

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Ballycastle vista

September 2, 2023

Image of the day

Ballycastle vista



Autumnal vibes in Ballycastle one morning this week - Fair Head to the right. Photography courtesy Louise McVeigh

People and places

European Heritage Open Day 2023 at Hezlett House

On 9 and 10 of September 2023 between 10 00 -14 00 you can step inside one of Northern Ireland's oldest buildings and learn about the reality of 17th-century rural life, told



The Bishop's Lodge near Mussenden Temple

through the people who once lived here by National Trust volunteer guides .

Guided tours are available every 30 minutes from 10 to 14

This free event is part of EHOD 2023. Booking essential:
nationaltrust.org.uk/mussenden-temple-and-downhill-demesne

Mussenden Temple and Downhill Demesne's chief mason was James McBlain, and although he mainly worked on drawings by architects such as Columbani or Shanahan,

The Bishop's Lodge, with its Gothick style ashlar-faced, is entirely his work from design to execution.

The lodge has been restored to its former glory and can be enjoyed as a holiday retreat .

September 2, 2023

For more details go to:

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/holidays/northern-ireland/bishops-gate-lodge?>

Leaders Training Certificates presented in Cork, Cloyne and Ross



This year's Leaders in Training Graduates with their Bishop, Paul Colton, their Youth Officer, Hilda Connolly, and CDYC Chairperson, Judy Peters. -

In January 2023 a new group of young leaders emerged from the Cork Diocesan Youth Council's Leaders in Training Course.

September 2, 2023

This is the third group in Cork, Cloyne and Ross, to complete the course. Leaders in Training is offered through the YMCA Cork and facilitated by Isla Jeffers and the Diocesan Youth Officer Hilda Connolly.

Hilda writes: Each group has to run their own event as part of their final assessment. On 27th November 2022, this year's group took over St Fachtna's Cathedral in Rosscarbery and ran their own Advent Youth Service. It came about, after a needs assessment with their friends and peers, that the theme of the service would be called "Great Expectations".



The Lord is good to all,
and His compassion is over all that He has made.
The Lord upholds all who are falling,
and raises up all who are bowed down.

September 2, 2023

The group organized the service in a way to expect the unexpected. And they certainly achieved that. Through drama, music and activity stations around the church they demonstrated the pressures teens are under.

On Saturday 26th August 2023, at a BBQ in Bishop Colton's garden to celebrate CDYC's 20th Anniversary, the opportunity was taken to present some of the Leaders in Training students with their Certificates. All of them achieved amazing results from their 8 week course.

Crinken welcomes new minister as Tom O'Brien embraces full time ministry

Canon Tom O'Brien was introduced as the new Minister in Charge at Crinken by Archbishop Michael Jackson. Also pictured are Archdeacon David Pierpoint and the Revd Suzanne Harris.

"Depend on one another like family because together we are strong." This is the message of a current advertising campaign featuring the Irish Rugby World Cup team. But it was also the message to the people of Crinken as they welcomed their new Minister yesterday evening (Thursday August 31).

Canon Tom O'Brien was introduced as Minister in Charge of St James's, Crinken, by Archbishop Michael Jackson before a full congregation which included Tom's wife Daniella and their daughter Tara Rose, who represented the rest of their family at the service. There were also former colleagues from the Health Service Executive in attendance along with



Canon Tom O'Brien was introduced as the new Minister in Charge at Crinken by Archbishop Michael Jackson. Also pictured are Archdeacon David Pierpoint and the Revd Suzanne Harris.

members of Tom and Daniella's families, friends and local public representatives.

service represented a huge change for Tom and his family as he enters full time ministry after 30 years of service with the HSE and moves to the south side of Dublin after many years living on the north side.

The sermon was preached by the Revd Suzanne Harris, Rector of Castlemacadam, Ballinatone and Aughrim and joint Diocesan Director of Ordinands with Tom. She highlighted Tom's many qualities including his ability to



Canon Tom O'Brien with the Trustees of Crinken.

relate to people, his deep faith, his heart for God, his preaching, his trustworthiness, his honesty and ability to speak his mind, among others.

She said that his ministry over the last 30 years had been with the HSE in the areas of addiction, mental health and palliative care, areas which were often left at the back of the queue. But she pointed out that the Gospel reading [Luke 4] said that Jesus came to proclaim the good news to the poor, freedom for prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind and freedom for the oppressed. She said that Tom would

September 2, 2023

continue to reach out to those in need and provide an opportunity for all to connect with God.

News reports

Why Mongolia Pope Francis?

Mongolia's Catholics - all 1,450 of them - could be squeezed standing into St. Peter's Basilica dozens of times over and their number is smaller than the congregation of a small parish in some small towns.

So why has Pope Francis, 86 and in need of a wheelchair, travelled 8,278 km (5,143 miles) to visit them this week.

Essentially, to paraphrase British climber George Mallory's response in the 1920s as to why he wanted to climb Mt. Everest, because the Catholics are there.

"I can't even fathom this," said Arvanai Hashdorj, 19, a university student who attended Mass on Sunday at the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in the Mongolian capital Ulaanbaatar on Sunday. "So I am very grateful".

Hashdorj told Reuters he had recently returned from the Catholic Church's World Youth Day gathering in Lisbon, where young people from countries with millions of Catholics noted in conversations with him that the pope had not yet visited their countries.

Visiting places where Catholics are a minority is part of Francis' policy of drawing attention to people and problems

September 2, 2023

in what he has called the peripheries of society and of the world.

He still has not visited most of the capitals of Western Europe.

Francis, who will be attending an inter-religious service in Mongolia, said at his weekly noon address on Sunday that he would be visiting "a Church that is small in numbers but vivacious in faith".

Last year, Francis named Archbishop Giorgio Marengo, an Italian, the first cardinal to be based in Mongolia, where he is the Catholic Church's administrator.

"The originality of this trip is related to the originality of the country sparsely populated and with such a small Catholic community," Marengo said last month in Rome.

**Ballyscullion
(Grange) Parish
Church**

**Northern Ireland Air
Ambulance**

Fundraising Event

On

Friday 15th September at 8 pm

**In the Church Hall
(The Pound School)**

**Old Time Music
With Story Telling**

All welcome

Voluntary donations

**AIR AMBULANCE
NORTHERN IRELAND
CHARITY**

Paint X Lite

September 2, 2023

"This shows how for him (the pope), every single member of the faithful is important," said Marengo, who has been a missionary in Mongolia for more than 20 years.

Mongolia has nine parishes, compared to 25,500 in Italy. The smallest one, hundreds of miles from the capital, has only between 30-40 members.

Still, the visit will show how far it has come since locals watched "these funny foreigners praying," Marengo said.



Sad news that theologian **Fr Gabriel Daly OSA** has died in his 96th year. He worked hard over many years to help people engage with Faith. May he rest in peace.

September 2, 2023

Francis said on Sunday that he felt honoured to visit "a noble and wise people" with a "great religious tradition".

About 60% of Mongolians identify as religious. Among those, 87.1% are Buddhist, 5.4% Muslim, 4.2% Shamanist, 2.2% Christian and 1.1% followers of other religions, according to the U.S. State Department.

There are only two native Mongolian Catholic priests.

"I wanted to show the world that there is a Catholic Church (in Mongolia) and it's beautiful," said one of them, Father Peter Sanjaajav, after saying Mass at the Cathedral the pope will visit on Saturday as part of the Aug. 31-Sept 4 trip.

Inflatable church to be used by priests visiting front lines

Russia has created a mobile church complete with Orthodox icons and camouflage for priests visiting troops on front lines in Ukraine.

Father Boris Grishin showed visitors around the unit, which consisted of a caravan equipped with two beds, a shower and a toilet and an inflatable 13ft by 13ft camouflaged tent used as a prayer room.

The mobile church is ideal for priests travelling to the war zone or military training in the field, Father Grishin said.

"You fold it out, inflate really quickly, do the service, fold it up and go," he told RIA Novosti, Russia's news agency. "With

September 2, 2023

two people pitching it and hanging the icons, you can do it in under 10 minutes.” The prayer room can accommodate a platoon (21 to 28 men) he said.

Clerics with large crosses hanging from their necks were an unusual sight on Monday at Russia’s annual weapons expo, where defence firms present their newest prototypes.

In the 2010s, the Russian Church promoted special churches that could be parachuted and easily pitched in the field.

Russia’s Orthodox Church has supported the invasion of Ukraine and has fired dissident priests who refuse to pray for a Russian victory.

Principal of Ridley Hall to be next Bishop of Birmingham

The next Bishop of Birmingham is to be the Revd Dr Michael Volland, Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge, since 2017, Downing Street announced on Thursday

In the media

Majority concerned about Church control over Irish schools

Newstalk - More than half of people are concerned about the Catholic Church being in control of the majority of Ireland’s schools, according to a new survey from *Newstalk*.

The latest in a series of polls carried out by Amárach Research for *Newstalk* examines all things Back to School

September 2, 2023

from **voluntary contributions** to **transport** and sex education.

The survey finds that 56% of parents are concerned about the Catholic Church being the patron of the majority of Irish schools – with 32% ‘very concerned’ and 24% ‘somewhat concerned’.

<https://www.newstalk.com/news/newstalk-schools-survey-majority-concerned-about-church-control-over-irish-schools-1501760>

Police Federation vote of no confidence in Chief Constable Simon Byrne expected

Belfast Telegraph -The Police Federation (PFNI), which represents rank-and-file PSNI officers, has called an extraordinary general meeting next week.



Statues of Her Majesty The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh are the two most recent additions to Canterbury Cathedral’s West End. Funded by donations from The Friends of Canterbury Cathedral, the statues were unveiled in 2015

September 2, 2023

It is likely a vote of confidence in chief constable Simon Byrne and the PSNI's Senior Executive team will take place at that meeting on Wednesday.

In a statement, the PFNI confirmed that the meeting will take place but not if a vote of no confidence would occur.

"This meeting will discuss the outcome of the Judicial Review and recent events incorporating members concerns with the PSNI and its senior leadership team", the statement said.

Translink slammed for telling customer 'a ticket is just a ticket' after not being allowed on pre-booked train

Belfast Live - Claire Magowan arrived early for her pre-booked train from Belfast to Dublin but the service had been oversubscribed

Translink has been slammed for not letting pre-booked passengers board a train from Belfast to Dublin.

On Bank Holiday Monday, August 28, Claire Magowan arrived around 25 minutes early for the 10.35am Enterprise train from [Belfast Lanyon Place](#) to Dublin Connolly Station.

Despite booking the four tickets her group needed a month in advance, they were told the train was oversubscribed and they wouldn't be able to board due to health and safety reasons.

https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/news/belfast-news/translink-slammed-telling-customer-a-27622239?utm_source=belfast_live_newsletter&utm_campaign=daily_newsletter2&utm_medium=email



125 road deaths so far this year - up 25 on last year

[RTE.ie](https://www.rte.ie): Latest figures show there have been 125 deaths on the roads in the Republic of Ireland so far this year, an increase of 25 for the same period last year.

<https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2023/0831/1402659-road-figures/>

Flower power: New £150k 'Botanical Borough' street art project given green light

Belfast Telegraph - Street art costing £150,000 is to be installed across Antrim and Newtownabbey in a bid to develop a "Botanical Borough", it was agreed at a meeting of the borough council

September 2, 2023

Councillors have approved the creation of five art installations in each of the borough's seven district electoral areas (DEAs).

The proposal was initially agreed in October 2021 as part of “a means to animate towns and villages” when it was decided street art would be “reflective of the local area including potentially history and heritage”.

The council will be working with Daisy Chain Inc, a Belfast-based agency that works with specialist artists to deliver street art.

It is proposed to deliver 35 pieces of public art by October 2024 with one “large-scale signature art work created in each DEA based upon the area's chosen botanical emblem” as well as smaller pieces.

The proposal to accept the recommendation for the creation of local street art was made by Airport Sinn Fein Councillor Annemarie Logue seconded by Threemilewater Alliance Cllr Julie Gilmour.

The districts' botanical emblems are: Airport, rose; Antrim, bluebell; Ballyclare, flax flower; Dunsilly, flax flower; Glengormley, forget-me-not; Macedon, cherry blossom; Threemilewater, flax flower.

Construction work starts at Coleraine Grammar School £11.5million investment

News Letter - Construction work is underway at Coleraine Grammar School following approval of an over £11.5m investment from the Department of Education.

This investment will see the creation of new buildings and facilities which will enable the whole school to be situated on a single site on the Castlerock Road for the first time from September 2024.

Renovation works at the school's Castlerock Road site include the construction of a new building to house the home economics and music departments as well as excellent study and social facilities for sixth form pupils. The significant construction project will enable a reconfiguration of the school estate and see the school's over 1,000 pupils educated together on the same campus for the first time since its establishment in 2015, following the merger of Coleraine Academical Institution and Coleraine High School. More at -

<https://app.newsletter.co.uk/2023/08/30/construction-work-starts-at-coleraine-grammar-school-thanks-to-11-5million-investment-to-get-over-1000-pupils-educated-together/content.html>

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

KidsMatter – Helping parishes support families in need

The Church of Ireland Board for Ministry with Children and Families is partnering with KidsMatter to bring its parenting programme to parishes.

With thanks to the Priorities Fund, 11 parishes – one from each diocese – can be enabled to access KidsMatter facilitator training and support, so they can run the programme for families in their local community. Whilst all parents need support, the KidsMatter programme has been created specifically to be effective and accessible for families who have low incomes and limited support networks.

There are two programmes: KidsMatter and BabiesMatter. Each parish taking part in the training can decide which programme best suits their current ministry with local families. The facilitator training will take place online over four days and ideally each church will put forward two people to take part. These facilitators will then run the programme at least twice during the following year.

As this is a peer-led programme, those taking part as facilitators do not need to have any previous experience of delivering training, there are no flip charts or PowerPoints in sight! The programme is designed to be accessible to those with limited literacy skills, so it is more conversation and relationship-based rather than ‘school-style’ teaching. The programme itself has six sessions with a taster session at the start and an additional booster session a month after completion.

With a rise in children under 15 being referred for mental health problems and fast dwindling resources to meet the need – particularly in the area of early intervention and especially for those children raised in financial adversity – it is increasingly vital that the Church find ways to support parents and carers in communities. Through the KidsMatter



Jesus said to his disciples : “Many who are first will be last, and the last, first.” Matthew 19,30

programme, churches will offer useful parenting tools for families to grab hold of and stay alongside them as they grapple with those tools, offering genuine community and relationship.

Sarah Fretwell in Mount Merrion Church (Down and Dromore) has completed her facilitator training and is currently running the pilot scheme to help encourage future parishes to run the programme. She said: “KidsMatter has impacted the relationships with local families, as I think they recognise that I care for their own well-being and families’

September 2, 2023

well-being and not just providing a weekly tots' group for their children. I think this programme is essential for our local community, as it gives an opportunity to build small groups of parents that can help and support one another.

“The course material is beautifully laid out and evidence-informed which has given me confidence in delivering it. I would say, ‘You need to do Kids Matter!’ The programme is easy to follow and provides lots of personal reflection. It gives parents a space to feel heard and to work through things in a supportive environment.”

If you feel that this programme would be of particular benefit to your parish, then we ask you to complete the expression of interest form which can be accessed via - [\[https://form.jotform.com/231853196492060\]](https://form.jotform.com/231853196492060)

Connor Diocese are running the SERVE Programme in 2023

The course is for young people and young adults aged 15 to 20 and prepares those who are exploring leadership in their local parish context. It is a great opportunity to meet new people and develop character traits which are invaluable in leadership. It will equip young people and young adults to serve in their home Parishes with confidence and enthusiasm.

SERVE will include 8 sessions and a Graduation event. It will begin on Thursday 21st September.

September 2, 2023

Each session will run from 6pm - 9pm in The Hub Chaplaincy, Elmwood Avenue, Belfast.

The dates for all sessions are: 21st September, 28th September, 5th October, 12th October, 19th October, 9th November, 16th November, 23rd November. There will be a graduation on Thursday 30th November for participants to attend with friends, family, leaders and clergy. Participants are asked to attend all sessions and there is some preparatory work for each session.

To participate in SERVE, it costs £50 per participant, to cover dinner each week, a handbook, a sweatshirt as well as graduation ceremony and certificate. Participants can apply to the CIYD Young Leaders Fund for support with the cost.

The closing date for applications is Sunday 17th September 2023.

If you have any questions about the SERVE course, please contact Christina Baillie on christinabaillie@connordiocese.org

Bishop Michael Burrows - Pentecost Address 2023

Bishop Michael Burrows addresses the importance of and desire for 'a right judgement in all things' - the ultimate spiritual gift.

[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zz7tvONB-ok>]

Perspective

Resist the oppression of British Christians

Instead of timidly saying nothing or courting false popularity, the Church must stand up for Truth writes George Pitcher in the Daily Telegraph

Mild, non-clinical depression is my principal reaction to a new survey which shows that, not only is Church of England attendance falling, but that its clergy seem to have largely given up on it. (See CNI News Reports yesterday).

It's not the research findings – that less than a quarter of Church of England priests think Britain can be described as a Christian country today, that a third of them have considered quitting over the past five years, and 67 per cent believe efforts to reverse church decline will fail – which get me down. In one form or another, we've heard it all before.

It's the attitudes that this survey sparks in its conclusive commentaries. It's that we need to be relevant to current social mores and we need to be more popular. In paraphrase, we need to get with the programme.

I'm not a white-knuckled, old reactionary. But I don't want to be relevant; I want to be true. I wasn't called to be ordained in order to be popular. I don't chase votes like a politician seeking election. I'm wholly interested in Truth, while knowing that I'm not the sole guardian of it.

September 2, 2023

So I don't want Church doctrine decided by focus group. And I'm not interested in marketing. We're not a club for the enlightened – I'd rather we were a guttering candle in the world's darkness, as the gospel has proven to be so successfully throughout its history.

But this means being brave, and standing up for what that gospel means for us, as well as accepting that it means different things to other people. Unlike Roman Catholics, we Anglicans in the reformed tradition have no centralised, catechistic authority and that, in turn, means trusting (and investing in) very diverse and, in some cases, atomised parishes.

To do so is to fly in the face of polarised, entrenched and, more usually these days, fashionable opinion and rejoice in our plurality – and that includes embracing our secularism too. And that makes the Church of England, established in law, less of the socially well-to-do institution that it once was, still less “the Conservative Party at prayer”, and more of a resistance movement against right-think and cancel culture.

We cannot, as a Church, tolerate circumstances in which a local councillor in Northamptonshire, Anthony Stevens, was arrested earlier this month, then bailed, for an alleged hate crime after posting a video of the heavy-handed arrest of a preacher. Or the cancellation of Anglican priest Richard Fothergill, who accused Yorkshire Building Society of closing his account for objecting to its transgender promotional material.

Nor can we countenance the arrest of a Catholic priest from Wolverhampton, Fr Sean Gough, and his charity volunteer

September 2, 2023

colleague, Isabel Vaughan-Spruce, for praying silently outside an abortion clinic – charges that were thankfully dropped.

I may not agree with all of what these people have to say – or indeed with any of it. But I respect their right to say it peacefully in a free society.

At the heart of a lot of the reaction to the latest poll of Anglican clergy is an acceptance that there is a right way to think about social issues of the day. And, if we're to go down that path, it starts to make the Church of England a dangerous place to be if you don't hold an approved opinion. And that's a form of oppression.

This is not a charter for "anything goes". I am vehemently opposed to expressions of racism and sexism – plenty of which I have heard in church circles. I oppose those views vigorously when I encounter them. But I hope it's always in terms that I don't recognise the gospel in them, rather than that I despise the person expressing the opinion.

In this model, the Church of England could develop an alternative role, as an oasis of peace in the culture wars, rather than simply be worn down into an acceptance of prevailing contemporary culture.

It's that latter, depressing course that its clergy seem to be contemplating in this latest piece of research. But we're better than that. We just need to see the world through the prism of our faith, rather than the other way around.

September 2, 2023

We're not a supermarket responding to customer demand. We're a sanctuary, for the disillusioned, the marginalised, the unpopular and, yes, the oppressed. If we stick to that gospel imperative, we can be a beacon of hope again, rather than a guttering candle.

The Rev'd George Pitcher is an Anglican priest. Daily Telegraph 31/08/2023

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
