

# Church News Ireland



Image of the day – New Easter window

April 3, 2024

## Image of the day



### **New Easter window**

**On Sunday morning there was a very special service in Lisbellaw.**

“Not only did we mark the joy of the Resurrection but we also witnessed Bishop Ian dedicate a beautiful new stained glass window in loving memory of Mrs Jean McElroy, Mr Billy Graham and Mrs Jane Packham.



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“It was great to welcome so many of their family members and friends, a number of whom took part in the service and of course it was lovely as always to have with us, Bishop Ian (Ellis of Clogher diocese) and his wife Heather.

‘To God be the Glory.’

## News

### Easter celebrations review part 2



**Cleenish Centre**

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Absolutely brilliant Dawn service at Cleenish Centre. So lovely to see new folks coming along to celebrate. He is not here He has risen” just as he said” Matthew Ch 28 v 6  
No better Day to experience the promises and presence of the Risen Christ.

## St Andrew’s Colin, Derriaghy Parish

Outdoor communion the crest of northern slope of the Lagan Valley is a long-established practice.



On a clear day the vista covers Belfast Lough, East Belfast, the Lagan Valley and the Mourne Mountains.



## Antrim churches' pilgrimage

The pilgrims made their established visits to the different churches participating

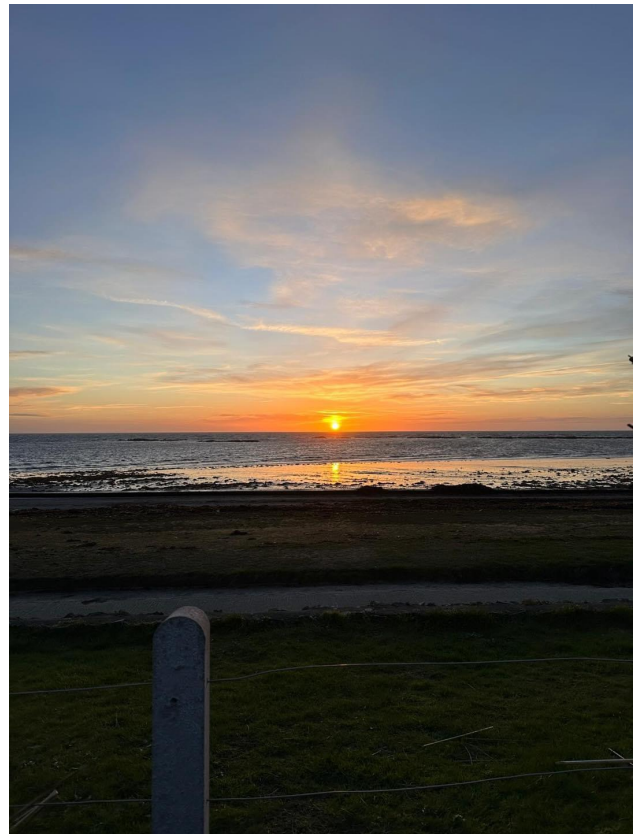


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## Christ Church Carrowdore

Dawn Service in Millisle Community Garden - great gathering from local churches and visitors

## Easter Morning Sunrise. Christ Church, Bray



## Christ Church Derriaghy...



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A big thank you to the ladies from craic 'n' craft for knitting these beautiful chicks that lay creme eggs for everyone.

### **St Patrick's Church, Castle Archdale on Easter Sunday.**

Thank you to all the decorators, organist Billy, reader Bobby, minister of the chalice Alison, churchwardens Bryan & Derek and the members of the singing group.



### **Holy Trinity Westport**

Easter Monday mini-pilgrimage to Inishbiggle. A perfect day in wonderful company - human and divine! Thanks to everyone and "thanks be to God for his indescribable gift" which we reflected upon during our celebration of Easter Holy Communion.

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## Dundrum Churches Together

Yesterday, Good Friday, Dundrum Churches Together completed a Way of the Cross pilgrimage around the seven churches in the Dundrum area. Balally, Dundrum Methodist,



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Ballinteer, Meadowbrook, St Nahi's, Holy Cross and Christ Church Taney. A wonderful afternoon.



## Bishops Spouses' Network an important space

**It is good to see the Spouses' Network (bishops' spouses) meeting online for prayer, Bible study and discussion. The Spouses' Network has been established since the Lambeth Conference in 2022.**

Lizzie Jeanes, a volunteer on the Spouses' Network said: "It has been a delight to see the Spouses' Network running a series of online meetings. Gathering with our sisters and brothers around the world provides an important space for

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prayer, friendship and community, as together we explore important themes in our Christian life.”

Read the full article: [#Anglicans](https://bit.ly/3SVA2hP)



## April 1 style and appearance winner is Ecclesiastical Sewing

Ecclesiastical Sewing said, “Today April 1st we’re proud to announce a new line of vestments geared toward our canine friends! If successful we will be launch a feline and equus to follow!”



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**The Organ  
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Ep5**

**“Building a new organ gives us the ability to have a modern expression of what we are as a company.”**

In ep.5 of The Organ Podcast, Harrison & Harrison’s head voicer Andy Scott talks about voicing the new instrument at London’s Guards’ Chapel.

Available wherever you get your podcasts (including Apple, Spotify, Amazon, YouTube and Google) or visit <https://theorganpodcast.buzzsprout.com/>

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## **Art exhibition at The Saint Patrick Centre**

**Beautiful Ballyhornan, County Down is captured in oil by Downpatrick artist Brian Trainor.**

So looking forward to launching his exhibition at The Saint Patrick Centre this Saturday 2pm, Downpatrick. All welcome!! Many beautiful images to enjoy!

## **Cappella Caeciliana perform Dum Transisset Sabbatum by Áine Mallon**

YouTube

[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AYewFOc4650>]

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## Bishop Michael Router Homily - Easter Vigil



## Bishop Michael Router Homily - Easter vigil 2024

YouTube

[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Y7IC1I-ju4>]

## Gospel Music Club, Drumbo, Friday

**Join the Gospel Music Club on Friday 5th April 5 2024, from 7.30pm-10pm. As usual Drumbo Presbyterian Church Hall, 120 Drumbo Road, Lisburn BT27 5TX, will be the venue.**

On stage this month will be the GMC Choir, St. Donard's Praise Group and the Annetts as well as Charlaine and Gary & Adam and Graham.

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As always, members of the Gospel Music Club Choir will be singing traditional Gospel Music, Southern, Country Gospel, Old Hymns, there will be solo artists & instrumentals as well as audience singing....

Refreshments will also be served and new club members are always welcome. Acoustic musicians are also invited to take part in a superjam.

## Perspective

### England's 'Christian inheritance' at stake in UK General Election - Bishop Mark Davies

**Easter has arrived early in a year when a General Election is anticipated.**

“To elect” means to choose. This Easter holiday celebrates the greatest and most enduring choice our country ever made, in embracing Christianity more than a millennium ago.

It was a choice made not merely by the leaders of society but personally – in Baptism one by one – across a century and more.

This conversion of England is the choice which has shaped our values and laws and even how we see ourselves.



The choice of every Baptism – to turn away from evil and put our faith in Christ – is dramatically renewed by entire congregations on Easter night and morning.

Whatever our relationship to the Church, these spiritual values are the shared inheritance that has shaped our life together.

Like the gold reportedly found in the Shropshire Hills, it is a gift embedded in the moral landscape of England and is to be found and discovered anew by every generation.

At the coming elections, Christians informed by their faith will freely take differing views on the political issues of our time. Yet, the Church provides the enduring witness to the

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bedrock of faith and values which help us in the great moral choices we face.

A new parliament will soon be asked to make one of those choices which impacts on the central foundations of this Christian inheritance: the sanctity of human life.

The proposal to legalise euthanasia is often called “assisted dying”, though it is certainly not assisting the sick or the dying in the way Christianity has long proposed.

For those we elect will be asked to decide whether to permit the medical killing of the sick and the dying the first time in our history.

Parliamentarians will be aware that to remove these legal protections will open the way to untold dangers for those who are most vulnerable.

In considering such a far-reaching change to our way of life, our elected representatives can depend on the secure foundations which have led us to hold human life sacred and which has long inspired our care for the sick and the dying.

Faced with the challenges of our time, the national celebration of Easter invites us to treasure our Christian inheritance and to make this our choice anew.

*Easter Message 2024 by the Rt. Rev. Mark Davies, Bishop of Shrewsbury*



<https://catholicherald.co.uk/englands-christian-inheritance-at-stake-in-uk-general-election/>

## In the media

### **Catholic Herald - Does Leo Varadkar's surprise resignation as Ireland's first gay Taoiseach show he underestimated the Catholic Church?**

**The news that Leo Varadkar is to step down as Ireland's Taoiseach (prime minister) once his Fine Gael party selects a new leader, will give rise to reflection among the country's Catholics about whether his successor will bring any changes to current Church-State relations, Declan McSweeney wrote.**

Varadkar had a complex relationship with the Catholic Church, after making history by becoming the country's youngest and first openly gay and first biracial leader. It was certainly a more confrontational relationship than any of his predecessors, exemplified most forcefully by his spearheading the 2018 referendum to liberalise the Republic's abortion laws, a move backed two to one by voters.

"I'm proud that we have made the country a more equal and more modern place," Varadkar said in his resignation statement announced in Dublin on 20 March.

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Yet his pending resignation follows an overwhelming defeat in two referendums on proposed constitutional changes on issues regarding marriage, family and the position of women in the home. But it would be inaccurate to conclude that the defeat of those measures reflects a revival of conservative values.

Many complex issues were involved and much of the opposition came from people with liberal views, concerned about the impact on care for people with disabilities, for example.

Varadkar's being openly gay and in a relationship, coupled with his being the first Taoiseach who was not a practising Catholic, made clear from the start that his relationship with the Church would not be an easy one.

Though he has made clear that he does believe in God, he has also said he is not a regular churchgoer. Son of a Catholic mother and Hindu father, he received his secondary education at King's Hospital, a Dublin school run by the Church of Ireland.

At times he appeared closer to the Protestant community in the Republic, though this did not translate into an amicable relationship with Unionists in Northern Ireland. While they see him as very much a nationalist, supporters of Sinn Féin, ironically, would see him as quasi-Unionist and very pro-British in his thinking.

In 2019, Varadkar had to apologise to the Catholic Church for comments made about the then opposition leader, Micheal Martin (now his deputy in the coalition government),

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in which Varadkar compared him to a priest who sinned but lectured others on sinning.

He was accused of tarring all priests with the one brush for the child abuse scandals and had to make clear his “tremendous respect for priests”.

On the other hand, the previous year saw him at pains to pay tribute to religious orders at the opening of Ireland’s first new Catholic secondary school in thirty years. It was notable that the parents of the new school in Tyrrelstown, a very multi-ethnic part of Dublin, opted to have a school with a Catholic ethos.

The Taoiseach welcomed Pope Francis to Dublin Castle in 2018. His speech on that occasion was seen as respectful to the pontiff, though at the same time it underlined how much the country had changed since the 1979 visit of St Pope John Paul II.

It must be remembered that some of the liberalising changes he pushed in Ireland have been opposed not only by the Catholic Church but by other denominations. In particular, the moves to liberalise the abortion law were opposed by the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, as well as by evangelical Christians and many Muslims.

Likewise, the proposed constitutional changes on family and care which were recently rejected drew opposition from Presbyterian, Muslim and Jewish leaders as well as the Catholic bishops.

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While Ireland's Catholic Church has a less prominent role in society as a result of massive decline in weekly Mass attendance and the impact of the abuse scandals, it still has a key role in communities across the country, which is something that the next Taoiseach will have to bear in mind.

Along with other Churches, it has played an important part in ensuring the integration of Ukrainian refugees in recent times, along with new arrivals from many other parts of the world, as well as working hard to combat rising homelessness in Ireland.

The next Taoiseach, whether he or she is Catholic or not, will have to remember that even in today's more secular Ireland, faith groups are at the heart of local communities, and engagement with them is in the Government's own interest.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## Church News Ireland

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