

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Stir-up Sunday

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Stir-up Sunday

Stir-up Sunday is this weekend, the day where people traditionally make their Christmas puddings.

It always takes place on the last Sunday before Advent - and the name originates, not from the stirring of the pudding, but from a prayer traditionally used on this day:

"Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people..."

People and places

Liam Neeson records Advent series of C S Lewis readings for religious app

Actor Liam Neeson has recorded an Advent series for the devotional app, Hallow, featuring several readings from renowned Christian author C.S. Lewis, 60 years after his death.

In a trail for the series, Neeson described the app, which offers Catholic liturgy as well as recorded devotions as a "great prayer and meditation app", and said the content was "pretty incredible".

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"There's everything from growing in faith, to what it means to love, to how we're called to learn to let go."

He said the Christmas and Advent challenge was to "help us really grow deeper in our faith in this holiday season."

The award winning actor grew up as a Catholic, in the mainly Protestant town of Ballymena in County Antrim. He is the voice of Aslan in The Chronicles of Narnia series,



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although he is often better known for his grittier roles in films such as Taken and Gangs of New York.

In the 2003 star-studded romantic comedy Love Actually, which is often shown during the Christmas season, Neeson plays a bereaved father who talks poignantly about marriage, love and loss with his young son, before his character embarks on the dating scene again.

Neeson also starred in Scorsese's religious epic Silence (2016), and has appeared in other highly-rated religiously-themed films including The Mission , about the experiences of a Jesuit missionary in 18th-century South America.

He was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 2000.

Statement by the Archbishop of Dublin Following Parnell Square Incident

Archbishop Michael Jackson released the following statement this evening following the incident on Parnell Square on Thursday November 23.

On behalf of the people of Dublin and Glendalough I wish to extend our concern and compassion to all those affected by the horrific incident which occurred on Parnell Square in Dublin this afternoon (Thursday November 23).

We hold the children and adults injured in the incident in our thoughts and prayers together with their families and all the

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families connected with the school and the people of the area.

We give thanks for the members of the public who had the courage to intervene to protect the children and for the emergency services who responded so dutifully and courageously.

Following violence in the city this evening, we pray for the safety of those involved in keeping the peace and those who live there.

See RTE News -

[<https://www.rte.ie/news/dublin/2023/1124/1418254-dublin-parnell-street/>]

Two Church of Ireland churches to close in coming weeks

Two Church of Ireland churches in the Rathmolyon Union of Parishes are to close in the coming weeks, the Meath Chronicle reports.

It has been announced that the final service to mark the closure of St Michael and All Angels Church in Rathmolyon will take place this Sunday, 26th November at 9.45am.

"The service follows a long process of discernment and deliberation by the Select Vestry, as stewards of the parish resources who are charged with seeking to ensure the long-term sustainability of the parish," the latest edition of the Dunboyne and Rathmolyon Bugle stated.

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“Members of the Catholic Chaplaincy team are at the Vatican this week, representing Queen’s at an international conference on pastoral care and campus ministry. They’ve joined delegates from 44 other countries to discuss how best we can support our students in the contemporary context. We’re honoured to be contributing to these important conversations!”

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St Michael and All Angels Church in Rathmolyon was built in 1797 having replaced an older church which was in use until 1784.

Meanwhile, Sunday, 31st December will mark the closure of St Ultan's Church in Rathcore with the final service taking place at 11.30am. The church was built in 1806 and according to the latest edition of the Dunboyne and Rathmolyon Bugle, new possibilities are being explored after its closure. All those who had connections with the church, old and new, are warmly encouraged to attend the service.

From 2024, Agher Church will become the principal church for Rathmolyon Parish.

The newsletter noted that just as they experience closure they can also experience new life with the new school building for St Peter's National School in Dunboyne due to open in Spring of next year.

Thank you to Billy Skuse, outgoing Diocesan Secretary of Cork, Cloyne and Ross

On Sunday, 19th November 2023, people from all over the Diocese gathered to say thank you to Billy Skuse for his nine years as Diocesan Secretary of Cork, Cloyne and Ross.

After Billy handed the new Diocesan Secretary the symbols of his office, keys, a minute book and an ancient seal, the



Recently retired Diocesan Secretary, Billy Skuse (right) with the Bishop and the new Diocesan Secretary, John de Montfort.

Bishop spoke and, on behalf of everyone in the Diocese, Dorothy Verplancke, Lay Honorary Secretary presented Billy with a gift. Anne Skuse was presented with flowers by Helen Arnopp, Lay Diocesan Treasurer.

In his speech of thanks and farewell to Billy, the Bishop, Dr Paul Colton said:

The Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross is a very complex and unique organisation. Not only are there all the parishes, chaplaincies and schools, there are the many trusts, charities and institutions that we have pioneered over the centuries and which today work in the areas of poverty,



housing, healthcare, education, religious education and care of older people. But you entered into all of this with courage and valiantly. You gave generously of yourself and most especially of your own faith and humanity, I want to thank you for that. I remember at your interview you said, 'Nice people like to do business with nice people' and you have been and are the personification of that, your own principle. You have been kind and generous and thoughtful and thoroughly nice to everyone. There have been many challenges in the last nine years, but we chipped away at it all together, and all I can say on behalf of us all is 'Thank you'.

There was sustained applause for Billy and long after the Service ended people were coming up to Billy personally to wish him a happy retirement.

NI-supporting bishop could have sealed Casement deal, funeral told

A Catholic bishop who supported Northern Ireland and counted goalkeeper Harry Gregg among his friends could have been a “special diplomat of peace and reconciliation during the reconstruction of Casement Park”, his funeral has been told, Brett Campbell writes in the Belfast Telegraph.

The Requiem Mass for Bishop Anthony Farquhar (83), who died peacefully in the Nazareth Care Village last Friday, was held at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Belfast yesterday.

A message from the pope expressing condolences was read out at the funeral, which heard that Bishop Farquhar used sport to communicate the gospel “in his own unique way”.

Canon Patrick McKenna told mourners including Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin and Cardinal Sean Brady that his friend influenced the lives of thousands of people in Down and Connor, especially the 90,000 parishioners he confirmed.

“His one message to confirmandi (was) 'Never give up on your dreams', advice inspired by his great friend Harry Gregg,” he said, referring to the Manchester United star who pulled several teammates from a burning plane in the 1958 Munich air disaster.

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Canon McKenna continued: “He would mention the words on his Coat of Arms, Sapientia Proficere, (meaning) to increase in wisdom.”

Leaders from Protestant denominations including Church of Ireland Archbishop John McDowell, Clerk of the Presbyterian Church Rev Trevor Gribben and head of the Methodist Church Rev David Turtle also attended.



Hospice Big Coffee morning in Antrim - A cheque for £500.00 was presented to the Northern Ireland Hospice by Antrim parish. The money was raised at the family service in October and on a couple of subsequent Sundays. It was part of the Hospice Big Coffee morning appeal.

They heard how Bishop Farquhar maintained his interests in golf, GAA and soccer after being ordained as an auxiliary bishop of Down and Connor in the 1980s — a position he held for more than 30 years.

“He had a special allegiance as president of the QUB Football Club, a loyal supporter during the Collingwood Cup Competition,” Fr McKenna said.

“He had strong links with Dundela and a lifelong friendship with the legendary Dundela manager, the late Mervyn Bell.

“He would often go to Windsor Park to support Northern Ireland team. He could have been a special diplomat of peace and reconciliation during the reconstruction of Casement Park.”

The clergyman joked the late bishop “unbeknownst to the Scottish FA” served as the unofficial spiritual director of Dundee United, “where he was treated with tremendous deference”.

“It was through sport he got to know and love so many young people,” Fr McKenna said.

“Through sport, in his own unique way, he communicated the good news of salvation.”

The former St Malachy's College pupil studied philosophy and classics at Queen's University in 1950s before graduating from the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome.

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His first appointment after being ordained in March 1965 was in the parish of Ardglass.

The former lecturer and chaplain also taught Latin, Greek and religion at St MacNissi's College.

Bishop Donal McKeown, his former pupil and the chief celebrant at the funeral, said while Bishop Farquhar had “a tiny family circle of one sister”, he was “loved and cherished by many”.

“A blood relation of few, he became a family friend to very many,” he added.

Bishop Farquhar was buried in the adjoining cemetery following the service.

In the media

Education 'Oscars': Hard work and commitment recognised as school strikes gold - Belfast Telegraph

A Belfast primary school has been named as a gold award winner in the education ‘Oscars’, Mark Bain writes.

St Oliver Plunkett PS received its Pearson National Teaching Award in front of millions of TV viewers on BBC's The One Show.



The school was named the Making a Difference Primary School of the Year for its “unwavering commitment to its students and the wider school community”.

Eve Bremner, chief executive of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), said the honour was a wonderful recognition for the hard work and commitment from staff at the school.

“Inclusivity is at the heart of Catholic maintained schools' ethos and St Oliver Plunkett PS is a great example of how our schools develop and care for all children; as well as engage with the wider community, other schools and organisations,” she said.

PEARSON NATIONAL TEACHING AWARDS

THE AWARD FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE PRIMARY SCHOOL OF THE YEAR

ST OLIVER PLUNKETT PRIMARY SCHOOL
NORTHERN IRELAND

GOLD WINNER
2023

THE TEACHING AWARDS TRUST

PiXL

“I am grateful to the school for all they have achieved, despite the many pressures facing education in Northern Ireland, and wish them every continued success.”

Judges were impressed with the way the school prides itself on embracing pupils coming from all social and economic backgrounds, not only delivering a 21st century curriculum utilising current technology, but also by tapping into numerous Northern Ireland sporting bodies and music classes.

Support extends to the wider community through partnerships with local groups and charities which has led them to being recognised by the Alzheimer's Association as a Dementia-Friendly School.

During a week-long celebration honouring inspirational educators across the country, BBC's The One Show is announcing seven of 16 gold award winners of the Pearson National Teaching

UK-EU divergence putting some farming sectors in NI at risk, peers are told

News Letter - Alexander Kinnear, parliamentary officer for the Ulster Farmers' Union, said it was the UK Government which had delivered the Northern Ireland Protocol and the Windsor Framework – and it now had to deliver a mechanism to deal with divergence.

The House of Lords European Affairs sub-committee on the Windsor Framework is investigating regulatory divergence – the development of differences in the legal standards separately imposed by the EU and the UK for the manufacturing, import, export and marketing of goods and services.

The Northern Ireland Protocol, negotiated to avoid a hard border in Ireland after Brexit, tied Northern Ireland to the rules of the EU single market for goods.

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<https://app.newsletter.co.uk/story/uk-eu-divergence-putting-some-farming-sectors-in-ni-at-risk-peers-are-told/content.html>

Four key people to watch at COP28

RTE News - Britain's King Charles III, Pope Francis and COP28 President Sultan Al Jaber might grab headlines at next week's COP28 in Dubai, but they are not the only people who will play an important role at the crunch UN climate conference.

Negotiators, activists and the leaders of vulnerable small island nations are all key to shaping the 30 November to 12 December talks.

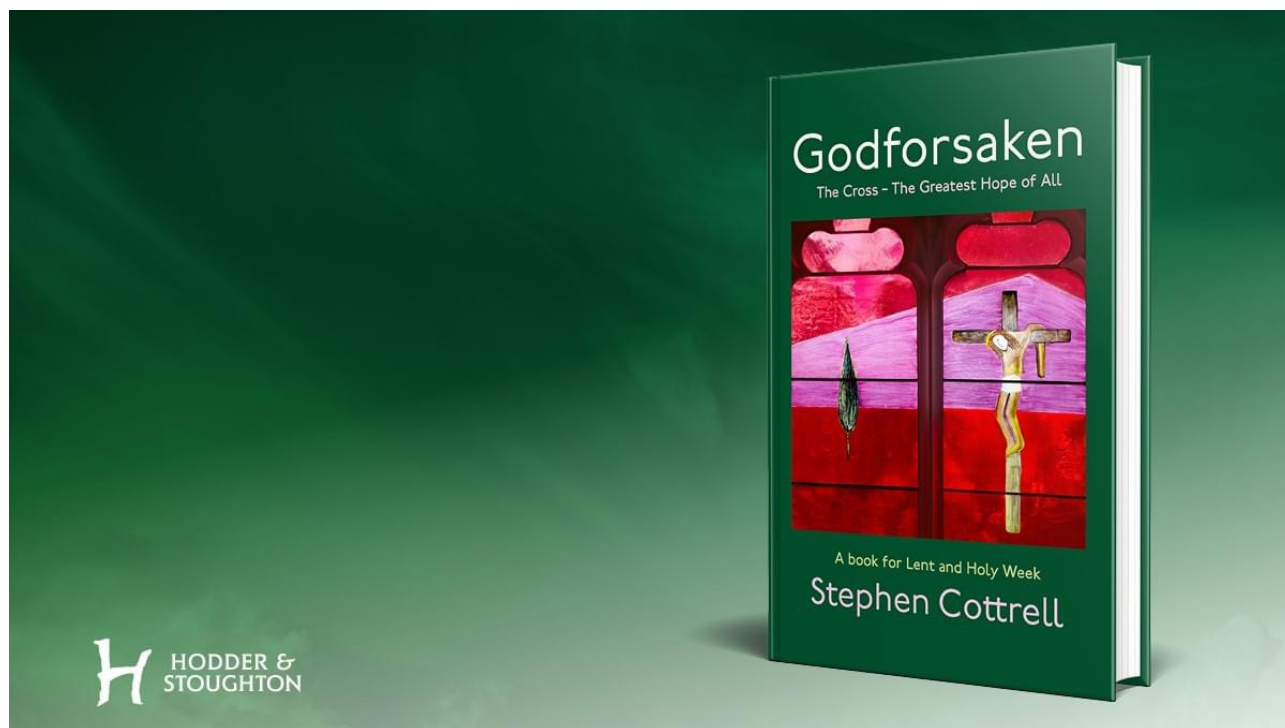
Here are four people to watch:

[<https://www.rte.ie/news/world/2023/1123/1418065-cop28/>]

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Archbishop of York's Advent Book

Archbishop Stephen's book, *Godforsaken*, is now available in paperback. It's a series of reflections written for Lent and Holy Week, pondering the significance of Jesus' last words on the cross.



Get your copy at <https://bit.ly/49DJldH>

LGBT Community Carol Service

Save the date! On Wednesday, December 13th, join in at All Souls Church for the annual LGBT Community Carol Service at 7:30 PM. Gareth Johnston organises the event each festive season. “I are welcome to celebrate the spirit of inclusivity and joy. Let's come together for a memorable evening of music, unity, and festive cheer” says All Souls

Poem for today

A Memory

by George William (“A. E.”) Russell



You remember, dear, together
Two children, you and I,
Sat once in the autumn weather,
Watching the autumn sky.

There was some one round us straying
The whole of the long day through,
Who seemed to say, "I am playing
At hide and seek with you."

And one thing after another
Was whispered out of the air,
How God was a big, kind brother
Whose home is in everywhere.

His light like a smile comes glancing
Through the cool, cool winds as they pass, From the
flowers in heaven dancing
To the stars that shine in the grass.

From the clouds in deep blue wreathing
And most from the mountains tall,
But God like a wind goes breathing
A dream of Himself in all.

The heart of the Wise was beating
Sweet, sweet, in our hearts that day:
And many a thought came fleeting
And fancies solemn and gay.

We were grave in our way divining
How childhood was taking wings,
And the wonder world was shining
With vast eternal things.

The solemn twilight fluttered
Like the plumes of seraphim,
And we felt what things were uttered
In the sunset voice of Him.

We lingered long, for dearer
Than home were the mountain places
Where God from the stars dropt nearer
Our pale, dreamy faces.

Our very hearts from beating
We stilled in awed delight,
For spirit and children were meeting
In the purple, ample night.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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