

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Bishop completes big bike ride round diocese for world development funds

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Image of the day

Bishop completes Big Bike Ride around his diocese

In the late afternoon yesterday, Monday 4th April, the Bishop of Down and Dromore, the Rt Revd David McClay, arrived at the steps of Belfast Cathedral having cycled into every parish in his diocese.

The 'Bishop's Big Bike Ride' set out to highlight the work of Bishops' Appeal, the Church of Ireland's own World Aid and Development

Programme. Bishops' Appeal recently sent €20,000 to Habitat for Humanity and Christian Aid for their humanitarian responses in Ukraine. It is also the focus of the Down and Dromore Lent Appeal for 2022.

6 Days. 350 Miles. 83 Stops





The Bishop's Big Bike Ride set out from Holywood Parish Church on Monday 7th March and over 6 (non-consecutive) days Bishop David and the Revd Colin Darling made 83 stops. Revd Colin Darling is the rector of Killyleagh and Bishops' Appeal Rep for the Diocese of Down and Dromore.

Other clergy and parishioners hopped on their bikes and joined the ride for sections of the route, including the Dean of Dromore who completed 5 days and 61 stops but couldn't continue because of changes to the schedule.

The bishop and Colin were greeted by supporters in every parish and kept going by multiple cups of tea and biscuits. They covered roughly 350 miles cycling through North Down and Ards, South Down, Newry and Mourne and, on the last day, Belfast and Castlereagh.

Bishop David hadn't been on a bike for 35 years and had just recovered from Covid-19 when the ride began so he was grateful for a little electric power to his wheels, especially in the drumlins of County Down!

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Down and Dromore Lent Appeal

The Down and Dromore Lent Appeal 2022 is supporting two projects in partnership with Bishops' Appeal, one in Honduras through Christian Aid and the other in Jordan through Tearfund.

The Christian Aid project is in Honduras, working with their local partner organisation in eight communities that are particularly vulnerable to climate change. The Tearfund project is in Jordan, helping mobilise the Anglican church there to work amongst Jordan's poorest communities.

Parishes in the diocese are supporting the appeal in the season leading up to Easter.

People and places

Launch of Living Faith, Living history - through the eyes of primary school children

There was a great afternoon in Christ Church Cathedral Dublin for the launch of Living Faith, Living History - parishes of Dublin & Glendalough through the eyes of primary school children - edited by Prof Anne Lodge and Archbishop Michael Jackson and launched by Dr Ida Milne.

Living Faith, Living History was written by the children in ten Church of Ireland schools around the United Dioceses of



Dublin & Glendalough. They were expertly directed by their teachers, supported by their principals and other staff in the schools, and assisted by the clergy and laity of their local parish. Children in classes ranging from 3rd to 6th engaged in the project to find out more about the history and current life of their local parish.

The participating schools and parishes are:

Athy Model School / Athy Union of Parishes/

Castleknock National School / St. Brigid's Church

Castleknock Drumcondra National School / St. John the

Baptist Church Drumcondra Holmpatrick National School

Skerries / Holmpatrick Church Skerries Kill O'the Grange

National School / Kill O'the Grange parish Kilternan National

School / Kilternan parish/

St. George's National School Balbriggan / St. George's

Church Balbriggan St. Matthew's National School Irishtown /

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St. Matthew's Church Irishtown Springdale National School
Raheny / All Saints Church Raheny Whitechurch National
School / Whitechurch parish

This project is a shared initiative between the Church of Ireland Centre in DCU, the United Dioceses of Dublin & Glendalough and Christ Church Cathedral Dublin. The exhibition and publication were supported by grants from All Churches Trust, the Advisory Council of the Church of Ireland Centre, DCU and the Church Education Society. The book of the children's projects is published by Cadolux.

Maud may be Missionary Aviation Fellowship's oldest frequent flyer

Maud Kells OBE - retired nurse, missionary, trainer,

**author and
MAF partner-
turned 83 on
April 1.**



Maud is thought to be Missionary Aviation Fellowship's oldest frequent flyer. Since 1968, she has dedicated her life to the people of Mulita in north-eastern

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DRC, where she founded a hospital, primary school and nursery.


MAF has flown Maud over 300 times including her lifesaving medevac in 2015 when she was shot in the chest by an armed robber.

Maud brought medical supplies and plenty of encouragement on her latest visit to Mulita.

Belated Happy birthday Maud.

More about Maud: <http://ow.ly/1JLh50IxY6L>

ST POLYCARP'S CHURCH
PARISH OF FINAGHY



SERVICE OF
THANKSGIVING & CELEBRATION
TO MARK THE
90th ANNIVERSARY OF THE
CONSECRATION OF THE CHURCH

Sunday 3 April 2022 - 10.30am
The Fifth Sunday in Lent
Passion Sunday

Choral Eucharist - Rite II

St. Polycarp's parish celebrates 90th Anniversary

**Sunday past
was a joyous
occasion in St.
Polycarp's,
Finaghy, as the
parish
celebrated it's
90th
Anniversary.**

The guest
celebrant and

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preacher was the Most Reverend John McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland.

Primate, preacher and planter

Former rector Canon Clifford Skilen also took part and the choir offered wonderful

music under their director Simon Neill.

Following a tree planting ceremony involving Archbishop McDowell and the rector, the Reverend Louise Stewart.

The first curate in charge from 1928 to 1936 was Rev F J Mitchell who would eventually become Bishop of Down & Dromore. He was succeeded by Canon JC Butler in 1936 who became the first rector in 1945. On his retirement in



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1966, Canon James Hall commenced his 23 year incumbency.

Among the legion of curate assistants were Sterling Mortimer, James Hartin, Maurice Siri and John Bond.



Stainer at St John's Malone

April 10 - The Crucifixion: A Meditation on the Sacred Passion of the Holy Redeemer, an oratorio by John Stainer at St John's, Malone, Belfast

6.30 pm for an hour - St Johns Parish Choir and friends are joined by Glenn Tweedie (Tenor) and Michael Brown (Bass) with organist Stephen Hamill.

141 Malone Road, Belfast.



Ordained in St Canice's Cathedral

Congratulations to The Reverend s Ger James (Carlow) and Mike O'Meara (Cashel) who were ordained to the priesthood (OLM) on Sunday evening in St Canice's Cathedral. A wonderful occasion for the diocese. Pictured before their ordination with Bishop Michael Burrows.

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News reports

Stop this obscene killing,' pleads Archbishop after reports of war crimes in Ukraine

The Archbishop of Canterbury has condemned alleged atrocities in the Ukrainian town of Bucha.

Archbishop Justin Welby lamented the "loss of humanity" in a tweet in which he called for the killing to end.

"With war comes the loss of our humanity - and that is laid bare for the world to see in Bucha," he said.

"May those leading the war of aggression against the people of Ukraine rediscover their humanity, and stop this obscene killing of God's precious children."

Ukraine says that war crimes have been committed by Russian soldiers.

In Bucha, a town close to capital Kyiv, there are reports of dead civilians being found with their hands tied behind their backs and signs of being killed execution style.

Bucha Mayor Anatoly Fedorur said that retreating Russian forces executed at least 280 civilians.

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy has used the word "genocide" to describe the atrocities being committed, and has said that his people are being "exterminated".

The International Criminal Court is already investigating allegations of war crimes and genocide in Ukraine.

In a report on Sunday, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said Russian troops were committing "laws-of-war violations" against civilians in occupied areas of the Chernihiv, Kharkiv, and Kyiv regions.

"These include a case of repeated rape; two cases of summary execution, one of six men, the other of one man; and other cases of unlawful violence and threats against civilians between February 27 and March 14, 2022," it said.

"Soldiers were also implicated in looting civilian property, including food, clothing, and firewood. Those who carried out these abuses are responsible for war crimes."

Hugh Williamson, HRW's Europe and Central Asia director, said, "The cases we documented amount to unspeakable, deliberate cruelty and violence against Ukrainian civilians.

"Rape, murder, and other violent acts against people in the Russian forces' custody should be investigated as war crimes."

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Strong case' to expel Russian Orthodox Church from ecumenical body, says Rowan Williams

The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, has suggested that the World Council of Churches (WCC) could be justified in expelling the Russian Orthodox Church over its failure to condemn the war in Ukraine.

Dr Williams told BBC Radio 4 on Sunday that he was "still waiting" for senior leaders in the Russian Orthodox Church "to say that the slaughter of the innocent in war is condemned unequivocally by all forms of Christianity".

He also had a strongly worded message for Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill: "Your own flock are being killed in Ukraine, by other members of your own flock.

"It is your responsibility to condemn the killing of your own flock, for who you are answering to Jesus Christ."

The former Archbishop of Canterbury said that as a "minimum", the Russian Orthodox Church should call for "an effective and credible" ceasefire.

He said he suspected that such a call would have the support of "at least some" Orthodox churches because "I know that there are many people in the Orthodox world who feel that orthodoxy itself is compromised by this, who feel

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almost ashamed to be associated and I would want to listen very carefully to what other Orthodox churches have to say".

Last month, a group of Russian Orthodox priests started a petition calling for an immediate ceasefire and condemning the suppression of peaceful anti-war protests in Russia.

Turning to the WCC, Dr Williams suggested there was a "strong case" for expulsion.

"When churches are actively supporting the war of aggression, failing to condemn nakedly obvious breaches in any kind of ethical conduct in wartime," he said.

"Then other churches do have the right to raise the question."

"I think there is a strong case for expulsion, because we have seen those signs."

The same suggestion was made last month by Rev Rob Schenck, president of the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute in Washington DC.

"Given Patriarch Kirill's aiding and abetting of war crimes perpetrated by Russian forces in Ukraine, the World Council of Churches must act with moral courage, ethical responsibility and spiritual integrity and remove the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church from its membership," he said.

Vatican: Teachers in Church schools have duty to uphold Catholic ethos

The Vatican's education congregation has published a document responding to conflicts over the interpretation of the concept of "Catholic identity" in Catholic school settings.

The 20-page instruction affirmed the importance of a Catholic educational project with an evangelical goal and explained the role that teachers and administrators play in its achievement.

"The whole school community is responsible for implementing the school's Catholic educational project as an expression of its ecclesiality and its being a part of the community of the Church," the document from the Congregation for Catholic Education said.

"Everyone has the obligation to recognize, respect, and bear witness to the Catholic identity of the school, officially set out in the educational project," it continued. "This applies to the teaching staff, the non-teaching personnel, and the pupils and their families."

The Congregation for Catholic Education explained in the introduction that it had been "confronted with cases of conflicts and appeals resulting from different interpretations of the traditional concept of Catholic identity by educational institutions."

Many of these conflicts, it said, concerned rapid changes in society, including the process of globalisation and the growth of interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

“It seemed therefore appropriate to offer a more in-depth and up-to-date reflection and guidelines on the value of the Catholic identity of educational institutions in the Church, so as to provide a set of criteria responding to the challenges of our times, in continuity with the criteria that always apply,” it said.

One of the issues addressed in the new instruction is the role of teachers and administrators of a Catholic school. The instruction said that the witness of lay and consecrated educators was “increasingly relevant to achieving the integral formation of students.”

Quoting from the 1997 document “The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium,” it said: “In fact, ‘In the Catholic school’s educational project there is no separation between time for learning and time for formation, between acquiring notions and growing in wisdom. The various school subjects do not present only knowledge to be attained, but also values to be acquired and truths to be discovered. All of which demands an atmosphere characterised by the search for truth, in which competent, convinced, and coherent educators, teachers of learning and of life, may be a reflection, albeit imperfect but still vivid, of the one Teacher.’”

The instruction said that teachers in a Catholic school also bear witness to the Catholic identity through their lives and should be hired with that in mind.

It said if this cannot be upheld, it may be necessary to dismiss a teacher from their position, but this option should be reserved as a last resort.

School leadership, it continued, has the “right and duty” to intervene if teachers or students do not comply with the universal, particular, or proper law of Catholic schools.

The instruction also upheld the responsibility of parents to be the primary educators of their children, recalling that they also have the “priority right” to make a choice about how and where their child is educated.

The Catholic Church’s interest in education, it explained, is more than philanthropy or filling a social need, but stems from the Church’s role as mother and teacher.

Quoting *Gravissimum educationis*, the Second Vatican Council’s declaration on Christian education, it said: “To fulfil the mandate she has received from her divine founder of proclaiming the mystery of salvation to all men and of restoring all things in Christ, Holy Mother the Church must be concerned with the whole of man’s life, even the secular part of it insofar as it has a bearing on his heavenly calling. Therefore, she has a role in the progress and development of education.”

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In the media

German cardinal admits blessing gay couples and calls for Church teaching on homosexuality to change

Catholic Herald

A German cardinal has admitted to blessing couples in same-sex relationships and has called for a change in Catholic teaching on homosexuality.

Cardinal Reinhard Marx of Munich and Freising is the latest of a string of senior European clerics to call upon the Catholic Church to ditch its traditional teaching that homosexual sexual acts are objectively disordered.

In an interview with Stern, a German magazine, the 68-year-old cardinal declared that the Catechism of the Catholic Church was “not set in stone” and the faithful therefore had a right to question what it taught.

He said: “Homosexuality is not a sin. It corresponds to a Christian attitude when two people, regardless of gender, stand up for each other, in joy and sorrow.”

[[] <https://catholicherald.co.uk/german-cardinal-admits-blessing-couples-in-same-sex-relationships-and-calls-for-change-to-teaching-on-gay-sex/>]

Perspective

Christians Against Poverty warns of 'catastrophic' rising cost of living

The debt charity Christians Against Poverty (CAP) is warning that the Easter period is set to be the start of a big squeeze on family finances due to the rising cost of living.

The start of April marks the energy price cap increase and CAP says that combined with tax increases and stagnant wages means it's going to be tough year for many.

Chief executive, Paula Stringer, said: "The debt crisis is tightening on our own doorstep, with 2022 becoming the year of the squeeze.

"We can't stand by and let people fall deeper into poverty. For millions of people already in poverty and debt, the rising cost of living will be catastrophic."

CAP says it has seen a 47 per cent increase in calls to its debt helpline compared to 2021, while requests for emergency fuel vouchers and food parcels have doubled.

The charity is launching its Easter appeal to raise funds to support those struggling.

It comes as a survey from the Office for National Statistics showed nearly half of adults were struggling to pay their

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energy bills even before today's price hike which could see an increase of £700 a year.

Speaking to Sky News, government minister Kit Malthouse, said: "It is very tough at the moment.

"We completely acknowledge that a combination of factors has meant that prices are rising significantly, energy prices in particular, driven by a variety of factors - post-pandemic, the war in Ukraine, other kinds of global factors outside of our immediate control - and it is tough.

"For those of us who have a smart meter, as we do here in my house, we can see how much it is costing us on an hourly basis, and it is not happy reading."

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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