

# Church News Ireland



**Image of  
the day –  
St.  
Volodymyr  
Cathedral  
Kyiv,  
Ukraine**

March 3, 2022

## Image of the day

### St. Volodymyr Cathedral

St. Volodymyr Cathedral is in the centre of Kyiv, Ukraine. It serves as the mother cathedral of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Its ownership is debated between the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Kyiv Patriarche and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Moscow Patriarchate.

## People and places

### Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal responds to Ukraine crisis

**The Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal for World Aid and Development has committed €10,000 (£8,300) from its emergency funds to assist with the humanitarian response to the current crisis in Ukraine.**

Bishops' Appeal is partnering with Habitat for Humanity Ireland and Christian Aid, and encouraging parishes across the island to contribute to our response to help people seeking refuge.

Jenny Williams, Chief Executive of Habitat for Humanity Ireland, remarked: "UNHCR reports that over 500,000 people fled Ukraine into neighbouring and nearby countries from 24th February to 1st March. We have strong programmes in Poland, Hungary and Romania and our

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European office is in Slovakia so we are on the ground responding.



Habitat for Humanity Romania assisting Ukrainian refugees at the Stadion Siret North camp near the border with Ukraine. Photo credit: Habitat for Humanity.

“Habitat is meeting UNHCR daily and co-ordinates with governments to add value and ensure there isn’t duplication of effort. Colleagues from Hungary and Romania spent the weekend at their borders. In Romania, the need was to provide additional heat for a camp – even more important given that there was more snow at the weekend and people were cold. More broadly our focus is on supporting the shelter needs of refugees, ensuring that more people can feel safe. We will support them for the long term.”

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Christian Aid's funds will go to sister agencies in the ACT Alliance. This network of Christian aid and development agencies includes the Lutheran World Federation and Hungarian Church Aid which are both working in neighbouring countries. As the situation within Ukraine is changing by the day and there is a high level of violence within the country, Bishops' Appeal will not be funding work within Ukraine at this stage although this will be kept under consideration.

**The Most Revd John McDowell**, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, said: "The tragic and wholly avoidable destruction which we are witnessing in Ukraine leaves many of us in the West lost for words and at a loss to know how best to respond to alleviate suffering. However, wars always create refugees and I am grateful that Bishops' Appeal is targeting its immediate aid efforts to assist trusted agencies working in neighbouring countries to help those who have been displaced by this invasion. I would urge all parishes to consider helping Bishops' Appeal to increase the aid which it can provide by contributing generously in one of the ways outlined below."

**The Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson**, Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland, said: "The developing and declining situation in Ukraine has already had devastating consequences for hundreds of thousands of people. Prayerful assistance and practical assistance are both important components of our response. I commend the current initiative by Bishops' Appeal."

**Lydia Monds, Bishops' Appeal's Education Advisor**, added: "Bishops' Appeal will continue to monitor access to



refugees so that we as a Church can stand in solidarity with them and support them in the most effective ways possible. We will only release funding through channels that enable vital aid to reach those who need it most. We will continue to liaise with partner agencies working on the ground to provide relief. Our emergency funds will be released immediately and we invite parishes to continue to give to the Appeal so that we can continue to support efforts in a constantly evolving crisis.”

### **How you can help**

Parishes are encouraged to contribute to the response and donations can be made, by euro or sterling, in the following ways:

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An online donation at  
[ [www.bishopsappeal.ireland.anglican.org/give](http://www.bishopsappeal.ireland.anglican.org/give) ]

A direct lodgement into the Bishops' Appeal bank account (details of which are provided on the Bishops' Appeal website at the link provided above);

Sending a cheque, payable to Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal, to: Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal, Church of Ireland House, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6, D06 CF67;

Making a donation through a Church of Ireland parish or diocesan office.

Taxpayers can give more help by gift aiding donations (if resident in the UK) or tax relief on donations (in the Republic of Ireland). The appropriate forms and further details on how to give are also available at  
[ [www.bishopsappeal.ireland.anglican.org/give](http://www.bishopsappeal.ireland.anglican.org/give) ]

The National Director of Habitat for Humanity Romania, Roberto Patrascoiu, speaks about the immediate support which Habitat is providing in a refugee camp in a video which can be shared with parishes and more widely from this link: [ <https://youtu.be/hzPhLHkQK0E> ]

More information on Habitat for Humanity's response to the Ukraine crisis is available here: [ [www.habitatni.co.uk/ukraine](http://www.habitatni.co.uk/ukraine) ]

The ACT Alliance comprises 137 members in 127 countries. Visit [ [www.actalliance.org/news](http://www.actalliance.org/news) ] to find out more about its

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network and how partner agencies are responding to the crisis in Ukraine.

Bishops' Appeal is registered as a charity in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland.

Republic of Ireland Registered Charity Number: 20019068 (CHY 8026)

Northern Ireland Charity Number: 101325



## **Stained glass workshop made an afternoon with a difference on Armagh's hill**

**The first of the 'Afternoon on the Hill with a Difference' events was held in St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral on Saturday 26th February.**



Following the regular Afternoon on the Hill visit to Armagh Robinson Library, No 5 Vicars' Hill and the Cathedral, a workshop on stained glass windows was held in the Cathedral.

Featured with the visitors who attended the workshop were seated, from the left: Stuart Suckling, stained glass designer from CWS Design; the Very Revd Shane Forster, Dean of Armagh and Keeper of Armagh Robinson Library; and Thomas McLaughlin, stained glass artist with CWS Design.

Two more workshops will be held at the end of the well-established threefold visit, the next one being on paper conservation by local paper conservator, Sean Madden on Saturday 5 March 2022, and the final workshop by Armagh florist, Annette Foster, on Saturday 12 March 2022. More information can be found from Armagh Robinson Library by



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telephoning 028 37523142 or e-mailing  
[admin@armaghrobinsonlibrary.co.uk](mailto:admin@armaghrobinsonlibrary.co.uk)



## Helping C of I parishes to serve schools

Supporting teachers and pupils is one of many ways in which the Church fulfils its missional role in today's society. To empower parishes in how they serve schools, the Board of Education (Northern Ireland) has offered more than £7,000 in grants over the last three years to nine projects which build on these local relationships.

Even small initiatives have brought about really positive results.

In **Eglinton, Co. Londonderry**, children and teachers enjoyed an outdoor Christmas display and star hunt at the parish church – all classes came together over several days for what was the first activity they had done outside school since the start of the pandemic. Canon Paul Hoey says: “We built on that by having assemblies outside of the school – remarkably it only rained once! These have gone so well that the school has since purchased a structure that allows for assemblies to take place outside in all weathers.”

**St Mark’s, Portadown**, partnering with its local school, Millington Primary School, has made great progress in its project for P7 pupils called ‘Boys To Men,



Girls To Ladies’ which has taught practical skills about basic woodwork tools, cooking, sewing, cleaning your shoes, cars and clothes to using an iron! Coming up to Easter, the church teaches one RE class on the reasons for the Resurrection. The project has run at full speed ahead and from March plans have been put in place to run a version of

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it on a Sunday afternoon as a new Junior Youth Fellowship. One P7 pupil called this one hour per week “the best thing in the whole week!”

Other parish–school links have reached back into the past to encourage a better understanding of local communities and their history. **St Augustine’s, Londonderry**, used its money alongside funds from other sponsors to commission a special educational video which was made available to nearby primary and post–primary schools together with a copy of ‘The Little Church on the Walls’, the parish’s history book. St Augustine’s sits on the site of St Columba’s first monastery in Ireland and, in 2021, marked 1,500 years since his birth. The video – ‘St Columba: A Tale from Bad to Good’ – was written and produced by Kieran Griffiths in a Horrible Histories format and launched at a special service at the end of June last year.

In **Florencecourt**, St John’s parish is working with P4 and P5 pupils to help them learn about the current and historical links between the church and Florencecourt Primary School.

Transforming Lives for Good was launched in Ballysillan Primary School, in North Belfast, by the **parish of St Peter and St James** last October. A small group of volunteers provide one–to–one support for children for one hour a week – a time to try out their creative abilities with some arts and crafts and also to receive emotional support and talking therapy. Feedback has been very positive and at Christmas, a present for each child and a hamper were delivered to each family home along with a personalised note with details of the parish’s Christmas services.

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**Willowfield Parish Church** has run financial awareness classes for Key Stage 2 pupils in local schools in East Belfast, based on material developed by Christians Against Poverty.

Not far away, in **Hollywood**, the parish church has received funding to help to deliver a puppet ministry (in-person or on video) around Personal Development and Mutual Understanding, focusing initially on drug awareness. It has run two years of these workshops with P7 pupils and hopes, over



time, to help more classes and more schools. The puppets are also used to tell Bible stories in a fun and interactive way in school assemblies and to primary school children at its after-schools club, Mini-Gap.

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“Once a month we have puppet workshops, where the children get a chance to learn how to use them,” the parish’s children’s worker, Angela Megarry, explains. “We have also started a space for families to come into the church together, and then the children perform a song or act out a Bible story with the puppets to their families. This is along the lines of Messy Church but takes place after school and connects with parents as well as children.”

The Board of Education (Northern Ireland) is delighted to see the work ongoing in parishes with local schools. It hopes to open this funding opportunity for new projects in the autumn of 2022 and will be contacting parishes after Easter with details of the next scheme.

Courtesy the Church of Ireland Gazette.

## **Saint Luke’s Home Cork, 150 years of caring**

**Saint Luke’s Home, a residential care home in Cork for older people which also established Ireland’s first specialist unit for people living with dementia, marked the start of its 150th anniversary year yesterday, 1st March 2022.**

‘In fact we were a day out’ explained the charity’s longest serving President, Church of Ireland Bishop, Dr Paul Colton. ‘1872 was a Leap Year and the first recorded meeting of the Council of the charity was on 29th February 1872.’

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Left to right: Patrick Mayes chairperson of St. Luke's Home., The Right Rev. Dr Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross President of St. Luke's Charity and Home, and chairperson of the Board of the Charity, Joan Jeffery Director of Finance & Administration, SVP South-West regional president Paddy O'Flynn and Tony O'Brien CEO St Luke's Charity & Home at 2 Tuckey Street, now the offices of St Vincent de Paul, but where St Luke's Home was founded in 1872 at a meeting when the building was the home of Mrs Gunn, Photo: Gerard McCarthy

That meeting, according to the Charity's history, was held 'at the home of Mrs Gunn, Tuckey Street, Cork.' Some research was needed and, with the help of Cork City Librarian, David O'Brien, it was established that Mrs Gunn lived at 2 Tuckey Street, Cork in 1872. By total and happy coincidence 2 Tuckey Street, Cork today is occupied by the offices of another great charity known for its Christian

compassion and caring: the Society of St Vincent de Paul in Cork.

To mark the 150th anniversary of that first meeting, Bishop Paul Colton chaired a short meeting of the current board at 2 Tuckey Street, the place where the early vision for the charity was charted and the first practical steps were taken under the watchful and visionary eye of the charity's founder; Miss Frances Fitzgerald Gregg, daughter of the then Bishop of Cork, Dr John Gregg. Since then Church of Ireland Bishops of Cork have each served as President of the charity.

The directors of Saint Luke's were welcomed to 2 Tuckey Street by Paddy O'Flynn, South-West Regional President of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork, Councillor Derry Canty paid tribute to the work of the charity throughout its 150 years. Bishop Colton then read an account of the first meeting held in that place on 29th February 1872. Following a period of silence for commemoration and thanksgiving, the Charity's prayer was said. Mindful of the tragedies of the current time, prayers were then said for the peace of the world, for all places where there is conflict, and especially for Ukraine.

The main activity of Saint Luke's Charity Cork is the provision of a 128 residential care home for older people and people living with dementia. The charity employs 280 people at its base at Mahon, Blackrock Cork, where today it also has an outreach programme, a daycare facility and an Education and Research Centre at Northridge House.

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More activities are planned for the 150th anniversary year, concluding with a Service of Thanksgiving in Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork on Saint Luke's Day, 18th October 2022.

## News special

### The Siege of Kyiv – The View from a Basement

**Alla Gedz is a member of Christ Church, Kyiv, part of the Church of England's Diocese of Europe. She has posted regular updates about the situation in Kyiv has given the Anglican Communion News Service permission to publish them.**

“They're bombing. I heard the first explosions at night. It's 8:00 am now.” That is how Alla Gedz, a member of the congregation of Christ Church, Kyiv, first broke news of Russia's invasion of Kyiv last Thursday to her friends across the world.

“I looked out the window”, she said. “Lots of noise. I live on the first floor. People are in fear and panic. I'm trying not to cry myself.

“City officials say we should be packed with documents and ready to go to the hideout! BUT! There is no shelter near us. And we have nowhere to go. I live near Sikorsky Airport. Very near.



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“They can turn off the electricity at any time. Therefore, there will be no internet connection.”

Alla suffers from a chronic health condition and her doctor is currently unable to issue a prescription which would enable her to get much-needed painkillers. Nor is she able to get a health note which would enable her husband to travel with her should she find a way out of Kyiv to a neighbouring country for sanctuary.

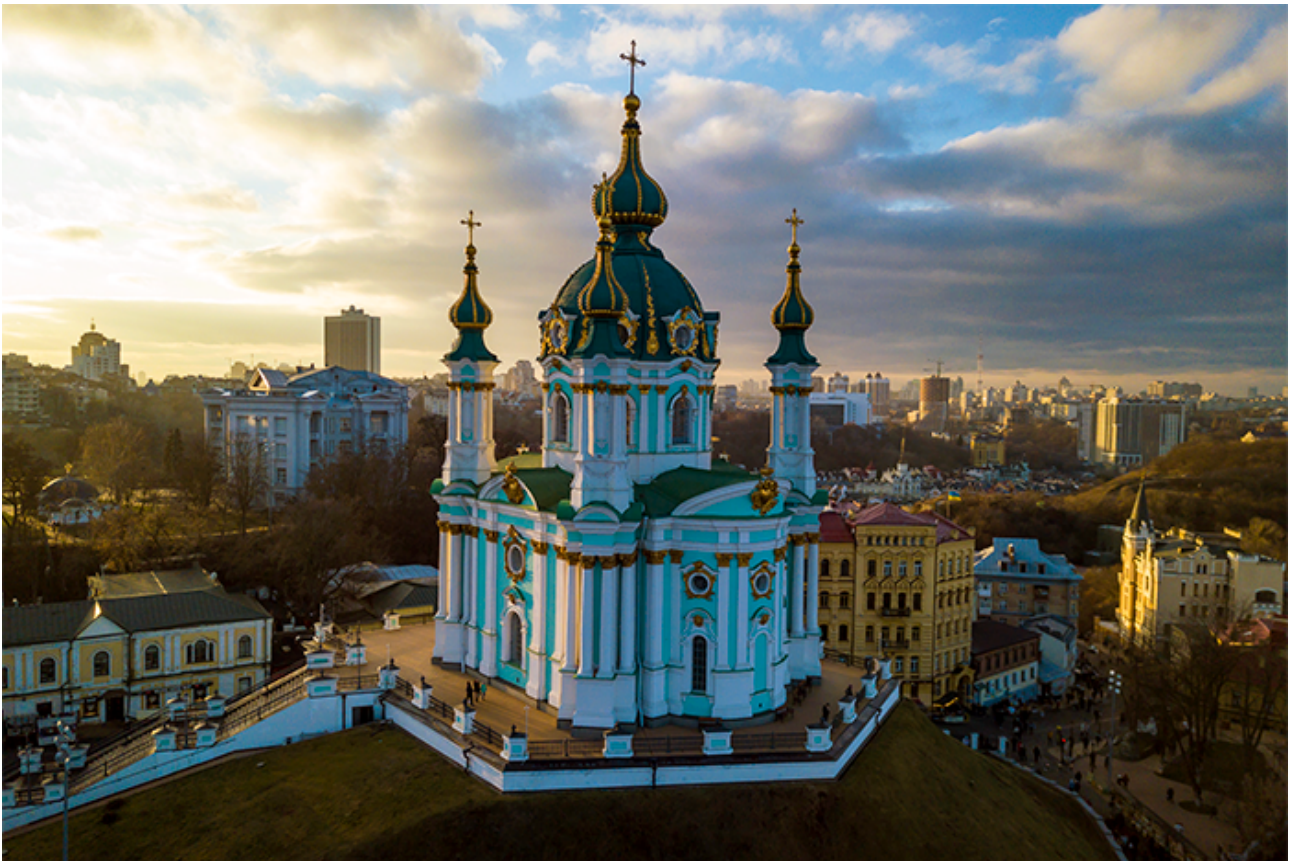
Supplies in shops and stores in Kyiv are running low as businesses struggle to move goods around Ukraine and into Kyiv.

“My wheelchair will not help me at all now if I need to urgently move somewhere”, she said. I have breathing problems and difficulty concentrating because of virus and fever and cannot move without assistance.”

Alla updated her friends last Thursday evening as the first day of the invasion drew to a close: “My dear friends, brothers and sisters. In these special moments I would like to share how much I appreciate your prayers and support”, she said. “I treasure each and every one of you in my heart.

“I heard the first explosions at night and then during the day the bombing continued. The building in which I live was not damaged, only the windowpanes rang a little, when there was an explosion.

“I saw fighter jets through the window. And they repeated on TV that the people of Kyiv must hide in a shelter, danger from the sky.



## St Andrew's, Kyiv

“At the moment, I am ill and staying in bed. When ‘Air Raid’ was announced I was in my bed and hoped for God's mercy.”

By Friday night, Alla's neighbours had left their building. “There are a lot of military equipment and vehicles near our building”, she said. “The bombing is more like constant shots. About 100 meters from our building there is a gas station for cars. If it blows up, there won't be any dust left of us.”

“An air strike on Kyiv was announced on TV! We stay at home. We have nowhere to go!

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“I pray that my psyche can bear it all. I can no longer restrain myself from crying. I shudder from any noise, even when there is no danger. Lord, please save my mind and my psyche from destruction.”

In the early hours of Saturday morning, Alla said that she “looked through the crack in the window. We blocked the window with a dismantled wardrobe.

“Now, at this moment, concrete blocks are being unloaded near my house and a roadblock is being set up. Lots of soldiers with weapons.

“Something is being built right next to the building. It's scary to imagine what awaits us.

My apartment is right next to the road where the action takes place...

“There is less and less chance of surviving until morning... Terribly scary! Very scary!”

Just after 8am EET (6 am GMT), Alla reported that she was “safe and sound”

“Praise the Lord and thank you, my dear friends,” she said.

“The shrunken body gradually begins to take its usual form. Our apartment is intact.

And I understand that this is a real miracle! You made this miracle a reality! The Lord has been very merciful to us! The

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fighting stopped a couple of hundred meters from our house.”

She said that tanks and people with machine guns “did not quite reach our house, where a big battle was being prepared, but, it was terribly scary.

“I was picking myself up piece by piece to pray. Now they don’t shoot anymore, but it still seems to me that a battle is going on. A little sleep might help.

“Thank you my dear brothers and sisters. thank you for fighting for our lives! I love you all! We would not make it without you!”

Saturday afternoon brought news that a high-rise apartment block which was hit by a Russian missile was not far from Alla’s flat.

“I am crying”, she said. “This building is very near to ours. The troops moved away from our house and have already begun to dismantle the concrete structures.

“The military, who were under our windows, said that everything was fine. The operation is over. After a while, all the military and equipment left.

“We were ready to get some sleep and recover from the stress of the night. Then there was an explosion. One of many. The shell hit the building which is near to ours.”

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Late on Saturday night, news broke that all residents of Kyiv feared: “The last announcement”, Alla wrote. “Everyone must be ready.

“According to intelligence, in 30 minutes everything that the fascist family has will fly to Kyiv. Everyone MUST hide in the shelter! Everyone MUST be prepared”, she said, quoting Iryna Herashchenko, the Deputy Chair of Ukraine’s Parliament.

But Sunday morning brought fresh hope. “Dear friends, thank you for helping us live another day and one more night”, she said. “We are exhausted and worn out but alive.

“We spent the night in the basement of a neighbouring building under the sewer pipes. Unfortunately, there is no bomb shelter near our building.

“There are military battles in Kyiv. An air alarm is constantly being sounded. We are at the epicentre of hostilities.

“All shops, pharmacies, banks are closed. There is a curfew in Kyiv from Saturday 5 pm to Monday 8 am. Anyone who goes out into the street at this time will be considered saboteurs and will be destroyed.

“I value your prayers and loving care. Thank you for caring us to the Lord!”

When the curfew lifted on Monday morning, Alla and her were able to leave their shelter. “We started our night in the basement, but when everything started to calm down, we

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returned home,” she said. “How I love a warm shower and my bed!”

“It is very cold and wet in the basement where we hide under the sewer pipes.

“The morning was quiet. Suspiciously quiet. Even the birds were silent, did not sing. This is the moment when you start to be afraid of silence, because you don't know what awaits you.

Then the curfew ended. And the sirens blared again: ‘Air Raid!’

I looked out the window and saw a lot of people who, as it turned out, were standing in line at the store, which is located near our building. People were standing in line, despite the fact that it was announced: ‘Air Raid!’

“I sent my husband to look what was going on. He called me back and said that the queues to the supermarkets and pharmacies are several hundred meters long. Pharmacies are all closed, but people are standing and hoping that they might open.

“All these days, when there were hostilities, not a single car with food appeared on the square where we live. Yesterday, there were posts on Facebook from people who live near Kyiv. They wrote that there was nothing in the supermarkets. Nothing at all.

“When they said, before the war, that there would be a blockade of Kyiv, it was hard to believe... I understood that

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this is one of the ways to exterminate people. No one hopes and does not believe that humanitarian aid sent by all countries will reach ordinary people. Not a single help has reached ordinary people yet.

“Today is a nice sunny day, but for some reason I want to cry. Thank you my dear friends for your support and prayers.”

## Perspective

### **PS...We don't know ourselves by Tony Davidson**

One of my Christmas presents in 2021 was Fintan O'Toole's new book, “We don't know ourselves, a personal history of Ireland since 1958”. Being quarantined in the house for a week, I confess I devoured the book quicker than the Christmas cake. O'Toole, born in 1958, is just a few months younger than I am. He is, as the foremost columnist at the Irish Times, one of Ireland's leading cultural and political commentators.

He recounts tales of growing up in Crumlin, in south Dublin. He has the preacher's knack of allowing a personal story to evolve into a commentary on a public story. He is almost Forest Gump like at times, turning up at the right time and place to comment on the dramatic events of Irish history. He is an altar boy to the famous conservative Archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid. His local sweetie shop is owned by Jim O'Keefe, the Mayor of Dublin, when President John F Kennedy visited the city. He is a neighbour of the

famous drug barons, the Dunne family. He works for a summer in Dunnes stores, no relation, and meets both old and young Ben. There are 570 pages with chapters on among other subjects, the Congo intervention, the Late Late Show, the Christian Brothers, the Irish relationship with Britain and the USA, the changing music and literary scene, the Troubles, the Pope's visit, attitudes to property, poverty and drugs, the Kerry Babies and moving statues, emigration, the ceasefires, the peace process, the Celtic Tiger and the abortion amendment. O'Toole describes dramatically the demise of the pillars of the state, the Roman Catholic Church, and the political party, Fianna Fail.

As I read the book, chapter by chapter, I felt I was being swept through my own life, being given prophetic insights into what was happening on this island. From my Limerick days, I can remember exactly where I was when I heard about Bishop Casey's fall from grace, and when it became apparent that Mary Robinson would be President of Ireland.

O'Toole describes the remarkable Irish ability to, "know and not know," particularly about clerical abuse, as well as political and financial scandals. At the same time he assesses the huge changes in the Irish economy influenced by civil servant, Ken Whitaker's 1958 document entitled, "Economic Development". He describes how the Irish economy grew with the new Irish Trinity of Information technology, pharmaceuticals and medical devices. In the 25 years from 1990, US companies invested roughly \$277 billion in Ireland, more than Russia, China, and India combined.



O'Toole moves from being an altar boy to studying scholastic philosophy at UCD, under Desmond Connell, who would become a Cardinal and Archbishop of Dublin. While he later rejects institutional religion, the influence of those years can be discerned in his adherence to a morality of the common good, and his use of religious language. He uses the language of idolatry to describe how, "Since the 1960s Fianna Fail had linked itself financially and morally to the property developers who epitomised their native resurgence, it could not believe that these gods were failing. It chose instead with dreadful consequences for the Irish public to believe that they were merely experiencing some temporary troubles. What the gods needed were more sacrifices."

His final chapter is optimistic. Let me quote, "What was being recognised was not just the wonderful and ordinary variousness of Irish lives and desires, it was Irish society's other secret self - not the one that contained all the darkness and in-turned violence, but the great secret of intimate grace. Ours has been a place in which the quiet kindness of human acceptance of loving and liking people even when their lives were not as they were supposed to be."

After reading "We don't know ourselves", I felt I knew my southern neighbours better, but I couldn't help wondering, do we still not know ourselves here in Northern Ireland and do we northerners need to rediscover more in public as well as private lives of "the great secret of intimate grace"?

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**Tony Davidson** - was the minister in Christ Church Limerick and Shannon from 1986 to 1994 and since then has been the Minister of First Armagh Presbyterian Church. He is a former chair of ECONI, and President of the Irish Council of Churches. He chairs the Peace and Reconciliation Panel under the Council for Public Affairs of the Presbyterian Church. He is married to Christine and has three grown up children and four grandchildren.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## Church News Ireland

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