

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – D Day Church

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Image of the day

Sainte-Mère-Église D-Day Church

The inside of the church at Sainte-Mère-Église which is a commune in the northwestern French department of Manche, in Normandy.

Founded in the eleventh century, the earliest records (1080 - 1082) include the name Sancte Marie Ecclesia, Latin for "Church of St. Mary", while a later document written in Norman-French mentions Saincte Mariglise.

The church became one of the best known landmarks of D-Day on June 6, 1944.

On the night of June 5th-6th paratroopers from the 82nd airborne division were mistakenly dropped onto the town of Sainte-Mère-Église which was occupied by the Germans.

The town was made famous by the paratrooper John Steele of F Company, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR), 82nd Airborne Division, whose parachute caught on the church's steeple where he hung for two hours while the fighting continued on the ground below him before finally being cut free and taken prisoner by the Germans. This incident was later made famous by its depiction in the film *The Longest Day*.

Steele later escaped and rejoined his division when US troops.

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An effigy of John Steele now hangs from the church's steeple. The church also contains two stain glass windows. One of the windows depicts the Virgin Mary and two paratroops, one of which is John Steele. The other shows Saint Michael the patron saint of paratroopers.

Sainte-Mère-Église near the D-Doay beaches was the first town to be liberated.

People and places

Hub chaplaincy students Kampala bound



Students from the Hub at Queen's University, Belfast have left the city bound for Kampala where they will work with two

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agencies in their missions of outreach. The Hub is a combined community sponsored in its witness by the Church of University Ireland and Methodist Church

Lay Reader licensed in Cork, Cloyne and Ross



Many congratulations to Karl Tyrrell (left) who was licensed on Sunday last as a Diocesan Reader. “It’s a joy to have him and his wife the Rev. Abby Sines (right) in the diocese” said the bishop, Rt Reverend Dr Paul Colton.





Mothers' Union meet a knitted Cathedral

Magheracross Mothers' Union in Clogher diocese had a lovely day out on Saturday 3 June with a beautiful lunch at the Clogher Valley Golf Club restaurant in Fivemiletown.





This was followed by a visit to St Macartan's Cathedral Clogher to learn about the knitted Cathedral from Joyce Stafford the Sexton and have the opportunity to view it.

Hilary Keys also told the branch members about her visit to York Minster to receive Maundy Money.

Trinity Confirmation in Armagh

Pentecost and Trinity Sunday saw confirmations throughout the Church of Ireland.

In Armagh diocese six young people from Derrygortreavy and Clonfeacle were presented to the Most Reverend John McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh by their rector, the Reverend Susanne Cousins.



The service took place in St Patrick's Church, Clonfeacle (Benburb). Six wonderful young people had their commitment confirmed in the Strong Name of the Trinity.

News reports

Glorious weather for St Columba Thanksgiving at Gartan

The weather was glorious - as usual - for Conwal Union with Gartan's annual Service of Thanksgiving, on Sunday afternoon, for the life and Ministry of St Columba.



The service took place in Gartan Abbey, near Churchill, not far from where the saint is reputed to have been born.

The congregation were welcomed to the abbey by the local Rector, Rev David Houlton, and the service was led by Diocesan Reader Sean McClafferty, who'll be ordained into the Diaconate on St Peter's Day, at the end of this month.

Rev Canon Katie McAteer - who served in Conwal for a couple of years - assisted with the service and the sermon was preached by the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Andrew Forster.

Asked on arrival whether he had 'arranged' the glorious weather, Bishop Andrew quipped: "I'm in PR, not planning, so the weather has nothing to do with me."

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In his sermon, the Bishop referred to Mr McClafferty's approaching ordination. "Isn't it amazing for Sean, for all of us, today, whenever we look back on our own journeys to see how God actually leads us step by step and yet, at the time, we don't really see it? Isn't it amazing to think that just here, Columba - Colmcille - was born, and the steps that he took were transformative, were transformative for these islands that we call home, were transformative for the history of the Christian faith in these islands, that today we come to give thanks to God for Columba, to give thanks to God for his [Columba's] ministry, and to give thanks to God for the effect that Columba's ministry still has in the life of the Church?"

"This morning, I was in one of our parishes that will be familiar to many of you - it's known with great affection as 'the Wee Church on the Walls - St Augustine's, on Derry's Walls, and they were finishing a celebration of 150 years of the building of the church that is there now. But, as you may know, St Columba formed a monastery on the site of St Augustine's Church, and the actual footprint of the church - when you look at it, it looks as though it should be straight to the Walls but it's not, it's at an angle - and the angle where it's built was exactly where Columba built his monastery in Derry. And the footprint of St Augustine's Church now was the footprint of the monastery from 562AD.

"This morning, what we thought about was that footprint, and the footprint of Columba there, and how we can follow the footprint of Columba. And I think for us, today, the heritage of Columba, as we look back, can be for you and for me an inspiration for our own future, for our own steps, for the steps of the journey of faith that we have yet to take.



"One of the things I find encouraging about Columba's story- and this may sound a strange way to put it - but there's a sort of chequered history - it's not as if every step was plain sailing; it's not as if he got every step right. But what he found out is that the God who loved him wouldn't let him go

"I'm sure, you know, when we were all schoolchildren, I hope we had the sort of teachers who gave us a second chance, who gave us another chance even when we got things wrong. And Columba was sort of a faltering disciple who got things wrong but what he found out in God was that He was not some schoolteacher just giving us a second chance because he had a bit of pity on us. What he found was that in God he had a father who loved him and forgave him and wanted to give him another chance.

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"And that's the story of the life of Columba, that even when he allowed an argument over a book of psalms to grow into a battle, literally - I know it seems strange for our ears, but a battle over a book of psalms where 3,000 people were killed, the Battle of Cúl Dreimhne, it happened in County Sligo - and as a result of that Columba was so broken by guilt and grief that he went into voluntary exile and that brought him to Iona. Then the rest is history, really, isn't it, because he founded an abbey in Iona and from that the gospel spread from Scotland and northern England?"

"And yet Columba could have been written off. He could've been written off as a man who had 'blown it big style'; who had broken hearts and had caused so much heartache. And yet God wouldn't give up on him. And I want to say to you and me that the example of Columba is this example - not simply of a man but of a loving and forgiving God - who isn't the God of a second chance, he's the God of the second chance, the third chance, the slim chance, the fat chance. In other words, He will never give up on you, no matter what, and He didn't give up on Columba and look what happened through Columba's life and ministry.

"The footprints of Columba are really important footprints for the Church to follow because they were about an active Church, a Church that reached out, a Church that made a difference, a Church that had a heart for the vulnerable, a Church that looked to the future not just to the past. And we, as the people who carry the 'spiritual DNA' of Columba, must continue to follow those footprints. But - Columba's footprints were fine, they were wonderful - but whose footprints was he following? Quite simply it was the one who says, 'Follow me', the footprints of Jesus. 'Follow me,' says



Jesus, that's all he asks for, that we will follow him and know the transformation, the wonder, the beauty that that brings to our lives."

Bishop Andrew told those gathered at Gartan Abbey that he and his wife, Heather, visited Iona last year and stood in the cell where Columba transcribed verse 9 from Psalm 34, 'Fear the Lord, you His holy people, for those who fear Him lack nothing.'

"What a verse," Bishop Andrew said, "and as he transcribed that, days later he took his last breath as somebody who feared the Lord and saw how God had guided and blessed him and led him through the journey of his life from here in Gartan, to Iona and far beyond. And for you and I, as we take steps in our journey of faith - faltering at times, failing many times - let's follow the footprints of Columba, but more

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importantly follow the one who says, 'Follow me,' Jesus Christ."

The Britannia Band, who have become a mainstay at the annual service, again provided music for Sunday's worship and our Diocesan Children's Officer, Kirsty McCartney, oversaw activities on-site for youngsters. The parishioners of Gartan - who had prepared the abbey car park for the occasion - generously laid on refreshments afterwards.

New NEST at Kill O' the Grange National School

A morning of joyful celebration in Kill O' the Grange National School marked the official opening and dedication of their new ASD unit. 'The Nest' will enable the school to offer an even warmer welcome with broader support for inclusive education.

The whole school community turned out on the morning of June 1 for an outdoor assembly during which the ribbon on the modern new unit was cut by Archbishop Michael Jackson. The Nest, which stands for Nurturing Education Seamlessly Together, is the fruition of a two-year project by parents and teachers.

After a welcome by Principal Hilary McBain, the Rector of Kill O' the Grange, the Revd Alan Breen, opened the outdoor assembly. He said that the new building represented an extension of the school community which enabled it to give a bigger welcome to more people. He said



Mark Groves Board of Management, Deputy Principal Gwendolyn Baker, Deputy Cormac Devlin, the Revd Alan Breen, Archbishop Michael Jackson, Principal Hilary McBain, Cathaoirleach Mary Hannifin, Noel Merrick JMB, Jeannette Mee PTA and David Shepherd BOM.

that the Nest was built on a solid foundation of the loving school community.

Parent, Sandra Kelly, spoke of the huge support her son had received at KOTG. She said that as parents they were not surprised by their son Samuel's diagnosis of autism but she was surprised at the many negative words associated with the diagnosis. "It is hard and there are challenges but the autism world is full of ability. Children like Samuel need advocates who will support their abilities and help them reach their potential and from day one Kill o' the Grange have supported him and helped him to learn his way. This is the Kill o' the Grange magic. Now, with the Nest, Kill o' the



Pupils of Kill O' the Grange NS leading the singing at their open air assembly.

Grange can spread that magic further and help more children,” she stated.

Her son was on his school tour but in a message, Samuel said that his autism and he had changed a lot since he started in Kill o’ the Grange. He said the teachers had really helped him and that the Nest was a great idea.

Former teacher at the school, Sarah Northcott, who planted the idea for the Nest, paid tribute to the staff and parents who worked so hard and advocated for their children. Their dedication has resulted in a way that even more people could access the school community, she said.

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Mr McConnell, who is the first ever Nest teacher in Kill O' the Grange NS, said that inclusive education had been part of his journey since he was 15 years old. "It's an honour and a privilege to be starting this journey today," he said. To the children who would be spending time in the Nest he said: "This room is going to be a space for people like you to reach your potential. Kill O' the Grange is already a diverse and welcoming place and I am happy that this is part of its journey." He added that Mrs McBain was already leaving a huge legacy when she retires but the Nest would add to it.

Deputy Principal, Mrs Baker interviewed Olivia whose brother will join the school in September as a result of the Nest opening. She explained that her brother understands the world in a different way and learns differently. Currently he attends a different school because KOTG didn't have a class for people with autism until now.

Cathaoirleach of Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown County Council, Cllr Mary Hannifin, said it was a personal joy to be present at the opening of the Nest as she opened the new KOTG NS building 20 years ago. She recalled that during her time as Minister for Education that there was an "almighty row" over the best policy for educating children with autism. "I knew and we knew that the best policy was for children to be able to go to their local schools... The decision to integrate children into mainstream schools was one of the most difficult political decisions of my life," she commented.

Deputy Cormac Devlin congratulated the school on the opening of the Nest and said that the building was important to allow for the education of all children. "I love the name, the Nest. It has connotations of safety and support of the



Mrs Baker interviews Olivia.

Young. These Nests are vitally important and I wish Adam [McConnell] and the team and staff continued success,” he said.

PTA member and chairperson of the building project, Jeannette Mee, said that the idea for the Nest came up during a conversation with Sarah Northcott. She paid tribute to Principal Hilary McBain for her readiness to engage with the project and for her belief that everything was possible. She also praised Noel Merrick of the Joint Managerial Body for guiding them through every step of the process. “The Nest is going to give every child a place to go to recharge. But for some it will mean much more. It is recognition,

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happiness, acceptance and support of their differences,” she stated.

Archbishop Jackson said it was wonderful to see the school community thriving, contributing and growing. “It is so clear that you have grown together even more as a community. Every individual makes a contribution and makes a difference,” he said encouraging the pupils to continue being helpful and holistic in enabling everyone to journey together.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Not Forgotten – A Concert in Aid of the Women of Afghanistan

‘Not Forgotten’, a concert in aid of the women of Afghanistan, takes place in Monkstown Parish Church on Saturday June 17 at 5pm. The concert will feature the Laetare Vocal Ensemble, conducted by Roisin Blunney, and others along with organist Simon Harden of Waterford Cathedral and flautist Emma Elkinson of the University of the Hague.

The concert is organised by SAFE (Support Afghan Further Education sae.ie) which has worked with women in Afghanistan for many years.

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SAFE was approached by the Afghan NGO Central Afghanistan Welfare Committee (CAWC) seeking help with funding a women's project in the rural area of Daikundi Province. The project was launched in 2019 with the help of UNICEF to train women in tailoring and embroidery. The aim of the project was that the women would eventually open a shop and sell their merchandise. The training was well under way when the political and security changes happened in Afghanistan.

CAWC is now aiming to re-establish the women's cooperative and reorganize the 40 graduated women in the tailoring and embroidery centre. They hope to have support from UNICEF again, and have also asked SAFE to help with funds as well. When asked about the security situation in this area, the CEO of CAWC said that he feels that the rural Taliban would be sympathetic towards the project.

Tickets are available at the door on the day of the concert and cost €20 (concessions/under 16s €10).

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