

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – St Patrick's friendly dog**

## Image of the day

### St Patrick's friendly dog

Snow day! Gavan Woods the CEO at St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, brought his beautiful Millie to visit the Cathedral last week. The staff consensus was "We think she had a ball 🐾 we're hoping she comes back to us regularly."

## News reports

### Ballycastle minister John Stanbridge uses frankincense to 'scent' a message about African famine

**A Ballycastle church leader is raising awareness of the hunger crisis raging in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya by hanging a bag of frankincense on his Christmas tree this festive season.**

Rev John Stanbridge, minister of Ballycastle Presbyterian Church, hopes his gesture of solidarity will also encourage people to give a gift this Christmas to support the work of Christian Aid Ireland as they respond to the severe drought in the Horn of Africa where more than 23 million people are short of food after five failed rainy seasons.

Frankincense is a fragrant resin obtained from trees native to the Horn of Africa and is famous as one of the gifts given to the baby Jesus by the three wise men.



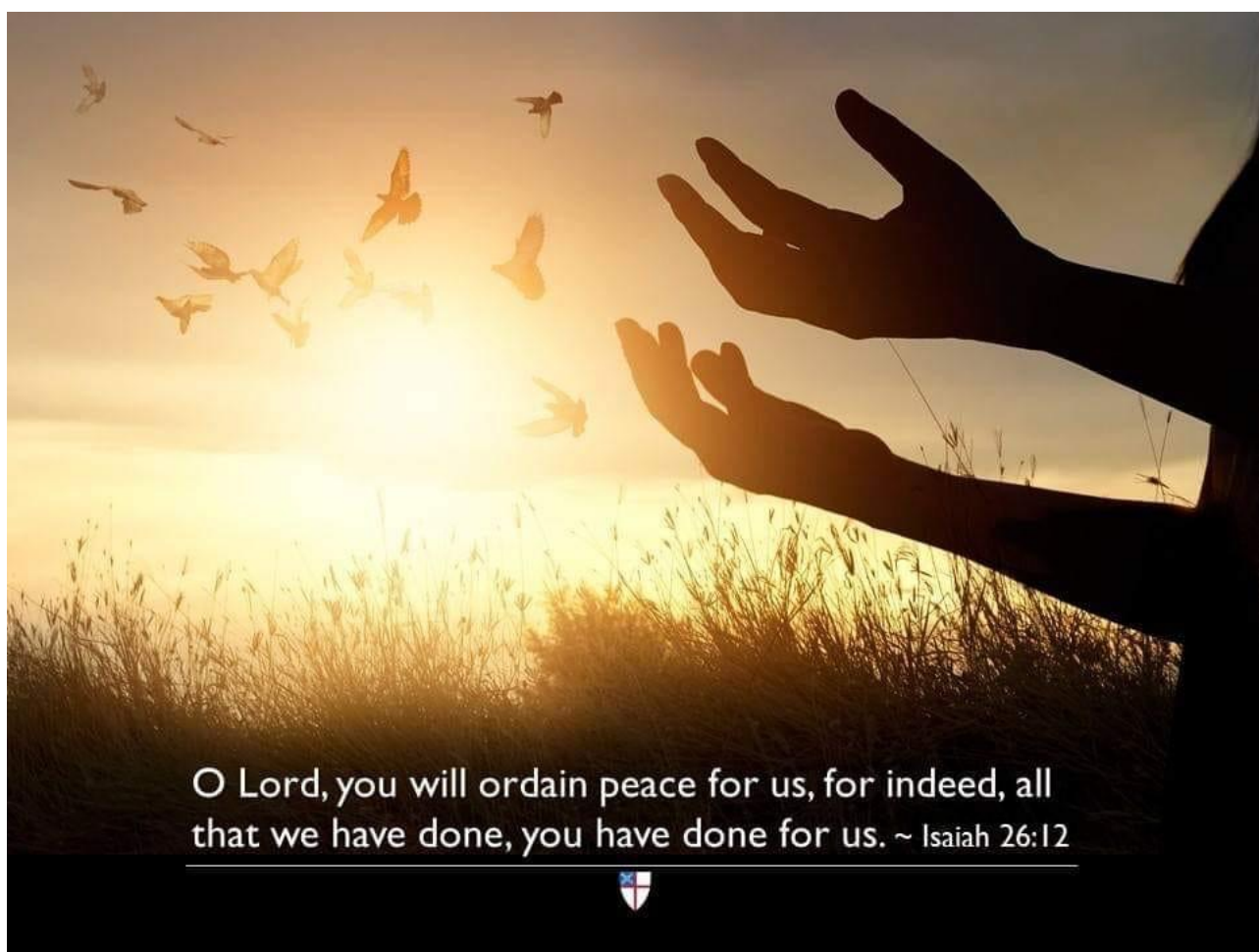
December 12, 2022

Aid agencies are warning that the worst drought to hit the Horn of Africa in 40 years has created conditions that are pushing millions close to famine in the hardest-hit regions. People are being forced to take desperate measures to survive in the face of extreme hunger as the drought causes failed harvests and livestock deaths as well as water shortages. The severe conditions are being made worse by the climate crisis and the war in Ukraine which has caused food prices to rise and badly impacted grain exports to the region.



Working through local partners, Christian Aid is responding in Ethiopia and Kenya, helping over 300,000 people by repairing wells, handing out water purification kits, providing cash support, trucking water to drought-affected communities as well as providing fodder and veterinary medicine to keep valuable livestock alive.

Christian Aid Ireland Chief Executive Rosamond Bennett thanked Rev John for raising awareness of the crisis. Rosamond travelled to the region in the summer to see for herself the hardship caused by the drought.



○ Lord, you will ordain peace for us, for indeed, all that we have done, you have done for us. ~ Isaiah 26:12



December 12, 2022

She said: "In northern Kenya, we drove over several bridges but none of the rivers had any water. They were just wide, empty tracts of sand and dust. The landscape was littered with carcasses. Weakened by hunger and thirst, the animals had died where they stood - goats and cattle mainly but even the camels, the ships of the desert, had succumbed to this harshest of droughts."

To support Christian Aid's work this Christmas, please visit [<https://www.northernirelandworld.com/news/people/ballycastle-minister-john-stanbridge-uses-frankincense-to-scent-a-message-about-african-famine-3948715>]

## **Catholic Primate hits out at plan to ban protests outside abortion clinics**

**Ireland's most senior Catholic cleric has backed anti-abortion protesters who hold demonstrations outside maternity hospitals and GP clinics, saying it is "perfectly reasonable" to want to try to reach women who may be about to end a pregnancy.**

Primate of All Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin condemned plans to ban such vigils and protests.

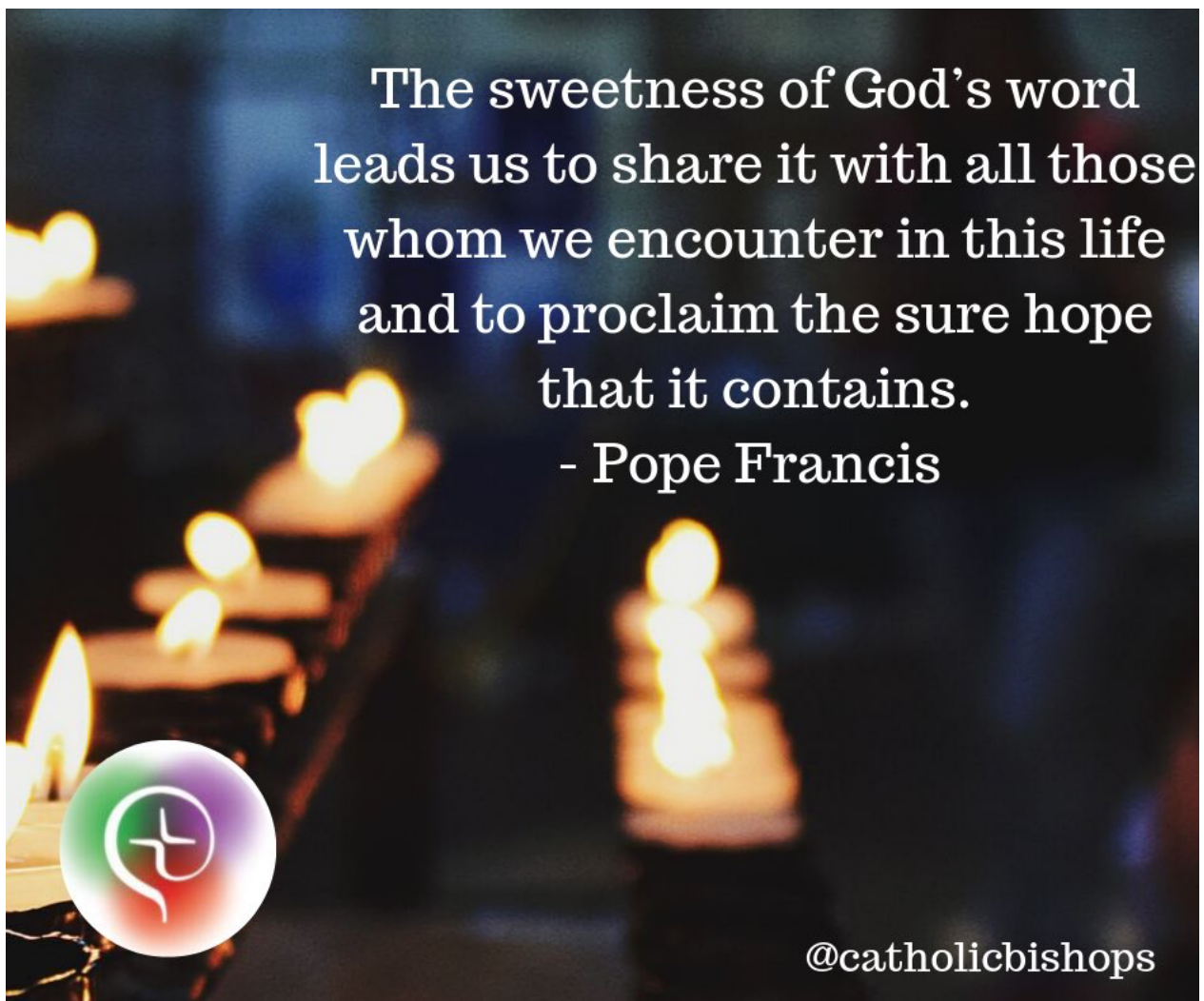
He said the law would silence the "voice of the innocent unborn".

Archbishop Martin was speaking after the UK Supreme Court this week cleared the way for Northern Ireland to ban protests outside clinics.

The Irish Government has already promised to pass a similar law in the south, and the Department of Health is working with the Attorney General to try to ensure the proposal will be able to withstand legal challenges.

Yesterday Archbishop Martin claimed that implementing such a ban on anti-abortion demonstrations would be “tantamount to enforcing a ban on pro-life activities, including prayer and respectful witness”.

“Buffer zones will further silence the voice of the innocent unborn,” he said.





“Given that the law already prevents harassment and intimidation, I believe the new legislation represents a disproportionate response with potentially wide implications for freedom of religion and speech.”

He said discussions around abortion in recent years had made people more aware of the “pressures” women experience in pregnancy, and many women can feel “isolated, neglected and alone in their distress”.

But he said these situations would not go away just because abortion was legal, or because “buffer zones” outside clinics ban demonstrations.

“Over the years many mothers in crisis have felt supported — sometimes at the very last minute — by a sensitive offer of practical help to find a way out of their crisis other than by ending the life of their unborn baby.

“It is perfectly reasonable to want to reach out in compassion to help vulnerable women and to be free to protect the life and well-being of both a mother and her unborn child.”

Anti-abortion activists in Ireland and across the world use different tactics to try to intercept or delay women who are trying to end a crisis pregnancy.

Some may pose as objective crisis pregnancy counselling services, to try to talk women out of ending their pregnancy or delay them until they no longer have a choice but to give birth. In Ireland such crisis pregnancy agencies are still not regulated.

December 12, 2022

Archbishop Martin said “harassment laws are already in place to prevent intimidation”.

“The Supreme Court judgment will increase fears that freedom of religion, belief, expression and association are being undermined and open to attack,” he added.

“The punitive sanctions being introduced will undermine the common good as they disproportionately shut down the rights of those who wish to peacefully and prayerfully offer support and alternative options and to save the lives of innocent unborn children.”

## **Lydia Monds appointed as CMH:I Ministry Leader**

**The Church’s Ministry of Healing: Ireland has appointed Lydia Monds as Ministry Leader.**

As Ministry Leader, Lydia will encourage and facilitate a healing ministry for parishes with no previous involvement, and will encourage those across the Church who already have healing ministry.

Rev Canon Lesley Robinson, the Chair of CMH:I, said: “I am excited and grateful that Lydia has accepted the position of Ministry Leader with CMH:I. She has a proven track record in all her previous positions in church life and brings wonderful gifts with her to be used in the service of Christ the Healer. I believe that with Lydia and our Operations Executive, Dr. Catherine Smith, working together from St Fin





January the future of the healing ministry throughout Ireland holds great promise.”

## **St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork**

Lydia writes: “I’m delighted to be taking up a role with the Church’s Ministry of Healing. More than ever, I believe this ministry is needed and has a valuable contribution to make and I look forward to being a part of that.”

Lydia holds a Masters in Intercultural Theology and Interreligious Studies and a Higher Diploma in Education. Recently, she qualified as a Forest School Leader, which focuses on engaging people in nature and all the benefits that brings. Lydia has worked as the Children’s Ministry development officer for the Sunday School Society for 8 years. She and the team focused on supporting children’s leaders and families in their own mental health, faith and wellbeing, particularly since the Pandemic. She was also the Education Advisor to the Church of Ireland Bishops’ Appeal for over 11 years. Most recently in this role she collaborated with the Mothers’ Union and Tearfund to design and run a parish training titled ‘Equipping the Church to take action and end domestic abuse’. Lydia is married to John and they have 2 sons, Cillian and Oisín.

Dr Catherine Smith said: “Like many in the Church, I have always admired the energy and compassion that Lydia brought to her work in Bishops’ Appeal, and the creativity and fun of her children’s ministry projects. I’m thrilled that we will both be part of the important work of healing ministry, particularly as CMH:I moves into its 91st year. The work that Dr Iva Beranek carried out during her years of working for CMH:I has laid a solid and compassionate foundation, and we are delighted that Dr Beranek is flourishing in her new job”.



December 12, 2022

To request a quiet day, retreat, or other event in your parish, or to discuss the setting up of a healing prayer group or the holding of a service of healing and wholeness, contact [catherine@ministryofhealing.ie](mailto:catherine@ministryofhealing.ie).

Go to the CMH:I website for further resources, including prayer cards for download and a new request facility for healing prayer for someone in need. You can also follow CMH:I on Facebook and Instagram for reflection, prayer, news, and healing meditations.

## North Connor rector instituted



At the Service of Institution in Billy Parish Church on Friday December 9 are, from left: Bishop George Davison, Mrs

December 12, 2022

Karen Haugh, the Rev Geoff Haugh, the Rev Malcolm Ferry (Rural Dean) and the Rev Graham Spence (preacher).

**The Rev Geoff Haugh was instituted as rector of the Parishes of Billy and Derrykeighan at a service in Billy Parish Church on Friday December 9.**

Geoff is married to Karen and they have four daughters, Laura, Judith, Rebekah and Melissa, and four grandchildren.

A native of the Birches, a townland between Dungannon and Portadown, Geoff, 55, is a past pupil of Killycomaine Junior High School and Portadown Technical College.

He served with Her Majesty's Forces in Northern Ireland for 17 years, and also worked in agriculture as a sale rep in animal medication and later animal nutrition.

Geoff began his ministry in 2013 as a deacon in Ballymore Parish, Tandragee, Diocese of Down and Dromore. He moved to St Philip and St James' Church, Holywood, also Down and Dromore, as curate in 2014.

Remaining in Down and Dromore, Geoff has been incumbent in Knocknamuckley Parish since June 2017.

Geoff was instituted by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison. The preacher at the service was the Rev Graham Spence, rector of Acton, Drumbanagher and Loughgilly, Diocese of Armagh.



## London cathedral dedicates chapel to victims of terrorism and violent crime



**Victims of violent crime and terrorism will be remembered in a newly dedicated Chapel of Reconciliation at Southwark Cathedral.**

The Bishop of Southwark, Christopher Chessun, and Bishop of Croydon, Rosemarie Mallett, dedicated the cathedral's Chapel of St Francis and St Elizabeth to Reconciliation in a service earlier this month.

Five years on from the London Bridge Terror Attack, Southwark Cathedral has joined the Community of the

December 12, 2022

Cross of Nails, in remembrance of all who have been victims of terrorism and violent crime.

Bishop Christopher said the Cathedral has also joined “as a pledge of our common commitment to work and pray for peace, justice and reconciliation.

“This we do through seeking to heal the wounds of violent crime, through learning to live with difference and to celebrate diversity, seeking to build a culture of peace.”



A large Cross of Nails, commissioned for the new Chapel of Reconciliation, stands on the altar. The Community of the Cross of Nails is an international Christian network working towards peace and reconciliation.



The Clewer Initiative contributed to a stained-glass panel entitled *We See You*, which was commissioned for the chapel by The Worshipful Company of Glaziers and The John Reyntiens Studio. It sits below the altar, depicting a motif on freedom from modern slavery. School children aided in its design. The Initiative is the Church of England's response to modern slavery.

Caroline Virgo, director of The Clewer Initiative, said: "Modern slavery is a huge global problem, one that won't be solved without people coming together.

"The conviction and energy young people bring are essential to tackling this challenge which is why we have created a range of school resources to teach young people about modern slavery.

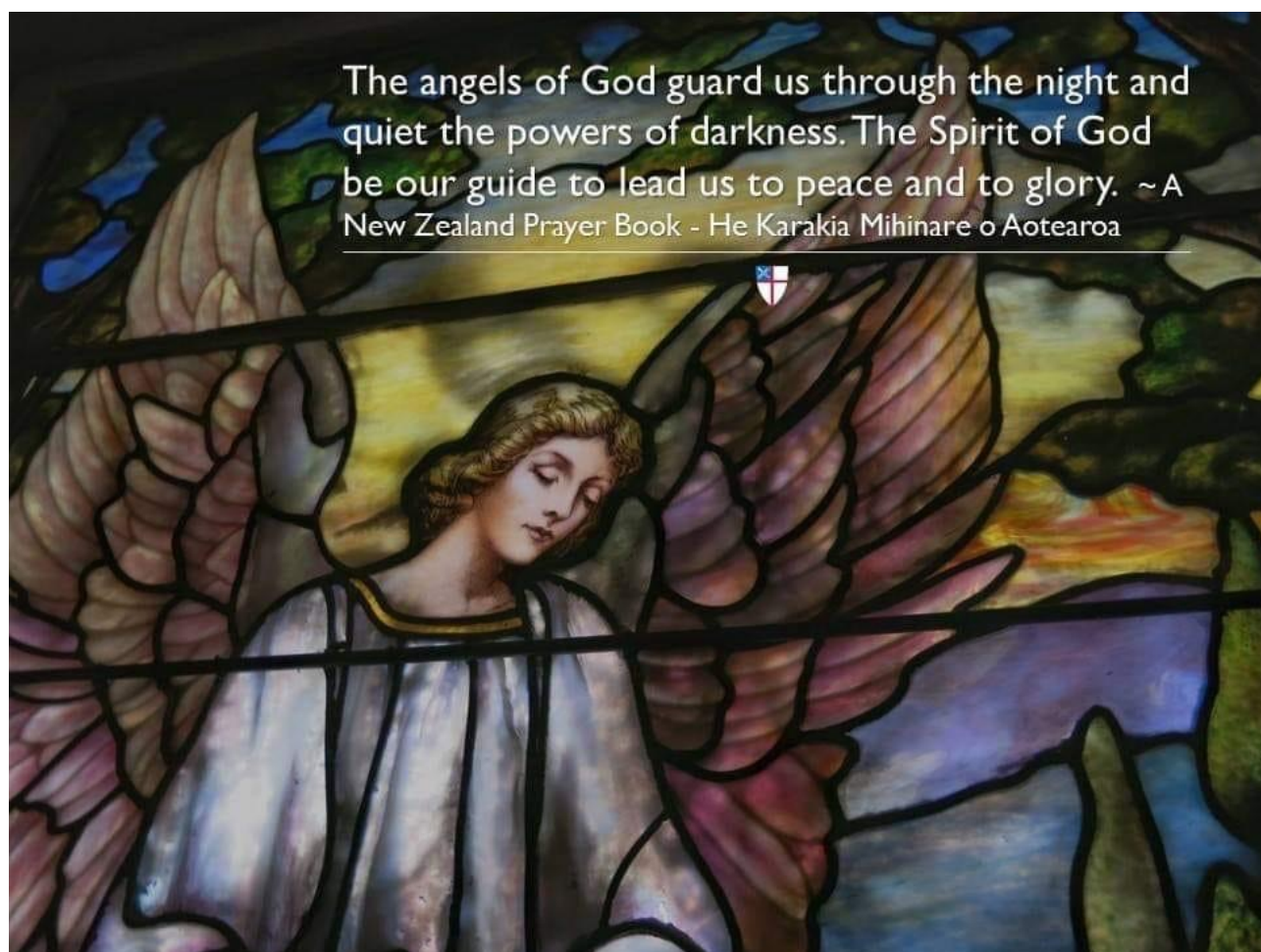


December 12, 2022

"We were thrilled that Southwark Cathedral used our resources to inspire school children across the diocese to create this stunning stained-glass panel. The panel perfectly encapsulates our strapline 'We See You' and is a powerful tool for raising awareness of modern slavery amongst visitors to Southwark Cathedral.

"Our hope is that the school children will take the learnings with them beyond this project and continue to care for and see the vulnerable in their communities as they grow."

The dedication of the Chapel came after Choral Evensong at which Bishop Christopher paid tribute to the victims of the London Bridge attack, saying: "We do so with great sadness and heavy hearts, remembering those who perished, those who endured life-changing injuries, those who were





December 12, 2022

traumatised along with their families, colleagues, and friends.

“But we do so with renewed sorrow because only last week two more young people from South London, Kearne Solanke and Charlie Bartolo, became themselves tragic victims of knife crime – and we pray for them and their families in their devastating loss and grief.”

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



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## **New free e-book edition of A History of St James's Church and Graveyard, Dublin**

The History of St James's Church and Graveyard, by historian and genealogist, Sean Murphy, is no longer in print and so the author has decided to make an e-book edition free for downloading at the link below. The book includes parallel histories of the Protestant and Catholic parishes of St James since the Reformation and features appendices listing both ministers and priests. There is much new research contained in the book, including a chapter on St James and Compostela, the fact that Dr Pearse Lyons was born in Inchicore, that about 100,000 people are buried in St James's Graveyard, mostly Catholics, and that the burials include Sir John Trail, architect of Kilmainham Gaol, James Power, founder of Power's Distillery, and of course nine members of Dr Lyons's family. Very importantly the book provides practical guidance for those who wish to check if someone is buried in St James's Graveyard.

[\[https://www.sjbmurphy.com/post/new-book-stjames-church-and-graveyard-dublin\]](https://www.sjbmurphy.com/post/new-book-stjames-church-and-graveyard-dublin)

# Poem for today

## Hope by Peter Skaller

As the apple of red was tasted  
A veil spread across the soul's eyes.  
Overcome by the sweetness  
The world beyond was viewed  
As through a cloud.

More sweetness, more colour craved,  
Until cloud so thickened  
Only wafting shadows were seen,  
Leading mind to conclude  
Nothing more was there.

Only delights and sufferings  
And shadows seemed sure.  
Faith ebbing, love too, till  
Truth-hunger's madness brought violence,  
Life-threatening wounds to the World.

But within cloud-gazer-souls'  
Abyssal dark depths  
A last living ember  
Flickers for those able  
To feel into deep stillness.

Once sensed, this soft Hope,  
This final force for future,  
Itself enlivens, begins musing anew.

December 12, 2022

By mystery Mary rises opening as pure pod,  
Enclosing mystery-conceived seed-Word.

“Hope is last to die,”  
Says a Russian proverb.  
In those where its embers still glow  
Life-support, gentle fanning, tending are needed  
That germ of Word leaf out and up.

Tending it ever so carefully  
Till born Word rends cloud-veil  
And world, now known Abode of God  
Swings doors open welcoming home  
All who in hope knock, and knock and knock.

by Rev. Peter Skaller December 11, 2011

## World Cup Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## 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](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)



December 12, 2022