

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Bann sunset

September 5, 2023

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Bann sunset

The sunset last Sunday was special. The marina at Coleraine and the west bank are photographed from an excellent sea food restaurant now sited in the former yacht club premises.

People and places



Air Ambulance theme at Eglantine parish worship

Last Sunday morning at the family service in All Saints, Eglantine parishioners gave thanks for the work of the Air Ambulance.



Alison Leckey spoke to the children and to the adults about the work of this wonderful organisation. A special visitor also made an appearance especially for the children.

Alison presented the children with beautiful knitted Air Ambulance teddies made by Sally McCambley, and they also received a few other little gifts. After the service the congregation enjoyed a wonderful lunch provided by the ladies of the parish.

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Ordination in the family



An amazing day at St. Anne's on Sunday - Melanie Sloan who was made deacon to serve in St. Patrick's Parish, Broughshane, shared the day with her son Finn, who was a verger during the service.

Above - Melanie and Finn with the Dean of St. Anne's, Very Rev Stephen Forde.

Below - Melanie with the Churchwardens from St. Patrick's Ballymena, Jim and Irene Mawhinney.



Welcome to Lurgan Methodist



It was a great Sunday night in High St Lurgan Methodist Church - welcoming Rev Andrew Gibson and Rev Andrew Topley, and families, to the circuit. “ And yes, we are thinking of becoming the latest Methodist boy band”.

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40 is the new 30 at Catholic Chaplaincy

Members of the Catholic
Chaplaincy at the
Queen's University,
Belfast, conveyed Happy
Birthday to Fr Dominic

Homelessness rises in Ireland

The number of people who are homeless in Ireland rose again in July according to the latest figures which showed a record 12,847 people living in emergency accommodation, such as homeless hostels, family hubs, hotel rooms or bed and breakfasts.

The Department of Housing figures showed homelessness increased across all cohorts: children, families and single adults. Responding to the figures the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice said that there were 4,119 fewer people in emergency accommodation when the Government was appointed in 2020, but female homelessness rose by 57 per cent and homeless single parent families rose by 69 per cent.

First female students at 223-year-old Catholic secondary school

One of the oldest and best-known Catholic secondary schools in the West of Ireland opened its doors this month to female students for the first time in its 223-year history. St Jarlath's College in Tuam was founded in 1800 under the patronage of Archbishop Edward Dillon of Tuam. Initially it operated as a boarding school and was seen primarily as a preparatory college for the seminary in Maynooth. This month 30 girls were among the new batch of first year students following extensive research among parents and



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students. The majority indicated their preference for ending single-sex education for the 600 students attending the Co Galway school.

This famous choir at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin is looking to recruit a Soprano and Tenor Lay Vicar for immediate start

If interested, please contact the Director of Music at tom.little@christchurch.ie

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Find out more information see the cathedral website :

<https://christchurchcathedral.ie/music-and-choirs/vacancies/>

News reports



Pope Francis stands outside a traditional Mongolian nomadic home with a Buddhist woman called Tsetsegee, who had found a statue of Our Lady while scavenging through a landfill 18 years ago.

Pope makes coded appeal to Beijing on Mongolia trip

Pope Francis has called on Chinese Catholics to be “good citizens” and praised the nobility of its people in

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his latest overture to the communist country, which has strict rules on religion.



A child runs past a mural showing Pope Francis amid scenes of Mongolian nomadic life outside a church in Ulaanbaatar, 28/08 The Pope arrived on Friday in Mongolia, home to only 1,500 Catholics (vs just 14 in 1995)

He made the unscripted comments at the end of a mass in Mongolia, calling up Cardinal John Tong Hon and Archbishop Stephen Chow, the former and current archbishops of Hong Kong, to be beside him as he spoke.

“These two brother bishops, the emeritus of Hong Kong and the current bishop of Hong Kong. I would like to take advantage of their presence to send a warm greeting to the noble Chinese people,” he said.

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“I wish the best for all the (Chinese) people, to go forward, to always progress. And to Chinese Catholics I ask to be good Christians and good citizens,” he added.

The phrase used by the Pope, “good Christians and good citizens”, is one the Vatican adopts frequently when trying to convince communist governments that giving Catholics more freedom would help their countries’ social and economic progression.

The Vatican has used the same phrase about Vietnam, which in July upgraded relations by allowing the Vatican to have a Resident Papal Representative.

The Pope spoke at the end of an unprecedented event where he and almost the entire Catholic population of a country were in the same room. On his trip to Mongolia, which concludes today, he is visiting a Catholic community that numbers just 1,450.

On Saturday, in words that appeared to be aimed at China rather than Mongolia, the Pope said governments had nothing to fear from the Catholic Church because it has no political agenda. Beijing has been following a policy of “Sinicisation” of religion, trying to root out foreign influences and enforce obedience to the government.

A landmark 2018 agreement between the Vatican and China on the appointment of bishops has been tenuous at best, with the Vatican complaining that Beijing has violated it several times.

In the media

No women priests in his lifetime, says retired Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin

Irish Times - Clerical sexual abuse scandals have badly damaged the Catholic Church, in particular ‘the faith of young people, says retired archbishop, Patsy McGarry writes

Retired Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin has said there is “a huge amount of resistance among the Catholic education establishment” to pluralism in schools’ patronage. He does not believe there will be women priests in the Catholic Church in his lifetime and described as “bad theology” the banning of condoms in the fight against Aids. The clerical child sexual abuse scandals had “badly damaged the church,” he said and, in particular, “the faith of young people”.

Now living in Dublin’s Stoneybatter, Archbishop Martin (78) has also admitted finding retirement in 2020 “very difficult at the beginning because I retired right in the middle of Covid.” He remembered “one day in the Phoenix Park, I was out in an open-necked shirt and there was a man sitting on a bench. He looked up and said: ‘Are you enjoying your retirement?’ And I said: ‘Yeah.’ And he said: ‘Did they take the collar off you? Did you have to give it back?’ They recognise the face. Somebody stopped me and said: ‘I know



your face. Were you ever in Fair City?’ Dubliners are great for that.”

When he was born, the family “lived in a tenement, there was nothing else available, then we went out to Ballyfermot”. Once when he was archbishop a delegation of Christian Brothers complained about criticisms he made of Artane industrial school. They “were sent to me to tell me that I didn’t know what I was talking about and one of them came up with this punchline. He said: ‘You know, many of these children came from appalling backgrounds, from places like Ballyfermot.’ He hadn’t done his homework.”

In discussing child abuse he became emotional. On arrival in Dublin as Coadjutor Archbishop in 2003, he “wasn’t prepared for it. Do you know who understood the harm paedophilia did? Ordinary, working-class Dublin women. They saw the mess that their child got into, they saw in some cases how their child took their own life, and they went to bishops and they weren’t listened to.”

On education, he said: “We do need to have pluralism of patronage in schools to respect individuals, to respect teachers also. We should also be fighting to ensure that we can maintain schools which are strongly Catholic.”

He added: “There’s a huge amount of resistance among the Catholic education establishment to this. I think I was probably out of tune with the other bishops on this and still would be, mainly because I’ve lived in countries where they have a different system.”

He did not see “in any way that women priests will be something that we will see in my lifetime. I’d be very worried about consultations which lead to frustrated expectations which don’t take place. People’s faith is damaged by a church which doesn’t respect women’s dignity.”

Asked whether Pope John Paul II’s ban on condoms during the Aids crisis was bad judgment, he said: “I think that it was bad theology. It’s this idea of an extraordinary narrow dogmatic understanding of bringing principles and not looking at the broad circumstances in which the situation is taking place and the struggles that people have to face. It was one of the problems with the church in Ireland, we learned the rules before we learned who Jesus Christ was.”

As to what, on arrival at the pearly gates, he would say to God, he said: “The only phrase I have is, when you’ve got that weighing scales there, take the 80,000 files I gave and that might bring me the right way.” It was a reference to the number of documents he handed the Murphy commission when it was investigating how the archdiocese had dealt with allegations of clerical child sexual abuse.

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How Sinn Fein captured Northern Ireland's police force



Policing any part of the United Kingdom is a difficult enough task these days, Ian Acheson write in The Spectator

Policing the part of it where the national security threat is highest and the personal details of all officers and staff are now likely in the hands of terrorists after an embarrassing data breach is a whole other story.

We are talking about Northern Ireland, where this week the Chief Constable inexplicably flip-flopped over a court decision that said the PSNI unlawfully disciplined two junior officers. At first Simon Byrne said he would accept the court's decision, only to later this week say he would launch an appeal. But his volte face is merely the culmination of a series of preventable calamities that in any other jurisdiction would see senior leaders picking up their P45s.

If you're wondering how a police force could effectively be blackmailed by a political party, composed in part of former terrorists, you've not been paying attention

The court case – in the form of a judicial review – over the disciplining of two officers is notable. It seems to be an official corroboration of views long held by Unionists that the senior leadership of the PSNI is more concerned with appeasing Sinn Fein than standing up for the welfare of its own front line officers and effectively enforcing the law.

The case began in 2021. When Covid restrictions were in place, two patrolling officers came across a commemoration by republicans in a nationalist area of Belfast, who had gathered to remember a massacre by Loyalist terrorists in February 1992 outside the Sean Graham bookmakers.

The officers had apparently not been briefed that the event was taking place and the crowd reacted to their presence in a hostile manner. This resulted in one person being temporarily arrested for disorderly conduct.

How the PSNI handled this incident has now been starkly revealed in court proceedings. After extraordinary and relentless pressure from Sinn Fein, the top brass agreed to suspend one of the officers while transferring the other to

different duties. A high court judge, in a judicial review of the incident, found that senior police managers did this to appease Sinn Fein, who they feared would withdraw consent for policing. The judge ruled, therefore, that PSNI had unlawfully disciplined these two officers.

If you're wondering how on earth a public law enforcement agency could effectively be blackmailed by a political party, composed in part of former terrorists, you've not been paying attention to the bizarre and morally bankrupt trade offs and compromises that keep Northern Ireland's semi-skimmed peace from curdling. There can't be many places in the world where the political oversight body for policing has a subcommittee on police performance chaired by a convicted republican terrorist bomber who spent his formative years trying to violently overthrow the state.

The price exacted by Sinn Fein for participating in normal politics and endorsing the rule of law has been very high indeed. Public institutions, particularly those created after the 1998 Belfast/Good Friday Agreement with a law enforcement purpose have been shaped, and in some cases hollowed out, by a preoccupation with keeping republicans inside the tent and not outside trying to burn it down.

That harvest is now delivering bitter fruit. The year before the PSNI threw two officers under the bus for the sake of the 'peace process' over 1,000 mourners turned out in Belfast for the funeral of Bobby Storey, one of the IRA's senior members. Coronavirus restrictions were still in place. The cortege included the senior leadership of Sinn Fein north and south of the border and took place at a time when ordinary citizens could only be buried with a handful of

mourners present. Indeed, eight other bereaved families were denied access to the cemetery Storey was buried in. Despite clear prior knowledge that a mass funeral would take place, there was no overt police presence. And despite overwhelming evidence that this spectacle contravened Covid regulations in place at the time, Northern Ireland's Public Prosecution Service declined to press charges, partly on the ludicrous basis that the rules were too complicated to understand.

The chief constable in place at the time of the Sean Graham incident is the same person who was in charge during the Storey funeral. He is the same person accountable for the catastrophic data security breaches that have most likely put the personal data of the entirety of the PSNI workforce into the hands of dissident republican terrorists. He is Chief Constable Simon Byrne and if this was anywhere else in the British isles he'd not only be considering his position he'd have the door held wide open for him by ministers.

So what is to be done? If Byrne won't go, which would be the honourable course of action, then the Secretary of State should consider radical reform of the police governance structures which bake political interference into policing. The policing board which provides oversight is dominated by politicians. This has to be changed. While political representation is useful, the board needs a majority of carefully chosen lay professionals and a strong independent chair. This would change the dynamics away from pandering to sectarian bases and towards supporting impartial and effective law enforcement without fear or favour.

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Northern Ireland is still plagued by polycriminals who have moved from terrorism to drug dealing on both sides of its fractured society and operate in ghettos not much changed since the Troubles. Getting these people off the streets and into prison would do more to restore confidence in policing than the pious platitudes of the most human rights compliant police service in Europe.

Professor Ian Acheson is a former prison governor. He was also Director of Community Safety at the Home Office

Courtesy The Spectator 02/09/2023



Reactions to the resignation of Chief Constable PSNI

Police Federation Chair

In reaction to the resignation of Chief Constable Police Federation Chair, Liam Kelly, says the Chief Constable's position became questionable and then untenable.

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Read in full: <http://tinyurl.com/3wse254y>

Jim Allister TUV

He leaves behind a demoralised and politically compromised PSNI, making the top priority now its political decontamination. If it is to be a police service for all, then, it must be in the pocket of none – and that includes not just Sinn Fein but also the NIO and the ever meddling Dublin Government.

Jim Gamble

The Chief Constable PSNI has done the right thing and put the service first. Now there needs to be an overarching review of what happened including the role of the NI Policing Board and the part played (if any) by the NI Gov.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

CMSI's annual conference

Bishop Jered will be in Ireland for CMSI's annual conference. As you listen and learn from the global church, our children's programme provides opportunities for the next generation to connect with their wider Christian family. Booking still open: cmsireland.org/ignite



Follow the Star : Join The Song

As churches plan for Advent and Christmas, C of E launch free, adaptable resources for 2023.

Find out how your church could offer people of all ages an invitation to JoinTheSong.

Read more at cofe.io/Christmas.

Back to School with God

Don't forget about the Back to School with God resources produced by Scripture Union.

Free to download at the link below.



<https://www.sunis.co.uk/what-we-do/training-resources/creation-delivery/supporting-churches/back-to-school-with-god>

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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