

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Gweebarra Bay**

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Short reading and a prayer daily on this site

## Image of the day – Gweebarra Bay

### **Gweebarra Bay, Lettermacaward, County Donegal**

The Gweebarra Bridge is known locally as the 'Gateway to the Rosses'. The bridge is situated on the N56 road, which is a major route in the area.

The Gweebarra River is 32km long from its source above Lough Barra to Gweebarra Bay and is tidal from Doochary Bridge to Gweebarra Bay. The Gweebarra Bridge is a popular spot for anglers and is known for its scenic views of the surrounding countryside.

Courtesy Discover Donegal photo by Gareth Wray / [www.garethwray.com](http://www.garethwray.com)

Book Discover Donegal - more beautiful photos at - <http://book.discoverdonegal.ie/books/mwmu/#p=>

## News

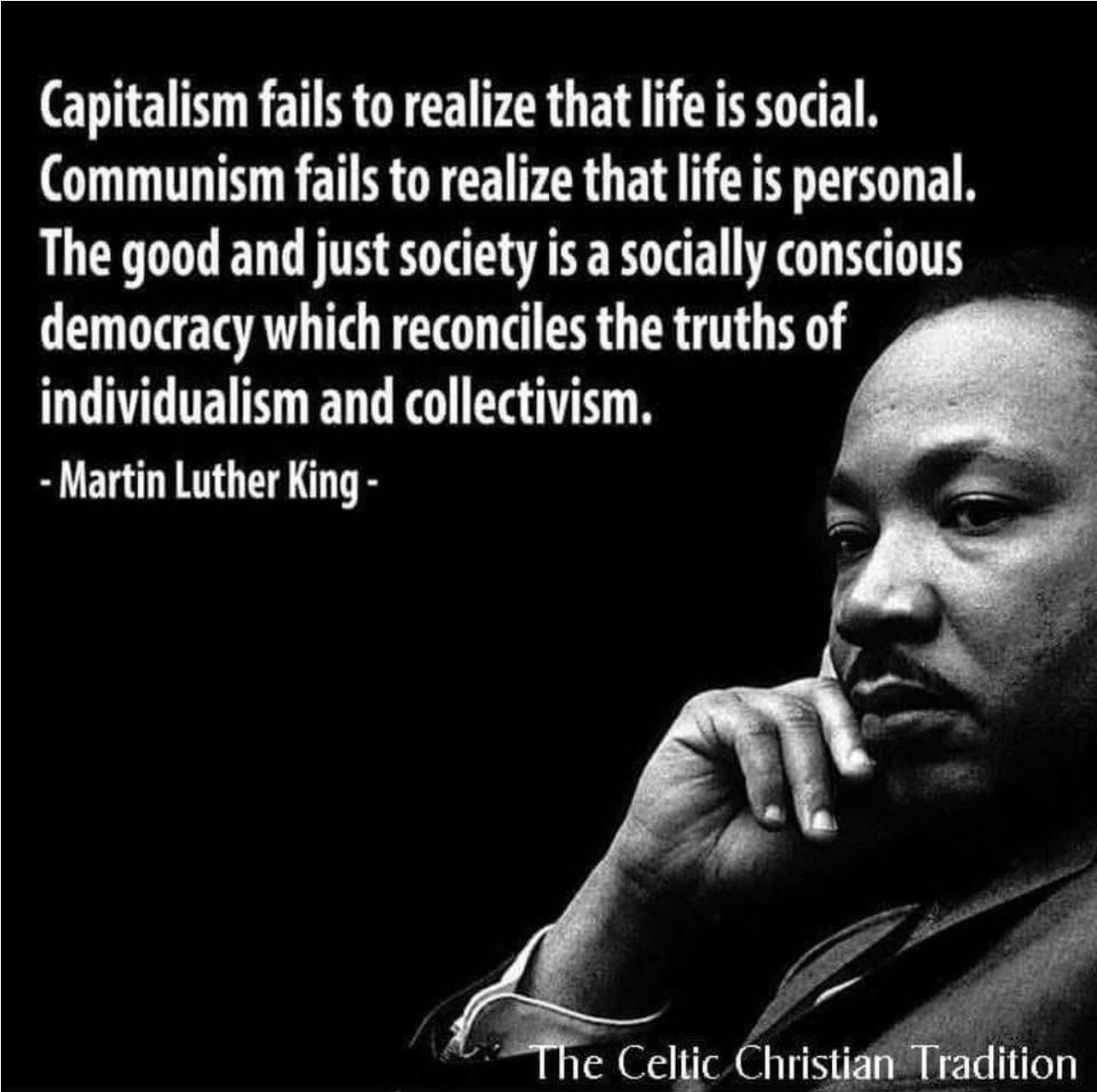
### **Christian Aid slams Trump's 'ignorant' withdrawal from Paris Agreement**

**Christian Aid has strongly criticised Donald Trump, after he signed an executive order to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Climate Agreement on his first day as President.**

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The Paris Agreement commits nations to keeping global warming below 2°C (ideally 1.5°C), to set targets to reduce emissions, and to aim for net-zero emissions by 2050. Richer countries also pledge to support poorer nations in adapting to climate-related challenges.

Christian Aid's Head of Global Advocacy, Graham Gordon, described Trump's decision as showing a "unique level of ignorance and indifference" to the struggles faced by vulnerable communities around the world.



**Capitalism fails to realize that life is social.  
Communism fails to realize that life is personal.  
The good and just society is a socially conscious  
democracy which reconciles the truths of  
individualism and collectivism.**

**- Martin Luther King -**

The Celtic Christian Tradition

January 23, 2025

“Last time Trump withdrew the U.S. from the Paris Agreement, other countries, states, cities, businesses, and civil society organizations stepped in to maintain momentum. We need that same clear-sighted leadership again,” Gordon added.

Christian Aid is calling on the international community to take urgent action, describing climate change as the world’s “biggest geopolitical threat.”

On his first day in office, Trump also granted full presidential pardons to around 1,500 individuals involved in the storming of the Capitol four years ago.

Additionally, he withdrew the U.S. from the World Health Organisation, declared a National Emergency at the border with Mexico—effectively halting asylum—and announced plans to end birthright citizenship for children born to undocumented immigrant parents. The U.S. has long interpreted its 14th Amendment to guarantee citizenship to those born on American soil, regardless of their parents' immigration status.

## **Influential Anglican priest and philosopher Don Cupitt dies age 90**

**He became widely known for his 1984 BBC series *The Sea of Faith*, where he explored the decline of religion and asked whether the Christian faith still had a place today. The series led to the creation of the Sea of Faith Network, which remains active.**

January 23, 2025

A life Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, Cupitt lectured in philosophy for 30 years and was a key non-realist thinker. His ideas challenged traditional views of God, asserting that "talk of God in transcendent and metaphysical terms belongs to an intellectual epoch that has long since passed."

While his 1980 book *Taking Leave of God* raised questions about his own faith, he described himself as a "Christian Buddhist".

Though he stopped officiating at public worship in the 1990s, Cupitt continued to influence debates on faith and religion, encouraging open discussion about God's existence and the future of the Church.

Several colleagues and former pupils have taken to social media to pay their respects. Giles Fraser wrote on X: "He was a fearless fighter for truth and integrity, and was a huge personal support to me even as I got more conservative than him. A lovely man. May he rest in peace and rise in glory."

Gildas Unbound also wrote: "Don Cupitt converted me. His TV series "Sea of Faith" was the first time I had experienced Christianity as having anything to do with intellectual rigour or credibility. Happily for me, as I told him some years later, he converted me to a belief in a real, transcendent and objective God (Who is no object). He had the decency to be very gracious with this disappointment. May he rest in peace, and rise in glory - and some surprise."

# Education



## Holy Family Parish, Belfast celebrates Catholic Schools week

**“This week, as well as being ChristianUnity Week, we celebrate all our wonderful Catholic Schools (coinciding with Grandparents Day on Wednesday).**



We are Blessed to have so many fantastic schools within the Parish and local community. We thank God for the dedicated teachers and staff who support our children in their academic and faith development.

It was lovely to have so many of those schools represented on Saturday & Sunday at all of our weekend Masses.

Our thanks to the pupils of St Malachy's, Dominican College Fortwilliam, Blessed Trinity College, Holy Family Primary School and Nursery Unit, Belfast and St Therese Of Lisieux Primary School who presented the gifts during the offertory of each Mass.



## Prayer ball at Templemore school

**Bishop Adrian Wilkinson of Cashel diocese said he had a “Lovely visit to meet the pupils and staff of St Mary’s National School in Templemore.**



It is just beside the church. Using a prayer ball, we talked about the things we sometimes pray about. It was also World Religions Day so I spotted a relevant book on one of the school bookshelves.

## Staying in the game differently

**An outstanding representation of past pupils and staff from RBAI involved in Ulster Rugby’s win over Exeter Chiefs at Kingspan.**

January 23, 2025

A brilliant demonstration of excellence, but also a reflection of different ways to stay in the game.



Standing L-R :Rob McDowell - Assistant Referee; Hugh McCaughey - CEO; Kyle Alexander - Physio ; Bryn Ward; David McCann; Corrie Barrett; Jude Postlethwaite; James Hume; Dan Soper - Attack Coach; Johnny Peak - 4th Official

Front row L-R : Rob Lyttle; Niall Armstrong - Exeter Chiefs; Michael Lowry; Callum Reid

## **Vice Principals at MCB applications invited**

**The Board of Governors of Methodist College Belfast invites applications for the posts of Vice Principal Curriculum and Vice Principal Pastoral.**



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HIRING  
VICE PRINCIPALS** ✝

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COLLEGE  
BELFAST**

These positions become available from 1 September 2025 following the promotion of our Vice Principal Curriculum to a Principal position and also the retirement of our Vice Principal Pastoral.

As a member of staff, you will discover a celebrated tapestry of diversity, opportunity and excellence that makes Methody truly unique. Methody provides life changing opportunities for everyone and we would love you to experience that for yourself as a member of staff.

January 23, 2025

Application packs can be downloaded from our website and the closing date for applications is Friday 31 January 2025.

<https://www.methody.org/vacancies>

## Cathedral Calls

### TCD Chapel Choir visits Enniskillen



**On Sunday last (January 19), the choir of the Chapel of Trinity College, Dublin sang at the morning Eucharist at St Maccartan's Cathedral, Enniskillen.**

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They joined with the cathedral choir to sing music ranging from the 16th to the 21st centuries.

The Eucharist was celebrated by the Dean, The Very Rev'd Kenneth Hall, and the sermon was preached by the Dean of Residence & Chaplain of Trinity College, Dublin, The Rev'd Canon Paul Arbuthnot.

On the previous evening the Trinity College, Dublin Chapel choir sang at the Vigil Mass in St Michael's, Enniskillen. Included in their music was a composition by a former conductor of the chapel choir, Deacon Paul Flynn.

Canon Arbuthnot commented: "It was wonderful for the Trinity College, Dublin Chapel Choir to be in Enniskillen. The hospitality and welcome shown to us by Monsignor Peter O'Reilly and Dean Kenneth Hall was incredibly kind and vast. It was also a delight to meet once again the curate of St Maccartan's, The Rev'd Dr Edwin Aiken".



He added:  
"The Trinity College, Dublin chaplaincy is ecumenical and this visit reflected this commitment. Many thanks are due to our hosts, to the chapel

choir for their beautiful singing, and to Dr Kerry Houston, Director of Chapel Music at Trinity College, Dublin for making this a most memorable and good visit”.

## **“Millions have put their trust in you,” Washington bishop at Inauguration day service in National Cathedral**

**Washington bishop’s plea to Trump: ‘Have mercy upon the people in our country who are scared’. David Paulsen of Episcopal News Service reports.**

Washington Bishop Mariann Budde, in her Jan. 21 sermon at Washington National Cathedral’s Service of Prayer for the Nation, called on all Americans to strive for a renewed unity based in honesty, humility and respect for human dignity – and she directed her final words to President Donald Trump, who was seated in the front row.

“Millions have put their trust in you,” Budde said to Trump, who was joined at the Episcopal cathedral’s service by Vice President JD Vance and their spouses.

Budde then alluded to Trump’s speech the day before, at his Jan. 20 inauguration. Trump, who survived an assassination attempt during the 2024 presidential campaign, had said he felt “saved by God to make America great again.”

“In the name of our God,” Budde continued, “I ask you to have mercy upon the people in our country who are scared now.”

Some gay, lesbian and transgender Americans fear for their lives, Budde said, and a similar fear looms over hard-working immigrant families in communities across the country. “They may not be citizens or have the proper documentation, but the vast majority of immigrants are not criminals,” Budde said. “They pay taxes and are good neighbors. They are faithful members of our churches and mosques, synagogues, gurdwara and temples.

“I ask you to have mercy, Mr. President, on those in our communities whose children fear that their parents will be taken away, and that you help those who are fleeing war zones and persecution in their own lands to find compassion and welcome here. Our God teaches us that we are to be merciful to the stranger for we were all once strangers in this land.”

Budde’s sermon echoed the concerns stated by Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe and House of Deputies President Julia Ayala Harris in their Jan. 21 letter to the church, issued in response to Trump starting his second term with a barrage of executive orders, many of them targeting migrants, refugees and other immigrants. The orders signed by Trump included measures seeking to suspend the federal refugee resettlement program, declare a national emergency at the U.S-Mexico border, block an “invasion” of migrants into the United States, end the right to birthright citizenship that is guaranteed by the Constitution and resume a policy of making asylum-seekers wait in Mexico for their cases to be heard.

Other executive orders were related to the federal work force, the economy, energy policy and the environment, and they included some measures targeting transgender people. The government, under Trump, intends to recognize only two sexes, male and female, and he seeks to end protections for transgender inmates in federal prisons.

“We read this news with concern and urge our new president and congressional leaders to exercise mercy and compassion,” Rowe and Ayala Harris said in their letter, which focused primarily on immigration policy.

Before the inauguration, Trump started his day Jan. 20 by attending a worship service at another Episcopal church, St. John’s Church, Lafayette Square. It sometimes is referred to as “the church of the presidents” because of its location across the street from the White House.

Nearly five years ago, in June 2020, Trump drew widespread condemnation for posing with a Bible in front of St. John’s after ordering his security detail and law enforcement officers to forcibly push back protesters who had gathered outside the White House as part of an ongoing anti-racism demonstration a week after the killing of George Floyd.

At the time, Budde and other church leaders condemned the use of force against protesters and the photo-op, which they said ran counter to Christian teachings.

Budde’s sermon at Washington National Cathedral was not so pointed, though she again sought to underscore



universal values shared by most world religions over the politics of hate and division.

“We have gathered this morning to pray for unity as a people and a nation,” she said, “not for agreement, political or otherwise, but for the kind of unity that fosters community across diversity and division, a unity that serves the common good. ... It is not conformity. It is not victory. It is not polite weariness or passivity born of exhaustion. Unity is not partisan.

“Rather, unity is a way of being with one another that encompasses and respects our differences, that teaches us to hold multiple perspectives and life experiences as valid and worthy of respect, that enables us in our communities and in the halls of power to genuinely care for one another, even when we disagree.”

Washington National Cathedral is the seat of The Episcopal Church’s presiding bishop and of the bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington. Plans for the cathedral’s post-inauguration service were announced in October, before Trump defeated Vice President Kamala Harris in November to win the presidency for a second time.

The service was not open to the public because of security concerns, and the cathedral’s nave was only partially filled with the service’s invitees, who included House Speaker Mike Johnson and some of Trump’s cabinet nominees.

It was livestreamed and available as a video on the cathedral’s YouTube channel.

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National Cathedral Dean Randy Hollerith also participated, along with the Rt. Rev. Ann Ritonja, The Episcopal Church's bishop suffragan for armed forces and federal ministries.

“As we mark the transition of political leadership and begin a new chapter in the story of America, may these sacred texts, songs and petitions from the many faith traditions of our country inspire and challenge us to care for one another and live according to the highest ideals to which God has called us,” Hollerith said in his welcoming remarks. “Thank you for being here, and please know that we are a house of prayer for all people, and you are always welcome.”

The service was joined by leaders from a diverse group of faith denominations, including Protestant, Mennonite, Mormon, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist leaders. Participating musicians included the United States Marine Chamber Orchestra.

The service also featured a rendition of Franz Schubert's “Ave Maria,” which Trump has expressed a fondness for in the past.

After the service, however, when asked about it by reporters, Trump disparaged the cathedral's event, saying he “didn't think it was a good service.”

The cathedral previously had hosted 10 official inaugural prayer services for various presidents of both parties.

Unlike in the past, this liturgy was not planned in conjunction with the Presidential Inaugural Committee, and rather than

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focusing on an individual, it was offered for the country at large.

## Clergy and ministry

## Galway Samaritans are recruiting new volunteers



The poster features a photograph of four people (three men and one woman) wearing green Samaritans vests with the text 'Samaritans We're here to listen 116 123'. The background is green with yellow polka dots. The text on the poster includes: 'Samaritans Galway', 'Join our team', 'Copy', 'Go to message', 'Open meeting Tuesday February 4th at 7:30pm', '14 Nun's Island, Galway, H91 YR27', 'If you wish to be a volunteer but can't make this meeting please sign up online or email us: samaritans.ie/volunteer recruitment@galwaysamaritans.ie', and 'Samaritans - Galway is a registered charity.'

**If you are interested and want to know more please come along to their next Open Meeting.**

At - 14 Nun's Island, Galway, H91 YR27 on Tuesday February 4 at 7.30pm. If you can't make the meeting and are interested please email [recruitment@galwaysamaritans.ie](mailto:recruitment@galwaysamaritans.ie)

## Vocations Morning in Cork, Cloyne and Ross

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**There will be a vocations morning on Saturday 25th January at Carrigrohane parish hall (T12 RX57).**

Canon John Ardis, Diocesan Director of Ordinands, writes: “This will be a gentle morning open to people who may be exploring any call to a vocation (lay or ordained). Lydia Monds from the Churches’ ministry of healing will be facilitating our morning, and there will be input from Rev. Terry Mitchell who will explain options for those considering lay vocations within the church, and I will explain how the process will work for those who might be considering ordained vocations”.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## 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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# Church News Ireland

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

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