

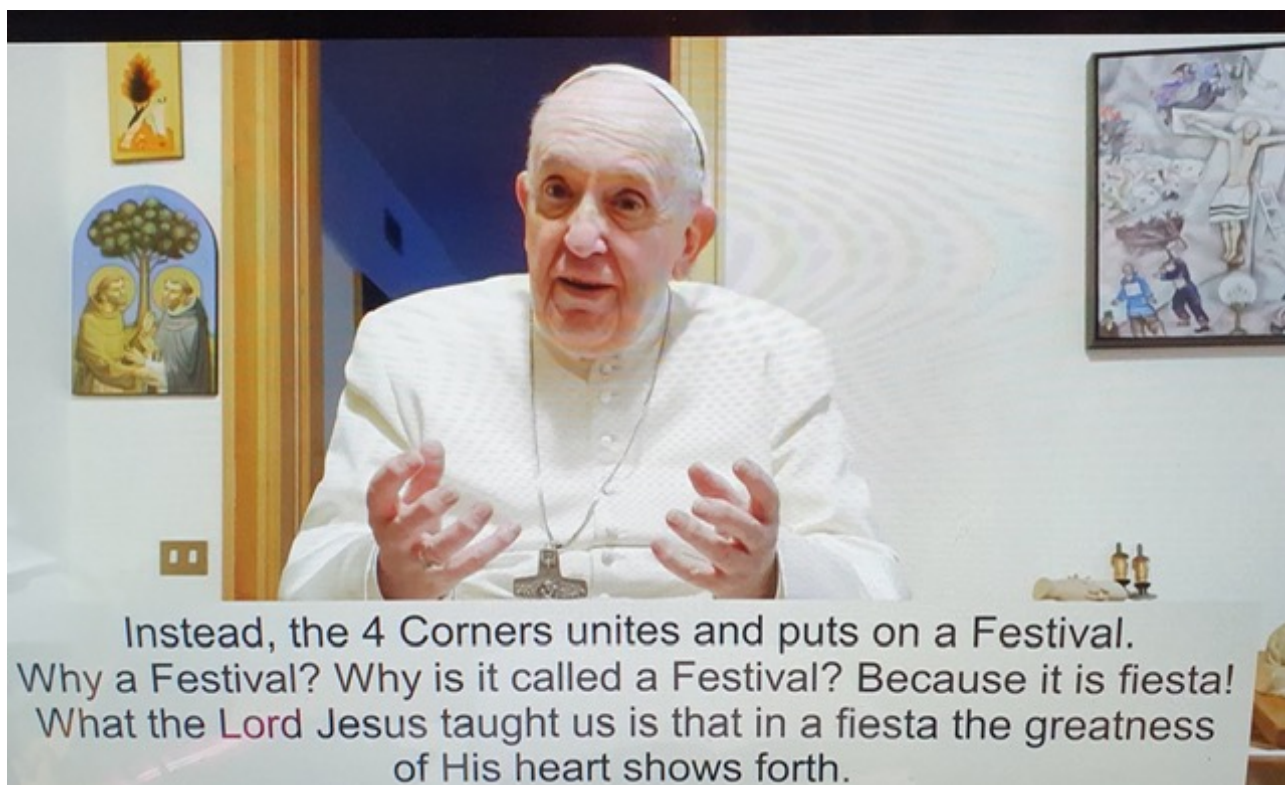
February 2, 2022



**Image of the day - the Albert Clock, Belfast**

February 2, 2022

## People and places



## Personal message from Pope Francis at opening of Belfast's 4 Corners Festival

**A personal message from Pope Francis for the people of Belfast was broadcast at the opening event of the 4 Corners Festival, an inter-church festival that seeks to bring together people from all parts of Belfast.**

The message was played in St Anne's Church of Ireland Cathedral ahead of a talk and Q&A with Austen Ivereigh, who collaborated with Pope Francis on his recent book, *Let us Dream*

Full Text of the Pope's Message -

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February 2, 2022

I was delighted to learn of this festival in Belfast, the Four Corners.

I thank Reverend Steve Stockman and Father Martin McGill for this gesture, a gesture of walking together, a gesture of opening horizons.

This is a Christian reality. To the extent that we open more horizons, the more the grace of God enters us, the more the Lord is revealed to us.

The danger is when we close ourselves off, each one of us, at a personal level, when we close in our own story. We don't grow. It's a sad story.

Or when, as a society, we enclose ourselves in our religion, in our ideas, and live closed-up, each one in our corner.

But in this festival, the four 'corners' are mixed, everything is together. People mix in the best sense: they talk to one other, they express themselves, listen to each other, walk together.

I'm happy about this. I'm happy that my brother, Justin Welby, is celebrating there; I am happy that the Catholic archbishop is celebrating there.

We're brothers, and if we have walked together for centuries why stop and mutually excommunicate each other?

Because what we do when we separate ourselves from each other, is excommunicate each other. That is to say:

February 2, 2022

“you’re not from my family, you’re not from my communion, you’re not this, not that...”

Instead, the Four Corners unites and puts on a Festival. Why a Festival? Why is it called a Festival? Because it’s fiesta! What the Lord Jesus taught us is that in a fiesta the greatness of His heart shows forth.

Let’s remember that parable when the guests didn’t want to come.

Go to the crossroads and bring everybody, the rich, the poor, the lame, the blind and the deaf, everybody, healthy and sick.

Because in the fiesta of the Lord all come together as brothers and sisters.

I wish you the best in this festival. But I especially want to thank you for the good your example does me.

It does me good because I see we have to pull down walls and build bridges.

May God bless you. Pray for me, please, and I will pray for you. Thank you very much.”

## **Dublin’s Interfaith Forum marks 10th anniversary**

**A decade of building bridges between communities, people and agencies was celebrated on Monday**

February 2, 2022

**morning (January 31) as Dublin City Interfaith Forum marked its 10th anniversary. Members, associates and friends of DCIF gathered online to celebrate the milestone.**

The theme was ‘Building Bridges, Sharing Common Ground, Promoting Integration’, and contributors from various areas of civic life highlighted the importance of the Forum to life in Dublin. Speakers included the Lord Mayor of Dublin Alison Gilliland, Garda Assistant Commissioner Paula Hilman, Sinead Gibney Chief Commissioner of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, Philip McDonagh of the DCU Centre for Religion, Human Values and International Relations, and Mary Lynch Head of Integration of Dublin City Council. The session was chaired by the new chairperson of DCIF, Archbishop Michael Jackson.

DCIF’s Executive Officer Adrian Cristea recalled the first meeting of leaders and representatives of various faith communities when they embarked on a journey of learning and friendship. He said that today they honoured all their members,

past and present, and thanked them for their contribution to making a better Dublin.

He said they had worked together to promote integration, nurture harmony and encourage respect.

Mr Cristea noted speakers at the Holocaust commemoration yesterday evening told of the rise of far right extremism, racism and hate speech. He said that the more that the language of hate was tolerated, the more it found a place in the national discourse. He encouraged everyone to call it

February 2, 2022



out. Today, Dublin is home to many faiths and he stated that DCIF must continue to work to build bridges and promote dialogue with others to develop a cohesive society that understands each of its diverse parts.

Lord Mayor Alison Gilliland also recalled Holocaust Memorial Day when people were reminded of their collective responsibility to reject hate speech and to understand and uphold the rights of others to dignity, to be valued for their own sake, to be accepted and respected and to be treated fairly.

Recalling her childhood, she said she grew up in a Protestant family on this side of the Border during the Troubles. She said there were very few opportunities to mix and there was an environment of 'them and us'. She said that looking back she could see how an organisation like

February 2, 2022

DCIF could have helped her community to find common ground.

Aside from Border related challenges, Ireland has a relatively short history cultural diversity, dating mostly from the Celtic Tiger era when, the Lord Mayor stated, our communities became “more diverse and varied and more beautiful and colourful in every sense of the word”.

However, she noted that there had been and continued to be challenges for migrants and new arrivals to Ireland for integration.

There were also challenges within local communities where people were stereotyped because of a global political situation and could be targeted because of that.

“Lack of understanding of faith and culture gives rise to fear and fear can make us insular and defensive often manifesting itself in acts of intolerance, acts of race based harassment, bullying, damage to property and violence, acts of discrimination and acts of exclusion. As we know these biased acts damage communities, damage social and civic cohesion and damage our prosperity,” the Lord Mayor commented. “DCIF in partnership with Dublin City Council can play a key role in preventing this social damage. We both share a strong vision of a fully integrated city that promotes respect for, acceptance of and inclusion of diversity of faith, belief, nationality and culture of all those who choose to live, work and recreate in our city.”

She concluded: “I believe in working together we can all reach out the hand of friendship to communities and across communities to break down stereotypes, to deepen



February 2, 2022

understanding, to build bridges, to share common ground and to promote integration and social harmony.”

Assistant Commissioner Paula Hilman was the first speaker in the panel discussion. From a policing perspective, she said that a great deal of social capital was unlocked through starting conversations with faith groups adding that by working together they could overcome problems.

A number of organisations that have engaged with DCIF over the decade brought anniversary wishes including Jenny Siung of the Chester Beatty Library, Norman Richardson of the Northern Ireland Interfaith Forum, Leonie Lewis of the Cities of Faith and Communities Forum, Iain Stewart of the Edinburgh Interfaith Association and Mustafa Field of the Faiths Forum in London.

Bringing the morning to a close, Archbishop Jackson said that many new avenues and pathways had opened and that DCIF had reached a moment of renewal. Thanking contributors and participants he said: “Those who have joined us have given us encouragement in this moment of renewal. You have given us body and strength in the work of diversity.”

## Talking Education at PCI Conference

**The Presbyterian Church in Ireland brought together over 100 teachers, senior leaders, school governors and other education professionals from across the denomination this weekend (29 January 2022) for ‘PCI**



February 2, 2022

## **Talks Education: A vision for the future in Northern Ireland.'**

With the launch of the Independent Review of Education providing the backdrop for the conference, delegates welcomed the Minister for Education, Michelle McIlveen MLA, who addressed the Saturday morning event, which took place in PCI's Assembly Buildings in Belfast.

Speaking during Saturday's conference, Michelle McIlveen said, "I am very pleased to be invited to speak at your conference today, which has the theme of 'a vision for the future'. It is heartening to see so many people interested and invested in the future of education in Northern Ireland. I am well aware of the positive impact that the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has on the lives of our children and young people through your various youth ministries, as well as your invaluable contribution to the management of our schools."

The Minister continued, "The education of our children and young people goes far beyond the Department of Education, or even schools and colleges. It requires the dedication of teachers, governors, parents and many more. The support of local churches, such as yours, is also key in placing schools at the heart of their communities.

"Sessions like today, when we can discuss ethos and vision, consider the strengths and challenges in the current system and build consensus of how we work together to bring improvements, are extremely valuable," she said.

February 2, 2022

Having heard PCI's Moderator, Right Reverend Dr David Bruce, commit the conference to God in prayer, those attending had the opportunity to hear from Dr Andy Brown, Chair of PCI's State Education Committee. Speaking about the event he said, "Supporting and participating in education has been part of the DNA of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for over a century. Our church's history in education is undeniable and enviable, having formed schools in our quest for social justice and a desire to make education accessible. Then as now it is also our desire for children and young people to flourish, reaching their full potential in a nurturing and holistic way."

Contributing to the morning's discussions was keynote speaker Dr Irvin Scott, founder of the Harvard University Leadership Institute for Faith and Education. In a recorded address from Cambridge, Massachusetts, Dr Scott noted that while the context of education in the United States and Northern Ireland were, on the one hand very different, the goal of education in both places was very similar. "...[I]n the end we're after the same thing – a group of students and educators who are achieving at high levels, who are becoming increasingly understanding of one another, who are learning across differences and who are just thriving... that's what we are ultimately after.." he said.

Perspectives from different spheres of the local education system were also heard during the panel discussion. Panellists included Rev Robert Herron OBE, a transferor representative on the board of Northern Ireland's Education Authority, Dr Barbara McDade from Stranmillis University College, Leanne Dunlop, who is experienced in schools' ministry through Scripture Union Northern Ireland, and a

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February 2, 2022

local principal, Mark Beattie, from The Diamond Primary School in Cullybackey. Delegates were then free to participate in small group discussions on key themes, the feedback from which will inform and shape PCI's response to the Independent Review.

Speaking at the close of the event, Dr Brown said, "We are grateful to the Minister for Education for taking time to join us this morning and to Dr Scott, for providing us with some thought-provoking insights. Our panel discussion reflected some of the diverse roles that PCI members and other Christian people play in the education system. Another important part of today's proceedings was the small group engagement, which will provide us with much food for thought, as we seek to respond to the Independent Review of Education positively and creatively.

"We believe that the values and Christian ethos that PCI, and the other churches, cherish and promote in education are healthy and positive for children and young people. At the same time, our partnerships with local schools in our communities are an act of service for the common good. This morning has been an important opportunity to reflect on how, in a changing world, we can continue to be effective in our mission to serve our society, our communities, our families, our children and young people, through constructive leadership and partnership in education," he said.

Dr Brown concluded by saying. "Many Presbyterian people are involved in education at all levels throughout Northern Ireland, often regarding it as a vocation rather than simply another job and I would like to thank everyone for coming

February 2, 2022

and for their contributions today. In the context of this changing educational landscape, this has been a vital moment for us to pause and consider what that involvement might look like for the next 100 years.”

Echoing Dr Brown’s comments, the Moderator said at the close of the conference, “Today across many areas of life, education included, we find ourselves in a different place than the one we were once used to, which can be both a new experience and somewhat disconcerting. This morning’s conference has been an important opportunity to reflect together and I would like to personally thank everyone for their very positive engagement and extend my warmest thanks the Michelle McIlveen, Irvin Scott, and our panellists for their contributions.

Dr Bruce continued, “The Mission of God is less something we do, it is more something in which we participate, responding to what He is already doing – and God is active in this new secular environment. We give thanks for that, as we partner with Him, reflecting on where we are, reframing partnerships and relationships, while endeavouring to be a blessing in our schools.”

## **Annual Tractor Run in Bandon parishes took place again this year**

**After an absence last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic the annual Tractor Run was held again this year on Sunday January 23.**



February 2, 2022



The first parish Tractor Run took place in 2016, and on that day 90 Tractors took part. Over the years the event has grown to include vintage/classic cars, trucks and jeeps. This year a little over 350 vehicles took part in the run, 209 tractors, 70 trucks, 70 cars and 12 jeeps.

The run started at the Mart in Bandon, and it was led off by a Vintage Fire Brigade, making its way to Ballinadee, Ballinspittle, and Garretstown, turning right up the hill and back on to the Kilbrittain Road, through the village of Kilbrittain and back to the Mart for refreshments and the all-important raffle!

The Tractor Run has become an important cross community event and social occasion, and great friendships and connections have been made over the years. The event

February 2, 2022



gives us a significant foot print in the life of the town, as it is now seen as an important part of the yearly social and charity calendars.

The fact that the Covid-19 regulations were relaxed on the Friday before the event, resulted in a much bigger attendance than expected, enabling us to raise our biggest sum yet of €13,500. The funds raised are in aid of BASC (Bandon Area Special Children), Cork Down Syndrome Centre and St. Peter's Development Fund.

## In the media

**Faced with the Gray report, Johnson was left without honesty and without honour - John Crace**

February 2, 2022

The Guardian

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jan/31/faced-with-the-gray-report-johnson-was-left-without-honesty-and-without-honour?CMP>

## **Public consultation on bill to stop NI schools from hiring teachers based on religious beliefs**

Belfast Telegraph

The NI Assembly Committee began its examination of the Fair Employment (School Teachers) Bill on Monday, and has launched a public consultation to ask people across Northern Ireland for their views on the issue.

The bill aims to amend fair employment legislation, to ensure schools are no longer permitted to use religious beliefs as grounds in deciding who to recruit to teaching posts.

[[] <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/public-consultation-on-bill-to-stop-ni-schools-from-hiring-teachers-based-on-religious-beliefs-41295883.html?utm> ]

## **Pope Francis tells Belfast festival to keep 'building bridges'**

BBC News

A goodwill video message from the Pope was broadcast during the opening night of a cross-community festival in Belfast on Sunday.

[[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-60193019> ]

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February 2, 2022

## **Climate change: Agri-food groups promote Edwin Poots' bill**

BBC News

Agri-food business groups have urged assembly members to back a new law that aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 82% by 2050.

[[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-60192745> ]

## **Bishop Sullivan joins Hibernians for 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday**

Catholic Star Herald

Bishop Dennis Sullivan visited the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Fort Mercer Club, Jan. 30 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday with prayers and Mass.

He said it was “important to remember the atrocities” that occurred on Jan. 30, 1972, when British soldiers killed 13 unarmed civilians – all Catholics – during a protest against internment without trial in Londonderry, or Derry, Northern Ireland. A 14th man died months later.

Bishop Sullivan, a Hibernian himself, recalled learning of the event five decades ago as a priest serving in the Washington Heights section of New York, and marching through the city streets in protest of the killings. More at-  
[[] <https://catholicstarherald.org/bishop-sullivan-joins-hibernians-on-50th-anniversary-of-bloody-sunday/> ]

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February 2, 2022

## **End of an era as doors close for the last time at Windsor Presbyterian Church -**

Belfast Telegraph

The service which ended with the familiar hymn “Be Thou My Vision” to the traditional Irish melody of Slane was also presented in sign language to ...

[[] <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/end-of-an-era-as-doors-close-for-the-last-time-at-windsor-presbyterian-church-41293930.html> ]

## **The Venerable John Blackburn, 73: Chaplain general and champion of the outsider**

The Times

As the British army’s chaplain general, in 2000 John Blackburn inaugurated and saw through to completion the greatest change in the Royal Army Chaplains’ Department for 80 years. Until then the department had been split in two in both administrative and spiritual terms. It had been suggested that all church denominations come together under one administrative authority but the Catholic Church had resisted, so for every regiment there were two chaplains rather than one. Pay access

[[] [https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-venerable-john-blackburn-73-chaplain-general-and-champion-of-the-outsider-blcv587p?utm\\_](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-venerable-john-blackburn-73-chaplain-general-and-champion-of-the-outsider-blcv587p?utm_) ]

February 2, 2022

## Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts and books



# #ashtags & Hormones

## Hashtags & Hormones - Calling all leaders & parents

Connor Youth will be facilitating some training events with Love for Life. Their Hashtags & Hormones programme is fantastic for parents of young people and very helpful for youth leaders too. They will also be sharing how our new resource Pursuit could be used in groups.

It will be run in two locations:

Tuesday 1st March in St Matthews Church, Belfast

[ <https://engageconnoryouthstmatthews.eventbrite.co.uk> ]

Wednesday 2nd March in Armoy Parishchurch

[ <https://engageconnoryoutharmoy.eventbrite.co.uk> ]

Sign up to book your space!

## **Parenting for Faith course**

Based on the book Parenting Children for a Life of Faith, the Parenting for Faith course is a video-based resource for communities that can be downloaded or live-streamed. The course, handbooks and promotional materials are all free to download and use or you can purchase a DVD and handbooks if you prefer. It's normally run in a church or small group, but can be used by individuals as well.

The goal of the course is to help parents discover that they are perfectly positioned to show their children the reality of a life with God and to empower them to have their own vibrant two-way relationship with him.

[<http://parentingforfaith.org/course>]

## **Covid enabled growth of archives at C of I library**

The Representative Church Body Library's first two Archives of the Month for 2022 feature the growth in its collections of parish registers, over the course of the last two years, and a rare archive relating to architecture in Armagh – both the city and the county – in Victorian times.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic began back in March 2020, accessions to the Library's archival collections have continued at an extraordinary pace, with significant transfers from the local custodies in which they were created to the permanent safe-keeping of the Library's custody.

February 2, 2022

A total of 54 ‘new’ parish collections that previously were not among the Library’s holdings have been transferred and accessioned during this period – each assigned with their own unique identity numbers, with the result that the Library now holds no less than 1,214 individual parish record collections. Many other parishes which already had transferred records to the Library carried out impressive tidy-up work during the prolonged lockdown periods, with several local clergy and conscientious parishioners transferring additional materials to the Library.

### **35 Parish Readers in training in Down & Dromore this year**

**It’s been another encouraging start to the diocese’s Parish Reader training with 35 people from 12 parishes enrolled on the 2022 course.**

Revd Adrian Dorrian is teaching the course. Adrian is the Vicar of LAMP, where he is regularly involved in the planning and delivery of Diocesan Services as a Minor Canon of Down Cathedral. He is a member of the Liturgical Advisory Committee of the Church of Ireland and serves as its Chaplain. He is also an honorary Duty Chaplain in Westminster Abbey.

Adrian said, “One of the things I love about the Down and Dromore Parish Reader Course (which is also part of the training for our Diocesan Readers) is the variety of people it brings together.

“It is so exciting to see such a range of women and men from across our parishes engage with the Book of Common



February 2, 2022

Prayer as part of these ministries to which they've been called. The BCP is at the heart of how we worship as Anglicans; this Diocese is blessed with a wide variety of worship styles in our parishes and church plants, but all that worship is informed by the principles articulated across the generations of liturgical material we find in today's Prayer Book.

“Each course is slightly different, as it is shaped by the participants and the questions and experiences they bring with them. It is always a blessing to teach this material to individuals who are so committed to helping God's people engage in worship as disciples together.”

The first session took place in Down Cathedral on 25 January and the group will meet again this evening in St Ignatius, Carryduff.

### What is a Parish Reader?

The role usually involves the reading of liturgy, bible readings, prayers and assisting at Holy Communion. Parish Readers may assist in any or all of the ways outlined above and on a regular or occasional basis depending on how they are needed by the Rector. While the role is normally restricted to involvement in public worship it is significant in its support for clergy leading the service.

Parish Readers should undergo a short (free) training course of 6 weeks before being approved to exercise this ministry. They must also have the support of their Rector before applying.

February 2, 2022

The approval granted for a Reader will normally last for 3 years and cease on the appointment of a new Rector.

### Course Content

Introduction – A History of the Office

Key factors in Leading Worship

Prayer Book 1 – Overview

Prayer Book 2 – The Church Year

Prayer Book 3 – Service of the Word

Prayer Book 4 – Leading Intercessions

## Poem for today

### Mirror in February by Thomas Kinsella

The day dawns, with scent of must and rain,  
Of opened soil, dark trees, dry bedroom air.  
Under the fading lamp, half dressed -- my brain  
Idling on some compulsive fantasy --  
I towel my shaven jaw and stop, and stare,  
Riveted by a dark exhausted eye,  
A dry downturning mouth.  
It seems again that it is time to learn,  
In this untiring, crumbling place of growth  
To which, for the time being, I return.  
Now plainly in the mirror of my soul  
I read that I have looked my last on youth  
And little more; for they are not made whole  
That reach the age of Christ.

Below my window the wakening trees,  
Hacked clean for better bearing, stand defaced  
Suffering their brute necessities;

February 2, 2022

And how should the flesh not quail, that span for span  
Is mutilated more? In slow distaste  
I fold my towel with what grace I can,  
Not young, and not renewable, but man.

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