

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Superb history of Nine Lessons & Carols

Image of the day



Superb history of Nine Lessons & Carols

Treat yourself and your friends with this superb web site account of the origin and the development of this annual ever-increasing popular festival.

The Archive of Recorded Church Music writes - We present a history of the 'Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols' illustrated with rare recordings, radio & TV broadcasts and photos, including Dean Eric Milner-White reading part of the Christmas story.



Scroll down the webpage for details of our exciting King's and Cleobury Christmas upload. Click here to read:

[https://
recordedchurchmusic.org/
story-of-nine-lessons](https://recordedchurchmusic.org/story-of-nine-lessons)

See also today's "Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books" section for "Royal Carols: Together At Christmas - Christmas Eve on ITV1"

People and places

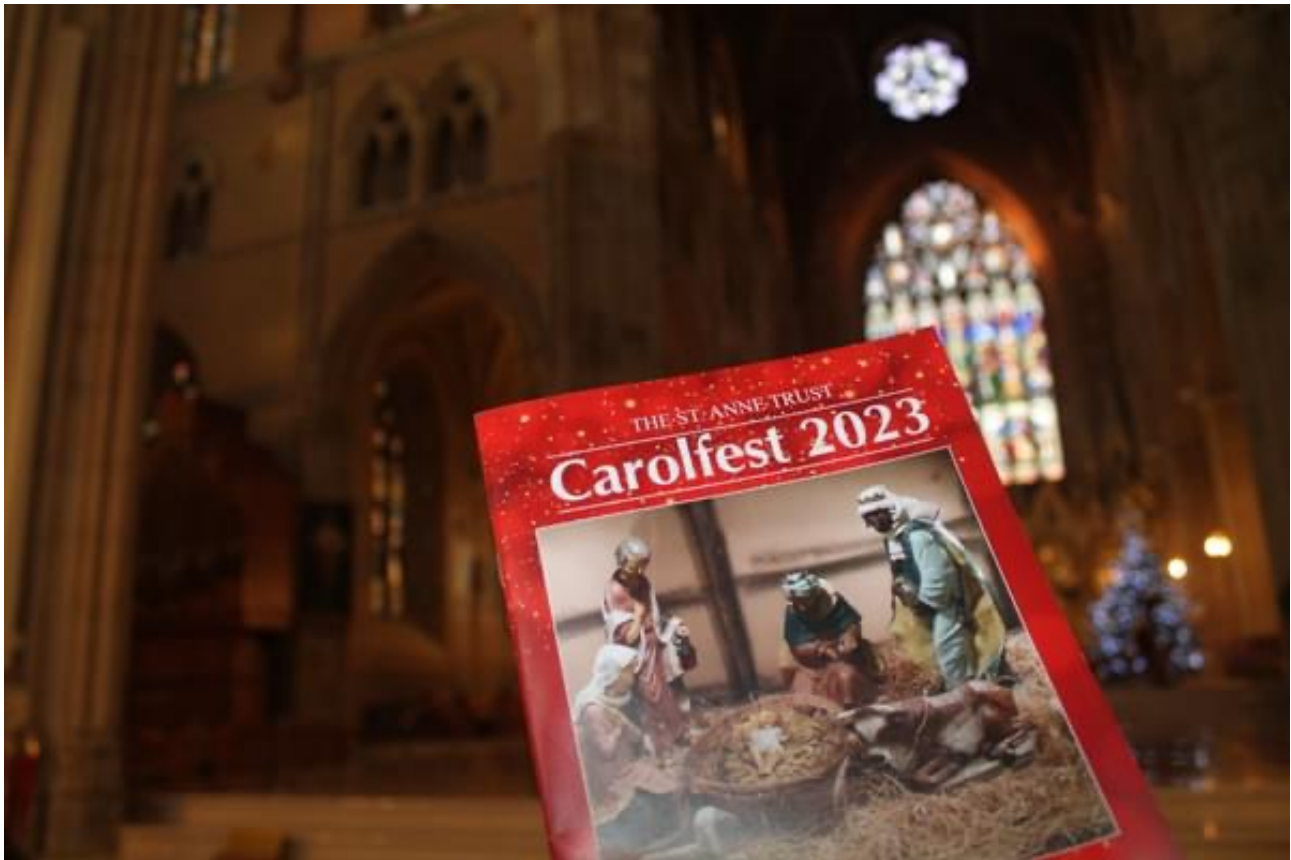
Derry curate shines a light on efforts to overcome poverty in Bangladesh

A Derry curate is hanging a star made of sari fabric on her Christmas tree this festive season to raise awareness of efforts to help young women overcome extreme poverty in Bangladesh.

Rev Andrea Cotter's homemade 'sari-star' is representative of some of the products made by entrepreneurial young

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women in Bangladesh, supported by Christian Aid and its local partner, to boost both their income and social status.



St Anne Trust Carolfest is growing every year

The annual St Anne Trust Carolfest is growing every year, with a total of five Carolfests taking place in the run-up to Christmas, including two in Belfast Cathedral.

Services were held in the St Philip and St James, Holywood Parish Church; in St Patrick's RC Cathedral, Armagh; and, in quite a unique service, in both St Macartin's Cathedral and St Michael's Church, Enniskillen. Read more at <https://rb.gy/g56fve>



412 Youth Centre opens in Shankill, Lurgan

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It was a wonderful evening in Lurgan as Shankill Parish Lurgan opened the 412 Youth Centre beside The Jethro Centre.

Bishop David McClay dedicated the centre which would not have happened without the vision and support of the staff team, select vestry and Shankill parishioners. The support of local politicians Carla Lockhart MP Peter Haire and Peter Lavery who were present was appreciated.



Sitouts from Drumbeg to Enniskillen

Dean Kenneth Hall's charity sit-out at Enniskillen Cathedral had a stormy beginning yesterday at 9am as

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the wind and rain from Storm Pia passed over Fermanagh.

However during the day, there were plenty of people making their way to the Cathedral gates to make a donation. Among these were worshippers at the Thursday morning service in the Cathedral.

This year, funds collected during the 12-hour sit-out from 9am to 9pm will be distributed to Bishops' Appeal, Air Ambulance Northern Ireland and the Cathedral Outreach Fund.



Today, Revd Johnny McLoughlin, Rector of Aghavea Parish will be sitting out for charity in Brookeborough from 9am to 9pm.

Final stop of the day is at Drumbeg Parish (Photo left) where the Rector and the Curate (Canon Willie Nixon and Tim) begun the



now Annual 24 hour sit-out (Photo above).

Funds raised will help Habitat’s support for those forced to flee their homes because of war in Ukraine

Christmas message from Archbishop Eamon Martin

“He assumed at his first coming the lowliness of human flesh, and so fulfilled the design you formed long ago, and opened for us the way to eternal salvation...”

May we inherit that great promise in which now we dare to hope. This profound prayer from the first Advent preface is particularly relevant this year as we dare to hope for



Christmas peace and joy in the midst of a very troubled world.

I have been privileged during my years as a priest and a bishop to witness many people ‘daring to hope’ even in the most difficult of circumstances. I can’t imagine what it must be like to lose all hope. And yet sadly we live in a world where too many people fall into despair – sometimes turning to alcohol, drugs, other addictions or self-harm in order to escape their fears and disappointments.

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In the musical version of Les Misérables, the lead character, Jean Valjean, sings of God: “He gave me hope when hope was gone. He gave me strength to journey on.”

For me that’s what “daring to hope” is about – to have hope when hope seems gone; to truly believe that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us – our reason for living; our reason for hoping.

There seem to be so many reasons nowadays to give up on hope – the terrible wars, violence and injustices that appear intractable; the shocking disregard for human dignity and vulnerable life; the almost relentless advance of climate change. At a personal level it is easy sometimes to feel overwhelmed by the pressures and worries of every day. But as people of God we can never allow ourselves, or the world, to stop daring to hope.

This Christmas I pray for an outpouring of hope – light in the darkness – for you, your loved ones and all those we serve. Thank you for all that you do.

A very Happy Christmas to you, and many blessings for the New Year.

Archbishop Eamon Martin is Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland

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In the media

Cheap Anglophobia is all that Varadkar knows - Daily Telegraph

Ireland is hypocritical for suing the UK over the Troubles Legacy Act. It's just playing up for Biden, Ruth Dudley Edwards writes.

Even if you disqualify Gerry (I-was-never-in-the-IRA) Adams and his Sinn Fein colleagues, there is no shortage of prime candidates for the position of Chief Hypocrite of the Irish Peace Process. But though he's a late starter and has stiff competition from historic candidates like Tony Blair, Leo Varadkar has powered his way to the front of the field.

His government, he tells us, "with a sense of regret", is going to the Strasbourg court to sue the British government for breaching the Convention on Human Rights with its Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act, which gives some immunity from prosecution.

He has no option, apparently, because his government made "a commitment to survivors in Northern Ireland and to the families of victims that we would stand by them, respect their wishes and also stand by the Good Friday Agreement, which specifically references the European Convention on Human Rights."

Everything about this is dodgy, particularly the timing, which came when the elaborate minuet being danced by the

British and Irish governments, hand in hand, trying to bribe the DUP back into Stormont, was thought to be bearing fruit.

Now it is true that the legacy legislation has been denounced by every political party in Northern Ireland. No one wants those who murdered their loved ones off the hook. But it's also true that what precipitated the legacy bill was public outrage in England that while a few elderly soldiers – more than 600 of whose comrades were murdered by the IRA – were being pursued over alleged murder 50 years ago, there never seemed to be enough evidence to put in jail republican politicians that – in the Northern Irish idiom – the dogs in the street knew to be as guilty as hell.

In practice, the whole justice system has been biased against representatives of the British state. Unlike the forces of law and order, terrorists do not keep records, tell the truth, tolerate unhelpful witnesses or run short of lawyers. Under Blair, there was much underhand facilitation of those known as “On the Runs” and hundreds of millions were chucked into investigating anti-state claims. There was little interest in the widows and children of cops or squaddies.

Successive governments in the Republic – although in theory they deplored IRA atrocities – gave virtually no support to those seeking justice for republican crimes. IRA terrorists left their homes in the south to cross the border and murder men in lonely farms and villages, and then raced back home rejoicing in the knowledge that, even should the police have enough evidence to charge them, they would not be extradited.

Where the mega hypocrisy comes in is that, though Varadkar is taking a high moral line about amnesty, the British Government is doing nothing that the Irish haven't done for years.

From 1999 to 2007, Michael McDowell was attorney general and then minister for justice, and one of the harshest critics of the IRA and Sinn Fein. He has written publicly that the government of which he was a member yielded to the incessant demands of Sinn Fein for immunity from criminal prosecution for unconvicted IRA members, and brought in a de facto moratorium on investigation and prosecution of IRA members.

In the UK, after decades of wrestling with the issue, the Government decided to draw a line in the sand and have an amnesty in exchange for information. Even though my heart is with those who opposed any such betrayal of the forces of law and order, my head is with the compromisers, since I think they offer a worthwhile alternative.

What is hardest for victims to bear is not knowing the truth. The new Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery is already taking shape. Since it would require cross-border co-operation, Westminster wanted inter-governmental consultations to make it work.

So why the threat of legal action? Well, ever since Brexit, which Ireland took personally, Joe Biden – who is obsessed with his Irish Catholic heritage – has made it clear that in any disagreement between “the Brits” and his ancestral home he's in the green corner. Varadkar has an election coming up, Anglophobia is rampant, Sinn Fein are breathing

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over his shoulder and Irish prosperity depends on Silicon Valley.

He reached for his handiest weapon. Go to the top of the class, Leo.

Follow Ruth Dudley Edwards on Twitter @RuthDE

£500k payout for man who claimed paedophile priest subjected him to years of sexual and physical abuse - Belfast News Letter

A man who claimed a paedophile priest subjected him to years of sexual and physical abuse at a Co Down school is to receive £500,000 in damages, the High Court heard, writes Alan Erwin.

The settlement was reached in an action over alleged historical assaults by the late Fr Malachy Finnegan.

The plaintiff, who is not being named, sued the Diocese of Dromore and the Board of Governors at St Colman's College in Newry.

Proceedings centred on alleged attacks on him over a five year period while a pupil at the school during the 1980s.

A statement of claim said he was targeted and groomed by Finnegan for the purposes of an abusive sexual, physical and emotional relationship.

He was sexually assaulted in a series of locations, including the vestry, priests' corridor and lounge, the nuns' chapel and the President's business office, according to court papers.

Finnegan also allegedly choked the plaintiff, punched and slapped him on multiple occasions, and threatened him not to make any disclosure.

Lawyers for the man said he believes the priest surreptitiously put vodka in his fizzy drink before molesting him.

He lived in constant fear during his time as a student at the college, became suicidal and even considered burning down the priests' chapel.

It was alleged that the assaults became less frequent when Finnegan moved on to abuse a younger boy as a replacement.

Since leaving the school the plaintiff has spent several years unable to work due to his psychological injuries and trauma.

The case is one of a number of actions focused on the activities of Finnegan.

He taught and worked at St Colman's College from 1967 to 1987, spending the last decade as the school's president.

The priest, who died on 2002, was accused of a long campaign of child sexual abuse but never prosecuted or questioned by police about claims made against him.

In 2018 it emerged that the Diocese of Dromore had settled a previous claim made by one of his alleged victims.

At that stage the Board of Governors at St Colman's condemned the physical, sexual and emotional abuse inflicted by Finnegan while he worked there. His image was also removed from the school's photographs.

Legal action against the defendants involved claims for negligence, assault, battery and trespass to the person.

In court today counsel for the plaintiff, David Ringland KC, announced that his client is to receive £500,000 damages plus costs under the terms of the resolution. No admission of liability was made by the defendants.

Outside court the man's solicitor, Claire McKeegan of Phoenix Law, said: "This settlement is a welcome vindication for our client who was repeatedly sexually abused as a young boy by the former President of St Colmans College.

"Malachy Finnegan was a priest of the Catholic Church who resided in the college. For three decades he acted under the protective cloak of the Church."

Ms McKeegan added: "For children like my client, there was no escape from his campaign of terror.

"The pain and suffering is lifelong for children who have been violated in this grotesque manner by those in positions of trust."

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Royal Carols: Together At Christmas - Christmas Eve on ITV1

The Princess of Wales will deliver a heartfelt thanks to all those helping babies and young children “feel safe, valued and loved” in a video message for her televised carol service.

Kate hosted her Together At Christmas event at Westminster Abbey on December 8, welcoming her family, members of the monarchy and inspiring individuals in celebration of those supporting children and families.

The event will be broadcast on Christmas Eve on ITV1 as part of the special programme Royal Carols: Together At Christmas, featuring additional material including films emphasising the importance of early childhood and contributions from celebrities like Rio and Kate Ferdinand and Dame Sheila Hancock.

In her message Kate will say: “Christmas is a time when we come together and celebrate the birth of a newborn baby.

“The arrival of every baby is a precious and momentous time, it brings us together to reflect on new beginnings and brings hope for the future.

“Throughout our earliest interactions, relationships and experiences, with those who love us, even before we are born, we lay the foundations to so much of what that future will depend on. But only by valuing and supporting the vital role of the adults in a child's world can we hope to make a difference.”

She added: “From parents and carers, to early educators, midwives, health visitors and community volunteers, thank you for all you do in helping the very youngest members of our communities, feel safe, valued and loved.

Coronation of King Charles III, and the Royal family as never seen before

The Prince of Wales strokes his father’s cheek. The King jokes about his sausage fingers. And the Archbishop of Canterbury worries aloud about accidentally breaking the sovereign’s neck.

This is the Coronation of King Charles III, and the Royal family as never seen before. A new documentary taking the public behind the scenes of the once-in-a-generation Westminster Abbey service has shown the no-nonsense, affectionate and teasing sides of the senior members of the family as they go about their preparation for the big day.

With footage of rehearsals, in which the King and his elder son laugh as they rehearse the details of a kiss of homage, the programme is intended to capture the hidden story of the Coronation for the history books.

With moving commentary from the Princess Royal, who speaks of her mother's death and funeral, it captures for posterity the balance between solemn tradition and family life at the heart of the Firm.

Charles III: The Coronation Year will be broadcast on Boxing Day at 6.50pm on BBC One and iPlayer.

Justin Welby, star of the show

The Archbishop of Canterbury proved the break-out star of the show, with his dry humour breaking the ice of Coronation formality throughout.

As the Prince of Wales tried to get to grips with where and when he was moving during the service, the Archbishop told him solemnly: "If you ever get lost Sir in this, you just look confident and bow."

Fumbling one of his lines, as another official teased him, "You must have done this before?" he proclaimed he had a memory as good as his pet spaniel.

As they practised putting on the St Edward's Crown – gesturing in thin air before the Crown itself was delivered for the real ceremony – the King advised him to "jam it on".

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“I don’t want to break your neck, Sir,” the Archbishop replied. “It might ruin the service.”

The jovial atmosphere extended to the Royal family. When rehearsing the Queen’s crowning, Queen Camilla was filmed looking at her husband to remind him: “You’ve got to say yes or no.”

At that moment, the Archbishop adds: “If you don’t say anything, if you don’t nod or indicate, Sir, I can’t crown Her Majesty.”

The Queen, grinning, chips in: “Don’t bother to look, I’m very happy.”

Other surprise stars of the show include a Ukrainian geography teacher who is over in the UK for military training and meets the King, as well as Liverpoolian brothers who have built a business empire from seed funding from the Prince’s Trust in 1985.

Poem for today

The Kerry Christmas Carol by Sigerson Clifford

Brush the floor and clean the hearth,
And set the fire to keep,
For they might visit us tonight
When all the world's asleep.

Don't blow the tall white candle out

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But leave it burning bright,
So that they'll know they're welcome here
This holy Christmas night.

Leave out the bread and meat for them,
And sweet milk for the Child,
And they will bless the fire, that baked
And, too, the hands that toiled.

For Joseph will be travel-tired,
And Mary pale and wan,
And they can sleep a little while
Before they journey on.

They will be weary of the roads,
And rest will comfort them,
For it must be many a lonely mile
From here to Bethlehem.

O long the road they have to go,
The bad mile with the good,
Till the journey ends on Calvary
Beneath a cross of wood.

Leave the door upon the latch,
And set the fire to keep,
And pray they'll rest with us tonight
When all the world's asleep.

The poem is an evocation of an old Irish custom in which each household would leave a lighted candle in their window on Christmas night. There was a pious belief that Joseph and Mary and the Child still wandered the roads of

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the world, looking for a place to rest from the persecution of Herod. That they should show a preference for the roads of rural Ireland was accepted as a given.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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