church in honour of Rev Prof E. Byron Anderson.



A full house in St Mary's Maynooth with delegates from the Societas Liturgica conference

the conference explored a range of contemporary issues for worship and liturgy, including digital technology, COVID-19 and the growth of Pentecostalism.

The conference also published a position paper on the need for increased ecumenical cooperation in the study of worship.

The conference was organised by an Irish sub-committee of Societas Liturgica, which included Dr Bridget Nichols (Church of Ireland Theological Institute), Dr Kerry Houston (TU Dublin) and Rev Prof Liam Tracey (St Patrick's College Maynooth)

News reports



Queen is new patron of the Royal Army Chaplains' Department

The Chaplain General of His Majesty's Land Forces has been pleased to announce that the King has appointed Her Majesty the Queen as patron of the Royal Army Chaplains' Department, in succession to the Late Queen.

Increase in C of E Youth Pilgrimage to Walsingham

Numbers attending the Walsingham Youth Pilgrimage last week were three times higher than last year, it was reported this week. A total of 308 young people, representing 18 dioceses, were present, compared with just over 100 in 2022.

Among them were six young people from St Mary's, Willesden, accompanied by the Vicar, the Revd Christopher Phillips. "When the sacraments are offered to young people, and presented in a straightforward way, where it is normal and they see other people just like them are engaging in it and receiving them, and you can see fruit being born in the people around you, it just goes to show how much power they have to change people's lives," he said this week.

Originally allocated to sprinkle holy water during the healing service, he had been asked to take confessions because of a long queue of young people seeking to make one. Increase in C of E Youth Pilgrimage to Walsingham

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In the media

Republic of Ireland: Critics fear hate crimes bill will have ‘chilling effect’ on free speech

Evangelical Times - More Irish parliamentarians have spoken out against a proposed hate crime law in the Republic of Ireland, claiming if enacted in its current form, it will have a ‘chilling effect’ on free speech as people fear prosecution.

During a Seanad debate on the Criminal Justice (Incitement to Violence or Hatred and Hate Offences) Bill 2022, Senators expressed fears that people would rather remain silent on ‘controversial’ issues than run the risk of prosecution.

Senator Michael McDowell called for the bill to be amended, branding it ‘a charter for freezing genuine free speech and preventing people from articulating unpopular views’.

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Senator Rónán Mullen asked, ‘Will robust campaigning by parents against inappropriate school curricula be allowed?’



Catholic police officers fearful of impact of serious PSNI data breach

News Letter - A body which represents Catholic police officers in Northern Ireland is fearful of the impact that the serious PSNI data breach will have on future recruitment of young Catholics.

The Catholic Police Guild, a body which represents a significant number of Catholic members of the PSNI, has said the serious data breaches require a full response from the senior ranks of the Police Service, Graeme Cousins writes.

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Superintendent Gerry Murray, the guild's chairperson, is seeking reassurance from the chief constable on behalf of the organisation's members.

He said: "Our Guild was formed to provide a support service within the PSNI for Catholic members, and to raise issues which impact on their work within the PSNI.

"It is hard to think of a more pressing issue for Catholic officers and staff than the data breaches which have come to light this week. Everyone understands the particular difficulties faced by Catholic members of the PSNI and indeed the implications of this for potential new recruits from the Catholic community.

"Our members have expressed genuinely held concerns over the release of this information, they are worried for themselves and in many cases for their family members. As Chairman of the Guild I am also concerned about the impact on future recruitment of young Catholics into the police service.

"We are seeking an urgent meeting with the chief constable and senior colleagues and we want to be assured that the data breach will be fully and quickly investigated and procedures put in place to ensure it cannot happen again.

He added: "Catholic officers and staff who feel vulnerable need to be supported in protecting themselves, their families and their homes. The Police Service must acknowledge and take account of the particular sensitivities of the Catholic members of the Force. The community background of police officers and staff has to be given the proportionate weight

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when considering the implications of this data breach on serving officers.

“It is important that the police service acts quickly and comprehensively to win back and retain the confidence of serving officers and staff. This applies particularly to colleagues from the Catholic community.”

Irish Times - Almost 2,000 police officers had by Friday evening registered an interest in joining any legal action which might be taken against the PSNI over the data breach, according to the Police Federation of Northern Ireland.

Belfast News Letter - A UK-wide approach to police data protection may be needed following news that Cumbria police experienced a similar data breach to the PSNI

Migrants taken off barge in Legionella scare

Daily Telegraph - Home Office branded ‘incompetent’ as vessel may be uninhabitable for weeks

The Home Office has been branded “incompetent” over the Bibby Stockholm barge fiasco, as it emerged the vessel will be out of action for weeks following the discovery of Legionella bacteria in its water supply.

All 39 asylum seekers living on the barge were evacuated yesterday and taken back to hotels just five days after the green light was given for them to board on Monday.

Senior MPs have raised questions over why the migrants were allowed on the barge in the first place before the result

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of tests for the bacteria had come back, and why at least six asylum seekers were boarded after Home Office officials had been made aware there was Legionella on the vessel. Tory MPs are furious over the debacle, which came at the end of a week in which the Government made a series of announcements aimed at promoting its efforts to tackle illegal migration.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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