



Image of the day - Confirmation in Bandon

Reports

EU blamed for ‘despicable’ stance on NI kosher imports

The EU’s failure to come forward with solutions to ensure Northern Ireland’s Jewish community can continue to receive British kosher food is “despicable”, Brandon Lewis has claimed.

With the UK continuing to push for a renegotiation of the province’s post-Brexit trading arrangements, the Northern Ireland Secretary said it was “fairly disgraceful” that solutions had not been found to address the community’s concerns. His intervention comes several months after Jewish leaders warned their traditions were under threat from the Northern Ireland Protocol, which requires the province to follow EU rules.

Under the protocol, British chilled meats are to be banned in Northern Ireland’s shops, a move that will also affect a number of Jewish products. There are also concerns that new paperwork requirements and customs controls on agrifoods at ports are putting off British producers from sending smaller volumes of product across the Irish Sea.

The EU has now agreed to a standstill arrangement while the two sides discuss permanent solutions, meaning the chilled meats ban and a range of other checks are suspended indefinitely.

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Maros Sefcovic, the European Commission vice president, has promised proposals but UK officials and ministers are frustrated at the lack of urgency.

Brussels has also warned it will not renegotiate the legal text of the protocol and reserves its rights to demand that additional red tape, currently suspended, be implemented.

Mr Lewis said: “To have the EU effectively saying to the Jewish community, ‘you can’t source your products in your own country’, is a pretty despicable place to be.”

Whitechurch Parish scoops gold award for biodiversity project

Whitechurch Parish in Dublin has become one of just a handful of parishes in Ireland to be presented with an Eco–Congregation Ireland Gold Award.

The award, which recognises the parish’s great efforts to improve biodiversity as well as mentoring another parish, was presented by Eco–Congregation Ireland chairperson, Canon Andrew Orr, yesterday evening (Monday September 13).

Whitechurch was the first Church of Ireland parish in the Republic to win an Eco–Congregation award in 2010. Since then the church grounds have been transformed into a pollinator friendly area for bees and butterflies and bat boxes have been installed in some trees. They have been following the recommendations contained in the All–Ireland



Canon Andrew Orr, chairperson of Eco–Congregation Ireland, presents the Gold Award to Canon Horace McKinley, Pam Sheil and Reg Richards of Whitechurch Parish.

Pollinator Plan 2015–2020 and 75% of their planting is pollinator friendly.

Members of the parish joined two neighbouring Roman Catholic parishes in a study of Pope Francis’s encyclical ‘Laudato Si’ and parish representatives have also attended lectures and seminars on biodiversity. A weekly crew of volunteers assist Reg Richards in tending the church grounds with much reduced grass cutting and last April 26 square metres of the churchyard was planted with wildflowers. The parish Eco–Congregation representative, Pam Sheil, keeps parishioners up to date on developments while the Rector, Canon Horace McKinley, has put an emphasis, through preaching and liturgical opportunities, on the core values of the Eco–Congregation programme.



The grass cutters - the volunteers who keep the grounds of Whitechurch looking fantastic

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Part of the conditions to be met to achieve the Gold Award include that a parish mentor another parish as members embark on their Eco–Congregation journey. Whitechurch is mentoring Nun’s Cross, Killiskey, as they take their first steps to improve biodiversity in their church grounds.

Presenting the award, Canon Orr congratulated the team in Whitechurch and praised the work in the grounds. “It is so important to do this kind of work. We all know about climate change... but we can also do much to improve biodiversity,” he said.

He gave stark statistics on the loss of biodiversity on the planet. Ninety percent of all large animals on earth are human beings or their domestic animals and 70% of birds in the world are poultry. This represents a staggering loss of diversity, he stated. “That’s why doing things like improving the biodiversity of a church yard is so important. So many insects depend on it,” he said adding that a great chain of life depends on insects. Canon Orr encouraged gardeners to leave a patch of their garden unmowed to improve biodiversity rather than continuing the obsession with neatly trimmed lawns.

To obtain an Eco–Congregation award a parish must focus on four areas: parochial, liturgical, working with the local community and linking with the global community. The Gold Award can be obtained when a parish continues and diversifies their efforts but also mentors another parish. Whitechurch is the fourth parish to be presented with the Eco–Congregation Ireland gold award and the first to be presented in person as the others were made virtually.

Canon McKinley paid tribute to Pam Sheil for encouraging the parish to get involved with Eco–Congregation over 10 years ago. He also thanked Reg Richards who, he said, never lost the vision of what they were trying to achieve.

“Since Covid restrictions there has been a completely new social phenomenon here. Huge numbers of walkers have emerged and have been using Whitechurch Road. Many have wandered in and have complimented the grounds,” the Rector stated.

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Visiting from Nun's Cross Church, Stella Mew, said it had been a great pleasure to be mentored by Whitechurch. "One of the wonderful things about Eco-Congregation is that it is parochial but there is also outreach. It does make a difference when we can bring people together to see what we can do... We hope to put in a wild flower area, which we will document to encourage others," she commented.

Reg Richards acknowledged the great help he had received from parishioners who volunteered to help with grass cutting and hedge clipping every Saturday.



Bishop to the Armed Forces appointed

Lambeth Palace has announced that the Bishop of St Germans, the Rt Revd Hugh Nelson will take over the role of Bishop to the UK's Armed Forces in September.

Bishop Hugh will be formally licensed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, during a meeting of the

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College of Bishops in Oxford on September 20.

Bishop Hugh is taking over from Bishop Tim Thornton, Bishop at Lambeth, who is retiring after four years in the post.

This new post will be in addition to Bishop Hugh's role as Bishop of St Germans in the Diocese of Truro. Bishop Hugh was consecrated as Bishop of St Germans in July 2020.

Bishop Hugh said: "It is an honour to take up this role supporting the Chaplains of the three services as they provide pastoral, spiritual and practical care to the men and women of the Armed Forces. Their work, often in difficult and dangerous situations, is a crucial part of the ministry of the Church of England and I very much look forward to being involved as Bishop to the Armed Forces."

Read more here: <https://trurodiocese.org.uk/>

UCLA rowing scholarship for Belfast parishioner

Congratulations to eighteen-year-old Giselle Coulter, a member of St Stephen's Parish, Belfast, who is off to the USA this week on a four-year rowing scholarship at UCLA in Los Angeles.

Giselle has enjoyed great success on the international rowing circuit in recent weeks, picking up a gold medal in the Women's Junior Irish double at the Ireland Championships in Cork in August, and winning a silver



International rower Giselle Coulter, second from right, with her sister Claudia and parents Elaine and John.

medal for Ireland in the Women's Quadruple sculls at the Coupe de la Jeunesse 2021 in Linz, Austria.

A past pupil of Methodist College Belfast, Giselle's connection with St Stephen's goes back several generations, and she has been a regular attender at both parish and diocesan events including the parish youth fellowship Shine and Connor Youth Council, which she has been involved in for four years.

Giselle speaks about her rowing and her faith in the autumn issue of Connor Connections which will be available in parishes next month.

News briefs

50th anniversary of ordination

The Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory conveyed congratulations to The Very Reverend Leslie Forrest on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his ordination as priest in the Church of Ireland.

He was ordained priest on the twelfth of

September 1971 in St. Eunan's Cathedral Raphoe. He retired as Dean of Ferns in February 2011 but is still active and encouraging to all. Congratulations!

Bishop Michael Burrowes preached at the special service in St Mary's Church, Enniscorthy yesterday, Sunday 12th September, to mark this special occasion, and also read out a letter of congratulations and good wishes for Leslie from President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins.





Welcome and Introduction to Raphoe parish

The Rev Alan McCracken came face to face with his new parishioners for the first time as Bishop's Curate of the Parishes of Moville Upper and Lower, Donagh, Cloncha and Culdaff, at a Service of Welcome and Introduction led by the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Andrew Forster.

The Rural Dean for Inishowen and Diocesan Registrar, Rev Canon David Crooks, provoked laughter from the congregation in St Columb's Church in Moville when he described the Rathcoole man as the most northerly priest in the diocese, "so probably the closest to God".

Rev McCracken was joined in church on Saturday afternoon by his wife, Karen, his mother Rita, and members of the wider family for a Service attended by clergy from the local Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches.

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Addressing his congregation for the first time as their Bishop's Curate, Rev McCracken said he was there in Moville, Greencastle, Carndonagh, Culdaff and Malin to build and to grow the Church.



Opening events of Derry International Choir Festival

Tickets on sale now! Get your tickets now for the Opening Gala Concert; The Voyage and Tenebrae. in-person concerts have limited seating this year so don't leave it too long before you book. All live events have been carefully planned within Covid-19 guidelines and risk assessments.

For further information on events see - <https://www.derrychoirfest.com/tickets/>
Visit milleniumforum.co.uk to book tickets or call their box office on 028 7126 4455.

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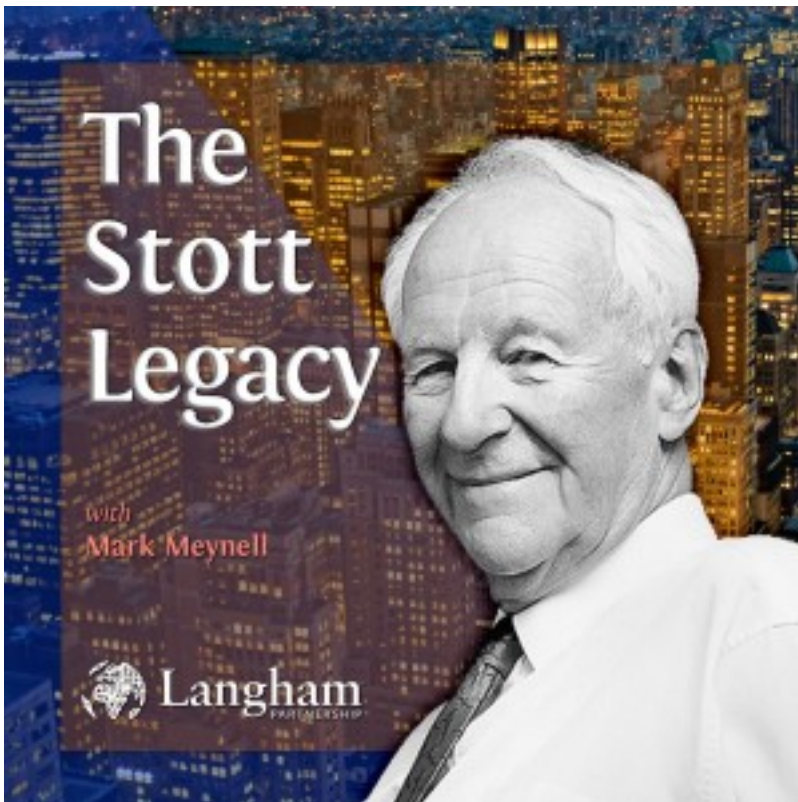
Please get in touch if you have any queries or concerns before booking.

Direct ticket links:

Tenebrae Tickets: <https://bit.ly/3hhQ0kk>

The Voyage Tickets: <https://bit.ly/3C0LDIy>

Books, Broadcasts, Resources, and Webinars



Jeremy Vine on The Stott Legacy podcast

BBC broadcaster Jeremy Vine gave a warm and entertaining account of his memories of John Stott for Episode 10 of The Stott Legacy podcast.

Jeremy Vine is a veteran journalist who started out in local radio and newspaper reporting. He was for several years the BBC Africa correspondent based in Johannesburg, and has since become very familiar, as presenter of flagship programmes like BBC's Newsnight and Panorama. He currently juggles hosting two daily broadcasts, one on BBC Radio 2 and the

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other on Channel 5 TV. This is quite apart from the fun he has hosting quiz show Eggheads.

But most significantly he knew John Stott well when starting out on his career, having attended All Souls, Langham Place as a young graduate. He counts John Stott as one of his heroes and even visited John in the last weeks of his life. Jeremy admired John's simple lifestyle and humble preaching style. His memoir is 'It's All News To Me' (Simon & Shuster, 2013)

Listen online, and share with your friends!

<https://uk.langham.org/jeremy-vine-on-the-stott-legacy-podcast/>

New resources for youth

Over the past year, Connor Diocesan Youth Officer Christina Baillie has been busy developing several new resources for use with young people in parishes.

Pursuit has been developed in partnership with Love For Life and supported by funding from the Church of Ireland Priorities Fund. This resource encourages young people to pursue character traits which will shape them to reflect God and have a positive impact upon all their relationships.

Each participant will get a workbook and there is a separate Leader's Guide to help leaders deliver the sessions. Copies are free and you can get yours by contacting Christina.

Another new resource is The Jesus Sessions, developed by Christina along with Ava Jordan-Curasi (Youth and



Children's Ministry Co-ordinator, Banbridge Parish) and Tim Burns (Diocesan Youth Officer in Down and Dromore).

Christina said: "This is an eight-session guide which gives a foundation to look at the life and ministry of Jesus. The resource looks at themes like fullness of life, Jesus' justice and generosity. The Jesus Sessions is a pdf Leaders Guide and can be accessed on the Connor and Down & Dromore diocesan web sites.

"The Jesus Session and Pursuit have been designed to support leaders to have access to high-quality engaging resources which equip leaders to disciple young people. These resources can be adapted to your own context."

Recent book on Reformation Anglican worship

Reformation Anglican Worship: Experiencing Grace, Expressing Gratitude, by Michael P. Jensen, Crossway, 190pp:

"The author boldly states that his conviction is that the theological commitments of Cranmer and the other English

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Reformers had, and still have, seminal significance for Anglicans and that theology of this period has often been disregarded in a more cavalier fashion. The spirit of the Reformers, and indeed to orthodox Christian faith is that nothing be “repugnant to the Word of God.”

That was crucial for Cranmer as a liturgist. He was a genuinely theological liturgist, who sought to enshrine a particular gospel by means of his revision of English worship.

Is there anything distinctive about a Reformation Anglican view of Christian worship? It was Martin Luther who pioneered the idea that Christian worship was not about what people did for God, but about what God did for the people. The characteristic pre-Reformation notion of worship had been precisely the opposite—namely, that the people gathered in order for the priest to offer a sacrifice to God on their behalf. But when the people came together under the influence of the Reformers, it was to hear the proclamation of the gospel through which God would work in people’s hearts and minds.

Reformation Anglican worship today is grounded in a specific set of theological convictions about (a) how human beings come to know God in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and (b) how gatherings of believers ought to be ordered.



Poem for today

The Sofa by Medbh McGuckian

Do not be angry if I tell you
your letter stayed unopened on my table
for several days. If you were friend enough
to believe me, I was about to start writing
at any moment; my mind was savagely made up,
like a serious sofa moved
under a north window. My heart, alas,

is not the calmest of places.

Still it is not my heart that needs replacing:

and my books seem real enough to me,
my disasters, my surrenders, all my loss. . . .

Since I was child enough to forget
that you loathe poetry, you ask for some—
about nature, greenery, insects, and, of course,

the sun—surely that would be to open
an already open window? To celebrate
the impudence of flowers? If I could
interest you instead in his large, gentle stares,
how his soft shirt is the inside of pleasure
to me, why I must wear white for him,
imagine he no longer trembles

when I approach, no longer buys me
flowers for my name day. . . . But I spread
on like a house, I begin to scatter

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to a tiny to-and-fro at odds
with the wear on my threshold. Somewhere
a curtain rising wonders where I am,
my books sleep, pretending to forget me.



Pointers for prayer & Speaking to the Soul

On CNI in a separate post today

