

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Sheep's Head Hike success

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Sheep's Head Hike success




Huge thanks to the organisers of this year's Sheep's Head Hike in west Cork who met recently to present Christian Aid Ireland with a cheque for almost €14,500.

Nearly 200 walkers took part in the 15th annual Christian Aid Sheep's Head Hike, making it the biggest walking event on one of Ireland's best-loved coastal routes.

The funds raised this year bring to more than €100,000 the total raised since the hike began in 2009.

Held each year on the first Saturday in September, the walk sets off from Kilcrohane Community Hall with two routes on offer to cater for all levels of fitness.

CAI said they are hugely grateful to all the organisers, guides, stewards, drivers and caterers who volunteer their time each year to make the event such a success.

 If 'ewe' would like to come along next year to help CAI stamp out poverty, the date will be Saturday 7 September 2024. Why not get it in your calendar now?  

Page 1 photo - Left to right: Margaret Skuce, Canon Paul Willoughby (Rector of Kilmacomogue Union), Andrew

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Coleman, Sandra Dukelow, Ulla Zepperitz, Judith Payne, Ruth Beerli, Caroline Coleman, David Hayward and Hilda Attridge.

People and places



Mothers Union gain Safe Church awards

Members of St. Finnian's & St. John's Killyleagh from Down & Dromore diocese along with Colette Stewart CEO of ONUS and June Butler MU All Ireland President at the recent Safe Church awards evening.



Appreciating W F Marshall at Sixmilecross

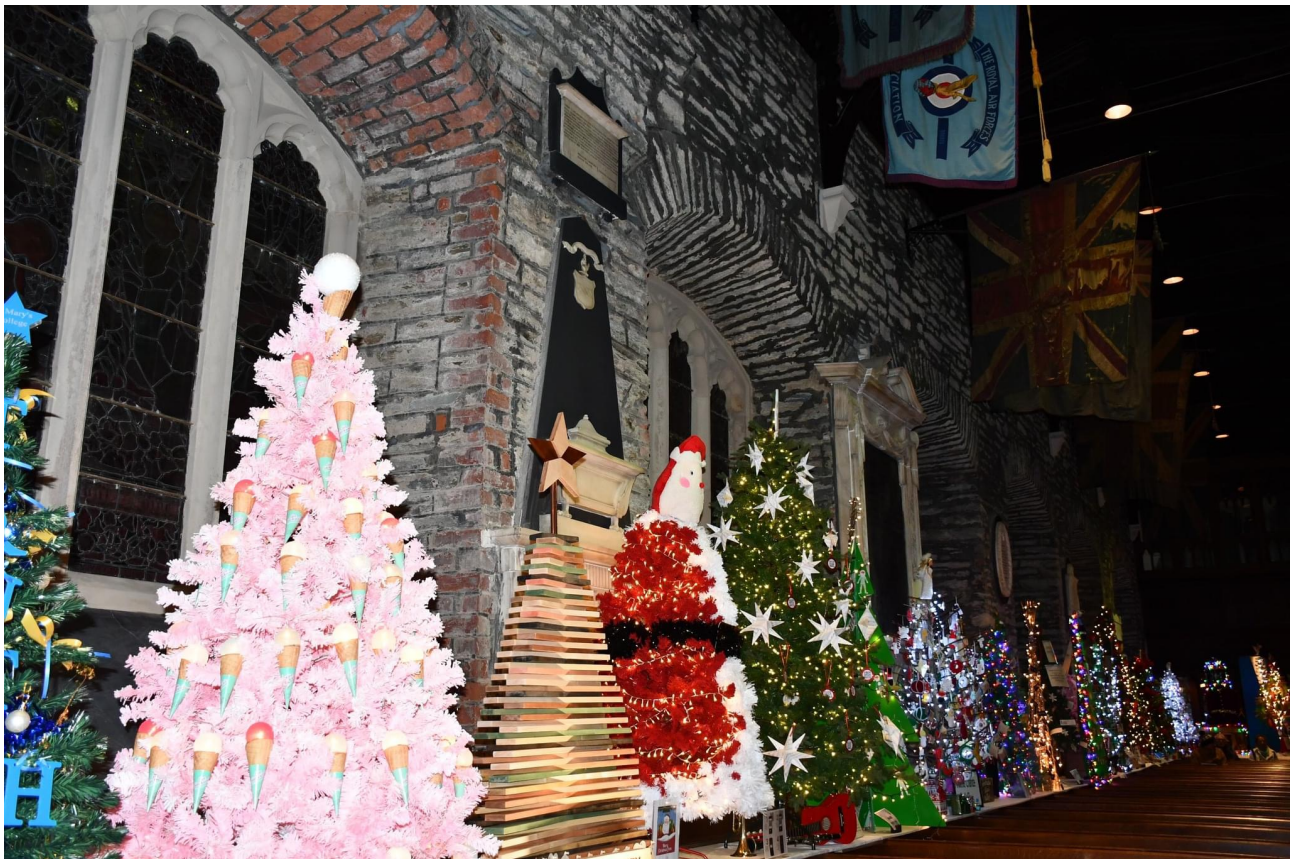
The appreciation of W F Marshall, which took place in Sixmilecross Presbyterian Church last week, was a great success and the hall was filled, Nelson McCausland writes.

Nelson (photo above) continues, "William Anderson spoke about the church and the graveyard where Marshall and his brother are buried, Gary and Anne Blair read some of Marshall's poems, I spoke about some aspects of Marshall's work, and the programme ended with the McClintock highland dancers.

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“It was nice to meet up with some folk I had seen for some time and good to have councillors Shirley Hawkes and Paul Robinson with us”. Below - Derry Cathedral



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Wonderful evensong in Armagh for Georgian Day. Zadok the Priest, Stanford in C, and about 150 in the cathedral on a Saturday afternoon





Derry & Raphoe Mothers Union assist three domestic abuse service

Derry & Raphoe Mothers Union had a busy morning thanks to the branches

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and members who forwarded a fabulous array of knits, crafted items and emergency Hospital admission packs.

A special word of thanks at this time for the vouchers and items received on behalf of our three domestic abuse services - Foyle Women's Aid, Omagh Women's Aid and Donegal Domestic Violence Services. At the start of this their busiest season of the year, this is very much appreciated. Well done on all counts to all concerned.



Appointment to Leckpatrick parish

The Rev'd Andrea Cotter has been appointed Rector of the parishes of Leckpatrick and Dunnalong, succeeding Rev Canon Paul Whittaker, who retired last February.

Rev'd Cotter is serving as Curate-Assistant at All Saints', Clooney, since her ordination as priest there two years ago.

The parishioners in her new parishes will have to wait until the springtime, though, to welcome the new incumbent and her husband, Richard. “It’ll be after Easter before we move to Leckpatrick,” she said yesterday. “I’m really looking forward to it. I know that ministry in rural Tyrone will be very different from an urban parish like Clooney, but the challenge excites me.

“The good news is we have an amazing story and message to proclaim,” Rev’d Cotter said, “and I can’t wait to share it with the congregations in St Patrick’s and St John’s — and in the wider communities in both parishes.

“Obviously, I’ll be sad to leave All Saints’. I’ve made many new friends there and I’ve been blessed to serve with Canon [David] McBeth. He has a great pastoral heart and I’ve learned so much from him. I look forward to putting all that teaching into practice as a Rector.”

Rev’d Cotter was born and baptised in Lisburn, and spent part of her childhood in Finaghy. A former Sunday School teacher, she attended St Patrick’s Church in Ballymena following her marriage to Richard.

Andrea hopes, through her ministry, to encourage people to use their gifts and build up the community of faith, and to reach out into the community to show Christ’s love and peace to all. She is “passionate”, she says, about encouraging young people to come and get involved in church life, and also feels strongly about hospitality and welcome in churches.

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Dublin City Interfaith Forum responds to city centre violence

“Let us collectively find a way to address and to move on from the hate-filled rhetoric and actions of those last night to a shared aspiration of making Dublin a welcoming city, a city of kindness.”

Dublin City Interfaith Forum is shocked by the horrendous attack on our young children and adults outside the Gael Scoil Mhuire in the centre of our City. Our deepest thoughts and prayers are with the three children and the woman who were viciously attacked in Dublin yesterday, the other people who have been injured, their families and the teachers and staff at the school.

We are grateful to the members of An Garda Síochána, other emergency services and members of the public who put themselves in harm's way to professionally and proportionately respond to the uncontrolled violence and thuggery that erupted after the horrific attack.

What we saw unfold last night was orchestrated public disorder stoked by hate and far-right rhetoric online and on our streets. The attacks on emergency service personnel and vehicles, the burning of Garda cars and public transport, the looting of department stores and the damage to retail premises deserves condemnation. We strongly condemn those people and groups clearly set to sow hatred and division in our community.

We stand by all those who hold the rule of law and democracy and we ask, at this difficult time to reflect on how we can heal the scars left from the events of last night. We ask people to treasure the diversity of our city. This is a diversity that stretches back to its very founding.

The question before us is how we may help one another, understand one another and learn from one another as we share this vibrant city as our home. Let us collectively find a way to address and to move on from the hate-filled rhetoric and actions of those last night to a shared aspiration of making Dublin a welcoming city, a city of kindness.

More than ever, we need to stand with our diverse communities. Dublin City Interfaith Forum pledges to do everything possible to offer assistance. We ask any of those directly impacted by the violence and hate-filled actions of last night to report such hate incidents to An Garda Síochána, or independently through our Safe Haven project for responding to hate and extremism.

You can find out more information here: <https://www.dcif.ie/>

Archbishop Farrell: “We are all made in the image and likeness of God”

Statement of Archbishop Dermot Farrell on the riots in Dublin city centre

The shocking events on the streets of our city on Thursday afternoon and evening have dismayed us all. We have seen with our own eyes, how violence puts everyone – especially

the vulnerable and the innocent – in mortal danger. In places we know first-hand, we have seen its power to draw people in and consume them in a spiral of hatred and wanton destruction.

That such violence – something we associate with other countries and other situations – would happen on our streets can have an effect in our lives. It can quietly, but very markedly, erode the ethos of peace and safety that usually characterises our lives together. As we gather this weekend to celebrate our Eucharist some of us may feel bewildered and anxious. Let us keep our Lord before our eyes. He, who lived in a world marked by violence, and whose very death was the epitome of violence and terror – He is our peace. The Bread of Life is the food of our hope, and the one who guides our feet on the way of peace, justice, and dignity (see Luke 1:79).

As people of hope we are not helpless in the face of what we have witnessed. In solidarity, we pray for the victims of the horrific assault on Parnell Square, for their families, for the school staff, and the children in Scoil Mhuire Primary School. We give thanks for the courage and decisiveness of those who acted so promptly with such selflessness, for the skill of the emergency services and Gardaí, and for all who helped restore order.

As well as people of prayer, we are also people of action. This weekend's Gospel tells us that our actions – especially with regard to the weak and vulnerable – are a key measure of who we truly are. Let us, therefore, not be passive in the face of what we have witnessed. In the first place, let us refuse to allow ourselves to be cowed or intimidated by

those who seek to coerce us. We can challenge the misinformation that seeks to sow doubt, suspicion, resentment, and fear. We can challenge the casual remarks that spread cynicism and prejudice.

Above all, we can reach out in solidarity and friendship to those who have made their homes among us, but who are being targeted with words of hate and gestures that are filled with hostility and derision. Let us not forget the invaluable contribution so many make to our economy and society. Let us not take for granted the vibrant gifts of faith and witness which they bring to our parish communities.

Our Gospel for the Celebration of Christ the King (Matt 25:31–46) tells us that the Lord identifies himself with the stranger. It is the Lord himself we welcome when we welcome the stranger in our midst. This is the Living Christ, our Risen Lord, Emmanuel – as Saint Matthew calls him – God – with us (Matt 1:23). Our most telling rejection of the darkness we have seen on our streets will therefore be the words and gestures of support we offer to those who have been targeted by mobs enflamed in a cynical attempt to sow division and hatred.

This is a moment of truth for our city and for Irish society more broadly. As a community of faith we are called to give clear and consistent witness to what our faith proclaims: that we are all made in the image and likeness of God, that we are all children of the one God, the God who looks for the lost and brings back the stray, who bandages the wounded and strengthens the weak. May we not be found wanting. May Christ and His way take flesh in our lives, in how we live.

Full statement -

[<https://www.catholicbishops.ie/2023/11/25/archbishop-farrell-we-are-all-made-in-the-image-and-likeness-of-god/>]

News reports



Lord Chartres visits Monte Carlo church

As part of the ongoing celebrations marking the foundation and consecration of St Paul's Anglican church, Monte Carlo, Lord Chartres, recently visited and preached at the church.

Bishop Richard also presented an altar edition of the BCP to the Chaplain, the Revd Hugh Bearn that had been gifted by the PBS - Prayer Book Society.

St Paul's has recently become a corporate member of the PBS.

Lord Chartres met members of the Church Council and the Russian Orthodox Church who are permitted to use St Paul's for their liturgy on Saturday mornings.

Pilavachi successor resigns over abuse scandal fallout

A Soul Survivor priest has resigned from the church saying he has also been deeply affected by Rev Canon Mike Pilavachi's "abusive behaviour".

Pilavachi, an evangelical preacher with a global following, founded the Soul Survivor Watford Church in Hertfordshire, and its namesake summer youth festivals which ran from 1993 to 2019.

Allegations of abuse were revealed by The Daily Telegraph in April. His victims spoke out over claims that Pilavachi ran "a cult" in which a "conveyor belt" of vulnerable, attractive young men were encouraged to receive full-body oil massages on his bed, engage in vigorous wrestling matches and endure psychological torment and spiritual abuse.

An inquiry by the Church of England's National Safeguarding Team (NST) and the Diocese of St Albans concluded in September he had spiritually abused his victims for over 40 years.

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The Rev Andy Croft, the son of the Bishop of Oxford, Rt Rev Dr Steven Croft, stepped up to lead the church after Pilavachi's resignation, but was suspended himself in June owing to claims he had failed to act on abuse accusations. He has said he is "very sorry" for his actions.

However, while the Church of England said yesterday that a safeguarding investigation had cleared Rev Croft for ministry, he announced his resignation.

In a statement, Rev Croft said: "The stories of victims that have emerged and the work of the NST have changed my perspective on much of what I have experienced from a young age."

He added he apologised for errors in his judgment that "may have allowed others to experience pain". He said he intended to return to ministry, but not as Senior Pastor at Soul Survivor Watford.

In the media

Fanning the flames of hate - Sunday Life

If any proof was needed that social media is a lethal weapon, it exploded with a bang in Dublin a few days ago, Ivan Little writes.

The stabbing of three children and a woman by a man outside a school was shocking, but what happened next was shameful.

Within hours, Dublin was gripped by rumours and then an appalling riot orchestrated by anti-immigrant thugs fired up by social media claims about the ethnicity of the attacker.

With questions of his nationality also raised, keyboard nutters were quick with 'answers', even though they had no evidence to substantiate their dangerous allegations.

Gardai urged people to ignore “misinformation” spread online about the “person of interest”, but that didn't stop the mobs from going on an orgy of burning, looting and violence against the police force.

Commissioner Drew Harris blamed right-wing militants, but TV footage showed that most of the troublemakers were teenagers, many of whom had taken to the streets itching for a fight after messages on social media encouraged people to take vengeance on anyone and everyone, using anti-immigrant feelings as an excuse.

At one stage, there were even posts claiming that the Irish Army had been deployed on the streets, backed up by archive photos of tanks.

The claims were swiftly exposed as nonsense, but that didn't deter some people from spreading the gospel of guff.

RTE Prime Time presenter Miriam O'Callaghan made the point on Thursday night that if people across Ireland were seeing the incendiary social media posts, gardai should have been across them too.

Yet the TV pictures from Parnell Square, O'Connell Street and beyond seemed to show a police force that was ill-prepared for the ferocity of the attacks by so many rioters, although Mr Harris dismissed that notion out of hand.

The anti-immigrant violence, that's been roundly condemned, came on a day in which figures showed migration had hit a record high in the UK and the anti-Islam Dutch politician Geert Wilders won a dramatic victory in his country's general election.

Commentators said Wilders had harnessed widespread frustration about migration and promised to close the borders.

Similar calls were heard live from Dublin as protesters rounded on a journalist filing a story on the riots.

In all the reports, on both the television and the radio, it was repeatedly claimed that the violence in the Irish capital was unprecedented.

These journalists must have short memories, for in 2006 I reported how republican rioters had launched a frenzy of violence that started at the top of O'Connell Street, the same spot where Thursday's disturbances broke out.

Seventeen years ago, the catalyst for the disorder was a proposed demonstration by loyalists from Willie Frazer's Love Ulster campaign who wanted to march from Parnell Square to Leinster House.

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The organisers said the aim was to show their opposition to what they saw as collusion between the Republic's government and IRA terrorists.

I genuinely believed someone would be killed as the marchers tried to get through a tight bottleneck, with few police on duty to marshal a counter-protest by republicans.

Eventually, the loyalists decided to travel to Leinster House on the buses they had been driven down on.

However, the re-routing didn't placate the republicans, and we filmed them venting their anger at not getting their hands on the loyalists by instead running amok on O'Connell Street, attacking businesses and setting fire to cars.

Thankfully, that violence was over in a day. Gardai fear the legacy of Thursday's trouble could last a lot longer.

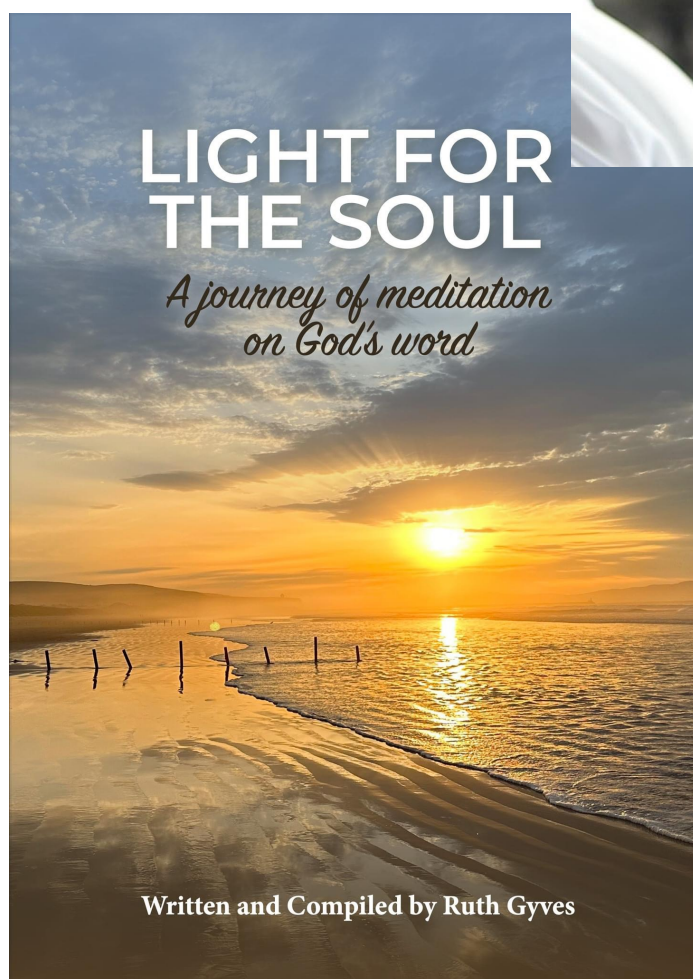
Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Sixth booklet in the 'for the Soul' series

Ruth Gyves from Holy Trinity Church in Rathmines, Dublin, has just produced her sixth booklet in the 'for the Soul' series and this one, Light for the Soul, is not to be missed.

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Ruth explains: “In our busy world today, it’s good to pause. This new booklet will help you do just that – to pause and think about light and darkness; to consider what it might be like to have the light of Jesus in your own life or to share with someone else who needs to experience light in their own



darkness. The light of Jesus can shine in our dark times and light up the way ahead”.

This booklet is packed with quotes, scripture verses and thoughts to help you on your journey and encourages us to pause and reflect.

All six booklets are a perfect size for your

pocket, and ideal for sending with a card to brighten someone’s day or to help them through a rough patch.

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The booklets cost €1 each (plus P&P) and can be ordered through the website, www.bringhope.ie

Discount offered on orders of 100+ - contact Ruth direct at 087 232 8848



New Irish Arts meet the soloist - Sandra McCracken

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New Irish Arts are introducing their soloists for Ireland in Christmas Praise 2023 over the next few days.

Sandra McCracken is based in Nashville, Tennessee. Sandra is a prolific songwriter, modern-day hymn writer, and record producer. She has more than fifteen studio albums to her credit, including songs such as “We Will Feast in the House of Zion”, and her latest album “Light In The Canyon” recently won a GMA Dove Award for Best Bluegrass/Country/Roots Album of the Year.

Livestream tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/livestream-ireland-in-christmas-praise-2023-tickets-757725115217?aff=oddtcreator>

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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