

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Church Lads' Brigade 130th.

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This week 130 years of the Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade in Ireland were celebrated with a Regimental Dinner in Brownlow Castle.

Archbishop McDowell was presented with commemorative crystal by Mr John Williams - Regimental Commander - to mark the occasion. (Page above)



Present were the Most Rev John McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh, Primate of All Ireland and Metropolitan and President of The Ulster Regiment, Mr Andrew Hayday -



Governor of the CLCGB, Mr Melvyn Lockhart - Deputy Governor, Mr John Williams - Regimental Commander, Mr Perry Gunn - National Co-ordinator and Officers and Leaders from the Ulster Regiment. Archbishop McDowell was presented with commemorative crystal to mark the occasion.

The Armachian Quartet from The

Royal School Armagh provided musical entertainment at the start of the evening.

People and places

New Law Term Service in St Michan's Church. Dublin

The new legal year got underway on Monday morning (October 2) with the traditional Michaelmas Law Term



The Choir of the King's Hospital School with clergy involved in the annual New Law Term Service in St Michan's Church.

services taking place in St Michan's Church of Ireland and Catholic churches in Dublin.

This year in addition to the traditional church services to mark the start of the term, a new secular ceremony took place in the Four Courts with addresses by the Chief Justice, the chief executive of the Courts Service and the

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Attorney General as well as a performance of the Courts Service choir.

Back in St Michan's, Archbishop Michael Jackson presided at the service with other participants including the Vicar of the Christ Church Cathedral Group of Parishes,

Archdeacon David Pierpoint; the Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, the Very Revd William Morton; the Precentor of St Patrick's and chaplain to the King's Hospital School, Canon Peter Campion; and the Revd Alan Ruffli, prison chaplain. The preacher was the Revd Robert Marshall, Diocesan and Provincial Registrar and solicitor.

As has been tradition for over a century, the choir of the King's Hospital, under the direction of Ciaran Kelly, led the music at the service. The service gathers people from the legal world including solicitors, barristers, members of the judiciary, representatives of An Garda Síochána, the Defence Forces and the Diplomatic Corps to pray for those involved in the justice system at the start of the Michaelmas Term.

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Queen's graduate Dominican ordained priest

A new priest - Fr Ruaidhri Grieve OP was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh in St Catherine's Church, Newry.

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Thanks to Sean and Peadar, servers at the ordination of Fr Ruaidri Grieve OP in Newry. A wonderful occasion for the Irish Dominicans and the people of Newry.

Fr Ruaidhri is a Queen's alumnus having graduated with a PhD in Physics before joining the Dominican Order. To which the Chaplaincy at QUB commented "We're very proud of you Fr Ruaidhri! "

Ad multos annos, Father Ruaidhri - to many happy years of priesthood. Photography: Br Sean Blackwell OP.



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Ad multos annos, Father Ruaidhri - to many happy years of priesthood. Photography: Br Sean Blackwell OP.

Minister-in-Charge introduced in Tullylish



The Revd Robert Smyth has been introduced as Minister-in-Charge of the Parish of Tullylish.

He is no stranger to the parish having for the last 20 months provided Sunday cover during the rector's illness and subsequent retirement.

The rector of St Elizabeth's Dundonald, Revd Tim Anderson, (Photo above right) gave the address at the service which took place in All Saints on Tuesday evening, 3 October.

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Speaking of his new role, Robert said, “I am humbled and honoured to become minister-in-charge for Tullylish, a parish we have come to consider our spiritual home. By God’s grace, we will continue to preach and teach faithfully all that Christ has commanded us, strive to make His name known to all by making disciples and lovingly pastor all of His people.”

A photo gallery of the event is at -

https://www.downanddromore.org/news/2023/10/revd-robert-smyth-is-introduced-in-tullylish?utm_

Recent road tragedies, social poverty and NI Troubles Act among highlights of Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference

Members of the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference gathered this week in Saint Patrick’s College, Maynooth, for their Autumn 2023 General Meeting.

The President of the Conference is Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh and the Vice-President is Archbishop Dermot Farrell of Dublin. During the meeting, Mass was offered in the College Chapel for the Synod on Synodality in Rome, and for the current, retired and deceased clergy and staff of the College, councils, agencies and initiatives of the Bishops’ Conference.

Conscious of recent road tragedies on the island of Ireland, bishops remembered in their prayers victims and survivors

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of road collisions, their families, local clergy, other first responders and affected communities.

The main issues discussed by bishops during their Autumn General Meeting included:

Welcoming Laudate Deum (Praise God) – new exhortation by Pope Francis

Budget 2024 measures should target poverty and income protection

Bishops express concern re passing of Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy & Reconciliation) Act 2023

Universal Synodal Assembly and Irish Synodal Pathway Safeguarding Children

Prayers for Peace and bells to be rung on 11 November

Call to pray and display red for persecuted Christians on Red Wednesday, 22 November

Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly to celebrate televised Mass on RTÉ for World Mission Sunday on 22 October

(i) Year for Vocation to the Diocesan Priesthood (ii) Jubilee of Consecrated Life

In Memoriam

Welcoming Laudate Deum (Praise God) – new exhortation by Pope Francis

Statement published on Bishops' web site.

Budget 2024 measures should target poverty and income protection

In the context of Government's publication of Budget 2024 on Tuesday next, 10 October, bishops reflected on the

continuing financial and social pressures facing many families.

Representatives of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul presented the Society's Pre-Budget Submission. The PBS analysis is based on robust research of the work of the Society's 11,000 volunteers who help many vulnerable people in poverty, trying to deal with the housing crisis, with reduced access to education, with income insecurity, and affected by the continuing energy crisis.

Bishops congratulated the Society on its outstanding work across the island of Ireland in addressing poverty, helping people to be self-sufficient and advocating for social justice. Bishops also acknowledged the regular financial support provided to the Society from hundreds of thousands of people who attend Mass in parishes at weekends, and encouraged people to continue to support the work of the Society, including through the recruitment of much needed additional volunteers.

Bishops noted, in particular, the scandal that 875,000 people are going without basics, and far too many children are living in enforced deprivation. Taken together with the reality of 12,000 people living in emergency accommodation and that 377,000 people were unable to afford suitable and sufficient heating in 2022, bishops said that, "this untenable situation necessitates radical action by Government so that, through solidarity, the State can fulfil its duty to uphold the God-given dignity of all people."

Bishops continued, "we strongly call for targeted supports in Budget 2024, in order:

to protect the incomes of the most vulnerable in our society; so that social welfare increases keep in line with inflation; that the Government includes measures to address child poverty, including childcare costs, and early interventions aimed at addressing inter-generational poverty; that financial supports are focused on people with disabilities to enable them participate more fully in the community.

“These measures are necessary, not as a form of charity, rather, as a statement of solidarity that shows how we are all connected and responsible for each other. This means we must, as a society, help all in need to be self-sufficient and able to contribute to the common good.”

Worsening financial situation facing people in Northern Ireland

Bishops prayed for continued peace on the island of Ireland.

Bishops discussed the worsening financial situation facing people in Northern Ireland that is due to a variety of factors, notably the lack of a functioning Executive and Assembly, which has led to cuts in public services. The absence of local political accountability is affecting delivery of a range of supports for families and individuals, including those in education, and dependent on social support. In this regard, bishops welcomed the work over recent months by the Christian Coalition Against Poverty (which includes the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, and the Bishops' Northern Ireland Catholic Council for Social Affairs), which are urging the UK government to invoke its power under Section 28 (e)

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of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, so as to prioritise measures aimed at alleviating poverty.

Call to increase Ireland's Overseas Development Assistance

In addition, in light of ever-increasing humanitarian needs globally, and the imperative for increased investment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, bishops call on the Government to build on the increase in overseas aid last year. Bishops said that the Government must make real and tangible progress in its longstanding commitment to spend 0.7% of Gross National Income of Official Development Assistance, by increasing its allocation by €305 million in the forthcoming budget.

Bishops express concern re passing of Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy & Reconciliation) Act 2023

Bishops discussed the recent passing by the Westminster Parliament of the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023, noting that this legislation was passed without the support of victims of the Troubles or of political parties in the north or south. The bishops expressed the view that this legislation is unlikely to contribute to the work for reconciliation and healing. Indeed, they contend, it further undermines confidence in the political process in Northern Ireland.

Universal Synodal Assembly and Irish Synodal Pathway Universal Synod

Bishops offered their prayerful good wishes to all participants at the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the

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Synod of Bishops, which officially opens today with a celebration of the Eucharist in Saint Peter's Square in the Vatican. The theme of the Synod is 'For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission.' At their meeting, bishops echoed Pope Francis' comment that 'without prayer there will be no Synod' and invited people of faith to continue to pray incessantly over the coming weeks for all members of the Synodal Assembly.

Attending as representatives of the Bishops' Conference are Bishop Brendan Leahy of Limerick, and Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ of Raphoe. Also present at the Synod are Sister Mary Barron OLA, in her role as President of the International Union of Superiors General; Sister Patricia Murray IBVM, as Executive Secretary of the International Union of Superiors General; and, Rev Professor Eamon Conway, a priest of the Archdiocese of Tuam, who will serve the Synod as an 'Expert and Facilitator'.

News reports

Bear Grylls fulfils 'dream' of being baptised in Jordan River

Bear Grylls has spoken of his joy after being baptised in the Jordan River at the site where Jesus was baptised.

The TV adventurer shared the happy occasion on his Instagram along with a photo of himself waist-deep in water, eyes closed as he was about to be plunged.

In the caption, he said that being baptised in the same place as Jesus was baptised by his "hero" John the Baptist was a "dream".

He also shared a little about Luke and his admiration for his Gospel, which records the baptism of Jesus in chapter 3.

Grylls said that the story of Jesus' baptism was "amazing" and that Luke's account was "reliable" and "poignant".

Luke 3:21-22 says, "Now when all the people were baptised, and when Jesus also had been baptised and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'"

The baptismal site is known as "Bethany Beyond the Jordan" and is located in al-Maghtas on the east bank of the Jordan River. It is a World Heritage Site visited by hundreds of thousands of people every year.

Grylls wrote, "It had always been a dream of mine to get in the water that Jesus was baptised in by my hero John the Baptist.

"The story is so amazing, & it seems wherever Jesus went, that new birth, new life, a new vision followed. Luke (in the bible) was probably a Syrian doctor before he met Jesus.

"He writes a reliable, poignant account of his life. It's short. I like it."

Pope expresses openness to same-sex blessings

Pope Francis has expressed an openness towards the possibility of blessing same-sex partnerships in response to questions from five cardinals.

He suggested it may be an expression of "pastoral charity" but only so long as it is not conflated with marriage.

He also suggested that what may be considered "pastoral prudence in certain circumstances should not necessarily become a norm".

"It is not just a matter of names, but the reality we call marriage has a unique essential constitution that requires an exclusive name, not applicable to other realities. It is undoubtedly much more than a mere 'ideal,'" he wrote.

"For this reason, the Church avoids any type of rite or sacramental that might contradict this conviction and suggest that something that is not marriage is recognized as marriage.

"However, in our relationships with people, we must not lose the pastoral charity, which should permeate all our decisions and attitudes. The defence of objective truth is not the only expression of this charity; it also includes kindness, patience, understanding, tenderness, and encouragement. Therefore, we cannot be judges who only deny, reject, and exclude."

He added, "Therefore, pastoral prudence must adequately discern whether there are forms of blessing, requested by one or more persons, that do not convey a mistaken concept of marriage."

The letter was a response to questions - or dubia - posed by five retired cardinals on critical issues. Although written earlier in the year, the Pope's answers were published on Monday ahead of the start of a major synod at the Vatican



Diocese of Clogher

www.clogher.anglican.org

Expressions of interest are invited
from clergy in respect of the following:



Curate Assistant, St Macartin's Cathedral, Enniskillen

St Macartin's Cathedral Enniskillen is seeking an enthusiastic and self-motivated Anglican Deacon / Priest to join the Cathedral's team to serve as Curate Assistant, sharing responsibility with the Dean and Cathedral clergy for leading worship and exercising a ministry of pastoral care. With approximately 1,665 parishioners, this position offers a great opportunity to work in an active and growing large semi-urban parish. The curatage is a comfortable residence located within the cathedral's precincts, close to Enniskillen town centre.

For further information and to express interest in the above vacancy please write to: **The Very Revd Kenny Hall, St. Macartin's Deanery, 13 Church Street, Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh BT74 7DW**
or email dean@clogher.org

Expressions of interest in the above vacancies should be made by:
19th November 2023

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that is expected to address the issues raised by the retired cardinals.

Writer and Associate Editor of the Catholic Herald, Gavin Ashenden, questioned the Pope's response on X, formerly Twitter: "What is the 'status' of a pope who authorises the blessing of what the Church has always discerned as disorder, and the Bible as abomination ? Isn't this close to the sin against the Holy Spirit where evil is called good and good evil?"

The response to the dubia marks an abrupt departure from a decree issued by the Vatican in March 2021 with the Pope's approval stating that the Catholic Church could not bless same-sex partnerships because God "cannot bless sin".

That document reaffirmed marriage as a lifelong union between a man and a woman for the purpose of procreation and described gay sex as "intrinsically disordered".

Bishop calls for housing strategy before pre-General Election debates begin

The Bishop of Chelmsford, Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani, has convened a group of politicians and church leaders to work on a national housing strategy, to inform debates on the issue before the next General Election.

Dr Francis-Dehqani, who is the C of E's lead bishop for housing, visited St Andrew's, on the Isle of Portland, in

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Dorset, last week, where the church hall had been converted into two “starter flats” for people under the age of 25.

Such developments could “make a real difference to the lives of local residents”, she said; but local councillors in Portland had told her that “they — and we — can only go so far without an agreed long-term national housing strategy.”

This was one of the recommendations of the report *Coming Home*, published in 2021 by the Archbishops’ Commission on Housing, Church and Community (News, 26 February 2021).

“We have long-term strategies for public health, for the environment, and for climate change; so why not for housing? Especially since housing is fundamental to so many other areas of life and society,” she said.

The meeting last week was convened by Dr Francis-Dehqani and David Orr, a member of the Commission, who is a former chief executive of the National Housing Federation.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

As you make your preparations for Advent and Christmas, the “Follow The Star” Advent Calendar is now available.



Follow the star, come join in the fun! Christmas is coming, the countdown's begun...

This Follow The Star Advent Calendar is a fun and educational way for children and their families to mark Advent and celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas.

Featuring a fold-out, stand up crib scene, stickers for every day of Advent and a rhyming Nativity story sheet, it tells the

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story of how – and why – Jesus came to be born in Bethlehem.

With beautiful illustrations and 24 stickers, you can order these for children in your family or church at cofe.io/2023AdventCalendar.

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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