

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Instonians front row

October 7, 2024

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Short reading and a prayer daily on this site

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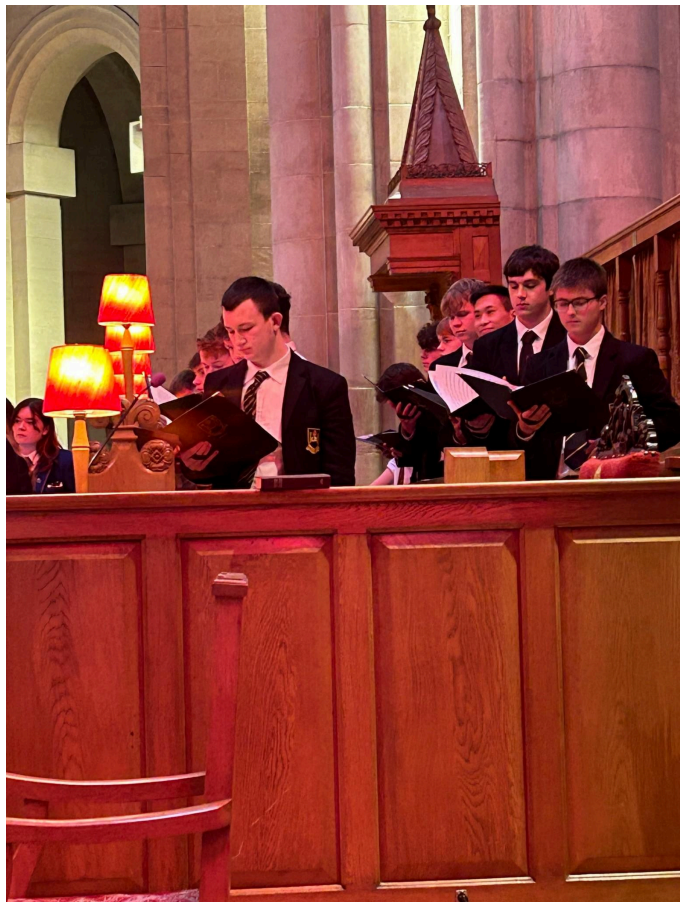
Instonians front row

Last week school leaders from across the UK met in Belfast for the annual HMC (The Heads' Conference).

Alongside RBAI - Inst - hosting a fundraising seminar for 25 Irish schools, RBAI's musicians participated in a service at St Anne's Cathedral and performed at a gala dinner in the Culloden Hotel.

Right - The Principal of RBAI

RBAI was delighted to welcome 25 Irish schools to discuss the role of philanthropy in generating sustainable income for our schools.



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Speakers included Philip Britton, Chair of HMC & Head of Foundation, Bolton School, along with Lou Bennett, CEO of IDPE to The Royal Belfast Academical Institution.

IDPE support 400 European schools to raise in excess of £150m each year.

Footnote - A challenge would be to collate rolls of those who have served as cathedral choristers from RBAI and BRA...

News

Award achievers meet HRH The Duke of Edinburgh

To mark the 25th anniversary of the Joint Award in Northern Ireland (the collaboration between DofE, the DofE International Award and Gaisce - Ireland's President's Award), ten Ballyclare Hugh School pupils were invited to a special celebration event held at Crawfordsburn Scout Centre on Thursday 3 October.

There they met HRH The Duke of Edinburgh as they took part in a variety





of outdoor activities.

One of the Ballyclare pupils, Izaak, was presented to Prince Edward in a smaller group of young people who were recognised for their determination to overcome challenge and adversity.

This was a fantastic opportunity for the pupils and it was recognition of the commitment to DofE staff have demonstrated over the years.

In a world of full stops, we need more commas - Boys Brigade NI

So much of our daily work revolves around communication - emails, phone calls, meetings, social media, website etc

Last week the Chief Officer of NI Boys Brigade **Lisa Keys** ran a communications workshop with NI BB's engagement team. The aim was to refresh and renew knowledge and exchange ideas.

To help focus she shared a Ted Talk from NI BB's former President and good friend **David Blevins**. As always, David's ability to communicate so effectively provides so much learning from everyone who listens. Such a great Ted Talk - well worth a listen!

David Blevins TedX talk at Stormont

[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RJr9K5a6-70>]

Armagh Diocese young peoples' Habitat for Humanity trip to Romania 2025

This experience for young people from across Armagh Diocese, aged 16 years to 18 years on the dates of travel - 2nd to 9th August 2025.

The cost is £1700 per person (with a significant contribution to Habitat Romania funds for on-going development work).

To receive more information as to this trip, parents can call David Brown on 07557 665 860 or email doycarmagh@gmail.com



To book in: Please visit this link habitatireland.org/gv and

1. click “Apply Today”
2. A form will open and for the question “What Country are you applying from” – select Northern Ireland.
3. For the question “What team are you applying for” select ‘Armagh Diocese, Romania - August 2025’

First Rathfriland Harvest plus

The First Rathfriland Church was opened on Saturday to enable people to view the harvest decorations, and then to call into the Church Hall for some heart warming soup and a bit of chat with the Presbyterian Church’s Rural Chaplain - Kenny Hanna.



Then folk could pop over to the Church Car Park to see the animals that our farming families have brought along too.

Harvest Thanksgiving in Enniskillen Mart

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There. Was a wonderful Harvest Thanksgiving in Enniskillen Mart on Friday night.



It was a Blessing to all who attended. A huge 'Thank You' to all who worked hard to make it such a success, from the decorations, the singing, the message



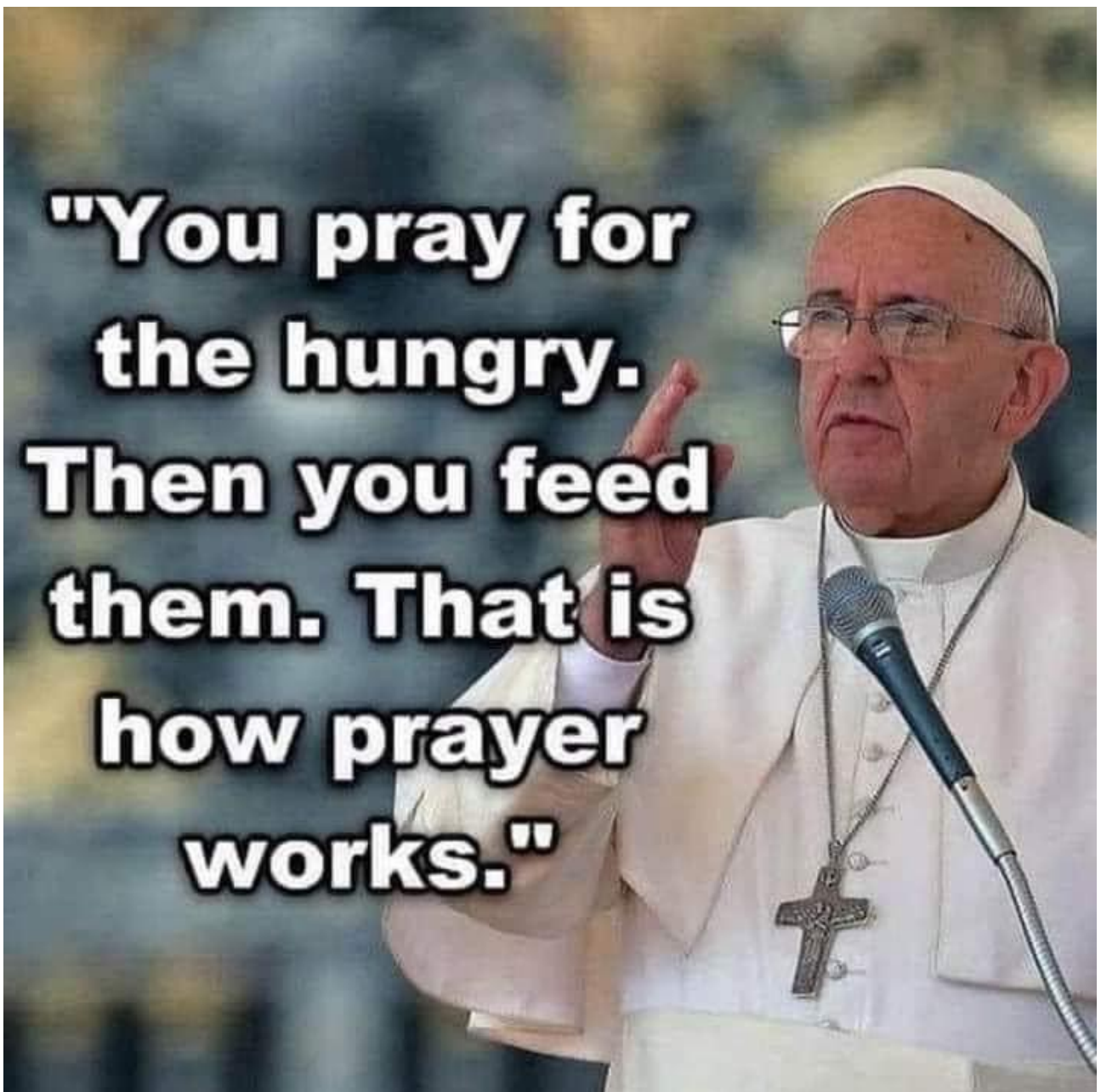
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and of course the amazing supper!.

Time to say Good Bye - The Priests final performances

In 2024, The Priests are marking the 50th anniversary of their musical collaboration.

They have performed for Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis, as well as for the late Queen Elizabeth II and the now King and Queen Consort.



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They have decided however that it is “Time to say Good Bye” as the number of concerts in their schedule is diminishing rapidly. Tempus Fugit.

With a history of performing stretching back to their childhood, Fathers Eugene and Martin O’Hagan and David Delargy became known as The Priests when in April 2008 they signed a recording contract in front of Westminster Cathedral. The event featured in the national news, the international print media, even making the cover of Time Magazine.

Their debut album was released in 40+ countries, and earned them a place in the Guinness Book of Records as the fastest selling debut for a classical act, as well as gold and platinum discs for sales throughout Europe and Australia in addition to topping the classical Billboard chart in the US.

Their first three albums, The Priests, 2008, Harmony 2009 and Noel 2010 were each nominated as Classical Album of the Year in the Classical Brit Awards. They have performed for Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis, as well as for the late Queen Elizabeth II and the now King and Queen Consort.

The Priests continue to serve as full time priests in the Diocese of Down and Connor in Northern Ireland. The majority of their music income goes into their charitable trust, The Priests’ Foundation, which has helped build schools in Cambodia, Uganda and Thailand, plus has helped look after retired priests, the homeless and supply schools with music apparatus. In 2020, The Priests were

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awarded MBEs in recognition of their contribution to Music and Charity in Northern Ireland.

For the upcoming concerts see -
[<https://www.thepriests.org/concerts>]



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Cathedral Calls

Belfast Cathedral's new children's choir is beginning rehearsals this October

Boys and girls aged 7+ are welcome to join those already signed up.

This is a great opportunity for eager young musicians, which is completely free of charge, and will give children the amazing opportunity to sing at wonderful musical services and events, including our upcoming Christmas carol services this year.

“We rehearse each Thursday in term-time, and sing alternate Sunday mornings. Further information can be found below, and on our website” at - <https://www.belfastcathedral.org/music/become-a-chorister>

HM Chapel Royal Hampton Court Palace

“While the chapel undergoes a deep clean, other exciting things have happened - not least that the official portrait of His Majesty has been hung in the chapel.

Usually, the portrait of the reigning monarch has hung in the vestry, but, we want to position this for whole community to enjoy”.

Clergy and ministry

Rector of Glengormley instituted

Revd Jacob Mercer was instituted as Rector of St Brigid's on 2nd October 2024 by Rt Rev George Davison, Bishop of Connor

Vocations office to host open-days for men interested in priesthood

Open-days on *Exploring Priesthood*, across three regional locations.

The Bishops' National Vocations Office, in collaboration with the local Diocesan Vocations Directors, have arranged a series of open-days themed: *Exploring Priesthood*, across three regional locations.

Following the success of previous years, these open-days are an opportunity for Catholic men aged 18 and over who would like to find out more about the ministry and life of a diocesan priest; how to discern a calling to be a priest; and, to understand what is involved in seminary formation. The open-days will provide participants with a supportive and confidential space to explore, along with others who are at the same stage as them.

Commenting on the upcoming open-days, Father Willie Purcell, National Vocations Director of the Bishops' Conference, said, "Our experience from previous years

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indicates that our vocations inquiry gatherings are of great value to the men interested in the priesthood. There will be three ‘exploring priesthood’ workshops happening in October and November. On Saturday 12 October in UCD Belfield Dublin; on Saturday 26 October in the University of Galway and on 10 November in the Pallotine House, Thurles. These events are great opportunities for young men who are enquiring about diocesan priesthood to come and pray, reflect and discuss what it is to become a Diocesan Priest in Ireland today.”

Father Willie continued, “The men who are currently studying for the Irish Diocesan priesthood are signs of hope for the future of the Church in Ireland. Their generosity in saying ‘yes’ to the call of God is confirmation that prayer in our dioceses, parishes and homes is the powerhouse for creating a vocations culture in Ireland. The courage of these men to stand for Christ is a sign of ‘new beginnings’ and ‘radical change’ in the Irish Church. They will work with and carry on the heroic ministry of our priests who daily give their lives for Christ and those whom they are called to serve, we pray that the good work which God has begun in them will come to completion in Christ Jesus.”

To register to attend any of the three open-days, visit www.vocations.ie.

The Vision of Pioneer Ministry in the C of I

Reaching those with little or no connection to church.

Pioneer ministry stands in the widening gap between the church and contemporary culture with the aim of reaching those outside the church in new ways and in different places.

All current parishes and ministries were at some point 'something new', and a means of connecting with the culture and community of their own age and context. Pioneering is not a new idea, but something intrinsic to the church throughout history. The vision is for Pioneer Ministry to be a movement which will offer a renewed focus for the church to connect in fresh ways with those with whom it has lost connection. It will advocate for, champion, support and encourage every parish, chaplaincy, ministry and network within the Church of Ireland in reaching those with little or no connection to church.

What is Pioneer Ministry in the Church of Ireland?

Pioneer Ministries emerge alongside traditional forms of Church in the Church of Ireland. They seek to engage people where they are, rather than inviting them to come to us. What this looks like will vary depending on the cultural distance between a church and the people it is reaching out to.

Why Pioneer Ministry?

Over the last 50 years, attendance and membership of the Church of Ireland has progressively declined, as has also been observed in many other Christian denominations in Western societies. This has resulted in a narrowing of the fringe of people with whom traditional church can connect.

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There are now more people in our communities who have no engagement with the Church and no understanding of the Christian message. New approaches to ministry - Pioneer Ministries - are needed to cross cultural barriers to enable the Gospel to be shared with people who are well beyond the fringe.

Where does Pioneer Ministry fit within the existing Church?

Pioneer Ministries exist in addition to, rather than instead of, traditional approaches that the Church is currently using to reach out to and engage with those around it. Pioneer Ministry plays its role within a Mixed Ecology of the Church, with traditional and new ministries complementing each other and honouring each other through mutual prayer, respect, recognition and learning.

How is Pioneer Ministry a central part of the Church of Ireland?

Pioneer Ministry is fully endorsed by the House of Bishops, will be rooted in each diocese, has received significant financial backing from the Representative Church Body and is a body of the General Synod through the established Pioneer Ministry Council, chaired by Bishop David McClay.

Contacts

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In the media

Obituary: Michael Ancram, 1945-2024 - The Catholic Herald

Born on 7 July 1945, the 13th Marquess of Lothian (previously better known as Michael Ancram) was educated by the Benedictines at Ampleforth, before going on to Christ Church, Oxford, to read History.

After further study at Edinburgh he was called to the Scottish bar; half a century of public service followed, during which Ancram won (and then lost) two Conservative seats in Scotland before becoming MP for Devizes in Wiltshire.

His courtesy title of Earl of Ancram enabled him to sit in the House of Commons, and a change of legislation meant that when his father died in 2004 he did not have to choose between sitting in the House of Lords and disclaiming his titles. Ancram only entered the upper chamber when he retired as an MP in 2010, and then as a life peer as Lord Kerr of Monteviot.

The Lothians converted to Catholicism in the wake of the Oxford Movement (the 7th Marchioness was instructed by John Henry Newman and received into the Church by Henry Edward Manning). Ancram's Irish-Italian mother, Antonella – famous on the London social circuit for her striking black eye-patch – was particularly devout.



In 2001 Ancram might have become the first Catholic to lead the Conservative Party, had it not suffered a comprehensive thrashing at the polls after a campaign that had effectively turned that year's general election into a vote on whether or not the United Kingdom should join the euro. Ancram was not necessarily unpopular – even then he was a veteran and well-respected parliamentarian, and viewed by some as a compromise candidate – but as party chairman he inevitably shared the blame for defeat with William Hague.

Iain Duncan Smith, Hague's eventual successor, claimed the distinction instead; recognising Ancram's gifts he appointed him deputy leader and Shadow Foreign Secretary. Ancram was nevertheless the first Catholic to become a Scottish Conservative MP; perhaps his greatest political distinction, however, was the distinguished but

relatively unsung part that he played in the Northern Irish peace process.

Between 1993 and 1997 Ancram served as minister for political development in Northern Ireland and as the impetus for a settlement began to increase his tact and diplomacy played a crucial part in keeping different parties at the negotiating table. He became the first minister of the Crown in over two decades to meet face-to-face with Republican leaders, entered into discussions with Sinn Féin about IRA disarmament and later shook hands publicly with Gerry Adams.

It was not Ancram's first brush with the IRA; in 1984 he narrowly avoided being killed in the bombing of the Grand Hotel in Brighton during that year's Conservative Party Conference. He had been in bed when the device went off and was trapped in the building by fallen masonry; by the time he was rescued it had become clear that a number of his friends were among the dead.

Although he was widely known for his geniality, Ancram's approach to the task in Northern Ireland was robust. He was frank about the fact that there would need to be compromise on both sides in the context of executive cross-border bodies, and that there would be no amnesty for Loyalist members of paramilitary organisations.

He was also quite clear that terrorists would not be allowed to bully their way into the discussions, saying that "we will only commence dialogue on the basis of a permanent and credible cessation of violence". He insisted, echoing the

views of John Major, that Adams and Martin McGuinness should not be included until the IRA had begun to disarm.

Early progress foundered because of a stalemate over the decommissioning of weapons. For Ancram it was not a matter of winning or losing the issue; instead, he explained that the British government was “looking for the start of a credible and verifiable process”. To his anger and frustration, any hope of an imminent resolution was wrecked when the IRA bombed London’s Isle of Dogs in February 1996.

Thereafter Ancram struggled to keep the Unionist parties at the negotiating table; Ian Paisley refused to take any more part in proceedings and took his Democratic Unionists with him. It was another two years before a Labour government under Tony Blair managed to bring about the 1998 Good Friday Agreement – but it built on the work of its Conservative predecessor, in which Ancram had played a significant role.

The Daily Telegraph called Ancram “a most unstuffy grandee”, while the crossbench peer Peter Hennessey thought that “he gave noblesse oblige a good name”. Widely liked across the political spectrum, away from Parliament in his younger years Ancram was an international competitive skier. He was also an accomplished fisherman, acoustic guitarist and folk singer; he regularly performed onstage at Conservative Party events and for charities.

In 1975 Ancram married Lady Jane Fitzalan-Howard, a daughter of the 16th Duke of Norfolk and aunt of the present Earl Marshal; they had three daughters together. He died

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after a short illness on 1 October and has been succeeded in his hereditary titles by his brother, Ralph. The present Marquess's youngest son, Lord Hugh Kerr, was until recently a member of the Catholic Herald editorial team.

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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