

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Bishop balloons at installation

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Image of the day

Bishop balloons at installation

Rt Rev. George Davison, following his installation in Lisburn Cathedral, with young people from the diocese of Connor in a photo booth which ballooned for the occasion.

People and places

Youth to the fore at special Service of Installation of Bishop of Connor

A special and, in the words of the Dean of Connor ‘probably unique.’ Service of Installation took place in Lisburn Cathedral on February 20.

At this, the Rt Rev George Davison was welcomed to the Cathedral as Bishop of Connor by the Dean, and invited inside, where he was greeted by a congregation made up predominantly of young people.

At Bishop Davison’s request, the special Service of Installation, which due to the Covid-19 pandemic took place two years after the Bishop’s appointment, was focused on the youth of the diocese.

It was young people who led the readings and prayers, and members of Connor Youth Forum who read the Charge to the Bishop – one they had written themselves.

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As is tradition, the Bishop knocked on the Cathedral door with his pastoral staff to gain admission. Afterwards, he and members of the Chapter of St Saviour (Connor) processed to the choir where he was formally installed by the Dean, following the reading of the Mandate from the Archbishop of Armagh by Diocesan Registrar, the Rev Canon William Taggart. He was led to his episcopal seat and installed by the Dean.

In his opening greeting, the Bishop spoke about the delay to this service: “The installation of a new Bishop is the moment when, having been duly appointed by the Church and ordained by the Archbishop, the Bishop arrives in the Diocesan Cathedral to begin their work as the Bishop – normally,” he said.

“For all sorts of reasons, mostly to do with that little virus... we have had to do things a little bit differently this time around so, having been elected to succeed Bishop Alan two years ago last week, it has taken until now to be able to have this service.

“Let me assure you that during that time, I have been working as the Bishop... popping in and out of Cathedrals uninstalled on a number of occasions, so I don't really feel like the new Bishop anymore!”

He said the ministry of a Bishop was one of leadership, but also one of partnership with every person in the diocese who has heard the call of Jesus, adding that not least that meant a partnership with young people. “In taking on this role, I do so in partnership with you, and I am so grateful to



you for being here,” he told the young people in the congregation.

Bishop Davison made special mention of Connor Youth Forum who shared in the leading of the service and who prepared their Charge for him. “I have no doubt as we share together in this service, it will be a meaningful beginning to the formal ministry that I exercise in this place,” he said.

The Charge was put to Bishop Davison by Youth Forum members Isaac and Maddie, but first, the two young people put questions to the Bishop around his journey in ministry and his role as Bishop.

In their Charge, they challenged Bishop Davison to continue to be radical in sharing the Gospel; to be a very public Christian leader in order to counter negative views on



the Church held by many non-Christian young people; to equip young people in evangelism; to support young people to connect with other parishes; and to share his wisdom with them.

The Bishop responded that he was massively encouraged by this Charge. “The things that you have said to me are things that I have been thinking about,” he said.

In another break from tradition, Diocesan Youth Officer Christina Baillie invited the congregation to pick up their phones and connect to Menti, an online app. She encouraged young people to share their blessings for Bishop George, and these quickly started appearing on the big screen. Those watching at home on the YouTube livestream were also able to take part.

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‘Peace that passes all understanding’ - ‘Strength of character’ - ‘Praying for courage and strength as you go forward in this role’ - ‘Wisdom’ - ‘God bless your family time’ - ‘Health and happiness’ - ‘That he would know God with him every step’ - ‘Courage to lead the diocese in faith over all the parishes of Connor’



The above are some of the many, many blessings that scrolled on the screen, some read out by Christina, who thanked everyone for taking part. “That feels really powerful,” she said.

Praise was led by the Cathedral worship band, who sang 10,000 Reasons; This is Amazing Grace; Who You Say I

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am; Yet not I but through Christ in me; O Praise the Name of the Lord our God; and The Blessing.

The Readers were Maddie who read Galatians 5:13-18 and Lauren (Matthew 20:20-34), and Lucas and Ella led the prayers. The service was conducted by the Dean , Very Rev Samuel Wright and the Rev Danielle McCullagh.

Afterwards, everyone was invited to the Cathedral Hall for hot dogs, cupcakes, s'mores and hot chocolate, and a chance to have their picture taken with the newly-installed Bishop in a special photo booth, before heading home ahead of Storm Franklin.

If you missed the service, you can catch up with it on YouTube.

Bishop George will be installed in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, on March 13.

Photo gallery at

<https://connor.anglican.org/2022/02/21/unique-service-as-bishop-george-installed-in-lisburn-cathedral/>

Founders Day / Thinking Day in Clogher parish

After a long break 1st Magheraculmoney held their Founders Day / Thinking Day Service at Ardess Parish Church Kesh on Sunday.

Thanks to all who were able to attend. Guiding Promises led by Caroline Neville, Kerri Neville, and Louie Lee Scouting



promises led by Brian Noble and Maurice Lee . Service conducted by Harry Anderson.

Moderator of the NSPCI expresses sympathy on death of MLA

The Reverend Chris Hudson Moderator of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church in Ireland responded to the death of Christopher Stalford MLA. He stated -

“I am deeply saddened to hear of the death of Christopher Stalford MLA. Christopher was one of our five MLAs, here in South Belfast. Always approachable and with a great wit. My deepest sympathy and prayers are with his wife, Laura, children and extended family. As Moderator of the NSPCI, I express my deepest sympathy to all his colleagues in the DUP. We are thankful for Christopher's contribution to public life. Lord rest him.”

Appointment to Belfast parish

The Rev Andrew Irwin has been appointed curate for the Parish of St Paul and St Barnabas, York Street, Belfast, in Connor Diocese.

Mr Irwin has been curate in Seapatrick Parish, Banbridge, Diocese of Down and Dromore, since September 2018, and served his deacon year (2017-18) in Donacloney Parish, Down and Dromore.

News reports

Archbishop Welby tells of self-loathing stemming from depression

The Archbishop of Canterbury has revealed he feels a “vicious sense of dislike of oneself” when suffering from depression.

The Most Rev Justin Welby said it feels “very odd” to feel this alongside the love of God, describing his faith as a “safety net”.

He opened up about his personal experiences in the first episode of The Archbishop Interviews, a new programme on BBC Radio 4 and BBC Sounds. In the episode, he spoke with Elif Shafak, an author, and explored the topics of faith, doubt and depression.

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“My own experience of depression –one of the symptoms of it is self-hatred, self-contempt, real, vicious sense of dislike of oneself,” he said.

“And that seems very odd when it combines with also a deep sense that I’m loved by God. And in my life that expressed itself almost as a safety net.

“I would say in my prayers – I may be this terrible person, this failure as an Archbishop, whatever it is, but I know you know me better than I know myself and you still love me.

Mr Welby said a book written by his daughter, Katharine Welby-Roberts, had encouraged him to speak to others and get help. “For me one of the most important things was a book written by our eldest daughter about her own depression,” he said. “She wrote a beautiful book called I Thought There Would Be Cake ... And in that there was a chapter about the need to be open to speak to others. And so I did.”

In the media

Why does Ireland hate Israel? - opinion

The Jerusalem Post

Underlying antisemitism is only one part of an explanation of Irish hostility. Viewing the Arab-Israel conflict solely through a distorted lens is another.

Relations between Dublin and Jerusalem are not particularly good. Of all European Union member states, Ireland is

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probably one of the most critical/hostile toward Israel. And if this changes, it will probably do so only for the worse. Polls show that the adamantly anti-Israel Sinn Féin, currently in the opposition, is likely to increase its representation in the next parliament, boosting the chances of it being part of the government and determining Ireland's foreign policy.

One might have expected there be a natural friendship between the Republic of Ireland and the State of Israel, both being Western democracies born in not dissimilar struggles for independence.

In the 1940s Yitzhak Shamir, who later became Israel's seventh prime minister, was a leader of the underground Lehi (the Stern Group) and branded a terrorist by the British. Shamir, inspired by the armed insurrection after the First World War that led to the creation of the Irish Free State, famously chose the name Michael as his nom de guerre after the Irish Republic Army's Michael Collins.

More at -

[[] <https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-696833>]

Higgins's remarks about North's 'segregated' schools spark anger

The Irish Times

President Michael D Higgins has provoked the ire of churches and politicians on both sides of the sectarian divide in Northern Ireland for ...

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[[] <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/higgins-s-remarks-about-north-s-segregated-schools-spark-anger-1.4806504>]

Elim church remembers 17-year-old Belfast Christian shot dead randomly 30 years ago by

Belfast Telegraph

Andrew was a member of Ballysillan Elim Church, where Jack McKee had been pastor for ten years at the time. He told Belfast Telegraph that he ...

[[] <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/remembrance-service-takes-place-of-andrew-johnston-30-years-on-41359004.html>]

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Bishop David McClay takes ‘A fresh Luke’ for Lent

Following the success of last year’s series, Bishop David has filmed forty devotionals for Lent that take a fresh look at the Gospel of Luke and the lessons that will shape our living. He says:

“Living lives of fruitfulness and fullness requires us to discover what following Jesus looks like and what loving Jesus means in times of uncertainty and change. The story of Jesus as told by Luke is transformational when we allow

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his story to change our story. I invite you to join me each day in Lent for a few minutes to look again at Luke's account of Jesus then, and what that means for us now." The short films 'A Fresh Luke' will be released at 7.00 am each morning in the News section of the diocesan website, plus their Facebook, YouTube and Instagram accounts.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, 2nd March 2022.

Illuminating Dark Times: Catholic Social Teaching for all

Adult learning at St Paul's presents Anna Rowlands and Paula Gooder in conversation

Premieres online Tuesday 22 February 7.00-7.45pm

Where can we find hopeful, transformative stories in the dark times we live in? How can we read the 'signs of the times', and act for the good? Theologians Anna Rowlands and Paula Gooder explore the roots and universality of Catholic Social Teaching, its foundations in the Gospels, and what it can teach us about working for justice, freedom and the common good when the world seems dark.

Dr Anna Rowlands is the St Hilda Professor of Catholic Social Thought & Practice at Durham University, and the author of *Towards a Politics of Communion: Catholic Social Teaching for Dark Times*. She has interests in everyday ethics and the way that academic research and teaching can engage in wider forms of public benefit and the common good.

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Dr Paula Gooder is Canon Chancellor at St Paul's Cathedral and a leading Biblical scholar. Her recent books include The Parables and Phoebe: A Story.

The event is free, but if you are able to make a donation to the continuing learning programme at St Paul's Cathedral when you register for the event they would be very grateful.

[[] <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/illuminating-dark-times-catholic-social-teaching-for-all-tickets-247079861517>]

First single 'Coming Home' from Evangelist at Church Army's Newry Centre

Laurence Bellew, Pioneer Evangelist at Church Army's Newry Centre of Mission in Northern Ireland, writes...

I'm so excited to be releasing my first single 'Coming Home' on Friday 18th February. It's a song that reflects on how I felt growing up in foster care; the feelings of rejection, worthlessness and searching for belonging, and then finding out about a God who loves me more than I could ever understand and who welcomes me into his arms. I really hope it will bless you and can be a resource to help others find God too.

I recorded the single at the Base Project Studio in Belfast which invests the money back into music lessons for their local community.

[<https://churcharmy.org/transformational-stories/cominghome/>]

Life On The Breadline Lent course

Online Lent Course: Life on the Breadline

Thursday 3rd March, 7-8:30pm

'Race, ethnicity, austerity and faith'

with:

 

Revd Farai Mapamula Deacon Eunice Atwood

   

Register at bit.ly/breadlineent

The first session of the #LifeOnTheBreadline Lent course will focus on 'Race, ethnicity, austerity and faith', facilitated by Eunice Atwood and Farai Mapamula.

The second session of the #LifeOnTheBreadline Lent course will focus on 'Christian responses to poverty',

Online Lent Course: Life on the Breadline

Thursday 10th March, 7-8:30pm

'Christian Responses to Poverty'

with:

 

Revd Chris Howson Stef Benstead

   

Register at bit.ly/breadlineent

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facilitated by Chris Howson and Stef Benstead from Church Action on Poverty.

The poster features a blue background with a faint illustration of a church window. At the top, the title 'Online Lent Course: Life on the Breadline' is written in white. Below it, the date and time 'Thursday 17th March, 7-8:30pm' are displayed. The session title 'Deficits and assets' is in large white font, followed by 'with:'. Two portrait photos are shown: Hannah Brown on the left and Kerry Scarlett on the right. Below the photos are their names. At the bottom, there are logos for Coventry University, Church Action on Poverty, The Methodist Church, and the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT). A registration link 'Register at bit.ly/breadlineent' is provided at the bottom.

The third session of the #LifeOnTheBreadline Lent course will focus on 'Deficits and assets', facilitated by Hannah Brown from JPIT and Kerry Scarlett from the West Midlands Methodist Learning Network.

Register at

[<https://bit.ly/breadlineent>.]

Perspective

Owen Polley - Unionists have fallen asleep at the wheel

Unless the Tories and the DUP get their act together immediately, Sinn Fein will storm the May elections.

Owen Polley writes in the Daily Telegraph

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On Friday, in the Orange Order's heartland of County Armagh, Sammy Wilson MP got a taste of how deeply frustrated grass-roots Unionists in Ulster have become.

Several thousand people gathered in the small town of Markethill to express their anger at the Northern Ireland Protocol. The fiercely Brexiteer DUP politician would have expected a warm reception from this crowd, but instead he was booed and heckled.

Many pro-Union people in Ulster are angry that they have been cut off from the rest of the UK by the Irish Sea border. They feel let down by politicians who have failed to prevent Northern Ireland's economic estrangement from Great Britain.

Ahead of an Assembly election in May, polls suggest that the DUP has lost support, with some of its backers considering switching to the moderate Ulster Unionist Party or the more hard-line option, the Traditional Unionist Voice. There is a real chance that Sinn Fein will become the largest party at Stormont, securing the first minister's post and delivering a symbolic blow to Unionism.

Yesterday, Michelle O'Neill, the republican party's leader in Ulster, told Sky News that nationalists "are closer than ... ever" to an all-Ireland state, claiming, "I think now is the time to plan."

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The idea that the Republic will soon absorb Northern Ireland is not credible. No serious opinion poll shows a majority for breaking up the UK. But, as the protocol demonstrated, nationalist pressure can damage the Union, even if the constitutional position is not changed formally through a border poll.

Sinn Fein is already the largest party in the Dail Eireann, the Republic of Ireland's parliament. Although the coalition government in Dublin has maintained its lead in polling, more than a third of Irish voters apparently want Mary Lou McDonald to head the next administration.

Many younger people, across the island, seem prepared to disregard Sinn Fein's blood-drenched past, and they may even be attracted by a whiff of cordite. They ignore a campaign of murder directed overwhelmingly at their near neighbours, citing disaffection with the Irish government's handling of issues such as housing and health.

Those of us who remember Northern Ireland's Troubles find this shocking, but Sinn Fein's political opponents must accept some responsibility for the situation.

When the DUP held the balance of power at Westminster in 2017, it had an unprecedented chance to contribute to the nation's governance. Instead, it boasted that it had extracted £1 billion from the Treasury. Subsequently, it endorsed Theresa May's "joint report" that entrenched the idea of a

“backstop”. And it formally agreed to a regulatory border, though not a customs border, in the Irish Sea.

Now, the party’s attempts to overturn the protocol seem increasingly futile. Edwin Poots, Northern Ireland’s agriculture minister, ordered that checks on goods at Irish Sea ports should stop, but his directive was immediately suspended by a judge. The DUP collapsed the executive, when Paul Givan resigned as first minister, but that was only 48 working days from the start of an election campaign. Before then, it had administered the protocol.

Meanwhile, in the Republic of Ireland, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael have been ineffective in countering Sinn Fein’s propaganda. Their attempts to draw attention to the party’s past are undermined by almost six years spent attacking the UK during Brexit and protocol negotiations.

Sinn Fein’s success has accompanied a surge of anti-Britishness that mainstream politicians such as Leo Varadkar and Simon Coveney have contributed to and exploited.

Unionism’s malaise and Sinn Fein’s success are also nurtured by our own Government’s failure to deal with the Irish Sea border effectively. The protocol has now been in force for more than a year, preventing free GB to NI trade and raising costs in Northern Ireland, yet a solution to these problems seems no closer.

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Unless Boris Johnson restores the province's place in the UK's internal market, or triggers Article 16, Unionists will continue to look like losers and Sinn Fein will enjoy masquerading as a winner.

Courtesy the Daily Telegraph 21/02/2022

Poem for today

In memoriam Francis Ledwidge Killed in France 31 July 1917 By Seamus Heaney

The bronze soldier hitches a bronze cape
That crumples stiffly in imagined wind
No matter how the real winds buff and sweep
His sudden hunkering run, forever craned

Over Flanders. Helmet and haversack,
The gun's firm slope from butt to bayonet,
The loyal, fallen names on the embossed plaque —
It all meant little to the worried pet

I was in nineteen forty-six or seven,
Gripping my Aunt Mary by the hand
Along the Portstewart prom, then round the crescent
To thread the Castle Walk out to the strand.

The pilot from Coleraine sailed to the coal-boat.
Courting couples rose out of the scooped dunes.
A farmer stripped to his studs and shiny waistcoat

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Rolled the trousers down on his timid shins.

At night when coloured bulbs strung out the sea-front
Country voices rose from a cliff-top shelter
With news of a great litter – “We’ll pet the runt!” –
And barbed wire that had torn a friesian’s elder.

Francis Ledwidge, you courted at the seaside
Beyond Drogheda one Sunday afternoon.
Literary, sweet-talking, countrified,
You pedalled out the leafy road from Slane.

Where you belonged, among the dolorous
And lovely: the May altar of wild flowers,
Easter water sprinkled in outhouses,
Mass-rocks and hill-top raths and raftered byres.

I think of you in your Tommy’s uniform,
A haunted Catholic face, pallid and brave,
Ghosting the trenches with a bloom of hawthorn
Or silence cored from a Boyne passage-grave.

It’s summer, nineteen-fifteen. I see the girl
My aunt was then, herding on the long acre.
Behind a low bush in the Dardanelles
You suck stones to make your dry mouth water.

It’s nineteen-seventeen. She still herds cows,
But a big strafe puts the candles out in Ypres:
‘My soul is by the Boyne, cutting new meadows...
My country wears her confirmation dress.’

‘To be called a British soldier while my country

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Has no place among nations...’ You were rent
By shrapnel six weeks later. ‘I am sorry
That party politics should divide our tents.’

In you, our dead enigma, all the strains
Criss-cross in useless equilibrium
And as the wind tunes through this vigilant bronze
I hear again the sure confusing drum

You followed from Boyne water to the Balkans
But miss the twilit note your flute should sound.
You were not keyed or pitched like these true-blue ones
Though all of you consort now underground.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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