

# Church News Ireland



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January 21, 2025

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## Image of the day

### First Romanian Orthodox Bishop of New Diocese of Ireland and Iceland enthroned

**Dublin was the location for the historic enthronement of Bishop Nectarie as the first Romanian Orthodox Bishop of Ireland and Iceland on Saturday (January 11).**

Bishop Nectarie was consecrated for the youngest diocese in the Romanian diaspora at the Divine Liturgy held at the Parish of The Holy Great Martyr George and St Columba in Dublin.

The Church of Ireland was represented at the consecration by Archbishop Michael Jackson and Canon Paul Arbuthnot. Archbishop Jackson delivered a greeting and said the consecration of a bishop in the Church of God was always a joy and a delight for people of faith.

He said the people of the Church of Ireland valued the close relationship of friendship and solidarity with members of the Romanian Orthodox Church. “We are honoured to number Metropolitan Joseph, your Patriarch, as one of our Ecumenical Canons in Christ Church Cathedral. He is always welcome and you are always welcome. We are honoured also to know many of your priests and your people,” he said.

The Archbishop outlined the strong links that existed between Ireland and Iceland. “These are of long standing. It is understood that Irish women, captured by Viking sailors to

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Ireland and taken to Iceland, brought Christianity into the homes and the communities there as what today we might call domestic missionaries. There is a further link in that both the Church of Ireland and the Church of Iceland are signatories of the Porvoo Agreement between the Anglican Provinces of these islands and the Lutheran Churches of Scandinavia and the Baltics,” he explained adding that the Archbishop of Iceland had asked him to convey her greetings and good wishes to Bishop Nectarie.

He anticipated strengthening the ties of solidarity between both churches as an expression of faith, hope and love as they both seek to witness to the compassion and expression of faith of the Incarnate Christ and the Holy Spirit.

The Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Ireland and Iceland has its headquarters in Dublin. It was established by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church in February 2024. Along with the Archdiocese of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, it forms part of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of Western and Southern Europe. Bishop Nectarie Petre was elected its first bishop in October

## News

**Pope expresses appreciation for Gaza ceasefire agreement, Cuba prisoner releases**

**During his weekly Angelus address with pilgrims in St Peter's Square on Sunday, Pope Francis expressed his gratitude for the Gaza ceasefire.**

He calls for the agreement to be respected and for aid to enter Gaza. He also applauded Cuba's recent announcement to release prisoners in the spirit of the Jubilee Year and remembers the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Turning first to the Gaza ceasefire agreement, the Pope thanked the mediators and all those involved who worked to make it possible.

Pope Francis expressed his hope that "what has been agreed will be respected immediately by the parties" and that all the hostages will finally be able to return home, and embrace again their loved ones. "I pray a lot for them and their families," he said.

Moreover, the Pope prayed that the "so-urgently-needed" humanitarian aid will be able to arrive in Gaza as soon as possible in large quantities, and reiterated the Holy See's stance on working toward an eventual 'Two-State' solution.

Both the Israelis and the Palestinians, Pope Francis insisted, need "clear signs" of hope. "I trust that the political authorities of both of them, with the help of the international community, may reach the right solution for the two States."

"May everyone be able to say: yes to dialogue, yes to reconciliation, yes to peace," as he called on all faithful to pray for the achievement of these three elements.

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The Pope next expressed his delight for Cuba's announcement this week, stating it will release from prison 553 people "convicted of various crimes." The decision was communicated to Pope Francis earlier this month in a letter from Cuban president Miguel Díaz-Canel, who indicated that the release of prisoners was made "in the spirit of the Ordinary Jubilee of 2025."

"This," Pope Francis stressed, "is a gesture of great hope that embodies one of the intentions of this Jubilee Year."

"I hope that in the coming months, we will continue to undertake initiatives of this type, which instil confidence in the journey of people and populations."

In his Bull of Indiction for the Jubilee Year, Pope Francis proposed that "governments undertake initiatives aimed at restoring hope; forms of amnesty or pardon meant to help individuals regain confidence in themselves and in society; and programmes of reintegration in the community, including a concrete commitment to respect for law."

Finally, the Holy Father turned his attention to the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, 18-25 January, before wishing those gathered a good lunch and good Sunday.

"In these days of prayer for Christian unity," Pope Francis insisted, "let us not cease to invoke from God the precious gift of full communion between all the Lord's disciples."

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"Let us pray always," he invited, "for tormented Ukraine, for Palestine, Israel, Myanmar and all the populations who are suffering because of war."

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Watch the Angelus on Vatican Youtube channel:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xVkvP\ 5Xi8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xVkvP\ 5Xi8)

Read the full official English translation:

[www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2025-01/pope-francis-angelus-19-january-2025.html](https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2025-01/pope-francis-angelus-19-january-2025.html)

## Education

### Methodist College and Maghera students to serve in Romania

Wishing Methodist College and St Patrick's College, Maghera School Aid Romania teams a safe journey as they travel to Romania.



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The pupils raised a grand total of £27,000 to help those in need in Romania. Thank you for all the donations and support so far.

The pupils enjoyed a lovely breakfast supplied by the college canteen, before boarding the coach to Dublin airport with the staff and pupils from St Patrick's College, Maghera.



## New primary principals meet at Christ Church Cathedral



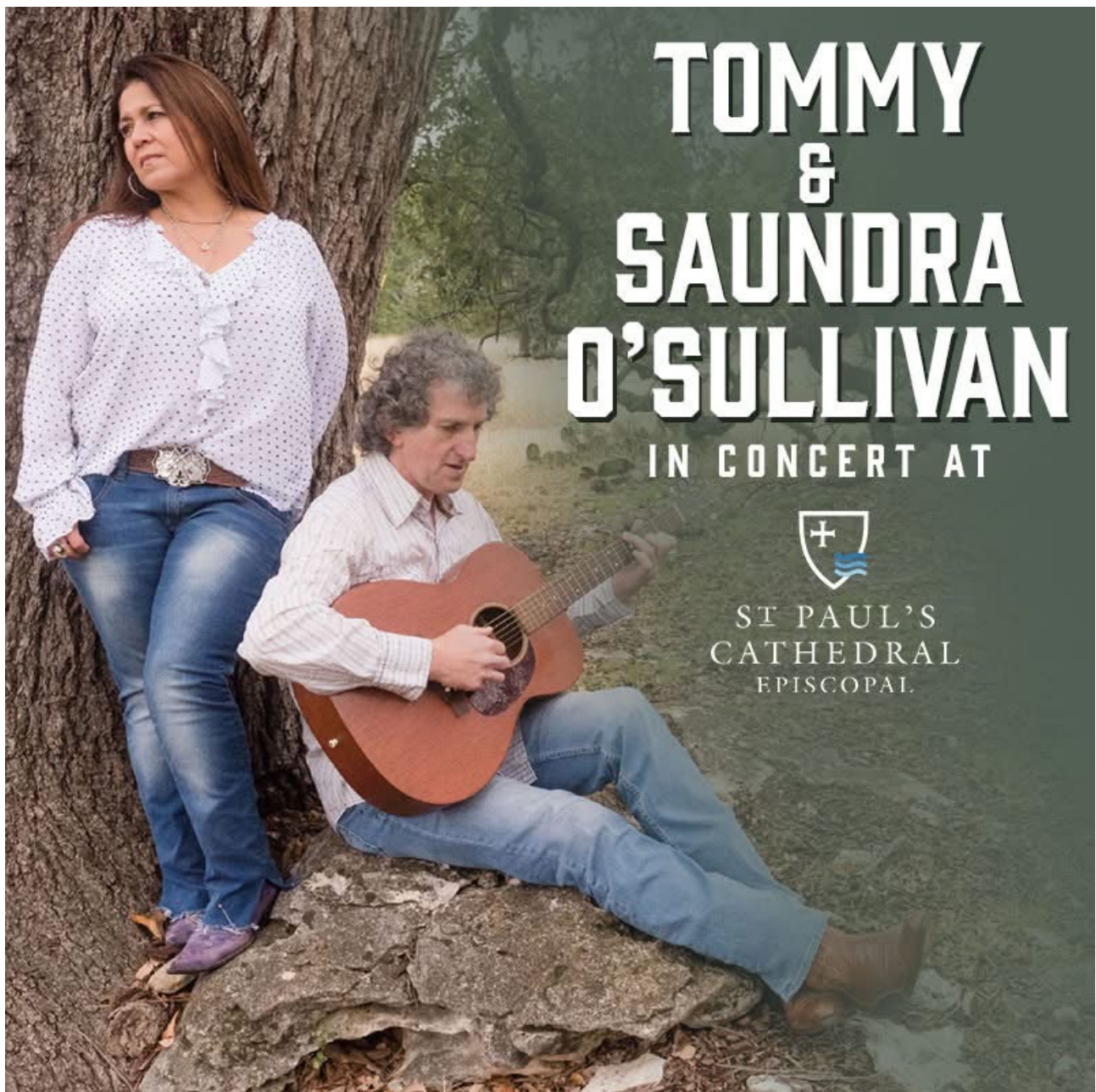
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**A great session with newly appointed primary principals was held recently.**

Appreciation was expressed to Christ Church Cathedral Dublin for hosting the event.

## Cathedral Calls

### From Dingle to San Diego Cathedral





**St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral in San Diego are ready once again to welcome recording artists Tommy and Sandra O'Sullivan for an evening of traditional and original Irish music.**

Tommy and Sandra own, manage and perform at O'Sullivan's Courthouse Pub in Dingle on the wind-swept southwest coast of Ireland, a renowned centre for Irish Folk Music. Tommy is a master guitarist with "A tenor voice that has all the ring of Waterford crystal which has only ever served smokey whiskey"— Sean Laffey, Irish Music Magazine.

His wife and musical partner Sandra hails from Texas and was a nurse in her former life. Of them, the prolific Irish music reviewer Nicky Rossiter said: "The husband-and-wife team from Dingle must surely be the best exponents of what Irish folk should be."

Please join us for a memorable event. St. Paul's Cathedral is a San Diego architectural treasure and wonderful acoustic

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venue. The O'Sullivan's concert series is sponsored in part by a grant from Culture Ireland... And the Dean is from Northern Ireland.

Tickets from - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/tommy-and-saundra-osullivan-in-concert-tickets-1124535157929?aff=oddtcreator>

## Appointments to the Chapter of St Canice's Cathedral in Kilkenny

**The Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory, the Right Reverend Adrian Wilkinson, has appointed two new members of the Chapter of St Canice's Cathedral in Kilkenny.**

The Revd Canon Ian Coulter, currently Prebendary of Blackrath, is to become the new Treasurer in succession to



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The Revd Brian O'Rourke who has retired recently. Canon Coulter was ordained deacon in 1999 to serve in the non-stipendiary ministry and was ordained priest the following year. Ian has served in a number of parishes throughout the Diocese and is currently part-time priest in charge of Templemore Union. Last June the parish there hosted a special reception to mark the 25th anniversary of Ian's ordination. A longtime resident of Kilkenny, he is very widely known through his involvement in the cultural life of the city.



The Revd Helen Oxley is to become the new Prebendary of Blackrath. She graduated from Trinity College Dublin with a degree in Hebrew, Biblical and Theological Studies and trained initially as a Secondary teacher specialising in RE and History. She later retrained as a primary teacher and is currently teaching principal in Kiltegan National School, one of the diocesan schools. She completed her Master of Ministry in Theology and was ordained for the Non-Stipendiary Ministry in 2011, to serve initially in Dunleckney

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Union. She has since worked in a number of other parishes. Last year the Bishop appointed her as Warden of Readers in the Diocese.

Commenting on these new appointments, the Dean of Ossory, the Very Revd Stephen Farrell says ‘I am thrilled at the news of these appointments. Ian has been a constant support to me as Dean and he makes a wonderful contribution to cathedral life. It is fitting that his commitment and dedication is being further recognised. Helen’s pastoral gifts and her immersion in the world of education will be a glorious addition to the Chapter and to the outreach of the cathedral. Laus Deo.’

A date for the installation of the new canons will be announced in due course.

## The Minster Gate Bookshop

The Minster  
Gate  
Bookshop,  
nestled in the  
shadow of



## **York Minster, is a charming multi-level haven for book lovers.**

Housed in a 15th-century building, the shop's historical significance is woven into its architecture, from its uneven floors to its labyrinth of rooms packed with books both old and new. Once a location for crafting ecclesiastical texts, this spot has evolved into a treasure trove for rare and second-hand books. Its creaking staircases and nooks create an atmosphere that mirrors the literary discoveries within. Fun fact: the shop is said to have a resident ghost, adding to its storied allure.

The Minster Gate Bookshop, 8 Minster Gates,  
York YO1 7HL. Opening Hours:

- Monday to Saturday: 10:00 AM – 05:30 PM
- Sunday: 11:00 AM – 05:30 PM

Photo Credit: Clare Meadows

## **Clergy and ministry**

### **Prayer for Healing service in Carrick Limavady**

**The Rector of All Saints' Clooney, Rev Canon David McBeth, will be the guest speaker at a special Service of Prayer for Healing in Carrick Parish Church on Sunday 26th January at 6pm.**

Many of us are aware of the power of prayer to help those afflicted by illness, and of its power to support those caring for the sick, so do please spread the word about the service.



During the service, members of the congregation will have the opportunity to come forward and receive individual prayer.

Everyone is welcome to attend, whether they're seeking healing for themselves or for someone they love. For further details, contact the Rector of the Balteagh Group of Parishes, Rev Rhys Jones.

Carrick Church is located at Carrick Lane, Ballyquin Road, Limavady BT49 9HA.

## **Appointed Rector of Delgany**

**The Revd Natasha Quinn–Thomas has been appointed as the new Rector of Christ Church, Delgany.**



Natasha is currently Curate Assistant in Castleknock and Mulhuddart with Clonsilla. (The announcement was made in both parishes on Sunday January 19).

Over the past nine years Natasha has served in various ministry contexts in Wales, England and Ireland. She joined the parish in Dublin in June 2023.

Natasha trained for ordination at St Padarn's Institute, the ministerial training college for the Church in Wales. She was ordained Deacon in 2021 and Priesthood in 2022 and then served a curacy in Dyffryn Clwyd Ministry Area in North Wales, close to where she grew up.



Children's and Families ministry has been a passion of hers and something that has come naturally to her. In every area in which she has served she has developed good links with the local schools, and she enjoys setting up new initiatives that encourage faith development in young people.

During her time in Castleknock and Mulhuddart with Clonsilla, the main projects she has been involved with include developing the baby and toddler group in the parish (that is now thriving), leading multiple faith development courses throughout the years, teaching the young people in the parish more about faith both in Castleknock National School and at the parish's children's and youth groups and drinking lots of tea at home visits.

In 2024, Natasha completed her master's degree in Theology, Ministry and Mission through Durham University. Her dissertation explored how a diversely gifted ministry team enhances the mission and ministry of a church context. She began her part-time PhD research at Trinity College Dublin in September. She is looking at how women in Ireland participate in ecumenical mission and ministry initiatives. In the past, her research has inspired her practical ministry and vice versa. Natasha is currently chair of of the Church of Ireland Disability Consultative Group, which is seeking to make our churches more accessible to all.

She will be moving to Delgany with her golden Labrador, Rufus, who will enjoy exploring the mountains and beaches in the area.

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Commenting on her appointment, Natasha said she was looking forward to this next phase of her ministry. “For the past year and a half, I have been blessed to serve in the communities of Castleknock and Mulhuddart with Clonsilla. I am grateful for the welcome to Ireland and the support I received from Reverend Colin and the ministry team. Ministering in such a vibrant and inclusive community has been a privilege. Whilst I will be sad to leave these parishes, I am excited to start a new ministry adventure in Delgany. I was drawn to Delgany because of the potential for new outreach initiatives due to the area’s ever-growing population. I am eager to continue nurturing the parish’s well-established ethos of faith and hospitality. I look forward to moving to Delgany and making the area my new home,” she said.

## Death of Ms Trudi Jeffers, diocesan reader

### A message from Bishop Pat Storey -

“As a dioceses we are very sorry to hear of the death of a much esteemed diocesan reader, Trudi Jeffers. Trudi was 95, and never stopped encouraging others and talking with joy about her Lord. Whilst we will miss her, we know that she is ‘safe in the arms of Jesus’.



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As a dioceses, and as her bishop, we are deeply grateful for her ministry.”

+Pat

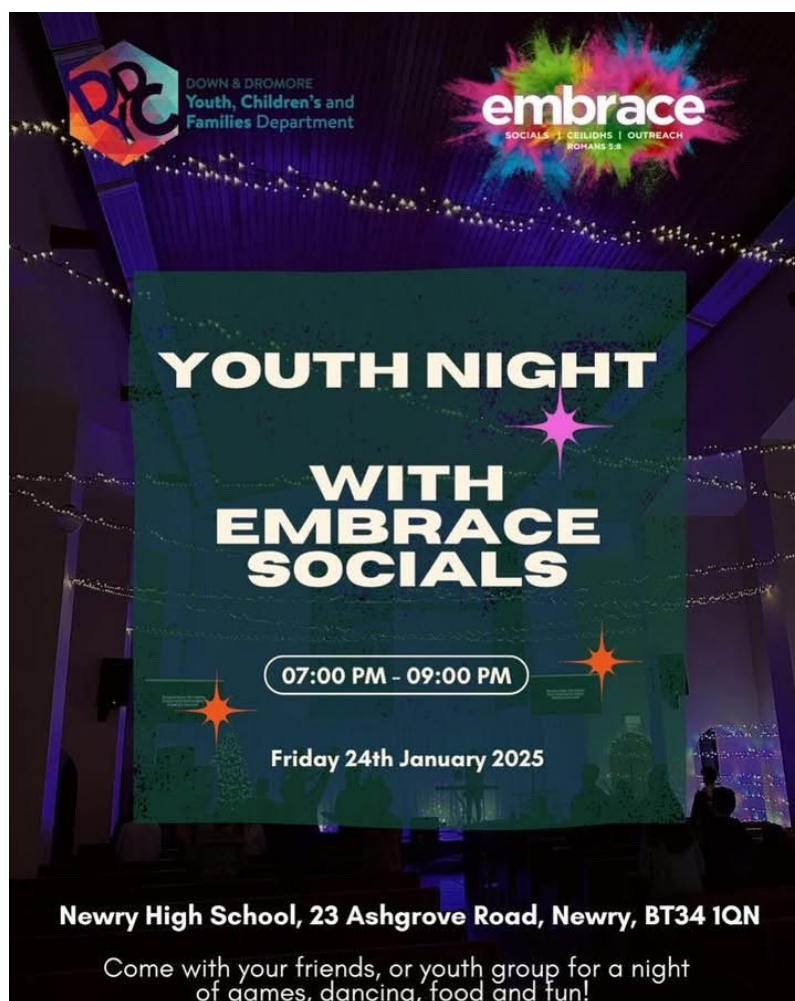
## Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

### Moravian Church archives

Diary date - 25th January 2025, 10am to 4pm at Gracehill Moravian Church.

"Archivists from the Moravian churches in NI will be present at this exhibition - presenting items from their archives. Also an opportunity to find out about Gracehill's World Heritage and look round the village. Lecture from 10-11 then free access until 4 to the presentations. Everyone welcome! Feel free to share."

### Down & Dromore youth gathering



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**The next DDYC youth gathering is coming up this Friday 24 January in Newry from 7-9.00pm.**

They are very excited to have Embrace Socials along to bring the banter.

## **From Rome...to home...**

**After the Synod on Synodality in Rome, what next steps can we take to bring synodality into our parishes?**

Join the School for Synodality on Saturday 25th January, for an online interactive event to discuss the routes and resources as well as the challenges and opportunities available.

Includes a conversation between Synod facilitator Avril Baigent and delegate Bishop Nick Hudson, small group discussions, Q&A session and more.

Tickets here  [www.schoolforsynodality.org.uk](http://www.schoolforsynodality.org.uk)

## **Faith in Kids - commended by C of I Children's Ministry**

**If you lead the Children's Ministry in your church, come and join us for our next session of Inspire on Tuesday 28th January**

Here at Faith in Kids, we want to help you share the welcome Jesus offers to all children. In this session, we will

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focus on including children with additional needs in our ministry settings.

We will root what we learn in gospel principles and learn how to better understand the needs of every child. With help to explore ways we can include every child, communicate well and disciple creatively and the chance to talk through scenarios in breakout groups, share ideas and realistic practical tips, you will leave this session equipped and encouraged to share a better welcome.

We are delighted that Triona Brading, a disability champion and SEND coordinator for her church network will be joining us.

## **Candlelight Concerts at ‘St. Collegiate’ Church Galway**

**“Join us during these cold winter evenings as we host a series of Candlelight Concerts!”**

These are always a treat, especially in the atmospheric surrounds of Galway’s medieval church. More information on our website, or from [feverup.com](http://feverup.com).

## **Free webinar on intergenerational preaching**

**Roots are running an online workshop that will be a great help if you are interested in how to preach in a truly Intergenerational Church.**

Some great speakers. Check out the details below:

Free webinar on intergenerational preaching, with special guests David Csinos, Rachel Turner and Mary Hawes 🙌🙌  
Tuesday 25th February. 7.30-9.00pm (GMT). Online.

Further information at -

<https://www.instagram.com/rootsforchurches/>

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DE4aBhgKH1R/>

This event has been organised by Intergenerate UK, a new network to support intergenerational ministry within the UK. Roots is proud to be a part of Intergenerate UK. Find out more about Intergenerate UK: [intergenerateuk.org](http://intergenerateuk.org)  
Sign up for the webinar now on Eventbrite

## Perspective

### Pope Francis addresses health concerns in historic autobiography

**Pope Francis has released his highly anticipated autobiography, *Hope – an Autobiography*, offering personal reflections on his life, beliefs, and the challenges of leading the Catholic Church.**

Published in over 100 countries, the 303-page volume is the first of its kind written by a reigning pope and reviews his journey from Buenos Aires to the Vatican.

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Neil Thorns, spokesperson for CAFOD (the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development), praised the Pope for his focus on issues that resonate globally.

“He talks about the things people care about, whether it’s the climate crisis or migrants,” Thorns said.

“His small gestures - like washing prisoners’ feet or opening a [Holy Door at Rebibbia Prison in Rome during the Jubilee Year] - make a big difference.”

Originally planned for release after his death, the pope decided to publish the book during the ongoing Catholic Holy Year.

Thorns compared it to the timing of Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si*, which was published ahead of the Paris Agreement to influence global climate policy.

“This autobiography is there to inspire us as pilgrims of hope,” he said, referencing the Jubilee theme.

Thorns highlighted the Pope’s enduring focus on humanity’s pressing issues: “From the pandemic to the climate crisis and migration, he’s always advocated for the poor and excluded. He doesn’t just speak; he acts, and that’s what makes him relatable.”

The book also addresses speculation about a potential resignation, following the precedent of Pope Benedict XVI. Pope Francis made it clear he would only step down if his health made it impossible to continue.

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“I am well,” he writes. “The reality is, quite simply, that I am old. The Church is governed using the head and the heart, not the legs.”

Francis, who now often uses a wheelchair due to knee and back pain, has faced several health challenges, including surgeries for diverticulitis and a hernia in recent years. Despite this, he reiterated that he has never considered stepping down.

The book also addresses controversial decisions, such as the 2024 move to allow blessings for same-sex couples on a case-by-case basis. “It is the people who are blessed, not the relationships,” Francis states. “Everyone in the Church is invited [for a blessing], including people who are divorced, including people who are homosexual, including people who are transgender. Homosexuality is not a crime, it is a human fact.”

While widely praised, the autobiography has not been without criticism. Catholic commentator Austin Ivereigh called it “long-winded” and “riddled with errors” in a review for *The Tablet*, yet acknowledged its significance, saying:

“Francis gives us urgent, heartfelt reflections on the current age, a call to conversion that shines brightly against the darkening of our time.”

## 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](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

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

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