

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Derry Cathedral's Girls

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Derry Cathedral's Girls

Congratulations to the Girls' Choir who had their robes and medals dedicated by Bishop Forster on Sunday morning, and who were presented with their surplices. "You are a fantastic addition to our Cathedral Music" said one who knows.

People and places

Season of Advent launched island wide



Old Leighlin Carols, Readings and Christian Studies



On Advent Sunday, a congregation gathered in the ancient cathedral Church of Saint Laserian in Old Leighlin for a special evening service of Carols and Readings and to witness the awarding of the certificate in Christian Studies to eight students who have recently completed the course.

The graduates were joined by Fr Michael Shortall and Fr John Paul Sheridan, faculty staff of St Patrick's Pontifical University Maynooth (Photo page 2). Congratulations to Adedotun Adekeye, Rosemary Brown, Oliver Deegan, Stephen Doak, Claire Forde, Paul Hanson, Sile Hunt, and Liz Keyes from the dioceses of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory, Cork, Cloyne and Ross, and Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe. A number of those within this year's graduates will be

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commissioned as Diocesan Lay Readers. All will be blessings to the Church of God through their theological studies and the deepening of faith.

After the certificates were presented, the Bishop congratulated all the graduates and thanked the Dean, the Very Revd Tom Gordon, who taught and co-ordinated the course, for his enthusiasm and commitment to adult education in the Diocese.



Belfast Advent procession

The Choir of St Anne's Cathedral with their Advent candles sing at the West Door prior to their customary Advent procession.



Advent candlelight procession in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast



Derry maintains Advent traditions

The Season of Advent was launched formally and dramatically in St Columb's Cathedral in Londonderry on Sunday evening with its traditional Advent procession.

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This is a well-established and much loved service of readings, hymns and anthems on the theme 'Darkness into Light'.

The temperature hovered around freezing as the congregation made their way into church and the comforting warmth of a porch festooned with Christmas lighting.

The Service — which was based on the Great Advent Antiphons — began in darkness (representing the darkness before creation and the darkness of sin), with the choir gradually proceeding by candlelight from the west end of the church to the east, symbolising our journey of faith towards Christ.



This evening Service was led by the Dean of Derry, Very Rev Raymond Stewart, assisted by the Bishop of Derry and

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Raphoe, Rt Rev Andrew Forster and the Cathedral's Pastoral Assistant, Rev Canon John Merrick. The service was sung by the Choristers and Gentlemen of the Cathedral Choir, directed by Dr Derek Collins and accompanied by Nicky Morton on the organ, and among those who delivered the lessons and readings were People's Churchwarden, Miss Muriel Hamilton; Diocesan Reader Mr David Bell; and Parish Reader Ms Jacqui Armstrong.



Final service in Drumshanbo Methodist Church

On Sunday afternoon a final service was conducted in Drumshanbo Methodist Church.



It is the end of Methodist use of this building which is to be largely preserved by the local community association as a community and arts venue. It is not the end of Methodism in the area and we will discover our new future soon. I'm highlighting here one of the local leaders - Rodney Hodgins. With others he has made difficult but important decisions, preserved our legacy in the community

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and shown great commitment to the cause of Christ in the area, I am thankful to God for such leaders in our churches and district. 'We praise Him for all that is past, and trust Him for all that's to come.'



34 C of I students aim to be Fit for the Purpose

A total of 34 students were in attendance for the fourth cycle of the Certificate in Christian Theology and Practice which

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began last weekend at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute.

The programme, entitled 'Fit for the Purpose', took as its theme a personal and biblical exploration of various matters to do with vocation. The lead facilitators were Dr Christina Baxter, former Principal of St John's College, Nottingham, Revd Dr Maurice Elliott, Director of CITI, Revd Ruth Noble, Revd Ken Rue, Andrew McNeile and Andrew Brannigan.



Belfast marks 80 years of Focolare

The Focolare Movement celebrates its 80th (international) anniversary on 7th December 2023.

The Movement, which has a centre in Belfast, works for universal

fraternity, inspired by Jesus' prayer to the Father: 'May they all be one'. (Jn 17:20)

Marking this special anniversary, Bishop Alan McGuckian will celebrate a thanksgiving Mass in Belfast.

Where: Holy Family Church, 226-228 Limestone Road, Belfast BT15 3AP

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When: Thursday 7th December 2023 at 12.00pm, followed by a light celebratory lunch.

All are welcome. Those staying for lunch are asked to RSVP Irene at +44 7599 422914

If you'd like to know more, please contact the Focolare community in Belfast (at above number).

Those unable to attend in person may follow the Mass online at www.holy-familyparish.com.

Note - Parking is NOT possible within the church grounds. You can park (free of charge) on the Limestone Road near the church.

News reports

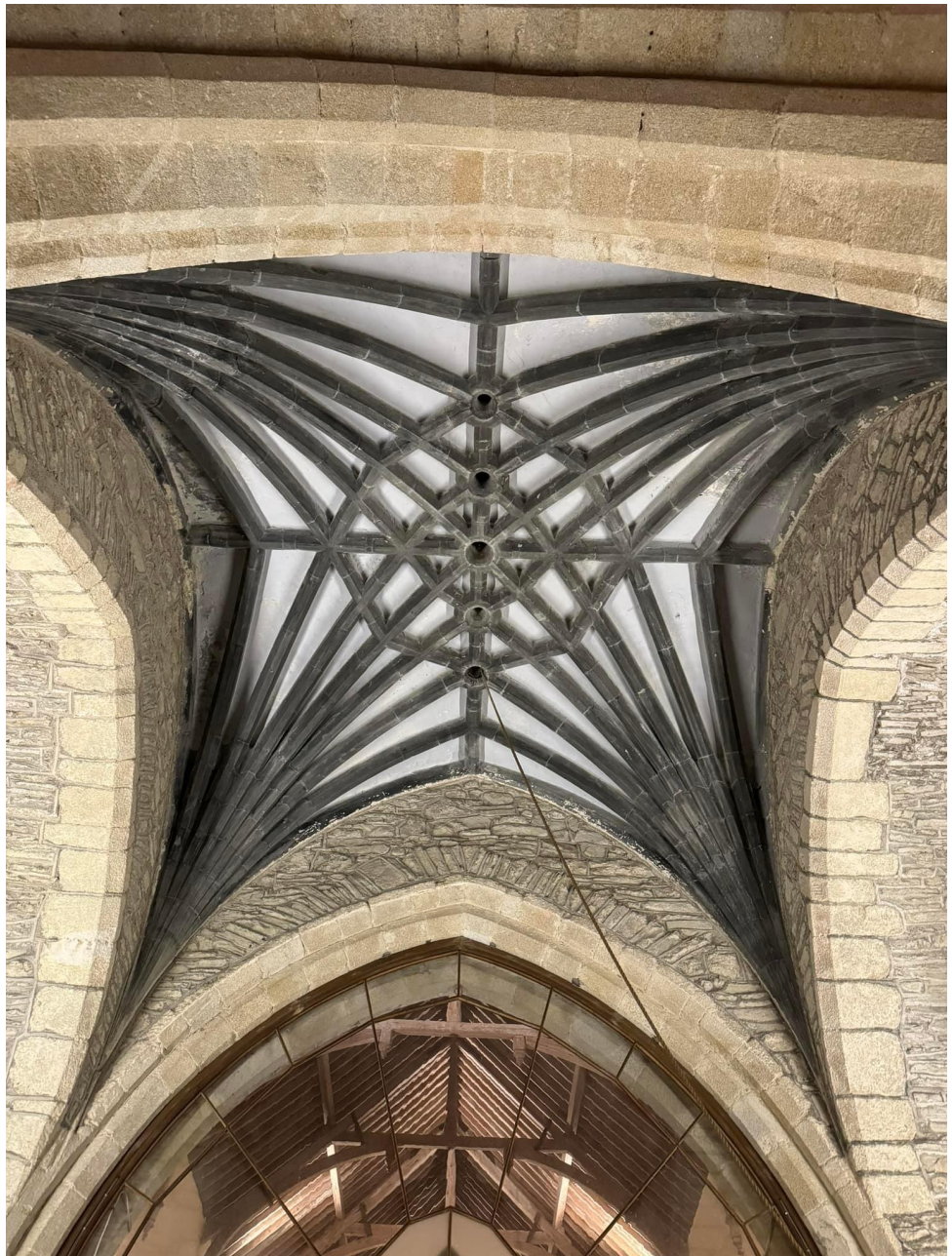
Every Cof E cathedral set to receive a generous bequest from a man who loved cathedrals

Frank Buzzard, who passed away last year, left £4,000 to all the cathedrals in his will after visiting each of them during his retirement. His favourite was Lichfield, for which he left £5,000.

Mr Buzzard, a keen poet, wrote a guide for each of them. His daughter Christine Wild told Premier her dad found cathedrals to be a place of "deep spirituality".

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Wild said:
"He found cathedrals, a place of great spirituality. For him, they presented Christianity in this country. And he thought of all the people that had worshipped in those buildings before him, you know, in previous centuries."



Mr Buzzard, raised in the Church of England, trained as an accountant and eventually established his own company. His initial job took him to Peterborough, where he rented a place in the cathedral precincts. Later, he moved to Sutton Coldfield, where he discovered Lichfield Cathedral, eventually becoming his favourite and frequent place.

His passion for cathedrals led him to write 'A Pilgrimage Around The Cathedrals of England', 172 pages offering a guide to all 42 Church of England cathedrals.

A snippet from his guide to Ely Cathedral reads:" I had just glimpsed the cathedral, grey as a battleship across the sea flat fens when a signpost announced thirteen miles to Ely. It is lovely to see a cathedral from a long distance stretching radiance over the wide acres of its Diocese...

"Everybody has heard of Ely's unique octagonal central tower with lantern, built by Alan of Walsingham after the original tower collapsed in 1322. I sat directly underneath

ST ANN'S CHURCH
DAWSON STREET
DUBLIN

1723-2023

*Celebrating
300 years*

BREAK WITH THE HUNGRY THY BREAD

Performers
Choir of St Ann's Church
Rachel Talbot
Michael Lee
Francesco Giusti
Con Tempo Quartet
Ruby Ashley
David Agnew
Adelah Davis
Cormac Hannon
Connor Wilcox
Thomas Charles Marshall

**8PM FRIDAY
DECEMBER 8TH
2023**

TICKETS €20

Programme of music featuring Bach's
Cantata Brich dem Hungrigen dein Brot
BWV 39

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where the spandrels seemed to curl over me, hanging in space almost without support; 400 tons of timber and lead giving an impression of weightlessness.

"To those who first saw it in the 14th Century, it must have been the greatest wonder of the world."

Wild concluded: "This is a reflection of my dad's faith. He was such a committed believer. And it's all about what these cathedrals are really here for, which is to worship the Lord Jesus, isn't it? And that's the most important thing, getting people in to hear about Him. And if what he has written in any way makes anybody think, 'Oh, I will just go in and find out for myself', then that has to be a good thing, doesn't it?"

In the media

Clean our streets of Muslim and Jewish racism, pleads Welby - Daily Telegraph

THE Archbishop of Canterbury called on Britain to “clean up our doorstep” of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism at a rally in Whitehall yesterday, Ed Cumming writes

“There will be children thinking about going to school in the UK tomorrow who dread going because they will be spat at, shouted at, hated, because they’re Muslim, because they’re Jewish,” said Justin Welby. “They’ll have to go without their uniforms because it identifies them too clearly. And that is in our streets.

“Years ago, I said to someone in a flooded street where the water had gone down, leaving all the filth and mess, ‘where do we start?’. And she said ‘let’s clean up our own doorsteps first’. We are called to clean up our doorstep in this country. To clean away all anti-Semitism, all Islamophobia.”

Earlier he had quoted Martin Luther King and Desmond Tutu in saying “I will destroy my enemies by making them my friends.” After weeks of fractious marches and rallies in central London, the Together for Humanity rally was an attempt at a more harmonious event. Its flyers promised: “No flags, no placards, just people.”

Fittingly, a scrupulously balanced group of speakers addressed the crowd, which numbered several hundred at the start and steadily filled up. The event was hosted by Brendan Cox, husband of murdered MP Jo Cox, who invited MPs from the three main parties to speak: the Lib Dem Layla Moran, the first MP of Palestinian descent; the Labour MP Stella Creasy; and the Tory MP Tobias Ellwood.

Celebrities, including Jemima Khan and Rob Rinder, looked on. Mr Ellwood said: “Our message must be different from other public rallies: more nuanced, more unified and more profound, a non-partisan collective call, that we must not be bystanders, we cannot ignore what we are witnessing, because in today’s digital world it has lifted the fog of war. Everything is seen in real time.

“You can be supportive of the state and people of Israel and the Jewish faith here in Israel, but be critical of Israel’s use of its military might,” he added. “And you can be supportive

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of a two-state solution and the plight of the Palestinians, but be critical of Hamas that has lost any claim to represent ordinary Palestinians.”

Then the religious leaders had their turn: Imam Monawar Hussain and Rabbi David Mason, as well as Welby. All stopped short of offering specific political solutions. The most moving speech came from Magen Inon, a teacher who lost both his parents in the Hamas terrorist attacks on Oct 7th and appeared alongside Hamze Awawde, a Palestinian peace activist.

He said: “Extremists who call for more violence are hijacking our pain. They are feeding off one another and will never be able to quench their bloodlust. The only possible revenge of my parents is to set aside fear and hate and hope a better future is possible.”

When the speeches were over, Cox led a minute’s silence as the rain came down.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Places of Worship Forum - Northern Ireland

The next Places of Worship Forum will take place at Murphy's on Main Street on Thursday 14 December at 2pm.

The event is an opportunity for anyone involved with churches or for those that love church buildings to connect



and share information. Organised by the National Churches Trust, the forum will present details of the Treasure Ireland grant programme which supports the repair, maintenance and promotion of churches and how your treasured church can get involved.

The forum will be chaired by Mrs June Butler, MBE, Chair of the National Churches Trust Northern Ireland Grant Committee. If you are thinking of making an application to the Treasure Ireland project, their support officer will also be on hand to answer any questions that you have.

To book your free ticket for the event please follow the link below:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/places-of-worship-forum-northern-ireland-14-december-2023-tickets-770184802477?aff=erelexpmlt>

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The Places of Worship Forum – Northern Ireland is made possible thanks to the support of our funders The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Pilgrim Trust and Historic Environment Division at the Department for Communities.



New choral publishing from Oxford

Choral Update is bigger than usual and packed full of exciting new repertoire

Explore the score for centenary publication, 'Garden of Dreams', by Sarah Quartel, or take a dive into the Voices as One series, featuring pieces by Bob Chilcott, Sarah Quartel and John Rutter.

There's lots to discover, so grab a warming mug of tea, and browse Oxford publishing's latest choral publications

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<https://pages.oup.com/mus/cus/85yy345dd/november-choral>

Sermons for Advent and Christmas 2023

A compilation of all our sermons for use as a private devotional, small group reading, or congregational formation. Visit sermonsthatwork.org to download and read along.

Poem for today

In Drear Nighted December by John Keats

In drear nighted December,
Too happy, happy tree,
Thy branches ne'er remember
Their green felicity—
The north cannot undo them
With a sleety whistle through them
Nor frozen thawings glue them
From budding at the prime.

In drear-nighted December,
Too happy, happy brook,
Thy bubblings ne'er remember
Apollo's summer look;
But with a sweet forgetting,
They stay their crystal fretting,
Never, never petting

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About the frozen time.

Ah! would 'twere so with many
A gentle girl and boy—
But were there ever any
Writh'd not of passed joy?
The feel of not to feel it,
When there is none to heal it
Nor numbed sense to steel it,
Was never said in rhyme.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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

