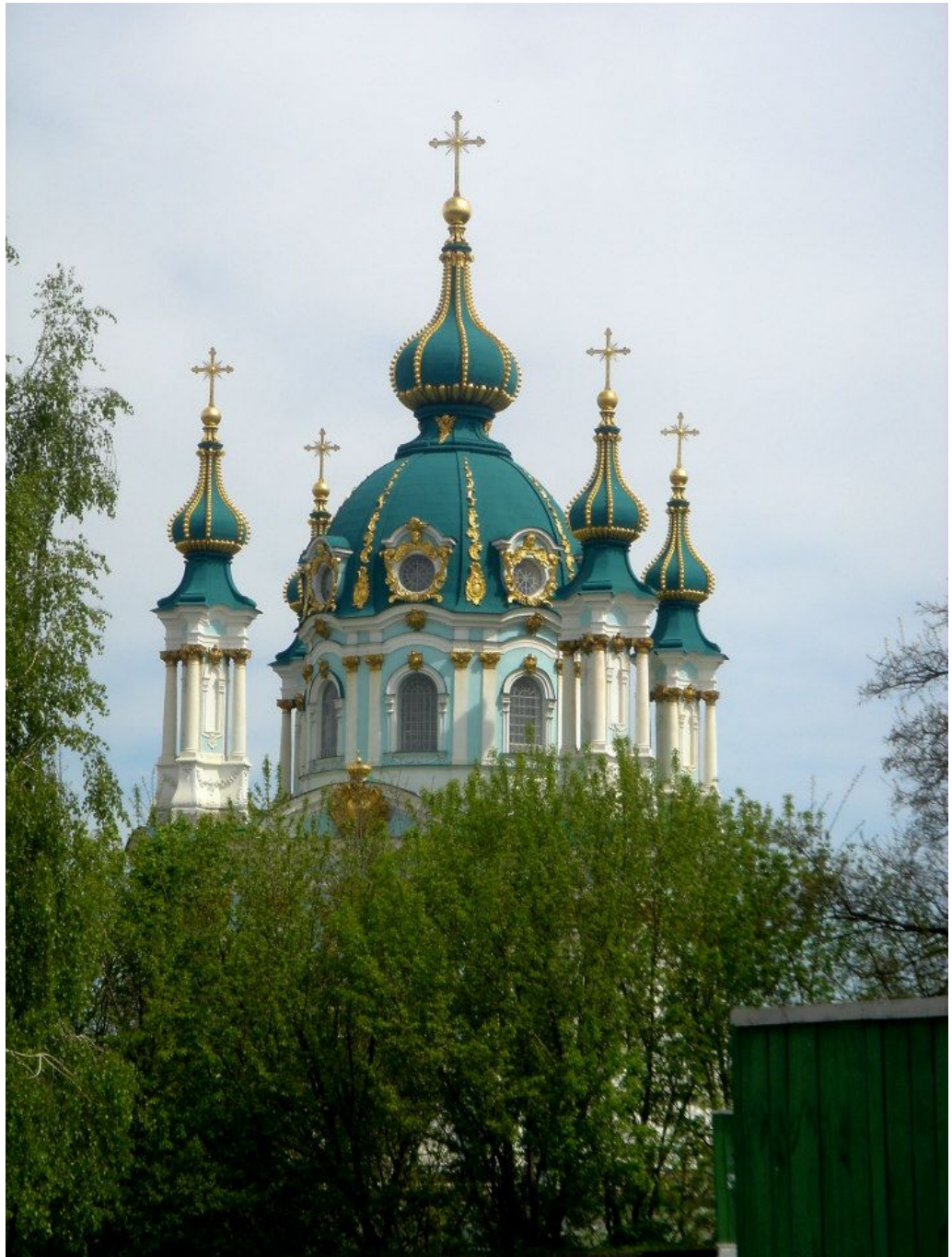


Church News Ireland

**Image
of the
day –
a church
in Kyiv**



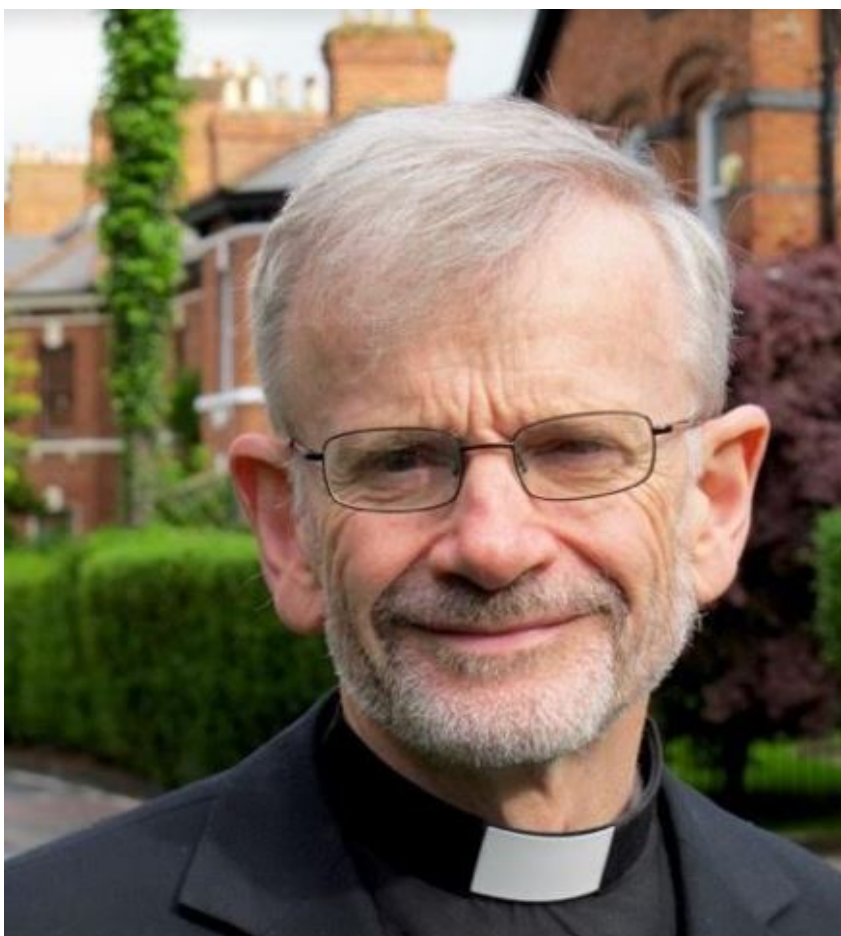
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Image of the day

A church in Kyiv by Virginia Pulver

People and places

Ukraine a challenge for all of Europe - Irish bishops



Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ, chair of the Bishops' Council for Justice and Peace, has published the following statement asking for prayers for the people of Ukraine:

“We keep the people of Ukraine in our prayers at this time. We also hold in prayer all leaders

who have a duty to return to the table of peacebuilding in this time of great anxiety and challenge for all of Europe and particularly the peoples of the countries involved.

“This is the first invasion in Europe since 1945. Indeed, until a few weeks ago it seemed unthinkable that any country

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would be invaded by another. It makes us realise how much we take peace for granted.”



Counselling service in North Belfast

Hope Counselling Support is a counselling service situated at St Paul and St Barnabas Parish Church, 210 York Street, Belfast, BT15 1EN.

While counselling takes place within in a church setting, the service offered is not necessarily a faith-based one, but can be, depending on the client’s needs.

Hope is run by fully qualified, experienced counsellors and is free for service users, although a small donation can be made to assist with heat and electricity.

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Anyone wanting further information can either ring 07902 523883 or email hopecounselling1@hotmail.com.

Catholic police in Northern Ireland seek to restart progress

Only a third of Police officers in the north hail from a Catholic background, Madoc Cairns writes in The Tablet.

An organisation of Catholic police officers in Northern Ireland has vowed to restart stalled progress towards a religiously diverse police force in the six counties. The Northern Irish Catholic Police Guild, recently reorganised with an expanded committee drawn from all ranks of the police service, was founded in 2020 with the intent of providing pastoral support to existing police officers and promoting policing as a career amongst Catholic communities.

Presently, Catholics are underrepresented amongst the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), with only 32 per cent of police officers hailing from a “perceived Catholic” background – compared to 66 per cent from a protestant one.

In 2020, 75 per cent of new recruits were Protestant and 24 per cent were Catholic. In the last national census, held in 2011, 45 per cent of the Northern Irish population specified that they were Catholic or from a Catholic background, and 48 per cent were from a Protestant or other non-Catholic Christian background. The proportion of Catholics to non-

Catholics at present is estimated to be even closer at present.

Speaking to The Tablet, a committee member said that the group saw itself as continuing the progress made over the past twenty years in policing, encouraging more Catholics to apply for policing roles, and supporting those Catholics who do take up appointments as police officers.

Given the limited links between Catholic communities and policing as a profession, the committee member, who helped found the guild, the process of joining the PSNI can be a socially and spiritually lonely one. In reaching out to potential officers in Catholic communities, providing social, pastoral and moral support to those officers already in the service, and campaigning to change attitudes amongst other Catholics, the guild hopes to “continue the progress” made over the last few decades.

According to some Catholic members of the police service, however, resistance to the idea of the guild could be found amongst some officers.

Others were reluctant to join or publicly support the new group out of a belief it would undermine their career prospects. These “troubling” trends, they said, show the work that needed to be done to change attitudes within the service.

Traditionally, policing has been seen as a protestant profession in Northern Ireland. Only 7 per cent of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) was Catholic as assessed in one 1996 study. The RUC was dissolved in 2001 and replaced

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with the PSNI, proposed as a cross-community body acceptable to protestant unionists and Catholic nationalists alike.

Under rules drawn up following the recommendations of Chris Patten, the last British governor of Hong Kong, the new service implemented 50:50 recruitment policing, with the intent that “an equal number of Protestant and Catholics would be drawn from the pool of qualified candidates”. Under the policy, the percentage of Catholic officers rose from 8 per cent in 2001 to around 30 per cent when the 50:50 system ended in 2011. In spite of a rise in concerns over “sectarian” policing over the course of the coronavirus pandemic, PSNI leaders have so far rejected reintroducing recruitment quotas.

Courtesy The Tablet 24/02/2022

Fermanagh artists to perform at Gospel Fest Goes West tonight

Omagh and Fintona Methodist Circuit are delighted to be hosting Gospel Fest Goes West on Saturday, February 26 at 7.30pm, in The Strule Arts Centre, Omagh.

This is the seventh year of Omagh and Fintona Methodist Circuit is preparing to host ‘Gospel Fest Goes West’, Jessica Campbell writes in the Impartial Reporter.

The event is making a welcome return following the cancellation in 2021 due to the pandemic.

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Thanks to patrons' support over the years, their generosity has helped the valuable work of the Kamatunga School for Deaf Children in Kenya, the Container Ministry, the Surf Project within the Methodist Church, the vulnerable people of Haiti and the Home Mission Department of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

This year, the proceeds will again be going to support the rebuilding work of the Methodist Church in Haiti – one of the poorest countries in the world, where most of the population struggles to survive.

Haiti has also faced several major natural disasters in recent years, most recently an earthquake in the southwestern part of the island last August.

Organisers are delighted to welcome Live Issue back to Gospel Fest Goes West. Since they reformed back in 2006, the band has become one of the most popular Country/Gospel bands in the British Isles.

The group was also invited to perform at the International Festival of Country Music held in the SSE Arena in Belfast.

Live Issue literally made history in Nashville by becoming the first Country band from Ireland, and only the second group from the British Isles, to perform on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry.

The LaGrange Daily News in Georgia commented: “The members of Live Issue have become ambassadors not only for Country Gospel Music, but also for their Christian faith and everything that is good about Northern Ireland.”

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Live Issue comprises Colin Elliott, Roy Dreaning, Sam Armstrong, Carl Sands and Ivan McLernon. Prior to the pandemic, the group regularly played at many events in Northern Ireland, as well as other Gospel Music conventions and churches throughout the British Isles and Europe.

Once again, **Laura Beck** will perform at Gospel Fest Goes West. Laura lives in Co. Down and regularly assists with leading worship in Newmills Presbyterian Church in Portadown.

In the past few years, her singing has been in great demand at many churches and concerts throughout Ireland and the UK. She has also teamed up with Live Issue on many occasions, and has taken part in memorable solo performances with the Belfast Community Gospel Choir at the Grand Opera House and Waterfront Concert Hall in Belfast.

In January, 2016, Laura released her debut album, entitled, 'I Can Only Imagine'. This album has been warmly received and is played regularly on many Gospel music radio shows.

Laura enjoys the opportunity to share her Christian faith through music and her distinctive vocals fuse a blend of Country and Soul which brings a fresh approach to every song she sings.

Margaret Johnston will make her first appearance at Gospel Fest Goes West. She was brought up in a Christian home near Brookeborough and is currently living in Ballinamallard. Married to Adrian, she has three children and four grandchildren.

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Margaret loves playing the accordion and was given her first one at the age of 10. She also likes playing the piano, banjo and church organ. Music is her hobby, and she says there is nothing more she loves to do than sit by her piano and worship the Lord.

Kingdom Bound return to Gospel Fest Goes West, having made their first appearance in 2018. They regularly sing at churches and concerts throughout Northern Ireland. The band comprises Stephen Ellis, Matthew Farrell and Andrew Cornett.

Kingdom Bound love to sing old hymns and choruses in a simple, stripped-back way using guitar and vocal harmonies. They launched their debut album, 'I saw the light', in May of 2015 and are currently in the studio working on new recordings with another album in the pipeline.

The boys have a real desire to go out and minister in song in the hope that their ministry can bring others to know a real and personal relationship with Jesus.

Delighted

Organisers are also delighted to have **The Morrisons** perform for the first time in Omagh. The Morrisons were formed in January, 2016, and comprise David Morrison; his wife, Sharon; his brother, Ronnie; and his close friend, Robert Wilkin.

David, Ronnie and Robert sang together for several years in The Harvesters' Gospel Group. The Harvesters retired from Gospel Music in 2015. Sharon has been singing all her life

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and is in demand for studio session work as a harmony backing vocalist.

The Morrisons have a love for all varieties of Gospel music, close harmony and most importantly their heart's desire is to serve the Lord through their God-given talents.

“This an opportunity to step aside from the busy routine of our lives and celebrate the joy of being reunited together at Gospel Fest Goes West which we have missed so much,” said one of the organisers of the event.

The Strule Arts Centre will have social distancing measures in place in the auditorium. For your ticket, contact Strule Arts Centre at www.struleartscentre.co.uk, or telephone 028 8224 7831, or Reggie Mills at 0773 682 6969.

Courtesy The Impartial Reporter

News reports

Archbishop of York calls for 'stringent' economic sanctions to be imposed on Russia

Britain must use all of its "diplomatic muscle and energy, stringent economic sanctions, and focused political will" to force Russia to end its aggression in Ukraine, the Archbishop of York has said.

Archbishop Stephen Cottrell addressed the House of Lords in a debate on the situation in Ukraine on Friday.

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In his speech, the Archbishop repeated comments he made jointly with the Archbishop of Canterbury in which they called the unprovoked attack on Ukraine "an act of great evil".

"This is a dark hour for Europe," Cottrell told peers.

He said that events in Ukraine had been "truly shocking" and expressed his regret that "Ukraine now stands alone, unprotected by the treaties that protect us".

"Perhaps in the West, we have taken peace for granted. The horrors being visited on Ukraine must be a wake-up call for us that peace is something you need to work at," he said.

He continued, "Peace is a choice. It is a decision that we need to make each day about the way we live and about our responsibilities to and with our neighbour, be that in our family, in our local community, or between the nations of the world. And we need the policies, the wisdom, the tenacity and the international resolve that will deliver it."

The Archbishop went on to call for "generous" humanitarian aid and support for refugees, and urged Britain to continue pursuing a diplomatic solution to the crisis.

"Our actions must be swift and cohesive if they are to be decisive," he said.

"The suffering of Ukraine, the imperialist ambition of Russia, our own acceptance that 'immoral flood of corrupt money that flows (from Russia) through London' has to stop."



Christian response to Ukraine crisis 'must be rooted in prayer', say Archbishops

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have written a pastoral letter to the clergy and people of the Church of England asking them to pray for peace in Ukraine.

The letter laments Russia's invasion, which it says is a powerful reminder "that peace is precious and it is fragile".

The Archbishops said Russia's actions had "rightly provoked outrage, sanctions and condemnation", and that the country should agree to an immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of its forces.



Prayers Across Europe for Peace in Ukraine

Tuesday 1 March

1800gmt / 1900cet / 2000eet (Kyiv) / 2100gmt+3 (Moscow)

Led by Bishop Robert Innes with Rev'd Canon Malcolm Rogers,
Chaplain of St Andrew's, Moscow, Area Dean of Russia and Ukraine and
Representatives of Christ Church, Kyiv

Join by visiting [Diocese in Europe Youtube channel](#)

"Many of us will have troubled hearts as we watch with horror the attack by Russia on Ukraine," the Archbishops said.

"As we have already said, this attack is an act of evil, imperilling as it does the relative peace and security that Europe has enjoyed for so long.

"The attack by one nation on a free, democratic country has rightly provoked outrage, sanctions and condemnation."

The Archbishops said they were praying for "the innocent, the frightened and those who have lost loved ones, homes, and family".

They are asking Christians to join in a number of prayer initiatives taking place in response to the crisis.

The first is on Sunday, when Christians and churches across the UK will join in a day of prayer for peace.

This will be followed by a Diocese in Europe prayer vigil taking place online at 6pm GMT on 1 March.

The Archbishops are also encouraging Christians to join in the day of prayer and fasting for peace called by Pope Francis on Ash Wednesday, 2 March.

"In these days of uncertainty and fear, we pray that each of us might again turn to the Lord and receive God's gift of peace, work for God's justice, know God's reconciliation and love, and choose paths not of hatred or destruction, of violence or retribution, but God's way of justice, mercy and peace," the Archbishops continued.

"As Christians, our response to a crisis must always be rooted in prayer."

The Church of England has produced resources which are available online.

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The Archbishops added, "However and whenever you pray, pray that the world may choose peace, and be assured of our prayers for you."

Pope Francis appeals for prayer for Ukraine on Ash Wednesday

During the General Audience on Wednesday, Pope Francis made a heartfelt appeal for peace in Ukraine, saying that the threat of war had caused "great pain in my heart."

"Despite the diplomatic efforts of the last few weeks," the Pope said, "increasingly alarming scenarios are opening up," with many people all over the world feeling anguish and pain.

"“Once again the peace of all is threatened by partisan interests,” he stressed. Pope Francis appealed to those “with political responsibility to examine their consciences seriously before God, who is the God of peace and not of war, who is the Father of all, not just of some, who wants us to be brothers and not enemies.””

He also prayed that “all the parties involved refrain from any action that would cause even more suffering to the people, destabilizing coexistence between nations and bringing international law into disrepute.”

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

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the Queen of Peace preserve the world from the madness of war.

In response to the Holy Father's call for a day of prayer, Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland said, "I invite as many people as possible to join this day of prayer and fasting for peace on Ash Wednesday."

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Irish Bishops' Drugs Initiative launch Leave Your Mark Podcast ahead of Temperance Sunday

"This series of podcasts and videos produced by the Irish Bishops' Drugs Initiative will help to highlight the problems that exist and how those who have struggled with addiction have overcome their challenges." – Bishop Michael Router

"I was chasing some things that weren't just about money, I started chasing things that I felt I lost along the way. Like self-respect, integrity, relationships, family members. I thought I could win all these things back by having a bet in the bookies." – Oisín McConville (2002 All-Ireland Winner)

"It was like the hit a drug abuser feels or an alcoholic sitting in the pub getting drunk." – Conn Kilpatrick (2021 All-Ireland Winner)

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Ahead of Temperance Sunday, this Sunday, the Irish Bishops' Drugs Initiative (IBDI) has launched the 'Leave Your Mark' podcast, to raise awareness about the impact gambling, drugs and alcohol addiction can have on young people's lives.

Episode one of this new podcast features a discussion between Tyrone GAA midfielder and 2021 All-Ireland winner, Conn Kilpatrick, and the 2002 All-Ireland winner, Oisín McConville of Armagh, sharing their personal experience with gambling addiction, and who also believe that it is a growing problem among young people. Conn is also interviewed by Newry Parish Youth Forum member Jake McGill, on the highs and lows of his route to becoming an All-Ireland winner.

Welcoming the new podcast series, Bishop Michael Router of the IBDI said, "Addiction is a frightening aspect of life in Ireland today. The rise in the abuse of drugs and alcohol is well documented and many parents, families and communities have suffered and are struggling to respond. Especially in this digital era, gambling has become a huge problem that is destroying lives and livelihoods and is so interwoven with popular sports events. Across Ireland, the collocation of pubs and bookies exemplifies how people can be exposed to the influence of addiction.

"This series of podcasts and videos produced by the Irish Bishop's Drugs Initiative will help to highlight the problems that exist, and how those who have struggled with addiction have overcome their challenges. It will provide guidance and hope to people that there is a way out of addiction and that there are services to turn to when needed."

The 'Leave Your Mark' podcast series will consist of four episodes involving guests from sports stars to community leaders, who will tell their stories. Students and members of parish groups will also participate in a conversation with guests about the challenges they have faced, as well as hear from a professional on the growing challenges of addiction that face our community.

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/leaveyourmarkpodcast>

YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/b6JZtRpAVMc>

Spotify:

[https://open.spotify.com/episode/](https://open.spotify.com/episode/4pJ2zxiayhwRjCiBeKA3Yf?s=2nwnldWxRQGUayXJbuq1Xw)

[4pJ2zxiayhwRjCiBeKA3Yf?](https://open.spotify.com/episode/4pJ2zxiayhwRjCiBeKA3Yf?s=2nwnldWxRQGUayXJbuq1Xw)

[s=2nwnldWxRQGUayXJbuq1Xw](https://open.spotify.com/episode/4pJ2zxiayhwRjCiBeKA3Yf?s=2nwnldWxRQGUayXJbuq1Xw)

Apple:

[https://podcasts.apple.com/ie/podcast/leave-your-mark-](https://podcasts.apple.com/ie/podcast/leave-your-mark-podcast/id1610731424?i=1000551519690)

[podcast/id1610731424?i=1000551519690](https://podcasts.apple.com/ie/podcast/leave-your-mark-podcast/id1610731424?i=1000551519690)

Anchor:

<https://anchor.fm/leave-your-mark>

Perspective

Drink is killing me - Jim Rea

I recall watching the late great Jimmy Greaves score a wonder goal with a header at Windsor Park on the 3rd October 1964. I didn't cheer, for on this occasion England

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beat Northern Ireland narrowly 4-3. In my early life Greavsie was an outstanding striker.

Sadly, later in life Jimmy Greaves openly admitted his fondness for drink, saying that he could easily drink 12 pints of beer a day alongside a bottle of vodka. His death last September last came before the alarming 2020 figures were released in Northern Ireland on alcohol-related deaths.

While the tragic Covid deaths in the last two years in Northern Ireland have been frightening, these have overshadowed deaths from other causes. In the year 2020 according to the Department of Health almost one person died every day as a direct result of alcohol abuse. This does not include road deaths and other accidents and serious injuries related to alcohol use. In the ten year period since 2011 figures in Northern Ireland have risen by over one third.

Undoubtedly due to covid lockdown, drinking at home has increased, and the availability of inexpensive alcohol will have increased the addiction. After the Christmas festivities many people took up the challenge of a dry January, a realistic way of testing if one has an alcohol problem. The question I have often asked people who seek counsel is, "Can you stop drinking for a month?" If the answer is "no" or "I really don't want to" then there may well be a problem.

If a person drinks to relieve issues such as unemployment, broken relationships, debt and suchlike, then alcohol use is only dealing with the symptoms and not the cause. In such situations sobriety is a truly worthwhile goal. I am often told by people, "I'm not an alcoholic." Understandably the word

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has negative associations, but the inability to stop drinking suggests that alcohol is a problem.

In my many years working with problem drinkers I have known many people who have discovered how wonderful life can be without drink. The benefits to health and well-being are enormous, and in many situations it has radically changed family relationships for the better.

Greaves after giving an interview to a newspaper couldn't believe the headline to the printed article: "Drink is killing me." Jimmy was so deeply shocked that for the first time he faced his problem. He eventually gained sobriety, to continue as a successful sports journalist and TV pundit on the programme 'Saint and Greavsie'. To live without drink was life-changing.

There are organisations such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Addiction NI, Inspire, and Stauros, a Christian based help group that effectively deals with alcohol and drug problems through their programme of Christian discipleship. These organisations are all easily found on the internet and have helplines. One only needs to lift the phone.

The Reverend Jim Rea is writing on behalf of the Irish Temperance League.

Poem for today

Anthem For Doomed Youth by Wilfred Owen

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What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
— Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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