

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – signs of spring in Armagh

Image of the day

Signs of spring at St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh

People and places

Irish Methodists contribute to mission and outreach in Sierra Leone

Through World Mission Partnership, Irish Methodists have sent a financial gift of £28,000 to the Methodist Church in Sierra Leone. This sum will be used to purchase a Connexional vehicle to further mission and outreach in the country.

The President of the Methodist Church in Ireland Rev Dr Sahr Yambasu, who is from Sierra Leone and serves as Ministerial Treasurer of World Mission Partnership, received this message of thanks from Rev. Mark Komba Ngobeh, Presiding Bishop of Methodist Church Sierra Leone:

“I greet in the name of our Lord and Saviour, the Christ.

“We have received the money.

“On behalf of the entire membership of MCSL and on my personal behalf I say thank you very much and convey our thanks to the entire membership of Methodist church in Ireland. We will use the money for the intended purpose.

“May the Lord bless us all, Mark

Methodist President visits Mayor of Belfast

Following visit to the City Hall by the the President, Councillor Kate Nicholl the Lord Mayor commented, “I really enjoyed spending time with the President of the Methodist Church Rev Dr Sahr John Yambasu this afternoon - we talked about a range of issues and the importance of connectedness, inclusiveness and gratitude.”

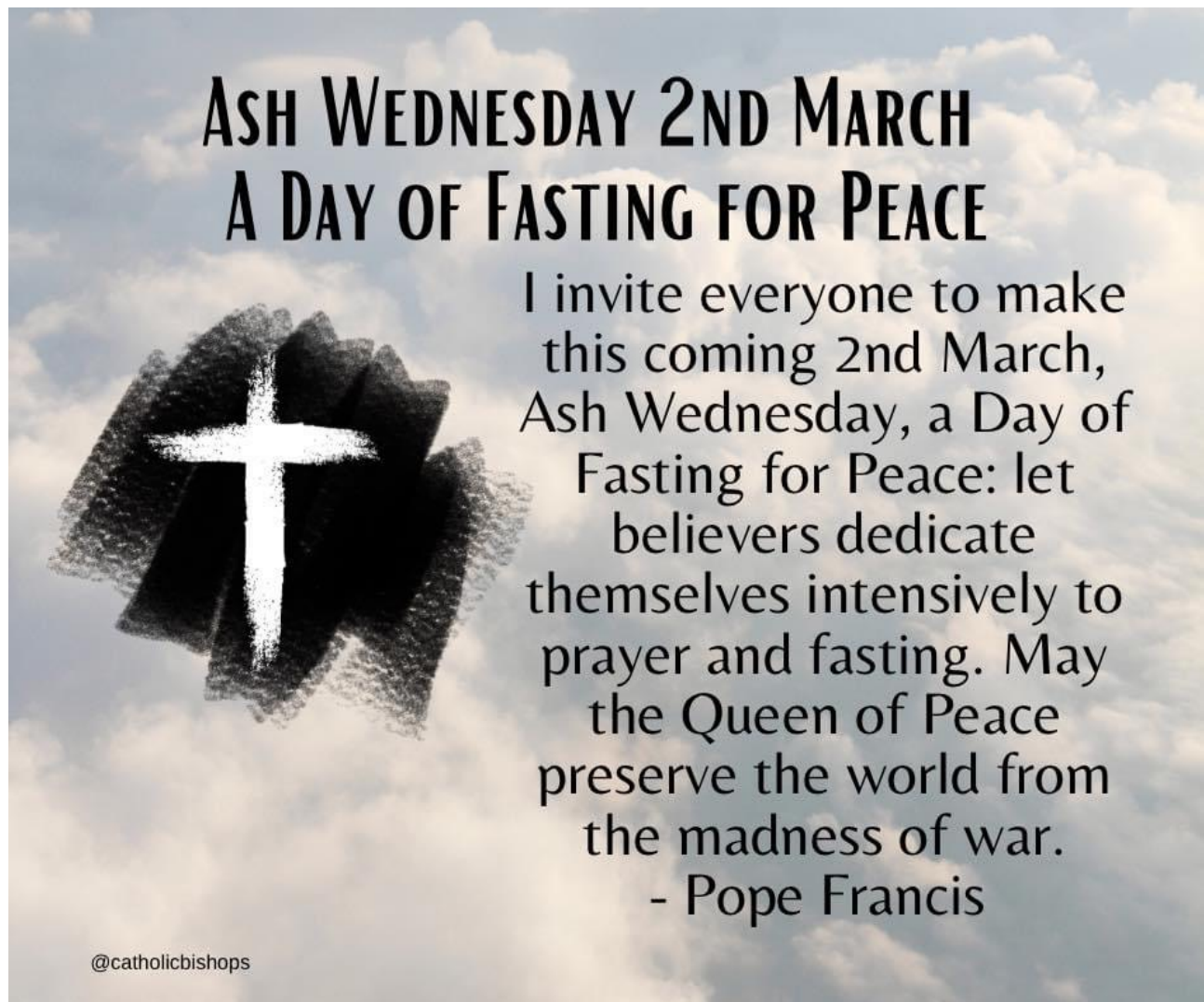


Healer Prayer Services resume in St Ann's, Dublin

Healer Prayer Services resumed at St Ann's Church Dawson Street today after an absence of almost two years. Archbishop Michael Jackson celebrated Holy Communion to

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mark the occasion. Healing prayer will be available every Tuesday at 12.45pm. All welcome.



ASH WEDNESDAY 2ND MARCH
A DAY OF FASTING FOR PEACE

I invite everyone to make this coming 2nd March, Ash Wednesday, a Day of Fasting for Peace: let believers dedicate themselves intensively to prayer and fasting. May the Queen of Peace preserve the world from the madness of war.
- Pope Francis

@catholicbishops

Make Ash Wednesday, a Day of Fasting for Peace - Pope Francis

He's asking believers to dedicate themselves intensively to prayer and fasting. Pope Francis is inviting everyone to make this coming 2nd March, Ash Wednesday, a Day of Fasting for Peace. He's asking believers to dedicate themselves intensively to prayer and fasting. He also asks the Queen of Peace to preserve the world from the madness of war. #prayforpeace

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"For several weeks, we have been watching the escalating tensions and military activity along the border between Russia and Ukraine with grave concern. We condemn the invasion of Ukraine and pray in solidarity with all children of God who are now in harm's way. I invite you to pray with me for peace—and for a world where we all join hands and 'strive for justice and peace and respect the dignity of every human being.'" - Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry

Young Clogher parishioner to attend Service of Thanksgiving for the Late HRH Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh

Christopher Hunter, (right) a parishioner of Derryvullen North, has the honour of representing the Army Cadet Force at the Service of Thanksgiving for the Late HRH Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh



Her Majesty The Queen has approved a Service of Thanksgiving for the life of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh at Westminster Abbey on 29th

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March and the Lord Chamberlain's Office has invited 9 Army Cadet Force Cadets and 1 x Adult Instructor from throughout the United Kingdom.

This will be an important event that will celebrate the life of the Duke of Edinburgh. He had been Colonel in Chief of the ACF for 68 years. The Army Cadet contingent will be representative of cadets from across the UK and Cdt Cpl Christopher Hunter has been selected as the single representative for the Army Cadet Force from throughout Northern Ireland.

This is a considerable honour and responsibility for Cdt Cpl Hunter as he will not only be representing his detachment, Enniskillen Open, his Company and Battalion and the Army Cadet Force throughout Northern Ireland but also the Royal Irish Regiment as he wears the Green Hackle on parade at Westminster.

Limerick Cathedral Community Awards presented

The recipients of the 2021 Cathedral Community Awards Scheme are Ms Ann Curley; Ms Dolores O'Meara; Ms Mary Keogh and Mr Mohamed Ferhat. The Dean of Limerick, the Very Revd Niall Sloane said that the four individuals were presented with the award for their service to the city and its people. The Awards Scheme, which was established in 2018, aims to highlight the 'unsung heroes' of Limerick. This year's awards were presented by the Mayor of Limerick in the Cathedral on last Sunday evening.

News reports

Be mindful of the most vulnerable, says CofE as restrictions lift

The Bishop of London has cautioned churches to remember the most vulnerable as Covid restrictions lift.

The Prime Minister announced earlier this week that all remaining Covid restrictions would be ending as part of the government's "Living with Covid" plan.

From today, Thursday, people with Covid will no longer be legally required to self isolate, and routine contact tracing will end.

Bishop Sarah Mullally, who chairs the Church of England's Covid Recovery Group, said that "there may be good reason" for individuals and local churches to continue taking some measures despite legal restrictions lifting.

"The Prime Minister's announcement that Covid-19 restrictions are being lifted holds out the hopeful prospect of the end of the pandemic but will nonetheless raise concerns for some," she said.

She added, "I am conscious that some people with medical conditions will be more fearful now that compulsory isolation for those who are likely to be infectious is ending and we should not lose our focus on the most vulnerable."



The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, is a former Chief Nursing Officer with 35 years of experience in the NHS. She chaired the Church of England's Covid Recovery Group during the pandemic. (Photo: Church of England)

The bishop said the pandemic has had "a major impact" on people's wellbeing and that "the need to look out for each other is as great if not greater than ever".

But she also thanked the NHS and frontline workers, and paid tribute to the many people "who have made huge sacrifices" during the pandemic, including clergy, parish volunteers and congregations.

And she expressed thanks for the vaccine.

"Your actions - whether noticed or unnoticed, big or small - have been the glue which has held our communities and our nation together during this time of great need," she said.

She added, "We've much to be thankful for - not least the vaccines which have been a real answer to prayer. They are more vital than ever, both here and around the world."

Online worship in rural parish has deepened prayer life and increased numbers

'There is a real, tangible sense of God's presence' - the rural parish that has deepened its prayer life through online services.

Online worship in the rural parish of Ainsty, west of York, has deepened prayer life in the community and led to an increase in the numbers of people attending church services in person since restrictions were eased.

The parish, spread over 20 miles, now runs 'hybrid' worship both online and in person, based in one of its five churches every week, along with morning and evening prayer by Zoom.

Up to 700 people are prayed for by name throughout the week. The parish also runs 24-hour prayer on Zoom, often leading up to Sunday worship. The online prayer and Sunday worship began during the first lockdown last year.

Revd Richard Battersby, who has headed the parish for the past five years as part of a 'Bishop's Mission Order', said the parish was growing before the pandemic but the decision to livestream services has increased participation, making it easier for people to join who might previously have had to travel to services.

Around 20 people tune in to morning and evening prayer regularly, he said, while the parish now has a worshipping community of more than 200 members, compared to around 150 before the pandemic.

"At the morning and evening prayer the level and depth of spiritual encounter has been very profound," he said. "There is a real, tangible sense of God's presence."

He added: "People have been joining us for Sunday worship who live outside the parish – such as couples who married in the parish but are now living in places such as Manchester and family groups that were separated but joined together for worship. We have had one person read prayers from Ghana, where they were working."

Anglicans set to highlight climate justice at UN Commission on Status of Women

A delegation of women from across the Anglican Communion are preparing to represent the Church again at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66), being held next month.



The Communion routinely sends a delegation to the commission, at which UN member states and entities and NGOs from around the world gather to discuss how to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. This year's commission will explore how these goals can be achieved against a backdrop of climate change and escalating environmental disasters.

Rachel Mash, Environmental Co-ordinator for the Anglican Church of Southern Africa and one of the delegates, said that while the climate crisis affects everyone, women and girls are often disproportionately affected. Women are often the first to go hungry when food is low, carry the greatest burden in sourcing water or fuel and are more likely to die in natural disasters.

Mandy Marshall, the Director of Gender Justice for the Anglican Communion, said that when disasters do strike, “the situation can be made worse for women and girls, as their vulnerability increases in many ways”. This might come from their limited access to safe sanitation, water and shelter, but also from increased exposure to abuse or sexual violence.

Marshall said churches are a vital voice in the conversation around climate change. They are “often the first to respond in a time of crisis as they are at the centre of the community and are trusted by local communities”. She said the ACO delegation to CSW66 aimed to ensure that Anglicans and all people of faith “are included in the response to gender, climate change and disaster response and mitigation”.

Breadth of experience

The delegation is made up of women from around the Communion who will be able to share both their deep theological knowledge and research and their lived experiences of climate and gender justice.

Among them are Rachel Taber-Hamilton, a Shackan First Nation woman, from Canada, who represents the Episcopal Church on the board of the Anglican Indigenous Network. With 30 years’ experience in social justice and environmental advocacy, and as an ordained priest, Taber-Hamilton will reflect the voice of indigenous women within the Communion, and the particular challenges they face.

Jacynthia Murphy joins the delegation from the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia. She said

women's voices are critical in the battle against climate change.

“From birth to birthing women have an intrinsic relationship with creation,” she said. “It is for this reason that women have the potential to make greater contributions at the sustainability tables of ecological awareness, biodiversity, regeneration, climate care, and all manner of practices relevant to robust environmental protection.”

Christine B Benoit is the only female priest from the Diocese of Seychelles, in the Indian Ocean, a nation already living with the realities of climate change.

“Coming from small islands, I believe that my contribution will be to share evidence based information on how we are being affected with some of our beaches being destroyed due to climate change, and how scary it is that we might just disappear altogether from the Earth,” she said.

CSW66 will take place from 14-22 March and is primarily online, due to ongoing restrictions and concerns around Covid-19.

In the media

Tuam babies - New law to set out plan for mass grave sites

BBC News

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The Irish government is to publish new legislation dealing with mass graves, including the site of the former mother and baby home in Tuam, County Galway.

[<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-60464447>]

Putin's absurd, angry spectacle will be a turning point in his long reign

Guardian

Analysis: This was a supreme leader marshalling his minions for a decision that will change the security architecture in Europe and may well lead to horrific war
[[[https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/21/putin-angry-spectacle-amounts-to-declaration-war-ukraine?](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/21/putin-angry-spectacle-amounts-to-declaration-war-ukraine?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)
[CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other](#)]]

Monsignor Donal O'Doherty Curate and parish priest who devoted life to serving Dublin

Irish Times

Monsignor Donal O'Doherty, who died last Monday in his 90th year, was a native of Glenbeigh, Co Kerry, who spent his working life serving the people of the archdiocese of Dublin where he was curate and parish priest to diverse parishes. Born in 1932, one of six children to parents who were both National School teachers, he was surrounded by teachers, he recalled. "Two of my sisters became teachers and numerous uncles, aunts and cousins were in the same profession."

He was a boarder in St Brendan's, Killarney, from 1946 to 1950. "The first year I was in St Brendan's, Kerry won the All-Ireland and they came in with the cup and filled it to the brim with lemonade. We all supped from it — no problem in

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those days — and I thought it was heaven,” he said. Football remained a constant in his life, and he admitted supporting the Dubs too as they contributed so much — “they lift the hype to a new level. And Dublin has given a home to so many of my own family, not to mention my own job. Dublin has been a great gift in my life”.

[[] <https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/fr-donal-o-doherty-kind-and-caring-priest-made-a-lasting-contribution-to-dublin-parishes-and-religious-education-1.4807368>]

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

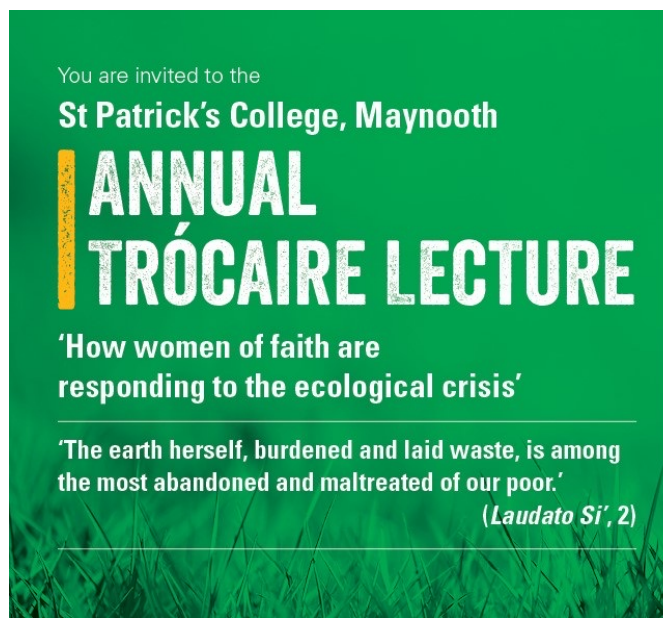


Interactive website to help farming community deal with stress

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Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland launches interactive website to help farming community deal with stress, read more here

www.hseni.gov.uk/news/health-and-safety-executive-northern-ireland-launches-interactive-website-help-farming



Dr Carmody Grey (Assistant Professor of Catholic Theology at University of Durham) and **Lucy Vokhiwa** (Chairperson of Catholic Women Organisation, Archdiocese of Blantyre, Malawi) will co-deliver the keynote address.

International Women's Day, 2022
Tuesday, 8 March, 7 p.m. GMT

This is a free online event and registration is essential

Please register using this link:

https://trocaire-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_R59M-zzRS5in4awZc6WsdQ



Trócaire

How women of faith are responding to the ecological crisis

St. Patrick's College Maynooth Annual Trócaire Lecture:
"How women of faith are responding to the ecological crisis"
Dr. Carmody Grey & Lucy Vokhiwa Tuesday 8th March 2022
@ 7pm GMT. **Registration for this free online event is required. Register here: bit.ly/35mkgHI

Spring Issue of Search, a Church of Ireland journal

The Spring issue of the Church of Ireland journal, Search, edited by Canon Ginnie Kennerley is now available.

The leading article concerns climate change and what can be done to halt it, as individuals and as church communities, not just as voters looking for government action. Damian Jackson attended COP 26 for the Irish Council of Churches, and he confronts the climate crisis in his daily work.

Moving on to young people: with an average age well over 50 in most congregations nowadays, there is a need to ask how the Church has been failing the rising generation – and their parents. The question of what needs to be done is multi-dimensional and so there is a series of approaches in this issue: from Bishop Pat Storey, president of the Church of Ireland Youth Department; from its development officer Steve Grasham; from DCU chaplain Eric Hughes; and from liturgy enthusiast the Revd Christopher West. And going on from there, the editor would love to hear from readers with their thoughts on how to inspire and energise young people.

Other concerns which this issue addresses are the problem posed by small churches without viable congregations; the question of how we label ourselves and other people and why this matters; the whys and wherefores of the marked rise of humanist funerals. The Ven. Simon Lumby, Archdeacon of Limerick, tackles the first of these; Emma Rothwell writes on identity issues and personal freedom; and humanist celebrant, Brian Whiteside, on the need for funerals that don't demand assent to traditional beliefs. More basic than any of these are the simple thoughts of Canon John Bartlett, until recently Chairman of Search, 'Being Christian Today', as expressed recently at St Lasarian's cathedral, Old Leighlin.

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Reverting to anxiety about the future, readers are asked to note the emergency requirement that all Search subscriptions need to be renewed and back copies paid for without delay. New subscribers or those who wish to purchase single copies should contact the Honorary Treasurer, Michael Denton, at 10 Dun Emer Drive, Dublin D16 F788, 01-2956997 or at subscriptions@searchjournal.ireland.anglican.org

Perspective

It's Sinn Fein who are in denial about republican violence - But point this out and you're accused of being obsessed

by Malachi O'Doherty

I was talking to an Orangeman the other day and asked him if he was sectarian or not and he said he wasn't. He said, "You're not supposed to say this, but some of my best friends are Catholics."

And I thought about that. Some of his best friends being Catholic, if that is true, would indeed suggest that he is not sectarian and yet it is a comment that people scoff at.

"Some of my best friends are gay." Well, if they are, you can usually be presumed not to be prejudiced against gay

people and that should be an adequate rebuttal of any suggestion that you are.

But it isn't and I can't easily explain that. I just know that, whenever I have heard people use the "some of my best friends..." defence, others have scoffed at it.

Could it be that the reflexive scoffing is actually just a device for undermining a perfectly decent argument? It signals a refusal to hear any defence.

Maybe the scoffer is the real bigot and the person, some of whose best friends are Muslims, or Protestants, is being cancelled, because someone else can't think of any other way of countering an unacceptable reality.

I do remember the first time I heard people laugh at the "some of my best friends..." defence and wondering what was so ridiculous about it — and I still don't know.

But if someone accused me of a prejudice, it's a line I would hesitate to use, just like the Orangeman, because I understand that it is now universally regarded as invalid, likely to be dismissed as insincere.

Some people prefer to scoff at an argument than to discuss it. After last week's column, two routine jibes at me followed on social media. One was that I am "self-hating", the other that I am "full of myself".

These can't both actually be true, for if I am "full of myself", then I don't hate, but rather like, myself — perhaps too much.

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But these are stock insults, levelled at me almost invariably by republicans.

Why would they think I hate myself? Am I betraying an inner self-loathing through subconscious signals that they can pick up on through their more refined intuition? Do they know me better than I know myself? Perhaps I should consider that. Perhaps I am too full of myself to bother.

The same people often call me an Uncle Tom, a turncoat, a souper and a Castle Catholic. So, by their view, I had a predetermined path to take through life as an Irish Catholic nationalist and, in straying from that, I have let myself down.

This is the self that I hate, my true self, a dedicated little chuckyhead formed in the womb, just as they were themselves.

Well, if that is indicative of their commitment to freedom of thought and conscience, there's little need to take them seriously.

What's disturbing about all this is that it is an effort to shut down people who disagree with the Sinn Fein line.

The point of writing a column, or engaging in social media, from my perspective anyway, is to get discussion going.

This works better for me on Facebook than on Twitter.

On Facebook, people read my comments and discuss them. Proportionately, far fewer of the comments are just plain nasty.

Yet, the people who come out with these most vile comments think they are defending a political movement which stands for human rights and free speech.

I wonder if they are the self-haters, since they have so much guilt to cope with and so little capacity for owning it. Are they deluding themselves?

Michelle O'Neill was speaking in Armagh last week about the need to address the trauma of the Troubles so that it is not passed on to successive generations and it's decent of her to be so considerate of the children and grandchildren of victims.

Has she never considered that many, perhaps most, of those victims and their offspring would be best assuaged of their pain if her party gave up on excusing and celebrating the people who did most of the killing? Apparently not.

I completely agree with the Sinn Fein opposition to Boris Johnson's effort to grant an amnesty to all the killers.

This is, indeed, a self-sacrificing position for republicans to take, given that uncounted members of their own movement would benefit by it. Or are they so overcome by their own smugness that they have forgotten that?

They should take some credit for sacrificing the On The Runs in the cause of justice — at least those who didn't get comfort letters allowing them to come home. It's the most generous thing they have ever done.

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I wonder what Rita O'Hare thinks of it, when such an amnesty would lift a 50-year threat of prosecution from her for allegedly shooting at soldiers.

The Sinn Fein self-image is that it is harbours the whole, exclusive truth about the past and that republicans only did what they had to do. They don't hate themselves. They are full of themselves.

If you comment negatively on Sinn Fein, you are accused of being obsessed, away in the head.

Either they believe that no rational person would ever disagree with them, or they are strategically trying to undermine all criticism by disparaging those it comes from.

Even so, some of my best friends are chuckyheads. Well, that's not actually true, but some used to be and wised up."

Courtesy the Belfast Telegraph 07/12/ 2021

Poem for today

How to pray for peace from a world in pieces by Rosalind Hughes

Your world is in pieces, O God.
Our world comes apart at the seams;
once united by the Tower,
once by the Flood (although
let's not go there),

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now scattered like hayseed,
planting flags, some upon rich soil,
some among brambles,
none believes it is by sheer luck
that some survive.

How will we pray for peace
from a place of pride?
How will we pray for peace
from a place of oppression?
How will we pray for peace
from a world in pieces?

Thy will be done: Creator,
though the tectons shift and we fracture,
let peace take root like the thistle
between the cracks in the sidewalk flags,
tenacious, impossible, lean, and fierce;
its bruised stalk you will not break,
nor extinguish the smoldering wick
of our sputtering prayers for peace,
candles flickering in a hurricane.

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
