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**Image of the day - Tewkesbury Abbey**

## People and places

### Importance of truth highlighted at Bloody Sunday commemorative mass

**A special mass in honour of those killed and injured on Bloody Sunday has been told that the truth is vitally important, and much suffering could have been averted had the truth been told at the time.**

Speaking at the mass in St Mary's Church, Catholic Bishop Donal McKeown welcomed Church of Ireland Bishop Andrew Forster to the mass, saying his presence was very important.

Bishop McKeown said had truth been spoken that day and over the next weeks, so many lives and so much pain could have been spared. However, he said, when truth is killed to protect the system, the initial pain is multiplied. As with many other tragedies, he added, the system frustrated the desire of families to get at the truth.

The bishop said people are crushed when institutions or organisations lie to preserve their reputation, and many people still know truths that they are reluctant to share.

He added there is a need for an agreed system that creates space for the truth to be told about the thousands of unsolved murders.

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Welcoming Bishop Andrew Forster, Bishop McKeown said presence builds on the courageous work begun by Bishops Daly and Mehaffey some 40 years ago. They showed a way forward, he concluded, long before warring politicians would sit in the same room.

See Perspective later in this issue for text of Bishop McKeown's homily.

## **Inter-faith group formed to look out for NI clergy**

**A group of senior clergy from the main denominations in Northern Ireland has been set up to provide a place of spiritual and psychological “sanctuary” for their fellow clerics.**

The group's aim is to recognise the pressures and expectations which all clergy face and the lack of opportunity they have to talk about these, in a confidential setting.

This initiative is part of the Care4Clergy group, which acknowledges the commonalities of issues facing clergy of all faiths including dealing with congregational problems, challenging parishioners, and increased workload with fewer colleagues.

Presbyterian minister the Rev Gabrielle Farquhar, a leading member of the group, said: “No matter what our differing backgrounds within the Christian church, we found that

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certain triggers for difficulties like stress, burn-out, conflict are common to all clergy.

“Some struggle on without talking to anyone about how they feel or what they are experiencing, until they become ill. Others even begin to question their call.

“For various reasons the clergy are not using some of the pastoral care already available. Since the covid pandemic, some have expressed a deep sense of loneliness and others have left the ministry pastorate altogether.

“This new peer group initiative therefore opens up a whole new support network for all clergy.”

The Rev Farquhar served for 26 years until 2019 as minister of Ballycarry Presbyterian church in Co Antrim - Irish Presbyterianism’s oldest congregation. For a number of years, she was convenor of the Presbyterian church’s pastoral care of ministers and their families panel.

Roman Catholic Redemptorist priest the Rev Ciarán O’Callaghan, whose church’s clergy are all celibate (unmarried), commented: “One of the important aspects of the Care4Clergy group is its wide inter-church dimension. This will allow clergy to have a safe space outside of their own denomination, if needed. It also gives a powerful witness to the desire for unity among Christians.”

\* The team can be contacted through the Care4Clergy facebook page or Care4Clergy website.

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## C of I Children and Families Development Officer appointed

**The Church of Ireland has appointed Ms Rachael Murphy as its Children and Families Development Officer.**

Ms Murphy has worked in the youth and children's sector for the past 27 years; in this role, which is a three-year appointment, she will be responsible for raising the profile of children and families ministry, training, supporting and developing resources.

Welcoming her appointment, Bishop George Davison remarked: "On behalf of the Church of Ireland Board for Ministry with Children and Families, I'm delighted to welcome Rachael Murphy to the role of Development Officer. Her warm personality and wealth of experience will

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be great assets as we seek to develop the work of this new Board to resource and support the Church in its ministry with children and families.”

Rachael says: “I am both humbled and excited by the appointment in equal measure, as it brings together my love for children’s ministry and my passion to see families equipped and empowered.

“The past two years in particular have seen our families and children’s ministry come under great strain; it has required the Church to look for new and innovative ways to engage. As the saying goes ‘necessity is the mother of invention’ and there have been some fantastic ideas and programmes that have come forward during this time, so it is exciting now to see how the Church can further develop this vital ministry for God’s glory.

“There are so many amazing, dedicated and talented people who have been working tirelessly for God through this period and long before, reaching out to children and their families. It is my hope to raise the profile of this amazing ministry, to highlight the huge impact it has on church life and to support those who have given, and continue to give, so much of their time, skills and energy across the island of Ireland.”

The Board for Ministry with Children and Families seeks to equip, resource and advocate for the increased welcome, enhanced inclusion and full participation of children and their families in the whole life of the Church. Its vision is that every Church of Ireland parish, no matter how big or small, is equipped to provide vibrant and engaging ministry with

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children and families. The Board is chaired by the Rt Revd George Davison, Bishop of Connor.

Find out more about Children and Families Ministry at [www.ireland.anglican.org/CFM](http://www.ireland.anglican.org/CFM) or on our social media channels – Facebook at [@churchofirelandchildrensministry](https://www.facebook.com/churchofirelandchildrensministry) and Instagram [@coficfm](https://www.instagram.com/coficfm)

## In the media

### WCC appeals for peace in Ukraine

WCC

The World Council of Churches (WCC) acting general secretary Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca, on behalf of WCC member churches throughout the world, urgently appealed for peace for the people of Ukraine:

"As we follow the news of the mad progression towards war, we plead for a different logic than one based on geopolitical competition - a logic that considers the death and suffering that any armed conflict would inevitably visit on the children, women and men of Ukraine," said Sauca. "We pray for a change of hearts and minds, for de-escalation, and for dialogue instead of threats."

"God's people - and members of the ecumenical fellowship - find themselves on both sides of the current confrontation," added Sauca. "But our God is a God of peace, not of war and bloodshed," he said. "Though the things that make for peace may be hidden from the eyes of those driving the

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march to war, we pray that they may yet be opened, and that peace may yet prevail."

[ [www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/statement-on-ukraine](http://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/statement-on-ukraine) ]

## **Indian-born priest ordained as youngest bishop in Church of England**

News 18

This event attracted immense interest in the Indian press

[ <https://www.news18.com/news/buzz/indian-born-priest-ordained-as-youngest-bishop-in-church-of-england-4704083.html> ]

## **Revealed: Nearly every post-primary school in NI reported Covid outbreak this month**

Belfast Telegraph

Virtually every post-primary school in Northern Ireland reported an outbreak of Covid-19 this month, Public Health Agency (PHA) statistics have revealed.

The Agency's Epidemiological Survey shows that 99.5% of post primaries reported at least one new positive case during the first three weeks of the school term.

The number of positive cases has continued to rise across all sectors of education, with almost 6,000 new cases identified in schools in the week ending January 23.

[ [ <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/education/revealed-nearly-every-post-primary-school-in-ni-reported-covid-outbreak-this-month-41288819.html?utm> ]



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## **Report shows shocking use of sexual violence to convert or punish LGBT people**

Daily Mail

Coverage of survey of LGBT+ victims of sexual violence in which one in four respondents said they believed they may have been assaulted by people trying to “convert or punish” them. Quotes General Synod member Jayne Ozanne -

Around one in four LGBT+ victims of sexual violence in the UK could have been assaulted by people trying to “convert or punish” them, research suggests.

Some 23.5% of people surveyed for the LGBT+ anti-abuse charity Galop said they believe the sexual violence they had experienced was intended to convert or punish them for their sexual orientation or gender identity.

This rose to around a third if the victim was asexual (34%), non-binary (32%), a trans man (35%) or a trans woman (30%).

Respondents aged 18-24 reported the highest levels of sexual violence with the intention to convert or punish their identity among all age groups.

[[] [https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-10441753/Report-shows-shocking-use-sexual-violence-convert-punish-LGBT-people.html?utm\\_](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-10441753/Report-shows-shocking-use-sexual-violence-convert-punish-LGBT-people.html?utm_)]

## **Archbishop denounces Jew-hate**

Jewish Chronicle

[churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)

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'There is no acceptable level of antisemitism' says Justin Welby Report on video message to a group of faith leaders meeting in Berlin from the Archbishop of Canterbury, in which he spoke of the “the profound evil of antisemitism”. The meeting was marking the 80th anniversary of the Wannsee Conference.

[[] <https://www.thejc.com/news/news/archbishop-denounces-jew-hate-6ZuVQ7mRc6ssVfMehmyM89?utm>]

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

### **Kilkenny Installation livestream**

The Installation of the Rev'd Stephen Farrell as Dean of Ossory and Rector of the Kilkenny Union of Parishes will be livestreamed. Bishop Burrows will institute the Revd Stephen Farrell as Rector of the Kilkenny union of parishes and he will then be installed as Dean of Ossory. The new dean was ordained in 2008 for the curacy of Taney in the Diocese of Dublin and since 2011 has been Rector of Zion in the Dublin suburb of Rathgar. His academic background has been in law and he has been serving as Provincial and Diocesan Registrar in Dublin & Glendalough.

[<https://youtu.be/wZd9MULUM9s>]

### **Annual Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise Ecumenical service**

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The recent Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise (the Irish Guild of the Church) and Pobal an Aifrinn Annual Ecumenical service is available on the Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise Youtube channel and there is a link at -  
[ [www.facebook.com/Gaeleaglais](http://www.facebook.com/Gaeleaglais) ]

## Domestic Abuse knows NO boundaries



## Free training session for Church Leaders



Unfortunately, 1 in 4 women experience domestic abuse and therefore we know some women and children in your congregation will be affected by it. Unfortunately COVID-19 has further exacerbated the situation for many women and children.

We are offering free training sessions for any and all leaders in your church which will provide an overview of what domestic abuse is and how you can support women in your church community experiencing domestic abuse.

**Zoom training sessions will be available for faith based groups and churches in Belfast and Lisburn areas on the following dates:**

**Tuesday 8th February from 11:00-13:00**

**Tuesday 22nd February from 11:00-13:00**

**Thursday 24th February from 11:00-13:00**

**Sign up to one of these sessions by filling in the form above.**



For any enquiries please email [rebecca.grounds@belfastwomensaid.org.uk](mailto:rebecca.grounds@belfastwomensaid.org.uk)

### **Domestic abuse awareness training**

Women's Aid (Belfast and Lisburn) is holding training sessions via Zoom to faith/church leaders in the Belfast & Lisburn areas on three dates in February.

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Are you a faith/church leader and want to sign up? Simply click the following link and select the session you would like to attend:

[ [bit.ly/3gjtTZX](https://bit.ly/3gjtTZX) ]

## **Eco Journeys – Past and Future: Leinster**

Eco–Congregation Ireland is hosting an online gathering for all friends in the Leinster region. Title: Eco Journeys – Past and Future. Date and Time: Saturday, 12th February 2022, 10.30am – 12.00pm

This event is open to those in Leinster who are interested in learning how to start their church’s eco–journey, work towards their ECI Award, and develop their work into the future.

Participants will hear from three faith communities who have received their ECI Award. They will tell us how they began their journey and how they have continued their work for God’s creation. There will be an opportunity for discussion, questions and ideas sharing.

If you would like to attend, drop a line to

[ [info@ecocongregationireland.com](mailto:info@ecocongregationireland.com) ]

to book a place and you will be sent the Zoom link closer to the time.

Eco–Congregation Ireland is an initiative of the Irish Inter Church Meeting, and includes members from the Roman Catholic Church, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church and Religious Society of Friends.

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## Perspective

# Bloody Sunday's hurts and hopes by Bishop Donal McKeown

## Bishop McKeown of Derry speaking on Friday evening past

We gather in St Mary's Church where the funerals took place for those who died on that terrible day, January 30th, 1972. On the following Wednesday February 2nd, this church was packed and many thousands of us stood outside in a soft swirling mist and a storm of emotions. The shooting of 26 unarmed civilians in little more than 10 minutes – and the death of 14, including 6 who were under 18 years of age – was a trauma never to be forgotten. Tonight, we gather in faith as people have done here every year. In the Lord's presence we are sensitive to where everybody is and to the still voice of God who speaks grace into pain and loss.

## Homily

Those of us gathered here this evening have known for a long time that this anniversary was approaching. What happened 50 years ago on the streets of this city was such a shocking event that has reverberated down through the years and around the world. Unarmed civilians were gunned down by the state when all they were doing was protesting against decades of injustice.

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There is no doubt now as to what we remember. The Saville tribunal overturned the Widgery whitewash, though it took 38 years for an acknowledgement of what the families always knew to be true. But though there are no doubts as to what happened, we can reflect on how we chose to remember what we recall with love.

What might Jesus have to say to us to help us remember the loss of life and the loss of innocence that happened that Sunday afternoon?

Firstly, Jesus said that the truth will set you free. Had truth been spoken that day and over the next weeks, so many lives and so much pain could have been spared. But when truth is killed to protect the system, the initial pain is multiplied. As with many other tragedies in our history, the system frustrated the desire of families to get at the truth. Blatant lies were told. Campaigners were sometimes seen as obsessive. That put huge pressure on mental health and on relationships. Institutions – whether in state, church or non-state actors – tell stories of their own heroism. And that makes it very hard for them to admit the presence of sin in their ranks. People are crushed when institutions or organisations lie to preserve their reputation. We still have much truth to discover about many other deaths. Many people still know truths that they are reluctant to share. We deserve an agreed system that creates space for the truth to be told about the thousands of unsolved murders. Drawing a line under the past always suits those who have much to hide. Today we remember those whose lives were lost by brutal violence – and all those who suffered terribly because of the lies that were told.

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Secondly, we all know that finding peace with the past is very difficult. Many of our societies struggle to know how they remember unsavoury chapters in their history. How do we deal with slavery and colonialism, the treatment of those who offended against society's morals and the banishment of the poor to Australia for stealing food or a handkerchief?

There are various attitudes that can be employed. There are those who prefer to stoke the flames of rage, believing that the fire of anger will cleanse the wound or promote a modern agenda. There are others who want to let sleeping dogs lie and prefer not to grapple with uncomfortable truths that might disturb our comfort in the present. But there is another way. It seeks to acknowledge the past but to have compassion and forgiveness for those who were caught up in systems and situations that they can now look at with other eyes. There is a grace-filled art in forgiving and remembering. It takes a wise heart to look at the rubble of what has been shattered in the past and to make it into a foundation for the future. If all we do with the past is to use it as a heap of angry stones to throw at other people, then we cannot build. Either we process the rubbish of the past and make it into life-giving compost – or it lies in the corner and benefits no-one. I hope that our celebrations this weekend will help us all to build a future full of hope for our young people and not nourish them on bitter anger that can only kill and destroy. A new society on the island needs big hearts. It will not be created by small minds.

Thirdly, I was delighted when Bishop Andrew Forster said that he would join us this evening. His presence builds on the courageous work begun by Bishops Daly and Mehaffey some 40 years ago. They showed a way forward long

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before warring politicians would sit in the same room. That good work was built on when, at the publication of the Saville Report, Bishop Ken Good, Rev Norman Hamilton and Rev Paul Kingston received a warm welcome when they came to meet victims' families at the monument. The people of this city have shown great dignity and courage, often leading the way for the rest of Northern Ireland to follow. The suffering endured has borne the seed of solidarity and not merely of anger. The dignity of the people means that we do not look like a post-conflict society. Music and community have enabled the population to be known for its welcome and great stories. This is a city that can look back with compassion on the past. For it is a town that we all love so well. Phil Coulter's song doesn't forget the barbed wire and guns and the gas that hung on every breeze. But he knew the burning local pride and remembered his first pay and what he learned about life. Love changes everything and gives us eyes to see little beauties that brighten the dark. Bishop Andrew, your presence here invites us to pray together and work for a bright brand-new day.

Tonight, we remember those who died and those who were scarred by their deaths. But we also remember those who risked everything as they went to help the injured. Some are here tonight, and others died on that January afternoon. We remember heroism and strength of character in those who sought and fought for the truth. And, as people of faith, we remember that there is more grace and goodness in the world than sin and evil.

And we pray that those whom we have loved can be at peace and that we can find peace at their leaving us.



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Together we can acknowledge the patronage of St Columba and use his words in prayer

“Be a bright light before me, O God, a guiding star above me. A smooth path below me a kindly shepherd behind me today, tonight and for ever.”

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed.....

## Poem for today

### Pisces by Colette Bryce

When the tide withdraws  
like a jeweller's cloth  
to reveal a mile  
of glittering rocks,

what's not to love?  
What's to stop  
a human like you  
in coat and gumboot

clambering out  
to the furthest reach,  
as near as dammit  
to the sea floor?

What's to prevent  
a human like you  
from choosing a spot

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on the planetary rocks

to live,  
resolute as a limpet  
sits tight  
in its home scar?

The hermit crab  
in its hermit shell.  
You in your skull,  
your pulsing fontanelle,

the North Sea  
creeping up on you  
again, fingertip  
by fingertip, ready  
to pounce

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