

Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – Holocaust Memorial Day
preparations**

Image of the day

Holocaust Memorial Day preparations

Belfast Synagogue was the venue for a video conversation between Rabbi Kale, Archbishop John McDowell, and HMD Trust NI representative, Shirley Lennon, on this year's theme, 'The Fragility of Freedom'.

The video recorded by Armagh Diocesan Communications Officer, Jonathan Hull, will be shared on the C of I website for Holocaust Memorial Day, 27th January.

There are a variety of events taking place in Northern Ireland.

The various organisers would like to draw your attention to events which are taking place in Northern Ireland to mark Holocaust Memorial Day 2024. Please contact the organisers directly to confirm details etc

THURSDAY, 25 JANUARY 2024, 7PM

Northern Ireland War Memorial Museum - 21 Talbot Street
Belfast BT1 2LD

Free lecture 'A Haven from Hitler - The Story of Jewish refugees who came to Northern Ireland in the 1930s and 40s' by Steven Jaffe.

January 24, 2024

In the 1930s Northern Ireland became home to a small number of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution. The Refugee farm in Millisle is relatively well known, but Steven's talk will also cover Jewish families from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary, who made new homes in places like Shrigley, Fivemiletown and Cookstown. Steven will examine the impact such families had on the social, cultural and economic life of Northern Ireland.



Tickets are available via the link here: <https://www.niwarmemorial.org/events/a-haven-from-hitler-the-story-of-jewish-refugees-who-came-to-northern-ireland-in-the-1930s-and-40s>

THURSDAY, 25 JANUARY 2024, 4:30PM

Shankill Library, Shankill Road Belfast BT13 2BN

January 24, 2024

Young people from the Lower Shankill and Falls will be undertaking a remembrance event at Shankill Library where they will unveil a photographic exhibition of their visits to Belfast Synagogue, Auschwitz Concentration Camp and will have affirmations of their learning in both music and spoken word.

The music piece has been developed with Ulster Orchestra and will set the background through a musical exploration and presentation on the impacts of hate and genocide felt by the Jews during the second world war

Organisers Website: <http://www.stpetersimmaculatayc.org>

FRIDAY, 26 JANUARY 2024, 1pm

Linen Hall library, free talk

Maddy Tongue will talk about her friendship with fellow dancer and teacher Helen Lewis, who survived Auschwitz and went on to teach modern dance in Belfast. Maddy will be joined by the acclaimed poet Michael Longley, who was also a close friend of Helen Lewis. Maddy is the author of the book, Helen Lewis: Shadows behind the Dance.

WEDNESDAY, 7 FEBRUARY 2024, 7:45PM

Council of Christians and Jews
From Belfast to Auschwitz

Speaker: Mayor of Antrim & Newtownabbey - Mark Cooper
BEM

January 24, 2024

Mark Cooper has been an active member of his local community and council for many years and last year was the driving force behind a trip for councilors and community representatives to visit Auschwitz. Mark also arranged two workshops before they made their trip, one with Steven Jaffe on Anti-semitism and one with the Belfast Jewish Community and CCJ NI on Jewish Culture and the local community.

“We look forward to hearing Mark's thoughts and experiences of the trip and also why he feels so passionately about Holocaust Education and Remembrance”.

The location of the event will be confirmed when you register -

RSVP to Sharon Lough, Council of Christians and Jews at ccj.belfast@gmail.com

For information regarding other HMD activities taking place across Northern Ireland please take a look at the map via the link here:

<https://www.hmd.org.uk/take-part-in-holocaust-memorial-day/activities/>

People and places

CMSI links with Down and Dromore diocese



CMSI was delighted to meet with people from across Down & Dromore diocese.

Bishop David McClay of Down & Dromore leading worship. Clergy and laity enjoying fellowship at Bangor Abbey

January 24, 2024

Installation of Dean of Tuam

At 5pm on Sunday, 14th January 2024 the Installation of the Very Revd Diane Matchett as Dean of Tuam and her Institution as Incumbent of the Tuam & Omey Group of Parishes by the Rt Revd Michael Burrows, will take place. All are very welcome to attend.



A crib designed by Fr Denis Quinn is pictured in St Columba's Church, Carrick. It is built with stones from the Slieve League area, the highest accessible sea cliffs in Europe, and from where the first Irish Monks set out to Iceland and Greenland and eventually Western Canada. Irish Catholic Newspaper

CMSI evening focuses on South Sudan

Church Mission Society Ireland (CMSI), an organisation attached to the Church of Ireland, is planning a special focus evening event on Thursday January 18 at Portglenone parish centre, Co Antrim.

The evening will focus on Ibba Anglican diocese in South Sudan, with updates on Christian church life in the African

Newry convent features in new RTÉ documentary examining role of religious sisters in Ireland

A convent in Newry is set to feature in a new documentary examining the role of religious sisters in Ireland, Suzanne McGonagle writes in The Irish News.

The RTÉ programme, *The Last Nuns of Ireland*, follows journalist and broadcaster Dearbhail McDonald as she returns to her home city to investigate how nuns shaped Irish lives, including her own, for better or for worse.

She examines the role of female religious sisters in Ireland, from earliest times to the present day and asks whether the achievements of these women can be acknowledged amid the legacy of abuse scandals.

The average age of nuns in Ireland is now over 80 - and the supply of vocations to religious life has slowed to a trickle.

In a society where ‘the nuns’ once ran practically every element of education, healthcare and social services, Ms McDonald asks herself if she is ready to look at their contribution in the round.

Newry was the location for the first established convent in Ulster since the reformation.

Ms McDonald spent 14 years at two local schools run by the Order of St Clare.

Returning to Newry, she meets Sr Julie McGoldrick, her former teacher, who is now Mother Abbess of the Sisters of St Clare’s in Ireland.

As she makes her way around the island of Ireland, meeting a combination of religious and academics, she gains a deeper insight into the circumstances in which nuns and sisters came to be so firmly embedded in the lives of towns and villages – in Ireland as well as abroad.

However, nuns were also linked to the Church related scandals which emerged in the 1990s and 2000s.

Speaking on camera for the first time, several sisters tell their side of those controversies.

They speak about their shock and dismay at learning about the scandals, the challenges to their own faith and how they have had to deal with negative perceptions of their legacy to Irish society.

January 24, 2024

Some sisters said they feel that religious life is at an end, whilst others are convinced there will always be a place for nuns in Irish society.

For Ms McDonald, this process makes her examine her own preconceptions of religious life and question how current and future flashpoints involving the State and the Catholic Church in Ireland can be navigated.

“I have spent a significant part of my own vocation as a journalist criticising ‘the nuns’ and the Catholic Church’s once powerful hold over Irish society”, she said.

“But this is a way of life could be gone in 10 or 15 years’ time.

“This journey forced me to revise many of my own prejudices about women in religious life.

“We cannot avoid our shared history, but we do need to find ways to navigate the complicated relationships between Church and State in the future.

“Exploring the lives of ‘the nuns’ has helped me reflect on the need for those important conversations.”

The two-part series will air on January 15 and 16.

Black Santa 2023 raises almost £171,000

December’s Black Santa Sit-out on the steps of Belfast Cathedral raised almost £171,000 – far exceeding Dean Stephen Forde’s target of £130,000.

In the media

Pope Francis has praised the Good Friday Agreement in a speech in Rome - Irish News

In his annual address to members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See, the pontiff spoke about the “path to peace” and cited the agreement as an example of how “significant results can be achieved”, Suzanne McGonagle writes.

The meeting, which was held at Benediction Hall in the Vatican City on Monday, saw the Pope tell ambassadors that greater efforts are needed to prevent conflict and war through dialogue, disarmament and respect for human rights.

Speaking to representatives of the 184 countries that have full diplomatic relations with the Vatican, Pope Francis said 2024 could be a “year that we hope to be one of peace, but has instead dawned amid conflicts and divisions”.

He also said there is “a need for greater effort on the part of the international community to defend and implement humanitarian law, which seems to be the only way to ensure the defence of human dignity in situations of warfare”.

January 24, 2024

In his address, he raised the Good Friday Agreement as an example of how peace can be achieved.

“To be sure, dialogue requires patience, perseverance and an ability to listen, yet when sincere attempts are made to put an end to disagreements, significant results can be achieved,” said Pope Francis.

“One example that comes to mind is the Belfast Agreement, also known as the Good Friday Agreement, signed by the British and Irish governments, whose 25th anniversary was commemorated last year.

“Putting an end to thirty years of violent conflict, it can serve as an example to motivate and encourage authorities to trust in peace processes, whatever the hardships and sacrifices they entail.”

The Good Friday Agreement established a new political system in the north and largely ended conflict and violence.

Disgraced chief almost became Bishop of London - Daily Telegraph

The disgraced former boss of the Post Office was shortlisted to be Bishop of London despite suggestions having emerged at the time that postmasters had been wrongly prosecuted.

January 24, 2024

Paula Vennells, who today handed back her CBE, was one of a handful candidates to become Bishop of London in 2017, the third most senior role in the Church of England.

She was ordained as a priest in 2006 and had been an associate minister in the diocese of St Albans while at the same time running the Post Office

Ms Vennells was interviewed to be Bishop of London in 2017, with the Archbishop of Canterbury believed to support her application. By 2015, the Post Office had halted prosecutions of subpostmasters and in 2017 legal action was launched by 555 subpostmasters after a long-running campaign about the miscarriage of justice.

Dame Sarah Mullally DBE was appointed the 133rd bishop of London in December 2017, however, church sources said Justin Welby was personally supportive of Ms Vennells.

“I have heard that Welby pushed for her,” one said. “Apparently, the meeting of the Crown Nominations Committee in 2017 was quite fortuitous because Paula had no parish experience and was a self supporting minister.”

Another source said the Mr Welby was known to be supportive of Ms Vennells, who sat on the church’s Ethical Investments Advisory Group.

An annual report from the group said Ms Vennells stood down in May 2021 after a temporary leave of absence. “We are grateful for all the time, wisdom and support that Paula has provided to the Group since her appointment in 2019 and wish her well,” it said.

Lambeth Palace did not respond to request for comment. A spokesman for the Church of England said: “We never make any comment on who is a candidate, or not, in what is a confidential discernment process.”

Meet the real Alan Bates of the Post Office - The Times

Alan Bates is sitting at his desk at his pebbledashed semi outside Colwyn Bay with a view of the rolling Welsh countryside.

It is the desk from which he has spearheaded a national campaign that has already cost the Post Office £2bn.

Bates was one of thousands of sub-postmasters for whom Horizon, a faulty computer system created by the Japanese firm Fujitsu and installed in the 14,000 post offices up and down the country, malfunctioned and showed accounting failures.

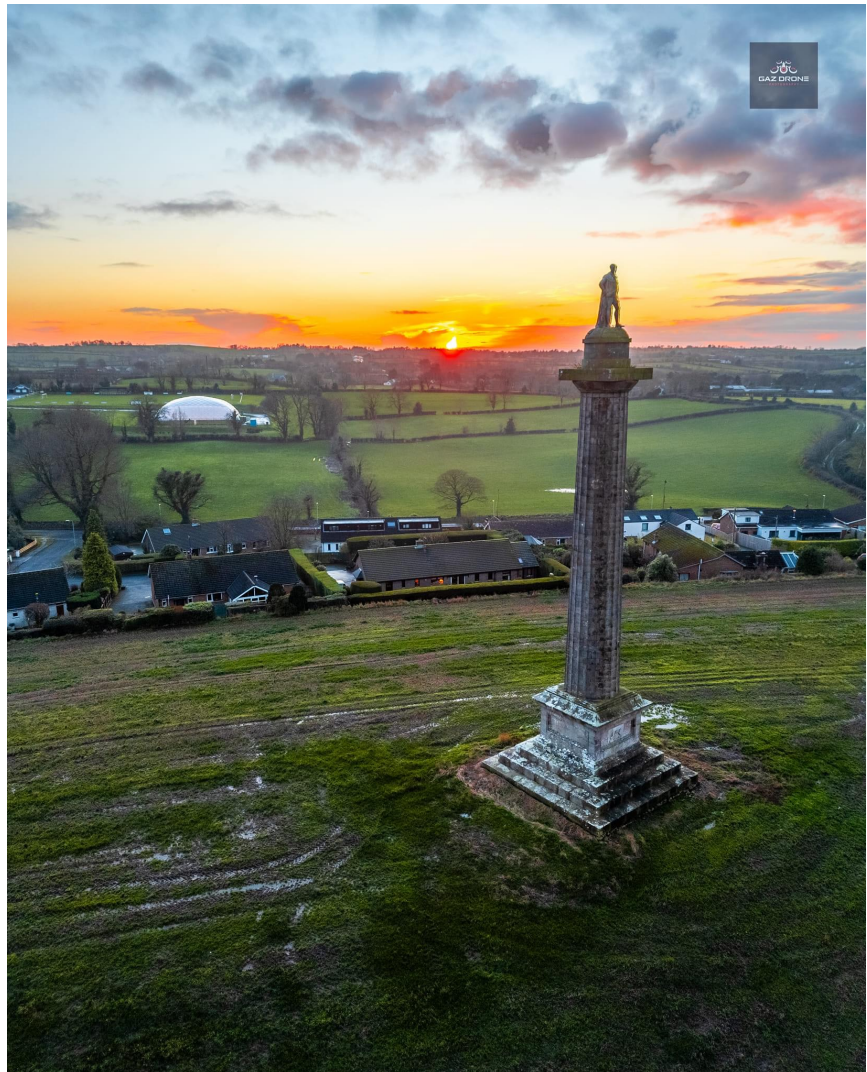
Bates’s victory, long and painful as it was to achieve, is so complete that he is played by Toby Jones in the acclaimed new ITV drama, Mr Bates vs the Post Office. He has become a national treasure.

“I think for once it’s actually grabbed the nation and rightfully so, it deserves to. But it’s taken a long time to get to this point,” he said.

Read the full interview below 

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/alan-bates-interview-real-mr-bates-post-office-scandal-xzs73g8sf?>

Heritage



The Downshire Monument

The Marquis of Downshire Monument, also known as the Hilltop Folly, is a tall, obelisk-shaped tower that stands on a hilltop overlooking the village of Hillsborough in County Down, Northern Ireland.

The Downshire Monument: This 100-foot (30 m) tall obelisk was built in 1874 in memory of Arthur Hill, 4th Marquess of Downshire, who was known as "The Big Marquis." He was a

January 24, 2024

popular figure in the county and his death in 1868 was a major public event. The monument is made of local Mourne granite and is decorated with carvings of family crests and coats of arms.

If you're interested in learning more about the Marquesses of Downshire and their monuments, CNI recommends visiting the Hillsborough Castle Estate or the Ulster Museum in Belfast. Photo thanks to Gas Drone photography

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Christianity Explored course in Carrickfergus

Woodlands Presbyterian church Carrickfergus are running a Christianity Explored Course at Woodlands Presbyterian church Carrickfergus for 7 weeks Starting Tuesday 16th January 2024, 7pm.

“Join us each Tuesday night for a free meal and then we will have a chance to explore the hope of Christianity and what life’s all about.”

Christianity Explored is a free, relaxed & informal course for anyone who wants to think through what Christianity says about the meaning of life. It looks at the person at the heart of the Christian faith – Jesus Christ.

January 24, 2024

Who was Jesus? Why did he come? What does it mean to follow him?

Everyone is welcome

You don't need to know anything about the Bible

You won't be asked to read aloud, pray or sing

You can ask any question you want.

Tuesday 16th January 2024, then each Tuesday for 7 weeks
7.00pm

REGISTER NOW: woodlandschurch.co.uk/register

Poem for today

The Innkeeper's Wife

By Clive Sansom

I love this byre. Shadows are kindly here.
The light is flecked with travelling stars of dust,
So quiet it seems after the inn-clamour,
Scraping of fiddles and the stamping feet.
Only the cows, each in her patient box,
Turn their slow eyes, as we and the sunlight enter,
Their slowly rhythmic mouths.
'That is the stall,
Carpenter. You see it's too far gone
For patching or repatching. My husband made it,
And he's been gone these dozen years and more...'

Strange how this lifeless thing, degraded wood
Split from the tree and nailed and crucified

To make a wall, outlives the mastering hand
That struck it down, the warm firm hand
That touched my body with its wandering love.
'No, let the fire take them. Strip every board
And make a new beginning. Too many memories lurk
Like worms in this old wood. That piece you're holding –
That patch of grain with the giant's thumbprint –
I stared at it a full hour when he died:
Its grooves are down my mind. And that board there
Baring its knot-hole like a missing jig-saw –
I remember another hand along its rim.
No, not my husband's and why I should remember
I cannot say. It was a night in winter.
Our house was full, tight-packed as salted herrings –
So full, they said, we had to hold our breaths
To close the door and shut the night-air out!

And then two travellers came. They stood outside
Across the threshold, half in the ring of light
And half beyond it. I would have let them in
Despite the crowding – the woman was past her time –
But I'd no mind to argue with my husband,
The flagon in my hand and half the inn
Still clamouring for wine. But when trade slackened,
And all out guests had sung themselves to bed
Or told the floor their troubles, I came out here
Where he had lodged them. The man was standing
As you are now, his hand smoothing that board –
He was a carpenter, I heard them say.
She rested on the straw, and on her arm
A child was lying. None of your crease-faced brats
Squalling their lungs out. Just lying there
As calm as a new-dropped calf – his eyes wide open,

January 24, 2024

And gazing round as if the world he saw
In the chaff-strewn light of the stable lantern
Was something beautiful and new and strange.
Ah well, he'll have learnt different now, I reckon,
Wherever he is. And why I should recall
A scene like that, when times I would remember
Have passed beyond reliving, I cannot think.
It's a trick you're served by old possessions:
They have their memories too – too many memories.

Well, I must go in. There are meals to serve.
Join us there, Carpenter, when you've had enough
Of cattle-company. The world is a sad place,
But wine and music blunt the truth of it.

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

