



Image of the day - Chester Cathedral

January 27, 2021

Sister Annmarie and Sister Isabel - both Franciscan nuns and ordained Anglican priests



Sr Isabel Keegan (left) and Sr Annmarie Stuart, Franciscan Sisters who were members of the Roman Catholic Church but are now ordained priests in the Church of Ireland, preparing for service in the Church of Ireland in Killorglin, Co. Kerry. They don't see their journey as leaving one religion for another. Photo: Don MacMonagle

In the second part of a two-day special report, Joyce Fegan in the Irish Examiner asked six people to open up about how they left one faith behind, and about their new lives. Joyce writes -

Sr Isabel Keegan and Sr Annmarie Stuart are Franciscan Sisters who were members of the Roman Catholic Church

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but are now ordained priests in the Church of Ireland. They minister to the parishes of St Cartach's in Castlemaine and St Michael's in Killorglin in Co. Kerry.

Annmarie, 79, had Catholic and Anglican religion in her life from her mother and father. Early on she felt called "to the vowed life".

"I was born during the last World War. I was evacuated with my mother to Lancashire, to where my grandparents had been evacuated. My mother was an Anglican and my father was a Catholic. When she married, she became a Catholic.

"I was sent at five to a convent boarding school. When I eventually left the school, I felt called to the vowed life. My father was a businessman and lived in Chelsea and that felt alien to me, so I looked for a religious order," says Sr Annmarie.

She would joined the Franciscan order and studied theology and went to "preach retreats".

Sr Annmarie met Sr Isabel through the Franciscan order.

"I was born in Dublin. My mother was a devout Catholic; my father went to Mass once a week. Through my father I became very aware of nature; through his eyes, I would look at something beautiful.

I felt my father was a very spiritual man — that was my sense of another life, the birth of another life within me.

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“At about 18, I decided to dedicate myself to God. I wanted to give something back to God when I recognised the wonder of God coming among us,” says Sr Isabel.

She initially joined the Sisters of Nazareth, nursing the elderly and the dying, and then changed over to a more “contemplative way of life” in the Franciscans.

The two sisters got work as cleaners in a home for the deaf and the blind. They were living as Roman Catholic nuns in Canterbury, and studied and prayed hard.

In Canterbury, they got to know the Anglican church, and it was from there they became ordained as Anglican priests.

“The Anglican parish priest asked us to be ordained. We were shocked as it wasn’t on our minds because of all the work we had been doing,” explains Sr Isabel.

However, the sisters do not see their journey as leaving one religion for another.

“It seemed strange to leave one organisation for another. At the heart of our journey is this relationship with a living God. My aim is to share who the love of my life is. We follow the gospel of Christ.

“We thought and we prayed about it, how strongly we felt a different way of being Catholics,” says Sr Annmarie.

She adds: “We are Anglican priests. We are Anglican Franciscan nuns. We see it as a seamless journey”.

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She says that they have both always been “ecumenical in many ways” in their religious lives, with their work being to help people find their way to the living God.

“Some people have nice short journeys, and some people’s journeys demand change and movement,” says Sr Annmarie.

Report courtesy the Irish Examiner 26.01.2021. More at -
[[<https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/spotlight/arid-40213865.html>]

Northern Ireland Mother & Baby Homes Report makes for uncomfortable reading- Presbyterian Church

With the publication yesterday (26 January) of the Department of Health-commissioned report into mother-and-baby homes in Northern Ireland the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has said that, “The Report sheds much needed light on a dark era in Northern Ireland’s history and speaks more of the inhumanity shown to mothers and their babies and their wider families at that time, than the Christian care and compassion they deserved.”

In a statement following the Report’s publication this afternoon, Right Rev Dr David Bruce, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland said, “The times and circumstances covered by the report make for deeply uncomfortable reading. The terrible cost to every mother and child who suffered in such institutions is upsetting for all of us in society.

“Those children who survived, who have now been given opportunity to share their stories, along with their mothers who they may never have known, are an ongoing and courageous witness to an era in which the state, society and the churches failed to show compassion to some of the most vulnerable in their care. The Report sheds much needed light on a dark era in Northern Ireland’s history and speaks more of the inhumanity shown to mothers and their babies and their wider families at that time, than the Christian care and compassion they deserved. In any forthcoming inquiry, or process, we will certainly co-operate as far as we are able.”

Dr Bruce concluded by saying, “When the report’s authors approached us asking if we would participate in the research, we encouraged our members who had been residents of any Mother and Baby Home to come forward and share their story. With regards to our own history, we will need to reflect on the findings of this report, and our own association with, for example, what became the Edgar Home in Belfast, which closed some 93 years ago.

“We deeply regret and unreservedly apologise for the damaging effects of institutional care, in which the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, or its members played a part. We pray that those who still live with the memories of those days will know and experience the peace of God which may only be found in Christ’s love.”

Church of Ireland statement

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"The publication of the Research Report on Mother and Baby Homes and Magdalene Laundries in Northern Ireland sheds further light on the suffering of women and children in relation to their experiences in these homes.

"The Church of Ireland will be giving the report further careful consideration, as it has done with the recent report in the Republic of Ireland. We appreciate the extensive work undertaken by the researchers in the Department of Health."

Report sheds lights on what could be historic church shift across religious divide

New research has shown that the perceptions of what church has begun to change during the coronavirus pandemic, Graeme Cousins reports in the News Letter.

The study from Queen's University which was published today sheds light on how churches are navigating Covid-19 including moving religion online and inter-church co-operation.

During most of the pandemic church buildings across the island have been closed for worship due to restrictions on public gatherings. When churches have been open, strict social distancing protocols have limited the numbers who can attend in person.

One of the key findings from the research – the result of 32 in-depth interviews with clergy from different denominations in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic – was the



perceptions of what church is and what it does may be starting to shift in response to the pandemic.

The research was conducted by Dr Gladys Ganiel from the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work at Queen's.

The findings complement an earlier survey of faith leaders on the island, the results of which were published in a May 2020 report.

Dr Ganiel said: "New findings include a range of perspectives on how God may be working during the pandemic, with a strong emphasis on God coming alongside us during the pandemic, as well as evidence that some

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people are asking whether the pandemic is God's judgement."

She said this was a minority view, with clergy generally encouraging people to think along the lines that God was coming alongside people, often through the kind and selfless actions of others.



Dr Ganiel (above) said: "The interviews also revealed shifting understandings of what it means to 'be church', prioritising the role of lay volunteers and moving faith outside the walls of church buildings. Taken together, these findings provide evidence for a shift in emphasis among clergy to the idea that church is something other than a building.

"In addition, there was evidence of what could be a historic shift in national level inter-church relations. Inter-church

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cooperation at this level has been more frequent and united during the pandemic than at perhaps any other time, with unprecedented levels of collaboration around pandemic-related issues such as closing and re-opening church buildings; as well as issues like Brexit and dealing with the past in Northern Ireland.

“Given the island’s religiously-divided past, such cooperation – if sustained – could provide churches with a solid platform from which to contribute to societal debate in the years ahead.”

The report is available via www.irishchurches.org

New Canons for Chapter of St Patrick’s Cathedral

Two new Canons have been elected to serve on the Chapter of Saint Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin.

The Revd Aonghus Mayes, Rector of Moy, County Tyrone, (Diocese of Armagh) and the Revd Katharine Poulton, Rector of Julianstown Union of Parishes, County Meath (Dioceses of Meath & Kildare) have been elected in succession to Canon Dr Ian Morton Ellis and the Very Revd Gregory Dunstan , both of whom retired at the end of October 2020, as Prebendary of Newcastle, and Prebendary of Swords, respectively.

The Dean of Saint Patrick’s Cathedral, the Very Revd Dr William Morton, said: “I am delighted to welcome to the Chapter our two new members and I look forward to their respective installations in due course.”

South American Mission Society (SAMS) 'Friday Night Live' video premiere

On Friday February 5, the South American Mission Society (SAMS) Ireland will video premier its annual evening conference Friday Night Live online.

Friday Night Live gathers supporters of SAMS Ireland together for an evening of encouragement in mission.

The event will include contributions from church partners in South America as well as local stories of mission and inspiration.

SAMS Ireland Mission Director Rev Stephen McElhinney said: "Even though it's been a difficult year for everyone, this February our prayer is that Friday Night Live will once again bring us hope and encouragement with the Global perspective on mission. This year we have even more connection with the South American church, many of whose members will be able to join us online for the first time."

Stephen said many people had been able to contribute to the video premier event. "We are especially delighted that Rev Ronald Irene from Asuncion, Paraguay, will lead us to reflect on prayer and the theme: TIES in the Gospel – to Thank, Inform, Encourage and Support.

"We will welcome Bishops Raphael (Bolivia) and Daniel (Uruguay) as well as hear from Anglican Church community leaders in remote areas such as the North Argentine Chaco region."



SAMS
IRELAND
South American Mission Society

Friday Night Live Online

Join us as we give thanks for the work God is doing in South America, hear mission stories from our partners and encourage one another for the year ahead.



Friday 5th Feb
7:30pm - 8:30pm

Visit : facebook.com/samsireland1

‘TIES in the Gospel’ will be the central theme of this service, reflecting on the message of Colossians 4:3-6.

Friday Night Live will initially be launched as a Facebook Premier Video, which can be viewed at 7.30pm on Friday February 5. The video of the full event will be available on other platforms following the premier.

To find out more about Friday Night Live, visit the SAMS Ireland website.

Remembering the Holocaust, Moderator

On 27 January each year, the anniversary of the liberation of concentration and death camps, Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1945, is commemorated as International Holocaust Memorial Day.

Speaking on the 76th anniversary of the liberation, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Rt Rev Dr

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David Bruce, has said that it is ‘crucially important that we pause for these moments and reflect, not only upon what happened, but the circumstances that led to such outrageous acts of inhumanity.’

“In normal times, on the closest Sunday to the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, I would have represented our Church at Ireland’s annual event at The Mansion House in Dublin, to remember and commemorate the six million Jewish men, women and children, and the millions of other victims of the Holocaust, murdered by the Nazi regime and their collaborators across Europe. This year it was a privileged to watch the special livestream from a hall, filled symbolically, with empty chairs,” Dr Bruce said.

“While we are unable to come together and remember collectively the horror of those times this year, it does not alter our need to remember those events that are still within living memory.”

Dr Bruce continued, “Each year it is important that we pause for these moments and reflect, not only upon what happened, but the circumstances that led to such outrageous acts of inhumanity. At the same time, it is also important that we honour and pay tribute to the memory of those who perished, and to those who survived and continue to bear witness to The Shoa.”

“The Holocaust had its roots in racism born out of a poisonous xenophobic view of ‘the other’. God’s teaching for the world, then and now, is of His love and commitment to all nations. One hundred and eight times that sentiment is repeated in the Old Testament. Reminding us of that love,

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and God's command, Jesus quoted his own Hebrew Scriptures '... love your neighbour as yourself. I am the LORD'" (Leviticus 19:18).

Dr Bruce concluded by saying, "It is so important that we continue to mark and remember this horrific disgrace in human history so that each succeeding generation re-learns the lessons and remains determined not to repeat these horrors. We must be ready to call out loud and courageously, often not an easy thing to do, when the smallest seeds of evil are sown.

"Nothing can compare to the scale of the systematic genocide which took place in Europe between 1933 and 1945, but genocide has taken place in many other places since the end of the Second World War. As we pause and take time to commemorate what took place then, we take this opportunity to pray for those who survived. We also pray for all those who are persecuted on the grounds of religious belief or ethnicity today, recognising that such oppression is never part of God's plan for humanity."

Coronavirus: Archbishops invite nation to pause, pray and remember 100,000 people 'known to God and cherished by God'

"100,000 isn't just an abstract figure – each number is a person: someone we loved and someone who loved us."

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“Death doesn’t have the last word. In God’s kingdom, every tear will be wiped away.”

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York are issuing a call to the nation to pause and reflect to remember the more than 100,000 people across the UK who have died after contracting Covid-19 and all those who know and love them.

In an open letter, Archbishops Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell invite everyone across England – whether they have faith or not – to pause, reflect on the “enormity of this pandemic” and to pray.

Death, they insist, does not have “the last word”, and the Christian faith promises that one day “every tear will be wiped away”.

God, they write, knows grief and suffering and “shares in the weight of our sadness”.

Acknowledging the wider impact of the pandemic on the whole of society through loneliness, anxiety and economic hardship, they invite people to “cast their fears on God”.

The letter also speaks of the particular impact of the pandemic on poorer communities, minority ethnic communities and those living with disabilities.

It acknowledges many who have lost their livelihoods as a result of the economic impact of the pandemic and it speaks

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about those unable to be with loved ones as they died or even at their graveside because of the restrictions.

The archbishops give thanks for NHS and social care staff, who they describe as “a blessing and lifeline for our nation”; for clergy, other frontline workers and “so many good neighbours”. They give thanks for the development of vaccines and reiterate a call to everyone to take the vaccine when it is offered.

They also urge people to support each other both by following the guidelines to limit the spread of the virus and in practical ways, reaching out in care and kindness.

The letter includes an invitation to everyone – whether they have faith or not – to join the archbishops in pausing and praying each day at 6pm from February 1.

The archbishops write: “100,000 isn’t just an abstract figure. Each number is a person: someone we loved and someone who loved us. We also believe that each of these people was known to God and cherished by God.

“We write to you then in consolation, but also in encouragement, and ultimately in the hope of Jesus Christ. The God who comes to us in Jesus knew grief and suffering himself. On the cross, Jesus shares the weight of our sadness.”

They conclude: “Most of all, we have hope because God raised Jesus from the dead. This is the Christian hope that we will be celebrating at Easter.

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“We live in the hope that we will share in his resurrection. Death doesn’t have the last word. In God’s kingdom, every tear will be wiped away.

“Please be assured of our prayers. Please join us.”

The tragic milestone comes amid lockdown conditions in which large gatherings such as a national memorial service are not possible in person.

It is expected that the Church of England will hold services of remembrance for those who have died and thanksgiving for all those who have cared for them when it is possible to do so.

A prayer for those who mourn is also being shared on social media and will be available to churches across the country. The Text is below.

A prayer for those who mourn

Gracious God,
as we remember before you the thousands who have died,
surround us and all who mourn with your strong
compassion.

Be gentle with us in our grief,
protect us from despair,
and give us grace to persevere
and face the future with hope
in Jesus Christ our risen Lord.
Amen.

Lord Carey free to minister again as he condemns abuse

The former Archbishop of Canterbury has had his ban on ministering overturned, amid calls by clergy for the Church to “concentrate their energies on those who are genuinely at fault”.

In June last year it emerged that Lord Carey, 85, had his permission to officiate (PTO) as a priest revoked.

Lord Carey said he had ‘no memory at all of John Smyth at Trinity College Bristol’

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At the time, the Church of England said new evidence linking Lord Carey to a review into abuse committed by the late John Smyth QC had emerged.

The barrister, who died aged 77 in 2018, was accused of assaulting boys he had met at a Christian camp during the Seventies and Eighties.

However, seven months after his PTO was revoked, a statement from Lord Carey was released, saying that the Bishop of Oxford, the Right Reverend Dr Steven Croft, had reinstated it because he does not “pose a safeguarding risk”.

Lord Carey’s PTO was withdrawn after the independent Learning Lessons Case Review had concerns that when he was principal of Trinity College Bristol in 1983-84, he had received a report concerning Smyth’s “evil conduct” in the early Eighties without disclosing these concerns to the authorities.

Responding to the revelation that the former Archbishop has had his PTO reinstated, the Reverend Janet Fife, co-editor of

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Letters to a Broken Church, said: “I’m pleased that Lord Carey has at last been given back his PTO. The case against him was weak, and it was always clear that he posed no risk to anyone.

“Perhaps now the National Safeguarding Team will concentrate their energies on those who are genuinely at fault, and on supporting survivors of Church abuse.”

David Lamming, a retired barrister and lay member of the General Synod, also welcomed the restoration of Lord Carey’s PTO.

“In no way could the information about John Smyth that George Carey may have received 36 years ago make him a safeguarding risk now in his ministerial role in retirement,” he said.

However, an abuse victim, who did not wish to be named, said: “Whether George Carey can remember John Smyth or not is irrelevant.

“If he failed to respond appropriately to a report regarding extensive and exceptional abuse he should not be allowed to minister again.”

Lord Carey, who was the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1991 to 2002, said: “Following helpful and friendly discussions with the Bishop of Oxford, I am pleased to say that my PTO has been reinstated.”

He also said that he has “no memory at all of John Smyth at Trinity College Bristol”.

He added: “Let me say firmly that I condemn utterly the crimes of Smyth, and the damage he did to the lives of young people. I

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am fully committed to placing those who have survived abuse at the centre of our safe practices, thoughts and prayers.”

Report by Gabriella Swerling, courtesy The Daily Telegraph, 25.01.2021

Resources and webinars

David's Crown: An evening with Malcolm Guite on the Psalms

Canterbury Press write - Join us at 7pm GMT (2pm EST/ 11am PST) on 11th February to celebrate the launch of Malcolm Guite's new poetry collection David's Crown!

As well as the name of a virus, a corona is a crown, the pearly glow around the sun in certain astronomical conditions and a poetic form where interlinking lines connect a sequence.

It is the perfect name therefore for Malcolm's new collection of 150 poems, each one written in response to the Bible's 150 psalms as they appear in William Coverdale's timeless translation.

Malcolm will be joined by Paula Gooder, Roger Wagner and David Taylor for a very special evening discussing poetry, the Psalms and much more.

Tickets to this event are FREE. Information on how to view this event via YouTube will be sent to registered attendees before the event.

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Date: Thursday 11th February

Time: 7pm GMT/2pm EST/11am PST

<https://canterburypress.hymnsam.co.uk/events>

The Church Army have produced a bereavement

resource - “We know that sadly many people have lost loved ones recently so we've created this free booklet.

If you're working with individuals, families, or groups experiencing grief and bereavement, we'd love to offer you a copy of Death, Grief & Hope”.

Download 🖱️ churcharmy.org/deathgriefhope pic email
24/01/

Pointers for prayer

Today we pray for Mozambique. A cholera outbreak combined with a growing humanitarian crisis after fighting in a northern province displaced more than 500,000 people last year has led to the UN calling for help in the region.

Today we give thanks for those raising awareness of leprosy around the world. It's World Leprosy Day next week, when advocates challenge myths and spread awareness about leprosy, which is totally curable, globally.

We pray today for the church across the world, especially in places where they are experiencing hardship and persecution. We stand together with our sisters and brothers and pray for God to bring relief from their circumstances.

Lord Jesus, you prayed that we would all be united together so the world would believe and experience your love. Help

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us to put aside that which keeps us apart and work together to share your love through our actions and our lives.

Let's remember and thank God today for friends and connections with different church traditions, and pray that we'll fully embrace and enjoy the richness of diversity that we all bring to worship and service.

We pray today for God's help as we unite across denominations to bring hope and practical care to those in need, and ask that any differences and misunderstandings will be overcome through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Today we pray for those facing food insecurity globally. Coronavirus, conflict and cuts to UN funding are increasing the risks of food insecurity and malnutrition in 2021, in particular in South Sudan.

Prolonged restrictions and times of isolation can lead to a loss of confidence in venturing out and interacting with others. We pray for all who are experiencing this and ask God to help us gently reach out with encouragement and understanding.

Speaking to the Soul

Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised. I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people. He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!

Luke 2:29-32 NLT

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Eight days after Jesus' birth his parents took him to the temple for his circumcision. There is no suggestion that the people of Jerusalem understood the significance of this moment. All that the people saw was a poor young couple presenting their baby in the way that people did every day. But two elderly people did understand what was going on. Simeon and Anna had been longing for this day and it had finally come!

Our verses today form what is known as the Nunc Dimittis, Simeon's famous prayer of thanks for this miraculous moment. He had been looking forward to this day for so long that he could now die in peace. As a Jew he recognized that this was a glorious moment for the people of Israel. But it was much, much more. In this little scrap of life he recognised the Messiah who had come not merely for the Jews, but for the whole world.

Simeon and Anna understood what was going on because they were people of prayer. They had devoted their lives to waiting on God. Anna was 84 and had been a widow for seven years. We are told that she was a prophetess and never left the temple. Luke tells us that she worshipped God night and day, fasting and praying. The deep understanding and insight of these two people arose from lives that were shaped by prayer. They had got to know God so well that they were able to understand what he was doing in the world.

Time and again in these daily devotionals we have been reminded of the importance of prayer as a way of life. Simeon and Anna are a supreme illustration of this and an inspiration to us as we live for God day by day.

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QUESTION

What have you learnt from the example of Simeon and Anna?

PRAYER

Lord, thank you that you want us to live in continual partnership with you in prayer. By your Spirit inspire us with the example of Simeon and Anna and help us to share more of our lives with you in prayer. Amen.

