

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Bella Duo in concert

December 7, 2023

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Bella Duo in concert

Throughout Advent and the weeks prior to the season Bella Duo have presented concerts in a number of churches.

This week they were at Eglantine Parish which commented - “Great night was had with a full church at All Saints, Eglantine, to hear Bella Duo, Thanks to Conor and Victoria for a wonderful and entertaining evening.”

Enjoy the photos. Of this remarkable event. Read on and please have a look at the web sites. This couple have given



a lot to the church this Advent already and there is more to come.

Conor Taggart & Victoria McClements originally began singing together at weddings as singing waiters, normally falling over with a tray of cutlery and bursting into song!

What they didn't know though, was that they

would soon fall for each other. In late 2019, Conor and Victoria's friendship grew into a loving relationship, but it wasn't long until the world, as we knew it, completely changed.

When Covid19 hit, Conor & Victoria isolated together in Victoria's grandparents' house and with the country in complete lockdown and a lot of time to kill, they began singing together. Taking original anthems and transforming them into duets, coming up with their own arrangements and harmonies and trying to make themselves different from the standard duo out there; it started to become something

December 7, 2023

very special. Initially, this was all in aid of our wonderful health service and our keyworkers who had been fighting the horrific battle of C19.

Every Thursday night, Conor & Victoria would stand in the street and serenade the neighbours to show their appreciation for the amazing frontline workers saving lives. Within a few weeks of lockdown, their Thursday night show had become very popular and a few of their videos reached over 150,000 views. Not only were they delighted with the positive response but loved bringing a little bit of cheer to those at a very difficult time. Fast forward 6 months and they have now released their own album, music videos, and are writing original music.

Joy to the World
Celebrating the Light of Christmas
Christmas Tree Festival

FRIDAY 8TH DECEMBER: 7 PM - 9 PM
SATURDAY 9TH DECEMBER: 10 AM - 5 PM
SUNDAY 10TH DECEMBER: 2 PM - 6 PM

Visit our sparkling Christmas trees throughout the church, decorated to individual themes.

Opportunities in the parish hall to create your own Christmas decoration, shop for some crafty gifts, visit our 'Narnia' themed photo booth and enjoy seasonal refreshments.

Free entry for all, with donations to parish *New Spring* initiative.

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December 7, 2023

See -

[\[https://belloduo.com/\]](https://belloduo.com/)

[\[https://belloduo.com/about/\]](https://belloduo.com/about/)

People and places



**Armagh
schools
sponsored
carol
service**

St Mark's Church Armagh had the pleasure of welcoming 15 local schools whose students were raising funds for the cancer fund for children.



The rector of St Marks with some of the staff members of the participating schools.

Discover more about St Mark's with its app, livestream, and much more at - [\[https://www.stmarksarmagh.org/\]](https://www.stmarksarmagh.org/)



Down farewell to Dean and Mrs Hull

Last Friday night the community of Down Cathedral said farewell to Dean Henry Hull and his wife Gerry as they retire at the end of December.

A short tribute stated, “We are so thankful for his many years of ministry in Down Cathedral, Downpatrick and the Lecale area. He will be missed by many but we’re sure that they’ll not be strangers and they hope to see everyone again”.

Dean Hull and Gerry expressed their thanks to everyone who came on Friday, to all who sent greetings and their immense thanks for everyone who gave them such a very generous gift.

Thank you good and faithful servants, enjoy your retirement!

Michael Kelly steps down as editor of Irish Catholic newspaper

Co Tyrone man Michael Kelly has announced he is leaving his role as editor of the Irish Catholic newspaper after 12 years at the helm.

Taking to the platform X, formerly known as Twitter, he said he will be stepping down from the job in early 2024 “to work on some long-cherished projects “, which he will reveal more details about at a later date.

"This job has been the great honour and joy of my life. Thank you to everyone who trusted me to tell their stories," Michael added.

The experienced journalist has led a pilgrimage in the Middle East with people from across the island of Ireland for the last 15 years, crossing the border from Israel to Bethlehem, and he has written a book on the subject.

Speaking further about his resignation from the Irish Catholic, he continued: “I leave with a bit of a heavy heart, but it’s mostly heavy with gratitude for the many blessings and opportunities that God has showered upon this his unworthy servant. I have sought to lead to the best of my ability, and tend the small part of the vineyard entrusted to me.



"I have also borne the heat and burden of the day. Reporting on the abuse scandals has exposed me to depths of human wickedness I once thought unimaginable, but also the unrelenting quiet heroism of survivors and their advocates and champions for justice in the Church.

"My Catholic Faith has been challenged, and often shaken. But I have also been blessed to meet and be inspired by some of the most wonderful people on this planet living their lives in the service of others, many of them priests and religious.

"It has also been a time of great loss and suffering for me personally with the untimely deaths of both my mother and brother, and yet I have seen God's gentle hand and felt his presence in the comfort of those around me, especially my family and dear father.

“We’ve always had a lot of interns, and I brim with pride as I see them now excel in every corner of the globe, proud I had some small part in their formation, and that they have helped shape and form me.”

Michael concluded his statement by saying that The Irish Catholic “is a great paper, looking good at 135 - for now, all I can say is a very heartfelt ‘thank you’ from the bottom of my heart. I rest confident in the knowledge that we are none of us the sum of our weaknesses and failures; we are the sum of God’s love for us.”

The Irish Catholic is based in Dublin and is Ireland’s best-selling religious newspaper. Michael took up its deputy editor post in 2005, going on to become editor in 2012.

News reports

Joanna Lumley among stars helping St Paul's celebrate Christmas

St Paul’s Cathedral in London has unveiled a star-studded line up and a host of special services and events in the run-up to Christmas.

Throughout the festive period, the Cathedral is working with charities to celebrate volunteers and charitable organisations across London and the UK. These include cancer charity Maggie’s, diabetes charity JDRF, the Prince’s Trust and the Royal Osteoporosis Society. Concerts

December 7, 2023

supporting the organisations will feature special guests including Dame Joanna Lumley as well as festive readings from Nick Knowles, Susan Hampshire, Diana Moran and Dr Amir Khan. Acclaimed cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason will be giving a solo performance, as well as other renowned musicians.

The world-famous St Paul's choir will be performing to audiences throughout Christmas, re-telling the life of Christ through Handel's Messiah, whilst the Cathedral choristers will be singing Benjamin Britten's Ceremony of Carols, written on his sea voyage from the US to England in 1942.

The special services will also bring together communities from across London, with the annual Swedish Christmas service, the Sankta Lucia Carol Concert, involving a candlelit procession from members of the Swedish Church in London with music from the choirs of both churches.

As Christmas edges closer, the Cathedral will host its 'Joy to the World!' service, involving the Blessing of the Crib and the Lighting of the Christmas Trees, given to the Cathedral by the royal family.

On Christmas Day, St Paul's will be holding two services, both of which will be free and un-ticketed. In the morning, there will be the Choral Eucharist, the principal service of Christmas Day with carols for the Choir and congregation, whilst in the afternoon the Festal Evensong will take place, sung by the St Paul's Cathedral Choir.

The Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, Very Rev Andrew Tremlett, said:

“As we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, St Paul’s will be welcoming all those across London, the UK and the world to join us in prayer and song. Our upcoming services and events will bring together people from different communities, areas and backgrounds, unified by our profound love of God.

“We hope our jubilant services will fill people’s hearts with the spirit of Christmas, inspiring generosity and kindness and reminding us all of the love shown by Jesus, and the importance of passing this love onto others.

“I would like to thank all those who are taking part and have arranged for these special services to take place, which I hope will bring joy to all those attending.”

More details can be found on the Cathedral website at Advent and Christmas | St Paul's Cathedral (stpauls.co.uk)

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

CELTISH Christmas Concert

It's not too late to plan on attending: This Saturday, 9th December in High Street, Holywood Presbyterian Church, at 7.30 pm.

December 7, 2023

Come and enjoy Nigel Cameron and Julie Cameron-Hall play a mix of traditional Celtic-style music with a Christian focus.

This promises to be a fantastic evening with great music as well as a wonderful opportunity to 'step aside' from the commercialisation of Christmas and focus on the true meaning of the season.

Suggested donation £10.00 per person, payable on the night. Please share with friends and plan to be there.

Details of Uk and Ireland tour at -

[<https://www.soundsofwonder.org/events/celtish-tour-dates/2021-2022/>]

Lambeth Calls webinar

Looking forward to the Lambeth Calls webinar on Thursday at 7PM on Zoom: <https://dcu-ie.zoom.us/j/93417083421>

Resurgam's CD for Thomas Weelkes 400th

Resurgam & ECSE's new CD 'Gentleman Extraordinary'. This has been receiving praise just a few weeks since its release. Get a gift for your loved ones and support a great cause for the arts and culture, whilst celebrating Thomas Weelkes' 400th anniversary. He died this week in 1623 but his music lives on, in Resurgam's new CD. Shipping is still free for 2 CDs or more. You may buy it at www.resurgam.ie

*"The excellent Irish vocal group Resurgam...directed by Mark Duley...discover Weelkes's distinctive brilliance, expertly displayed here."
—The Guardian*



400th Anniversary

Thomas
Weelkes
1623–2023

Resurgam
The English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble
Mark Duley, director

Gentleman B
Anthems, Services, and Inst
Th

Perspective

Value of life and support for care emphasised in Oireachtas hearing on end-of life issues - Church of Ireland

The Church of Ireland's strong opposition to euthanasia and support for hospice and palliative care was affirmed on Tuesday evening (5th December) in evidence presented to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Assisted Dying.

The Revd Dr Rory Corbett, a member of the Church and Society Commission, addressed the committee at its invitation, alongside presentations on behalf of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Methodist Church in Ireland, Irish Muslim Peace and Integration Council, and Humanist Association of Ireland.

In his remarks, Dr Corbett started from the position that assisted dying is “a euphemism in that the process is either suicide or ... killing by a third party.” The principle of affirming life, he noted, acknowledges both the right to life and the subsequent legal protection of life from the foundations not only of human rights law but also much of the criminal law.

“Beyond the legal underpinning affirming life is an acceptance that each individual life has purpose, value and meaning,” Dr Corbett remarked. “It is part of the Christian tradition to assert that every person's life is of intrinsic value,

but we can also get there from a secular position, in that our healthcare is predicated on this intrinsic value in the attempt to resuscitate a person who has collapsed in the street, or the time, money and energy expended on prevention of suicide programmes, premature baby care, or for those living with dementia.

“At the same time, quality of life can also be misused to suggest that a person’s life can be decided by others. It can lead to an assessment of what a person can do, and what they can contribute to society not what they are.”

His presentation emphasised that a civilised society cares for the vulnerable and that relationship is at the heart of what it means to be human – and therefore the basis of the care, cohesion and compassion that we must continue to seek as social values. He added: “Individuals are made in the image of God, not nations or organisations. Treating every person with respect and dignity is a corollary of recognising the intrinsic value of every human life. Individual free choice has to take second place to achieve this.”

Dr Corbett suggested that the discussion undertaken by the Oireachtas was indirectly highlighting the inadequacy of hospice, palliative and end-of-life care available to the population at large. In addition, international experience from jurisdictions permitting assisted dying indicated a lack of management and oversight of the medical practices leading up to the ending of a life. In most of the jurisdictions in Europe with permitted assisted dying, the initial application was limited only to adults who had a terminal illness and were close to death, before being expanded to

adults who had no medical illness but had no desire to live longer, and more recently it has been extended even to children and young people.

He also highlighted the need to consider the ethics of who should carry out an assessment and the procedure should this be legalised, although the Church and Society Commission remains firmly convinced that there is no place for assisted dying in a civilised society.

If a person seeks assisted dying because of a late-stage terminal illness then a doctor, preferably their family doctor, would be able to confirm the medical diagnosis and situation. However, for the second medical doctor who might be involved in the process, he or she would probably not personally know the patient or their background, or be aware of the possibility of coercion by others.

If the decision to end a life were taken on social grounds, that would sit outside the expertise of a medical professional. If permission were to be allowed for assisted dying for purely social and not medical reasons, he contended that perhaps society itself should be prepared to take on the role of making the assessment and carrying out the procedure.

Clergy and lay chaplains minister daily to people living with terminal conditions, and their families, in hospitals, hospices, residential and nursing homes, and other settings in which care is given, and are likely to be very familiar with the state of mind of a person seeking assisted dying. In addition to its formal responses to the debate and proposed legislation on assisted dying, several Church of Ireland

dioceses run an annual appeal to raise funds for hospice care.

Dr Corbett also quoted the UK Supreme Court's 2014 judgment on the issue, issued by its then President, Lord David Neuberger: "The vulnerability to pressure of the old or terminally ill is a more formidable problem. ... The real difficulty is that even the mentally competent may have reasons for deciding to kill themselves which reflect either overt pressure upon them by others or their own assumptions about what others may think or expect. The difficulty is particularly acute in the case of what the Commission on Assisted Dying called 'indirect social pressure'. This refers to the problems arising from the low self-esteem of many old or severely ill and dependent people, combined with the spontaneous and negative perceptions of patients about the views of those around them. The great majority of people contemplating suicide for health-related reasons are likely to be acutely conscious that their disabilities make them dependent on others. These disabilities may arise from illness or injury, or indeed (a much larger category) from the advancing infirmity of old age. People in this position are vulnerable. They are often afraid that their lives have become a burden to those around them."Poem for today

CNI Notes -

A written submission providing an overview of the Church of Ireland's position on the issue, was submitted to the Joint Committee in advance.

December 7, 2023

The **remarks from UK Supreme Court judgment** [2014] UKSC 38 are available at www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2013-0235-judgment.pdf (page 83).

RTE.ie Report

Religious leaders from various faiths and denominations have expressed their concerns over the prospect of assisted dying being legalised in Ireland.

<https://www.rte.ie/news/politics/2023/1205/1420366-religious-leaders-express-concern-over-assisted-dying/>

Independent Catholic News

Text of response from Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference and presentation by Ms Petra Conroy and Dr Margaret Naughton on behalf of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference.

[<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/48645>]

The Darkling Thrush

By Thomas Hardy

I leant upon a coppice gate
 When Frost was spectre-grey,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
 The weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
 Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh
 Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be



The Century's corpse outleant,
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul

December 7, 2023

Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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