

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Ukrainian Ambassador acknowledges Moville Parishes' support of refugees

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Ukrainian Ambassador acknowledges Merville Parishes' support of refugees

The Bishop's Curate in the Merville Group of Parishes, Rev Alan McCracken, has been acknowledged for his ministry among Ukrainian refugees who have fled the war in their homeland and settled in Inishowen in north Donegal.





Rev McCracken was invited to meet the Ukrainian ambassador to Ireland, Larysa Gerasko, when she visited the peninsula, recently, to meet families who were currently living in Donegal and those who had welcomed them to the community and helped them integrate.

Rev Alan and his wife, Karen, have made befriending those fleeing the war in Ukraine a key part of their ministry in Inishowen. "It can be hard for us to understand the plight of these refugees," Rev McCracken says, "the violence of the war they're fleeing; the trauma of being uprooted; arriving in a new country; getting used to new surroundings, new neighbours, a new culture. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus makes clear what he expects of us. As Christians, we are required to welcome the stranger in our midst.



(From left to right): Solomiia and Hanna Skoroopias of the Inishowen Ukrainian Arts & Crafts Group; H.E. Larysa Gerasko, the Ukrainian ambassador to Ireland; Rev Alan McCracken and Mrs Karen McCracken


"Karen and I have been happy to do that. In fact, we have been blessed, in return, for reaching out to our new neighbours, and made many wonderful new friendships that will, we are sure, prove lifelong."

Rev Alan and Karen have formed the Inishowen Ukrainian Arts & Crafts Group which meets regularly in two locations, St Eugene's Hall in Moville and the community centre in Quigley's Point. The project has been sponsored by the Benefact Trust. Recently the groups have been making Christmas gunks and Christmas cards which will be on sale

December 8, 2022

at the Mullan Hope Centre Christmas market. Proceeds will be donated to the Mica Crisis Fund.

The arts groups will continue to gather into the New Year, running different themed craft classes. Those in Moville are being led by Hanna Skoroopias, who comes from Ukraine, while the Quigley's Point classes are being taught by Rev Alan and Karen.



I wait for the Lord,
my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope.

I wait for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.

Psalm 130:5-6

THE ARCHBISHOP
OF CANTERBURY

December 8, 2022

The meeting with Ambassador Gerasko took place at Carndonagh Community School during an event attended by scores of Ukrainian refugees. The occasion was blessed with entertainment representative of both countries - with Ukrainian music and Irish dancing - and Hanna and her daughter, Solomiia, presented the ambassador with Irish-themed Christmas cards.

(from left to right): Solomiia and Hanna Skoroopias of the Inishowen Ukrainian Arts & Crafts Group; H.E. Larysa Gerasko, the Ukrainian ambassador to Ireland; Rev Alan McCracken and Mrs Karen McCracken

News reports

Christ Church Kilkeel opens new building

Congratulations to Christ Church Kilkeel who have celebrated the opening of their new Annex and welcome area which is a huge investment for both present and future generations.

The Bishop of Down & Dromore, Rt Rev David McClay, a former rector of the parish, dedicated the Annex at a special service on Sunday 4 December 2022.

The new build is multi-functional with a bright, double-height, glazed welcome area, kitchen, and accessible toilets on the same level as the church. There is a new entrance



into the worship space and a new stained-glass window featuring a lighthouse.

The lower level is accessed separately and includes the Parish Office, Rector's office, kitchen and toilets. A section of the building has been given over to the Cornerstone Foodbank which has its own reception area.

The vision for the new building is as a faith developing space, where before and after services people can meet for coffee and conversation, and where prayer ministry can be offered in a relaxed setting.

It will be used for courses like Alpha and also offers a modern space where young people can invite friends and do church in their own unique way. Young families are catered for with a facility to relay the services to a large screen.

The project cost approximately £320,000, almost all of which the congregation has already raised through generous giving and imaginative fundraising. The parish also applied for and received grants from Joseph Rank

December 8, 2022

Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation, Beatrice Laing Trust, and the Church of Ireland Priorities Fund.

Local building firm F.J.Charleton Ltd. carried out the work to their usual high standard!

Photo credits: Melissa Henderson. View more at - [\[https://www.downanddromore.org/news/gallery/701/opening-of-christ-church-kilkeel\]](https://www.downanddromore.org/news/gallery/701/opening-of-christ-church-kilkeel)

CITI Class of 2022 Graduation

Graduation ceremonies in Trinity College, Dublin resumed their pre–COVID character this year and it was a great joy to celebrate the achievement of the class of 2022 on 29th November.

Many features were familiar, but this time, the Registrar, Professor Neville Cox, prefaced proceedings with an address. He emphasised the character of rejoicing in every one of the achievements that have been marked this year (11,000 students have graduated), recognising the difficulties and challenges encountered by many candidates. If some of this gives rise to emotion, that is entirely appropriate. He spoke very generously of how the University of Dublin deeply cherishes its historic relationship with the Church of Ireland and, perhaps to the surprise of an audience both theological and secular, pointed to the Trinity, not just as an institutional title, but as the model of community under which this foundation lives its life. Degrees



Back L–R – Dr Katie Heffelfinger, Rev Alistair Doyle, Rev Andy Moore, Rev Alexander Chisnall, Rev Philip McKinley, Rev Dr Patrick McGlinchey, Dr Bridget Nichols

Front L–R– Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott (Director), Rev Johnny Lowden, Rev Jean Carney, Rev Elaine Pentland, Rev Martin Steele

were conferred by the Pro–Chancellor, former Chief Justice Frank Clarke.

Following the formalities, Professor Cox choreographed a lively photo session on the step of the Dining Hall. CITI said - We congratulate all who have successfully completed the MTh on their own achievement, and welcome them to the expanding extended community which is CITI.

Methodist Church's General Secretary becomes Cathedral's most recent Ecumenical Canon

From left: Bishop Richard Clarke, Canon Heather Morris, Canon Kenneth Milne, Archbishop John McDowell and Dean Shane Forster, at the Service of Installation in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh.

In an historic day on the Hill of Armagh, two new Canons were installed at St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral, on Sunday, 4th December.

The Revd Canon Dr Heather Morris, General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Ireland, became the Cathedral's most recent Ecumenical Canon and Canon Dr Kenneth Milne, well-known as the Church of Ireland's Historiographer with a long history in education and inter-church relations, formally took up his role as Lay Canon.

Both appointments were announced last summer, with Canon Milne succeeding the late Canon Dr Muriel McCarthy and Canon Morris succeeding the Revd Dr Tony Davidson, following his retirement. The Canons were installed by Archbishop John McDowell with the sermon preached by his predecessor, Bishop Richard Clarke.

In his sermon, Bishop Clarke spoke on John the Baptist, who was "clear that his identity is not his own proud possession but is to point on towards Jesus Christ" and who



Bishop Richard Clarke, Canon Heather Morris, Canon Kenneth Milne, Archbishop John McDowell and Dean Shane Forster, at the Service of Installation in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh.

had no middle ground... when it comes to truth and authenticity.” He concluded: “Without truth, both about ourselves, within ourselves and towards others, there can never be any authentic respect for anything or anyone, and yet it is only with respect that there can ever be real self-giving love, that beating heart of the Christian life.”

A portrait of Bishop Clarke was also unveiled in Church House, across from the Cathedral, after the service. Commending Canon Milne in the announcement of his appointment, Archbishop McDowell remarked that he has “helped keep alive an expansive vision of the role of the Church, in Ireland and in Europe, and I hope this canonry, in some small way, goes towards a recognition of the quiet wisdom and graciousness with which he has brought into

December 8, 2022

the treasury of the Church.” In his commendation of Canon Morris, he noted: “Heather is an eloquent preacher with a pastoral heart, who is genuinely interested in and committed to ecumenical outreach across this island, and I know that she will receive a warm welcome in her new role in Armagh.”

Religious thinkers deny Rwanda plan is un-Christian

Supporting the Government’s policy of sending asylum seekers to Rwanda is not an un-Christian act, leading religious thinkers have told the Archbishop of Canterbury.

In a pamphlet on the morality of asylum, they said it was legitimate for the Government to “offshore” asylum seekers in Rwanda to deter other migrants from making dangerous Channel crossings.

In the report by Policy Exchange, a centre-Right think tank, John Finnis, a Catholic philosopher, said there was nothing unethical or morally dubious about the policy.

The policy ‘may disappoint illegal asylum seekers ... but it is not lacking in care or compassion’

Nigel Biggar, an Anglican priest and Oxford professor, said care for a stranger – as the Gospels required – could involve settling asylum seekers in Rwanda.

December 8, 2022

Dr Michael Nazir Ali, a former bishop of Rochester who has since left Anglicanism for the Catholic church, said the case for sending illegally arriving migrants abroad was “strong” because of problems in removing them once they reached the UK.

He cited the Australian sovereign borders operation to place illegal migrants in Nauru and other Pacific islands, saying it had succeeded in deterring people from making dangerous sea journeys. The comments come ahead of a House of Lords debate to be convened on Friday by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby, in which he is expected to criticise the Rwanda policy.

The Archbishop has said that subcontracting the United Kingdom’s responsibilities out to Rwanda is “the opposite of the nature of God”.

Prof Bigger said Church leaders, including the Archbishop, risked implying that they support open borders and appear to overlook the significance of the unlawful Channel crossings.

He said the policy “aims to remove the incentive that motivates the criminal and dangerous smuggling of people” across the Channel, adding: “Such a policy may be firmly deterrent and it may disappoint illegal asylum seekers by denying them permanent residence in the UK but it is not lacking in care or compassion.”

Prof Finnis said the Archbishop’s proposals for “safe and legal” routes would not resolve the problem as there were far more refugees than the UK could admit and disappointed

applicants would still have the option of unlawfully crossing the Channel.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Vatican Council Memories by Bishop Michael Smith

About the Book: Pope John XXIII's announcement on 25 January 1959, just three months after his election as pope, of his intention to convoke an ecumenical council came as a great surprise to all.

The Second Vatican Council officially opened on 11 October 1962, welcoming more than two thousand bishops from across the world to Rome for what would become one of the most influential events in the history of the Catholic Church.

In *Vatican Council Memories*, Bishop Michael Smith revisits his experiences as a young student of the Pontifical Irish College in Rome invited to join a small group tasked with creating the official record of the events of the Council. This book offers readers a unique insight into the Council's many remarkable moments, decisions and debates, highlighting the significant figures, including the many Irish participants, who helped shape this historic event.

About the Author: Bishop Michael Smith is bishop emeritus of Meath and a native of Oldcastle in County Meath. Following an education at the Pontifical Irish College, Rome,

December 8, 2022

he was ordained a priest in 1963. He served in the cathedral parish of Mullingar and as chaplain to St Loman's Hospital. He was ordained auxiliary bishop of Meath in 1984 and coadjutor bishop in 1988.

Vatican Council Memories by Bishop Michael Smith
Binding: Perfect bound (Paperback). Size: 215 mm x 138 mm
Pages: 208 pp
Publisher: Veritas Publications. €19.99 | £17.50
[<https://www.veritasbooksonline.com/vatican-council-memories-9781800970113-46753/>]

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December 8, 2022

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Poem for today

Winter-Time

by Robert Louis Stevenson, (1850 - 1894)

Late lies the wintry sun a-bed,
A frosty, fiery sleepy-head;
Blinks but an hour or two; and then,
A blood-red orange, sets again.

Before the stars have left the skies,
At morning in the dark I rise;
And shivering in my nakedness,
By the cold candle, bathe and dress.

Close by the jolly fire I sit
To warm my frozen bones a bit;
Or with a reindeer-sled, explore
The colder countries round the door.

December 8, 2022

When to go out, my nurse doth wrap
Me in my comforter and cap;
The cold wind burns my face, and blows
Its frosty pepper up my nose.

Black are my steps on silver sod;
Thick blows my frosty breath abroad;
And tree and house, and hill and lake,
Are frosted like a wedding-cake.

World Cup Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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