

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Canterbury Cathedral**

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# People and places



## Methodist representatives to ICC

**A group from MCI attended the 99th Annual General Meeting of the Irish Council of Churches on Friday 31st March at the Skainos Centre, East Belfast Mission.**

The group included the President, General Secretary, Gillian Kingston, Dr. David Clements, Roy Cooper and Emma-Jayne Speers, Methodist youth and family worker in Woodvale Methodist. Read more here: <https://buff.ly/37hqkJJ>



## Handel's Messiah to mark 800th anniversary of Youghal Church

**Handel's Messiah in the atmospheric surroundings of one of Ireland's oldest churches St. Mary's Collegiate Church, Youghal**

To mark the 800th anniversary of St. Mary's Collegiate Church, Youghal, the parish will host a performance of GF Handel's ever popular Messiah, with the East Cork Choral Society and orchestra. Conductor: Colin Nicholl and Soloists Gemma Magner, Sarah Luttrell, Peter O'Reilly and Gheorghe Palcu.

With its original roof timbers, medieval carvings and wonderful stained glass St. Mary's is a feast for the eyes, and the choir will be a feast for the ears!

Admission is from €11.53. Proceeds will be donated to the Red Cross Ukraine Appeal and local charities. The event is sponsored by Youghal Credit Union

Place and time - Sun, 24 Apr 2022, 19:30 IST. St. Mary's Collegiate Church Youghal, Emmet Place, P36 AH64 Youghal

## **Enniskillen 'A Requiem for All' on Palm Sunday**

**As the local arts scene continues to emerge from "hibernation" as Covid-19 restrictions continue to ease, members of Fermanagh Choral Society are looking forward to their upcoming performance on Palm Sunday. Jessica Campbell writes in the Impartial Reporter.**

Fermanagh Choral Society was one of very few choirs in Northern Ireland to continue rehearsing throughout the pandemic, with members getting to grips with the vagaries of Zoom calls and microphone settings.

The choir posted a number of online performances through 2020 into 2021 and finally managed their first live performance in two years when they presented a Christmas Concert in St. Macartin's Cathedral last December.

Things have gone from strength to strength since then and the choral society are ready, once again, to welcome a live audience as they perform 'A Requiem for All' on Palm Sunday, April 10, in St. Michael's Church at 7.30pm.

The Society's Musical Director, David Robertson, explained: "The choir committee felt that our first full concert with

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orchestra in well over two years should be both accessible and uplifting.

"Accessible in that we want to give as many people as possible the chance to rediscover the power and beauty of Classical music after this period of enforced absence, and uplifting as we all need some inspiration after such a turbulent few years - a sentiment that also seems especially fitting giving current world events.

A poster for an Easter Dawn Service. The background features a stylized landscape with rolling hills in shades of brown and tan. A large, bright yellow sun is rising over the horizon, partially obscured by three black crosses of varying heights. The text 'EASTER' is written in large, bold, black capital letters at the top left. Below it, 'DAWN SERVICE' is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font, arched over the sun. At the bottom, the text reads: 'with Archbishop John McDowell and praise led by St Mark's Portadown's worship group.' Below that, the date and time are 'Sunday 17th April | 6:30am', the location is 'The Argory, Moy, BT71 6NA', and the contact information is 'For more information - 07557655860'. In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for 'AYaC' (Armagh Youth & Children) with a small 't' in a circle next to the 'C'.

"So I felt a selection of well-known movements from famous sacred works would be a perfect fit. I also made sure to choose movements that followed the contours of a traditional Requiem, but with an emphasis on comfort and hope."

'The

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Requiem for All' contains movements from Requiems by Mozart, Fauré, Rutter and Karl Jenkins, as well as movements from sacred works by Bach, Handel and John Stainer. Their sequencing closely follows that of a traditional Requiem Mass, though with some minor additions.

There were a few movements, such as 'I know that my redeemer liveth' from Handel's Messiah and Stainer's 'God so loved the World' that David says he "just couldn't leave out".

## **Bishop Alan McGuckian launches new Pastoral Plan for the Diocese of Raphoe**

**At 7.00pm Mass on 31 March, in the Cathedral of Saint Eunan and Saint Columba in the heart of Letterkenny, Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ launched 'Forward Together/Ar Aghaidh le Chéile' a new Pastoral Plan for the Diocese of Raphoe for the years 2022 – 2024.**

A small group of priests, religious and lay faithful under the chairmanship of Father Michael McKeever have been working on the plan throughout the pandemic. With the support and facilitation of Jim Deeds, the group presented a draft document to Bishop McGuckian during the summer of 2021.

Bishop McGuckian recommended the plan to the diocese with the conviction that it will foster a truly synodal spirit of cooperation between priests and people in the parishes and across the diocese.



At the launch, Bishop McGuckian pointed to three different dimensions under the headings of Structure, Mission and Planning.

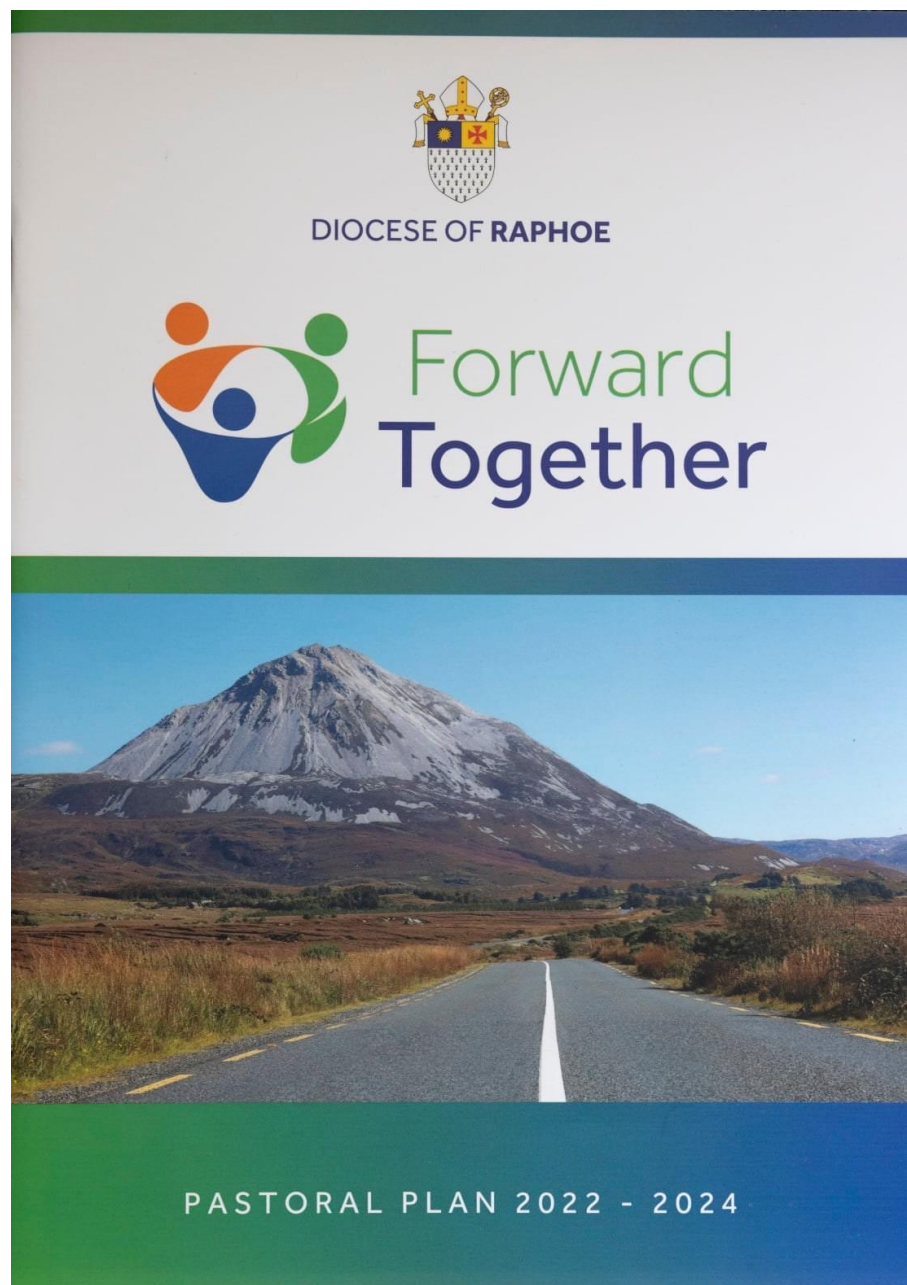
The Bishop of Raphoe said, “A key element in the structure of a synodal church will be well-formed Parish Pastoral Councils. For that reason a priority for us in this first year will be the training and formation – or the renewal – of effective Parish Pastoral Councils in as many parishes as possible. As bishop I have relied greatly on the support and hard work of our interim Diocesan Pastoral Council to bring the plan to this point. I can see what a gift a good Pastoral Council can be.”

“It is essential for the missionary outreach of the diocese that we form ourselves in a deep knowledge of the Faith. Only people who have come to know Christ deeply as he

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reveals himself in Word and Sacrament will be able to proclaim Him effectively to others. Our Plan proposes a renewal of faith formation across the ages with an emphasis on children and young adults.”

Bishop McGuckian continued, “As regards our planning for the future, the Plan will involve a serious review of the whole diocese on the basis of which we will have to discern how best to proceed into the future. We will want to do that in a prayerful, discerning way, with our full emphasis on identifying the future into which God is calling us. The future decline in the number of priests is a big worry for many people as they worry about the effects of this on their own parishes. We will have to face into the realities as we find them with hope in God and an openness to His will. It is important that we are open to change and that





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people know that they are key to the process. The formation of Parish Pastoral Councils, and other councils, will be central to this.

Plans are not made to sit on shelves and with that in mind the bishop pointed out that there is already a date in the diary for the parishes of the western deanery to come together and begin working towards the formation of new Parish Pastoral Councils. The emphasis in the Plan on faith formation for young people is reflected in the current series of 'Prayer and Praise' night-time gatherings organised by Connor Duncan in the Diocesan Pastoral Centre.

Bishop McGuckian concluded, "The Plan is only a start and I invite all parishioners to reflect deeply on it, and to ask yourself what the Lord is saying to you in it and then to be charitably stubborn in your insistence so that all of us will work with the Plan and put it into effect".

### **Quotations from the Diocesan plan -**

People who have come to know Christ deeply, as He reveals Himself in Word and Sacrament, will be able to proclaim Him effectively to others. Our Plan proposes a renewal of faith formation across the ages with an emphasis on children and young adults.

The future decline in the number of priests is a big worry for many people as they worry about the effects of this on their own parishes.

## **Retirement insight from minister of First Ballymena Presbyterian Church**

**Rev William Sinclair will retire as minister of First Ballymena Presbyterian Church at the end of April 2022.**

William was installed at the Meetinghouse Lane fellowship on 8th September 2006, arriving from Strain Presbyterian in Newtownards with his wife, Allison and daughters, Laura and Jill, who were teenagers at that time.

Without doubt, William's ministry in First Ballymena has been characterised with modernisation and development. He has, however, been respectful of the rich Christian heritage there, which was evident to him from his first day.

Looking back, William remembers: "There was a sense of history as I came through the doors; on the wall as you come in it says 1627 and you realise that this is a Church that has been here for a very long time. I felt a really strong sense of call to First Ballymena. As I look back on it now, I would say it started several years before I came. When the call eventually came, I sensed that if I said 'no' to this I was saying 'no' to God, so I took the step."

The last sixteen years have been a period of unprecedented development in First Ballymena.

A newly built modern 'Hub' area has enabled the Meetinghouse and the Church Hall to become physically connected. This facility has also become an ideal space to

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welcome people, to hold informal midweek meetings or Alpha courses.

William has also enjoyed being part of the thriving outreach programmes at First Ballymena.

He said: “It started with Spark and then we have Olive Hall who leads outreach work. She has made amazing inroads into this community and its needs. We are starting to see others come behind her now because we want to have a passion for Jesus and a compassion for people.

“I came to a congregation that had its fair share of hurts and division and my aim during my first five years was to bring everyone together and I think under God that happened.”

William went on to say: “I think just how He enabled my relationship with the congregation to grow. It is not just the Minister and congregation; I see it as one family. I wanted this Church to be my family and to be part of it. I think as well just to see how God has worked and when we took risks, God blessed them.”

The latter years of William’s ministry have been characterised by a spirit of rejuvenation. This has been most evident in the adaptation of Alpha as a key outreach tool, a course which has enabled the congregation to re-engage with young families in a powerful way.

William added: “We wanted to redress the generational balance between older people and young families. Alpha has helped with this. We also brought in Matthew Boyd whose brief is to ‘connect and consolidate’ – connect with those who are not here yet and to consolidate the faith of

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young adults and families and deepen it. The building work is also part of this rejuvenation and make us into a 21st century church.”

## **Tributes to 'vivacious' Dorinda, Lady Dunleath, after death aged 92**

**Dorinda, Lady Dunleath, who has died aged 92, was a well-known figure in the Ballywalter area, where she had an interest in the arts and community life, Alf McCreary writes in the Belfast Telegraph**

She was the widow of Henry, 4th Baron Dunleath, who died in 1993. They had no children

Dorinda Margery Dunleath was born in Knock in 1930.

She was the daughter of Lieutenant-General Arthur Percival and Betty, the daughter of Thomas McGregor-Greer and his wife Dorinda, from Cookstown.

She moved with her parents to England, where she was educated.

When she returned to Northern Ireland her maternal grandparents were still in Cookstown.

In her early life she was known as Margery, but when she became a teenager she chose to use her mother's name. With her husband she helped run the estate at Ballywalter and was popular in the community. She also had extensive

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outside interests, being fond of horses and a member of the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society.

She ran the Dorinda Dunleath Charitable Trust after the death of her husband, who founded it.

She was deeply interested in architecture and church life. Like her husband, she was a member of the Church of Ireland. She also had an interest in organ music, including the welfare and upkeep of the magnificent Mulholland Organ in the Ulster Hall, which was financed in the mid-19th century by the Mulholland family and named after Arthur Mulholland, a former Lord Mayor of Belfast.

His great-great grandson Henry, Dorinda's husband, oversaw its restoration in the 1970s.

Lady Dorinda was a supporter of the Ulster Orchestra and a board member at one time.

Former orchestra chairman Stratton Mills said: "I am very sorry to hear about Dorinda's death. She and her husband were strong supporters of the Arts in Northern Ireland. She regularly attended Ulster Orchestra concerts and she was an influential member of the board for a number of years."

Following the death of her husband Lady Dunleath moved away from the Ballywalter Estate and designed and built a new home, Killyvolgan House.

In her later years she developed a degenerative eye disease and spent time in the Somme Nursing Home.

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Her brother Brigadier James Percival, who lives in Dorset, said: “Dorinda was always a very vivacious person who loved life. She had a great sense of humour and everyone warmed to her greatly.

“She liked people, they liked her, and she contributed greatly to the local community. I spent 37 years in the Army, which included a great deal of travel overseas, while Dorinda lived in Northern Ireland. However, we were very close as brother and sister and we always kept in touch.”

A private funeral for her family and friends will take place this week. A service of thanksgiving will be announced in due course.

Lady Dunleath is survived by her sister-in-law Ann, niece Lucinda Lady Acton, nephew Justin Percival, and cousins Suzie and Charles.

## **Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books**

### **Book - Women of Holy Week**

'Women of Holy Week', written by Paula Gooder, explores Holy Week through the eyes of nine female characters she imagines accompanying Jesus during these momentous days.

Church House Bookshop are selling copies with a limited time discount until 15 April, order at [cofe.io/WOHW-CHP](https://cofe.io/WOHW-CHP).

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During Holy Week, Church House Bookshop will also be sharing stories from this book on Instagram. Search [@thechurchofengland](https://www.instagram.com/thechurchofengland) on Instagram to follow along.

## **Palm Sunday for Minecraft fans**

if you have any Minecrafters in your club or family then this is a great little video explaining what happened on Palm Sunday. <http://ow.ly/EZOF50IzAbZ>

## **Perspective**

### **Organised religion provides balance to uncritical acceptance of facile ‘groupthink’ by Archbishop Eamon Martin**

**Cardinal Newman once observed that if religion tends towards a “sentiment and a taste”, and if it “is the right of each individual to make it say just what strikes his fancy” then such religion becomes “so personal” and “so private” that we must of necessity ignore it. In his *Apologia pro Vita Sua* he wrote: “Religion, as a mere sentiment, is to me a dream and a mockery.”**

The hallmarks of organised religion include gathering for communal prayer, collective action, leadership, doctrine and tradition. Once these aspects are downplayed then what remains is ultimately the individual’s feelings, a disparate collection of voices and a vague sense of being “spiritual”.

Organised religion, on the other hand, brings a coherent corpus of teaching which is the fruit of centuries of reflection on revelation, and of dialogue between faith and reason.

The principles of Catholic social doctrine, for example, set out fundamental truths about the human person and his/her destiny while leaving latitude to individuals to pursue the common good in concrete circumstances.

Despite sustained efforts to confine it to the private sphere, organised religion continues to play a major role in local and global discourse on the common good. It offers a challenging – hopefully prophetic – voice and provides an important balance to the uncritical acceptance of facile “groupthink”.

Internally, its authority serves as a bulwark against privatised interpretations of religion which sometimes morph into fanatical distortions, extremism and violent fundamentalism.

Coleridge spoke of religion as a kind of “compensating counterforce”; a “perpetual friendly opposition”. In the midst of an ever-shifting consensus in society, organised religion seeks to build a stable foundation by upholding and defending fundamental values and non-negotiable ethical principles – not in a bid to stifle freedom, but to protect it against moral relativism.

The Catholic Church is often excoriated in fulfilling this role, especially when she speaks in favour of the sanctity of human life or the nature of marriage, but she might equally



encounter opposition when stressing the preferential option for the poor or the need for responsible stewardship of creation.

At the heart of Christianity is charity – the love for your neighbour, inspired by God’s love for us. Organised religion brings added value to individual acts of charity; it has the capacity for a collective response to need; it is unafraid to assert the voice of “the other”, and to direct its members to reach beyond the confines of the self in a spirit of solidarity and common purpose.

The church’s historic commitment to founding and operating social services such as schools, hospitals and universities speaks to this communal spirit of charity, mission and often heroic outreach at the service of humanity – especially towards the poor and vulnerable, and those who cannot defend themselves.

Organised religion also builds on the natural human desire and need for belonging and communion. During the Covid-19 pandemic, we witnessed the importance of inter-connectedness and inter-dependence.

Gathering together in faith offers a crucial community of support and accompaniment; in moments of crisis it helps us confront together the most emotionally-charged problems of life such as the mystery of suffering and the inevitability of our death.

Many people today are declaring themselves as “nones” – people of no religion – while still identifying as “spiritual”. To move in this way beyond organised religion is to invert the

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whole idea of religion – instead of faith as the reception by humanity of what God has revealed, we end up with the notion of a religion centred on humanity which reimagines God in humanity's own image.

We are not atomised individuals who have been created, and then abandoned, by God to plough our own furrow. Each of us is loved by God who took flesh for our sake and who wishes to share his life with us while we journey together on Earth.

The church is the vessel that gathers God's people together and communicates God's closeness to us.

It is understandable that believers become disaffected when religion is corrupted by power and institutional failings. Although all organisations have shortcomings and can fail, people are rightly shocked and disillusioned when the core values of the Gospel are undermined by infidelity, sin and sometimes even horrific crimes.

That is why organised religion must continually be open to repentance, renewal and conversion.

Church leaders would do well to keep in mind Chesterton's remark that "the Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult, and left untried".

Religious community can only regain its attractiveness when its leaders and members are true to their calling and coherent in their witness. This is the challenge that continually lies before me, and all of us in organised religion.

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Archbishop Eamon Martin is Catholic Primate of All Ireland. This is an edited version of his address opposing the motion 'This house would move beyond organised religion' at a recent Oxford Union debate.' The motion was defeated.

Courtesy The Irish Times April 4, 2022

## Poem for today

### As You Go Through Life by Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Don't look for the flaws as you go through life;  
And even when you find them,  
It is wise and kind to be somewhat blind  
And look for the virtue behind them.  
For the cloudiest night has a hint of light  
Somewhere in its shadows hiding;  
It is better by far to hunt for a star,  
Than the spots on the sun abiding.

The current of life runs ever away  
To the bosom of God's great ocean.  
Don't set your force 'gainst the river's course  
And think to alter its motion.  
Don't waste a curse on the universe--  
Remember it lived before you.  
Don't butt at the storm with your puny form,  
But bend and let it go o'er you.

The world will never adjust itself

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To suit your whims to the letter.  
Some things must go wrong your whole life long,  
And the sooner you know it the better.  
It is folly to fight with the Infinite,  
And go under at last in the wrestle;  
The wiser man shapes into God's plan  
As water shapes into a vessel.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## Church News Ireland

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