

January 29, 2022



**Image of the day**

**Ely Cathedral**

## Overview

### +Image of the day

Ely Cathedral

### +People and places

Bishops welcome new holiday dedicated to Saint Brigid

Bishop Leahy launches new religious education programme

Holocaust remembrance of Irish Presbyterian Ministers sent to concentration camp by the Nazis

Church of England statues linked to slavery are 'a bar to faith and worship'

Nine-week novena to St Patrick broadcast online

International symposium links racism, colonialism and slavery

### +In the media

Links to current reports and issues

### +Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

A Wee Bit of War

Racial Justice: What's it got to do with me?

### +Perspective

Plant a tree by the Archbishop of York

### +Poem for today

Holocaust Memorial Service by Elie Wiesel

January 29, 2022

## People and places

### Bishops welcome new holiday dedicated to Saint Brigid

Statue of St Brigid at a Holy Well in Kildare



**Bishop Pat Storey, Church of Ireland Bishop of Meath & Kildare, and Bishop Denis Nulty, Catholic Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin have welcomed the news that the Irish Government has announced an additional bank holiday to take place around Saint Brigid's Day.**

In a joint statement the bishops commented - "Brigid means many things to many people. Symbol and story feature strongly in her life. Brigid was born around 454 and died about 524. For people of faith Saint Brigid represents that transition from paganism to Christianity in Celtic Ireland. In 480 she founded her monastery in Kildare, the church of the oak tree. Every school child knows the song of Brigid and

January 29, 2022

how her cloak covered the area we know today as the Curragh, Saint Brigid's Field. Brigid is linked with the earth, with agriculture, particularly ploughing, sowing, milking, butter-making and, of course, vibrant Christian faith. Brigid was extravagant in her hospitality.

“It is very appropriate that a new public holiday will honour Saint Brigid. As the secondary saint in Ireland to Patrick, for too long she has been lost in his shadow. We warmly welcome the news that Brigid is being rightly, and long after time, acknowledged”.

## **Bishop Leahy launches new religious education programme**

**Bishop Brendan Leahy launched Credible Catholic, a new religious education programme for Catholic Voluntary Secondary School in Ireland, January 26.**

Credible Catholic is “a wonderful programme that quenches the thirst of the mind, expands the outreach of the heart and points in the direction of doing many good actions”, said Bishop Leahy, chair of the bishops' council for catechetics.

Dr Leahy added that the programme promises to be of great value to teachers and students, as it “responds to Jesus' call to love not just with our heart but also with our mind”.

The programme is an optional resource “which will be very helpful to teachers of religious education”, a spokesperson for the bishops' council said.

January 29, 2022

“Credible Catholic aims to stimulate dialogue, encourage reflection and critical reasoning, foster religious literacy, build community, and nurture faith, and in doing all of these things, to promote student wellbeing,” the spokesperson continued.

Bishop Leahy was joined at the webinar by Dr Alexander O’Hara, national director for catechetics of the Irish Catholic bishops’ conference; Dr Tom Finnegan, lecturer in theology and religious education, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick; and by Ms Kate Liffey, Chaplain at Saint Brendan’s Community School, Birr, Co. Offaly.

The Credible Catholic programme, which features seven modules, is free and the multi-media materials can be downloaded from [www.catholicschools.ie/crediblecatholic](http://www.catholicschools.ie/crediblecatholic).

## **Holocaust remembrance of Irish Presbyterian Ministers sent to concentration camp by the Nazis**

**Holocaust Memorial Day called into remembrance the life and work of Rev. Arnold Frank, one of two ethnically Jewish Irish Presbyterian Ministers who were arrested and sent to a concentration camp by the Nazis in 1938.**

The British Foreign Secretary intervened personally and Frank was able to flee Germany with his life, other members of the Jerusalem Church in Hamburg - an Irish Presbyterian Congregation for ethnic Jews - had to stay and endure terrible persecution among millions of others.

January 29, 2022



The recent Holocaust Remembrance Day recalled the contribution of the people of Millisle, County Down, where children from Germany were cared for. This is a memorial beside the village school and playgroup.

The 1939 General Assembly heard that:

“Arnold Frank and Rev. Ernst Moser were ethnic Jews who had been arrested by the Gestapo when the Mission was  
[churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)

January 29, 2022

finally suppressed in 1938. They had only been released after the personal intervention of the British Foreign Secretary.

Rev. J.A. Bain told the Assembly that ‘...a murderous gang of Jew-baiters had taken over the Government of the German people and thrown Dr. Frank into a concentration camp’.

Frank himself, rising to tumultuous applause said that:

Though the mission was closed its influence would remain ... Jews had been deprived of every right, degraded and treated as outcasts or even as lepers. But there was a better time in store for them.

## **Church of England statues linked to slavery are ‘a bar to faith and worship’**

**Church of England statues linked to slavery can “present a bar to faith and worship”, its race commission chairman, a former Labour minister, has said.**

Lord Boateng, 70, was appointed head of the Archbishops’ Racial Justice Commission in July last year to lead a board of independent advisers to scrutinise the Church’s policies, practices and culture, aiming to “root out systematic racism”.

The chairman, who is of Ghanaian and Scottish origin and was the first black Cabinet minister when he was appointed

January 29, 2022

as chief secretary to the Treasury in May 2002, is currently leading the three-year review.

During a briefing to reporters following the publication of General Synod papers last week, Lord Boateng gave his first update on the progress his commission has made so far, and also hinted at the direction the Church will take regarding controversial statues.

He said that there was a “moral imperative” to review monuments and to what extent those who profited from “trading in the souls of others”.

Lord Boateng also said that the commission was looking at “questions around monuments and memorials, [and] the extent to which they present a bar to faith and worship today”.

“It also throws up questions around the wealth of the Church and how that wealth came into being and what we need to do today [to] heal some of the legacy of that monumental injustice that slavery represents and the importance of finding the resource to do that.”

He said that there was a “moral imperative” to review churches and monuments and cited the example of Bristol Cathedral: “When you go into the cathedral and you look at the contributions made by people who made their money by exploiting and trading in the souls and lives of others, you get a sense of just how complex the picture is”.

The Diocese of Bristol decided to remove dedications to Edward Colston – the English philanthropist and MP who



January 29, 2022

was involved in the Atlantic slave trade and who died in 1721 – after the toppling of the late 19th-century statue of him in the city centre in June 2020.

Lord Boateng's comments regarding memorials within the Church of England come as the institution undergoes a period of reflection and revisionism in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement.

## Nine-week novena to St Patrick broadcast online



Slemish - where Patrick was a slave

**A nine-week novena in honour of St Patrick, was launched in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, January 19.**

January 29, 2022

The novena takes place on Wednesday evenings at 7pm, to pray for the renewal of the Faith in Ireland at this time. The novena began January 19 in St Patrick's Cathedral and will run until March 16.

The second broadcast took place in Our Lady Queen of Peace Church, Slemish, and on February 2 will be broadcast from St Patrick's Church, Saul, Co. Down. It will conclude Wednesday March 16 in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh.

The churches included in the broadcast schedule are: St Mary's Church, Westport, Co. Mayo; St Patrick's Church, Rathvilly, Co. Carlow; St Patrick's Well, Limerick, Co. Limerick; St Mary's Church, Pettigo, Co Donegal.

St Patrick and Shalom World Prayer will broadcast the Novena every Wednesday in different Churches across Ireland. Visit [ [www.swprayer.org](http://www.swprayer.org) ] for more information.

## **International symposium links racism, colonialism and slavery**

The systemic injustices of racism, colonialism and slavery - and how they feed into increases in violence and atrocities - held the attention of hundreds of people who attended the online Symposium on the Role of Religion and Faith-based Organisations in International Affairs on 25 January.

Co-sponsored by the World Council of Churches (WCC), United Nations agencies, ecumenical partners and faith-

January 29, 2022

based organisations, the 8th annual symposium, entitled 'Mobilising Moral Influence and Governance to End the Systemic Injustices of Racism, the legacy of Colonialism and Slavery,' focused on the urgent need to transform our world. Alice Wairimu Nderitu, special adviser of the UN secretary-general on the Prevention of Genocide, emphasised that the presence of racism and racial discrimination in specific contexts constitutes a key indicator of risk of atrocity crimes. "All over the world, ultranationalist resurgence is legitimising hatred, racism, and violence," said Nderitu. "While extremists spread inflammatory language in mainstream political discourse, under the guise of populism, hate crimes and hate speech continue to rise."

Nderitu added that religious actors and faith-based organisations play a paramount role in combating racism, xenophobia, and any form of intolerance. "In local communities, many faith-based organisations and religious-inspired individuals put their lives at risk every day to advance the values of inclusivity and respect for diversity," said Nderitu.

Dr Masiwa Gunda, WCC programme executive for programmatic responses on overcoming racism, said that the greatest catalyst for positive change in our quest to eliminate racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia is intentionally conquering denialism. "While racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia are pervasive in all societies, it is saddening that most societies remain in denial," he said. "We are in denial at a personal level, but most worryingly, at an institutional level."

January 29, 2022



Gunda highlighted some WCC member churches that have come out of denial to acknowledge the reality of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in society. "These Churches have gone a step further to acknowledge their own history of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia," he said. "They have and are acknowledging how they were beneficiaries of racism and racial discrimination in the past, how they even prayed for racialising systems, especially in the former colonies."

Rudelmar Bueno de Faria, general secretary of the ACT Alliance, said that it is extremely important and urgent to address racism in international humanitarian and development work. "We must recognise the issues across the system that undermine the ability of institutions and organisations to decolonialise themselves," he said. "While discrimination and inequalities exist in different forms and across societies, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore the systemic, structural and widespread nature of racial injustice, racial violence and racial inequality from

January 29, 2022

which people of colour disproportionately suffer." The aid sector has long been criticised for being deeply imbued by its colonial past and structural racism, added Bueno de Faria. "This has enabled the ideology and practice of the powerful to be normalised in ways that systematically undervalued local knowledge and expertise," he said. "If we really want to live into our values, make progress on sustainable development, and promote an inclusive humanity, we must grapple with the question of race and engage in active conversation on race and privilege."

Symposium participants joined Bueno de Faria in expressing appreciation for the opportunity to talk about these difficult topics.

"The forms of domination or subordination that affect social, cultural, economic and political dimensions are the expressions of our colonial history and current post-colonial practices," Bueno de Faria concluded. "The processes, attitudes and behaviours which amount to discrimination, prejudice, ignorance, and racist stereotyping continue to disadvantage minority ethnic people and exacerbate structural racism around the world."

However, there are many ways to overcome the existing barriers to end racism, and the symposium fielded suggestions and best practices in this area. "As multilateral and faith-based organisations we have to translate our actions into an operational environment that commits to being anti-racist," said Bueno de Faria. "We need to boldly raise awareness by stating and sharing facts of racism."

January 29, 2022

The 2022 edition of the Annual Symposium is promoted by the WCC's Ecumenical Office to the UN in New York, ACT Alliance, UN Alliance of Civilisations (UNAOC), UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, UN Population Fund (UNFPA), General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church, Islamic Relief USA, Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Milstein Center for Interreligious Dialogue, United Religions Initiative, and Soka Gakkai International.

Watch the recording of the Symposium:

[ [www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHmUOWQm\\_iY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHmUOWQm_iY) ]

Ecumenical Office to the United Nations:

[ [www.oikoumene.org/programme-activity/euno](http://www.oikoumene.org/programme-activity/euno) ]

## In the media

### **Church should introduce gay marriage blessings 'sooner rather than later' – MP ...**

Belfast Telegraph

The Church of England should introduce blessings for gay and lesbian marriages “sooner rather than later”, Church Commissioners have heard. Labour MP Dame Diana Johnson (Kingston upon Hull North) told MPs that the Church had moved at a “glacial pace” on whether or not women could be ordained as bishops, and should be quicker in allowing same-sex couples to have their marriage blessed in a church.

January 29, 2022

[[] <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/church-should-introduce-gay-marriage-blessings-sooner-rather-than-later-mp-41283894.html> ]

## **Presbyterian minister delighted to get personal video message from Pope Francis and says ...**

Belfast Telegraph

A Presbyterian minister has told how he'd love to sit down and have a proper chat with the Pope. In the meantime, however, Rev Steve Stockman can't wait to share a personal message from the Pontiff this Sunday at St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast to mark the opening of the popular 4 Corners Festival Belfast . Northern Ireland's first inter-church arts event, which was co-founded by Rev Stockman and Catholic priest Fr Martin Magill, is celebrating its milestone 10th birthday this year. The duo also announced that the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby will be closing the week-long event at St Peter's Cathedral.

[[] <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/presbyterian-minister-delighted-to-get-personal-video-message-from-pope-francis-and-says-id-love-to-meet-him-41284878.html> ]

## **Public are being 'scared' into supporting assisted suicide - doctors**

Christian Today

Doctors have warned that the debate on assisted suicide is being skewed by "exaggerated reporting" in the media and a [churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)

January 29, 2022

lack of accurate information about end of life care. The Association of Palliative Medicine (APM) surveyed members at the end of last year and found widespread concern about the possibility of assisted suicide being legalised in the UK.

[[] <https://christiantoday.com/article/public.are.being.scared.into.supporting.assisted.suicide.doctors/138095.htm> ]

## **‘My kids are traumatised’ – Dublin family fleeing racist attacks now living in church**

Independent.ie

A family who have been subjected to repeated racially-motivated attacks on their home have been forced to live in a church as they fear for their lives.

Emmanuel Aigboboh has said his children are “traumatised” following repeated attacks on his home, which he says are motivated by racism.

On January 12, Emmanuel said he was nearly killed when he opened his front door after noticing a silhouette outside. He said once he opened the door he was forced to dodge a knife with the person outside attempting to stab him in the head.

“If I did not dodge that knife I would be dead,” Emmanuel told the Irish Independent.

There were eight men armed with knives and wearing “balaclavas and ski masks” involved in the attack, Emmanuel’s son Seán told Joe Duffy on Liveline on Tuesday.



January 29, 2022

[[] <https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/crime/my-kids-are-traumatised-dublin-family-fleeing-racist-attacks-now-living-in-church-41281190.html> ]

## **Why has Sue Gray's report not appeared yet?**

BBC News

The expectation across Whitehall was that Sue Gray's long-anticipated report would be passed to Downing Street on Wednesday.

So why hasn't it appeared, and what is it likely to find when it does?

The announcement of the Met Police investigation has inserted a spanner in the works - especially as all contentious evidence had been given to the police by the cabinet office last week.

And there had been liaison throughout the internal inquiry. It's understood the Met Police Commissioner Cressida Dick examined the evidence at the weekend.

[ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-60157517> ]

## **IFA warning of higher food prices**

RTE News

The President of the Irish Farmers' Association has warned consumers they should expect higher food prices.

Speaking at the IFA's annual general meeting at the Mansion House in Dublin, Tim Cullinan said food prices had not risen in 20 years and farmers are under severe pressure due to the rising costs of inputs such as fertiliser and feeds.

January 29, 2022

He said some could go out of business if something is not done.

[ [ <https://www.rte.ie/news/business/2022/0127/1276206-ifa-agm-in-dublin/> ] ]

## **Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts and books**

### **A Wee Bit of War**

Episode 2 of A Wee Bit of War is an incredibly moving story. Scott Edgar speaks to Rachel Levy about life in occupied Europe, her time in Auschwitz and Belsen, and the journey as a refugee to Northern Ireland.

Listen here

[ <https://wartimeni.com/audio/episode-02-from-auschwitz-to-ulster/> ]

### **Racial Justice Sunday 2022**

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland has produced a resource for Racial Justice Sunday 2022. It is the product of ecumenical cooperation and partnership between Christian church denominations, parachurch organisations and groups, and individuals in Wales, Scotland, Ireland and England - the four nations.

Racial Justice: What's it got to do with me?

January 29, 2022

This is very much a call for all Christians to engage in the righteous struggle for racial justice because racial justice is everyone's business.

As we see in the resource for Racial Justice Sunday 2022, the Bible has a lot to say about justice because as God's Word it reflects God's heart for justice. It can be argued that we should love justice because God does! Racism and racial discrimination are justice issues because they deny basic justice and human dignity to women and men who are made in the image of God. Equally, they are sinful because, among other issues, they assume all are not equal before God and are not part of God's family.

For those who have previously not engaged with Racial Justice Sunday because they did not feel equipped to do so, this resource will provide them with the tools to play an active role in this work.

Who is the resource for?

It is an opportunity for all Churches to focus on the three 'R's of 'Remembering', 'Reflecting' and 'Responding':

Remembering the importance of racial justice.

Reflecting on human diversity and thanking God for it.

Responding by working to end injustice, racism and ignorance through prayer and action.

How can the resource be used?

This publication is divided into two sections:

January 29, 2022

The first contains a range of materials that will enable churches and congregations to carry out an act of worship or a service focusing on racial justice.

The second section provides churches, congregations, parachurch groups and individuals with information, ideas and activities that enable them to continue the conversations that may emanate from RJS.

Download: Racial Justice: What's it got to do with me?:

[ <https://ctbi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/RJS-2022-edit.pdf.pagespeed.ce.nU7KxSg95M.pdf> ]

## Perspective

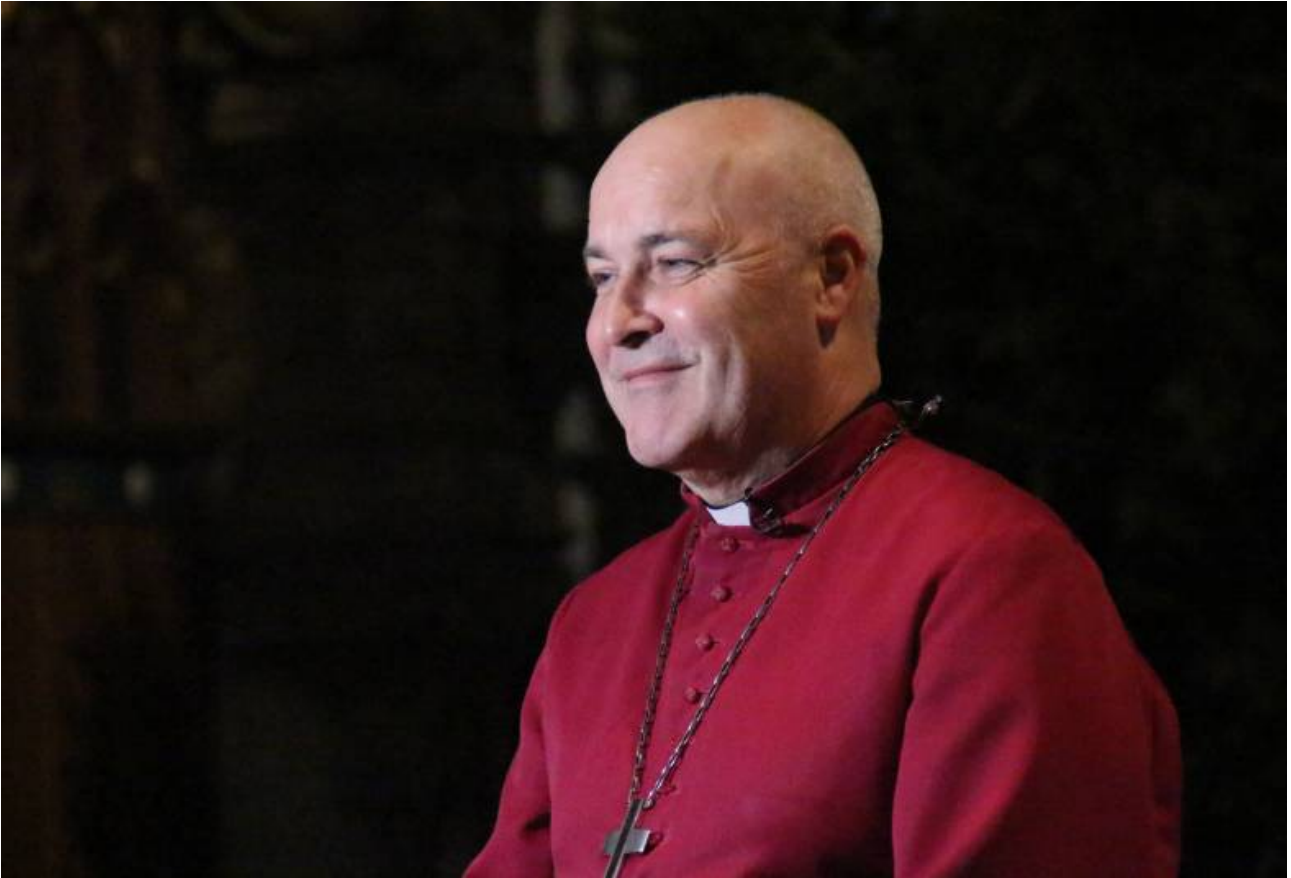
### Plant a tree by the Archbishop of York

**The Archbishop writes in yesterday's Yorkshire Post about the value and his love of trees - encouraging all to join in the efforts to plant a tree for the Jubilee. The article follows in full...**

The American poet Wendell Berry once described the canopy that trees formed above him as 'a timbered choir':

Great trees, outspreading and upright  
Apostles of the living light.

Patient as stars, they build in air  
Tier after tier a timbered choir  
Stout beams upholding weightless grace  
Of song, a blessing on this place.1



It will be a good while before the twelve small trees that were recently planted by myself and members of the local community in the gardens of Bishopthorpe Palace will resemble an avenue of giants, but left alone and allowed to thrive, they will become just that – each tree an ecosystem in itself, sustaining a wondrous diversity of life,

Receiving sun and giving shade  
Their life's a benefaction made  
And is a benediction said  
Over the living and the dead.

The annals of Bishopthorpe Palace will explain that the trees planted in November 2021 mark the Platinum Jubilee of the accession to the throne of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. It is a small contribution to the national initiative led by Cool Earth, in partnership with the UK Government

January 29, 2022

and the Woodland Trust, to plant millions of trees in celebration of the Jubilee. A living legacy - the Queen's Green Canopy.

There is something deeply humbling about planting trees. The old forester's proverb claims that 'Great oaks take 300 years to grow, 300 years to stay, and 300 years to die'. These fragile saplings are patient creatures that will long outlive me and even my great-grandchildren.

Those of us who have seen Sir David Attenborough's latest documentary series on the BBC will have nurtured a new respect for the intricate wonders of plant-life on our Green Planet. Did you know that oak trees alone provide a habitat for 2,300 other species – 326 of which are entirely dependent on oak for their survival?

Apart from their obvious benefit for biodiversity, trees also improve air quality, fight flooding, promote mental and physical health and wellbeing, improve the aesthetic value of the world around us, and as such even attract business and elevate house prices.

And I haven't even mentioned the role trees can play in our response to the Climate Crisis. It is estimated that each hectare of young woodland can capture over 400+ tonnes of carbon. Even a single mature tree will absorb between 10 and 40kg of carbon per year on average, adding up to at least a tonne over its lifetime. To put this into a more sombre perspective – the average carbon footprint of a UK citizen is about 10 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per person per year.

January 29, 2022

I know full well that my 12 trees aren't going to solve our climate crisis! However, no less than 3 million "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee" saplings and trees are available for free to UK community groups, schools, parish councils and corporates through the Woodland Trust and its partners. They can begin to make a difference. If we act together – much like trees do in the forest – we will start to notice the impact. Not just for ourselves, but also for those who will come after us.

This is the time for hopeful action. Jesus inspired us with stories of small beginnings and seemingly insignificant actions that transform the world beyond all recognition. From a single mustard seed grows a large plant that supports the nesting birds. A single grain of wheat, when buried, sprouts and reproduces itself many times over. As my friend Justin Welby expressed it in his New Year Message: "When we plant a seed, we don't see the fruit immediately. But under the surface, God is working with what we have planted." If we act in hope, we no longer feel the need to calculate the exact impact of our actions, but instead have faith in the life-giving and transforming power of the God of life to bring about things beyond our wildest imagination.

So I invite you to consider planting a tree this year. As you do this, you invest in joy and hope, and in someone else's future. You change the trajectory of our planet. The planting season ends in March and will start again in October. If you need help on what to plant and how to do it, the Woodland Trust website is the place to look.

January 29, 2022

Planting a tree is a joyfully defiant statement of hope: for you and your community; for generations to come; and for the earth itself.

## Poem for today

### Holocaust Memorial Service by Elie Wiesel

Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, that turned my life into one long night seven times sealed.

Never shall I forget that smoke.

Never shall I forget the small faces of the children whose bodies I saw transformed into smoke under a silent sky.

Never shall I forget those flames that consumed my faith for ever.

Never shall I forget the nocturnal silence that deprived me for all eternity of the desire to live.

Never shall I forget those moments that murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to ashes.

Never shall I forget those things, even were I condemned to live

as long as God Himself.

Never.

**+ Please share CNI with your friends**



**[www.churchnewsireland.org](http://www.churchnewsireland.org)**



January 29, 2022