

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Ballintoy harbour from seaward

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Image of the day

Ballintoy harbour from seaward

A narrow entrance between islands, rocks and seawalls is not for the novice skipper. Nor is access by road or the fainthearted but worth the challenge. Major scenery for Games of Thrones, perhaps the best known film series made in modern time. The much photographed white parish church is identifiable here to the keen eye. Thanks once again to our friendly drone operator superb.

News

Hardest-Working Royal for 2024

The Hardest-Working Royal for 2024 Princess Anne is already on track to retain her title in 2025 as she takes up the role of patron of a



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Scottish Rugby charity The Murrayfield Injured Players Foundation (MIPF).

Princess Anne is a longtime rugby fan and has been a patron of the Scottish Rugby Union since 1986!

She was recently pictured presenting the Centenary Quaich to Ireland captain Caelan Doris after the Guinness Six Nations Rugby Championship match between Scotland and Ireland in Edinburgh.

Read more about her activities here:

<https://the-australian-womens-weekly.visitlink.me/aXYsfH>



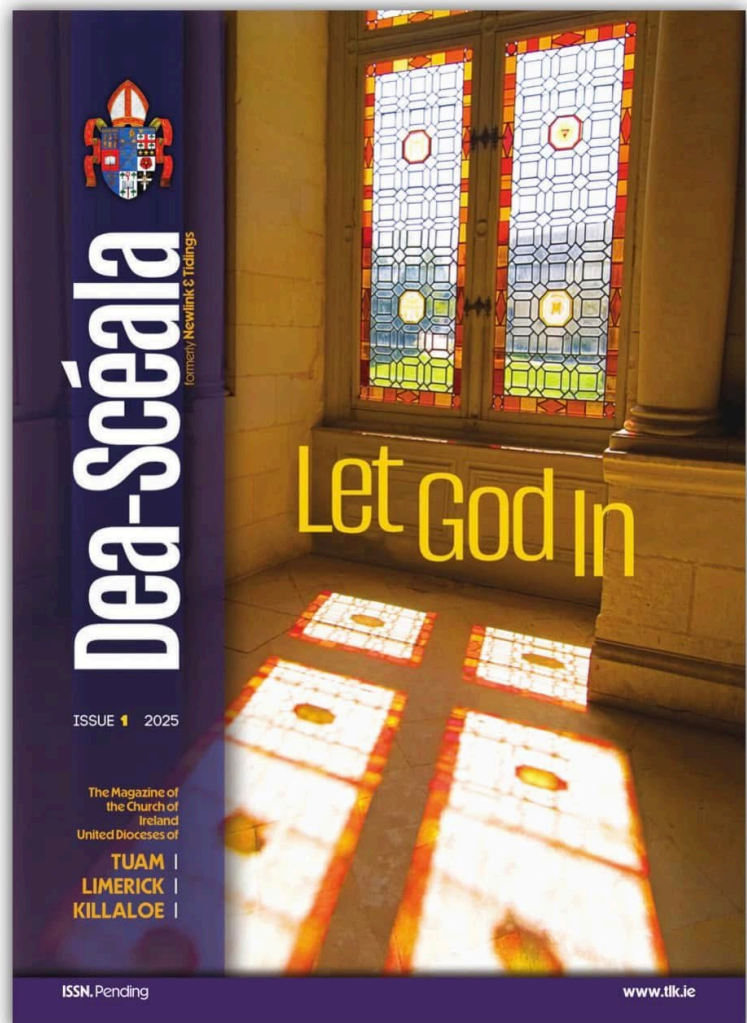
Ramsey Cardy/Getty Images

Rebrand of Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe magazine

The launch of the new diocesan magazine Dea Scéala (Good Tidings) took place at Diocesan Councils recently.

The magazine will bring news from all over TLK thanks to the editorial team - Led by

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Ros Stevenson, editor and the Revd Canon Andrea Wills, deputy editor; they are assisted by Janet Bray and Heather Pope.

Charles Wills will continue to work on distribution at the Northern end of the diocese.

The new publication is available for free - keep an eye out for it in churches or you can read it online at

<https://tlk.ie/3d-flip-book/dea-sceala/>

Photos courtesy of the DCO, Mr Stephen Fletcher.

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Derry Church leaders unite for 'Columba Conversations' with Rev Harold Good

A powerful evening of reflection and dialogue took place at The Playhouse, Derry on Tuesday as part of the Columba Conversations series, an initiative supported by PEACEPLUS, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), Derry Now reports.



Andrew Forster, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Cat Brogan, Churches Trust, Rev Good, Donal McKeown, Bishop of Derry, Rev Stephen Skuce District Superintendent, NW District, Methodist Church in Ireland.

The event brought together faith leaders, community members, and peacebuilders to explore the role of faith in fostering reconciliation and healing in Northern Ireland.

A distinguished audience gathered to hear from Rev Harold Good OBE, one of the independent witnesses to the

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decommissioning of paramilitary weapons, as he reflected on his lifelong commitment to peacebuilding. Rev Good was joined in conversation by journalist and author Martin O'Brien, co-writer of *In Good Time: A Memoir* by Harold Good.

The event was attended by Bishop Andrew Forster, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe; Bishop Donal McKeown, Bishop of Derry; the Dean of Derry, Very Rev Raymond Stewart; Rev David Skuce (Church of Ireland); and Rev Stephen Skuce (District Superintendent, North Western District, The Methodist Church in Ireland), all of whom offered visible support for this vital initiative.

Ballynature Day a massive success

Robin Swann MP conveyed congratulations to everyone involved in "Ballynature Day" in Ballynure Village.

The 'menu' ranged from swifts, to eagles, to bees, to wood turning, wind power and much more.

There were fantastic displays with over 30 stands to visit plus crafts, storytelling, faceprinting for the kids and lots more.

Education

St. Dominic's u16 camogs are All Ireland Champions



It was a brilliant day for St. Dominic's, as their u16 camogs became the first Ulster school to lift the Corn Úna, and the first Belfast school to win an All Ireland Camogie title at any grade.

The school writes - A special mention to Amelie Annett, who covered every blade of grass on the pitch, and was deservedly recognised as the player of the match.

We could not be prouder of each and every girl within the panel, who have worked so hard since September. Whether it was morning training, late evenings after school or challenge matches on a Saturday morning, nothing was too much to ask of the girls and it is wonderful to see their hard work rewarded.

Inst in UK's most historic rugby rivalry - again

The UK's most historic rugby rivalry....Great to see Adam Wylie (Inchmarlo & RBAI 2007-21) and Callum

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**Soper (RBAI
2017-24)
representing
Cambridge v
Oxford in the
2nd XV Varsity
Match.**

Oxford came
out top in a
tightly contested
game 32-27 at
Iffley Road.



Wallace Winner of Future Chef NI heat

Congratulations to Wallace High School's Year 11 student, Cicilly, for her recent success in the FutureChef competition.

Cicilly was mentored by Mr Newett and won the local heat of FutureChef, earning a place in the Northern Ireland Final at Belfast Met earlier this month. She was mentored by Damian Tumilty, Executive Head Chef of the Grand Central Hotel, Belfast, which she was understandably excited about.

She created a beautiful wild mushroom ravioli, showcasing her pasta-making skills, and her warm chocolate fondant was also a huge hit. Whilst the overall winner was another pupil, we are incredibly proud of Cicilly's achievements as a finalist and how well she represented Wallace. She is now

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determined to apply again next year, and we wish her the



best of luck!

Holy Trinity's icon blessed

Bishop Alan McGuckian of Down & Connor with pupils and staff from Blessed Trinity College in Belfast.

Bishop Alan blessed the copy of the icon of the Trinity that will be displayed at the main entrance of the school.

Fairtrade Bake-Off winner

Two of Dalriada Year 10 pupils, Emma Calderwood and Charlotte Thompson, participated in the Causeway Coast and Glens Fairtrade Bake-Off competition.



Both girls put in an outstanding effort producing two superb cakes filled and decorated with the Fair-trade brief. After facing tough competition amongst other local schools,

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Emma was announced winner of the Fairtrade Bake-Off with her delicious Chocolate Cake.

A huge well done to both Emma and Charlotte! Thank you to the Causeway Coast and Glens Council for a lovely morning at the competition.



Cathedral Calls

Godly Leadership theme of St Patrick's Day celebrations at Down

Down & Dromore's annual St Patrick's Day celebrations gather visitors of all denominations from Ireland and abroad.

The theme for 2025 is Godly Leadership and you are warmly invited to join Bishop David for worship and a complimentary 'Picnic in the Pews' on Monday 17 March.

We look forward to welcoming **His Honour David Turner KC** as our preacher at the Festival Service in Down Cathedral and the Revd Canon Maurice Elliott as the preacher at Saul.

The calling, training, and releasing of new leaders is a vital strand in Bishop David's vision for the diocese and both our speakers are leaders of note.

Originally from Derry/Londonderry, David Turner is a recently retired Circuit Judge who sat in Essex and London. An Anglican all his adult life, David is, among other things, Chancellor of the Diocese of Chester, Deputy President of the Clergy Discipline Commission and a Reader and regular preacher at All Souls' Church, Langham Place.

Canon Maurice Elliott is Director of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute, prior to which he spent fifteen years in parochial ministry including as rector of Shankill Parish Lurgan. In terms of training and ministerial formation, his passion is for mission and church growth, leadership and team ministry, biblical preaching, and personal spiritual development.

Programme

9.15am: Holy Communion at Saul

10.15am: Prayer Pilgrimage from Saul to Downpatrick

11.45am: Festival Service in Down Cathedral

Wreath laying ceremony at St Patrick's Grave

1.00pm: Complimentary 'Picnic in the Pews'

Transport to Saul

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Please park along the Mall leading to the Cathedral in Downpatrick and board one of the private buses.

Buses to the communion service depart between 8.15 and 8.45am. The last bus for the 35-minute pilgrimage leaves at 9.45am. The last bus from Saul to the Cathedral leaves at 10.40 am.

Clergy and ministry



Down and Connor Healthcare Chaplains of Hope meet

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Bishop Alan McGuckian and Rev Dr Columba Mary Toman OP addressed Down and Connor Healthcare Chaplains at the Tullyglass House Hotel on Wednesday on the theme of Chaplains of Hope.

The chaplains, who work across the diocese, then enjoyed a meal together.

Derry & Raphoe Confirmation Day in Stranorlar

There was a surprise in store for teenagers attending the Diocese's second Confirmation Day in Stranorlar Parish Hall. Bishop Andrew Forster – who'll be confirming them later this year – arrived to speak to them about the big day and to share memories of his own confirmation, which took place in 1981.

Twenty-seven confirmands from parishes in the Raphoe Diocese were put through their spiritual paces by our

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Diocesan Youth Officer, Claire Hinchliff, assisted by Rev Canon Mervyn Peoples, Rev Susan Elliott and leaders from the parishes whose young people were taking part.

Our Diocesan Confirmation Days are relaxed events, combining religious teaching with games and activities. The programme include quizzes – designed to gently test the young people's knowledge of Scripture – and games to encourage fellowship among them. Claire proved her aim was true as she threw chocolate bars to those who answered questions correctly. The young people also enjoyed lunch together in the hall.

Monsignor Raymond Murray

Monsignor Raymond Murray has been remembered as a 'tireless and courageous advocate for justice' at his funeral service in Armagh.

Mgr Murray, who was 86, died peacefully at Collegelands Nursing Home, Moy, on February 25, Mark Robinson reports in the Irish News.

Tributes in the wake of his death described him as a 'giant' of human rights due to his more than five decades of campaigning on abuses by the state, collusion and injustice during the Troubles.

These included his advocacy work on behalf of the so-called Hooded Men detainees, his exposing of conditions endured by female republican prisoners in Armagh jail and raising suspicions of a shoot-to-kill policy by the British army.

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He would go on to co-found the Relatives for Justice group in 1991, which continues to support the bereaved and injured of the Troubles.

Mourners gathered for Requiem Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral in Armagh on Friday afternoon, during which he was remembered as a "tireless and courageous advocate for justice".

Amongst those in attendance were priests from the Archdiocese of Armagh, the Diocese of Down and Connor and Church of Ireland minister Rev Kenny Hall, who worked in Cookstown at the same time as Mgr Murray when he was a parish priest.



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Canon Eugene Sweeney delivered the homily at the service and described Mgr Murray as “a man full of feeling and humanity; faith and gratitude”.

“Ray Murray, as we known, certainly spoke up with great courage; documenting everything, raising consciousness, being a shepherd to those in need and, of course, being misunderstood and pilloried in the process, as a prophet must always suffer,” he said.

“Condemning violence wherever it came from and driven by a strong sense of truth, justice and fair play, Ray would hammer away on his trusty Olivetti typewriter into the early hours.

“With Monsignor Denis Faul, he authored several documents and papers, highlighting serious human rights, violations and malpractice.

“He was to the fore in exposing injustice, whether for the Hooded Men, the Birmingham Six, Guildford Four or the Maguire family.

“Ray Murray lived the simple principle, with great vigour and effect, that there can be no peace without justice.”

His contributions to human rights on the international stage were remembered, including presentations at the United Nations, as well as his academic work, love of languages, history and the arts.

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“Above all, Raymond Murray was a pastor. He truly had the smell of the sheep about him and felt very much at home with people.”

Requiem Mass was followed by a burial in St Patrick’s Cemetery.

Events

Armagh diocesan Healing Service

A Diocesan Healing Service will be held (DV) in Tartaraghan Parish Church on Sunday March 16, at 3.30pm.

Tartaraghan Parish Church is located approx 6 miles from Portadown off the A4 Dungannon Road - after 5 miles turn left into the Tartaraghan Road just past the filling station on the left coming out from Portadown) Everyone will be very welcome.

Service at Freshford church, museum and arts centre

St Lachtain’s Church a wonderful National Monument is a living Church with service every Sunday morning at 10am in the lovely village of Freshford Co Kilkenny.

Also attached is Ionad Lachtain a community and parishioner led project which promotes local history and craft.

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On Sunday the 16th of March the closest Sunday to the Feast of St Lachtain.

Bishop Adrian Wilkinson will Celebrate and Preach at a Festal Eucharist to mark the Patronal Festival.

The service will be sung by the Cathedral Choir Cathedral Choir and Dr Harry Meehan will play the organ.

Refreshments will be served after the service

Everybody is warmly invited.

Ionad Lachtain's programme of events for 2025 will be launched.

The shops will be open on 15th and 16th March 11.30-4.30

Easter Singing Course for children

Matthew Owen's writes - I'm looking forward to The Ulster Consort Foundation's Easter Singing Course for children, ages 5-8 and 9-15, taking place in Belfast from 14-16 April.

My colleague India Chapman Webb will be directing her Songbirds, as she has done so brilliantly over the last four years, and I shall be leading the 9-15 Junior Course. We'll be joined by star pianist, Tristan Russcher for the concert on Wednesday 16 April.

Full details - please email hello@ulsterconsort.org

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These popular courses are full of fun, friendship, great music-making, and group activities. Early booking is recommended!

Positions

Methodist Church

There are currently a variety of posts at Craighill, Edgehill, Larne and Lurgan ,For job descriptions and applications see

-
irishmethodist.org/vacancies

Relief Bus Drivers and Bus Escorts

The Education Authority are inviting applications to join the register for Relief Bus Drivers and Bus Escorts across Northern Ireland.

Click below to register:

Relief Bus Drivers - <https://ow.ly/X2FX50T4b7u>

Relief Bus Escorts - duration

Kilkenny Cathedral Operations Supervisor-Tourism

As the Cathedral Operations Supervisor, you will support the General Manager in leading and inspiring a team to deliver exceptional service, oversee daily operations, and curate a welcoming and engaging environment for all visitors.

Full details and application to apply can be found here:

<https://indeedhi.re/412D8V5>



**MEATH &
KILDARE**
DIOCESES

**TOGETHER IN GOD'S LOVE
TRANSFORMING LIVES**

Dunboyne & Rathmolyon Group of Parishes (Meath)

**Applications are invited for the above incumbency
which is now vacant.**

The parish, which is situated around the borders of Co Meath and Co Kildare, is seeking an enthusiastic person who will embrace both the challenges and rewards of working with a combined rural and suburban parish.

There are four churches within the group. The Rectory is situated in Dunboyne village is the parish centre and the new build national school. There are a number of local secondary schools nearby, as well as Maynooth University.

Further particulars from: Karen Seaman, Bishop's PA
Email: office@meathandkildaredioceses.com
Applications/expressions of interest by 7 April 2025.m

In the media

Sinn Fein MLA hits out in row over gay rights in church jobs: 'So gays need not apply?' - Sunday Life

An MLA challenged Christian Institute leaders as they urged the Assembly to ensure new laws include the right of churches to remove gay people from church positions, Noel McAdam reports.

The Christian Institute told an Assembly Committee that people who do not follow the teaching of a Church should be stood down.

Sam Webster, solicitor advocate for the organisation, told the Executive committee which is examining a single equality bill for Northern Ireland: “It is about conduct consistent with the doctrinal teaching of a Church.”

But Sinn Fein's Caral Ni Chuilin interjected: “‘Gays don't apply' is basically what you are saying.”

As Mr Webster went on: “It is about...”, Ms Ni Chuilin, a deputy Speaker in the Assembly, repeated: “Gays not applying.”

Mr Webster replied: “No, it is not. It is about conduct consistent with the doctrinal teaching of a Church.

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“Churches have the liberty under existing law across the United Kingdom to ensure that those who hold particular positions in the Church abide by the teaching of the Church. That is all we are talking about here.

“If there were to be an issue whereby a particular employee was not abiding by the church's teaching in that area, those protections for the church would give it the right to remove someone.”

Another MLA, however, backed the Christian Institute representatives at the meeting of the committee which monitors the Executive Office.

TUV MLA Timothy Gastonsaid: “I would be strong on the point that faith-based organisations that, day by day, use the Bible as their navigation tool should have the protections in place to say to somebody, whether an employee or a volunteer, who was not living that way, 'You know what? You're not in keeping with the organisation,' and bringing that to an end.

“That is an important freedom that needs to remain.”

Showy self-denial can't completely eclipse the true spirit of Lent - Daily Telegraph

The year rushes on apace: spring is officially here – the turn of the season acknowledged by Radio 4's Today programme, which has been punctuating its grim

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chronicle of global turbulence with listeners' nature notes, Jane Shilling writes in the Daily Telegraph

Today is Shrove Tuesday, a festival marked across the country by pancake races. In the City of London the inter-Livery pancake race around Guildhall Yard is a reliably extravagant spectacle, while a Parliamentary pancake race has been an annual event in Victoria Tower Gardens.

The comparatively decorous pursuit of running about while flipping a roundel of batter in a frying pan might lack the gaudy theatricality of, say, the Venice carnival. But as an occasion it feels like a build-up without a conclusion. The Venice carnival is unmistakably the unruly preamble to something. But what does Pancake Day herald?

Visit any supermarket and you'd think that Shrove Tuesday was the opening event in a month-long blowout of chocolate eggs and rabbits.

"Easter" might get a fleeting mention in the chocolate branding (though you may recall the hoo-ha some years ago when the National Trust dispensed with the term when promoting its "Great British Egg Hunt"). But you'd have to look hard to find mention of Lent – that 40-day period of abstinence between the Shrove Tuesday pancakes and hot cross buns.

Search for what the Church of England suggests by way of Lenten spiritual practice, and you will learn that this year's theme is Living Hope. You can download the resources of Wild Bright Hope, the "Big Church Read" for 2025, and sign up for daily emails. This Friday the Archbishop of York,

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Stephen Cottrell, embarks on “The Lord’s Prayer Tour” – a missionary tour of the C of E’s Northern Province with teaching, storytelling and “church planting inspired by the Northern saints”. Meanwhile Radio 4 will broadcast its annual series of Lent talks, this year marking the 1,700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed.

But the theme of abstinence as a spiritual practice is harder to find. The most striking instance currently appears as a storyline in that everyday story of country folk, *The Archers*, where Linda Snell, the scourge of the cricket club, is insisting on participating in the Ramadan fast of her temporary house guests, the village GP Azra Malik and her teenaged children Zainab and Khalil. So far, the only Lenten reference I’ve heard (in, admittedly, quite erratic listening) is the pancake-eating contest at the flood-devastated tearoom. Perhaps Alan the vicar will redress the balance come Ash Wednesday.

If the “sweet abstinence” mentioned by George Herbert in his poem, *Lent*, seems to feature less prominently in the official Church of England guidance on Lenten practice, it is hard to avoid in the secular realm, where giving stuff up has become an unmistakable marker of a highly evolved sensibility. Already this year we have had Dry January and Veganuary – those self-denying correctives to festive feasting. Then there’s the viral “no-spend” challenge, in which people replace their old money-frittering habits with more frugal alternatives.

In the States, *The Washington Post* reports that an organisation called the People’s Union USA has begun a social media campaign urging consumers to flex their

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economic power via a rolling programme of boycotts of large corporations, including Amazon, Walmart and Nestlé. But Americus Reed, a marketing professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, notes that it is “difficult to parse which online campaigns simply amount to virtue signalling – or ‘moral peacocking’.”

It was a point trenchantly made in 2009 by the late Pope Benedict XVI, who wrote: “In our own day, fasting seems to have lost something of its spiritual meaning, and has taken on, in a culture characterised by the search for material well-being, a therapeutic value for the care of one's body.”

Evidently if it is narcissistic or performative, the point of self-denial is lost. Yet behind the showiness and silliness – the “moral peacocking” – of some of the fashionable exercises in self-denial, there might still lurk a confused but genuine quest for guidance towards a moral compass and a sense of the numinous.

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**

Please recommend to your friends
