

Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – The Wandering Wise Men
of Derry & Raphoe**

Image of the day



The Wandering Wise Men of Derry & Raphoe – the adventure in full

From Advent Sunday through to Epiphany, the Wandering Wise Men journeyed through homes, gardens and churches all across the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe.

The aim of the Wandering Wise Men was to think about the journey the original wise men took to the stable where Jesus was born, to remind us that it wouldn't have been a simple journey and that it would have taken a long time for the wise men to visit the new King.



Families were given three peg dolls to decorate as wise men and then encouraged to move them each day, getting closer towards their finishing point, be that the nativity scene, the front door or wherever suited. They also received a booklet which contained a reading from the Christmas story, a prayer, a game, an



activity, and simple craft ideas that families could do each week. We wanted to think about the true meaning of Christmas while being creative and having fun.

Wise Men were spotted in farmyards, appeared in gardens, and popped up in Christmas Trees, and were seen having fun with cars, animals and making new friends.



We hope you enjoyed journeying with our Wise Men.

The photos capture some of the flavour of our Wandering Wise Men's adventures.

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People and places



First in series of All Ireland Mothers' Union monthly Holy Communion Services



The first of the All Ireland Mothers' Union monthly Services of Holy Communion took place in Armagh Diocese tonight - Wednesday 10th January, in St Patrick's Cathedral Armagh.

The celebrant was Archbishop John McDowell and the Preacher was Archdeacon Stephen McBride, the All-Ireland Chaplain to the Mothers' Union.

During the Service, a new Mothers' Union Preaching Scarf was dedicated in loving memory of the late Mrs Jean Clyde.

Archdeacon of Derry presented with High Sheriff chain of office

Bobby Miller looked on proudly as his son, Archdeacon Robert Miller, was presented formally with the chain of office that accompanies his new role as High Sheriff of the County Borough (City) of Londonderry.



The presentation was made by the outgoing High Sheriff, Angela Thompson, presided over by the The Lord Lieutenant for the County Borough of Londonderry, Ian Crowe and hosted by the Mayor of Derry City & Strabane District, Councillor Patricia Logue.

The Lord Lieutenant and the High Sheriff are both appointed by, and are representatives of, the Sovereign, King Charles III. As well as upholding and enhancing "the dignity and standing of the ancient Office", as High Sheriff, Archdeacon Miller will be required to "lend active support to the principal organs of the Constitution" – the Royal Family, the Judiciary, the Police and other law enforcement agencies, the emergency services, local authorities, and church and faith groups – and to take an active part in supporting and promoting the voluntary sector (particularly those involved with crime reduction and social cohesion).

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There are currently eight Sheriffs in Northern Ireland – one for each county, and one for each county borough (the cities of Londonderry and Belfast) – and their appointments are officially made by the Secretary of State on behalf of the Monarch.

The role of High Sheriff for the County Borough of Londonderry is unpaid and no public expenses are attached to the duties.

Dean of St Eunan's Cathedral in Raphoe speaks of shock at graveyard vandalism

The Rector in charge of the group of parishes which includes St Eunan's Cathedral in Raphoe has spoken of her shock and distress at the vandalism of headstones in the graveyard grounds.

On Jan 9 gardai issued an appeal for information after damage was caused to eight headstones, some of which were broken while others were pulled out of the ground between December 19th and January 3rd.

On the afternoon of the 3rd, another headstone was pushed over in the early afternoon.

On today's Nine til Noon Show, Very Rev Liz Fitzgerald, Dean of St Eunan's Cathedral praised the garda response to the vandalism, and urged anyone with information to come forward. Highland Radio

News

Celebrating the 80th anniversary of the first Anglican woman priest



A service to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the ordination of Florence Li Tim-Oi is to be held at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London, on Thursday 25 January.

The Revd Dr Florence Li Tim-Oi was ordained on 25 January 1944. She was ordained Deacon on Ascension Day in 1941 after hearing the call to ministry 10 years earlier at the ordination of a deaconess in Hong Kong Cathedral. Florence was given charge of the Anglican congregation in

the Portuguese colony of Macau where, at the time, refugees were fleeing to from China.

Priests were unable to travel from Japanese occupied territories and therefore could not preside over the Eucharist for her. Florence was, therefore, licensed to do this as a deacon and eventually ordained priest by Bishop R.O Hall of Hong Kong.

Mandy Marshall, Director of Gender Justice at the Anglican Communion and a member of the planning committee organising the celebrations, said, “The Revd Dr Florence Li-Tim Oi remains an inspiration and a hope to women around the Anglican Communion. As the first female priest in an Anglican Church, Revd Dr Li-Tim Oi faced many challenges to her ministry and yet she persisted. She is a figure of hope to those women who are called by God to serve and yearn to be ordained and yet remain frustrated by differing theological beliefs on the ordination of women.”

The anniversary service is being organised by the Li Tim-Oi Foundation which gives grants to women in the Anglican Communion so that they can follow their God-given calling. The Revd Frances Shoemith, a granddaughter of Bishop Hall, will be leading the service and her father Canon Christopher Hall is hosting the reception afterwards. There will be contributions from the Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, the Bishop of Dover, Rose Hudson-Wilkin, the British Chinese community and music will be provided by the Soul Sanctuary Choir.

The Li Tim-Oi Foundation and the Tea House Trust are members of a global Anglican planning committee where

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churchwide programmes in celebration of the 80th anniversary of the ordination of Florence Li Tim-Oi will be taking place throughout this year. They will include theological education and open cultural exchanges as well as church services.

Find out more about the Revd Dr Florence Li Tim-Oi here: <https://www.ltof.org.uk/litimoi-story/>

In the media

Irish Medical Council endorses ‘fundamental shift’ in medical ethics paving way for government euthanasia push - Catholic Herald

The Irish Medical Council has updated its ethical guidelines for doctors. The standout change—and a disturbing change, especially given the supposedly ethical focus—is the removal of the very explicit direction: “You must not take part in the deliberate killing of a patient.” Dubhaltach O Reachtnin writes, January 10, 2024

The amendment to the 2024 Guide to Professional Conduct & Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners comes in the section on “End of Life Care”. It was previously enshrined in the hitherto most recent edition (2016) of the guide as Article 46.9, providing the blunt, clear and unambiguous aforementioned command that proscribes doctors from being involved in euthanasia.

The Iona Institute, an Irish organisation that promotes the place of marriage and religion in society, calls the revision “a huge change to the code of ethics that governs doctors in Ireland”. It highlights that “the prohibition had been an age-old principal of medical ethics with roots going back to ancient Greece, so this represents a seismic shift”.

Admittedly nothing has changed under the law in Ireland. It remains the same: euthanasia, assisted-suicide/dying



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remains illegal. Though in 2023, a joint Senate-Parliament Committee was established to look at the ethical, societal and legal issues pertaining to “assisted dying”.

Again, nothing has “changed” there, and to date the Committee’s work is incomplete – further discussions are planned, no recommendations to the Parliament or the Minister for Justice have been made, and no legislation has been proposed or prepared.

But the question must be asked: Why has the Irish Medical Council removed such an explicit and clear instruction from its ethical guidance and while the parliamentary deliberations are still in progress?

A clue may be found when comparing the preambles to the 2016 and 2024 documents. In 2016, the guide stated: “References to the law are included where relevant, but this is not a definitive statement of the law, and may become out of date”. In 2024, there is a subtle change: “This guidance should be read in conjunction with all relevant policy and legal developments during its period of application.”

No longer is the guidance from the Medical Council reflective of the law as it stands—gone are those “references to the law”—rather it is an equivocation, taking into consideration all possible changes in the law that may arise in the coming years, while removing perceived obstacles to what is on the agenda of the current government.

More at -

[\[https://catholicherald.co.uk/brave-new-ireland-irish-medical-council-endorses-fundamental-shift-in-medical-ethics/\]](https://catholicherald.co.uk/brave-new-ireland-irish-medical-council-endorses-fundamental-shift-in-medical-ethics/)

The failure of Anglican managerialism - The Critic Magazine

The decline in church attendance is a symptom of deeper problems than poor management, Gerry Lynch an Irishman serving in the C of E writes.

As well as paid parish vicars and curates — like me — and chaplains in places like schools and prisons, the Church of England would not function without a platoon of unpaid, volunteer priests, who have taken at least three years of part-time third-level courses, but who work in secular jobs. The equivalent of special constables or territorial soldiers, they celebrate the Eucharist on Sundays, but during the week work as accountants, doctors, lawyers, and occasionally non-graduate jobs. Although the idea came from French Catholicism's "worker priest" movement of the post-War years, in the C of E they are drawn mainly from the upper bourgeoisie. This is not necessarily a bad thing — many are highly intelligent and motivated people who make superb preachers and teachers and bring a wealth of life experience.

The most high-profile of these "Ministers in Secular Employment", as they are officially termed, is now undoubtedly Paula Vennells, the disgraced former Post Office boss. While it is possible for priests initially recruited as unpaid volunteers to later move into paid roles, sometimes senior ones, it is unprecedented that Vennells

was one of three candidates interviewed as a possible Bishop of London in 2017, despite never having held an actual paid job in the Church.

That says much about the C of E's obsession with management and "leadership" as a panacea for the problems of institutional decline. Since around 1990, the C of E has been strangely convinced that its crisis of attendance and vocations was caused by poor management.

One feature of this obsession is that since the mid-2010s, all up-and-coming clergy talent-spotted as potential bishops, Cathedral deans, or similar top clergy are now expected to attend a bespoke course on management theory and issues such as the role of the Church in a "modern liberal democracy" — a sort of clerical MBA, and not necessarily a bad idea in principle. Ironically, as a priest with top-level business experience, Vennells was one of the teachers on this course. In the main however, it was taught by the sort of people who teach secular MBA courses, such as organisational psychologists and management theorists.

Asking an organisational psychologist to offer suggestions on fixing the C of E's crisis is like asking a plumber to tell you how to fix your crashed hard drive. They may be good at what they do, but they don't have the right skillset for the job. What actually afflicts the C of E, and indeed pretty much all of Western Christianity, isn't a management crisis, but a narrative crisis. Put simply, people no longer believe the things they used to believe about God, Jesus Christ, and the Church during the millennium-and-a-half (think about that for

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a moment!) when England was part of a thriving multi-national Christendom.

Even the Church lost confidence in its story when the modernist paradigm seemed triumphant. Christendom and modernism dueled for well over a century, with the Church usually having the upper hand, until Christendom suddenly capitulated in the early 1960s. Beyond mere capitulation, the Church often attempted to assimilate modernism. Those Christians, congregations, and denominations that did so the most thoroughly usually found their capacity to transmit the Faith to the next generations greatly reduced.

More at

<https://thecritic.co.uk/the-failure-of-anglican-managerialism/>

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Women and the Old Testament

Free Walk through course from Langham Partnership

Walk through some of the most challenging Old Testament texts with Dr. Havilah Dharamraj, a Langham scholar from South Asia. Dr. Dharamraj received her Ph.D. in Old Testament from the University of Durham in the United Kingdom and currently serves as Academic Dean and teaches Old Testament at a seminary in South Asia. In a region where believers often face pressure and persecution

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for their faith, Havilah is at work training and mentoring the next generation of pastors and leaders through her teaching and writing.

In this [free six-session course], Dr. Dharamraj explores the stories of women in the Old Testament, walking you through a biblical perspective on topics like patriarchy, sexual assault, childlessness and widowhood. Langham Partnership is proud to invest in scholars like Havilah and share the wealth of wisdom the global church has to offer through our short course platform.

Langham was founded by John Stott (1921-2011), pastor, author, and advocate for the global church. Pastor John was Rector at All Souls Church in London and author of seminal classics such as *Basic Christianity* and *The Cross of Christ*. Most of all, Stott longed to see the global church grow in maturity, personally renouncing the income from his books and devoting all royalties to support the training of pastors in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. He saw the need to help the global church grow in depth, not just in size, by raising the standard of biblical preaching around the world.

Langham continues Stott's vision by 1) equipping emerging church leaders through education; 2) publishing books written by these leaders for their unique context; and 3) training pastors through locally led preaching movements.

[\[https://voices.langham.org/courses/first-course/\]](https://voices.langham.org/courses/first-course/)

Calling all open water swimmers!

There will be a water safety talk for sea swimmers at Red Bay RNLI's lifeboat station in Cushendall at 8pm on Thursday 29 February.

Topics covered by the RNLI's water safety team will include risks, preparation, kit, cold water shock, float to live and calling for help.

This is a great opportunity to meet other swimmers and to learn how to keep each other safe while swimming. For more information, contact Killian_OKelly@rnli.org.uk 00353 873385014._

Poem for today

Desert Places by Robert Frost

Snow falling and night falling fast, oh, fast
In a field I looked into going past,
And the ground almost covered smooth in snow,
But a few weeds and stubble showing last.

The woods around it have it - it is theirs.
All animals are smothered in their lairs.
I am too absent-spirited to count;
The loneliness includes me unawares.

And lonely as it is, that loneliness
Will be more lonely ere it will be less -
A blanker whiteness of benighted snow
With no expression, nothing to express.



They cannot scare me with their empty spaces
Between stars - on stars where no human race is.
I have it in me so much nearer home
To scare myself with my own desert places.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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