

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Artwork cross at Belvoir parish

APRIL 20, 2022

Image of the day

Artwork cross at Belvoir parish, Belfast

The giftedness of a parishioner, and this photo by another.

People and places



Fr Tim Bartlett of St Mary's Church in Belfast city centre pictured with a banner supporting Ukraine that was vandalised on Sunday night. Picture by Hugh Russell

Belfast church won't be deterred in supporting Ukraine after banner torn down and vandalised

APRIL 20, 2022

Parishioners at a church in Belfast city centre have been left "disgusted" after vandals tore down a banner urging people to pray for Ukraine, The Irish News reports.

The banner had been in place at the gates of St Mary's Catholic church in Chapel Lane since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but was ripped down on Sunday night.

It was found the following morning, with the words "pray for Russia too" scrawled on it.

St Mary's parish priest Fr Tim Bartlett said the incident indicated a growing "culture of aggression" in the city.

He told The Irish News that the incident had not been reported to police, but instead they would replace the banner to send a message that support for the people of Ukraine would remain firm.

"Unfortunately it seems this is a sign of the times, in that rather than coming and have a civil conversation about differences of opinion, there's an increasing culture of aggression and even violence in the streets of the city," he said.

"If the people responsible had come and spoken to us, they would learn that along with praying for Ukraine, we do also pray for the innocent people of Russia, and those in Russia brave enough to speak up in support of the dignity of Ukraine."

APRIL 20, 2022

Fr Bartlett said the banner was careful to indicate that all refugees, no matter where they were from, were welcome, despite the UK government's policy on housing refugees, which he said was designed to "make it as inaccessible as possible, while appearing to be generous".

"We're mindful of the plight of all refugees, especially given the UK government's stance, which was recently highlighted by the Archbishop of Canterbury," he said.

The Archbishop, Justin Welby, has described UK plans to send asylum seekers to Rwanda as being "against the judgment of God".

Fr Bartlett said his parishioners alone had raised over £4,000 for Ukrainian refugees. It has been estimated that Catholic churches across the island have so far raised over €3.25 million for the cause.

"The parishioners at 1pm Mass were disgusted and upset upon learning of the overnight vandalism," he added.

"They have been overwhelmingly generous in their response to the plight of Ukrainians, both in terms of money and offers of accommodation. So the banner will go back up and our message of support will continue, no matter what."

Courtesy The Irish News 19/04/2022 and Hugh Russell

Church News Ireland

APRIL 20, 2022

Lakeside Easter morning communion at Antrim



On Easter morning parishioners of All Saints, Antrim gathered on the shore of Lough Neagh at a celebration of the Holy Communion. The celebrant was the Vicar of Antrim, Ven. Dr. Stephen McBride.



APRIL 20, 2022

Young people get together at 'Destination' event



Members of Connor Youth Forum who planned and ran the 'Destination' event - Maddie, Emma, Naomi, Maia, Faith, Alex, Lucas and Isaac.

The atmosphere was electric on Sunday evening, April 10, as around 50 young people came together in St Michael's Parish Church and Hall to enjoy fun and worship.

With pandemic restrictions eased, it was apparent that this opportunity to share fellowship and meet other young people from around the diocese had been greatly missed.

APRIL 20, 2022

The Destination event was organised by Connor Youth Forum, supported by Diocesan Youth Officer Christina Baillie.

Young people attended from St Nicholas' Carrickfergus; St Stephen's and St Michael's, Belfast; Christ Church, Lisburn; the United Parish of Christ Church and St John's, Ballyclare; and Christ Church, Derriagh.

The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison joined them for the evening.

For the first part of the evening, the young people were able to enjoy table games and refreshments in one area; energetic activities including an inflatable assault course and volleyball in the sports hall, and creative activities in the art room. There was also a room set aside for prayer.

For the second part of the event, they moved into the church for worship, led by James and Elise Turner from the Church of the Resurrection alongside members of the Youth Forum.

Alex read from Hebrews 10:24-25. At the end of worship, Bishop George commended what Alex had shared, explaining how important it was to continue meeting together. The Bishop thanked Youth Forum for providing this opportunity to come together and encourage one another. [See image gallery at connor.anglican.org]

Church News Ireland

Clergy renew ordination vows



Bishop George Davison and Dean Stephen Forde with some of Connor clergy who attended the Service of Renewal of Ordination Vows in Belfast Cathedral on Maundy Thursday, April 14.

Clergy from across Connor Diocese came together on Maundy Thursday at the invitation of their Bishop for a service in which they renewed their Ordination Vows.

The Service of Holy Communion on April 14 was held in Belfast Cathedral and led by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison.

Welcoming those who had attended from every corner of the diocese, Bishop George said: “I am very conscious that we had have a couple of very challenging years and also of

the busyness of this season. For these reasons, it is important for us to draw aside as clergy called to serve, to remind ourselves of the heart of our call and to share in Holy Communion together.

“I invite you to take time simply to be quiet, to know God’s presence and together we will renew our vows of ordination to serve Christ.”

New Rector of Whitechurch Parish

The Revd David Bowles has been appointed the new Rector of Whitechurch Parish in the Diocese of Dublin. David is currently serving in the Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross.

David grew up in Blackrock, County Dublin and attended St Brigid’s National School in Stillorgan and was a parishioner of St Brigid’s Parish. After completing his secondary education in Newpark School, he studied Hotel Management in DIT Cathal Brugha Street. He trained in the Kensington Hilton Hotel. He went on to study ACCA Accountancy and worked in finance for a number of years, including while he studies for his Mth in CITI.

Having been ordained a Deacon in 2013, David served as Intern Deacon in Taney Parish for two years. He was appointed Curate Assistant in Douglas Union of Parishes, in Cork, Cloyne and Ross from 2015 to 2019 being ordained Priest in 2015. In 2019 he was appointed half time Priest-in-Charge of Moviddy Union of Parishes, west of Cork City and also half time Healthcare

APRIL 20, 2022

Chaplain in Cork University Hospital and the Bon Secours Hospital in Cork city.

David is married to Michelle and they have two children, Harry and Hannah. Also part of their family are the cats, Patches and Mitzy.

He is currently on the Diocesan Youth Council and chair of children's ministry group in Cork, Cloyne and Ross.

He enjoys singing bass, playing badminton, golf, reading, watching Liverpool play soccer and Leinster play rugby.

Following the announcement of his appointment David said his ministry in Cork had been very rewarding and was now looking forward to this next phase.



APRIL 20, 2022

“It is a bittersweet moment for me as I conclude my seven years of ministry on Cork, Cloyne and Ross Diocese. I have made many friends and met many lovely people in my time in Cork, in Douglas Union with Frankfield and most recently in Moviddy Union of Parishes and also in the hospitals. Moviddy Union have been extremely supportive during our time here and I will remember them with gratitude and fondness. My ministry has been so very rewarding and I look forward to starting a new chapter with my family serving in Whitechurch Parish,” he commented.

David succeeds Canon Horace McKinley who retired last year.

News reports

€3.25 million in response to the crisis in Ukraine

Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh and Archbishop Dermot Farrell of Dublin, as President and Vice-President of the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference, have thanked the parishes across Ireland for their extraordinary generosity in raising to date of over €3.25 million in response to the crisis in Ukraine.

Following the invasion of Ukraine by Russia on 24 February, the Bishops of Ireland asked for a special collection in parishes across the island. This mainly took place over the weekend of 26 and 27 March, as an additional way of helping to address the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

APRIL 20, 2022

The archbishops said, “Since the outbreak of this war, over 7 million people have been displaced and nearly 5 million people have been forced to emigrate from Ukraine, becoming international refugees. As Christians, our Gospel imperative is to support the victims of this appalling humanitarian crisis, in the words of the Holy Thursday Liturgy, ‘where charity and love are found there is God’.

“The large funds raised by Irish parishes will be channelled to assist those who are suffering such devastation to their lives and livelihoods. Parishes across Ireland have responded with enormous generosity and compassion and we are most grateful for that. It is also heartening that some parish communities have established direct links with Ukrainian parishes and local charitable projects to support refugees and those remaining in Ukraine. The proceeds of this special parish collection are already being sent to the international Catholic Church agency, Caritas Internationalis, which is currently operating on the ground in Ukraine and its surrounding areas.

The archbishops concluded, “Following the sad news this week that seven people, including two Caritas staff, were killed when a Caritas office in Mariupol was shelled, we wish to acknowledge the bravery of humanitarian workers who risk their lives in providing much needed assistance and protection to innocent people who have been caught up in this war. We extend our prayers and deepest sympathy to their families, friends and fellow humanitarian workers.”

Church News Ireland

In the media

The Russian violence is difficult to accept without belief in God'

Daily Telegraph

Under the candlelight of the St Michael's Golden Domed Monastery, hundreds of Ukrainians prayed for their loved ones and their country. Not even the mayor of Kyiv's warning to city-goers to stay away from the capital because of a rise in Russian attacks could stop them marking the start of Holy Week, which this year begins a week later in the Orthodox calendar than in the West.

Outside the cathedral it was snowing, creating a sense of calm amid the anxiety that had gripped Kyiv over the weekend as Russia pummelled Ukraine's cities with high precision long-range missiles.

<http://digitaleditions.telegraph.co.uk/data/947/reader/reader.html?social#!preferred/0/package/947/pub/947/page/8/article/299706>

Congregation at Ukrainian mass 'quadruples' in weeks

RTE News

<https://www.rte.ie/news/dublin/2022/0417/1292877-ukrainian-mass/>

The masons saving Salisbury Cathedral

Daily Telegraph

APRIL 20, 2022

As the building's 800th anniversary nears, Florence Hallett meets the team responsible for its ongoing survival

If you visit the Works Yard at Salisbury Cathedral, you will be greeted by a gentle rhythmic tapping that has endured for over 800 years. It's the tap-tap-tap of the stonemasons who have been working on this site since even before the foundation stone was laid on April 28 1220, and the craft itself has essentially remained unchanged.

"If a stonemason from 800 years ago turned up today, and you gave him a mallet and chisel, he'd know exactly what to do," says Gary Price, 53, who as clerk of works oversees the care of the cathedral fabric.

Price is one of a team of about 60 masons recruited following a survey in 1985 which revealed that the spire and tower, a source of anxiety since time immemorial, were dangerously compromised. The west front, its carvings constantly exposed to the worst of the wind and rain, was also in a bad state, with the rest of the limestone masonry in varying degrees of disrepair, having been largely neglected since the 19th century.

<http://digitaleditions.telegraph.co.uk/data/939/reader/reader.html?social#!preferred/0/package/939/pub/939/page/65/article/291692>

Notre-Dame slowly reviving three years after fire

RTE News

Three years after the devastating fire, Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris is mostly cleared of a thick layer of soot as an army

APRIL 20, 2022

of craftsmen race to meet a deadline to reopen in time for the 2024 Olympics.

<https://www.rte.ie/news/newsletters/2022/0413/1292157-notre-dame/>

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Sign up for Mothers' Union monthly eNewsletter

Sign up for their monthly eNewsletter to remain updated on their work and upcoming events at Mothers' Union!

<https://r1.dotdigital-pages.com/p/1I8Y-G0K/sign-up-to-the-mothers-union-mailing-list>

Temple Tracts - from the William Temple Foundation

Temple Tracts are accessible e-books of 8,000 words analysing key debates in religion and public life. Written by both established and up-and-coming authors, they engage theology with contemporary social ethics, politics, ecology, digital technology and philosophy. Given their recent success (over 20,000 downloads and counting), our Temple Tracts are now being published as four distinct series:

Temple Tracts: regular contributions to public and political theology and social ethics aimed at a general audience.

Temple Ethical Futures: specific contributions addressing ecological and digital agendas and alternatives.

Temple Continental: contributions of a more specialist nature engaging theological thought with the latest currents in continental philosophy and political theology.

Urban Tracts: reflections on urban ministry and mission for practitioners and church leaders in the run-up to the fortieth anniversary of the 1985 report Faith in the City.

See - <https://williamtemplefoundation.org.uk/>

Perspective

Religious belief is not a guarantee of human decency – but neither is it mumbo jumbo by Charles Moore

As the situation in Ukraine shows, the law of God can often be abused by man. Jesus, through his own suffering, understood that better than anyone

On the evening of Maundy Thursday, our village church held the ancient service of Tenebrae (“darkness” or “shadows”). It is a lament for the three days preceding Easter, the days in which Jesus sat at the Last Supper with his disciples, was betrayed, taken, falsely accused, tried and crucified. After the recitation of each psalm or other Bible passage, a candle is extinguished until, at the end, the church is dark.

After the third candle was put out in our parish church came the opening of the Lamentations of Jeremiah: “How lonely

sits the city,” said the translation used, “that once was full of people! How like a widow she has become, she that was great among the nations! She that was a princess among the provinces has become a vassal. She weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks.” The city referred to is Jerusalem. This week, however, it is impossible not to think also of Mariupol, still fighting – just – as vassalage descends.

One of the many distressing features of the war in Ukraine is the way the aggressor invokes the Christian God. Vladimir Putin is dishonourably abetted in this by Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow, who praised President Putin’s “high and responsible service to the people” just as the invasion began. He appears to believe that only the “Russian world”, as opposed to the whole of humanity, has been redeemed.

Next Sunday, is the Orthodox Easter. If security lets him show his face at all, I expect Vlad will grace Kirill’s Easter Eve Mass in Moscow as he did last year. On that occasion, he held a candle, crossing himself and sitting alone in a high place, far distanced from the rest of the congregation, in order to emphasise his eminence and decrease his chance of Covid infection.

To many, this association between priest and pseudo-prince is evidence that religious belief is useless, or worse than useless. Either religion’s exhortations to virtue have no effect, they say, or they are lies used to disguise the usual power urges of human beings. The world is full of examples, after all, and not only in Christianity. In modern times, the phrase “Allahu akbar!” (“God is great!”) has sadly become

most familiar to non-Christians as the cry uttered by Islamist terrorists just before they attack their victims.

Without faith, decency has no way of accounting for the truly terrible things that people do. It fails to confront the paradox that all humans are sinners, but none is hopeless

Many non-believers, of the reasonable majority which does not automatically scorn the motives of religious people, will tend to agree with our greatest Labour prime minister, Clement Attlee. Brought up in a devoutly Christian household, Attlee retained the moral seriousness which he had imbibed but rejected the belief system which underpinned it. As he put it, with characteristic terseness, in an interview late in life, “Believe in the ethics of Christianity. Can’t believe in the mumbo jumbo.”

It is some sort of answer to the anti-religious to point out that the most famous victim of this murderous zeal and self-righteous delusion was Jesus himself. The specific reason he was crucified was his alleged blasphemy. It was the chief priests who called for his death. The secular Roman authority, Pontius Pilate, merely acquiesced, probably for a quiet life. Jesus understood better than anyone how the law of God can be abused by man. He knew he would die as a result. This knowledge induced him not to reject religion, but to purify it.

Attlee’s point about the “mumbo jumbo” still needs addressing, however. After all, it is visibly the case not only that many religious people are very bad, but that many non-believers are very good. I wouldn’t go so far as to say that

believers are on average worse than non-believers, but it is evident that some believers are blind, in a special bogus-holy way, to the nature of humanity. Gloomy Jeremiah (again) has it right: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” Nothing is worse for the character than believing that you, unlike most other mortals, have been saved, and are therefore virtuous whatever you do.

Wouldn't it be better, therefore, if everyone just lived by decent moral codes and kept God out of it?

It is a good question, but it assumes something which should not be assumed. How do decent moral codes arise? You have to be quite a narrow rationalist to see them as self-evident.

Even before Charles Darwin produced scientific evidence for the survival of the fittest, most people's natural inclination was to put self-interest first. The ultimate logic of this leads, as in the animal kingdom, to the strong killing the weak without compunction, getting rid of those considered too old, or “defective” in mind or body, or because they belong to a race or nation or class seen as inferior.

The assertion of might often morphs into an assertion of right. The murder of all Jews was called “the final solution” by the Nazis because it presented itself as the right scientific answer to a “problem” – what Hitler saw as the inferiority of the Jewish race. In the early 1930s in Ukraine, Stalin defined and stigmatised a class of person called “kulaks” (prosperous, bourgeois peasants). The kulaks were “alien elements” who would corrupt the pure proletariat of the Marxist revolution, Stalin claimed, so he imposed upon them

a policy of deliberate starvation and stole their land. Millions died. Putin is very much Stalin's heir, especially in relation to Ukraine, although he invokes Holy Mother Russia rather than the Communist Manifesto.

Against such horrors, decency is necessary, but not sufficient. Of itself, it cannot see the appalling force of evil and so is not quite sure how to confront it. Without faith, it has no way of accounting for the truly terrible things that people do. It lacks the imagination to confront the paradox which religion understands so well – that all human beings are sinners, but none is hopeless.

The response of what one might call a merely decent person when confronted with extremes of human wickedness is to think that there must be some sort of misunderstanding which can be cleared up. Hence the propensity of international bodies to see ceasefires, "humanitarian corridors", aid agencies, "peace initiatives" and so on as solutions in themselves, rather than potentially useful instruments. Decency is a wonderful disposition, but it is not a means of understanding the world.

The main religions, and – I would argue – most notably Christianity, understand much better that life is not a series of problems which will eventually be rationally solved by acquiring more knowledge. If that were so, the most educated people in the world would be the best (a heresy which, I fear, is widely believed by the most educated, especially by "experts"). No, human life is a predicament, tragic because of the gap between what it could be and what it so often is, but also full of hope.

APRIL 20, 2022

It is not a coincidence, therefore, that religious believers tend to come mainly from groups traditionally seen as relatively powerless – the poor more than the rich, women more than men, the weak more than the strong. Nor is it a coincidence that the man who said he came to redeem the human predicament did so not by conquering other people's countries or getting very rich or even by writing a great work of philosophy, but through suffering and overcoming rejection, injustice and death. I can see why this is hard to believe, but mumbo jumbo it isn't.

Courtesy of Charles Moore and the Daily Telegraph

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

