

# Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – Armagh sunshine**

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## News

### Connor MU thank former Chaplain

Connor MU  
presentation to  
Archdeacon  
Stephen  
McBride: At a  
meeting of



Connor Mothers' Union (MU) Diocesan Council on Tuesday April 8, Diocesan President Alison Skillen made a presentation to Archdeacon Stephen McBride to mark his stepping down from the role of Diocesan Chaplain after 12 years.

### Colloquium on Invitations to Christian Commitment

**This year's SEARCH Colloquium in TCD's School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies on Saturday, 17th May 2025 majors on 'Invitations to Christian Commitment'.**

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‘Mission’ is for many an old-fashioned word but at a time when church attendance is low, a fresh invitation to share in the blessings of the Christian faith is needed. But fresh approaches, geared to current needs and various settings, are required.

This year’s SEARCH Colloquium in TCD’s School of Religion, Theology, and Peace Studies majors on ‘Invitations to Christian Commitment’.

Starting at 10am on Saturday, 17th May, it will explore various avenues through which believers can open their arms to enquirers and spiritual explorers, making all comers feel truly welcome without subjecting them to any pressure. Benefits to be found in cathedrals, university chaplaincies, local communities, pilgrimages and fresh styles of parish worship will all be explored, with a distinguished team of experienced and forward-looking speakers.

Early booking is advised, through Eventbrite (details below) or [subscriptions@searchjournal.ireland.anglican.org](mailto:subscriptions@searchjournal.ireland.anglican.org). A light lunch and morning and afternoon refreshments are included in the cost of €40 / £35 or €20 / £18 for students.

Find out more here: <https://www.churchofireland.org/news/12797/invitations-to-christian-commitment>

Search Journal is an independently edited journal for the Church of Ireland.

**C of I discussion on toolkit for anti-racist work in dioceses and parishes**

**As part of Ireland's Anti-Racism Month, the Primate's Reference Group on Ethnic Diversity, Inclusion and Racial Justice recently held a discussion on using the Irish Council of Churches' toolkit for anti-racist work in our dioceses and parishes.**

The From Every Nation handbook provides practical guidance for faith communities to create welcoming, equitable, and actively anti-racist church spaces. The discussion panel included Archbishop John McDowell, with the Revds Eileen Cremin, Maithrie White, Jenu John, Philip McKinley and Kevin Ronné, and Dr Lucy Michael.

## **Scotland's first female bishop vows to restore trust after bullying allegations**

**Scotland's first female bishop, Rt Rev Anne Dyer, has pledged to restore trust within her church following allegations of bullying.**

Suspended in 2022 and facing a disciplinary tribunal, the Scottish Episcopal Church's Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney was cleared when the church's procurator decided there was insufficient public interest to proceed. She has since begun a phased return to work.

Speaking to BBC Radio Shetland, Bishop Anne expressed her desire to "move forward" and reflected on the prolonged and stressful nature of the process.

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During her first visit to Shetland in three years, she acknowledged that things were not yet back to normal.

"I am visiting my priests, and people, and finding out how they are in their lives, but also wanting to hear from them about what they think God is doing in their churches," she said.

"The period of the process was extremely prolonged, it was stressful for absolutely everybody involved. There was a time when I thought it would never end, but thankfully it did. So, since October, we've been turning a corner and moving forward."

Bishop Anne emphasised the difficulty of quickly restoring strained relationships. "When any relationship is strained, you can't just automatically snap back to how things were previously," she said. "It wouldn't be right to pretend nothing has gone on, and nothing has been said."

"We are working hard at thinking about what it means to be reconciled and how professional mediation can help us address the issues we need to discuss in order to move forward. Most of those conversations are confidential, but they are taking place, and we are taking the healing very seriously indeed."

She welcomed the warm reception on her return and stressed the importance of healing strained relationships. She added: "I hope that they would hear me as well, that I want to respect our differences, because some of this is about differences, about opinions, on what the church should be like, and how we go about things, that our

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differences need to be respected, and they have my full assurance that I would do that.”

## **Rector and BB Captain raise vital funds for charity with four day 89-mile walk**

**Local church leaders have completed an 89-mile pilgrimage across Northern Ireland to raise money for charity, Jessica Rice reports in the Belfast Telegraph.**

Rev Peter Munce and Boys' Brigade Captain Timothy Wilson from the Mullabrack and Kilcluney Parish Group completed their 89-mile walk on Tuesday.

Their four-day journey took them through Armagh, Poyntzpass, Newry, the Mourne Mountains, and Newcastle, before finishing with a moving welcome at Down Cathedral from the Very Reverend Henry Blair.

The pilgrimage raised vital funds for the Mullabrack and Kilcluney Uganda Mission 2025 in partnership with Christian charity Abaana, which works to transform the lives of vulnerable children.

This summer, a team from the parish group will travel to Uganda, where funds raised through the Pilgrim's Walk will support the building of a nursery school, contribute to Street Reach (a program offering shelter and education for street boys in Kampala), and help deliver Zuri Girl Classes, which provide menstrual hygiene and sexual health education to keep young girls in school.

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Along the walk, the church leaders were joined by members of the Uganda Mission team, tackling full days or stages in solidarity.

Speaking after the pilgrimage, Uganda Mission group leader Linda Gilmore said: “What an incredible journey. Rev Peter and Timothy have shown such strength and faith every step of the way.

“This Pilgrim's Walk was a moving reflection of the daily challenges faced by many children in Uganda, and we are so proud of their achievement.

“The support we've received from our community — the prayers, donations, waves and words of encouragement — have meant the world to us.”

Reflecting on the journey, Rev Peter Munce said he was proud of himself and Mr Wilson.

“Sore feet, a few blisters, and a touch of sunburn — but what an achievement. This walk has been one of the most challenging and rewarding things I've ever done.

“Every step was taken with the children of Uganda in mind, and I'm so thankful for the support, prayers, and encouragement we received along the way.

“We did this not just for the sake of the challenge, but to help advance God's Kingdom — not only here at home, but also in Uganda.

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“Through it all, we were reminded that we don't walk alone — we walk with God, strengthened by His presence every step of the way. We walked in faith, and we arrived filled with gratitude.”

## Education

### BRA saxophone duet



**Well done to Hope Rogers (Form 3) and Keshav Raghuram (Form 5) who were awarded 1st place at**

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## Larne Music Festival for their saxophone duet in the Small Ensemble class.

Impressively, their total of 90 points was the highest woodwind score of the entire festival, and they were invited back to perform their piece once more at the event's gala concert on Saturday evening.

Hope also gained five more first places and two thirds over the course of the festival in Solo Singing, Duet Singing, Saxophone Solo, and Piano classes.



## Model performances of Beauty and The Beast

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**Congratulations to the entire cast of pupils from Carrickfergus Model Primary School who have been taking part in three Spring Performances of Beauty and The Beast.**

Hats off also to all the teachers and staff who helped make this such a professional performance.



## **Minister opens Integrated Primary & Nursery School, Cookstown**

**Education Minister Paul Givan MLA has officially opened a new, state of the art school at Phoenix Integrated Primary & Nursery School, Cookstown.**

The £7.3 million project will provide a new seven class-base school and single nursery unit.



Education Minister Paul Givan pictured speaking with pupils at the official opening of a new state of the art school at Phoenix Integrated Primary School, Cookstown.

Read more - <https://education-ni.gov.uk/news/education-minister-officially-opens-new-ps73-million-school-phoenix-integrated-primary-school>

## **The Future Belongs to Peace - Year 13 Conference at Friends' School**

**Five Year 13 History students recently represented St Malachi's College at a Year 13 conference held at Friends' School Lisburn as part of their 250th anniversary events.**



The conference was entitled The Future Belongs to Peace. Guest speakers and contributors included Siobhán Haire, Pete Shirlow and Corrymeela. Thanks to Friends' School Lisburn for the kind invitation and hospitality.

## **North West Regional College students play disciples in Walled City Passion**

**This week the organisers welcomed some students from the NWRC to the cast.**

They will be playing some of the disciples. NWRC Students have been part of this project since the first year, and the organisers are delighted to have them back again this year

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You can book your tickets now via @millenniumforum



17th, 18th & 19th April



12.30pm & 3.30pm



Starting Point: Diocesan Centre, London Street



Book your tickets now: @millenniumforum

## Cathedral Calls



### York Minster has unveiled its summer organ recital programme

It will feature heavy metal, improvisation, and Saint-Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals*.

Summer Organ Recitals, York Minster, 17 Jul – 21 Aug 2025

The series opens on 17 July by **Wayne Marshall OBE**, a world-renowned conductor and master of improvisation who will include some of his own compositions alongside classics and live improvisations.

He will be followed by **Jan Liebermann**, one of the most promising young artists in the organ world who is well-known for his ability to play complex pieces entirely from memory; Daniel Cook, a performer with a unique understanding of early-twentieth-century organs like York Minster's having recorded the complete works of many classic British organ composers; and Carolyn Craig, an award-winning American organist who champions female composers as the co-founder of the platform Amplify Female Composers.

**York Minster's own acclaimed musicians – Robert Sharpe, Director of Music, and Benjamin Morris, Assistant Director of Music**, who are both experienced soloists performing in the UK and abroad – complete the line-up for six nights of organ music every Thursday evenings from 17 July to 21 August, beginning at 7pm.

For younger listeners, York Minster will also be offering another family-sized exploration of the organ through Camille Saint-Saëns' *The Carnival of the Animals* on 28 May.

There's the chance to get up-close to the organ to see how the instrument is played and there will be a narrator sharing fun facts about the wild animals that roam through Saint-Saëns' creation and York Minster's history.

The Summer Organ Recitals and family organ concert will follow the upcoming Organic Metal showcase featuring **David Pipe**, former Assistant Director of Music at York Minster, performing Black Sabbath and Deep Purple on York

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Minster's Grand Organ. His set will be followed by Plague of Angels, an electro-symphonic-metal powerhouse who will present their own heavy metal music enhanced by the power and grandeur of the organ.

Tickets for this sold out within one week.

**Robert Sharpe**,  
Director of Music at  
York Minster, said:



“Organ music has played a central role in worship at York Minster for nearly 1,000 years. We have carefully crafted a programme of concerts and recitals that reflects this long and important history, but that also displays the incredible diversity of the organ and those who play and listen to it.

“We have a fantastic line-up of guest soloists set to perform at our Summer Organ Recitals, all of whom will showcase our Grand Organ in a different way. I am looking forward to hearing them perform at this fourth series of concerts since the organ’s expert refurbishment by Harrison & Harrison.

“The heavy metal concert and performance of The Carnival of the Animals complete our 2025 organ concert offering,

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which we hope will encourage people to engage with the instrument in new and exciting ways'

Tickets for the recitals are available at £15, with a combined season ticket price of £75 for all six recitals. A concessionary price of £7.50 for those aged 27 and under is also available, with a combined season ticket price of £38. All tickets include a free souvenir programme.

Tickets can be booked here

[\[https://yorkminster.org/whats-on/event/summer-organ-recitals/\]](https://yorkminster.org/whats-on/event/summer-organ-recitals/)

or by calling the cathedral's Box Office on 01904 557200.

## Clergy and ministry



## Good news as Neil Richmond TD meets Sister Teresa in Sierra Leone

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**“A real highlight for me was meeting Sr Teresa McKeon who travelled by ocean liner to Sierra Leone in 1954”, said Neil Richmond TD.**

He continued, “A native of Mullingar, Sr Teresa has lived through the most difficult years in Sierra Leone working with the disadvantaged of children in Freetown as well as in refugee camps during the civil war.

“A recipient of the Presidential Distinguished Service Award for the Irish Abroad, Sr Teresa must be the oldest living Irish missionary abroad at 95 years young.

“I announced that the Irish Government would fund the building of a new school hall where Sr Teresa and her colleagues from the St Joseph of Cluny sisters work”.

## **RTÉ Service celebrates Pioneer Ministry**

**As we approach Holy Week, this Sunday’s service on RTÉ will be led by the Revd Rob Jones, National Director for Pioneer Ministry, with a team from the Church of Ireland’s Pioneer Ministry initiative.**

The service will be broadcast at 11.00am on RTÉ One television and on RTÉ Radio 1 Extra, and will also be available afterwards through the RTÉ Player.

As Jesus dramatically entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, it transformed people’s experience and expectation of faith. Pioneer Ministry is seeing new and exciting ways in which

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God is moving throughout this island. Join us for a celebratory service and be encouraged by what God is doing across the island to reach those with little or no connection to church by honouring the past whilst releasing the new.

Find out more about Pioneer Ministry on its website – [www.pioneerministry.org](http://www.pioneerministry.org) – and Facebook, YouTube and Instagram channels.

Palm Sunday, 13th April 2025 · RTÉ One & Radio 1 Extra · 11.00am

## **Hanging up the dog collar - retirement reflections by Canon Paul Hoey**

**So, after much thought, reflection and prayer, and a degree of prevarication, I finally got round to announcing my forthcoming retirement in church on Sunday.**

Clergy retirement is something that's not often discussed, so I thought it might be useful over the coming weeks to share a few personal thoughts about the things that have made my 44 years of ordained ministry so rewarding, along with some of the particular challenges facing those of us who are fortunate enough to get to the stage of being able metaphorically to hang up our clerical collars.

I rather like the story about a preacher who set out to buy a lawnmower so he could cut the grass at his new retirement home. Spotting a good second-hand model for sale, he set

off to investigate. The man selling it demonstrated the mower in action by pulling the starter rope – at the same time muttering something the preacher didn't quite catch – and the engine started up right away. Satisfied, they agreed a price and the preacher took the mower home.

Next day, however, he was back. "This machine won't start," he said. "What am I doing wrong?" "I forget to tell you", his friend replied, "you have to swear at it." The preacher was shocked. "I've been a preacher for 44 years, and if I ever did swear – and I'm not saying that I did – I've certainly forgotten how to do it after all this time." The other man replied, "Reverend, just keep pulling that rope and it'll all come back to you."

I don't know about swearing in retirement, but that story effectively illustrates one of the challenges of retirement for ordained leaders – that of adjusting to being an 'ordinary' person again, after years of being under the spotlight of scrutiny because of their public role.

The transition is likely to involve:

- buying, renting or moving to a different house, probably much smaller (and almost certainly warmer!) than large rectories lived in over the years. This will most likely be in a different area (there is an unwritten code that clergy do not live in the parish where they last served; that has obvious potential for creating tensions). Where clergy have ministered in different areas, or even different countries, the decision about where to retire can be challenging enough;
- having to develop new friendships in the area where they will live – with the best will in the world, it won't be possible

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to keep up many of the friendships developed in the former parish;

- finding a church they feel comfortable being part of and deciding how best to be involved.

Each of these factors faced by clergy preparing for retirement scores highly on the 'stress level' and combined they can present a daunting challenge, especially to those living on their own. And, of course, they are in addition to the more general retirement challenges such as having to adjust to a reduced income and working out how best to use all the extra free time.

When people ask me if I'm looking forward to retirement, I tell them, in all honesty, that I am. I feel privileged to have been able to pursue such a rewarding vocation for so long. I look forward to being able to slow down a little, to enjoying more time with family and friends, to pursuing interests I've enjoyed for years and developing a few new ones, and above all to being able to devote time to read, pray and walk daily with God.

In some further reflections, I'll share some of the things that I will miss most about being a church leader (and perhaps one or two that I most definitely won't).

Until then, if you have a prayer to spare for any retiring rectors you happen to know, I'm sure these would be greatly appreciated.

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# Events

DOWN CATHEDRAL PRESENTS

## Eternal Light: A Requiem

*by Howard Goodall*

Monday, 14th April 2025 at 7.45pm  
*Down Cathedral, Downpatrick*

*Soprano*  
Lynda Barrett

*Tenor*  
Desmond Havlin

*Baritone*  
Ryan Garnham

*Chamber Orchestra*  
*Leader: Julie Bell*

Performed by Cathedra  
*incorporating Cadenza and Down Cathedral Choir*

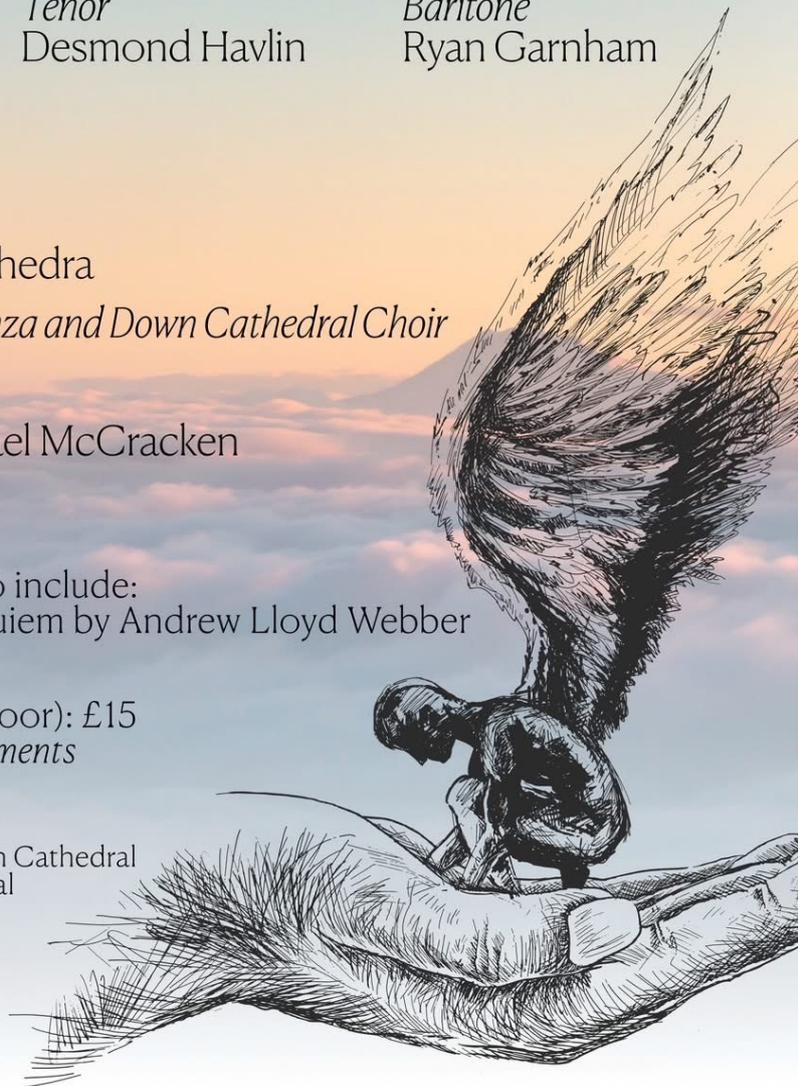
Directed by Michael McCracken

Programme will also include:  
'Pie Jesu' from Requiem by Andrew Lloyd Webber

Admission (at the door): £15  
*including light refreshments*

All proceeds to the Down Cathedral  
Organ Restoration Appeal

Doors open: 7.15pm





## DONARD METHODIST HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

**Wed 16th** Circuit worship at Priesthill Methodist Church 7.30pm

**Thur 17th** Passover meal Shimna College 7pm

**Good Friday** 2pm The Gospel of Mark, Donard Church  
7pm Holy Communion, Newcastle Presbyterian

**Easter Sat** 2-4pm Easter egg treasure hunt in the church

**Easter Sunday.**  
**6am Sunrise Service**  
**11am Resurrection Sunday Worship**



## HOLY WEEK '25 DONEGAL TOWN

**Wednesday 16th April, 8pm, Methodist Church**  
Preacher - Rev. Craig Wilson (Ballylennon, St. Johnston, Burt and Inch Presbyterian minister)

**Maundy Thursday 17th April, 8pm**  
Presbyterian Church, with Holy Communion  
Preacher - Rev. David Huss

**Good Friday 18th April, 11am, Church of Ireland**  
Preacher - Rev. John Montgomery



## Holy Week at Belfast Cathedral

**Join us for the richest liturgies of the Christian year as we draw near the heart of our faith: the mysteries of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

Here are the times for our Holy Week services :

✝ Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday (9:30am prayers; 1pm Eucharist)

✝ Maundy Thursday, 7:30pm: Choral Eucharist (telling the story of the Last Supper)

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✚ Good Friday

12-3pm: Vigil at the Foot of the Cross, with guest speaker +David McClay

7:30pm: Tenebrae (telling the story of the Crucifixion as darkness gathers)

✚ Holy Saturday, 7:30pm: Easter Vigil with Baptism and Eucharist (telling the story of salvation and announcing the resurrection)

✚ Easter Day, 11am: Choral Eucharist with Baptism (Easter celebration, with +George Davison)

**BELFAST CATHEDRAL**  
THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST. ANNE

# Organ Meditation

A journey through Holy Week

**Wednesday  
16th April  
7.30pm**

Join our Cathedral Organist and Master of Music Jack Wilson on a musical journey from Palm Sunday to Easter Day, featuring works by Widor, Langlais, Messiaen, Lanquetuit, and J.S. Bach.

Admission free, retiring collection.  
[www.belfastcathedral.org](http://www.belfastcathedral.org)

# Perspective

## Blessing for peace by John O'Donahue

As the fever of day calms towards twilight  
May all that is strained in us come to ease.

We pray for all who suffered violence today,  
May an unexpected serenity surprise them.

For those who risk their lives each day for peace,  
May their hearts glimpse providence at the heart of history.

That those who make riches from violence and war  
Might hear in their dreams the cries of the lost.

That we might see through our fear of each other  
A new vision to heal our fatal attraction to aggression.

That those who enjoy the privilege of peace  
Might not forget their tormented brothers and sisters.

That the wolf might lie down with the lamb,  
That our swords be beaten into ploughshares

And no hurt or harm be done  
Anywhere along the holy mountain.

From the book, Benedictus.  
<https://johnodonoehue.com/store>

# Heritage

## Douglas Hyde's "modern Irish" translation of St Patrick's Breastplate

*Portrait of Douglas Hyde, charcoal drawing by Sadbh Trench.*

**Douglas Hyde's modern Irish translation of 'St. Patrick's Breastplate', provides a unique perspective of the Irish Language Movement of the early 20th century.**

Born in Co. Roscommon in 1860, Hyde was an Irish academic, politician and diplomat. An active figure in the effort to revive the Irish language, Hyde also founded Conradh na Gaeilge (The Gaelic League) in 1893. In 1915, Hyde was approached by Eitne Culverwell, a member of the Irish Guild with a request to provide an updated translation of St Patrick's Breastplate to make it more accessible to a modern Irish language audience.

The Irish Guild was a group active within the Church of Ireland, specifically aiming to promote the use of the Irish language in the public services of the Church, as well as collect and publish suitable Irish prayers, hymns and other religious literature.

Hyde's translation was completed in a novel series of postcard replies, with the translation subsequently being published in 1916 as part of Duanaire Diadha, a collection of literature and hymns designed to be used in Church of

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Ireland services, particularly those held in Irish at St Patrick's Cathedral.

Based on work by **Rachel Bennett**, Assistant Archivist, RCB Library

With April being National Poetry Month, the RCB Library is taking the opportunity to explore four unique poetry-related items currently held in the archive and special reserve collection. These distinctive pieces showcase the diverse holdings of the RCB Library as well as the invaluable role that the archive plays in preserving historically unique items.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## 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](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

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# Church News Ireland

[www.churchnewsireland.org](http://www.churchnewsireland.org)

**Link in Monday through Saturday from  
early morning**

**Please recommend to your friends**