


**Image of the day - Children's book**

## People and places





**The Shandon Mystery!**



*300 Years ago*  
*work started on building*  
**Saint Anne's Church,**  
**Shandon**

**But we don't know when**  
**it was open & ready for its**  
**first Church Service.**

The parish records were destroyed by fire in  
the Public Records Office 100 years ago.

*Can you help us find out?*  
Email: [shandon300@stanneshandon.ie](mailto:shandon300@stanneshandon.ie)

 [stanneschurchshandon](https://www.facebook.com/stanneschurchshandon)  [www.shandonbells.ie](http://www.shandonbells.ie)

## “The Shandon Mystery” – When was Saint Anne’s built and consecrated?

**Bishop Paul Colton will inaugurate the 300th Anniversary celebrations at Saint Anne’s Church, Shandon, tomorrow.**

The tercentenary, 300 years, of the present day Saint Anne’s Church, Shandon, Cork’s iconic church, with its famous Shandon Bells, will be inaugurated on Sunday 6th February 2022 by the Bishop, the Right Reverend Dr Paul Colton, when he visits the parish to preside at the Sunday Service.

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The year will be inaugurated by a parish initiative called 'The Shandon Mystery' and an appeal to Cork people everywhere, Irish people and everyone anywhere, to help the parish to try to discover the exact dates of the building and the date of the consecration (opening) of the Church.

Bishop Colton explains: "The problem is that the parish records were lost in the fire one hundred years ago in June 1922. We need help.

"We have looked at all sorts of records, spoken with parishioners, some local people, and spoken to some archivists and historians. We have checked dates on parish silver, on plaques and on the font in the Church. There appears to be no foundation stone and no memorial stone commemorating the consecration. We would like to know these dates and that is what we mean by 'The Shandon Mystery'.

"As Church of Ireland Bishop and as a local Church of Ireland community we are very conscious that Saint Anne's, Shandon, to the people of Cork and for Irish people, this Church is much more than a parish church. It is a potent, evocative and emotive symbol of Cork around which the people of Cork rally, unite and identify. So, we are appealing to everyone to help us to solve our 'Shandon Mystery'. It just may be that someone has an original source in an archive that we do not know about, or information from a secondary source in a book or diary for example, that we are not aware of. We are going to celebrate the 300th anniversary of Shandon starting later this year, regardless, but it would also, as part of that, be

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great to solve our 'Shandon Mystery'. Indeed, someone out there may readily have an easy answer for us".

Bishop Paul Colton will preside at the Sunday Morning Service in Saint Anne's Shandon at 10.15 a.m. on Sunday next 6th February, after which, at 11.15 a.m. with the help of parishioners, he will launch 'The Shandon Mystery.'

The Parish and Diocese are in the process of developing a full Tercentenary programme in partnership with the City of Cork, the local community, history groups, and many interested parties, including the Church of Ireland nationally.

## **Moderator regrets resignation of First Minister**

**Following the announcement that the First Minister of Northern Ireland, Paul Givan MLA, was to resign, and with the implications that will follow for the working of the devolved institutions and government, Presbyterian Moderator, Right Reverend Dr David Bruce, said that he regretted that it was felt necessary for the First Minister to resign.**

Speaking on behalf of the Church, Dr Bruce said, "At our event to mark the centenary of Northern Ireland in September last year, I said the power-sharing arrangements which exist in Northern Ireland, 'while not by any means perfect, are precious.'

"We therefore regret that it was felt necessary for the First Minister to resign. We have long supported the existence of

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devolved government, and lament the position that has been arrived at today. While the deputy First Minister will now no longer hold office, we note that other ministers will stay in place at this time, and therefore some important aspects of the work of their departments can continue. That being said, there is no doubt that it will be the most vulnerable in our society who potentially will suffer most during this next period of uncertainty and lack of clear decision-making,” Dr Bruce said.

“There is clearly in certain quarters a growing frustration around the significant delays in resolving the issues caused by implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol. For the sake of everyone in Northern Ireland, the UK Government and the European Union urgently need to bring their negotiations to an acceptable conclusion. Likewise, there will be significant frustration about today’s actions and the threat to the devolved institutions which they present. Our political parties need to proactively work together to find a way forward. In both of these areas, a great deal can be

achieved when we seek honourable accommodations focused on the common good.

Dr Bruce concluded, “As we commit to continue to pray for all of our elected leaders, we urge all people



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of faith to join with us – upholding those in leadership at this time of uncertainty.”

## News Reports

### **Biden urges a return to political civility in remarks at prayer breakfast**

**President Joe Biden, addressing the National Prayer Breakfast Feb. 3, called for a return to the political civility he said he'd known as a freshman U.S. senator from Delaware.**

“We don't spend as much time with each other as we used to,” he reflected at the gathering.

The breakfast was greatly cut down from its previous incarnations at a Washington hotel.

This year it was held in the auditorium at the Capitol Visitor Center. One of the organizers, Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., called it a “reset,” limiting attendance to members of Congress, breakfast speakers and their spouses.

It was the first time the event was held in person in two years as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The proceedings also were carried live on C-SPAN and other broadcast outlets.

The 70th annual breakfast was low-key and bipartisan. The event always features members of Congress reading

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Scripture, and this year Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., read from the Gospel of Matthew.

“As president, you should still be able to count on our prayers for the success of our nation,” said Sen. Mike Rounds, R-S.D. He said the breakfast reflected “the right of each of us to worship the good Lord as we see fit.”

In his brief remarks, Biden, only the second Catholic president in the nation’s history, discussed the losses in his own life, including his son Beau’s death from a brain tumor, adding, “Everyone has had horrible things to deal with. I had a lot of help.”

Biden waxed nostalgic about an earlier time of eating lunches as part of a group in the Senate: “You learn about their losses and their happiness and you learn about them.”

He added, “It’s hard to dislike someone when you know they’re going through something you went through.”

Addressing McConnell directly, he said, “Mitch, I don’t want to hurt your reputation, but we really are friends. And that is not an epiphany we’re having at the moment. You’re a man of your word, you’re a man of honor. Thank you for being my friend.”

Referencing Matthew 20:28, Biden said, “I pray we do what Jesus taught us: to serve rather than be served.”

Concluding, Biden said, “One of the reasons other countries sometimes think we’re arrogant is because we believe anything is possible.”



“Unity doesn’t mean we have to agree on everything, but unity is where enough of us believe in a core of basic things. The common good, the general welfare, a faith in the United States of America.”

Political unity, Biden said, “is elusive,” but “it’s really very necessary. That’s why we’re here — to make the most of our time on earth.”

The keynote speaker was Bryan Stevenson, founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative, a nonprofit organization advocates for fair and equal treatment in the criminal justice system.

He told the gathering, “We have to understand our power as people of faith to embrace one another.”



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Outlining what he described as America's "narrative of racial differences" from the era of slavery to the violence that has persisted long after the Civil War ended, he concluded: "We've got to stay hopeful even when it's difficult and painful."

## **Pope Francis describes talking to Saints as like talking to a brother or sister**

**Pope Francis prayed for the Burmese people and for the success of the upcoming Winter Olympics during his general audience on Wednesday.**

He first provided a brief catechesis on St. Joseph and the communion of saints Feb. 2, saying that "Even when we rely fully on the intercession of a saint, or even more so that of the Virgin Mary, our trust only has value in relation to Christ. As if the path toward this saint or toward Our Lady does not end there, no. Not there, but in relationship with Christ. He is the bond, Christ is the bond that unites us to him and to each other, and which has a specific name: this bond that unites us all, between ourselves and us with Christ, it is the 'communion of saints'."

Devotion to the saints, he said, is "simply talking to a brother, a sister, who is in the presence of God, who has led a righteous life, a model life, and is now in the presence of God. And I talk to this brother, this sister, and ask for their intercession for the needs that I have."

He shared a prayer to St. Joseph he has recited daily for 40 years, and which he said came from a late 18th century



prayer book of the Sisters of Jesus and Mary: "Glorious Patriarch Saint Joseph, whose power makes the impossible possible, come to my aid in these times of anguish and difficulty. Take under your protection the serious and troubling situations that I commend to you, that they may have a happy outcome. My beloved father, all my trust is in you. All my trust is in you. Let it not be said that I invoked you in vain, and since you can do everything with Jesus and Mary, show me that your goodness is as great as your power. Amen."

After his catechesis, Pope Francis issued appeals for prayers on a multitude of international issues.

"For a year now, we have been watching the violence in Myanmar with sorrow. I echo the appeal of the Burmese bishops for the international community to work for

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reconciliation between the parties concerned," said Pope Francis.

Myanmar, which is also called Burma, is home to a small Catholic population. Despite their small numbers, Catholics have played a sizeable role in the protests throughout the country since a military coup seized power last year.

"We cannot look away from the suffering of so many brothers and sisters. Let us ask God in prayer for consolation for this tormented population," he said. "To him we entrust our efforts for peace."

Pope Francis noted that the 2022 Winter Olympics begin on Thursday, Feb. 4, and that the Paralympic Winter Games are set to commence on March 4.

"I warmly greet all participants. I wish the organizers every success and the athletes the very best," he said.

The pope added that the "universal language" of sports can serve as a way of building "friendship and solidarity between individuals and peoples of all cultures and religions." He said that he is hopeful "that the Olympic Games may bring about a more fraternal world."

The feats of disabled athletes, said Pope Francis, provide an example that "helps everyone to overcome prejudices and fears" and help to "make our communities more welcoming and inclusive."

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## Anglican Communion consulted on greater voice in choice of future Archbishops of Canterbury



**The Archbishops' Council considers a proposal to change the make-up of the body which nominates future Archbishops of Canterbury.**

The Church of England's Archbishops' Council has launched a consultation on a proposal to change the make-up of the body which nominates future Archbishops of Canterbury. The proposal would give the worldwide Anglican Communion a greater voice on the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC) for the See of Canterbury.

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Currently, the entire Communion outside of the Church of England is represented by just one of the 16 voting members, compared to six from the Diocese of Canterbury.

The proposal would increase the Anglican Communion representatives to five, while reducing the number of members from the diocese to three. There would also be nine other members from the Church of England, including six elected by General Synod.

The proposal is to be discussed at the Anglican Consultative Council's Standing Committee meeting later this month and will also be discussed at the Primate's Meeting in March.

The consultation, which will include key partners from across the Anglican Communion and the Church of England, will run until 31 March. It is expected that a final proposal will be put to the C of E's General Synod for a vote in July.

The consultation document is available in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Japanese. To access these, and for more information, please [click here](#).

## **In the media**

### **[Paul Givan resigns as First Minister of Northern Ireland in DUP protocol protest](#)**

#### **Irish Times**

Resignation automatically removes Sinn Féin's Michelle O'Neill from office

[<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/paul-givan-resigns-as-first-minister-of-northern-ireland-as-part-of-dup-protest-against-protocol-1.4792735?>]

## **Edwin Poots' order to halt NI Protocol checks at ports suspended by High Court judge**

### **Belfast Telegraph**

Directions issued by DUP Minister Edwin Poots to halt Irish Sea border checks are to be suspended, a High Court judge ordered today.

Mr Justice Colton confirmed that inspections on goods entering Northern Ireland from Great Britain must continue pending the outcome of legal challenges to the step taken by Mr Poots.

The development came as an unidentified member of Sinn Fein and another individual were both granted leave to seek a judicial review of the Stormont Agriculture Minister's decision.

[[] <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/courts/edwin-poots-order-to-halt-ni-protocol-checks-at-ports-suspended-by-high-court-judge-41312912.html> ]

## **Leading German bishops back end to priestly celibacy obligation**

### **Irish Times**

Leading German Catholic bishops have come out in favour of loosening their church's celibacy requirement and opening the priesthood to married men.

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Bishop Georg Bätzing, head of the German Bishops' Conference, welcomed calls to reform celibacy rules from two other senior clerics, Cardinal Reinhard Marx of Munich and Berlin archbishop Heiner Koch.

Dr Bätzing said “the celibacy of priests is a biblically-attested form of following Jesus . . . but not the only form, at least not in the Catholic church”.

[[] <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/leading-german-bishops-back-end-to-priestly-celibacy-obligation-1.4793072> ]

## **How Kenneth Branagh's Belfast became a surprise box-office hit**

### **Daily Telegraph**

All of the above makes the current UK and Ireland success of Belfast all the more notable – as well as extremely welcome for cinema operators. Kenneth Branagh's black-and-white autobiographical tale of growing up in Belfast in 1969 in the shadow of The Troubles has grossed a rather remarkable £6.08m in UK and Ireland in just 10 days – already beating the lifetime gross of the Oscar-nominated, Irish-flavoured Brooklyn, and tracking ahead of Philomena at the same stage of release. The UK and Ireland number also exceeds the \$7.20m earned by Belfast in North America after 12 weeks of release.

[ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/films/0/kenneth-branaghs-belfast-became-surprise-box-office-hit/> ]

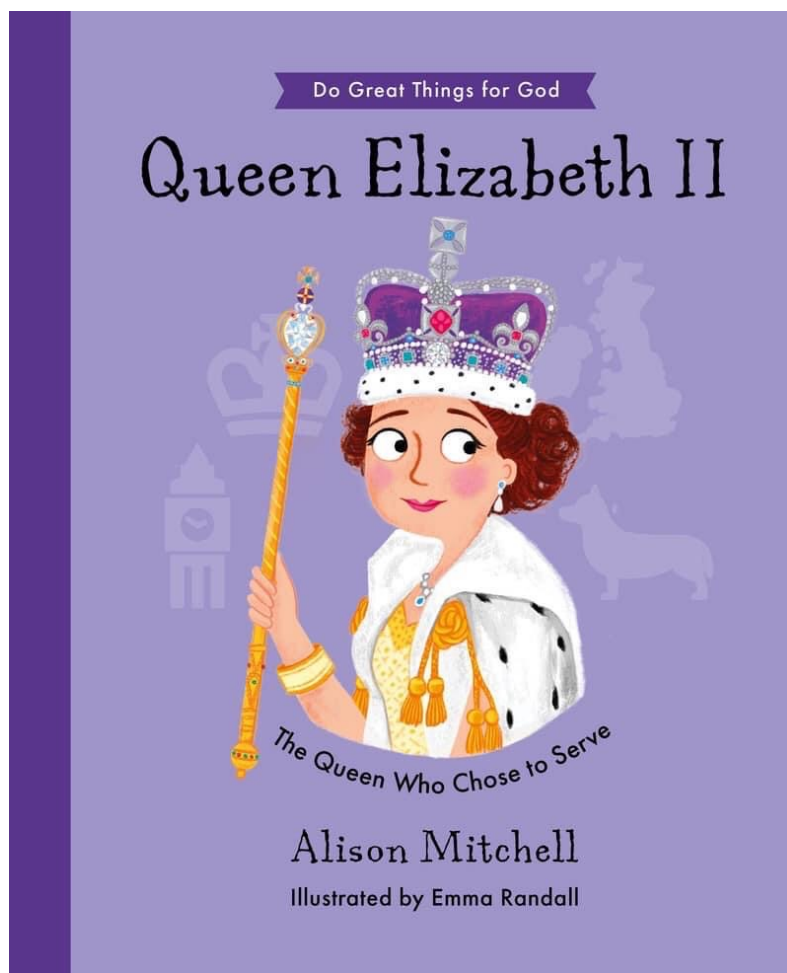
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## Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars

### New children's book Platinum Jubilee of the Queen

To mark the  
Platinum Jubilee of  
the Queen The  
Good Book  
Company are

**publishing a new children's book which not only tells her story but in her own words speaks of her Christian Faith .**



To help people get this book into the hands of children The Good Book Company are offering a special ministry box 30 books for £60:00. At £2:00 per book this a 70% discount.

This will allow an individual or a church to buy books for the children in their church or for every child in a local Primary School.

‘Princess Elizabeth never expected to be Queen. But when she was ten, her uncle, King Edward VIII, abdicated and everything changed... Her father took over as King, but after



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15 years on the throne, he died. So when she was just 25 years old, Elizabeth was crowned Queen and has become the longest-serving monarch in British history.

This inspiring children's biography of Queen Elizabeth II chronicles key moments in her life. It also highlights her Christian faith, in particular what she has said in her Christmas Day speeches.

Young children will learn more about the incredible life and faith of Britain's longest-serving monarch and they will be inspired about the great things they can do for God.

Written by Alison Mitchell, who has authored many children's books, including the award-winning *The One O'Clock Miracle*, and *Jesus and The Lions' Den*. Illustrated by Emma Randall whose previous works include *Diary of a Disciple: Luke's Story*.

Here are the links with more information and to read the book

<https://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/common/productfiles/bioqueen-Look%20Inside.pdf>

The book has been commended by many people but here are the commendations from Northern Ireland

**Rt. Hon. Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP**

This excellent children's book tells the story of a wonderful woman, Queen Elizabeth, whose enduring faith in God has helped her provide strong leadership to our nation for some 70 years. She is a shining example of how God can guide

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and help us when we seek to follow Him and serve the needs of others just as Jesus did.



### Victoria Jackson

Children's Ministry Development Officer, Connor Diocese of the Church of Ireland

I just love everything about this little book! How amazing and inspiring for children to have the opportunity to read about the faith of their Queen in words which they can understand and through illustrations which bring her story to life.

### Ruth Dalzell

E3 Schools Worker for Scripture Union NI

What a beautiful tribute to Queen Elizabeth II: an amazing woman who has given over 70 years of her life to public service. This book guides us through important events

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during her life and through her own words, we can read that the Queen's Christian faith is at the core of who she is and her choice to serve. After reading this book, I hope and pray that many others will choose to serve God and do great things for Him.

### **William Humphrey MBE, MLA**

President, North West Belfast District Scout Council; Chair, Northern Ireland Assembly Branch, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association

This little book tells the story of truly remarkable lady, the Queen, who has set a tremendous example of her Christian faith and as role model for us all, in terms of commitment, hard work and dedication.

The book can be ordered by contacting Robin Fairbairn  
Mobile 07841469165  
[robin.fairbairn@thegoodbook.co.uk](mailto:robin.fairbairn@thegoodbook.co.uk)

**Refined**  
Ardens sed Virens



## **Renewing our volunteers**

**The Presbyterian Church podcast continues its 'RENEW' theme by turning attention to how we might be able to help renew those who serve**



[churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)

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**as volunteers within our congregations.**

Discipleship Facilitator Rachael Gamble (Sloan Street) and Clerk of Session Paul Elliott (Carnmoney) join Rick Hill (PCI) to discuss encouraging those who serve, drawing others into leading, carrying an equipping mindset in their roles and being sustained in their own service.

Also, have a listen to discover a great acronym for the word KNOW!

Listen wherever you get your podcasts from or via:

<https://audioboom.com/channels/5019668>

## Perspective

### George Carey - Afghan Christians have been abandoned

**Just like Bishop George Bell, we must stand up and do what is right in the face of violence and oppression**

A strange and ancient verse in the book of Deuteronomy, 26.5, has long puzzled scholars. It says, “a wandering Aramean was my father” and is at the centre of vexed and energetic Rabbinic argumentation. One obvious meaning, however, is that the Hebrew people were themselves a migrant people – as the Bible clearly indicates. Migration is, of course, part of the human story to be found in the history of the British Isles as well as the Middle East, and

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everywhere where there are communities of people who suffer conflict, or natural disaster.

But the displacement of millions of people in recent times is unprecedented, and the sheer numbers of those risking their lives to cross the Channel even on cold mid-winter days tell a story of desperation that is experienced all over the world. Many people fear that as the world fragments into conflict and climate change places pressure on resources, migration may spiral out of control.

Today a new fund is being launched in the name of the great 20th-century wartime leader, Bishop George Bell specifically to support persecuted Christian pastors who are refugees. George Bell famously helped Lutheran pastors who opposed Hitler and had to flee for their lives. He, together with other British humanitarians such as Sir Nicholas Winton, recognised a need and acted upon it. There are still times today when Government inaction means that private individuals have to act in the wake of a crying need.

In response to the refugee crisis, former prime minister Gordon Brown said: “We’ve got to act for moral reasons but also it’s in our own self-interest to do so.” This reminded me of Archbishop William Temple’s dictum that the art of government is the art of so ordering life that self-interest prompts what justice demands. Both are right – allowing the situation to get worse is irresponsible.

Another point to note is the fear in stable societies that we might be unsettled by the consequences of allowing large numbers from other cultural traditions to settle among us. I recognise the worry which, to some degree, we all share.

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Clearly those who join us must recognise that they need to embrace the values, traditions and history of the host nation, just as the hosts will allow the customs of the migrants to have a place among us.

We are enriched by the presence of those who have joined us in recent decades. I hope the UK will give a firm moral lead as nations respond to the crisis facing the world today.

To take one example, Afghanistan is now recognised by the Open Doors charity's "watch list" as the worst place in the world to be a Christian. In spite of the pleas of organisations working with persecuted Christians, who face the death penalty for apostasy under the country's strict interpretation of shariah law, the Government has not taken any steps at all to allow Christians to claim asylum in the UK. We have been awaiting a long-promised announcement from ministers on how they plan to include persecuted religious minorities in resettlement schemes.

Freedom of Information requests to the UK Home Office found that in the Syrian resettlement scheme, Christians were consistently underrepresented in spite of the fact that they clearly faced violence and persecution. A tiny percentage – just 0.2 per cent – of the Syrian refugees accepted by the UK in 2017 were Christian. Underlying such shameful statistics was the Home Office's apparent admission in its own equality assessment that the effect of its policy was to "disproportionately advantage" Muslims.

Several hundred Afghan Christians, including pastors and converts, are currently in hiding in neighbouring countries.

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They are waiting to see whether they have a place on the UK Government's resettlement scheme.

The George Bell Memorial Fund will help them flee danger, despotism and violence, and travel to safety – whether they land on British shores or elsewhere. Sometimes it takes brave humanitarians like George Bell to stand up against even our own Government and bring the persecuted to safety.

George Carey is a former Archbishop of Canterbury. The second part of his memoirs, 'The Truth Will Set You Free' (Isaac Publishing) is out now

## Poem for today

### Month of February by Hilaire Belloc

The winter moon has such a quiet car  
That all the winter nights are dumb with rest.  
She drives the gradual dark with drooping crest,  
And dreams go wandering from her drowsy star.  
Because the nights are silent, do not wake:  
But there shall tremble through the general earth,  
And over you, a quickening and a birth.  
The sun is near the hill-tops for your sake.

The latest born of all the days shall creep  
To kiss the tender eyelids of the year;  
And you shall wake, grown young with perfect sleep,  
And smile at the new world, and make it dear  
With living murmurs more than dreams are deep.

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Silence is dead, my Dawn; the morning's here.

## Speaking to the Soul

Bible verse, thought for the day and prayers - on site daily

