

Church News Ireland



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April 19, 2025

Image of the day

Preparation for Easter



Maundy Thursday Chrism Eucharists

In Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin

Archbishop Michael Jackson washed the feet of several members of the clergy and in turn had his feet washed. The service was celebrated by the Archbishop and sung by the Cathedral Choir.

In his sermon, Archbishop Jackson addressed his fellow clergy and lay ministers and reminded them that despite the allure of clericalism and being an “insider with Jesus Christ”

they are also part of the bigger group of people who Scriptures regularly call 'the crowd'.

“As well as there being an unique quality in who we are as well as specialness as being an integral part of what we do and who God makes us to be, we all remain anonymous and wayward, unreliable and problematic. We too are: the crowd,” he noted.

Referring to The Footwashing, the Archbishop said that the Gospel reading [St John 13] enabled us to move seamlessly from the public ministry of Jesus among the people to the more intense expression of that ministry among his disciples. It changed the understanding of the 12 Disciples of their Master.

He then looked at St John 13: 34–35: ‘I give you a new commandment: love one another; as I have loved you, so you are to love one another. If there is this love among you, then everyone will know that you are my disciples’. He suggest that this could also be termed ‘I give you a new mandate: love one another...’

“Looked at from this perspective, the instruction and the invitation that Jesus gives to the disciples – and everything that we are told in the passage of Scripture between the Footwashing and the New Commandment – from how we now in church life use the word: mandated refers to a particular type of safeguarding of the community. It, therefore, gives to the word: love as used in this context a resonance something like this: This is the brutal task of holding fractious, dissident insiders together. This is love in a different register as protection regarding those who are

vulnerable alongside protection regarding those who do evil and want to do evil – protecting the latter from themselves. This after all is regulation rather than punishment; and regulation needs to offer scope for redemption. This is not a condemnation. This is a commitment. This is a contract of mutual service. This is a mandate,” he explained.

The Archbishop asked what it might look like to be mandated on Maundy Thursday to follow Christ – to Calvary, to Emmaus and to the ends of the earth. He suggested that on Maundy Thursday the word ‘mandate’ could be seen in a new light, as a gift to renew service, encourage ministry and strengthen love.



Belfast Cathedral
Clergy and Lay Readers from across Connor Diocese
gathered at Belfast Cathedral at the invitation of Bishop



George Davison for a service in which they renewed their ordination vows.

‘I have chosen you’ (John 15:16) took the form of a Service of Holy Communion, led by Bishop George who also preached. Readers were Mr John Williams and the Rev Canon Nigel Baylor. Organists were Jack Wilson and Finn Sloan.



Lisburn Cathedral Music men finish epic fundraising run

Congratulations to Lisburn Cathedral Music Director Stephen McLoughlin and his running partner Greg McClure who on Tuesday evening, April 15 completed an epic four-day run around the perimeter of Connor Diocese.

They had covered almost 170 miles over just four days and raised more than £8,000 to fund much-needed repairs to Lisburn Cathedral's hall.

En route, they were supported by a great team, with others joining them for sections of the run.

Here Stephen, who took up running just three years ago when problems with his eyesight meant he could no longer drive, reflects on his four-day multi-marathon experience.

“At the outset we had a good team of people helping us choose the safest route around the diocese, preparing to support us during the run with a stocked motorhome ready with lunches, snacks, first aid (thankfully not needed) and somewhere to have a rest. The whole team spirit of the event was evident from an early stage – however, what unfolded was way beyond my expectations.

“Despite the early start (7am) on April 12, we had a good crowd to cheer us off from Lisburn Cathedral and about



eight runners joined us on the initial stage to Belfast. Just on the outskirts of Lisburn we enjoyed a special rendition of Chariots of Fire by members of Lisburn Community Orchestra [both Stephen and Greg are members](#) – quite a delightful surprise at 7.15am!

“After a short coffee boost, Greg and I got our heads down and ran from Belfast to Whiteabbey and followed trails to Straid and later Mounthill. We picked up a few runners after Larne and pushed on towards our first stop and the end of Day 1 (44.5 miles) in Glenarm.

RAINBOW

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“Day 2 took us from Glenarm up the coast to Bushmills (41.5 miles). The weather again was fabulous – not too hot but with blue skies and the sun gleaming off the sea. A few showers hit us, with one particularly heavy shower as we approached Bushmills. Earlier in the day we had discussed the saying ‘when it’s raining look for the rainbow,’ and sure enough, a magical rainbow opened up as we descended into Bushmills.

“We were thankful for friends in the Cathedral, who had just flown home from Malaga to open their house in Bushmills for us to stay in. They had their open fire roaring for our arrival, but we quickly learned that the heavy rainshower not only brought a lovely rainbow, but also lightening which had stuck a transformer and we had no electricity as a result!

“Upwards and onwards, and we warmed ourselves by the fire while dinner was served from the local chippy and we told stories and laughed. Not long after power was restored and showers were taken and we slept well.

To read remainder of this epic journey see -
[<https://connor.anglican.org/2025/04/17/way-beyond-my-expectations-marathon-man-stephen-mcloughlin/>]

MCI statement on the Gaza humanitarian situation

**A statement on the Gaza humanitarian situation from
The President Rev Dr John Alderdice and Mrs Elaine
Barrett, Lay Leader of the Irish Methodist Church.**

We are outraged by the disastrous and deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza since the ending of the first ceasefire and the resumption of the Israeli military offensive and air strikes on 18th March.

Gazan families are now running out of food, clean water and medical supplies to the extent that many families are unable to secure one meal each day. This is because the Israeli government has imposed a blockade of essential supplies entering Gaza at the Rafah and other crossings going back over many weeks.

We call on Israel to fully open the border crossings into Gaza to allow an unimpeded flow of humanitarian food, fuel, medical and water supplies for all civilians. This should also include unblocking the supply of tents to replace the various forms of shelter damaged during the recent military operations. We seek the support of the Irish and British governments to use all their moral and legal power to persuade Israel to open the Rafah crossing so as to prevent famine and the loss of life.

We are also concerned about how IDF forces on the ground are endangering the lives of frontline humanitarian workers and hindering the distribution of essential food supplies.

It is essential that there must be a complete ceasefire, to prevent further suffering, loss of life and destruction of whatever infrastructure is left in Gaza.

We pray that those involved in international mediation and diplomacy will double their efforts to renew the ceasefire in Gaza between Israel and Hamas so there can be the full

return of hostages and Palestinian detainees. This needs to include substantial progress to implement the agreed second stage of the ceasefire.

Vatican starts ‘unfinished’ Gaudi’s path to sainthood

Antoni Gaudi, the artist behind Barcelona’s Sagrada Familia basilica, could be made into a saint after it emerged this week that the Pope has approved his first step towards canonisation.

Known as “God’s architect”, Gaudi was regarded as a pious man whose style is known for its vibrant colours and elaborate designs.

He worked for more than 40 years on the basilica, the largest unfinished Catholic church in the world and a Unesco World Heritage Site that attracts around five million visitors a year.

The Pope recognised the Catalan architect’s “heroic virtues” and authorised a decree declaring him “venerable”, the Vatican said in a statement yesterday.

3 - Number of days that Gaudi survived after he was run down by a tram in June 1926

Francis X Rocca, a senior Vatican analyst for the Catholic EWTN network, stressed that this was an early stage of the

process towards canonisation but an important one nonetheless.

“It takes a little time but it’s a significant thing,” said Mr Rocca. “It means that the Vatican thinks his life was exemplary and he had ‘heroic virtues’.”

Before Gaudi can be beatified, which is the next phase in the process, a miracle would need to be attributed to the architect and proof of a second miracle would be required, before he is finally declared a saint.

Beatification is usually reserved for martyrs, those who have lived a life of heroic values or with a saintly reputation. To beatify an artist is rare. “Neither Michelangelo nor Leonardo Da Vinci is a saint,” Mr Rocca said.

Born in Reus, 60 miles south of Barcelona, in 1852, Gaudi transformed Barcelona’s architectural landscape with his use of vibrant colour, form and texture before he died in tragic fashion in 1926 when, at the age of 73, he was run down by a tram.

He is known as the greatest exponent of Catalan Modernisme and several of his works including Parque Güell and Casa Batlló have World Heritage listing. His Catholic faith deepened during his life and he included religious images in many of his works.

Construction of the Sagrada Familia began in 1882 but is still unfinished, even though Gaudi devoted the last 12 years of his life exclusively to the project.

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The monumental basilica with its soaring Gothic spires has become a modern symbol of Barcelona, as well as a popular tourist attraction.

Gaudi's case for sainthood was first vetted by the church in 2003 and two decades later in 2023, Cardinal Juan Jose Omella, the Archbishop of Barcelona, commissioned a group of religious and lay people to press his cause.

When Pope Benedict XVI consecrated the Sagrada Familia in 2010, he praised "the genius of Antoni Gaudi ... [who] inspired by the ardour of his Christian faith, succeeded in transforming this church into a praise to God made of stone".

The signing of the canonisation decree was the first official appointment on Pope Francis's agenda after the 88-year-old pontiff was discharged from hospital on March 23 following five weeks spent battling life-threatening pneumonia.

Education

Campbell College Wellbeing Week 2025: Take Notice

Campbell College embraced the theme "Take Notice" as part of its Wellbeing Week. Students and staff were encouraged to put away their phones and engage more deeply with their surroundings and each other.

A highlight of the day was the Sixth Form Assembly, where they were honoured to have Jake Flannery and OC Tom



School children at St Comgall's Catholic Church Antrim during Holy Week

O'Toole (12405) from Ulster Rugby. They provided valuable insights into mental health and emotional resilience as part of the 'Tackle Your Feelings' programme, an initiative run by Rugby Players Ireland.

Following the assembly, Tom and Jake conducted an engaging Q&A session in the Drama Studio for the Sixth Form. They covered topics such as dealing with stress and pressure, breath work, coping mentally with periods of injury, and how planning can help balance sports and academics.



*School children at Star of The Sea Catholic Church
Portstewart during Holy Week*

Human Rights Year 10 at St Dominic's

Year 10 RE pupils at St Dominic's Grammar School, Belfast, have now completed their Human Rights unit.

They have also completed the World's Largest Lesson 2025. The World's Largest Lesson is a UN initiative delivering lessons on a series of topics they believe all students worldwide should have access too, one of which is an awareness of human rights. To conclude this unit year 10 pupils produced some outstanding human rights games.

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A number of these games were selected by the RE department (a tough choice as there were so many excellent games this year) to be entered into the Trocaire Game Changers 2025 Competition.

Cathedral Calls

VE service in Belfast Cathedral

A service in Belfast Cathedral will mark 80 years from Victory in Europe.

His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of the County Borough of Belfast, Dame Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle, DBE DStJ DDL, and the Dean of Belfast, the Very Reverend Stephen Forde, will host a civic service to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day on Sunday, 4th May, at 3.30pm in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast.

Many organisations that were involved both on the Home Front and at the Front in the war in Europe will be represented and will participate in the Service. The service will be open to the public and the preacher will be the Revd Dr John Alderdice, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

The service will also be recorded to be aired on BBC Radio Ulster on Sunday, 11th May, at 10.15am.

Events

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Celebrating 10 Years of Laudato Si: Raising hope for climate justice

Join this exciting interactive webinar on Wednesday 23 April from 7.30-9pm to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' groundbreaking encyclical, Laudato Si', and find out how you can take action for climate justice.

Speakers include:

- Lorna Gold, Executive Director of Laudato Si' Movement
- Ben Wilson, Director of Public Engagement at SCIAF
- James Buchanan, Climate Finance Campaign Manager at Laudato Si' Movement
- Claudia Melis from Focolare
- Rev Patrick Gerard, Diocesan Environmental Officer in the CofE Diocese of Birmingham, will lead an opening reflection

The banner features three circular portraits of speakers: Lorna Gold, Ben Wilson, and James Buchanan. To the right, the text reads: **WEBINAR: CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF LAUDATO SI:** Raising Hope for Climate Justice. Below this, it says 'Wednesday 23 April 7.30pm-9pm'. A QR code is provided for sign-up, with the text 'Sign up [link](#) or QR code' below it.



Co-sponsors of the event include Laudato Si' Movement, Focolare GB, the Care for Creation Office of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland, CAFOD, SCIAF, the National Justice and Peace Network, Justice and Peace Scotland, Ecological Conversion Group, A Rocha UK, Eco-Congregation Scotland, Operation Noah, Green Christian and JustMoney Movement.

The evening will include reflections, experiences on the Big Bank Switch campaign, online small group discussions and opportunities for Q&A and to find out more about upcoming activities and how to get involved.

All are welcome! Sign up link <https://tinyurl.com/5n8crbdf>



Home Grown Hope launching in First Antrim Presbyterian

Christian Aid Ireland says Home Grown Hope will feature a delightful mix of live cookery demonstrations and tastings, as well as stories of hope and faith from urban farming projects transforming communities in Nairobi.

On arrival, you'll be welcomed with a complimentary glass of homemade Kenyan fruit punch and some delectable nibbles. Then throughout the evening, you'll have the opportunity to sample a range of traditional Kenyan dishes, cooked live by Mollie herself, using ingredients freshly picked from her own kitchen garden in the rolling hills of Co. Down. You might even get chosen to help Mollie prepare one of her dishes!

From starters of Ugali (a savoury cornmeal porridge) to desserts of sweet chapattis with Kenyan honey, we'll fill you up with great food and even better stories of hope and growth from urban-farming projects that are transforming lives and bringing freedom to families.

At the end of the evening, you'll receive Home Grown Hope recipe cards so that you can try making Mollie's Kenyan classics at home.

"We are really looking forward to our new event for 2025, Home Grown Hope launching on Wednesday 30 April in First Antrim Presbyterian".

Tickets are on sale now at <http://bit.ly/AntrimHGH> and here's Mollie to tell you all about what you can expect from the evening!

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If you need any help purchasing your tickets, please contact our Belfast office directly on belfast@christian-aid.org or call 028 9064 8133

In the media

A priest has been arrested on suspicion of sexual communication with a child - Belfast Telegraph

It comes after videos circulated online of a man in clerical garb being challenged by self-styled paedophile hunters.

The man, aged in his 50s, was arrested outside a hotel in Londonderry today.

He remains in custody.

A spokesperson for the Diocese of Derry said: “The Diocese of Derry is aware of an incident outside a hotel in the Derry city involving a priest of this diocese.

“The diocese knows that a video of the incident has been posted online and we understand the PSNI have been involved. BT 17/04/2024

Huts at NI's second oldest Irish-medium school decay amid £1.4m works backlog - Belfast Telegraph

A school operating out of “temporary” huts for 30 years has a maintenance backlog of £1.4m with widespread “decay” identified, a survey by the Education Authority shows.

A maintenance backlog is normally factored into scores for schools applying for major funding, but Bunscoil Cholmcille in Derry didn't make it past the Department of Education's (DE) gateway when it submitted an application in 2016.

A 26-page report carried out by an expert in May 2024, and seen by the Belfast Telegraph, has recommendations to 'replace', 'remove' or 'upgrade' pupil and staff facilities at Bunscoil Cholmcille and Naiscoil Dhoire Nursery.

It documents “decaying” floors, walls, doors and staircases leading into the huts.

Head of British Jewish body criticises members' open letter attack on Israel - BBC News

The president of the largest communal body of Jews in the UK has responded to an open letter signed by some of its representatives criticising Israel's offensive in Gaza.

Phil Rosenberg, president of The Board of Deputies of British Jews, said he disagreed with the letter, which he said "lays blame squarely on the Israeli Government".

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He also criticised the letter, published in the Financial Times, external, for "barely" mentioning Hamas and the role he said it had played in the breakdown of hostage release negotiations.

On Tuesday, 36 members, or Deputies, signed the letter, saying it was their "duty, as Jews, to speak out".

It was the first show of opposition to the Gaza war by some of the Board's members - which is made up of more than 300 Deputies.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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

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