

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Bible Buddies

September 23, 2023

Image of the day

Bible Buddies

The Bible Buddies packs being enjoyed by the children of St Dorothea's Church, Gilnahirk at their recent Messy Church and Sunday Clubs. See

today's "Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books" section of CNI today on page below.



People and places

New Warden for Pioneer Ministries

Revd Mark Lennox, Rector of Donaghacloney, has accepted Bishop David's invitation to become the Down & Dromore diocesan Warden for Pioneer Ministries.



Mark will work alongside Bishop McClay to oversee and support the development of church planting and pioneer ministries within the diocese.

Mark says that one of his strongest gifts is that of evangelism. “I love the Lord and I am passionate about sharing the Gospel with others. There is nothing better than seeing people draw closer and experience all that God has for them, and I have always been interested in exploring new ways of sharing the Gospel message with others.

“I believe that mission should be at the heart of all our decisions and activities. Chris Wright wrote: ‘It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world, as that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church; the church was made for mission – God’s mission.’

“I look forward to drawing alongside and supporting those who have been called to develop these new and exciting ministries. For a long time, the Church of Ireland has talked about the need to explore new ways of doing ministry, so



St Matthew's Shankill and St John's Falls inter parish group after the celebration event in St Anne's Cathedral on Thursday night to mark International Day of Peace

now that it is actually happening on the ground, I am excited and delighted to be asked to be a part of it.”

“Utterly reckless” to water down climate policies says Christian Aid

Responding to the reported changes to Net Zero policies by the Government, Christian Aid's Head of UK Advocacy and Campaigns, Jennifer Larbie, said:

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“People on the front line of the climate crisis have been waiting decades for polluting nations like the UK to take action on climate change. And yet Rishi Sunak is preparing to water down these future targets.

"Deadlines spur action and pushing them back will see the UK heap further pain on people suffering from devastating drought in East Africa or killer storms in the Pacific. The UK has the 8th largest historical emissions in the world, that means, as a country, we have contributed more to the climate crisis than most.

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SCAN TO BOOK

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"By undermining our climate commitments Sunak is showing a woeful disregard for the world's most vulnerable people. It's utterly reckless."



Churches presence at National Ploughing Championships

All the main churches served and were seen at the recent National Ploughing Championships which



Two photos above - Bishop of Cashel Ferns and Ossory clergy and parishioners at C of I stand

continued to attract participants and visitors despite the most inclement weather which flooded several areas and roads.

Presbyterian Moderator, Right Reverend Dr Sam Mawhinney was in, County Laois on September 20,



Methodist President above left, at his church's stand

supporting the work of the Church at the National Ploughing Methodist President above left, at his church's stand Championships.



Dr Mawhinney (above) joined volunteers to welcome

people to the Presbyterian stand – and it brought back some happy memories for him.

Organised by the all-Ireland denomination's three regional presbyteries, which are located in the Republic of Ireland – the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster, along with the Presbytery of Monaghan and the Donegal part of the of Derry and Donegal Presbytery – the Church has had a presence at the event since 2016, when the Championships came to Tullamore in County Offaly.

Speaking about his visit, Dr Mawhinney said, “Growing up in Ballycastle on the north coast, my father had a small holding of about 27 acres, which he farmed part-time. He loved to plough with horses and tractors and took part in competitions. While he didn't reach the Nationals, I have fond memories of watching him working the land we had, and going to the competitions.”

The minister of Adelaide Road Presbyterian in Dublin continued, “When I was minister in Fermoy and Cahir, the first congregations I was called to in Cork and Tipperary, Karen and I would often have taken our boys to the National Ploughing Championships. I have really enjoyed spending time at them again, seeing my colleagues on the Presbyterian Strand as they witness for Jesus, watching some of the competition, and visiting the other stands as well.”

Last year, according to the Championship organisers, the three-day event attracted 277,000 people. The Minister of Tullamore Presbyterian Church, Rev William Hayes, has been involved in the team organising the stand ever since

the Nationals came to County Offaly. One of the largest outdoor events in Europe, it takes place across 900 acres, with 25 miles of walkways, and 1700 trade stalls. “It has gone really well, with lots of good conversations in the tent, which has been pretty solidly filled. We are delighted that Dr Mawhinney could join us,” Mr Hayes said.

“The thinking behind the stand is very simple. We offer a place to rest weary legs on a chair, or comfy sofa, a free cup of tea or coffee, a biscuit or two, and a listening ear. The formula certainly seems to work if the hundreds of tea bags that we get through each year is anything to go by! Conversations range from the friendly and superficial, “How far have you come today?” through to, “What type of church is a Presbyterian Church?” and on into the profound, “What do I need to do to be right with God? If desired, it is always a privilege to pray with people.”

Mr Hayes continued, “In previous years we have had a number of lulls in the day, this year, however, it has been almost constant. I am never surprised at the genuine spiritual hunger people have, especially among young people. Ireland may be becoming a secular nation, but that hunger, that thirst is out there.”

“It is an exhausting time of evangelism and outreach for everyone on the stand, but we hope and pray that every conversation, every act of hospitality and every New Testament, or piece of gospel literature taken away would, through God’s Sovereign Grace, “fall on good soil and produce a crop a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown,” as Matthew’s gospel tells us,” Mr Hayes said.

Archbishops of Armagh call for Lough Neagh task force to 'avert disaster'

The two Archbishops of Armagh have called for a task force to be established in a bid to help protect Ireland's largest freshwater lake.

In a joint statement, Catholic Archbishop Eamon Martin and Church of Ireland Archbishop John McDowell appealed for "focused action" on saving the environment of Lough Neagh and those who depend on it.

In their statement, issued on Tuesday, the archbishops said they "share the grave concerns, expressed by many, about the future of our beautiful and precious Lough Neagh".

"This impressive body of water – the largest freshwater lake in these islands – is facing a dire threat from toxic blue-green algae," they said.

"Collectively, we are endangering a natural asset that provides water to hundreds of thousands of families across Northern Ireland, sustains diverse fish varieties, supports wildlife and offers employment opportunities to thousands of people across the area.

"Last week representatives of our churches visited Lough Neagh and heard from some of those who live and work around it – people who love the Lough and enjoy it for all its recreational facilities, and others who depend on the Lough for their livelihoods and for fishing.

"In recent days, we have heard words of reassurance from those charged with protecting Lough Neagh.

"Still, the algae bloom persists and poses a real threat to livestock, pets and humans.

"It is indiscriminate in nature and a blight on the natural landscape and ecosystem."

Calling for a task force to be set up, the clerics said they believe "we are facing an environmental disaster and, as church leaders, we worry that the issue is not being given the priority it deserves".

"Before Lough Neagh approaches the point of no return, a collective examination of the causes and development of a robust plan to save this unique and ancient ecosystem is needed," they added.

"Each one of us is called to be a custodian and a steward of creation, we all share a collective responsibility to safeguard the beauty and wellbeing of our natural surroundings and must maintain and preserve the Lough for future generations to enjoy.

"We cannot take it for granted.

"Our primary concern is that the response is too slow and is tied up in multi-agency bureaucracy. Whilst multiple stakeholders debate the remit of responsibility, Lough Neagh and those who live near and around it suffer.

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"There is a clear need for decisive leadership. We must identify the causes of pollution and devise an action plan capable of arresting the decline.

"Lough Neagh ought to be the jewel in our tourism and recreational crown and not a danger to life, flora and fauna.

"We will not be forgiven for our inaction or inability to come up with workable solutions.

"Our appeal is that a task force comprised of experts and relevant agencies be formed immediately and instructed to submit a report outlining procedures and actions required to avert a disaster within a short timeframe."

Preparation for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025

A Meeting has been held to prepare materials for 2025 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

From 11 to 15 September, an international committee jointly sponsored by the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity (DPCU) and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches (WCC) met at the monastery of Bose near Magnano in Piedmont, Italy to finalise the texts and prayers for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2025. The drafting of the materials had been entrusted to the brothers and sisters of the monastic community of Bose by the WCC and the DPCU.

The year 2025 marks the 1,700th anniversary of the first Christian Ecumenical Council, held in Nicaea, near Constantinople in 325. This commemoration provides a unique opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the common faith of Christians, as expressed in the Creed formulated during this Council. The materials prepared for the 2025 Week of Prayer invite congregations and individuals to draw on this shared heritage and to enter more deeply into the faith that unites all Christians. It is with this in mind that the guiding biblical text for the week, John 11:17-27, was chosen. The theme for the week, “Do you believe this?” (v. 26), comes from the dialogue between Jesus and Martha when Jesus visited the home of Martha and Mary in Bethany following the death of their brother Lazarus. The proposed Ecumenical Celebration of the Word of God during the Week of Prayer is centred on the meaning of believing and the affirmation of faith, both personal and communal, while the texts provided for reflection on each of the eight days highlight in turn key statements of the Nicene Creed.

Bose is a community of monks and nuns seeking God in obedience to the Gospel and living in fraternal communion and celibacy. Established in 1968, Bose has from the beginning been both a mixed community and an ecumenical one, with Christians belonging to different churches among the first to take vows in 1973. The life of the brothers and sisters at Bose is a cenobitic one, built on prayer and work, in order to accomplish their one real “work”: believing and living in the One whom God has sent, Jesus Christ.

The meeting was chaired jointly by the World Council of Churches programme executive for Spiritual Life and for

Faith and Order, Revd Dr Mikie Roberts, and Fr Martin Browne OSB, official of the Western Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity.

News reports

Composer writes new tune for beloved carol for Church of England's Christmas theme

This Christmas, the Church of England is inviting choirs across churches, schools and communities to “join the song” alongside one of the country’s leading choral composers in a new interpretation of the beloved carol “The First Nowell” with a brand new melody.

The new carol has been written by acclaimed composer Bob Chilcott and is the centerpiece of this year’s Church of England Christmas focus: Follow The Star: Join The Song. The theme for 2023 highlights how singing can help draw people closer to God and one another through the journey from Advent to Epiphany, with a wealth of free resources available for churches, schools and any context.

The carol is published by Oxford University Press and features as part of OUP’s new edition of the favorite series, Carols for Choirs 6. Free sheet music and learning tracks may be downloaded via the Church of England’s Church Resource Hub (new users need to set up a free account).



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Choirs keen to be involved will have access to a suite of learning tracks, sheet music and other resources to help them prepare and learn the new carol alongside other resources to help churches engage in this year's theme. These can all be downloaded for free from the Church Resource Hub. [Link below](#).

A free webinar is also being planned to help people to get the most from the resources and understand how to take part.

Bob Chilcott is a composer, conductor, and singer, whose career in choral music began as a chorister and choral scholar in the choir of King's College, Cambridge, after which he sang for 12 years as a member of the world-famous King's Singers ensemble. He became a full-time composer in 1997, and has produced a large catalogue of music for all types of choirs. His most often performed pieces include Can you hear me?, A Little Jazz Mass, Requiem, and the St John Passion and his music has been widely recorded by leading British choirs and groups including The King's Singers, King's College, Cambridge, The Sixteen, Tenebrae and The BBC Singers.

Speaking about the new carol, Bob Chilcott said: "It's been an absolute thrill for me to be able to write new music for the well-known carol, 'The First Nowell,' and to be a part of the 'Follow the Star' campaign at Christmas 2023. I have aimed to make this melody easy to pick up and I hope all will enjoy singing it, at a time of year when the joy of singing is so central to worship and to the celebration of Christmas."

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York write: "Singing is central to how many of us celebrate Christmas. Around the country – and the world – young and old will gather in churches, schools and concert halls, on high streets, hospital wards and village greens, to hear and sing carols.

"As we gather in worship this Christmas and join the song of the angels, may we all be drawn deeper into the wonder and

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the truth of Christmas: in the birth of Jesus, God becomes human, heaven embraces earth.”

[\[https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/renowned-composer-thrilled-write-christmas-carol-church-englands-2023\]](https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/renowned-composer-thrilled-write-christmas-carol-church-englands-2023)

Archbishop Gallagher addresses UN forum on sustainable development

On September 19, 2023, Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States and International Organizations of the Holy See, addressed the Sixth Leaders' Dialogue at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which focused on "Mobilizing finance and investments and the means of implementation for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) achievement".

In his remarks, Archbishop Gallagher echoed Pope Francis in describing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as "an important sign of hope". At the halfway point to 2030, Archbishop Gallagher called on the international community to delivery on such hope with "concrete action to address the greatest challenges of our time", including the "pervasive throwaway culture in the name of which, persons are no longer seen as a paramount value to be cared for and respected".

In the face of such challenges, Archbishop Gallagher stressed the importance of "committing to and delivering on a new model of development that has the human person at

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its centre, is geared towards the common good, and grounded in ethical principles of justice, solidarity, and shared responsibility". Achieving such an end, he said, depends on the international community's commitment to multilateralism as an expression of solidarity.

Link to the full text of the statement at -
[<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/48051>]

In the media

Clergy in Londonderry overwhelmed by drug abuse bereavement

BBC News - A priest in Londonderry has said he and fellow clerics have been overwhelmed by the number of families bereaved through drug abuse.

It follows a BBC Spotlight investigation into the scale of the drug problem in the north west.

The mothers of two young people who died after taking extra-strength pills told the programme of their heartache.

Fr Joe Gormley, who is the priest at Holy Family Parish in Ballymagroarty, said the drug problem is getting worse.

Speaking to BBC Radio Foyle's The North West Today, Fr Gormley said that "maybe about 40 to 45% of the deaths that we attend as priests is related to drug and alcohol abuse".



Derry responds to change 1

"That is a huge figure, it's an epidemic," he said.

"I have been a priest in the city since 1997 and I have seen the rate of it going up and up.

"Throughout society so many people's lives are being ruined by drugs, irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds.

"Many people are looking for quick solutions or looking for something that is going to alleviate pressure or pain.

"Young people on a night out can make just one wrong decision and that can then lead them down a road of



Derry responds to change 2

destructive behaviour for themselves and destructive behaviour for others."

King Charles calls for action to step up fight against climate change

Daily Telegraph - The King became the first British monarch to deliver a speech at the French senate as he called for action to step up the fight against climate change. His

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Majesty urged the assembled politicians and dignitaries to not just “cherish and nurture our Entente Cordiale”, the landmark treaty of 1904 that helped thaw cross-Channel relations, but build upon it with more action to protect the planet.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/royal-family/2023/09/21/king-charles-queen-camilla-live-france-visit-paris-latest/>

Lough Neagh: Stormont warns it would take 20 years to make water safe

Belfast Telegraph - Lough Neagh will remain seriously polluted for 20 years, even if we cut emissions — which are still increasing.

Stormont officials set out gloomy prognosis for the source of 40% of NI’s drinking water, but defend policies which have worsened its pollution.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/environment/lough-neagh-will-remain-seriously-polluted-for-20-years-even-if-we-cut-emissions-which-are-still-increasing/a543011981.html>

Alarm over ‘fascist-like’ protest at Ireland’s seat of government

The Guardian - Ireland is reviewing security around the seat of government after aggressive protests in Dublin that trapped lawmakers, ended with 13 arrests and were condemned by the country’s leadership as “wrong” and “fascist-like”.

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The Oireachtas, Ireland's legislature, was put into a virtual lockdown for hours on Wednesday by a small but abusive group of about 200 people.

The protesters threatened staff and journalists and erected a mock gallows covered with photos of politicians from across the spectrum.

The crowd was apparently united not so much by a cause – their messages included Covid conspiracy theories, anti-immigration messages and attacks on transgender rights – as by a willingness to use aggression in a bid to shut down the heart of Ireland's democracy.

[https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/sep/21/alarm-over-fascist-like-protest-at-irelands-seat-of-government?](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/sep/21/alarm-over-fascist-like-protest-at-irelands-seat-of-government?CMP=share_btn_link)

[CMP=share_btn_link](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/sep/21/alarm-over-fascist-like-protest-at-irelands-seat-of-government?CMP=share_btn_link)

Poland will no longer send weapons to Ukraine, says PM, as grain dispute escalates

The Guardian - Poland, one of Ukraine's staunchest allies, has announced an end to its arms transfers to the country, a day after President Volodymyr Zelenskiy accused Warsaw of playing into Russia's hands by banning Ukrainian grain imports.

Poland is one of Kyiv's main weapons suppliers and has been one of the loudest cheerleaders for the Ukrainian cause since the full-scale invasion began in February 2022, but relations have soured over recent days amid the growing row over grain.

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The argument has led to heated rhetoric between the two countries on the sidelines of the UN general assembly, with the Polish president, Andrzej Duda, comparing Ukraine to “a drowning person clinging to anything available”.

On Wednesday, the Polish prime minister, Mateusz Morawiecki, said his country had decided to prioritise its own defence in the future. “We are no longer transferring weapons to Ukraine because we are now arming Poland with more modern weapons,” he said.

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/sep/21/poland-stop-ukraine-weapons-supply-grain-exports-dispute?CMP=share_btn_link

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books



Bible Buddies packs

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What a joy to see the Bible Buddies packs being enjoyed by the children of St Dorothea's Church, Gilnahirk at their recent Messy Church and Sunday Clubs. The Buddies even got a sparkly bag with their new name to help them feel extra special. Each family was also given a brand new Bible thanks to the generosity of parishioners who sponsored the cost.

If you've held a Bible Buddy adoption day the C of I children's and families ministries would love to see the pictures! (And so would CNI) So many unique buddies exploring God's word around the country now. Find all the packs and the app link on the resources page of the cfm website or click here for the Heroes Of Faith pack:
<https://cfm.ireland.anglican.org/heroes-of-faith/>

[Archbishop Eamon Martin on Synodality on YouTube](#)

On YouTube Archbishop Eamon highlights the importance of prayer for the Synod on Synodality as we "explore a new way of being Church while remaining faithful to the Church's tradition and teaching".

See full interview - <https://youtu.be/8BYz7zIN0bA>

[Pulling out all the stops in Songs of Praise](#)

Ever wondered what happens when you actually pull out all the stops? Find out with organ star Anna Lapwood on Songs of Praise Sunday 1.15 BBCOne
<http://bbc.in/3KACBA2>

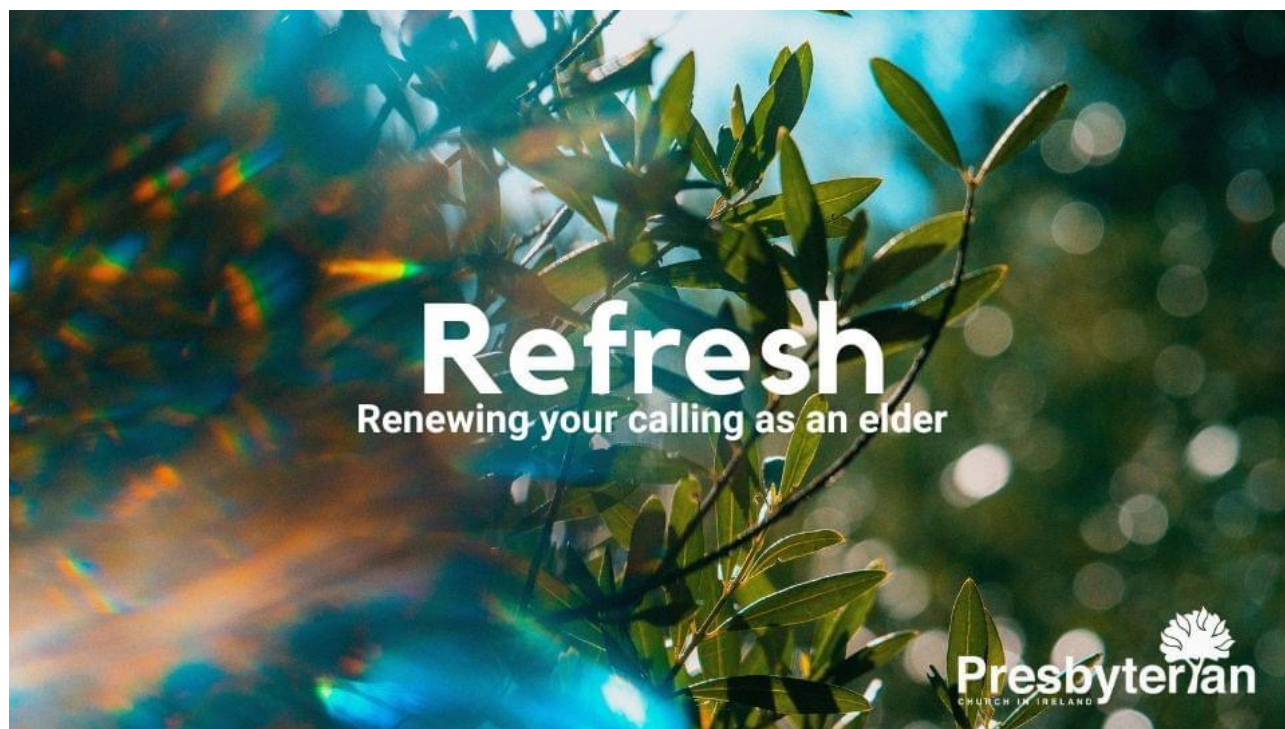
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Benburb Priory St Peregrine Mass online

St Peregrine Mass will be celebrated by Fr Colm McGlynn on Monday 2 October 2023 at 8.00pm. Everyone welcome.

You can also join online:

<https://mcnmedia.tv/camera/the-servite-priory-benburb>



Attention all Elders - Refresh Evenings

Refresh evenings offer an opportunity for elders to come together to be renewed and refreshed in fulfilling the calling of eldership. Whether you have been an elder for a long time, or have been elected recently to the role, come along to be encouraged, envisioned and equipped for leadership in your congregation in the next season of church life.

Refresh will take place from 7.45 to 9.15 pm at the following locations.

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📍 Thursday, 19 October 2023 (in person event): Union Road, Magherafelt

📍 Thursday, 9 November 2023 (in person event and live stream): Assembly Buildings, Belfast

📍 Thursday, 14 March 2024 (in person event): Second Limavady Presbyterian

To book a space, click here:

www.presbyterianireland.org/refreshforelders

To watch a video explaining the evenings further, visit:

<https://vimeo.com/860148699>

Poem for today

Canal Bank Walk by Patrick Kavanagh

“Leafy-with-love banks and the green waters of the canal
Pouring redemption for me, that I do
The will of God, wallow in the habitual, the banal,
Grow with nature again as before I grew.
The bright stick trapped, the breeze adding a third
Party to the couple kissing on an old seat,
And a bird gathering materials for the nest for the Word
Eloquently new and abandoned to its delirious beat.
O unworn world enrapture me, encapture me in a web
Of fabulous grass and eternal voices by a beech,
Feed the gaping need of my senses, give me ad lib
To pray unselfconsciously with overflowing speech
For this soul needs to be honoured with a new dress woven
From green and blue things and arguments that cannot be
proven.”

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at houstonmckelvey@mac.com