

Church News Ireland



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Image of the day - An Icon at Advent

St. Nicholas Collegiate Church Galway last Friday celebrated the Feast of St. Nicholas with an ecumenical service of Patronal Vespers with the Galway Cathedral.

The parish posted - "We are grateful for our community that came together for this special occasion and for participating in the consecration of our new icon of St. Nicholas".

Photo above - Represented at the service were Reverend Alistair, Bishop Michael Duignan, Fr. Tudor, and Fr. Tony, and with assistants Oman and Gregory.

News

Poinsettia and remembrance at Christmas

St John Baptist Parish, Falls Rd, Belfast in a Facebook invitation asks - Would you like to donate a poinsettia in memory of a loved one this Christmas?

Encouragement to those who will do - Bring your poinsettia to the church and leave it on the bench up at the Baptismal Font. Take a star tag from the basket and write the name of the person you want remembered on it then place the tag in the purple box.

The poinsettias will be used to decorate the sanctuary area and crib for Christmas. The tags will be placed at the crib and those named on the tags will be remembered at the Masses of the twelve days of Christmas.

Nun's Cross Church transformed into a dazzling winter wonderland





Even a red weather alert couldn't stop parishioners of Nun's Cross Church, Killiskey Parish, although Storm Darragh did disrupt their first Christmas Tree Festival for one day.

The historic Nun's Cross Church in Killiskey was transformed into a dazzling winter wonderland at the weekend with a beautiful light show and wonderfully decorated Christmas trees lining the walls.

The community event brought together parishioners, local businesses, schools and families in celebration of Christmas and to harness their creative flare as many created their own uniquely decorated trees.



The festival was a fundraiser for the parish's €350,000 five-year church restoration programme and Wicklow Hospice. Read more on website here: <https://dublin.anglican.org/news/2024/12/11/nuns-cross-church-becomes-dazzling>

Aghalee Parish Heritage Project

As part of their Heritage Project, their final information panel has now been erected at the Soldierstown car park, on the Lagan Navigation towpath.

“We're glad to share our Heritage with those walking the Broadwater. Thanks to Larry Donaghey for all his work seeing this project through to completion.”

Photos below on next page



December 13, 2024



Update on restoration of Menin Gate and Irish remembrance

The restoration of the Menin Gate is nearing its final stage. The temporary roof, needed for the new roof to be waterproof, has been removed.

From 9 December 2024, they started to remove the scaffolding (side Frenchlaan). From mid-January 2025, the scaffolding on the other side will be removed. According to the schedule, all the name panels, both in the main hall and in the galleries will be visible to the public again next spring. By Easter 2025, the restoration is expected to be completed.

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The Last Post Ceremony continues to take place under the Menin Gate every evening.

Last Post Association Ieper - the Daily Tribute to the Fallen

www.lastpost.be

<https://www.facebook.com/lastpostieper>,

<https://www.instagram.com/lastpostassociation>,

<https://twitter.com/lastpostieper>

<https://www.youtube.com/@lastpostassociation>

Cathedral Calls

Bark the Herald Angels Sing at Christ Church

Dogs of all sizes filled Christ Church Cathedral Dublin with great energy and joyful barks for the annual Peata Therapy Dog Carol Service (December 10).

Some had donned festive outfits and others were enjoying the different smells of the cathedral but all were celebrated for the gifts they bring to their families. Many of the dogs present were therapy dogs and people who benefit from their visits were also in attendance.

The service was celebrated by Archbishop Michael Jackson along with Dean Dermot Dunne and the Revd Lindsay Llewellyn–MacDuff. The Girls' Choir, conducted by the Director of Music Tom Little, led the singing wonderfully and the highlight was the concluding hymn, Bark the Herald Angels Sing.



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Read more on the Dublin website here: <https://dublin.anglican.org/news/2024/12/11/bark-the-herald-angels-sing>



It's the long-awaited return of a Parisian icon

After five years of restoration, Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral will be inaugurated this weekend.

New tour itinerary, mobile app, reservation system...check out our site for more info: <https://bit.ly/4g1eyKH>

Visitors will experience the cathedral's renewed splendor through a free mobile application booking system. The reopening introduces a reimagined tour route with a



carefully managed daily capacity of 2,500 people, ensuring
It's the long-awaited return of a Parisian icon

This momentous restoration not only reconstructs a physical landmark but also symbolizes cultural resilience, allowing visitors to reconnect with a treasured architectural masterpiece that traditionally attracts between 14 and 15 million people annually. The cathedral's return represents a triumph of preservation, heritage, and collective commitment to protecting France's architectural legacy.

Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris | Paris je t'aime 📷 Julio Piatti/Notre-Dame de Paris

Cathedral communications 2024



The Dean of Kilkenny at the car wash whilst continuing to enjoy Matin's live from St Patrick's, Dublin

The Cathedral Church of Saint Patrick,
Armagh

**A FESTIVAL
OF NINE LESSONS
& CAROLS**

Sunday 22nd December 2024
at 3.15 p.m.

Everyone welcome

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

New book on Enniskillen Royal School and its Tenant Farmers

The role of Royal School and its tenant farmers revealed in new book: A new book, “Enniskillen Royal School and its Tenant Farmers in the Nineteenth Century; Worlds Apart” detailing the origins of the School and the estate of land that was granted under the terms of the Plantation of Ulster in 1608 has been launched.





The book has been written by Mr Sam Morrow, a past pupil of Portora Royal School and a former member of the Board of Governors of Portora and its successor, Enniskillen Royal Grammar School for many years.

In the book, Sam traces the fortunes and challenges faced by the early Royal School and of the farmer tenants on the school estate during the 19th Century.

That estate of land was granted in 1608 to support at least one free school for County Fermanagh.



The book was launched by Bishop Ian Ellis, Chairman of the Board of Governors of Enniskillen Royal Grammar School who referred to the long-forgotten story of the link between estate ownership, tenant farmers and the provision of a Royal School in Fermanagh.

Winter Solstice at Carrickfergus

An event organised by the local Mid and East Antrim Council at the Andrew Jackson Cottage & US Rangers Museum, Carrickfergus, Saturday 21 December 2024, 8.30am - 9.30am

Event takes place outside AJC back viewing platform.

Free event, no booking needed, all welcome.

The winter solstice is the day of the year with the fewest hours of daylight.



In the northern hemisphere this date falls in December every year.

In 2024 the winter solstice will occur on Saturday 21 December. The word 'solstice' comes from the Latin 'solstitium', meaning 'Sun stands still' – because the apparent movement of the Sun's path north or south stops before changing direction.

In the media

Hark the Herald! Singing carols makes children behave better - Daily Telegraph

Singing carols, putting up the tree and watching festive films makes children better behaved on Christmas Day,

scientists have found. JoePinkstoneScience Correspondent writes.

However, the threat of being on Santa's naughty list is not enough to curb bad behaviour, so parents should follow the rituals associated with the holiday period to help children channel their inner angel.

Scientists conducted three studies over the Christmas periods of 2019, 2021 and 2022 and found that doing traditional activities in the run up to Dec 25 has a positive impact.

“The more ‘costly’ a ritual is (the more effort it takes to perform) and the more unusual it is from the rest of the year, the more likely it is to have an impact,” Dr Rohan Kapitany, an assistant Professor in Data Science at Durham University, told The Telegraph.

He asked more than 350 parents to explain their family's Christmas routines and to track the behaviour of the children from the end of November through to Boxing Day.

The study investigated whether or not believing in Father Christmas and participating in the pageantry of Christmas motivated children to behave in a naughtier or nicer manner. Data show that while most under-7s did believe in Father Christmas, the threat of getting no presents if they were on the naughty list made no difference to their behaviour.

However, partaking in festive activities and getting into the spirit of Christmas does. Children were kinder, less selfish

and more thoughtful the closer to Christmas it became, data show.

“We report, for the first time, that a child’s behaviour improves as Christmas Day approaches,” Dr Kapitany writes in his paper. The effect is small, he adds, but enough to be noticed by parents and is “primarily attributable to participation in yuletide rituals”.

“Children are diverse, and their tendencies towards specific kinds of behaviour – naughty or nice – are specific to them,” he added.

“We know children think being ‘nice’ is about sharing and doing what one’s parents and teachers tell them, so it’s likely children do what their role models value.”

Parents reported which Christmas routines they engaged with as well as how often and when they did them. This included erecting a Christmas tree, playing festive music, singing carols, going to Christmas events, consuming festive food or drink, any idiosyncratic family traditions, watching Christmas films and playing “elf on the shelf”.

‘Rituals are the glue that binds societies with values, this is true for children and adults’

“Rituals are the glue that binds societies with values and beliefs; this is true for children as much as it is for adults,” said Dr Kapitany.

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“Parents should do what they think best for their family, but the research suggests that there’s something special about rituals.

“For my money, the magic of Christmas is in the acts of Christmas, not the belief in a big, red imaginary being.”

The work recruited UK-based parents of children aged between four and nine years old. Around 70 per cent of the children still believed in Santa.

Parents spent around £300 on presents for their children and the average household income was between £40,000 and £50,000.

The work explains, for the first time, how children perceive the rigmarole of Christmas traditions and reveals a benefit to following them.

But the scientists say it also has wider implications for how humans of all ages interact with rituals and religion.

“Santa Claus is akin to a god, and children are his devotees,” the scientists write in their study, published as a preprint and awaiting peer-review.

Poem for today

The House of Christmas

by GK Chesterton

There fared a mother driven forth
Out of an inn to roam;
In the place where she was homeless
All men are at home.
The crazy stable close at hand,
With shaking timber and shifting sand,
Grew a stronger thing to abide and stand
Than the square stones of Rome.

For men are homesick in their homes,
And strangers under the sun,
And they lay on their heads in a foreign land
Whenever the day is done.
Here we have battle and blazing eyes,
And chance and honour and high surprise,
But our homes are under miraculous skies
Where the yule tale was begun.

A Child in a foul stable,
Where the beasts feed and foam;
Only where He was homeless
Are you and I at home;
We have hands that fashion and heads that know,
But our hearts we lost - how long ago!
In a place no chart nor ship can show
Under the sky's dome.

This world is wild as an old wives' tale,
And strange the plain things are,
The earth is enough and the air is enough
For our wonder and our war;
But our rest is as far as the fire-drake swings
And our peace is put in impossible things

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Where clashed and thundered unthinkable wings
Round an incredible star.

To an open house in the evening
Home shall men come,
To an older place than Eden
And a taller town than Rome.
To the end of the way of the wandering star,
To the things that cannot be and that are,
To the place where God was homeless
And all men are at home.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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Church News Ireland

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Christmas...**

