



Image of the day

**Christ the King
Keady Parish Church**

February 1, 2022

People and places



Cathedral memorial to Bishop James Mehafeey of Derry and Raphoe

Relatives of the late former Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Dr James Mehafeey, attended a Service in St Columb's Cathedral, on Sunday morning, during which a plaque was dedicated to the late bishop's memory.

The dedication was performed by the Rt Rev Andrew Forster.

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The former bishop's widow, Mrs Thelma Mehaffey, and the couple's daughter Wendy and son Tim were present.

The Service of Choral Matins was led by the Dean of the Cathedral, Very Rev Raymond Stewart, who was assisted by the Parish of Templemore's Pastoral Assistant, Rev Canon John Merrick.

Among those who provided music for the service was the Philip Mehaffey Memorial Organ Scholar, Lukas Lynch. The scholarship was set up by Bishop and Mrs Mehaffey in memory of their late son.

In his sermon, Bishop Andrew described how appropriate the first reading – Jeremiah 1:4-10 – was for the occasion. In the reading, he said, we saw a man who faced great challenges. God chose Jeremiah to be a prophet and



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effectively told him his job was going to be a terrible one, a difficult one, faced with opposition and heartache.

Bishop Andrew said the foundations of Bishop Mehaffey's life and ministry were not far from the prophet Jeremiah. "His ministry was not far from what Jeremiah was called to do: at times to pluck up and tear down things that were wrong; to call out that which was in our society that pulled us apart. And then the other part of Jeremiah's ministry was to build up and to plant.

"And I can't help but think, today – and maybe today of all days, in this city – without Jim's ministry, building up and planting, I truly believe we would be in a much worse place now than we are this day, and for that, every one of us must be thankful to almighty God.

"And for that, in generations to come, many generations to come – just like visitors who've come to this Cathedral and heard of Bishop Alexander and Mrs Alexander, have looked at the other plaques and monuments around this cathedral that have heralded the ministry and influence of good people – for generations to come, people will hear of the ministry of Jim Mehaffey, a man fully known and fully loved, a man blessed by the presence of God and equipped by his holy spirit, who tore down those attitudes that were wrong, and built us up into a better place, and planted grace into our hearts.

"Whenever I read today's reading, in one way I couldn't believe how appropriate it was for someone who built up so much, even physically. You know, today, as you and I drove to the cathedral, you might've seen the police presence

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outside
Bishopsgate
Hotel, because
the Taoiseach is
there for the
commemoration
later on today.

The Philip
Mehaffey
Memorial Organ
Scholar, Lukas
Lynch.



The Taoiseach is
in the Bishopsgate
Hotel that came

about because of the Inner City Trust, came about because
of people like Jim Mehaffey, who weren't prepared just to
leave this place in rubble and in ruin, but to rebuild – and to
rebuild better and to rebuild stronger.

“As we look back into the rubble of division, into the
wreckage of pain, Jim’s example to us is to build up: to build
up better, to build up stronger, and to look to the future. He
was able to do that because, like Jeremiah, Bishop Jim
knew that God knew him, that he was fully known, fully
loved, that the presence of God walked in him, and that he
was equipped by the Spirit.”

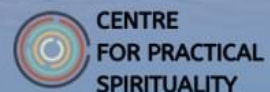
Bishop Forster recalled Bishop Mehaffey’s funeral, two
years ago this month. “When we gathered in this cathedral,

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[Bishop Mehaffey's daughter] Wendy told us that one of the last things her dad said was this – in its simplicity beautiful, but in its profundity incredible – simply this: 'One helps the other.' One helps the other. For me, that is the essence of the Kingdom of God. One helps the other.

“In our challenges, great or small, may Jim's – if I may say it – last sermon to all of us be his living legacy: that one helps the other; and that you and I will go on helping the other, because, like Jeremiah of old, like Bishop James Mehaffey, that we would know that whatever the challenges were, we faced them together, because we were fully known and fully loved; because God journeyed with us; and because we were equipped by his spirit. One helps the other. Jim

*Let tiny drops of
stillness fall gently
throughout your day.*



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Mehaffey helped us. May we be people who in thankfulness live out the sermon of his life: to build up and to help the other.”

The music at Sunday’s service was provided by the Gentlemen of the Cathedral Choir and the Cathedral Choristers. The Organist and Master of the Choristers was Dr Derek Collins and the Assistant Organist was Mr Nicky Morton.

Bishop’s Big Bike Ride

Advance notice to his parishioners that in March, Bishop David McClay will be arriving at your parish on two wheels instead of four.

The bishop is one of a small group of cyclists who will be travelling around the diocese to raise money for the Down and Dromore Lent Appeal.

The Bishop’s Big Bike Ride is the flagship fundraising effort and the organisers hope it will inspire everyone in the diocese to give generously.

All money raised will go to two Bishop’s Appeal projects being supported specifically by Down and Dromore, one through Christian Aid and the other through Tearfund.

The Christian Aid project is in Honduras, working with their local partner organisation in eight communities that are particularly vulnerable to climate change.

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The Tearfund project is in Jordan, helping mobilise the Anglican church there to work amongst Jordan's poorest communities.

To raise the profile of the campaign, Bishop David intends to cycle to each parish in the diocese over six days in March. He will be joined by a handful of intrepid clergy colleagues and representatives of Christian Aid Ireland and Tearfund.

The dates for the cycle are 4,7,11,14,16 and 21 March and the bishop looks forward to meeting some parishioners and clergy at each stop. Please note that time will not allow the cyclists to visit every church building.

Give

“We want as a diocese to show our love and support to the people of Honduras and Jordan with a generous donation through Bishops' Appeal.”

As Lent approaches, please watch out for more news of the appeal and bike ride on social media and in your parish, including details of the route and how to give.

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There is still space for others to join the team, either for the whole cycle, or for a day or part of a day. Please contact Down and Dromore's Bishops' Appeal representative Revd Colin Darling for more information and details of the route (colin.darling@talktalk.net).

Eritrean Coptic celebration at Queen's Chaplaincy

The Catholic Chaplaincy at Queen's University, Belfast,

hosted the traditional Ark celebration for their friends from the Eritrean Coptic community.



“Their prayer and presence among us is such a blessing”.

A good time was had by all, and the traditional food and coffee went down a treat!

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New rector for Clogher parish



The Revd William Jeffrey has been instituted as Rector of the Parish of Lisbellaw with Coolbuck at a special service in Lisbellaw Parish Church on Thursday, 27th January led by the Bishop of Clogher, the Right Revd Dr Ian Ellis.

Revd Jeffrey had previously served as Curate Assistant in St. Mark's Church, Ballymacash, Lisburn, in the Diocese of Connor.

Also officiating in the service was Dean Kenneth Hall, Archdeacon Brian Harper, the Registrar, Revd John

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McClenaghan and the preacher was the Revd Lynne Gibson, Rector of Ballymacash.

The readings were by Miss Isobel Stewart, Parish Reader and Mr Charles Barr.

The hymns were “Be thou my vision,” “Psalm 23,” “Dear Lord and Father of mankind” and “Great is thy faithfulness.” The organist was Mrs Lynda Lindsay.

Following the service, a number of speeches were introduced by the Acting Rural Dean, Dean Kenneth Hall. These included Mr Hilary Morrison from Ballymacash,

Rector of Howth announced

The Revd Philip Heak has been appointed the new Rector of Howth in the Diocese of Dublin. Philip is currently Rector of Naas Union of Parishes in the Diocese of Meath and Kildare and his appointment was announced in both parishes on Sunday January 30.

Philip was ordained a deacon in 1995 and priested in 1996. He has served as Curate at St Mark’s, Lisburn and as Curate/Priest in Charge at St Nicholas’s, Galway. He was Diocesan Youth Officer in Cashel, Ferns and Ossory for six years before moving to Naas as Rector in 2006 where he has served ever since.

Among his priorities in ministry, Philip includes worship and liturgy, pastoral care, school, outreach, ecumenism, discipleship, music and arts and community involvement. He

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plays the uilleann pipes and his interests include traditional Irish music, photography, woodwork, audio recording, cookery and movies and art.



Speaking following the announcement, Philip said: “It has been an immense privilege to serve as Rector in Naas Union of Parishes and I have greatly enjoyed my time here. Christabel and I have many fond memories of Naas, Kill and Rathmore. Although moving will be bittersweet, I am



Storm waves at Ballintoy, Co. Antrim

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looking forward to an exciting ministry in Howth and appreciate your prayers for both the parish that I'm leaving and the one to which I go."

Philip succeeds Canon Kevin Brew who retired as Rector of Howth last year.

News Reports

Afghan people need real pledges, not smoke and mirrors

International development charity, Christian Aid, has warned the UK Government the £286 million committed to Afghanistan in aid is "a drop in the ocean" and urged Ministers to make good on its promises to the Afghan people.

The intervention comes as the UK Government announces the latest allocation of aid to Afghanistan. The World Food Programme has also warned that by March 2022, a total of 8.7 million people in Afghanistan are expected to slide into critical levels of acute food insecurity

Fionna Smyth, Head of Global Advocacy and Policy at Christian Aid, said:

"Afghanistan is in crisis with millions on the verge of starvation. Reports of the elimination of women and girls from society are heart breaking.

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“The UK Government’s announcement is disappointing, nothing more than a game of smoke and mirrors. It is re-announcing money already committed.

"The £286 million committed is a drop in the ocean. To say aid has been doubled is categorically wrong, in fact the current level of aid to Afghanistan is less than 2019 levels.

“The UN has asked for \$4.4 billion for Afghanistan and the UK has a moral responsibility to lead by example. One way that it can do that by convening a humanitarian pledging conference.

“We welcome the UK Government’s step to bring the UN humanitarian exception into UK law, championed by Christian Aid, so aid can flow into the hands of the Afghan people.

WCC appeals for peace in Ukraine

The World Council of Churches (WCC) acting general secretary Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca, on behalf of WCC member churches throughout the world, urgently appealed for peace for the people of Ukraine:

"As we follow the news of the mad progression towards war, we plead for a different logic than one based on geopolitical competition - a logic that considers the death and suffering that any armed conflict would inevitably visit on the children, women and men of Ukraine," said Sauca. "We pray for a

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change of hearts and minds, for de-escalation, and for dialogue instead of threats."

"God's people - and members of the ecumenical fellowship - find themselves on both sides of the current confrontation," added Sauca. "But our God is a God of peace, not of war and bloodshed," he said. "Though the things that make for peace may be hidden from the eyes of those driving the march to war, we pray that they may yet be opened, and that peace may yet prevail."

www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/statement-on-ukraine

Pope says fake news and disinformation on Covid are human rights violations

Pope Francis said on Friday that spreading fake news and disinformation on covid-19 and vaccines, including by Catholic media, is a violation of human rights.

It was the second time in less than month that the 85-year-old pope has spoken out on the subject. Three weeks ago, he condemned as "baseless" ideological misinformation about vaccines, backing national immunisation campaigns and calling healthcare a "moral obligation".

Francis made his comments in an address to members of catholicfactchecking.com, a consortium of Catholic media whose website says its aim is to "clarify fake news and misleading information" about vaccines against covid.

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"To be properly informed, to be helped to understand situations based on scientific data and not fake news, is a human right," the pope told the group. "Correct information must be ensured above all to those who are less equipped, to the weakest and to those who are most vulnerable."

Francis decried a spreading "infodemic," which he said was a distortion of reality based on fear, falsified or invented news and "allegedly scientific information".

Believers of fake news should not be placed in "ghettos" but attempts should be made to try to win them over to the scientific truth.

"Fake news has to be refuted, but individual persons must always be respected, for they believe it often without full awareness or responsibility," Francis said.

It was significant that the pope made the address to a Catholic media group. Some right-wing Catholic outlets, blogs and websites have been shut down by social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter for spreading covid disinformation. Many have moved to other platforms.

Some right-wing Catholic media regularly host Francis' most severe critics, such as Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, an Italian who has been in hiding for nearly three years since issuing a statement against Francis demanding his resignation.

In a letter to followers this month, Vigano said the virus was produced in a lab was part of a global plot "to erase all traces of our identity as Christians".

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He has also denied the pandemic exists and has called it the work of Satan.

Perspective

Cost of living crisis demands action by Norman Hamilton

As the cost of living continues to climb, with soaring energy prices posing particular problems, Christians need to act on the issue of inequality in society. The Rev Dr Norman Hamilton reflects on two recent pieces of research and Jesus' teaching on compassion

The news is awash with stories of the ever-rising costs of living. Just before Christmas, a forecast for BBC Panorama reported that "a typical UK family will spend £1,700 more per year on household costs in 2022".

At a more local level, the BBC also reported in December that LifeHub - a Belfast food bank which helps more than 600 families each week - saw a 250 per cent increase in demand for food in the last year.

And to add to the statistical misery... The children's commissioner states that "almost one in every four children in Northern Ireland lives in a family which struggles to provide for their basic needs. These are children whose parents often have to get into debt to pay to make ends meet."

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My wife and I see a little of those pressures, for we are paying 50 per cent more for heating oil than a year ago - and everyone else is too. And that is clearly going to get worse during 2022.

But as a family we are not in need of more money to pay for the oil, nor needing to visit the local food bank, and we do expect to be able to weather the economic storms that may come our way over the next few years.

Our situation is not very different from many others, and that makes it all too easy for many of us to be relatively unconcerned about the intense stress and distress around us right now as winter deepens.

But there is a major and ongoing change in the thinking of God's people on this subject of inequality, which was highlighted in several major pieces of research in 2021, led by the Christian think-tank Theos in London, and the Jubilee centre in Cambridge.

Their findings are entirely consistent with the straightforward teaching of Jesus himself. If He was walking our streets today, he might well repeat what he said so many years ago: "I have compassion for these people; I do not want to send them away hungry."

And he would look to me - and to you - as he did then, to offer what we can to help. Indeed, the account of the last judgement in Matthew 25 is both a sobering warning and a call to action here and now: "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the

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creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink."

Crucially, this message of Jesus, and the wider teaching of the Bible captured by the Christian academics is not just about fixing material poverty: "The impact of excessive and/or widening inequality is as evident in our relationships as in our bank balances."

The research clearly spells out that inequality becomes a problem when it undermines our having good relationships with one another and when it separates us from the wider community. Indeed, the title of one of the research papers puts it very well: Money Can't Fix Everything.

Another suggestion, albeit fairly controversial, is put on the table for more and hopefully better discussion: a wealth tax.

This, broadly speaking, is a tax on the difference between what someone owns and what someone owes, and would be taken from those who are really wealthy. There are, of course, arguments for and against such a tax, but the researchers suggest that the discussion on the possibility needs to be opened once again. It is hard to disagree given that the pandemic has made some people very wealthy indeed.

This leads to one final, and hugely challenging thought from the research. It seems clear that as a society, we never think about what it means to have 'enough'. In both the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Jesus describes himself as having "nowhere to lay his head".

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Given that I personally do have enough and to spare (to quote from the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15), what are the implications I need to face?

As the costs of living continue to rise, I have both a Christian and a moral obligation to answer that question properly. For I know only too well that faith without works really is dead - very dead.

Courtesy the Irish News 20/01/2022

Poem for today

The Road To Derry by Séamus Heaney

Along Glenshane and Foreglen
and the cold woods of Hillhead:
A wet wind in the hedges and a dark cloud on the mountain,
And flags like black frost
mourning that the thirteen men were dead.
The Roe wept at Dungiven and the Foyle cried out to
heaven,
Burntollet's old wound opened and again the Bogside bled;
By Shipquay Gate I shivered and by Lone Moor I enquired
Where I might find the coffins where the thirteen men lay
dead.
My heart besieged by anger, my mind a gap of danger.
I walked among their old haunts.
the home ground where they bled;
And in the dirt lay justice like an acorn in the winter.
Till its oak would sprout in Derry
where the thirteen men lay dead.

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