



St Patrick's College, Maynooth, to mark 200th anniversary of Silent Night

St Patrick's College will be hosting a special exhibition to mark the two-hundredth anniversary of "Silent Night".

The exhibition, *Silent Night 200 – History. Message. Present.*, by the Austrian Foreign Ministry, traces the origins of the popular Christmas carol's lyrics and melody, its dissemination and also gives insight into the Carol's Irish adaptations.

"Silent Night, Holy Night" (in German "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht"), originated in Austria in 1818, and is known in more than 300 languages and dialects around the world. In 2011, the carol was declared an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO.

According to Dr John O'Keefe from St Patrick's College, legend has it that on Christmas Eve 1818, in the Austrian town of Oberndorf bei Salzburg, Austria, the organ broke down and consternation ensued.

December 18, 2018

“An author stepped forwards with a simple text. His name was Joseph Mohr and he presented it to Franz Xaver Gruber who set it to music there and then, and the carol was first performed on that Christmas Eve, 1818.”

Dr O’Keefe said that Maynooth was honoured to host the exhibition at the request of the Austrian Government. “The exhibition will feature historical and musical context and some background to the two composers, but it will also have a special feature on the origins of the most popular Irish language translation – ‘Oíche Chiúin, Oíche Mhic De’.”

“Silent Night” has been recorded by a large number of singers from every music genre. The version sung by Bing Crosby is the third-best-selling single of all time.

The beautiful carol caused a cease fire on Christmas Eve 1914, when fighting on the battlefields of World War I stopped – and a lone soldier’s exquisite voice made history. “It was impromptu, no one planned it,” said Stanley Weintraub, the author of *Silent Night: The Story of the World War I Christmas Truce*. “It has to begin with something, and it did begin with elements of shared culture. If it hadn’t been for shared culture, certainly there would have been no Christmas truce.”

Weintraub said a German officer, Walter Kirchhoff, began to sing the song, first in German, then in English.

“In the clear, cold night of Christmas Eve, his voice carried very far. The shooting had stopped and in that silence he sang and the British knew the song and sang back.”

December 18, 2018

Gradually the troops crawled forward into No Man's Land, said Weintraub. The song had a deep impact on many of the soldiers.

“Soldiers ... wrote home the day after to their families, to their wives, and to their parents, saying, ‘You won't believe this. It was like a waking dream.’

“They recognised that on both ends of the rifle, they were the same.”

Silent Night 200 – History. Message. Present. exhibition runs 17th to 21st from December 17 to 21 in 2018, and in 2019 from January, 3 to 7 at the President's Arch in St Patrick's College, Maynooth.

The exhibition is free of charge and open to the public from 9am to 6pm.

Lord Mayor of Belfast among first to visit Black Santa

Councillor Deirdre Hargey, Lord Mayor of Belfast, has been one of the first to visit Black Santa on the steps of Belfast Cathedral and make a donation to the charity sit-out.

The Dean of Belfast was joined by Bishop Harold on the first 'shift' and the Canons of the Cathedral, and the Bishop of Connor's commissary, will also take their turn on the steps, each dressed in the distinctive black cloak.

This is Dean Stephen Forde's first Christmas as Black Santa, and he continues the tradition established in 1976 by Dean Sammy Crooks who stood outside the Cathedral in

December 18, 2018



the days before Christmas urging people to ‘give and let live’ to support the sick, hungry and poor.

Funds raised aid the vital work of more than 200 local charities who offer support and opportunities to those in need in our community.

The 42nd Sit-out continues until Christmas Eve, with the exception of December 23 when the Dean will be busy with the Cathedral services, including the popular *Carols and Lessons for the City* at 3.30 pm.

Dean Forde said this will be a Christmas which will challenge many in the city of Belfast, and urged anyone who can't get to the Cathedral to make their donation, however small or large, by cheque or cash, by BACS or online at www.belfastcathedral.org.

December 18, 2018

Huge congregation at Civic Carol Service at St Ann's Dublin

Numerous aspects of Dublin life, from sports to politics, were represented at the annual Civic Carol Service at St Ann's Church, Dawson Street, on Sunday evening (December 16). There was a huge congregation for the service which took place in the presence of the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Michael Jackson and the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Nial Ring.

Readers were drawn from the city's political life, the Gardaí, the charity sector, sporting life and the commercial sector. The service was introduced by the Vicar, Canon David Gillespie and St Ann's Choir, under the direction of Charles Marshall, sang beautifully.

Readers included Suzanne Connolly, CEO of Barnardos Ireland; Philip Daly, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Ireland; Jamie Belton, manager of the Ivy Restaurant on Dawson Street; Minister for Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Josepha Madigan TD; Chloe Watkins, Irish international hockey player; Garda Commissioner Drew Harris; The Revd Dr Laurence Graham, former Moderator of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Lord Mayor, Nial Ring; and Archbishop Michael Jackson.

Giving the blessing at the end of the service, the Archbishop prayed for the life of Dublin city, all who contribute to it at every level and those who are charged with making decisions for the city.

December 18, 2018

Lurgan parish Christmas trees help raise 11,000 pounds for charities

Over 3000 people flocked to Shankill Parish Church in the heart of Lurgan in early December to view 72 Christmas trees, each interpreting a scripture verse that described something of who Jesus is.



Revd Mark Harvey with PIPS Upper Bann volunteer, Paula. PIPS provides support to individuals who are considering, or who have at some point considered, ending their own lives. PIPS also provides support to those families and friends who have been touched by suicide.

December 18, 2018

Parish organisations, local churches, schools, community groups and individuals all contributed to the blaze of light and colour, and did so with amazing creativity and individuality.

Donations from the Festival will benefit two local charities – Lurgan YMCA and PIPS Upper Bann, as well as the Parish. So far around £11,000 has been raised and the rector, Revd Mark Harvey, recently presented PIPS with a cheque for £2750.

On the Sunday morning, Bishop Ken Good, a former rector of Shankill, preached at a special Festival service at which the Parish launched 'Re-Imagining Shankill', a visionary plan that will lead into the 300th anniversary celebrations of the first church on the site in 2025.

'Only God could have taken us from where we were', Christians Against Poverty founder awarded CBE

John Kirkby has dedicated his CBE to staff and volunteers - past and present - at Christians Against Poverty (CAP), the charity he founded 22 years ago.

Prince Charles presented him with the Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire honour on behalf of the Queen during an investiture ceremony at Buckingham Palace.

December 18, 2018

Posting on Twitter afterwards, he said: "Only God could have taken us from where we were 26 years ago - in debt, lost, lonely and nothing to look forward to.

"Twenty-two years ago, CAP starts with £10 in our home office. Thanks everyone who has helped in any way, this is for us all."

Mr Kirkby described himself as being "absolutely bowled over" in June this year when he was named in Her Majesty's Birthday Honours list.

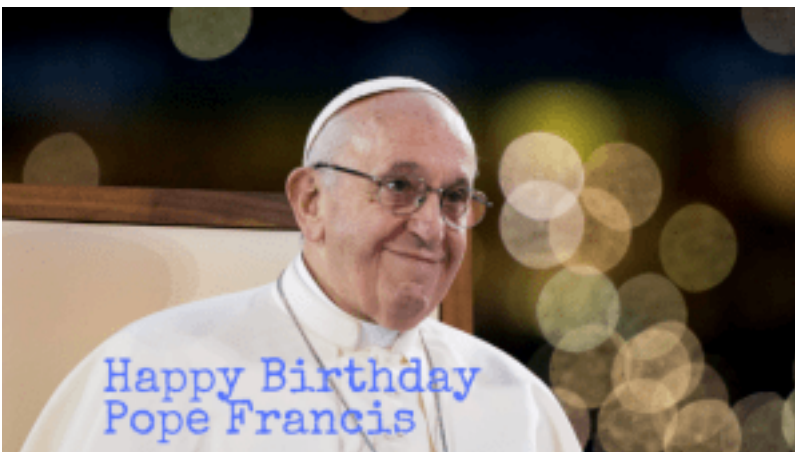


December 18, 2018



Since its inception in 1996, CAP has grown to open debt centres, jobs clubs for the unemployed and money management courses across the country.

Headquartered in Bradford, it has also expanded internationally - with operations in Australia, Canada and New Zealand.



Seven year old Eliza sent a special birthday message to Pope Francis

Seven year old Eliza Long from Dunboyne, Co Meath, Ireland, sent a special birthday message to Pope Francis for his 82nd birthday yesterday, Monday 17 December.

December 18, 2018

Eliza sang the *Happy Birthday* song to Pope Francis and thanked him for coming to Ireland this year for the World Meeting of Families 2018. Eliza took time out of a busy week at school where she has her nativity carol concert, to record the special message to Pope Francis. You may watch the video message here.

Urgent appeal launched after collapse of al-Ahli Arab Hospital Outpatient's Department in Gaza

The Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem, Suheil Dawani, has launched an urgent appeal for funds after the outpatients department of the diocese's al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza collapsed. The hospital's director, Mrs Suhaila Tarazi, reports that nobody was injured when the 120-year-old building collapsed because of environmental stress. The steel beams, roof decking, plaster ceiling, and surrounding walls caved into the room, before further collapsing into the basement below.

“If the facility had been occupied during that time, there might have been fatalities”, the Diocese of Jerusalem said. “Only by the grace of God was no one injured during this serious incident. Due to the sudden and catastrophic nature of this failure, Ahli Hospital patients, staff, and doctors had to be rushed out of the area and temporarily relocated to a safer and more secure place within the hospital's vicinity.

“Other Outpatient Clinic visitors were redirected to the Physiotherapy Department. Patients have continued to

December 18, 2018



receive treatment from healthcare professionals, though at a slower pace under these crowded and temporary conditions.”

The hospital’s consultant engineer and a construction team have assessed the damage and made recommendations for reconstruction. “Their findings provided useful insights about the deficiencies of the bar joists in the clinic that were manufactured between 1900 and the late 1950s, and still being used well after 1960”, the diocese said. “These were the chief culprits behind the catastrophic failure of the building – but so were the infrequent renovations, the latest occurring in 1993.

Archbishop Suheil has made an urgent appeal to supporters to contribute towards the estimated \$150,000 USD (approximately £119,000 GBP) cost of reconstruction “which

December 18, 2018

will allow the hospital to continue its charitable ministry with the many needy patients whom its doctors and staff serve each day", the diocese said.

People wishing to respond to the appeal can do so directly to the Diocese of Jerusalem or through a number of partners around the world:

[The Jerusalem and Middle East Church Association](#)

News links

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Northern Ireland business chief's fears over £2bn infrastructure projects stuck ... people who have their own agenda," the **Church of Ireland** cleric said.

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The video, which is being shared across social **media**, features a new ... Adrian Harris from the **Church of England** said: "The advert we've produced is ...

Bishops unite in prayer for nation after 'turbulent' week for Brexit

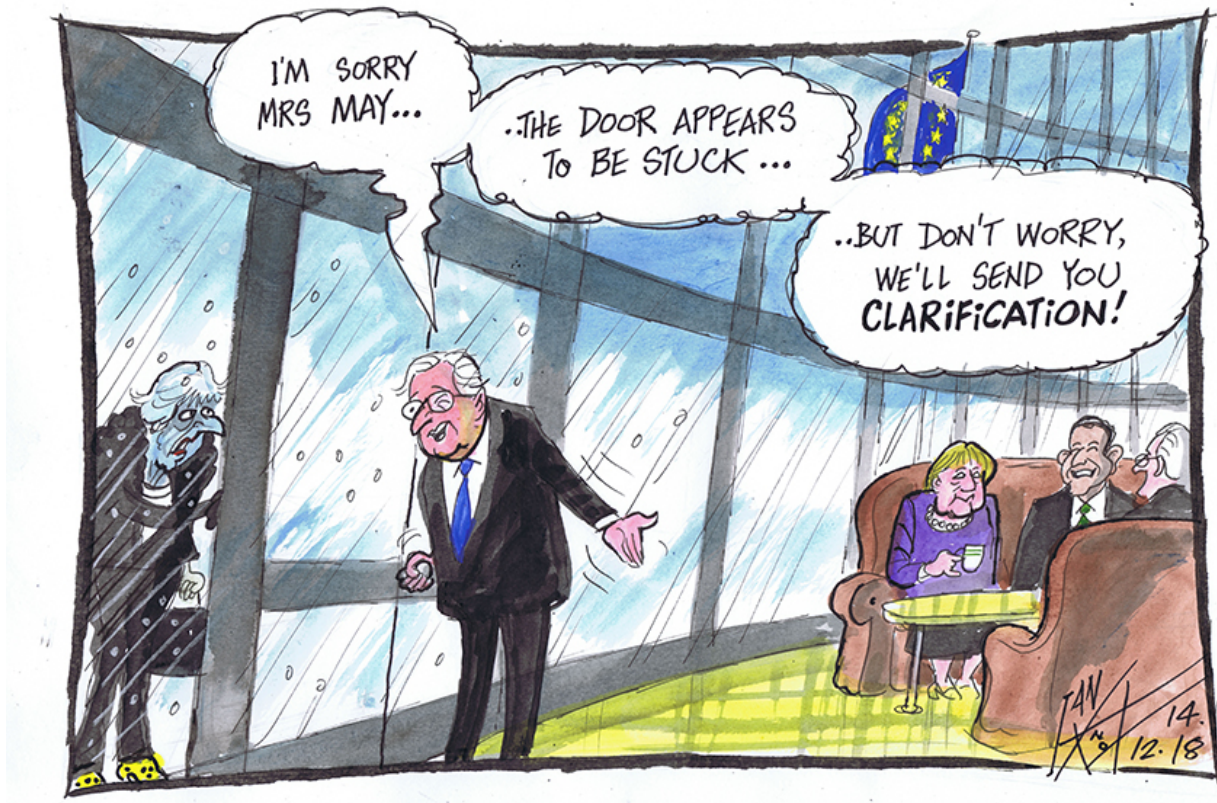
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Church of England bishops have issued an unusual joint statement, saying that they are praying for UK politicians and "national unity" following ...

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December 18, 2018



Above - Ian Knox in the Irish News

John Steinbeck's classic works were informed by his Presbyterian roots

<https://www.newsletter.co.uk/john-steinbeck-s-classic-works-were-informed-by-his-presbyterian-roots-1-8741527>

The son of the only member of the Irish Defence Forces murdered during the Troubles has called on senior figures within Sinn Fein to tell him why

<https://www.newsletter.co.uk/son-of-irish-soldier-murdered-by-ira-calls-on-sinn-fein-to-give-up-killers-1-8741596>

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December 18, 2018

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