

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Remembrance observed

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Remembrance observed

In the lead in to Remembrance Day churches and organisations have been active in the support and communication of the commemoration. Page above - Christ Church Dundonald acknowledged Dundonald Knit & Crochet Corner and others who helped to put together their Poppy Cascade which is on display outside the Presbyterian church.



Wreaths were laid in an Act of Remembrance in Kilkenny.



At the 95th Field of Remembrance on Thursday morning, The Queen planted a Cross of Remembrance and met veterans and serving military personnel at Westminster



Abbey. Since 1928, the land outside Westminster Abbey has been used as a place for people to plant a cross in memory of a loved one.



Professor Stephen White OBE, Chairman of the RUC GC Foundation was in attendance with a group of RUC GC widows and relatives.

People and places

Bells in Carlow parish to ring out in support of those caught the Middle Eastern conflict

On Saturday November 11, the Church Bell in St Columba's Church in Tullow and across the Diocese will be rung.

Local churches are showing their support for those trapped in areas of conflict in the Middle East and beyond.

On Saturday November 11, church bells will be rung in St Columba's Church in Tullow, County Carlow and elsewhere in the Diocese.

In a post on Facebook, The Tullow Group of Parishes said: "On Saturday next, November 11, the church bell in St Columba's Church, Tullow and across the Diocese will be rung. As we continue to witness the tragic events in the Middle East and elsewhere we call for peace in the world."

The Tullow Group of Parishes is a Church of Ireland parish in the Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory, and stretches from East Carlow to South Wicklow.

It consists of four churches, St Columba's Church in Tullow, Shillelagh Church, St Michael's Church in Aghold, and Mullinacuffe Church. Report courtesy Irish Independent.

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Milltown Mothers' Union Branch 90th Anniversary



It was a fabulous evening at Milltown Branch 90th Anniversary Service of Thanksgiving and Supper.



The Service was led by Rev Walmsley with Guest Preacher Rev Alan Cross, Diocesan Chaplain. The Branch Choir sang "I'll go in the strength of the Lord" The Intercessions were led by members of the branch.

A number of guests were present



including Debbie the Diocesan President, Lady Eames, and Lady Mayoress Tinsley, together with other public representatives. A delicious supper was served in the Parish Hall. A few speeches followed together with cutting the beautiful cake.



Congratulations to Markethill Methodist Church as they recently celebrated their 190th anniversary.

Brazilian President pays tribute to east Belfast man who eradicated leprosy in Acre region of Amazon

East Belfast man Dr Bill Woods OBE passed away this week from cancer after returning to NI from the Brazilian state of Acre.

Aged 86, he spent over 60 years serving as a medical missionary to the indigenous people of the area, whom he mainly reached after lengthy journeys by boat.

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He served with Acre Gospel Mission and was a lifelong member of the Minister at Martyrs Memorial Free Presbyterian Church in east Belfast.

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva – a personal friend – tweeted a tribute on Monday.

“William John Woods was a missionary of the Baptist church and a doctor who worked in Acre and Amazonas,” he said. “Dr. Guilherme, as he was called, was also known as the “leprosy doctor” in the 1970s and 1980s, when those affected by the disease were stigmatized in the country. “He worked in cities, in rubber plantations and indigenous territories, providing support to those who needed medical care. With sadness I received the news of his death. To the family, my condolences. To the doctors who find him an inspiration, may the good teachings of Dr. Guilherme remain.”

UTV broadcaster Paul Clarke travelled to Brazil to make a documentary about his work in the late 1990s.

He told how in the 1970s Bill arrived as a missionary in the Acre area and was moved by the plight of the indigenous peoples suffering from leprosy.

His response was to train as a medical doctor in Brazil in order to serve them – which later attracted the full support of the Brazilian government.

“He was able to eradicate leprosy in the state of Acre,” he said. “He never married – he was just wedded to the people he served – and to God.

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“He was the most humble man. He never sought any acknowledgement for the work he did. He took no credit but said it was all done by God. He just prayed about everything.”

Dr Woods’ service was formally recognised with an OBE from HM The Queen.

He is to be buried in a private committal service this weekend. A memorial service will be arranged in due course.

News reports

Transgender people may be baptised with Pope’s blessing

Transgender people can be baptised into the Catholic Church and be godparents and witnesses at weddings, Pope Francis has said, putting himself on a collision course with US bishops.

The Vatican decreed that a transgender person could be baptised as long as there was “no risk of causing a public scandal or disorientation among the faithful”.

The 86-year-old pontiff has tried to make the Church more welcoming to LGBT people without changing religious teachings, including one saying that same-sex attraction is not sinful but same-sex acts are. “Even if we are sinners, He draws near to help us. The Lord loves us as we are, this is God’s crazy love,” he told a transgender person in July.



Congratulations to Sir Terry Waite on receiving his KCMG from King Charles this week. Held hostage for 5 years in Lebanon and a man with so much humanity.

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A same-sex couple could have an adopted child or one from a surrogate mother baptised if there was “a [hope] that it would be educated in the Catholic religion”, the Vatican said.

Transgender people could be godparents at a baptism as well as a witness at a Church wedding, at the discretion of the local priest, who should exercise “pastoral prudence” in his decision.

The decree contradicts a 2015 Vatican ruling, which barred a transgender man in Spain from becoming a godparent.



Sir Ian Greer DL President and Vice - Chancellor of The Queen's University of Belfast has been formally knighted by the Princess Royal at a ceremony hosted at Buckingham Palace.

"This is an honour for me but, more than that, it is a recognition of the wider effort of my colleagues who I have been fortunate enough to have been surrounded by. Their support, contribution and commitment has helped make Queen's a hugely successful and well-regarded university and I thank them for that."

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Asked if someone in a same-sex relationship could be a godparent, the Vatican said that person had to "lead a life that conforms to the faith".

The doctrinal office said a person in a same-sex relationship could also be a witness at a Catholic wedding, citing current Church legislation that contained no prohibition against it.

The decree could prove controversial in the US, where the national conference of Catholic bishops has rejected the concept of gender transition.

The bishops issued guidelines to stop Catholic hospitals from providing gender-affirming care.

Some US dioceses have policies banning the use of pronouns matching transgender identities at Catholic institutions and transgender teachers have been fired from Catholic schools.

Pope Francis has previously said that it was an “honour” to be attacked by American Conservatives.

In the media

Heaton-Harris is 'not in touch with our realities' claims Archbishop Martin - Belfast Telegraph

Northern Ireland Secretary Chris Heaton-Harris is “distant” and “not in touch” with the realities people in Northern Ireland are facing, the leader of Ireland's Catholics has said, Liam Tunney reports.

Archbishop Eamon Martin was among a delegation of religious representatives who recently met with the leaders of Northern Ireland's five main parties to discuss the issues their congregations were bringing to them.



Some of the Lords Spiritual attending this week's State Opening of Parliament, in the Bishops's Robing Room. 13 attended the ceremony, 12 will respond to the speech over the next five days of debate on a variety of subjects ranging across devolution, health, justice, climate, environment, economy, foreign affairs and culture. It was the first King's Speech since 1951, and the first State Opening with a king present since 1950.

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He said the hurried nature of Mr H eaton-Harris' visit to flood-hit Newry and Downpatrick on Wednesday had left locals feeling as if they were not being heard.

The NI Secretary was in Co Down to announce that £15m had been diverted from the Stormont budget to provide relief for businesses affected by last week's flooding.

An initial announcement from the NI Civil Service indicated grants of £7,500 would be available for businesses, as well as rates relief.

Mr Martin told BBC Radio Ulster's Evening Extra programme that the Secretary of State was “distant”.

“He is not in touch with our realities,” he said.

“The people that are in touch are their own elected representatives. They are the ones who need to be making this call.

“No matter what you look at, there is no doubt local people acting in a devolved Assembly will have more empathy for their constituents.

“At the same time, they are going to need help, they are going to need the kind of funding that will help them to transform the situation here — some kind of needs-based arrangement where we are able to have a proper funding model going into the future. We need to step up in a mature political arrangement. We got a sense on Friday that our political leaders are ready to do that.”

Mr Martin said the religious leaders had met with the five main parties to point out the growing levels of despair they

were becoming increasingly aware of within their communities.

“When we look at the floods, the problems in our schools, about providing enough for the special educational needs, when we think of people who are trying to put enough together to celebrate Christmas, the issues in health, we are hearing an exasperation among the communities here,” he said.

“People are beginning to feel more and more frustrated and that leads to anger and a loss of confidence in the whole political system.

“We are sensing an increasing amount of despair and a lack of hope, and that's why we wanted to meet with our political leaders to express to them the feedback of the communities regarding the seriousness of the situation and really the urgent need for restoration of devolved government.”

It comes after a Downpatrick publican hit out at the relief package put in place, saying it “means nothing”.

Bartley Murphy, the owner of Murphy's Bar in Downpatrick, said the scheme was “only adding salt to the wound”.

“I don't understand why they're even putting that in front of us,” he said.

“If you're not open and the businesses aren't here, so why would you want rate relief? If we're not here, we won't be paying rates.

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“If we're in here struggling over an accident that wasn't our fault, it's only adding salt to the wounds.”

Norah Bradford: Widow of UUP MP murdered by IRA is catalyst for new book - News Letter

The widow of a UUP MP murdered by the IRA has been instrumental in creating a book which reveals why so many border Protestant farms lie abandoned – yet still full of the personal possessions of their owners, Philip Bradfield writes.

Norah Bradford's own story was the catalyst behind the new book, which details the terror of 500 border families whose loved ones were singled out and murdered by the IRA along the border.

Her husband Rev Robert Bradford, a former Methodist Minister, was shot dead by two IRA men while he held a constituency clinic at Finaghy Community Centre in 1981.

The Border Cleansing: Unveiling Stories of Courage and Resilience during the Troubles came into being after the launch of her own life story, *When Time is Taken*, in 2021.

In the wake of her book, she and the publisher, Ballymena man Maurice Wylie, were invited to south Armagh to meet a number of victims of IRA terrorism.

Mr Wylie said: “They asked us if we would tell their stories too and obviously we could not say no. So we promised we

would and the only condition was that we would tell exactly what happened – with nothing fluffy about it.”

The resulting book is divided into two sections – the full unedited stories of 12 border families targeted by the IRA, and a further section analysing the 500 murders carried out along the full length of the border.

“During the Troubles, many people were driven out, moved out or emigrated, but the stories recounted in this book are from the ones who chose to stay and love this land, even when their fathers, mothers,

brothers and sisters were killed and their livelihoods wiped out, because they were forced to sell or just abandon their farms,” Mrs Bradford wrote in the foreword.

“Numerous farms along the border sit empty of life and livestock, overgrown by weeds; personal possessions have been left behind, and pictures still hang on the walls. Those who lived there, who called it their home, have vanished from the area because of terrorism and they may still have an uncertain future....These people are taking the risk of baring their souls in order to reveal the truth about what happened, told in their own words, without censorship from any government or person who would seek to rewrite history.”

She added: “I ask you to not forget them.”

Mr Wylie says the book reveals much material never told until now, such as what took place before, during and after the Kingsmill massacre; new information on the Darkley

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Massacre; the 26 member IRA unit told to stand down in Cork as they were about to kidnap three Protestants from Co Armagh; A Stormont MLA who oversaw the Enniskillen bombing and the terrorists who were stopped and let go off in the shadow of the Mournes.

The book was launched on Wednesday 8 November at the Seagoe Hotel in Portadown, hosted by broadcaster George Jones and his band, Heart & Soul.

Speakers included Norah Bradford, Kingsmills survivor Alan Black, former Newry and Armagh MLA Danny Kennedy, Sammy Heenan – who looked into the eyes of his father’s killer and Edith Kenny, a survivor of the Mountain Lodge Massacre.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books



Songs of Praise - This week Kath Jenkins marks

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Remembrance Sunday at the oldest Air Academy in the world, RAF Cranwell. She meets cadets, veterans and local people to explore the importance of remembrance for each generation. Songs of Praise - BBC One Sunday 1.15pm and <http://bbc.in/2Qlw5uT>

Poem for today

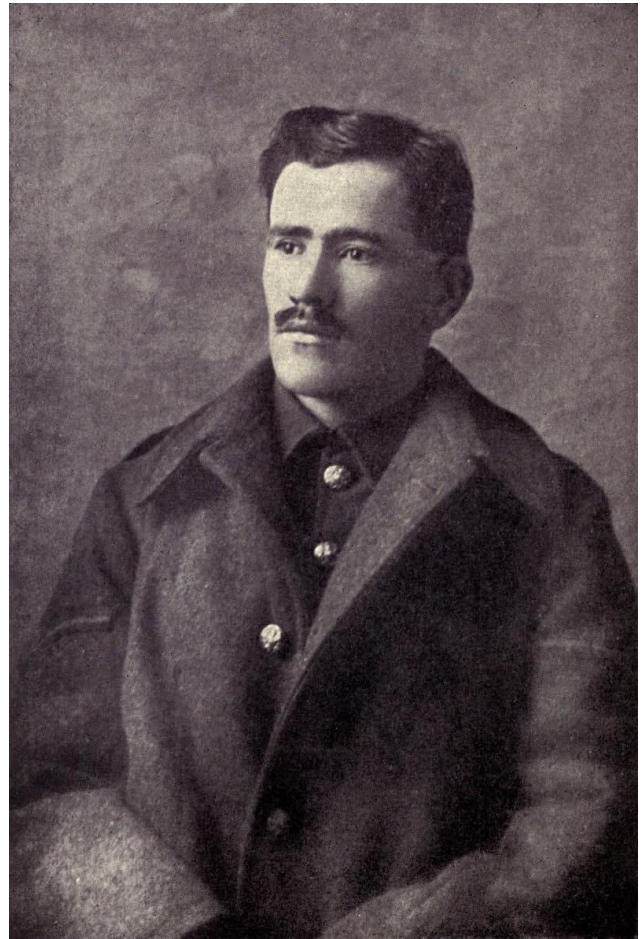
A Soldier's Grave by Francis Ledwidge

Then in the lull of midnight,
gentle arms
Lifted him slowly down the
slopes of death
Lest he should hear again
the mad alarms
Of battle, dying moans, and
painful breath.

And where the earth was soft
for flowers we made
A grave for him that he might
better rest.

So, Spring shall come and leave it seet arrayed,
And there the lark shall turn her dewy nest

Francis Edward Ledwidge was an Irish war poet from County Meath. Sometimes known as the "poet of the blackbirds", he was killed in action at the Battle of Passchendaele in July 1917.



Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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