

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – On the night train from Derry

March 21, 2025

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Image of the day

On the night train from Derry

The last night train departs for Coleraine, passing by St Columb's Park. With a beautiful postcard of the town in the background. Sincere thanks once again to the talent of photographer Patryk Sadowski.

News



RESTOCKING LOUGH NEAGH

A MILLION EELS GIVEN NEW HOME

A million eels have a new Irish home

UTV - More than a million eels from France have been given a new home in the UK's largest freshwater lake - Lough Neagh

<https://www.itv.com/watch/news/restocking-lough-neagh/vytzlyn>



The Dean of Belfast, Very Rev Stephen Forde (centre) attired in his Black Santa Stout gear and complete with the Bushmills Distillery made donations barrel was one of the portraitists who met HRH King Charles and HRH The Queen during their visit to Belfast this week.

Hope and hospitality at the annual Fermanagh novena at the Graan

The Graan - the Passionist monastery outside Enniskillen - will be hosting its annual Novena of Hope from Saturday March 22

Speakers during the nine days include Fr Kieran Creagh, Martina Purdy, Fr Brian D'Arcy and the Church of Ireland bishop of Clogher, Ian Ellis.

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‘Hope’ is the traditional theme of the Fermanagh novena, which draws thousands of visitors annually, and it coincides with the focus of the jubilee year called by Pope Francis for 2025.

The annual Fermanagh novena addresses an uncertain world. “We are now living in changing times,” says Fr Charles Cross, Superior of the Graan, setting out the context of this month’s novena.

“A new global order is coming to birth. War is still raging on the continent of Europe and the place we know as the Holy Land is torn apart by strife and conflict”.

Dublin Black Santa funds help heat homes and put food on tables

Dublin Charities thanked St Ann’s as Representatives of more than a dozen charities joined parishioners of St Ann’s Dawson Street on Sunday morning (March 16) for the distribution of the proceeds of the 2024 Black Santa Appeal.

A total of €66,000 was collected by clergy and laity during the annual Black Santa sit out outside St Ann’s Church during the days before Christmas. Every cent donated was distributed to the charities. Beneficiaries this year were:

Protestant Aid,

Brabazon Trust, Alice Leahy Trust, Laura Lynn Foundation, Solas Project, Samaritans, Salvation Army, Simon Community, Barnardos, St Vincent de Paul, Capuchin Day Centre, St John’s House and Focus Ireland.



Representatives of charities with Fred Deane and Archdeacon Gordon Linney at the Black Santa Service in St Ann's, Dublin.

The service was conducted by the Ven Gordon Linney, former Archdeacon of Dublin, who also gave the sermon. He highlighted the ethos of service which prevails at St Ann's as exemplified by the Black Santa Appeal over the last two decades. But the spirit of service dates back to the 18th century. The Bread Shelf was established in 1723 as a result of a bequest by Lord Newton of Newtown Butler to make bread available to those in need of it. He recalled as a choir boy after the Second World War witnessing a woman dressed in black regularly coming into the church to take down some bread from the shelf.

What is spoken and believed in St Ann's must be taken beyond the church congregation, he stated. He highlighted those who had attended the church who had gone on to do



Geoff Scargill thanks St Ann's on behalf of the charities.

good works such as Thomas Barnardo who was inspired to service in St Ann's but whose work had an impact on children far and wide.

Addressing the representatives of the charities present he said: "Your organisations go out and pick up the fallen, the homeless, the poor. You pick them up and give them an understanding of their value as children of God. You will say that not everyone who works for a charity believes in God but in their lives the light of God is reflected. What you do is consistent with the love and teaching of Christ".

Archdeacon Linney said there were many people deeply troubled by what is going on in the world at the moment. However, he believed that on statistical analysis one would find that the good people would outweigh the bad. "The bad

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people get the headlines but around the world there are people carrying out kind acts and reflecting a God who loves, cares and looks after us,” he said.

Speaking on behalf of the charities who benefited from Black Santa, Geoff Scargill of Protestant Aid thanked St Ann’s for the magnificent effort. He said there were lots of unsung heroes involved in the sit out, in particular Fred Deane who had been a great servant of the appeal. “What happens every year is that this tremendous effort has heated homes, it has put food on tables, it has been an incredible Christian witness and has made a real difference to people’s lives. So thank you to St Ann’s from the charities but also from the people whose homes were warmed, where food was put on the table and where they had a sense of Christian care and compassion,” he stated.

Church and community in Cork together honour national saint

Bishop Fintan Gavin was the principal celebrant of Mass to mark St. Patrick’s Day at the Cathedral of St. Mary and St. Anne, Cork

The congregation included An Taoiseach, Micheál Martin; members of the Cork City Council, led by Lord Mayor Cllr. Dan Boyle, along with Valerie O’Sullivan, Chief Executive of Cork City Council.

The Lord Mayor of Coventry, Cllr. Mal Mutton and Lady Mayoress of Coventry, Margaret Hickman were also in attendance.

In his homily at the Mass, Bishop Fintan reminded people of the important religious dimension of St. Patrick's Day.

“St. Patrick's Day is a religious feast. We celebrate our national saint, St. Patrick. We celebrate the important place our faith has played in our story over many centuries here in Ireland and beyond. We remember the thousands and thousands of Irish missionaries, religious and lay, around the world who have carried the message of Christ to the ends of the earth.”

Excellent gallery of photographs by Brian Loughheed at - [\[https://corkandross.org/news/church-and-community-in-cork-together-honour-our-national-saint\]](https://corkandross.org/news/church-and-community-in-cork-together-honour-our-national-saint)

Education

BRA explores Smashed Live award-winning alcohol education programme

Form 2 recently were visited by Smashed Live, the award-winning alcohol education programme, which aims to tackle underage drinking with positive thinking.

The hour-long event began with a theatrical performance charting the lives of three teenagers and their experiences with alcohol. This was followed by an interactive workshop exploring:

- ! The social and emotional causes of underage drinking
- ! Its impact on young lives



- ! Social influence and decision-making
- ! Where and how to help yourself and others

Thank you to Smashed Project for bringing their workshop into School and at this very thought-provoking topic.

Professor Sir Ian Greer of Queen's University Belfast on Irish American Scholarships funds

Sir Ian commented - I was delighted to speak at the Irish American Partnership Breakfast in Boston recently.

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Scholarships funded through the Irish American partnership create life-changing opportunities for our young people - giving them access to international experiences, expanding their networks, and empowering them to make meaningful contributions to society.

Queen's University Belfast is immensely proud of its deep and growing relationship with North America, a connection built on shared values and collaboration. We are excited for the future and for the opportunities our collaborations will continue to create on both sides of the Atlantic and across the world.

Click here to read about Hannah's experience studying abroad in Portugal and Costa Rica, funded through the Partnership: <https://ow.ly/BnFB50VjZ9y>

Ballyclare High Spring concert

You are warmly invited to our Annual Spring Concert on Wednesday 26th March at 7:30pm

Fresh from their fantastic success at the Ballyclare Music Festival, our talented musicians and vocalists are ready to deliver a musical extravaganza featuring works by Pachelbel, Mozart, Goodwin, Loesser, and the legendary Dolly Parton!

This is set to be an unforgettable evening of music – don't miss out!

Tickets are available from the school office.

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Register your class for the Living History Programme

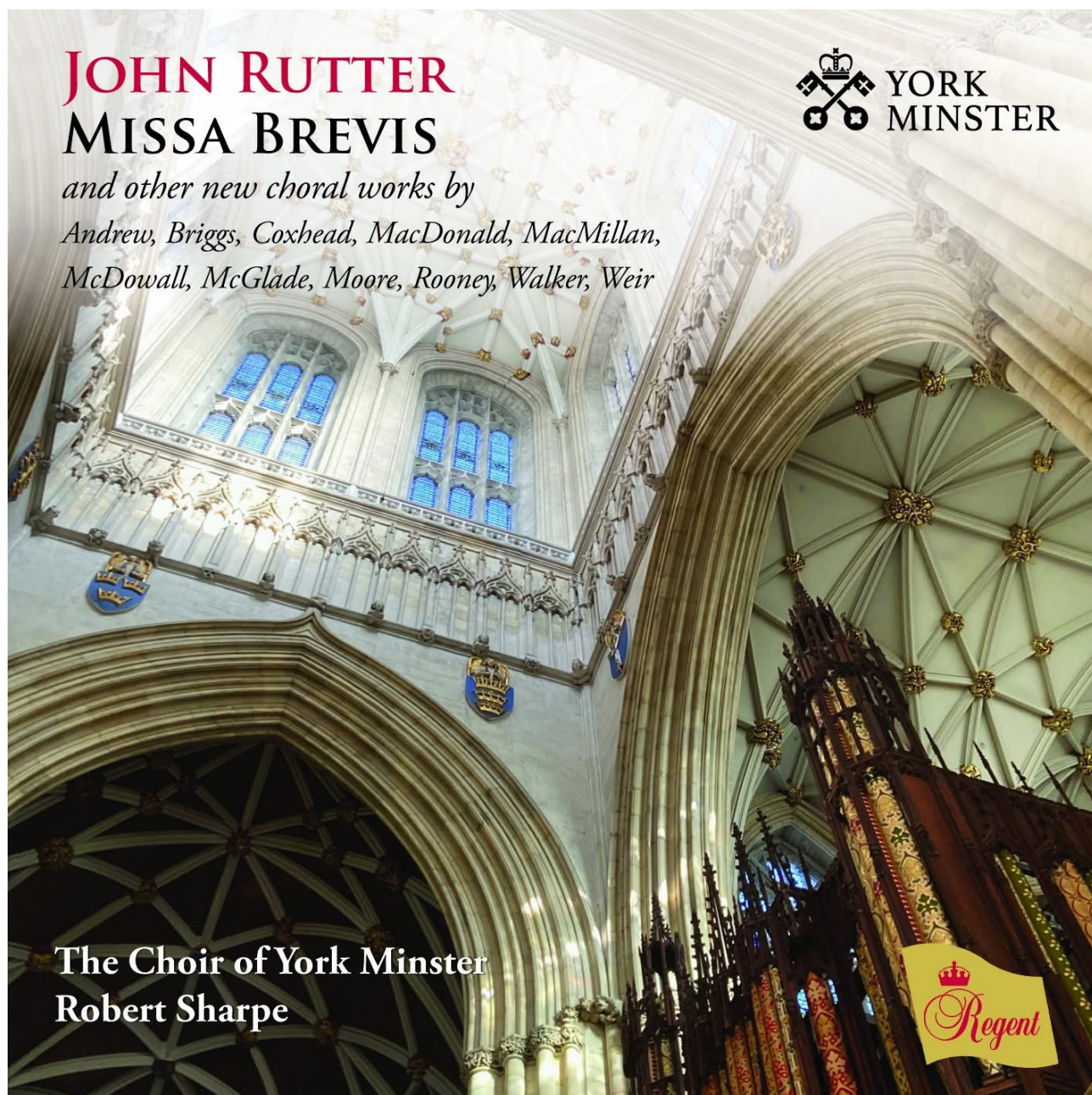
Join Caryna Camerino, third-generation Holocaust survivor, as she shares the powerful story of her grandfather, Enzo Camerino.

This is a unique opportunity for students to connect with history through a personal and moving account of survival and remembrance. Holocaust Education Ireland

Register here: <https://ow.ly/vqOp50V9kqG>

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Cathedral Calls



New Rutter's Missa Brevis recording from Choir of York Minster

A fabulous new recording from the Choir of York Minster, with Benjamin Morris (organ), directed by Robert Sharpe is now available. The major work is John Rutter's Missa Brevis (written for the Choir of York

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Minster and Robert Sharpe in memory of Richard Shephard).

In addition to Rutter's significant addition to the repertoire of shorter Mass settings, the collection also features contributions from other long-established composers of church music: Cecilia McDowall, Judith Weir, Philip Moore, and James MacMillan, together with a number of works from emerging new voices – several younger female composers - with most of these pieces receiving their first commercial recording.

The recording concludes with 'Celebration' - an extrovert organ solo in sweeping cinematic theme music style - again written by John Rutter in memory of Richard Shephard, who loved classic Westerns! It gives the restored organ of York Minster a full workout, including the iconic Tuba Mirabilis.

CD, download, stream: [<https://smarturl.it/RMB>](https://smarturl.it/RMB?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAAR0dNg5y5RIIMfAS2V4r9BMgbAgDp7WurEiP-vy6YkBH3Y-OaZnYq8Vm4Ug_aem_qLRYsHwWP5W0zngGAGBu8Q)

Clergy and ministry

Watch Archbishop Eamon Martin's welcome to St. Patrick's Day in New York

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Timothy Cardinal Dolan welcomes Archbishop Eamon Martin, Primate of All Ireland, to St. Patrick's Day in New York

“To have the successor of St. Patrick here reminds us that we’re celebrating a saint, an apostle, a priest, a bishop, a missionary, an evangelist—a pilgrim of hope!”

Watch the full report: <https://thegoodnewsroom.org/faith-heritage-and-hope-a-st-patricks-day-celebration-in-new-york/>

Cadet force chaplains attend shamrock ceremony



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The four chaplains of the 1st (NI) Battalion ACF recently attended the shamrock ceremony of B Company to mark St. Patrick's Day.

Pictured (L-R) are Padre Sean McClafferty, Padre Keith Hibbert, Maj. David Rutherford (OC B Coy), Lord Lieutenant's Cadet, HM Lord Lieutenant for Borough of Londonderry, Padre Kenneth Crowe, Padre Brian Hassan.

Lay Pastor sought for Omagh and Fintona Methodist Circuit

The Omagh and Fintona Methodist Circuit wishes to appoint a full time Lay Pastor to work alongside the Superintendent Minister.

→ For full job description and to apply now, visit:
bit.ly/3RcWCAA

Events

Take GIANT STEPS for Mental Health

Join AWARE NI on Saturday, 17 May, for a 7, 13, or 20-mile hike along the stunning Causeway Coast and help make a real difference in mental health support in our community.

This isn't just a walk – it's your chance to create a GIANT impact for those who need it most

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Watch last year's video for a glimpse of the breathtaking views, the craic, and the unbeatable community spirit you'll be part of.

Don't miss out – sign up NOW at aware-ni.org/giant

GIANT STEPS is proudly sponsored by Bell Contracts

Bluegrass Omagh at Ulster American Folk Park

Bringing the sounds of Appalachia home to its roots in Ulster, Bluegrass Omagh is a music festival not to be missed! 🎵🎸🎻

Watch live music performances from Muireann Bradley, Kristy Cox, Dublin Gospel Choir, Cup O'Joe and Old Baby Mackerel (to name a few)!

Book tickets for Bluegrass Omagh on 24th and 25th May here → <https://bit.ly/40V35XX>

In the media

British aid to Kyiv must continue to flow - Daily Telegraph Editorial

There were echoes from history in the discussions between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin over the future of Ukraine. As at the Yalta talks in 1945, America

and Russia were carving up part of Europe, with realpolitik, not the sovereign wishes of the country concerned, uppermost in their considerations.

President Putin was supposed to agree to a 30-day ceasefire unconditionally, as Ukraine has already done. But it is apparent that he has insisted upon a number of conditions, including a freeze on further military aid to Ukraine and its demobilisation. Russia also wants to keep the chunk of Ukraine it already occupies.

There was no agreement on a general ceasefire, only a Russian pledge not to target energy plants and critical infrastructure for the moment. There will also be “technical negotiations” to implement a maritime ceasefire in the Black Sea.

This cannot be accepted by Ukraine or its European allies. Why should Kyiv be made to compromise but not Moscow? Moreover, if the US halts military assistance, as it threatened to do before Volodymyr Zelensky agreed to a ceasefire, will that force the Europeans to do the same? Sir Keir Starmer has already earmarked more UK help for Kyiv. The UK must now make clear that this aid will continue to flow regardless of what Putin and Trump may have agreed. We should persuade other European nations to do likewise.

The intense diplomacy of the past few weeks to achieve the peace deal that President Trump promised to deliver on “day one” has failed to budge Mr Putin, who evidently thinks he holds most of the cards. What it has done is to galvanise the rest of Europe into making decisions about the

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continent's security, which had been put off since the end of the Cold War.

While the two leaders were speaking, the German parliament voted to release around £450 billion of infrastructure funding to bolster the country's defences. This was made possible by an historic decision to end the constitutional brake on borrowing, a rule reflecting the country's historic memories of excessive debt. This should make Germany the continent's biggest military spender for the first time in its post-war history.

It was the latest example of the geopolitical upheaval triggered by Mr Trump's overtures to Moscow and the growing European realisation that they can no longer rely on US military help in the face of Russian aggression and rearmament. 19/03/2025

Heritage

Andrew Jackson, Ulster-Scot who became the seventh President of the United States

Andrew Jackson, the Ulster-Scot who became the seventh President of the United States, was born on March 15, 1767. His parents were Ulster-Scots who lived in County Antrim.

Jackson's parents, Andrew Jackson senior and Elizabeth Hutchinson, were Presbyterians who had emigrated from Ulster, Ireland, in 1765. Jackson's father was born in Carrickfergus, County Antrim, around 1738, and his ancestors had crossed into Northern Ireland from Scotland after the Battle of the Boyne in 1690.

Andrew Jackson, in his correspondence and many books written about him, had preserved his family's Scottish dialect and phraseology, suggesting that even though the family resided in Ireland they still maintained a distinct Scottish identity.

Before being a successful politician, Jackson fought in the American Revolutionary War on the side of the Patriots, against the British forces. During the war, he and his brothers were imprisoned as prisoners of war, facing severe malnutrition and contracting smallpox, which led to the death of one of his brothers.

Despite being renowned as a President who looked out for ordinary workers and helped preserve the union of states, he has a contradictory legacy as he had many policies which were not favourable to Native Americans and was a prolific slave owner, which has led to his popularity declining in recent years.

The Andrew Jackson Cottage, Jackson's ancestral home and where his parents lived before emigrating to America, is currently a tourist attraction outside Carrickfergus, County Antrim, and offers fantastic guided tours catering to thousands of people yearly.

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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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