

# Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – Cathedral prepared for Christmas**

## Image of the day

### Cathedral prepared for Christmas

**The halls are decked, the lights are gleaming and joy resonates within the walls of St Patrick's cathedral, Dublin**

A majestic 20-foot Christmas tree stands tall, a symbol of faith, love and the spirit of the season. As Advent proceeds you are invited by the community at St Patrick's to bask in the warmth of togetherness and the blessings of this festive time - to join in celebrating the magic of Christmas at Saint Patrick's Cathedral!

## People and places

### Hitting the right notes for organ restoration at St George's Belfast

**St George's Parish in Belfast is hoping to hit the right note by fundraising to restore 160-year-old church organ**

Yesterday St George's hosted an advent carol service (December 3) to celebrate the launch of plans to raise funds to restore the church's organ.

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[York Minster's Advent Wreath has been raised!](#)  
[Come and see this beautiful display created by the York Minster Flower Arrangers](#)

The organ, which was built by J W Walker in 1863, needs urgent attention after a full inspection was carried out on the instrument.

It has been recommended that the organ has both the tracker action and the wind system restored, followed by refurbishing the console, and reinstating some stops removed in an earlier restoration.

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The estimated cost of the renovations is £100,000, and on Sunday, following the advent carol service, St George's Organ Committee launched the fundraising initiative, known as the 'St George's Organ Fund'.

The organ fund account opened with a bequest amounting to £43,000 from the late David McElderry, Hilary Headley and Billy Adair, with parishioners outlining their intention to contribute generously to the fund.

In addition to covering the cost of the urgent repairs now needed on the organ, funds raised will be put towards two new stops being added to the instrument.

The new stops will commemorate and celebrate the important contribution the late David McElderry made to St George's for over 40 years as a singer, vestry member and organ builder.

It will also fulfil David's long-held wish to improve the solo and accompanying potential of the instrument, and provide a vibrant, musical memorial to him.

Funds for their restoration project are being raised through organising fundraising events, including recitals and parish lunches, with members of the public also being able to donate through a crowdfunding appeal.

Furthermore, the committee vowed they will also apply for funding from charities that support the restoration of historic organs.

The organ fund is now open to receive donations.

## Generous response to Mothers Union Baby Basics project



Frances from Baby Basics in Ballyclare.  
Members of the branch with some of the items collected.



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**The Craigs, Dunaghy & Killagan Branch recently held their annual project night in Craigs Church Hall and the members excelled themselves with the amount of baby essentials they produced.**

Following the lead of Killagan Sunday School Children, it was decided to give the donations to Baby Basics. Frances from Baby Basics in Ballyclare was thrilled to receive a “carbootfull” of hand knits and baby essentials to help continue the work of Baby Basics in the area.

## **Five lay people commissioned for pastoral work as lay local ministers in Cork, Cloyne and Ross**

**Five new Lay Local Ministers (LLMs) were commissioned by Bishop Paul Colton for pastoral work in the diocese recently. The commissioning was part of the Diocesan Service for Lay Ministry held at St Fin Barre’s Cathedral.**

The new LLMs completed a two year course in pastoral studies laid down by the Bishop of Cork, and delivered under the supervision of the Rev. Bruce Pierce, who recently retired as Director of Education at Northridge House Education and Research Centre at St Luke’s Charity Cork.

The Local Lay Ministers (Pastoral) have a unique role in the diocese, being called to bring Christ’s presence to all, through their care for others. They are lay volunteers who



With the Bishop, Dr Paul Colton, following the commissioning of Lay Local Ministers for pastoral work in Cork, Cloyne and Ross were:

Front row (left to right): Paulette Murray, the Bishop and Anne Hevers;

Back row (left to right): the Reverend Bruce Piece, Lineke Stam, Clodagh King, Mary O’Riordan, and the Reverend Terry Mitchell, Chaplain to Lay Ministers in Cork, Cloyne and Ross.

are part of the local parish ministry team, and each is in a mentoring relationship with the local rector, priest-in-charge or chaplain in care settings.



## Support for Christian Aid in north Connor

**Last week, Christian Aid Ireland's Church and Community Officer Kaye Steele spoke to the Ladies Guild of St Colman's Derrykeighan in Dervock, County Antrim about CAI's work in Bangladesh. In Kurigram in the north of the country.**

It is a region affected by annual flooding, extreme poverty and child marriage, where CAI's partner has supported young women to set up online businesses and now the young women are seeing their social status rise, as well as their incomes.

CAI is grateful to the Derrykeighan women for their invitation and to the one male in the room, Reg the dog, who listened attentively to what Kaye had to say. (He almost broke into a round of a-paws).



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Visit [caid.ie/bookaspeaker](http://caid.ie/bookaspeaker) if you would like a Christian Aid speaker to come to your church, community group or school.

St Colman's Derrykeighan is a parish within the Church of Ireland Diocese of Connor.

## **Fifteen students begin their studies for the priesthood for Irish dioceses**

**Fifteen new seminarians have begun their 2023-2024 academic programme and priestly formation for Irish dioceses. In total 64 seminarians are currently studying for the priesthood for Irish dioceses.**

Commenting on this year's intake of seminarians, Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan, chair of the Bishops' Council for Vocations, said, "We must always remind ourselves that this is God's Church (Acts 20:28). Today's figure of fifteen new seminarians represents the reality, and is a clear indication, that God is still calling, and that men are responding with generosity. I prayerfully commend seminarians to God's grace. We need priests and always will. The priesthood is a precious gift to the Church instituted by Christ and, as we continue to encourage vocations we do so in hope, not because we trust in our human efforts, but because we trust in God."

Father Willie Purcell, National Diocesan Vocations Coordinator, said, "Especially during this dedicated 'Year for Vocation to the Diocesan Priesthood', I warmly welcome the figure of fifteen new students who have 'taken the risk for



Christ' by entering vocational training to the diocesan priesthood. Like generations before them, when ordained as priests, they will selflessly serve the mission of the Church along with the sacramental, spiritual and pastoral needs of parishioners across the island of Ireland. The Church will do everything it can to support seminarians throughout their formation period and during their ministry as priests. I pray to the Lord in joy and thanksgiving for all vocations to the priesthood.”

The fifteen new students are currently undertaking their Propaedeutic Programme in the Redemptoris Mater Seminary, Dundalk, Archdiocese of Armagh; Royal English College, Valladolid, Spain; and, Royal Scots College, Salamanca, Spain. These fifteen bring the total number of seminarians studying for the priesthood for Irish dioceses to

64. See below for the list of seminaries and houses of study where seminarians are undertaking their formation.

The Propaedeutic Stage is a distinct stage that takes place in a recognised seminary, approved by the Holy See and the relevant Bishops' Conference – see explanation below.

Upon completion of this programme, the seminarian, with the nomination of his bishop, then applies to a seminary to continue his formation for an Irish diocese.

## **Ashford shines a light on Jerusalem**

**The community of Ashford and beyond rallied around last Friday (December 1) and raised over €4,000 for Dublin and Glendalough's Advent and Christmas appeal – 'Shine a Light for the Diocese of Jerusalem'.**

The Hub in Ashford village, which is run by Nun's Cross Church, Killiskey, hosted a coffee morning in aid of the appeal for the Diocese of Jerusalem which operates, among other institutions, Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City.

The coffee morning was organised by local resident, Lesley Rue, and apart from sales of baked goods and raffle tickets, and contributions for coffee, donations were received from local businesses and collections held further afield.

Archbishop Michael Jackson joined those who enjoyed excellent cakes in the Hub.

Al-Ahli Hospital reopened following an explosion in its grounds in mid-October. It was the last hospital operating in

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The Revd Jack Kinkead, the Revd Ken Rue, Lesley Rue and Archbishop Michael Jackson at the Gaza coffee morning in the Hub, Ashford.

northern Gaza when it had to effectively close just over two weeks ago due to lack of fuel and medicine.

However, the recent ceasefire enabled the World Health Organisation to oversee deliveries of fuel for generators, anaesthesia, ICU supplies, emergency drugs and IV fluids.

It became once again the only functional hospital in northern Gaza, according to contacts in the Diocese of Jerusalem.

You can read the full story as well as find out how to donate on the website here: <https://dublin.anglican.org/news/2023/12/01/ashford-coffee-morning-raises-4k>



## News reports

### The Bells of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris have been restored

#### **The new bells are:**

The bourdon "Marie" (6.023 kg; 206.5 cm in diameter), dedicated to Our Lady. It is the largest of the nine bells.

The "Gabriel" bell (4.162 kg and 182.8 cm in diameter), dedicated to the Archangel Gabriel of Annunciation fame.

The bell "Ana Genoveva" (3.477 kg; 172.5 cm in diameter), dedicated to Saint Anne, mother of the Virgin Mary,, and Saint Genoveva, patron saint and protector of Paris.

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The "Dionysus" bell (2.502 kg; 153.6 cm in diameter) named for Saint Dionysus, first bishop of Paris.

The "Marcelo" bell (1.925 kg; 139.3 cm in diameter), named in memory of Saint Marcelo, ninth bishop of Paris, much revered by Parisians for his charity to the poor and the sick.

The "Stephen" bell (1.494 kg; 126.7 cm in diameter) named after the cathedral of Paris that preceded the current one and was dedicated to Saint Stephen.



THE ST. ANNE TRUST

*Enriching lives through education arts, culture and heritage.*

## **Carolfest 2023 – Enniskillen Primary Schools**

**St Macartin's Cathedral, and St Michael's Church. Enniskillen**

**Wednesday 13th December 2023. at 11.00 a.m.**

***One service of unity in two locations***

**The directors of The St Anne Trust extend a cordial**

**INVITATION**

**to join with them**

**and primary school pupils from**

**Enniskillen Integrated Enniskillen Model**

**and Holy Trinity**

**in this community event**

**Please be seated at 10.45 a.m.**

**RSVP by email to [info@thestannetrust.org](mailto:info@thestannetrust.org)**

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The "Bento-Jose" bell (1.309 kg; 120.7 cm in diameter) in reference to the Pope Benedict XVI and Saint Joseph.

The "Mauritius" bell (1.011 kg; 109.7 cm in diameter) in memory of Mauricio de Sully, 72nd Bishop of Paris, who laid the first stone of Notre Dame Cathedral in 1163.

The bell "Jean-Marie" (782 kg; 99.7 cm in diameter), the smallest of the bells, named after Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger.

## the media

### **COP28 - Pope Francis stays at Rome but sends message to world leaders gathered at in Dubai - CatholicHerald**

**Rome – Despite cancelling a planned trip to the COP28 United Nations climate summit in Dubai due to health concerns, Pope Francis sent a message to the event on Saturday lamenting the lack of progress in fighting climate change, repeating appeals for multilateralism, and calling the world to action, Elise Ann Allen writes.**

In a prepared speech read aloud by the Vatican's Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Pope Francis said "the destruction of the environment is an offence against God, a sin that is not only personal but also structural."

It is a sin, he said, "that greatly endangers all human beings, especially the most vulnerable in our midst and threatens to unleash a conflict between generations."

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“Are we working for a culture of life or a culture of death? To all of you I make this heartfelt appeal: Let us choose life! Let us choose the future!”

Pope Francis was scheduled to make a visit to Dubai between 1 and 3 December to address the COP28 summit and was expected to hold over 30 bilateral meetings with various heads of state and representatives of various organizations.

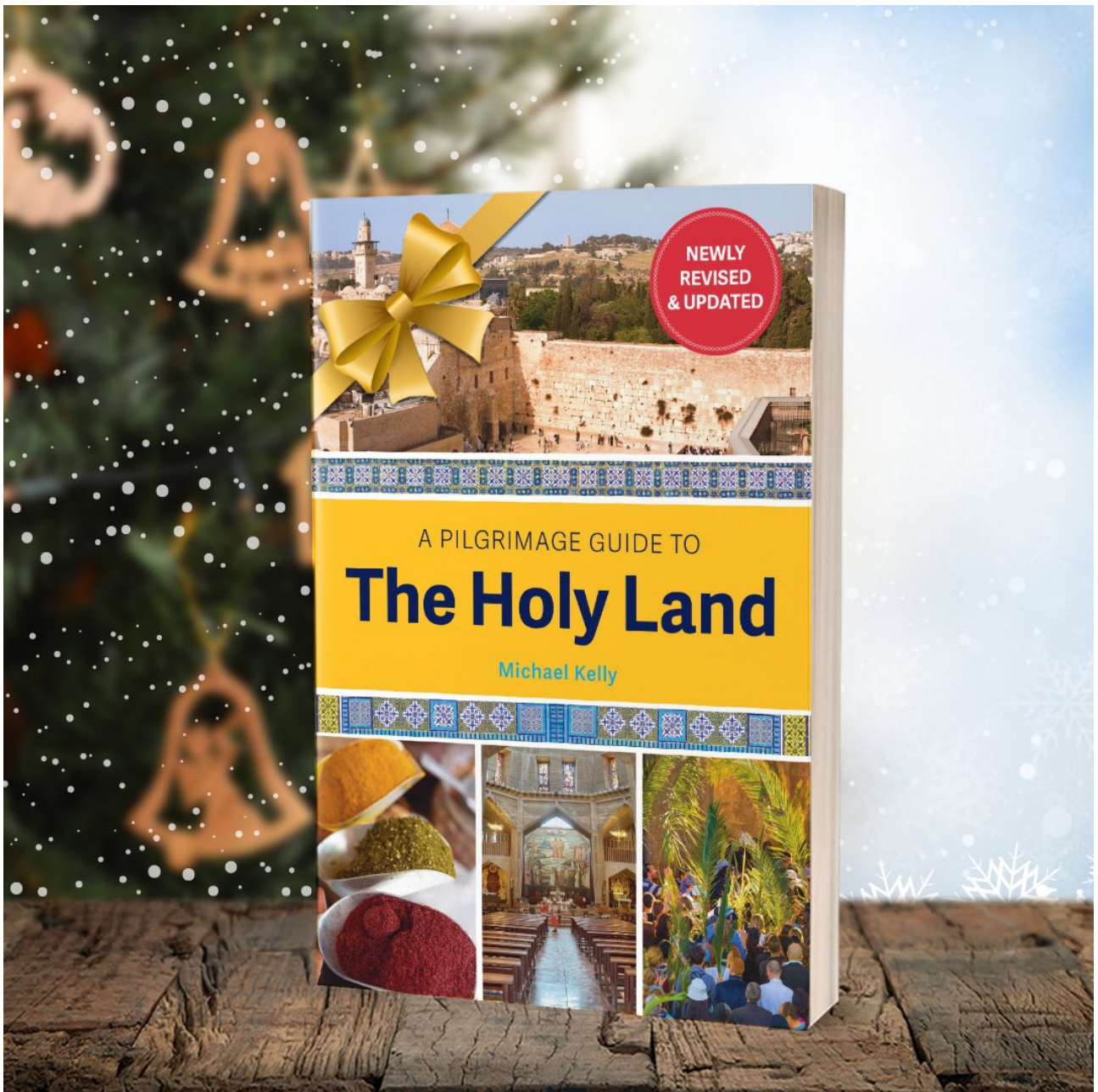
However, he cancelled the visit earlier this week after being advised to do so by his doctors due to what the Vatican has described as a “mild flu” causing lung inflammation, for which he is receiving antibiotics.

Speaking to participants in a seminar on ethics in healthcare management on 30 November, Pope Francis said he had “a very acute, infectious bronchitis,” and that while he no longer had a fever, he remains on antibiotics to treat his lung inflammation.

Cardinal Parolin traveled to COP28 in his place, where he pronounced the Pope’s speech faulting human activity for the greenhouse gas emissions which scientists say is causing global warming, and condemned an obsessive drive for production he said has caused “an inordinate greed that has made the environment the object of unbridled exploitation.”

“The climate, run amok, is crying out to us to halt this illusion of omnipotence,” the Pope said in his speech, saying world leaders must be humble in recognizing limits.





Michael Kelly - Until Christmas Eve, all royalties from my book bought on <http://columbabooks.com> will go to support peace and reconciliation projects in the Holy Land. The newly-revised and updated edition will make a perfect Christmas present, and help do some good at a tough time.

Several things stand in the way of this recognition, such as widespread divisions, he said, saying that “a world completely connected, like ours today, should not be unconnected by those who govern it.”

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It should not be the case that international negotiations “cannot make significant progress due to positions taken by countries which place their national interests above the global common good,” he said, condemning nations that choose to protect income and business interests over people while shifting blame onto others.

To this end, Pope Francis condemned what he said were attempts “to shift the blame onto the poor and high birth rates,” saying these are “falsities that must be firmly dispelled.”

The poor cannot be responsible when they are responsible for just 10 percent of toxic emissions, while the gap between “the opulent few and the masses of the poor has never been so abysmal”, he said, calling the poor the real victims.

Pope Francis also hit back against advocates of population control who fault high birth rates for climate woes, saying, “Births are not a problem, but a resource.”

“They are not opposed to life, but for life, whereas certain ideological and utilitarian models now being imposed with a velvet glove on families and peoples constitute real forms of colonization,” he said.

Pope Francis also said poorer nations should be forgiven their economic debt, as wealthier nations owe them what he said was “a deeply troubling ‘ecological debt.’”

“It would only be fair to find suitable means of remitting the financial debts that burden different peoples, not least in light of the ecological debt that they are owed,” he said.

As he has in the past, the Pope advocated for multilateralism as a strategy for moving forward, saying, “Our world has become so multipolar and at the same time so complex that a different framework for effective cooperation is required.”

“It is disturbing that global warming has been accompanied by a general cooling of multilateralism, a growing lack of trust within the international community,” he said, saying, “It is essential to rebuild trust, which is the foundation of multilateralism.”

Speaking of the need end global conflicts, Pope Francis said care of creation and the pursuit of peace go hand in hand, and lamented the vast amount of human energy being wasted “on the numerous wars presently in course, such as those in Israel and Palestine, in Ukraine and in many parts of the world.”

These conflicts will not solve problems, but will increase them, he said, lamenting the many resources “being squandered on weaponry that destroys lives and devastates our common home.”

He repeated past pleas for nations to use the money they would spend on weapons and instead allocate it to a global fund to eradicate hunger and to help poorer nations develop and fight climate change.

Pope Francis said it is the responsibility of the young and of future generations to lay the foundation for a solid

multilateralism and insisted that the fight against climate change requires “political change.”

“Let us emerge from the narrowness of self-interest and nationalism; these are approaches belonging to the past. Let us join in embracing an alternative vision” that will bring about ecological conversion, he said, and pledged the Catholic Church’s commitment and support through education and the promotion of sustainable lifestyles.

Calling for “a breakthrough that is not a partial change of course, but rather a new way of making progress together,” the Pope recalled previous climate commitments, including the 1992 climate conference in Rio de Janeiro and the COP21 Paris Agreement in 2015.

“Now there is a need to set out anew. May this COP prove to be a turning point, demonstrating a clear and tangible political will that can lead to a decisive acceleration of ecological transition,” he said, saying the requirements for this transition are that the means must be “efficient, obligatory and readily monitored.”

They must also be achieved in the four sectors of “energy efficiency; renewable sources; the elimination of fossil fuels; and education in lifestyles that are less dependent on the latter,” he said.

“Please, let us move forward and not turn back, he said, saying previous agreements and commitments have been “poorly implemented” and that there is no more time for postponing a response.

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For those in positions of authority, “the purpose of power is to serve,” he said, saying it is useless for those with responsibility “to cling to an authority that will one day be remembered for its inability to take action when it was urgent and necessary to do so.”

“History will be grateful to you. As will the societies in which you live, which are sadly divided into ‘fan bases,’ between prophets of doom and indifferent bystanders, radical environmentalists and climate change deniers,” he said.

The remedy for this “is good politics,” Pope Francis said, saying, “If an example of concreteness and cohesiveness comes from the top, this will benefit the base, where many people, especially the young, are already dedicated to caring for our common home.”

He voiced hope that the year 2024 would mark a breakthrough, and noted that a thousand years ago, in the year 1224, Saint Francis of Assisi composed his famed “Canticle of the Creatures” prayer as the fruit of a mystical experience, after having gone blind.

“I too, who bear the name Francis, with the heartfelt urgency of a prayer, want to leave you with this message: Let us leave behind our divisions and unite our forces!” he said, adding -

**“With God’s help, let us emerge from the dark night of wars and environmental devastation in order to turn our common future into the dawn of a new and radiant day.”**

2 December 2023 AT 18:50.

## Poem for today

### A Prayer on Going Into My House

by William Butler Yeats

God grant a blessing on this tower and cottage  
And on my heirs, if all remain unspoiled,  
No table or chair or stool not simple enough  
For shepherd lads in Galilee; and grant  
That I myself for portions of the year  
May handle nothing and set eyes on nothing  
But what the great and passionate have used  
Throughout so many varying centuries  
We take it for the norm; yet should I dream  
Sinbad the sailor's brought a painted chest,  
Or image, from beyond the Loadstone Mountain,  
That dream is a norm; and should some limb of the Devil  
Destroy the view by cutting down an ash  
That shades the road, or setting up a cottage  
Planned in a government office, shorten his life,  
Manacle his soul upon the Red Sea bottom.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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# Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at [houstonmckelvey@mac.com](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

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