

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Slemish in the snow

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Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books -

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Book Well's annual second-hand book sale
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Downshire Brass and Daffodil tea at Malone
Bible Week Newtownabbey Churches

In the media -

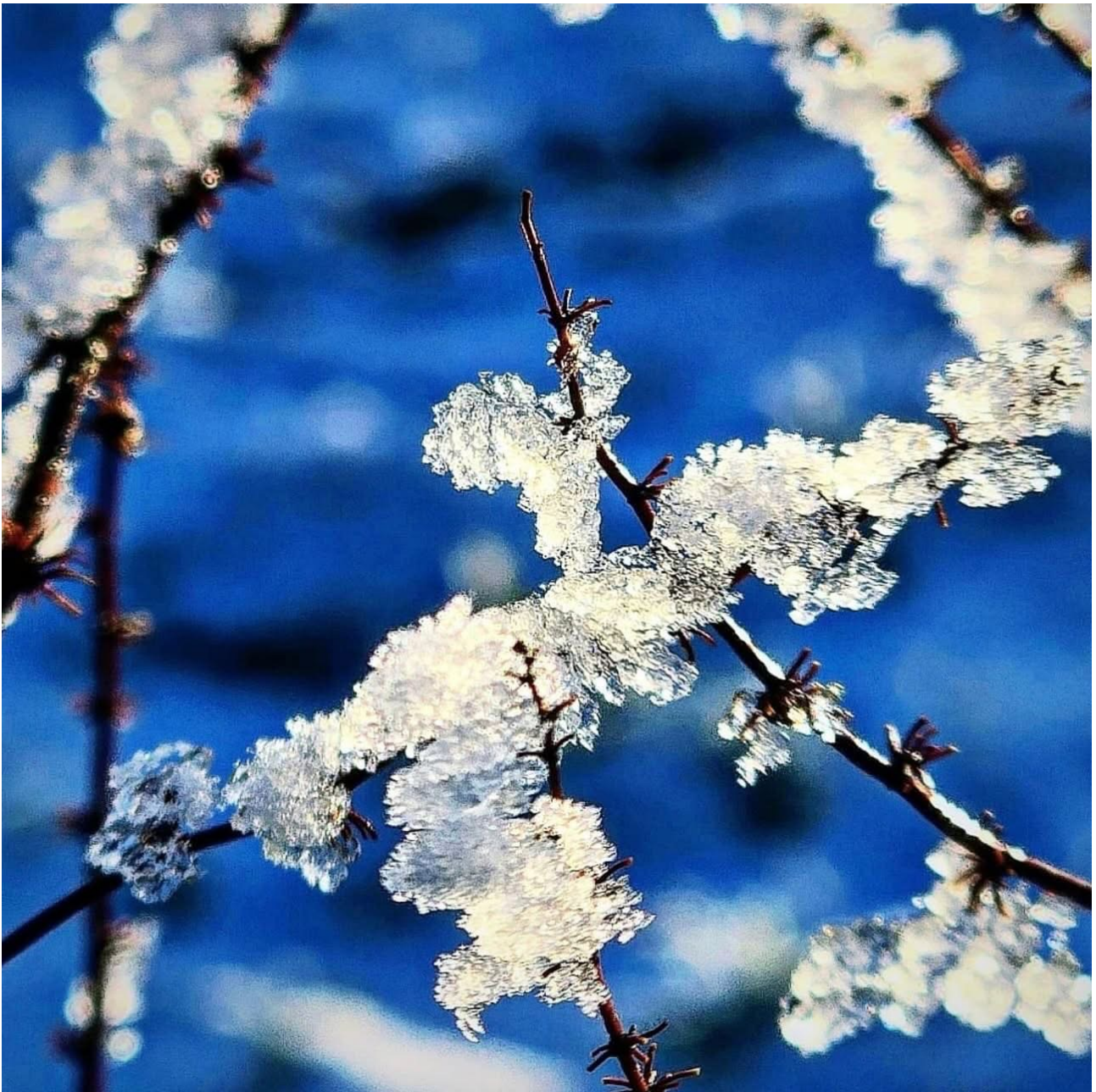
Jimmy Carter saw role for Irish Government by former Irish
Government's Head of Press and Information in the U.S

Image of the day - Slemish in the snow



Conal Stewart had his camera on his winter walks at the Ecos Nature Park in Ballymena.

The park on the banks of the Braid river gives vistas which include Slemish where Saint Patrick was a shepherd during his captivity.



News

Treasure Ireland: specialist support for Northern Ireland places of worship

Northern Ireland has an amazingly rich heritage of church and chapel buildings.



Northern Ireland Scout Awards Ceremony - Congratulations to Max Boyd, Daniel Carson, James Patterson, Adam Price and Jack Robinson of RBAI Scouts who received their Chief Scout's Gold Award Certificates at Belfast City Hall from NI Chief Volunteer Stephen Bell and Lord Major Micky Murray. Two years of hard work has paid off. Congratulations all.

This includes 939 listed places of worship, with 45 churches and chapels listed as Category A – building of the highest heritage significance. Treasure Ireland has been set up to help protect Northern Ireland's historic places of worship.

Treasure Ireland was set up as an initiative between the National Churches Trust, The National Lottery Heritage

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Fund, Pilgrim Trust and the Historic Environment Division at the Department for Communities and will run until 2026.

Through a dedicated support officer based in Northern Ireland, churches are given advice and training on grants and maintenance, so they can keep their places of worship in good repair.

There is also support given to help churches open their buildings to visitors and tourists, so that even more people can enjoy the stunning heritage that these churches have to offer.

A big thank you to The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Pilgrim Trust and the Historic Environment Division at the Department for Communities who have helped to make Treasure Ireland possible.

Grant Opportunity for Places of Worship

Status: OPEN

Next Deadline: 20 January 2025 (midnight)

Grant Size: £500 to £10,000

Works Cost: Up to £100,000 (including VAT and fees)

<https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/news/supporting-northern-irelands-churches-and-chapels>

<https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/search/node?keys=Treasure+Island+grant&language=en>



The poster features a dark green background with a hexagonal pattern. At the top left is the Holocaust Education Ireland logo (a yellow star) and text. To its right is the Irish harp logo and text for the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Further right is the Dublin City Council logo and text. The main title 'Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration' is centered in white. Below the title are three images: a man in a blue suit holding a lit candle, a group of people singing on a stage, and a row of lit candles with orange flowers in front. At the bottom left is contact information for Holocaust Education Ireland. At the bottom right is a QR code with the text 'Register here for invitations' above it.

Holocaust Education Ireland

An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais, Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Dublin City Council
Comhairle Cathrach Bhaile Átha Cliath

Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration

Sunday 26 January, 15:00 - 17:00
The Round Room at the Mansion House,
Dublin 2

[Register here for invitations](https://forms.gle/LJs5M36D75x5t3d28)

[holocausteducationireland.org](https://forms.gle/LJs5M36D75x5t3d28)
T. + 353 1 6690593
E. info@holocausteducationireland.org

National Holocaust Memorial Day

The National Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration will take place on Sunday, 26 January 2025 from 3-5 PM in the Round Room at the Mansion House.

“Please register for invitations at the link below.

We look forward to welcoming you to this event.”

<https://forms.gle/LJs5M36D75x5t3d28>.

Church Christmas Tree display supports Save Lives at Sea

Portrush and Portstewart RNLI Fundraising got a generous lift from a local church’s pre-Christmas event.



Llamas near Ballyclare after a fall of snow - Stephen Hamilton

Rev Stuart Morrow, Wendy Porter, Winnie Crooks, Michelle Hutchinson, Cathy Martin, Jayne Thompson, Rachel Greer from Portstewart Presbyterian Church handed a magnificent £2000 to Portrush and Portstewart RNLI Fundraising Committee member Bob Milton and Karen Milton, shop volunteer who decorated the RNLI Christmas Tree which was on display at the recent Church display of Christmas trees.

A massive thank-you to all the church members involved and the community who donated toward helping Save Lives at Sea.

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Cathedral Calls

Cork cathedral's local artist in residence



In 2024, St Fin Barre's Cathedral hosted local artist Orla O'Byrne as their artist in residence, where she most notably worked on the William Burges Maquette Conservation Project.

A maquette is a scale model or rough draft of an unfinished sculpture or work of architecture used to help visualise the final idea. Historically, maquettes are destroyed by their makers, or sold to different art collectors, often across the continent. The near complete collection at St Fin Barre's



Cathedral is a rarity, and conserving the maquettes has been at the centre of Orla's work for the past 12 months.

Orla has expressed her gratitude for her year spent as artist in residence the Cathedral:

It has been so exciting, fruitful and at times all-consuming and it's hard to believe it's only been 12 months. I am delighted to continue working on the William Burges maquette conservation project into the coming year.

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In particular, I am sincerely grateful to the Very Rev'd Nigel Dunne for his sustained support and interest in the arts and for generously allowing me access to the archival materials upon which much of my PhD research is based.

2025 will see Orla working on a programme of arts events for the cathedral as well as continuing her research in the archive and coordinating the ongoing Burges maquette conservation project.

250th Anniversary of Clifton House marked by significant donation to Belfast Cathedral's Black Santa Appeal

Belfast Charitable Society has made a significant donation to Belfast Cathedral's Black Santa Appeal to mark the 250th Anniversary of Clifton House.

On Christmas Eve, 250 years ago, following more than a decade of fundraising, planning and building, Clifton House, formerly the Poor House of Belfast, opened its doors for the first time.

As part its 250th anniversary celebrations, Belfast Charitable Society announced that it will make a significant donation to the Black Santa appeal. The familiar sight of Black Santa on the steps of St Anne's Cathedral has become synonymous with the giving spirit and generosity of the people of Belfast. An ideal also close to the hearts of past and present members of Belfast Charitable Society (BCS). This year, for the first time, BCS is joining forces with



this incredible annual fundraising initiative, through the giving of a significant donation.

Professor Alastair Adair, Chair of the Belfast Charitable Society (Photo right) explained: “It was on the eve of Christmas, 250 years ago in 1774, that members of the Belfast Charitable Society met in the Market House (now the Assembly Rooms) and agreed, with ‘immediate effect’, that ‘as many of the Begging poor as the Poor House can at present accommodate be received as soon as possible’.

“All these years later, the ethos of these founding members remains strong in the charitable activities of this organisation, which is evident again today as we announce our latest donation on what is the official anniversary of the opening of the Poor House.”

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Paula Reynolds, CEO of Belfast Charitable Society, (Photo centre) expanded: “This year, as well as reflecting on our long history of philanthropy and social reform, we have also been looking ahead to our future. Throughout the year, we brought others together to talk about the reality of poverty and disadvantage today – with an aim to inform our future work.

“The decision to support Black Santa’s remarkable fundraising this year has been as a direct result of the feedback we have gathered over the last 12 months in order to support those most in need.”

Clergy and ministry

Feedback from conference on mission and community futures

A conference organised by Tuam, Killala and Limerick united diocesan council on mission and community futures proved to be an enriching and illuminating discussion about the topics that are of great significance, and a vital interest, to the 20 to 50 year old age group.

One of the common themes of the conference was that of providing spaces for people to be in, to form community or to join an existing one, and to be nourished. food and of consuming it. This took a variety of forms.

We heard from Rev Jimmy Ogwal, vice president of the Mary I Students Union, that students want cheaper food on



campus, but also want places where they can store their own food and heat it in microwaves etc, if they are commuting long distances, and trying to save money by bringing their own meals to campus.

We heard from Jonathan Shinnors, regional emergency accommodation manager with the Midwest Simon Community, about the huge significance, emotionally mentally and spiritually, that a poly tunnel and kitchen garden project has had for their service users, many of whom are forced, due to the continuing housing crisis, to stay for years in accommodation that was planned to be for emergency or short-term use only. And we heard from minister Pippa Hackett about the importance of farmer's markets, about issues with the supply chain, ethical

consequences of the demand for cheap food, and problems with Ireland's reliance on imported fertilizers.

Other speakers also emphasized the value of opening up spaces, of providing welcome, and of fulfilling the mission of the church in sharing God's love and forgiveness with all.

The dynamics of outside /inside were questioned and re-imagined in generative new ways. Cllr Shane Hickey-O'Mara, a councillor in Limerick City North (Social Democrats) spoke of the importance of spaces in which young people can express themselves artistically as offering a form of home or community that many may not have found elsewhere – particularly in rural Ireland.

Rev Johnny Lowden (Glendermott Parish, Derry and Raphoe) discussed ways in which the Church needs to ensure that its welcome is known to all, and ways in which both uses of history and discussions of the future should be sensitively and compassionately developed.

Lydia Monds of the Church's Ministry of Healing: Ireland, used a fable to invite questions about power, tradition, and openness to curiosity, which then led into her discussion of mental health and loneliness.

Finally, **Rev Philip McKinley** (Dunboyne group of parishes/ Kildare Centre for Mission) suggested ways in which the Church (and churches) may fulfil our commitment to racial justice and become places of welcome and of sanctuary, and places in which we do not allow ourselves to rest easily in our inherited comfort.

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It was notable that many of the speakers pointed out the importance of physical spaces for the work in which they were involved, or for bringing people together to help to build community and escape lonely isolation. One thing in which the Church of Ireland is not lacking is buildings – and churches, parish halls, etc, could, perhaps, be offered to groups who don't have much money and are therefore excluded from other usual meeting places that charge a fee.

The conference showed that people are happy to engage with the Church when warmly invited – this is something which we sometimes forget, and we can see ourselves instead as set apart from community events that aren't overtly religious.

One final observation – it would have been rewarding to have had a greater attendance from TLK parishes, and, in particular, from clergy. However, hopefully the release of podcasts/recordings from the conference will bring the richness of ideas and questions to the diocese, and beyond.

As we are all aware, many parishes and clergy are concerned about a potential lack, in future, of the many office holders and volunteers who keep churches running. The conversations at Community Futures may shed some light on what might appeal to younger generations.

Report, courtesy of **Dr Catherine Smith**. The conference took place in the lady Gregory hotel, Gort, on Saturday November 16.



Renaissance Chamber Choir seeks new Conductor and Musical Director

Renowned Belfast Chamber Choir, Renaissance, wishes to appoint a suitably qualified Conductor and Musical Director.

Renaissance is a vibrant chamber choir based in Belfast, with a rich tradition of choral excellence and dynamic performances. Since its founding in 1976, the choir has established a notable reputation in Northern Ireland's musical scene, blending timeless classics with contemporary repertoire.

The choir now wishes to appoint a candidate who will take the choir forward into our 50th season.

Anyone interested can download the Job Description from the link below. The closing date for applications is 31st January 2025 at 5pm.

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<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1y5ub7D32DvDG6WQFTHFZSkiGZBxVnfh4SK9u55RqL-A/edit?tab=t.0>

Any queries should be directed to
renaissancechoirbelfast@gmail.com

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

PCI Kids' Big Day Out

Kids' Big Day Out is back for 2025!



Saturday 8th March 2025



2-4pm



West Presbyterian Church, Bangor

The theme this year is God is everywhere and this is our theme song for the event. It would be brilliant if you could share it with the children in your children's ministry so that they can sing along at the event.

Book Well's annual second-hand book sale

Book Well's write - It's happening again! Our massive annual second-hand book sale is taking place in St Mark's Dundela on Saturday 25th January between 10am-12:30pm.



As in previous years, there is no charge for the event. Just come and take what you want and give whatever you can, with proceeds going to Scripture Union's E3 Schools Project here in East Belfast. Help is also graciously received in the days running up to the sale, so if you can lend a hand in anyway, do please get in touch

Farming in Faith invite

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Farming in Faith invite you to join them in Manorcunningham on Monday 20th January 2025 at 8pm to pray for - and with - farmers.

Farmer and Rural Chaplain Kenny Hanna will speak to those present about 'The Good Shepherd'. All are welcome.



PLOUGH SUNDAY

Nenagh Union of Parishes

Templederry Church is reviving the old custom of marking the beginning of the agricultural year with 'Plough Sunday', a service to pray for the success of those who work on the land to bring forth its bounty. The particular theme of this year's service will focus on the health and well-being of those who work the land and the address will be given by Catherine Kenneally of Embrace FARM.

All are welcome and attendees are encouraged to bring a symbol of their relationship with the land to be blessed, from a spade to a pot of soil from their land to a tractor! Refreshments will follow and Embrace FARM embracefarm.com will benefit from the collection taken.

Sunday 12th January
United Service at 11am

Templederry Church
E45 X272

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Downshire Brass at Malone

“Join us for a delightful afternoon on 8 March 2025, from 2.30pm, inspired by the charm of a traditional tea party, all in support of Downshire Brass’s exciting journey to Stavanger, Norway in May 2025.

Indulge in a delicious spread of tea, coffee, soft drinks, freshly made sandwiches, tempting cakes, and mouthwatering pastries—while enjoying live music performances!

Not only will you be treated to a truly memorable afternoon, but every penny raised will help fund the band’s trip to Norway, where they’ll proudly represent Northern Ireland at the prestigious European Brass Band Championships.

DAFFODIL TEA
with Downshire Brass

Saturday, 8th March at 2.30pm
Malone Presbyterian Church Halls
Lisburn Road, Belfast
Tickets £15.00

Tickets: www.ticketsource.co.uk or via the Church
(all proceeds in support of the Band's participation in the 2025 European Brass Band Championship)

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Come for the tea, stay for the music, and leave knowing you've helped support a wonderful cause!

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/downshire-brass/daffodil-tea/e-aegmzq>

YOU ARE INVITED TO
NEWTOWNABBEY CHURCHES FELLOWSHIP
BIBLE WEEK
2025

**THE STORY OF JONAH:
FAITHFUL
STEADFASTNESS
THROUGH
TRYING TIMES**

**SPEAKER
BISHOP
ANDREW
FORSTER**



SUNDAY 19TH JANUARY - THURSDAY 23RD JANUARY 2025

7.30 PM EACH EVENING

**TEACHING // WORSHIP // TESTIMONIES
(JOINT NEWTOWNABBEY CHURCHES)**

**LOCATION:
MOSSLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL,
HAZELBURN ROAD, NEWTOWNABBEY, BT36 5NA**

FREE EVENT // EVERYONE WELCOME

In the media

Jimmy Carter saw role for Irish Government

Despite being one of the few U.S. presidents without any Irish ancestry, Jimmy Carter was the first president to recognize that the Irish government must have a role to play in a solution to the conflict in Northern Ireland, Ted Smyth writes in The Irish Echo.

What became known as the Carter Statement was issued in August 1977. In addition to the routine rejection of violence in Northern Ireland, Carter called for “a just solution that involves both parts of the community in Northern Ireland... a solution that the people in Northern Ireland, as well as the Governments of Great Britain and Ireland can support.” (my italics)

In addition, Carter added, “In the event of such a settlement, the US Government would be prepared to join with others to see how additional job-creating investment could be encouraged, to the benefit of all the people of Northern Ireland.”

In the words of former Irish Ambassador to the U.S., Sean Donlon, “Every subsequent U.S. president derives his interest in Ireland through the Carter Statement.”

The Statement was a shot in the arm for politics in Northern Ireland which, by 1977, had become paralyzed as the British

army, the IRA, and the Loyalists fought a vicious battle for military superiority.

One of the politicians to recognize the futility of this “eye for an eye” cycle, John Hume, realized that only Irish Americans could provide Irish nationalists crucial leverage against the centuries-old problem of the overwhelming power of Britain.

Hume focused on two of the most powerful men in America, Speaker Tip O’Neill and Senator Ted Kennedy. Unlike previous Irish visitors he did not ask them to support Irish unity, a proposition that had failed since the partition of Ireland in 1920. Instead, he had a new proposal for them: support political and economic equality between nationalists and unionists within Northern Ireland.

The Speaker and Senator were persuaded by Hume’s ideas and his credibility as a fearless civil rights campaigner in Ireland. They in turn formed the Four Horsemen with Senator Pat Moynihan and New York Governor Hugh Carey and approached President Carter, who had been elected the previous November.

Irish diplomats played a key role in advancing this campaign in Washington, particularly Irish embassy counselor Michael Lillis, backed by Anglo-Irish director in Dublin, Sean Donlon.

Lillis forged friendships with the Big Four, and the powerful Speaker was often a guest with his wife at Michael’s small Georgetown townhouse, joining happily in singing Irish songs. Lillis also forged a strong friendship with Bob Hunter, the Director of European Affairs in the White House.

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Hunter, who later became U.S. ambassador to NATO, helped show President Carter that the conflict in Northern Ireland-related to human rights abuses. Carter, who had a sincere lifelong commitment to human rights around the world, agreed that he should support reform. He also needed Speaker O'Neill to pass his legislative agenda and Tip kept telling him how important the Irish issue was to him personally.

The British government and the State Department fought relentlessly to prevent Carter from both ending the non-involvement of the U.S. in Northern Ireland and the recognition of a role for Dublin in any solution.

Carter, in a remarkable interview with Maurice Fitzpatrick for his 2017 documentary, "John Hume in America," said, "Well, the State Department was not in favor of what I did, as you may know. But I didn't really consult with them too thoroughly.

I had a lot of confidence in Pat Moynihan, and Tip O'Neill was visiting me every day. Hugh Carey was very important to me as a politician, so was Ted Kennedy. So these four people who had connections directly with Ireland, were good."

Later in the interview, Carter said, "I let it be known to the British leaders and also to the general public and to my Irish supporters in the U.S., that I had one policy toward Ireland. That was peace, human rights, and an absence of violence."

Jimmy Carter was faced by many difficult issues in his presidency, but Irish Americans and people in Ireland will

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gratefully remember him for being the first U.S. president to recognize the equal rights of nationalists and unionists in Northern Ireland, together with a role for Dublin in any solution.

Carter was deservedly awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2002 for his work in diplomacy and advocacy, both during and after his presidency. His work for peace in Ireland was part of that lasting achievement. Ní Bheidh A Leithéid Arís Ann.

Ted Smyth was the Irish Government's Head of Press and Information in the U.S. from 1976 to 1981.

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

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www.churchnewsireland.org

**Link in Monday through Saturday from
early morning**

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