

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Paddy's Milestone

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Paddy's Milestone

Ailsa Craig sometimes referred to as Paddy's Milestone is an intriguing place -

- from the very granite which provides greatly sought for curling stones. It is thought to be halfway between Belfast and Glasgow and that the milestone reference relates to the migration of Scots and Irish. The ship in today's photo is the Waverley, a well known tourist vessel, which is currently completing a round-Britain voyage... And as good a place get initial info is -

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ailsa_Craig

People and places

Small C of I school in Crosshaven, parish and community, utterly devastated at death of pupil

On behalf of the entire community at Templebreedy National School, Crosshaven, County Cork, the Bishop of Cork, Dr Paul Colton, as Patron of the school, the school Principal, Doris Bryan, and the Chairperson of

September 7, 2023

the Board of Management, Michael Hodder, have made the following statement.

‘The entire school community in our small Church of Ireland school in Crosshaven, County Cork, together with the local parish and community, are in shock and are utterly devastated at the death of our 2nd class pupil Emily Roman. Most of all we are all heartbroken for Emily’s family and loved ones.’

‘Emily would have been eight years old tomorrow. Emily and her twin brother Jeremy have been in our school since they joined Junior Infants in 2020’.

Doris Bryan, the school principal, who is also Emily’s class-teacher in second class, describes her as:

“kind, with a bubbly personality. She had a beautiful smile. She was greatly loved by everyone and was very popular with all her friends. She was also very artistic and a gifted young girl. On behalf of the school I extend our deepest sympathies to Emily’s parents, Marta and Slawomir, her older sister Inga and her twin brother Jeremy. We are doing our best at the moment to make our school a safe space for all our school community to be together and to support each other as we remember Emily and come to terms with what has happened. Again our primary focus, for Emily’s sake, is with her family and loved ones.

‘The school has implemented its Critical Incident Plan. Psychologists from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) are already here and are supporting and advising the school in our efforts to stand alongside

September 7, 2023

everyone in our school community, especially students and staff. We are also being supported by our local clergy and our bishop who are here too.'

Bishop Paul Colton, patron of the school, said:

'Most of us cannot begin to imagine the suffering that this family must now be going through. We are all, however, in shock and devastated. On behalf of us all in the Church of Ireland, in general, and in connection with Templebreedy National School and Templebreedy Parish, in particular, I too extend our sincere sympathy to everyone in the Roman family, to Emily's mother, Marta, father Slawomir, twin brother Jeremy, and older sister Inga.'

'A tragedy like this is having a traumatic effect also on this small parish school at the start of this new school year, and also the wider community. I am visiting the school this morning and throughout the day. Practical support and prayers are assured for everyone in the school community, for Emily's family, her fellow students, the school Principal, Doris Bryan, the teachers, staff, parents/guardians and members of the Board of Management. I extend sympathy to you all. I am also very conscious of the role played by the first responders, some of whom I know personally, and everyone in the rescue services and I'm conscious of the impact a tragedy such as this has on each of them as individuals'

'My thoughts and prayers are with you all.'



Jesus Mara. The Good Samaritan, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. Go and do likewise

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2024

Resources are becoming available for the 2024 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

For 2024, materials were prepared by an ecumenical team from Burkina Faso facilitated by the local Chemin Neuf Community (CCN).

The chosen theme is ‘You shall love the Lord your God... and your neighbour as yourself’ (Lk 10:27). Brothers and sisters from the Catholic Archdiocese of Ouagadougou, Protestant Churches, ecumenical bodies and the CCN in Burkina Faso collaborated generously in drafting the prayers and reflections. They experienced their work together as a

September 7, 2023

real path of ecumenical conversion – see the introduction below.

Resources.

For 2024, we are making the resources available both as downloads and printed versions that can be ordered. The pamphlet is available now in English, and will also be available in bilingual Welsh/English, Irish and Scots Gaelic. The poster will be produced as a multilingual version and an English only version.

Please post any photos and details of events you hold to the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity wall by posting to Twitter with the hashtag #wpcuwall.

Dates

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed from the 18th to the 25th January – the octave of St. Peter and St. Paul. However, some areas observe it at Pentecost or some other time.

Introduction

The parable of the Good Samaritan is one of the best known passages of Scripture, yet one that never seems to lose its power to challenge indifference to suffering and to inspire solidarity. It is a story about crossing boundaries that calls our attention to the bonds that unite the whole human family.

In choosing this passage of Scripture for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the churches of Burkina Faso have

September 7, 2023

invited us to join with them in a process of self-reflection as they consider what it means to love our neighbour in the midst of a security crisis. Communities in the British-Irish context may be less vulnerable to acts of mass violence than in Burkina Faso, but there are still many living with the memory and/or the threat of serious violence, centred on issues of identity and belonging. There are also groups within communities, including people from ethnic minority backgrounds and people seeking asylum, who feel particularly vulnerable to violence or being displaced by the threat of violence.

Christian Aid

Each year Christian Aid provides the Go and Do action points for each of the daily reflections – linking into the important work of Christian Aid in the relief of poverty and advocacy of justice.

Social media

Show your support for Christian Unity by posting unity messages and details of your events to our Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Twitter wall – simply add the #wpcuwall hashtag to your Twitter post (note there is a delay before they appear). You can also find updates about the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity on Twitter by following the #wpcu2024 hashtag.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2024

<https://ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2024/>



RSE Public Consultation deadline: 'unrealistic' - Presbyterian Church Ireland

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) has described the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland's deadline for his Public Consultation on Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) at Key Stages 3 and 4 as 'unrealistic and insensitive'.

Following a request for comment from the News Letter on the launch of the Department of Education's consultation on RSE a spokesperson for PCI told the newspaper, "When the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland announced his

decision back in June to bring forward legislation relating to the provision of Relationships and Sexuality Education in post-primary schools the Presbyterian Church in Ireland described his actions as ‘flawed’ and ‘a patronising imposition of a series of measures on the people of Northern Ireland with little or no consideration of their views’.

“The Secretary of State’s deadline of 1 January 2024 for the introduction of his revised RSE curriculum to post-primary schools is a further example of his unrealistic and insensitive approach to these matters, given that school leaders are already facing enormous pressures including those caused by reduced funding.”

The spokesperson continued, “PCI has previously stated that RSE should be taught in a sensitive and inclusive manner, where teaching is reinforced and supported by policies and processes that schools have in place around Getting in on the act at Bournemouth Air Shoe

bullying, safeguarding and pastoral care. Young people should also have the opportunity to explore their own personal morals, values and beliefs including the moral and ethical considerations around sensitive issues like abortion and the prevention of early pregnancy.

“The Department of Education consultation, announced today, is the first, and apparently only, opportunity for teachers, governors, parents and other interested stakeholders to have their say on the Secretary of State’s legislation. Like other stakeholders PCI will take time to consider the content of the consultation and respond accordingly. However, we also call upon the Secretary of State to reconsider his timetable so that Northern Ireland’s

September 7, 2023

Department of Education can conduct a truly meaningful consultation with all stakeholders on these most sensitive of issues.”

Need to protect religious freedom in the workplace

A parliamentary joint committee at Westminster is being urged by Christian groups in the United Kingdom to include concerns about religious freedom in the workplace in its latest inquiry into human rights at work, Billy Kennedy writes in the News Letter

The Evangelical Alliance, the Christian Institute and the Catholic Union have written to the chairperson of the committee on human rights, Labour MP Harriet Harman, a practising Roman Catholic, requesting for religious freedom to be made a “key part” of the inquiry.

Christian Institute deputy director, Simon Calvert, said: “Religion has long been the ‘Cinderella’ strand of discrimination law. Christians who take their faith seriously can feel overlooked, or even marginalised, by the equality, diversity, and inclusion industry.

“Many employers show little interest in seeking to understand the challenges faced in the workplace by devoutly Catholic or evangelical staff.

“I hope the joint committee on human rights will give a voice to these people.”



Getting in on the act at Bournemouth Air Show

Evangelical Alliance director of advocacy, Danny Webster, said: “It is essential that Christians, and people of other faiths, are able to bring their whole selves to work. Someone’s faith is not an optional extra that can be disregarded or ignored but an integral part of their lives.

“We encourage the joint committee on human rights to make the role of faith in the work place a central part of their inquiry into human rights at work”.

Catholic Union director, Nigel Parker said: “Sadly, it is becoming increasingly difficult to be a faithful Catholic in many workplaces in this country.

September 7, 2023

“Our concerns are shared by people from other denominations and faiths.

“This joint letter shows the strength of feeling about this matter. We strongly hope that the committee will take these concerns seriously,”

Earlier this year, a Catholic Union survey found almost half of workers do not feel able to talk about their faith openly with colleague, with 41 per cent of respondents saying they did not believe religious discrimination was given the same weight as discrimination against other protected characteristics, such as age, race, and sexuality.

Although the inquiry’s focus includes “freedom of thought, conscience, and religion”, the Protestant evangelical and Roman Catholic groups worry this might not receive enough attention.

They want a separate session to discuss religious freedom at work to help shape the final report and recommendations for the government.

They are asking the committee of MPs and peers from different parties to highlight these worries and suggest ways to make things better.

* Strangford DUP MP Jim Shannon is chairman of the parliamentary all-party committee on international freedom of religion and belief.

Mr Shannon, a Baptist, said his committee campaigns for all who are persecuted, in the UK and globally, not just Christians.

September 7, 2023

“I believe that God loves everybody. It is our duty to speak, not only for those of the Christian faith and also those who profess no faith at all.”



Retire to Tralee they said

Five of the six retired clergy living in the Tralee and Dingle group of parishes pictured with the Rector, The Rev Jim Stephens are -

Rev Robert Warren , Rev Phyllis Jones , Rev Kevin Stiles Methodist, Rev Jessie Langlie Methodist and the Rev Mike Holstein Lutheran. The Rev Joe Hardy also resides in Tralee.

News reports

Scotland's First Minister announces £8 million to Catholic agency for work in Rwanda

Scotland's First Minister has announced that Sciaf, the official Catholic aid agency of Scotland, will receive up to £8 million to support communities in Rwanda fighting the climate crisis. Humza Yousaf said last week that the Scottish government is committed to addressing climate issues. And the agency is asking the UK government to deliver new and additional cash to tackle food crises in East Africa, as well as using its aid budget to promote sustainable agriculture across the global south. Last year, Sciaf responded to 30 emergencies in 16 countries. It also spent more than £6 million on 101 projects, alongside 68 partners, in 26 countries.

Royal Mint commemorates The Lord Of The Rings author JRR Tolkien

The Royal Mint has launched a £2 coin to commemorate The Lord Of The Rings author JRR Tolkien. The coin has the author's monogram at the centre, encircled by a ring of runic patterns inspired by the writer's love of Anglo-Saxon scripts. Around the edge are the words "Not all those who wander are lost", a quote from the poem "The Riddle of Strider" in The Fellowship Of The Ring, the first volume of the novel set in Middle Earth. The coin, which was part of

September 7, 2023

the Royal Mint's 2023 set of commemorative coins, can now be bought individually and is being released to mark 50 years since Tolkien's death.



Salisbury Cathedral

Jews are ‘enemies of the West’, says ex-European Court judge

A former European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) judge has claimed that Jewish people are the “enemies of Western civilisation” in a string of anti-Semitic rants shared online, Gabriella Swerling writes in the Daily Telegraph.

September 7, 2023

Bostjan Zupancic, who worked at the court for 17 years until 2016, shared tweets in which he wrote that “Jews are the central enemies of Western civilisation”, what Jewish people are “doing in Ukraine” is “one of the greatest evils of the 21st century” and shared articles referring to the “Jewish War on White”.

The former ECHR judge also tweeted a bearded, hook-nosed Jewish caricature and shared links to videos about the apparent Rothschild banking “mafia”, among scores of other posts.

The posts appear to have been made between August 2022 and July this year, and were mainly on Twitter.

Mr Zupancic, who has been vice-president of the United Nations Committee Against Torture, is also understood to have adjudicated in numerous hearings that have had a direct impact on Jewish communities.

It is also believed he was involved in proceedings relating to the restitution of property owned by German Jews.

As a result of the revelations, reported by The Jewish Chronicle, the ECHR is facing calls to re-examine cases involving Jews after Mr Zupancic was exposed for sharing the content.

Lord Carlile KC, a former independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, told the newspaper: “I would call on the current court and member states such as the UK to disavow Mr Zupancic’s statements, and suggest there should be an

September 7, 2023

examination of the cases on which he sat to ensure the views he is expressing did not affect his judgments.”

After leaving the ECHR, Mr Zupancic joined the European Centre of Law and Justice (ECLJ), a human rights think-tank that reports to the UN. The ECLJ said it was removing him from his role.

An ECHR spokesperson said: “The Court is not in a position to comment on statements made by a former Judge in the press or on social media.” Mr Zupancic was contacted for comment.

Report courtesy Gabriella Swerling, Social and Religious Affairs Editor, and the Daily Telegraph.

Pope Francis laments "reactionary" Catholic Church in the United States

Pope Francis has lamented what he called a "reactionary" Catholic Church in the United States, where he said political ideology has replaced faith in some cases, the Jesuit journal *Civiltà Cattolica* reports.

In the 10 years since his election, Pope Francis has been criticised by conservative sectors of the US Church who are opposed to reforms such as giving women and lay Catholics more roles and making the Church more welcoming and less judgmental towards some, including LGBT people.



American conservatives are not more Catholic than the pope. Washington Herald - “They got angry, but let’s move on, move on,” the pope said. Translation: In the Catholic Church of the future, those who go backward are likely to be left behind. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/09/04/pope-wars-against-american-bishops/>

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Pope Francis made his comments on 5 August in a private meeting in Lisbon with members of the Jesuit order, of which he is a member, during his trip for World Youth Day.

They were published by the Jesuit journal *Civiltà Cattolica*.

In a question-and-answer session, a Portuguese Jesuit said that during a sabbatical in the United States, he was

September 7, 2023

saddened that many Catholics, including some bishops, were hostile to the pope's leadership.

"You have seen that in the United States the situation is not easy: there is a very strong reactionary attitude. It is organised and shapes the way people belong, even emotionally," the pope responded.

Religious conservatives in the United States often have aligned with politically conservative media outlets to criticise the pope over a host of issues such as climate change, immigration, social justice, his calls for gun control and his opposition to the death penalty.

"You have been to the United States and you say you have felt a climate of closure. Yes, this climate can be experienced in some situations," Pope Francis said.

"And there, one can lose the true tradition and turn to ideologies for support. In other words, ideology replaces faith, membership in a sector of the church replaces membership in the church," he said.

The pope said his critics should understand that "there is an appropriate evolution in the understanding of matters of faith and morals" and that being backward-looking is "useless".

As an example, he said some pontiffs centuries ago were tolerant of slavery but the church evolved.

One of the pope's fiercest American critics, Rome-based Cardinal Raymond Burke, wrote in an introduction for a recent book that a meeting of bishops called by Pope

September 7, 2023

Francis for this October to help chart the future of the Church risked sowing "confusion and error and division".

In the media

Titanic summer as Belfast's world-leading attraction welcomes 7.5 millionth visitor

News Letter - Titanic Belfast has reported its busiest summer since the iconic building opened in 2012, Claire Cartmill reports

In addition to achieving its best visitor numbers across July and August, the world-leading attraction also welcomed its 7.5 millionth visitor and recorded its busiest ever July.

A survey at the attraction this summer also showed that 42% of participants came to the city specifically to visit Titanic Belfast, while 62% of those also then visited or intended to visit other attractions within Northern Ireland when here.

Judith Owens MBE, chief executive of Titanic Belfast, said: "We are delighted that the summer season at Titanic Belfast has been our busiest ever. In the last 11 years, we have continued to work hard to drive new and repeat visitors and are proud of the significant role we play in putting Belfast on the global tourism map.

"Earlier this year we unveiled a £4.7m investment programme which has seen the introduction of four exciting new themed galleries, providing our most spectacular visitor experience to date. The response from guests has been

September 7, 2023

incredible and it has played a key role in our increased visitor figures.

Northern Ireland Affairs Committee: PSNI data breach 'could cost force up to £240m' in security and legal costs

News Letter - A major Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) data breach could potentially cost the force £240 million in security and legal costs, MPs have been told, Jonathan McCambridge reports.

Assistant chief constable Chris Todd also told the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee that almost 4,000 officers and staff have come forward with concerns after their personal information was released online.

The committee is investigating the data breach in which details of around 9,500 PSNI officers and staff were mistakenly published last month in response to a freedom of information request. The PSNI has confirmed the list, which included the surname and first initial of every employee, their rank of grade, where they are based and the unit they work in, is in the hands of dissident republicans.

Committee chair Simon Hoare asked Mr Todd if the PSNI had done an assessment of the cost of mitigating against the impact of the data leak.

Mr Todd said recovery costs around security measures were estimated at £24 million to £37 million. He confirmed this did not include the cost of potential compensation claims. He said: "In terms of individual litigation we naturally will plan for

September 7, 2023

that eventuality. I would estimate that could be in the region of £150-180 million.”

Mr Hoare said: “We are talking in ballpark terms of an unexpected expenditure of about £230-240 million. Existing budgets could not sustain that?”

Mr Todd said: “No. We already have a funding gap of around £50 million.”

MP Robert Buckland asked how many people had viewed the information on the freedom of information request within the PSNI before it was released publicly.

Mr Todd said: “In a query of that nature four or five people. It has gone through a number of eyes, the mistake has not been rectified or identified which suggest that we have systems errors we need to address.”

Mr Hoare said: “It does beggar belief that everybody made the same mistake. The odds of four people not spotting such a glaring error would be very considerable.”

Mr Todd responded: “It was not glaring to the naked eye and that is part of the issue. The fact that the core dataset remained attached was not obvious to the naked eye.”

The committee chair said the breach “smacked of incompetence”.

Mr Todd said: “If an individual misses something you might immediately go to that conclusion, when two people miss it you may start to question that, in this case where four

(people missed it), I think we need to look beyond incompetence on an individual human basis and look at the competence of the system and process which allowed that to happen.”

The senior officer said that by the weekend 3,954 members of the organisation had come forward to register concerns about their personal information being shared. He said the information was viewed approximately 300 times online before it was taken down.

Mr Hoare said: “You have sought to assure us you are absolutely confident this was effectively human error and you have no concerns at all that this wasn’t a deliberate breach of data. I am finding it hard as a layman to understand why four people didn’t spot it over a period of time but the recipient within two and a half hours does. I am not writing the plotline of Line Of Duty but it just strikes me as stretching credulity a little too far.”

Mr Todd said he had no concerns that the leak was done deliberately. He added: “There is an ongoing investigation into how the leak happened. The initial assessment was very clear there was no mal-intent in any of the individuals involved in this breach.”

Former chief constable Simon Byrne had been expected to appear as a witness before the committee before he resigned from his position this week.

September 7, 2023

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Free event // No booking required

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP a look at church history



Dr Cynthia Bennett Brown

*Lecturer in Systematic and Historical Theology
at Belfast Bible College*

8 pm // Wed 8th Nov 2023

Hillhall Presbyterian Church

EQUAL
to lead

Find out more at www.equaltolead.com

Women in Leadership

Looking forward to the next Equal to Lead event. Cindy is a great speaker and this is an important topic. There's no need to book, so put the date in your diary if you are interested in coming along... We hope to record for those who can't make it.

<https://facebook.com/events/s/women-in-leadership-a-look-at-643004684280124/>

September 7, 2023

Scouts NI Explorer Belt 2024

Scouts NI are delighted to be announce that an Explorer Belt is being organised for the summer of 2024 to Belgium and Luxembourg!

There is an information session, about the Explorer Belt and everything it involves, being held at Crawfordsburn Scout Centre on Sunday 24th September 2023 from 1:30pm - 4pm. To attend the information session, you need to fill out an expression of interest form.

For more info and the form click the link:

<https://www.scoutsni.org/news/article/explorer-belt-2024/>

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

September 7, 2023