

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – St Brigit's Kildare

January 31, 2023

Image of the day

St Brigit's Kildare

On Friday 27th January, An Taoiseach Leo Varadkar TD visited St Brigid's Cathedral, Kildare, in advance of Ireland's newest public holiday which celebrates the most renowned female saint in Ireland.



Finding Brigit - tonight RTE One

Good news for Siobhán McSweeney fans (which is basically all of us right!). As Ireland prepares to celebrate its first public holiday dedicated to a woman, Siobhán is going in

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People and places

search of the real Brigid for a new documentary on RTÉ One, Finding Brigid. Tuesday 31st January, 10.15pm

Capturing the Past project brings Shankill generations together



Members of the Young@Heart group with the finished mural.

‘Capturing the Past,’ an intergenerational history project led by Heather Carson, Parish Development Officer,

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Church of Ireland in Lower Shankill, has created a lasting legacy.

A podcast featuring stories collated by the parish Young @ Heart Group, with members of the congregations of St Michael's and St Stephen & St Luke's and children from Malvern Primary School, along with artwork and recordings of old Belfast songs, are now being shared with other groups.

'Capturing the Past' was initiated by Heather and David Corscadden, formerly of Bauer Media, who Heather was introduced to by Keeva Watson from ROC NI who had done a previous community project with David.

The project was funded by the Awards for All grants programme. It was supposed to take place in 2020 to celebrate the 150th year of St Stephen's but due to Covid-19 was delayed until 2022.

'Capturing the Post' began with reminiscence sessions during Young @ Heart meetings, led by arts facilitator Dr Geraldine Gallagher, who specialises in the older people sector. Participants were encouraged to recall memories of family, school, work and social life in years gone by, show old pictures and play music from the past.

"There was much laughter and joy and we sang some of the old Belfast street songs from way back," said Heather.

"We then visited Malvern Primary School where some of our ladies, particularly one who had gone to the school as a child when it was Hemsworth Square School and known as

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‘the Henhouse,’ spoke about where they lived as a child and what life was like back then, their home, games they played, food etc.

“There was much laughter at some of the stories, particularly queuing on the sofa for the tin bath in front of the fire and not being happy if you were the last one in! And having to go to a cold outside toilet in the middle of the night!”

The primary school children made sketches based on the stories and these were turned into pictures for an art project.



[Capturing the Past was an inter-generational project.](#)

David and Heather recorded some of the wonderful stories shared by Young @ Heart members and members of the congregations. Heather wrote a script and David edited the recordings, pulling them together into a podcast. They sourced photographs of the past along with photographs

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provided by some of the Young @ Heart group, and these were overlaid on the presentation.

The art project was led by Dr Gallagher and involved several sessions in COILS' afterschool club where young and not-so-young had fun working together to produce a 'stained glass window'. Each picture in the 'window' tells the story of a particular memory for one of the Young @ Heart members.

"We had a lovely celebration event in St Stephen's on December 22, attended by everyone involved in the project along with some friends and family," Heather said.

"Two of our ladies, Norma Clucas and Ella Lyle, along with two girls from Malvern Primary School spoke about their participation in the artwork and what some of the pictures represented from their lives and we watched the podcast video on the church TV screens."

Heather, David and Dr Gallagher spoke about various aspects of the project and the Ven Barry Forde, Archdeacon of Belfast, congratulated everyone and closed the celebration in prayer before lunch.

The podcast and recordings of stories and the singing of old Belfast songs are now on a private YouTube link which is available to the families and friends of those taking part.

Heather added: "The Public Records Office of Northern Ireland has asked if it can retain a copy of the podcast for the future which is wonderful. I will be going to a number of

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groups to show the podcast video and the artwork and to talk about the project over the next couple of months.”

See image gallery at

[<https://connor.anglican.org/2023/01/30/capturing-the-past-project-brings-generations-together/>]

News reports

C of E Clergy will bless same-sex couples not their marriage, say church lawyers

Civil marriage is not the same as holy matrimony, a note from the Church of England’s legal office has stated, Francis Martin reports on the Church Times web site.

The note, circulated to General Synod members on Wednesday morning last week, says that: “Because what is capable of constituting a marriage for the purposes of ecclesiastical law (the union of one man and one woman) now differs fundamentally from what is capable of constituting a marriage for the purposes of the general law (the union of two persons without regard to their sex), there is a good case for saying that the institution of Holy Matrimony and the institution of civil marriage are now distinct.”

The note goes on to say that the “two definitions [of marriage] are mutually exclusive”, and therefore “the

concept of civil marriage is now of a different nature from the concept of marriage set out in Canon B30.”

Next week, the General Synod will debate the proposal by the House and College of Bishops to enable clergy to use draft prayers contained in Prayers of Love and Faith to bless same-sex couples (CT News, 19 January).

The reason for the note has not been disclosed, but it appears to have the intention of making clear that the way in which the prayers are used should not blur the distinction between a prior civil marriage and a wedding in church.

The note says that it “would not be lawful for a minister to use a form of service which either explicitly or implicitly treated or recognised the civil marriage of two persons of the same sex as corresponding to Holy Matrimony”.

Another possible intention is to head off conservative criticism of such blessings by maintaining that the doctrine of marriage is unaltered by the Bishops’ proposals. “The Legal Office . . . considers that none of the text contained in the draft Prayers of Love and Faith treats the civil marriage of two persons of the same sex, either expressly or impliedly, as amounting to Holy Matrimony. The Prayers are careful to avoid any such implication. Moreover, the Prayers are framed so that they do not bless civil marriages (or civil partnerships); any blessing is of the couple and the good in their relationship, not of the civil status they may have acquired.”

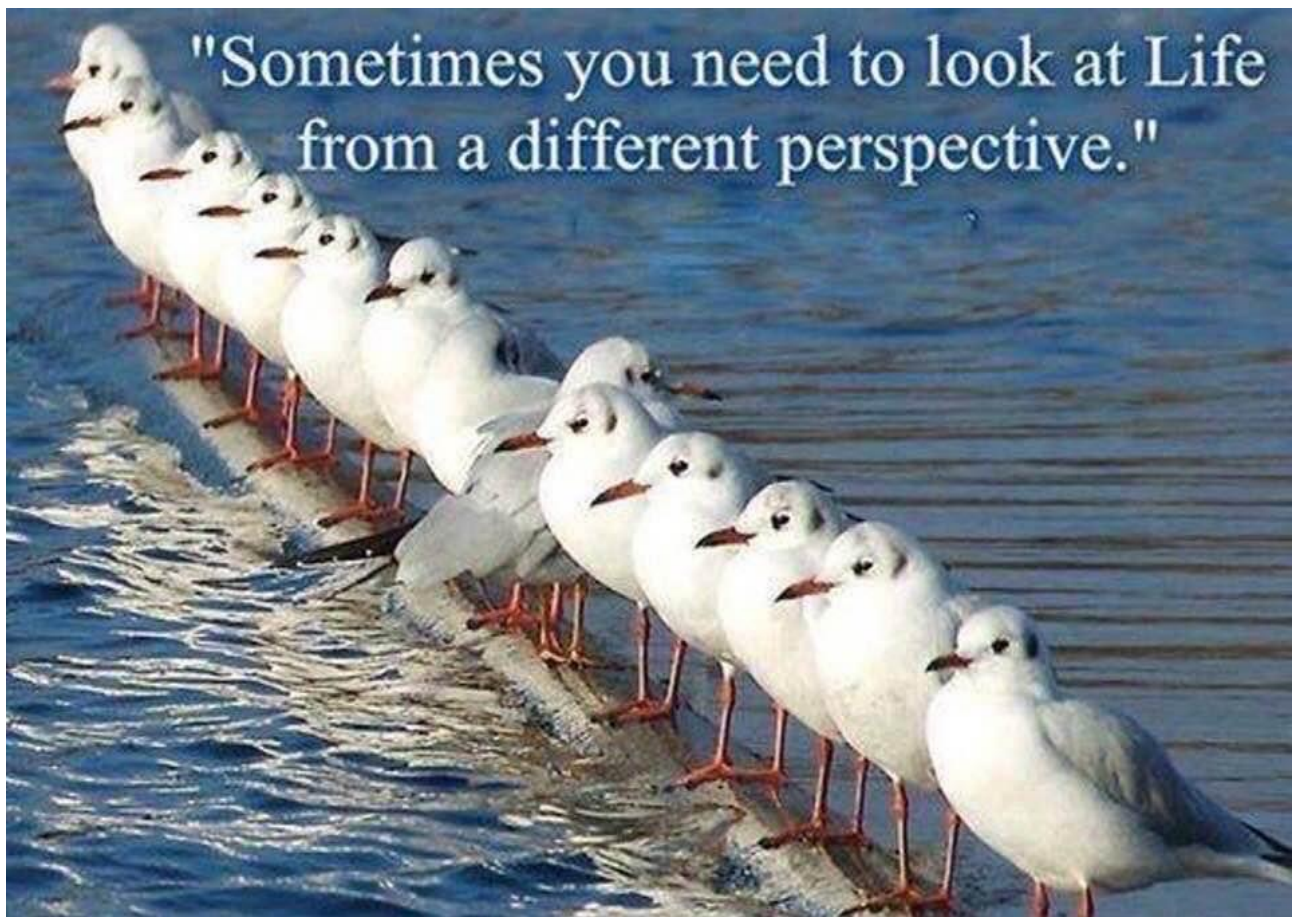
Although there have been suggestions in conservative circles that Evangelical bishops should ban the use of these

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prayers of blessing in their dioceses, it is understood that the way the prayers are framed means that the use of them can be decided by individual ministers without reference to their bishop.

The note says that the legal basis for the draft prayers is understood to be found in Canon B5, which gives ministers broad discretion to “use forms of service considered suitable by him”, providing that they do not contravene canon law (News, 20 January) — and it has determined that these do not.

Should the Synod wish to amend canon law on holy matrimony (Canon B30), it would require a simple majority, the Second Church Estates Commissioner, Andrew Selous MP, said on Thursday of last week.



After answering MPs questions about the issue on Tuesday of last week (News, 25 January), Mr Selous returned to the subject on Thursday and told the House of Commons that he had been asked by the Church's legal office to make a "small clarification" about the process by which the marriage canons could be amended.

"A simple majority in each of the three Houses of the General Synod could suffice to pass a measure and amending canon to change the definition of marriage in ecclesiastical law," he said. "But circumstances could also arise in which two-thirds majorities in the House of Bishops and the House of Clergy would be needed, and, as with all authorised forms of service, a two-thirds majority in each House would be required for the approval of the Synod as a form of service for the marriage of a same-sex couple," he said.

The Church Times understands that General Synod could pass legislation to amend Canon B30 with just a simple majority in each of the three Houses, but that under Article 7 of the Constitution of the General Synod, the House of Laity or the Convocations could subsequently decline to approve the legislation. In that event, a two-thirds majority would be required in the House of Bishops and the House of Clergy in order for the legislation to pass.

On Monday of last week, the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke to LGBTQ+ protesters outside Lambeth Palace, telling them "I don't have the votes to go further" than offering blessings (CT News, 27 January).

Courtesy Church Times, January 30

Scots Moderator asks for prayers ahead of historic South Sudan ecumenical visit

The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has urged people to pray for the people of South Sudan ahead of his historic ecumenical visit to the country this week.

He said he, Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury are making their Pilgrimage of Peace "as servants" to stand in unified solidarity with local people and "amplify" their cries as they continue to suffer from conflict, flooding and famine.

@ @

South Sudan gained independence from Sudan in 2011 and there was great hope for the country but communities have been torn apart by violence and an estimated 400,000 people have lost their lives.

It is estimated that 9.4 million people need humanitarian assistance and around two million have been displaced from their homes.

Dr Greenshields, Pope Francis and Most Rev Justin Welby have been invited to South Sudan by President Salva Kiir Mayardit and will meet with him and his five vice presidents in the capital city of Juba.

The three spiritual leaders will also meet local church representatives, political leaders, civil war victims living in a

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displaced persons camp and lead a large open-air prayer vigil for peace.

Christian unity

Dr Greenshields said: "South Sudan is the youngest country in the world and has enormous potential.

"Its greatest resource is its people and I am humbled at the opportunity to come alongside and support our brothers and sisters in their search for peace, reconciliation and justice.

"It is a privilege to be joining Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury on this historic ecumenical Pilgrimage of Peace and we come as servants of the global



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Church, joined in the unity of the Holy Spirit to offer our encouragement.

"The Churches in South Sudan - Presbyterian, Anglican and Catholic - have an important role to play in supporting efforts to bring peace to the nation and we are honoured to be part of this journey."

Presbyterianism was introduced to Sudan at the beginning of the 20th century by American missionaries and today the Church of Scotland has an official partnership with the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan and supports its Presbyterian Relief and Development Agency.

The country has a population of around 10.9 million people and between 60-70% of them identify as Christian.

The Church there - Presbyterian, Catholic and Anglican - was instrumental in ensuring that the country became independent peacefully.

Dr Greenshields said: "The Church of Scotland has been working closely with the Church in South Sudan since 2015 to support vital work on peace, reconciliation and conflict resolution.

"It has helped local church leaders work at both a grassroots level and political level to try and bring unnecessary conflict to an end and build lasting peace, stability and unity.

"We pray that this visit will be a catalyst for the leaders of South Sudan to focus on what unites them and not what

divides them for they are all loved equally in the eyes of the Lord.

"And to do so for the sake of the future of all their people to ensure a just peace which allows everyone the opportunity to flourish and live healthy and happy lives.

"There is still much work to do and the symbolism of this historic ecumenical visit after centuries of division between parts of the Christian Church sends out a very strong message about our steadfast commitment to standing in solidarity with the churches and people of this country.

"We encourage the people of South Sudan to give expression to Jesus' words that 'Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called the children of God."

The ecumenical Pilgrimage of Peace (3-5 February) was promised during a spiritual retreat at the Vatican in 2019 attended by South Sudanese political leaders.

Last November, a historic declaration of friendship between the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church in Scotland was signed at Dunfermline Abbey.

Named after the 11th century Scottish Queen who is buried in the abbey, the St Margaret Declaration is the culmination of years of ecumenical relationship building between the two Churches which recognise each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.

In the media

Woke church incurs wrath of the faithful with LGBT altar flag

St Nicholas Church in Leicester is so steeped in history that a chunk of 1,900-year-old Roman wall still adjoins its churchyard. But the 4th-century Saxon church, which is among the 10 oldest in Britain, now features a very modern addition, Ewan Somerville writes in the Sunday Telegraph.

A rainbow Pride flag on the altar has triggered the first court battle of its kind within the so-called “church of woke”.

The institution says the LGBT-themed altar is a “profound invitation” for those excluded by the escalating row in the Church of England over sexuality, marriage and gender.

But hundreds of churchgoers within and beyond the diocese of Leicester and even clergy are trying to block it, with objection letters saying it “will bring the church into disrepute” and “close the door” to worshippers.

The showdown is now in the church court, in a landmark test case that campaigners argue will “open the floodgates” to political insignia on altars throughout the Church of England if St Nicholas prevails.

The row began in September, when St Nicholas announced that the Pride flags it hung from the altar at weekend

services were replaced with “something a little more permanent” – a huge “Progress Pride flag” made of fabric.

It was gifted by a congregation member at the nearby All Saints with Holy Trinity church in Loughborough, which rewrote a Christmas carol to be inclusive.

“People were actually weeping in the pews when they saw it,” Jay Hulme, a transgender poet and St Nicholas churchwarden, said. In October, the church was forced to take the Pride altar frontal down and apply for the planning permission – known as a faculty – that it should have sought initially. With hundreds of protests flooding in from churches, it has been sent to the consistory court, the CofE’s ruling body, where the chancellor of the diocese will rule imminently on whether the Pride altar can stay.

Sam Margrave, a member of the General Synod, the CofE’s governing council who has led the campaign, fears an “infiltration” in the church of “moral anarchy, where they’re tearing down biological sex and the idea of monogamous marriage”.

“My main concern is about how our pulpit and our altar table has been hijacked by political activists – instead of preaching the gospel they’ve turned it into a church of woke,” he told The Sunday Telegraph.

“People come to church to get away from the culture wars and find sanctuary. I want to welcome the gay and lesbian community but there are better ways to do it. I hope that the court will make the right decision. If the chancellor were to rule and set a precedent, then it would open the floodgates.”

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He lodged an official objection as part of a 28-day consultation of interested parties by the diocese – represented by Stone King chambers – which closed last week.

Ian Paul, another Synod member who sits on the powerful Archbishops' Council, also objected. He told The Telegraph: "The Communion table is the place where we gather together to meet with God, remember Jesus' death and resurrection for us.

"This is not a place for political protest. It is no more appropriate than putting up the flag of a political party – and with the Progress flag, it is gender ideology. Worse than that, this flag is a sign of exclusion."

The altar is deemed to be the most sacred part of the church where the Eucharist is consecrated and the custom is for it to be adorned with white sheets normally, or green, purple, gold or red sheets on occasions.

For St Nicholas' part, Karen Rooms, the priest, has said that the Pride altar "is about pastoral care and a simple statement of welcome and safety".

Courtesy the Sunday Telegraph January 29, 2023

The BelTel podcast: Meet the Burkes - the evangelical family at the centre of much controversy

Members of the family have very set opinions on issues ranging from transgenderism to same-sex marriage.

He's still there Ted 🤔🤔



Listen here →

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/podcasts/the-beltel/meet-the-burkes-the-evangelical-family-from-castlebar-at-the-centre-of-much-controversy/444096598.html>

Vatican abuse inquiry into Hexham and Newcastle will cause 'pain and shame', says Archbishop

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CatholicHerald - Catholics of the diocese in the spotlight of a Vatican abuse inquiry were warned to brace themselves for a period of “pain and shame” as investigators establish the truth behind the shock resignation of their bishop.

Archbishop Malcolm McMahon of Liverpool said in a pastoral letter to the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle that he understood the feeling of “shock”, “bewilderment” and “anger” felt by many people at revelations in the media concerning the sudden departure in December of Bishop Robert Byrne.

[<https://catholicherald.co.uk/vatican-abuse-inquiry-into-hexham-and-newcastle-will-cause-pain-and-shame-says-archbishop/>]

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You are invited to Trócaire's photo exhibition and documentary screening

The Hub, University College Cork,
Western Road, Cork
Launch Events: Wednesday, 1 February 2023
at 1–2 p.m. and at 6–7 p.m.
Exhibition will run until 16 February 2023



Across the world women and men are challenging the activities of big business – activities which often destroy lives, damage the environment and violate human rights.

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Visit trocaire.org/business-and-human-rights for more information and to take action on this campaign.



Trócaire's Face of Resistance photo exhibition

Join Trócaire in The Hub, UCC on Wednesday the 1st of February for the launch of Trócaire's Face of Resistance photo exhibition and documentary screening of 'Women in their Place' at 1 - 2. And at 6 -7 pm. Exhibition will run until 16 February 2023

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<https://episcopalparishes.org>

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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