

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Boats Blessing at Red Sails Festival

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Image of the day



Boats Blessing at Red Sails Festival

There was a new start to Portstewart's annual Red Sails Festival on Sunday last with the Blessing of the Boats.

The Red Sails Festival reflects the link between the harbour town and the composer of the well known song.

A sizeable crowd gathered at the band stand - sometimes referred to as The Witch's Hat. The Blessing of the Boats reflected on the town's origin as a fishing port.

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Local clergy took part in the blessing by Canon Malcolm Ferry of the C of I parish church and the parish priest of Star of the Sea Church. The feeling of many is that the new service will become an annual feature of the opening of the Festival.



The Festival includes a range of activities.

This week there is an arts festival at the Flowerfield Centre.

On Tuesday the town's own local Elvis gave a performance to one of the large crowds at the Red Sails Festival a night to remember. The entertainment goes on until Saturday evening, and finishes with a massive fireworks display that evening.

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News

Ballynure and Ballyclare youth mission team in Spain

The team reports - There's been so many stories, so



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much
laughter,
and so
much to
give glory
to God for
since
arriving in
Tarragona
(In Spain).
Continue
to pray for
Team 26





Scouts Scotland recognition of NI's Chief Volunteer

The 39th Scottish International Patrol Jamborette is in full swing at Blair Atholl! From July 15th to July 26th, 500 Scottish Explorer Scouts are camping alongside Scouts from around the world.

A heartfelt thank you to Scouts Scotland for recognising (Photo top left) Stephen Donaldson, our Chief Volunteer, for

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his incredible contribution to Scouting and our longstanding relationship.

“We’re excited to see so many young people from different backgrounds coming together for adventure and friendship”.

This Sunday is Reek Sunday

This Sunday, Reek Sunday, thousands of pilgrims are expected to climb Croagh Patrick (2,510ft/765m), Ireland's Holy Mountain, to pray and participate in the Sacraments of Reconciliation, and the Eucharist on the summit.

Pope Francis has designated 2024 as a Year of Prayer. This Sunday is also a celebration of World Day for Grand Parents and the Elderly

Pilgrimages to Croagh Patrick have been undertaken for more than 1500 years, and this iconic physical feature on the southwest Co Mayo landscape is of significant natural, cultural and spiritual importance.

The pilgrimage is associated with Saint Patrick who, in 441 AD, spent forty days and nights fasting on the summit, following the example of Christ and Moses. The name 'Reek Sunday' comes from Patrick's ability to Christianise many pagan customs including the festival of Lughnasa, which previously heralded the start of the harvest festival honouring the ancient pagan god Lugh, whose name is encompassed in the Irish language word for August: Lughnasa. This festival's tradition became absorbed into

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new Christian beliefs and locally become known as Domhnach na Cruaiche (Reek Sunday).

For additional information and a virtual tour, visit: <https://tuamarchdiocese.org> and www.westportparish.ie.

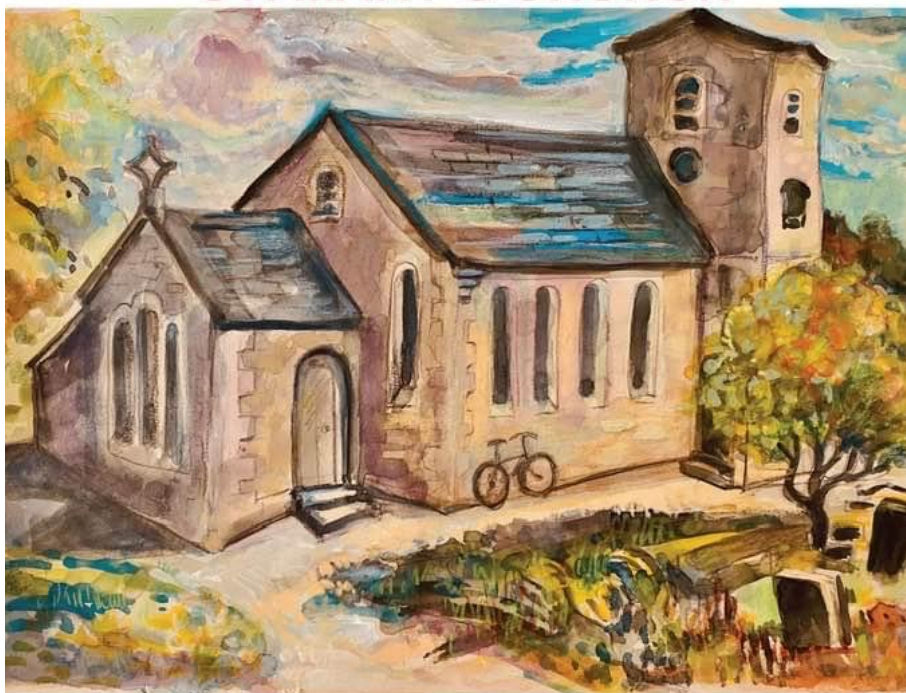
Croagh Patrick is a physically demanding pilgrimage. Intending pilgrims should make themselves aware in advance of health and safety information about the mountain. Pilgrims should also heed the instructions of stewards, the mountain rescue teams, Order of Malta, and

ROUNDSTONE

BICENTENNIAL LECTURE SERIES

AT

ST. MARY'S CHURCH



WEDS 31ST JULY
7:00PM

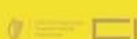
'KATE O'BRIEN IN ROUNDSTONE'
BY DON THORNHILL

WEDS 7TH AUG
7:00PM

'CONNEMARA INSPIRATIONS'
BY BILL WHELAN

WEDS 14TH AUG
7:00PM

'THE SEARCH FOR FRANKLIN'
BY KEVIN CRONIN



All Welcome
Admission Free



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Gardaí. While it is a custom for some to make the climb barefoot, pilgrims should come prepared for changeable weather conditions, and are advised to bring suitable warm/waterproof clothing, good footwear, walking stick/staff and water, and to be mindful of the safety of themselves and others.



Service for new Members of Parliament

The Archbishop of Canterbury commented later, “It was an honour today to lead a service for new Members of Parliament.

“The people who stood in the last election, whatever the result, are people of courage.



“Many MPs will have endured abuse and threats while campaigning. Threats aimed especially at women are becoming normalised. Hustings held in churches have sometimes needed close protection officers. The gracious transfer of power that we celebrate is fragile.

“Today’s readings touched on that fragility, because they speak deeply both to the temptations of being in government or opposition.

“They speak both of human action and of God's deep faithfulness, and why we should have joy and hope.

“Thank you to our all new MPs. May you know that our faithful saviour Jesus Christ guides and keeps you, and those who you love. Amen”



St Margaret's Church which is part of Westminster Abbey is the church for Members of Parliament and the House of Lords. A short walk across a busy street.

Scots Christians suffer prejudice because of their beliefs

Almost 80 per cent of Christians in Scotland believe they have experienced prejudice as a result of their faith, a survey has revealed.

New research, commissioned by the think tank Logos Scotland, also found that a vast majority of believers were concerned about abuse and negative attitudes directed at Christian politicians and did not feel "supported" by the Scottish Government.

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Campaigners called for new measures to improve “tolerance” for members of Scotland’s mainstream religions with a clear majority saying they felt reluctant to talk about their beliefs in public. The findings follow a storm of criticism directed at Kate Forbes, now the deputy First Minister, when she ran for the post of SNP leader last year for taking policy positions based on Christian teachings.

A member of the Free Church of Scotland, which is seen by its critics as hardline, she faced repeated attacks for stating her personal opposition to abortion and same-sex marriage.

John Swinney, now the First Minister is a member of the Church of Scotland and has described himself as a man of “deep Christian faith”. He made Ms Forbes his deputy to avoid another leadership contest, but was among the SNP figures to publicly question whether her views made her an “appropriate” person to lead Scotland.

The survey found that most non-Christians did not believe that Christians suffered discrimination.

However, nearly 70 per cent of believers said they had experienced prejudice through “negative comments or attitudes towards them” with a similar number admitting they are “reluctant to speak about their faith in public”.

Almost four in five Christians said they had “experienced or witnessed prejudice or discrimination” in some form because of their Christian faith.

“These findings expose a palpable feeling of exclusion amongst Scotland’s vibrant Christian community,” Shona

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Haslam, chief executive of Logos Scotland and the former leader of Scottish Borders Council, said. “There is an opportunity now for the First Minister to set a new tone for Scotland – one that doesn’t attempt to silence or ‘cancel’ Christian views, but rather, includes all perspectives in public conversation.”

The survey results follow the publication of the most recent census which found that, for the first time, a majority of Scots did not follow any religion.

Just one in five said they were part of the Church of Scotland in 2022, down from almost a third a decade ago, while 13.3 per cent were Roman Catholic and 5.1 per cent other Christian. A majority, 51.1 per cent, said they had no religion.

“We hope the data can help guide leaders to listen to the views of all Scots in the decision-making processes of our country – including Christians.”

Logos Scotland is a Christian think tank set up to promote Christian values in the public sphere. The survey it commissioned, of more than 1,000 people including 868 Christians, was carried out between January and April.

A spokesman for the Scottish Government said: “The Scottish Government supports and values Scotland’s diverse faith and belief communities and recognises the important role they play in making Scotland a more inclusive society.”

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Cathedral Calls

Clapped out at St Canices



The Cathedral's Tower Captain, Ian McCullagh, had to take one of the bell clappers away to be repaired a few weeks ago.

There are eight in total in the Cathedral.

Ian welded this particular one 32 years ago when he became a ringer.

It lasted well!

Clergy and ministry



Former wrestler ordained at Canterbury

Last month, the Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Revd Justin Welby, and The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin, Bishop of Dover, ordained nineteen new deacons and 6 new priests for ministry in the Church of England during the ordination services held at Canterbury Cathedral.

Among these ordinands was former wrestler turned deacon, The Reverend Steven Horne.

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He said: “Prior to ordination, my adventures have, among many things, included: serving as a police officer, jumping around a wrestling ring, earning a PhD in Theology, working in strategic management, and writing the first comprehensive ‘Traveller Theology’.”

The BBC spoke to Steven after the service about his journey to ordination, and you can read the full story using the link in our bio.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

St Ann's Church Lunchtime Recitals

This week, there are two recitals taking place. On Thursday, 25th of July, at 1:20 pm, Francesca Maria Villani (Italy) will perform the following programme on piano: Scarlatti Sonata K. 32 Berg 12 Variations on original theme Brahms (from Klavierstücke op 76) Intermezzi n. 3-4-6-7 Ravel La parade
<https://www.stannsrecitals.com/events/francesca-maria-villani>

Diocese of Down & Dromore Young Adults Portrush Retreat

Takes place 30-31 August. £15 per person.

Contact janine@downanddromore.org for more info or book through Eventbrite:

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<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/young-adults-portrush-retreat-2024-tickets-925965356307?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>



In the media

Daily Telegraph - 'Be ready for war in three years' says Army chief

UK's most senior officer warns that Russia will be out for revenge on the West for aiding Ukraine

THE British Army must be ready to fight a major war in three years, the new head of the Army has said, as he warned

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Russia will seek revenge on the West for aiding Ukraine, Henry Bodkin writes.

General Sir Roly Walker, Chief of the General Staff, said the Army needed to rapidly modernise to double its ability to kill the enemy by 2027 and triple it by the end of the decade. In his first major intervention since assuming the role last month, the former SAS officer said Britain must be able to “deter or fight a war in three years”.

He warned that in the second half of this decade, Russia, China and Iran could group to put the West under pressure and achieve their individual goals.

Sir Roly pointed to a scenario whereby a “very, very dangerous” Russia emerges from Ukraine, either defeated or as victors, China invades Taiwan and Iran becomes more aggressive. “That is why you get to this point by ... 2027-2028 this convergence may have reached some sort of mutual singularity and your ability to deal with them in isolation – a specific crisis that can be managed by the rules-based system – I think is significantly diminished,” Sir Roly said.

“A problem in one area is likely to trigger a sympathetic detonation in another and therefore it is a global problem looked at from different perspectives around the world.”

His comments came hours after Chief of the Defence Staff Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, the professional head of the armed forces, said Britain’s land forces were “not as strong as we could be”.

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Both were speaking at the start of a major review of defence policy by the new Labour Government, Sir Roly did not call for more troops or extra money, pushing back against a “big army” mindset. Instead, he said he wants fighting units to increase their “lethality” through better use of technology and smarter tactics, as has been demonstrated in Ukraine.

The ambition would be for a British brigade combat team of around 7,000 to be able to defeat a Russian combined arms army of approximately 21,000.

Much of the strategy depends upon getting cutting-edge software, including artificial intelligence, into the hands of frontline troops and improving the flow of data, both between units and with commanders.

Describing the potential threat in Europe, he said that however the Ukraine war ended, “I think Russia will emerge from it probably weaker objectively, or absolutely, but still very, very dangerous, and wanting some form of retribution for what we have done to help Ukraine. By any measure, they have lost hundreds of thousands of casualties, and if they carry on as they are it’s going to take them five years just to take the Dombas.

‘The lesson from history is that the Russians don’t forget and they will come back to get their revenge’

“So that’s a hell of a price that they paid. And the lesson from history is that the Russians don’t forget, and they will come back to get their revenge.”

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Speaking at the Royal United Services land warfare conference, Sir Roly added: “Each time you think Russia is down they come flying back.”

He said military chiefs should embrace the army’s status as “medium-sized”, and use it as a catalyst to modernise so that “any British land force will be able to destroy an enemy three times its size”.

The central strategy, he said, should be to improve the army’s fighting power to convince Nato’s enemies that they could not win a quick victory.

Poem for today

The Harbour

By Eavan Boland

This harbour was made by art and force.
And called Kingstown and afterwards Dun Laoghaire.
And holds the sea behind its barrier
less than five miles from my house.

Lord be with us say the makers of a nation.
Lord look down say the builders of a harbour.
They came and cut a shape out of ocean
and left stone to close around their labour.

Officers and their wives promenaded
on this spot once and saw with their own eyes



the opulent horizon and obedient skies
which nine tenths of the law provided.

And frigates with thirty-six guns, cruising
the outer edges of influence, could idle
and enter here and catch the tide of
empire and arrogance and the Irish Sea rising

and rising through a century of storms
and cormorants and moonlight the whole length of this
coast,
while an ocean forgot an empire and the armed
ships under it changed: to slime weed and cold salt and
rust.

City of shadows and of the gradual
capitulations to the last invader
this is the final one: signed in water
and witnessed in granite and ugly bronze and gun-metal.

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And by me. I am your citizen: composed of
your fictions, your compromise, I am
a part of your story and its outcome.
And ready to record its contradictions.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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