

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Mothers' Union en France

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Image of the day



Mothers' Union en France

Mothers Union branches throughout the world are currently sharing photographs of their branch banner.

There is possibly only one branch in France and Sue Wilcox of their colourful banner.

Sue writes, "Hello from the MU group in Poitou-Charentes in SW France. We think we are the only branch in France and we thought we would send you a few photos from our last event. We also include our banner..."

"This branch, attached to Christ the Good Shepherd, Poitou Charentes was formed in 2004. The photo shows (L to R) Myself, Rosemary Hill (one of the founding members) and Karen Burke our current secretary.

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“The banner was made by members for the branch back in 2004.”

OK ladies keep them coming -

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People and places

Successful Come and Sing in Cork

There was a Diocesan Come and Sing Choral Evensong on Saturday 7th October in St Fin Barre’s Cathedral, Cork.

Over forty people took part, travelling from across the Diocese (some from Ballydehob and Bantry) as well as from other parts of the country (Limerick and Athlone). Several different choirs were represented, including the choirs of St Luke’s Church, Douglas, St Mary’s Church, Carrigaline and St Peter’s Church, Bandon, as well as the East Cork Choral Society. The event was led by Cathedral Director of Music, Peter Stobart with Matthew Breen, Assistant Director of Music, at the organ.

The music included Bairstow’s anthem Save us, O Lord and the canticles were Walmisley in D minor. These had two soprano parts, giving the singers an additional challenge. Peter Stobart said:



I was delighted to see so many enthusiastic singers attending the event. The risk is always that the voice parts will be imbalanced but we were lucky to have a solid turnout from all voice types. I think part of the attraction is that the singers make new friends on the day and a cup of tea between the rehearsal and service helps this along!

Buns, Hymns and Hillsborough

“We are delighted to announce a major new series for our more senior members.

“Starting THIS MORNING Thursday 12 October at 10:30am, we will run a new 6 week series on the ‘Hymns we Love’.



“This series will look at the history and content of a traditional hymn each week and each session will feature a DVD presentation about the hymn. There will also be opportunity for everyone to sing the hymn!



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“Each Thursday will start at 10:30am with coffee and a scone before moving into the actual presentation and this will be led by Rev Julie Bell”

Bishop’s sympathy to family of Irish–Israeli citizen Kim Damti

The Rt Revd Adrian Wilkinson, Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory, issued the following statement:

‘The news and manner of the killing of Irish–Israeli citizen Kim Damti, in such horrific circumstances, has been greeted with both deep shock and profound sadness by people across the country. I am aware that as her funeral takes place today in Israel, many people in Co. Laois and elsewhere will be united in prayer for her family.

‘On behalf of the Church of Ireland community in the Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory, I extend my deepest sympathy to her relatives, the Cooper family, as they grieve for Kim and support her family in Israel at this very difficult time. We also remember all those who are suffering in this brutal conflict and pray that the principles of peace and co–existence will prevail.

Irish pilgrims home from Israel

Tweets from Michael Kelly who was with a party of pilgrims give an indication of the stress of the situation.

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Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport is busy, but moving. Our Irish pilgrims are safely through security and awaiting their direct flight to Dublin.

Our wonderful group of Irish Holy Land pilgrims departed Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport a few minutes ago with Conor McDonough and Jason Osborne for a direct flight to Dublin. Where they have gone, I hope to follow. God bless their journey.

Thanks to the Royal Netherlands Air Force for a seat on their evacuation flight out of Israel tonight. I have landed safe and sound in Eindhoven, a tired but very happy and relieved pilgrim. God is good.

Busy year for Dublin and Glendalough Diocesan Councils highlighted at Synod

The Diocesan Councils of Dublin and Glendalough have had a busy year and their activities were outlined to members of Diocesan Synods when they met in Taney Parish Centre recently.

The report of Diocesan Councils was presented at Synod by **Lyndon MacCann** who, in addition to highlighting a number of developments during the past year, noted the various functions of councils in the administration of the affairs of the dioceses and its role as the charity's trustee body.

Outside of the formal meetings of Councils, members also took part in an away day in CITI on March 4 during which they discussed the business of the dioceses and identified ways in which its governance could be enhanced. One item identified, Mr MacCann reported, was the need for a five-year plan to be drawn up for the dioceses.

A number of personnel changes were highlighted by Mr MacCann. He paid tribute to the **Revd Robert Marshall** for his patient, impartial and considered chairing of meetings of Diocesan Councils. David Wynne resigned from Councils in December after 18 years' membership and Mr MacCann thanked him for his commitment, along with others, to the oversight of the Church of St George and St Thomas while the parish was under the administration of the dioceses.



The 'top table' at Dublin and Glendalough Diocesan Synod in Taney.

He also paid tribute to **David Caird**, the outgoing Lay Honorary Secretary for Dublin. David was elected to the role in 2004 having been coopted onto Glebes and Finance in 1986 and becoming a member of Councils in 1990. "In his role as Honorary Secretary, David did a huge amount of work behind the scenes that even members of Councils were often unaware of. His contribution to the affairs of Councils has been immense. Our meeting in September was David's last as a member of Councils. We greatly appreciate all that he has done for these dioceses," he commented.

Other personnel changes included the election of the **Revd Brian O'Reilly** as Clerical Honorary Secretary for Glendalough in succession to the Archdeacon of Glendalough; the election of the **Revd John Tanner** as Clerical Honorary Secretary for Dublin in succession to the **Revd Dr William Olhausen**; and the resignation of the **Revd Nigel Waugh**. Mr MacCann also paid tribute to Mr



The Revd Rob Jones speaking to the report of Diocesan Councils.

Waugh for his work on the diocesan magazine, the Church Review.

Special mention went to **Sylvia Heggie** who officially retired as Diocesan Secretary in December after 17 years working for the dioceses. “Her contribution has been immense, and it is no exaggeration to say that the running of the dioceses would simply not have been able to happen without her untiring commitment to her job,” Mr MacCann said. He noted that Sylvia had graciously agreed to help out until a new diocesan secretary was appointed. **Ian Walshe**, formerly of the property department of the Representative Church Body, was appointed in May. He welcomed him to the role and thanked Sylvia for continuing to oversee the transition. The **Revd Rob Jones** speaking to the report of Diocesan Councils.



Canon David Gillespie

Mr MacCann also paid tribute to the Diocesan Communications Officer, **Lynn Glanville**, for her work.

At the end of 2022 there were 55 stipendiary clergy, three self-supporting ministers and 18 other licenced clergy as well as 53 licensed lay readers in the dioceses. He said councils greatly appreciated the invaluable contribution that clergy and lay readers made in leading worship and the myriad other acts of ministry they performed.

In mentioning parishes of the dioceses, he singled out the **Parish of St George and St Thomas**. Mr MacCann explained that due to the challenges it faced in supporting a clerical stipend, the parish was placed under the

administration of Councils in 2017. Councils established a working group to look at possible future roles for the parish. He reported to Synod that on January 14 this year an extraordinary general vestry of the parish was convened and a new select vestry was elected, along with other representatives, which enabled Councils to hand back administration to the parish. He welcomed the representatives of St George and St Thomas back to Synod and assured them of the best wishes of Councils as together they seek to map out their future.

After outlining finance, regulatory and property matters, Mr MacCann talked of changes to the work of Diocesan Councils as a result of legislation passed at last year's Diocesan Synods. He said that the central focus of the newly constituted Councils would be very much on mission. In this regard they would set up a new Mission Sub Committee which will take over the functions of the Diocesan Council for Mission and the Diocesan Committee for Social Action. The new committee will report to every meeting of Councils on its mission and activities.

The report was seconded by the **Revd Cathy Hallissey** who thanked Mr MacCann for his expertise and prayed for the guidance of the Holy Spirit through which Councils work. Lively debate on the report followed. Canon David Gillespie

The **Revd Prof Anne Lodge** (Christ Church Cathedral) queried the need to include university chaplaincy in the report of Diocesan Councils as third level chaplains are not paid or managed by Councils and their work was extraneous to the work of Councils.



[Evonne Mushonga.](#)

The **Revd Rob Jones** (Rathmines and Pioneer Ministry) highlighted the work of the Pioneer Ministry Team and said he would be sharing information with each diocese about how pioneer ministry projects could be funded and how training for pioneers and volunteers could be accessed. He pledged that the Pioneer Ministry Team would support parishes in reaching people outside parishes.

The **Revd John Tanner** (Tullow and Councils) announced that the Guild of Lay Ministry would be reestablished with a meeting taking place in CITI on October 19. He also spoke of a new initiative through the Covenant with the Methodist Church being piloted in Dublin and Glendalough in which it was hoped that five parishes in the dioceses would be

willing to have a Methodist Local Preacher for three Sundays in a year. In turn, five circuits of the Methodist Church would have a Lay Reader at three of their services.

Canon Dr Maurice Elliott (CITI) expressed concern about the numbers of students training towards ordination based on the report of the Diocesan Directors of Ordinands in the Book of Reports. He said there were currently 34 Curates in CME in preparation for moving to incumbency and 34 ordinands. But over the next 10 years 170 priests in stipendiary ministry would retire meaning that the rate of those leaving stipendiary ministry was more than twice that of those entering stipendiary ministry. He called on Synods members to make a point of conversation and prayer that more people will be identified to answer the call.

The **Revd Jack Kinhead** (Wicklow) commended the work of Church Music Dublin, of which he is chair and highlighted the importance of music in worship. He encouraged people to come along to the Come and Sing Evensong Event in Sandford on October 21.

Canon David Gillespie (Malahide) commended the stress course that was organised for clergy as part of the MindMatters project. He thanked MindMatters for all they were doing to raise awareness of mental health issues and the work done in Dublin and Glendalough on the issue. He said that a number of his clerical colleagues were dealing with such challenges and said he had spent two months in hospital dealing with depression and anxiety. He thanked the Archbishop and the Parish of Malahide for their support but made a plea for more to be done in the Church of Ireland to support clergy who are struggling under the



Canon William Deverell.

demands of admin and who could be on the receiving end of behaviour which would not be tolerated in any other context.

Evonne Mushonga (St George and St Thomas's) spoke about the closure, administration and reopening of the Church of St George and St Thomas on Cathal Brugha Street. She questioned the legitimacy of the actions of Diocesan Councils in regard to the parish when it was taken into administration in 2017 and said that the dioceses had failed to uphold its duties. She said that as a parishioner she felt abandoned and there had been little support for the parish since it had reopened with little diocesan

representation at the reopening service. She also questioned the use of various funds in relation to the parish.

The **Revd Prof Anne Lodge** (Christ Church Cathedral) urged the diocese to think more broadly on the issue of intercultural engagement. She referred her research launched last year in which she heard stories of good practice and enrichment as well as the desire to find ways to enhance leadership and engagement of people of different backgrounds in parish life. She called on the diocese to support St George and St Thomas but also to support what was happening in parishes like Tallaght which she described as a model of inclusion.

Canon Adrienne Galligan (Rathfarnham) acknowledged the hurt and distrust that had occurred in St George and St Thomas's. As chairperson of the working group she said that they have been working with the Vestry and the Rural Dean and pledged to continue that work. She noted that the time of the first service clashed with ordinations and in hindsight there might have been a better date. It was important that the Vestry take leadership and that conversations were happening about future viable ministry in the church.

Canon William Deverell (Tallaght) said it was up to all parishes to welcome people who were far away from home. He said his parish was blessed by people who had come to Tallaght from Africa and India and welcoming people into the parish community was an important part of integration into the wider community.

David Wynne (Sandford and St Philip's) said he was sorry that Evonne felt as she did about the care given to St George and St Thomas's Church. As one of those who looked after the church he said it was in poor condition when they took on the job and that he gave it all he had left in his body to try to look after it.

In reply Mr MacCann said that Dr Lodge had opened an interesting debate on third level chaplaincy. He commended the work of Rob Jones and Pioneer Ministry and looked forward to seeing what would develop in the exchange with the Methodist Church. He agreed with Canon Gillespie on the importance of MindMatters. On St George and St Thomas's he said that councils wished them well and a lot of work had gone into trying to find a viable future for the parish. He thanked Canon Galligan and the working group for their efforts and once again thanked David Wynne. He said he was delighted to hear of the work going on in Tallaght and said all parishes should work on their multicultural relations.

Education matters – Moderator on school tours

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), Right Reverend Dr Sam Mawhinney, has praised the 'dedication, commitment, passion, and care' of teachers and staff, when he visited two schools within the bounds of PCI's Presbytery of East Belfast, as part of a weeklong tour of the Presbytery.



At Mitchell House School (left to right) Principal Miriam Donnan, the Moderator, Rev Jonny Frazer, minister of Gillnahirk Presbyterian Church and Vice Principal of Mitchell House School, Ian Shanks.

Dr Mawhinney, who was accompanied by his wife Karen, visited Priory Integrated College in Holywood and Mitchell House Special School in the east of Belfast.

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Pictured in the foyer after the Moderator's visit to Priory Integrated College are, (left to right) Rev Stuart McCrea, minister of First Holywood Presbyterian, College Principal, Alison Watterson with Senior Prefect Sophie McGregor and Lead Prefect, Alice Cummings, the Moderator, Deirdre Scarlett, Leader of Learning and Teaching, with Amy Hunter, First Holywood's Children, Youth & Family Worker

While presbytery tours are primarily pastoral visits to encourage the local church on the ground, and in the Presbytery of East Belfast there are 23 congregations, engagements throughout the week have also included upwards of 20-plus civic, community and cultural visits.

“It has been a busy week and a fascinating one, with many different visits to a variety of places, including Priory

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Integrated College and Mitchell House School. Having gone to Ballycastle High and Queen's many years ago, and having ministered and lived in the Republic of Ireland for the past 25 years, much has changed. It was good to get a greater understanding of the sectors they are part of, and the challenges that they face at the moment," Dr Mawhinney said.

"I want to thank both of them for the warm welcome and time that they took to show my wife Karen and I around, which gave us just a glimpse of what daily life looks like for them, the teachers, children and young people. While they were different in many respects, the dedication, commitment, passion, professionalism and care that they, and their staff demonstrated, was palpable.

I really enjoyed the Q&A sessions that I had during Priory's Religious Studies class and the Year 12 Learning for Life and Work class, with some well thought out questions. It was also a privilege to take the Assembly in Mitchell House, where we were zoomed into the different classes around the school, due to the lack of space in the room itself. The singing and the attention was fantastic."

During his Assembly talk, Dr Mawhinney talked about how we all have favourites - favourite football team, favourite sport, or sweet, but how God loves us all and has no favourites. During the Q&A session with the Year 12s at Priory College he was asked about a range of issues from same-sex marriage to why he became a minister, if PCI works with other churches, and what happens to you when you die.



Alison Watterson, Principal of Holywood Integrated College shows the Moderator around the College

Welcoming the visit to Priory College, Vice Principal Alison Watterson explained that Priory's 700-plus students come from 23 feeder schools in a wide catchment area that extends from east Belfast to North Down and the Ards Peninsula, and as an Integrated College welcomes pupils of all religions, and none, and is inclusive of all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds and academic profiles. She also said that GCSE and A Level outcomes were consistently above the Northern Ireland average for similar schools.

Built in the 1970s as Holywood High School, the all-ability co-educational post primary school changed its name when

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it became part of the Integrated Sector in 1997. There are currently 58 teaching staff and 36 classroom assistants in the College, “supported by an amazing ancillary team,” Alison Watterson said, who has been at the College for 30 years. The College motto, ‘Accomplishing More Together’ embodies the college’s Integrated ethos.

“It was a pleasure to host the Moderator, which provided an opportunity for our pupils to engage with him on different subjects and hear his answers from a Christian perspective and his own lived faith experiences as a minister. Pupils took the opportunity to quiz him on some controversial issues and his honesty and considered answers were much valued, as were his answers about his own faith journey and his call to be a minister,” she said.

“I also welcomed the opportunity to share with the Moderator what integration looks like in action at Priory, and how the pupils, staff, and wider community experience integration. Our integrated ethos permeates all we do. Ours is an inclusive community in which building positive relationships are key to developing the aptitudes and talents of all our pupils. I very much hope the Moderator enjoyed his visit.”

Two and a half miles from Priory College, on the edge of east Belfast, is Mitchell House School, which celebrated its 60th anniversary last year. An Education Authority Belfast Region co-educational special school for children with physical disabilities, it currently has 113 children and young people in nursery, primary and post primary settings, from 3 to 19 years of age, with 14 teachers and 45 classroom assistants.

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“While we are a relatively small school, as a regional special school we have children and young people coming as far away as Scarva and from the Ards Peninsula, with most of our students having an associated learning difficulty to some degree,” explained Miriam Donnan, Mitchell House’s principal.

“We greatly appreciated the time that Dr Mawhinney spent with us, and for his talk at our assembly, and for engaging with our pupils. For us, it was also a chance to show him around the school where he met teachers, assistants and students. As a former doctor he was interested in our holistic and multi-disciplinary approach, which also includes on site nurses, occupational therapy, speech and language and physiotherapy.

“As well as catering for our pupils in school, we talked about the outreach service we provide to mainstream schools, supporting staff working with pupils who have a physical disability. I hope that Dr Mawhinney found Mitchell House to be a welcoming place, where we challenge our children and young people to be the very best they can be. It was good to have him visit.” she said.

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News reports

Porvoo Conference explores life in the Eucharist

Archbishop Michael Jackson is Anglican co–chair of the Porvoo Communion’s Contact Group.

The group is currently meeting in Madrid. Here the Archbishop reports from the second day of the gathering:

The members of the Porvoo Communion met as the Porvoo Contact Group ahead of the Thematic Meeting on Life in the Eucharist. Participants in the Service of Holy Communion in Madrid Cathedral.

“We covered matters relating to transitivity of ministry along with plans for future meeting of the Porvoo Churches. The theme for next year is the environment and the conference will be held in Sigtuna in Sweden.

“We were joined by members of the Church of the Faroe Islands where there are eighteen islands and a population of thirty thousand people. The other main traditions are Roman Catholic, Brethren and Pentecostal”.

The afternoon included an explanatory tour of Madrid led by Bishop Carlos of Spain.

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Holy Communion was celebrated in the cathedral with the Archbishop of Dublin as preacher on the theme of the Conference.

“The Eucharist is primarily for those within the circle of faith. But their work is only begun once they receive the same Eucharist. They are to search constantly, to adapt the words of St Matthew 21, for the stones which the builders rejected. Add to this the words of 1 Peter 2.5: You also, as living stones, must be built up into a spiritual temple, and form a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. The Temple in Jerusalem is gone. The Romans have razed it to the ground. These regular church goers, in the volatile and intimidating circumstances of the early Roman Empire along the shores of the Black Sea, are to offer these spiritual sacrifices as a spiritual temple in their daily life. That is where they are to live and work in the Spirit; that is where they are to stand among their colleagues and neighbours, friends and enemies as the Risen Christ. This is the dynamic and the urgency of life in the Eucharist today as it was in the days of 1 Peter,” he stated.

The **Rev Canon Stephen Fielding**, rector of St John's Malone, has been in Madrid as a Church of Ireland representative for the Porvoo Communion.

There is a link to the full text of the Archbishop's address here -

[\[https://dublin.anglican.org/news/2023/10/10/porvoo-conference-explores-life-in?utm%5C\]](https://dublin.anglican.org/news/2023/10/10/porvoo-conference-explores-life-in?utm%5C)

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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