

Church News Ireland



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December 24, 2024

Image of the day –

Heartfelt Nativity

**What a
blessing the
Sunday
School
Nativity was
at All Saints
Clooney.**



Very well done to all the children and young people ... (and to all the adults who made it happen on Sunday morning)

The heartfelt performances brought the Nativity story to life in a way that only children



can. Their enthusiasm was infectious, and it was heartwarming to see the smiles on everyone's faces as we celebrated the spirit of Christmas together.

Thank you to Samantha and to all of the Sunday School leaders/helpers who worked so hard over the last term to prepare

the children for this memorable performance.
congratulations on being recognised in the Honours List”.

News

New Beginnings Eglinton support for local charities

Representatives of a couple of local community organisations collected early Christmas presents in Eglinton as they picked up cheques – part of the



proceeds from sales at St. Canice's Parish Church's thrift shop, New Beginnings.

Each year, around the season of Advent, the church invites a number of local groups which do good work in the community to visit the shop to receive donations. The recipients are chosen on a cross-community basis.

This year's beneficiaries were Faughanvale Community Project, whose Acting Manager Raymond McKenna accepted its award, and Eglinton Primary School Breakfast Club, whose principal, Emma McGuinness, collected its award. Foyle Search and Rescue is also being recognised this year and will collect its donation early in the New Year.

The New Beginnings thrift shop has been trading for three and a half years now on the Benbow Industrial Estate, just outside Eglinton village. Proceeds from sales are reinvested in the local community by supporting local charities and through the St Canice's Hall Restoration Appeal.



The church's Rector, Rev Canon Paul Hoey, was joined at today's cheque presentation by the coordinator of New Beginnings, Roberta Sinclair. Canon Hoey thanked the groups who benefitted this Christmas for doing what they were doing for their neighbours, and expressed gratitude for the generosity of those – of all faiths and none – who support the thrift shop with purchases or donations.

Ballinamallard schoolchildren visit clergy on charity sit-out

A 12-hour charity sit-out in Ballinamallard ended this evening for the Revd Lorraine Capper, Rector of Magheracross Parish Church and Revd John Beacom, Minister of Ballinamallard Methodist Church.

Taking up their position outside Magheracross Church on Main Street, they had plenty of visitors passing by during the 12-hour sit-out.



Revd Lorraine Capper and Revd John Beacom with visitors from Ballinamallard PS.

Among their visitors were P6 and P7 pupils accompanied by Kate Hassard and Elizabeth McElhinney from Ballinamallard Primary School.

This year's charities were Alzheimers Society and the Children's Heartbeat

King gives well-wishers cheery wave after church service on royal estate

The King was pictured waving to well-wishers after attending a church service on his Norfolk estate, Jordan Reynolds writes in the Belfast Telegraph

Charles left St Mary Magdalene Church in Sandringham on Sunday morning wearing a brown tweed.



Last week it was revealed the King's cancer treatment is expected to continue into 2025 almost a year after his diagnosis following hospital treatment for an enlarged prostate.

Further details of the King's condition have not been

disclosed, and when Buckingham Palace announced the diagnosis in February it asked for privacy and only confirmed Charles has a “form of cancer”.

He cancelled all face-to-face public duties until April but has since travelled to France for D-Day commemorations, hosted a state visit for the Emperor of Japan and toured Australia and Samoa with the Queen.

The King and Queen will be hosting many members of their family at Sandringham on Christmas Day, with the Prince of Wales revealing recently 45 people will be “all in one room” at the royal residence.

Princess Beatrice will be joining the celebrations after changing her Christmas travel plans due to medical advice, it is understood.

Beatrice and husband Edoardo Mapelli Mozzi are expecting their second child in early spring and were expected to spend the festive period overseas with his family, but are understood to have been advised by medics not to travel long distances.

Beatrice's father the Duke of York is staying away from Sandringham amid the controversy surrounding his links to an alleged Chinese spy.

Meanwhile, it has been reported that the Princess of Wales planned her carol service with help from the grieving Lady Gabriella Windsor, whose husband was found dead earlier this year.

Kate invited Lady Gabriella during the summer to join her team organising her annual Together at Christmas event at Westminster Abbey which featured a host of stars.

The event was dedicated to those who have shown love, kindness and empathy to others in their communities, and the princess' gesture to the daughter of Prince and Princess Michael of Kent echoed this theme.

A source said about Lady Gabriella: "She was very touched and grateful to the princess to be asked to contribute to her very special concert, and that she felt honoured to do so."

Kate is understood to have been incredibly grateful for her contribution.

The service will be broadcast as part of the programme Royal Carols: Together At Christmas, screened on ITV1 and ITVM on Christmas Eve.

Cathedral Calls

Black Secretary for St Anne's

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Hilary Benn MP, visited Belfast Cathedral last week.

Dean Forde showed Mr Benn around the cathedral in its 120th anniversary year, and discussed the good work the Black Santa Appeal does each year by supporting local charities.

Mr Benn donned Black Santa's traditional cloak and spent some time on the steps, chatting



December 24, 2024

to passers-by.
Stop by yourself
to donate in the
final days before
Christmas - you
never know who
you'll meet!



St Columb's Girl Choristers live on BBC Christmas Special

St Columb's Cathedral Girl Choristers performed live on air for the Your Place And Mine Christmas Special produced by BBC Radio Foyle.

The Cathedral Girl Choristers (who are also St. Columb's School of Music students) had a very early start for the 7:30am sound check.

A special mention for Anne Marie who the girls were honoured to meet.



Festival of Lessons and Carols at Waterford

In Christ Church Cathedral Waterford following the Festival of Lessons and Carols on Sunday afternoon were, the Metropolitan Mayor, members of Waterford Council, ecumenical representatives, clergy and diocesan readers.

A full and festive cathedral enjoyed wonderful music led by the choir under their director Simon Harden.

Dean's Charity Sit Out at Enniskillen

At St Macartin's Cathedral Enniskillen thanks have been expressed to all who called by with donations, to the members of the Select Vestry and Air Ambulance volunteers who did stints on a rota basis, to all those who carried or sent me food, tea, coffee and even hot whiskeys! All was gratefully received.

Thanks also to the choir members who sang periodically though that day and for the final hour to the bitter end. The Dean had a special thank you to Andy, his vergier who "stood by me attending my every need and to our Honorary Treasurer Hope who continually counted the collection".

The total amount raised to date is £16,117. The fund will remain open until after Christmas to allow those who were unable to come to be able to contribute.

All the proceeds will be divided between Bishops' Appeal (International), Air Ambulance (National) and St Macartin's Charities (Local).

Clergy and ministry

Canon George Salter

It was with sadness that news was received in the Diocese of Cork the death on Sunday in Dublin of Canon George Salter.

Bishop Colton said "Canon George Salter was one of the best known figures in the Church of Ireland in Cork and was hugely involved with life in Cork City and County for more than half a century. On behalf of us all in Cork, Cloyne and Ross I send our sympathy to Canon Salter's family.'



George Salter was born in Castletownshend, County Cork in 1925. He was educated at Midleton College and read Irish and Spanish at Trinity College, Dublin. He was made deacon in 1949 and ordained priest in 1950. He served his first curacy in Rathdowney in the Diocese of Ossory from 1949 to 1951. Apart from those years in Ossory, the entirety of his ministry was served in Cork, Cloyne and Ross, first as curate of Saint Luke's and Saint Anne's (1951-53), He was rector of Fermoy from 1953 to 1955, after which he returned to Saint Luke's and Saint Anne's as rector until his retirement in 1994.

In the media

Irish leaders have caused anti-Jewish hatred

Chief Rabbi claims many Jews in Ireland no longer feel safe enough to wear symbols of their identity, James Crisp Europe Editor writes in The Telegraph

Yoni Wieder, Ireland's Chief Rabbi, says it has been 'painful' to hear all the hatred directed towards Israel

Jewish children in Irish schools hide their heritage from their fellow pupils because anti-Israeli sentiment is so strong in the country, the Chief Rabbi of Ireland said.

Yoni Wieder said that many of the 3,000 Jews in Ireland no longer felt safe enough to wear signs of their identity, such as skullcaps or the Star of David, when in public.

He said there had been a "significant" rise in anti-Semitism since the Oct 7 terror attacks and Israel's war in Gaza.

'Many people have told me that the anti-Israel sentiment in this country has never been as strong and as nasty'
Ireland's support for the Palestinians has seen it clash with Benjamin Netanyahu's government, which closed its Israeli embassy in Dublin last week.

Gideon Saar, Israel's foreign minister, accused Taoiseach Simon Harris of being an anti-Semite after the Irish premier said the embassy's closure was to distract from the killing of children in Gaza.

"Of late many Jews are not comfortable to display signs of their Jewish identity outside their homes, as is traditional, or to wear things like a Star of David or a Jewish skullcap when walking in the street," Rabbi Wieder said. "What I'm most upset and concerned about is the number of schoolchildren who have told me in recent months that they feel afraid because they are Jewish, or that they avoid talking about being Jewish in front of their non-Jewish peers."

"The vast majority of Jewish people in Ireland would say that this is a wonderful place to be Jewish. Generations of Irish Jews have thrived here and have contributed so much to so many parts of Irish society".

Older Irish Jews, especially those not on social media and without children in school, mostly do not feel the same levels of hatred directed towards them, he said. But he added: "There is no doubt in my mind that the inflammatory rhetoric by Irish political leaders against Israel over the past year has contributed to hatred against Jews in this country."

There have been instances of swastika and "kill Jews" graffiti, as well as a violent attack on a Jewish student in a nightclub.

Some community members have told their Rabbi they wished their children or grandchildren could grow up elsewhere because of the current climate.

“Political leaders have shown little or no interest in the impact of this situation on the Jewish community,” said Rabbi Wieder.

Dublin is an outlier among European governments after it formally recognised Palestine earlier this year. Last week it said it would support an International Court of Justice petition accusing Israel of genocide.

Tensions were further heightened because Irish UN peacekeepers were posted in Lebanon during Israel’s attack on the country.

Ireland has historically felt a deep sense of kinship with Palestinians, bound by an empathy born from a shared struggle against the evils of colonialism.

Irish people identify with their fight for independence from a larger, belligerent neighbour, drawing parallels between Britain and Israel.

“Irish support for the Palestinian cause is not new, although many, many people have told me that the anti-Israel sentiment in this country has never been as strong and as nasty as it is today,” said Rabbi Wieder, who moved to Ireland from London.

The feeling of isolation was exacerbated because all of the major political parties share similar views on Israel's war in Gaza, he said.

"The fact that we've reached the point where Israel has felt it right to close the embassy is very upsetting," said the 28-year-old, who became the eighth Chief Rabbi of Ireland in July 2023.

He said it was not anti-Semitic to challenge or criticise Israel's actions in Gaza and Lebanon but said that Ireland had shown "double-standards" in its rhetoric against Israel.

"The Jewish community in Ireland has a strong affinity with Israel, and hearing all the hatred directed against Israel has been painful," said Rabbi Wieder, who is based in Dublin.

"Most Jewish people here strongly oppose Ireland's hostile anti-Israel stance and many are downright ashamed of their government because of it."

After he was accused of anti-Semitism by Mr Saar, Mr Harris's office released a statement.

"The Taoiseach will not be responding to personalised and false attacks and remains focused on the horrific war crimes being perpetrated in Gaza, standing up for human rights and international law and reflecting the views of so many people across Ireland who are so concerned at the loss of innocent, civilian lives," it said.

Anti-Semitism was already on the rise across Europe before surging after the Oct 7 terror attack.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights' annual survey found that 96 per cent of Jews had faced anti-Semitism in the past year with 70 per cent saying they occasionally hid their Jewish identity.

Poem for today

Christmas berth

Worried Jewish husband
He is searching for a room
For him, his wife called Mary
And the child within her womb
In darkened streets
Their hope retreats
At each enquiry, 'no' repeats,
So back to cold and shadowed gloom.

Desperation drives them
as the pains of birth begin.
Still the answer at the doors
No room, you can't come in.
One last place,
A friendly face,
'Out the back, I have a space
It's just a shed, but warm within'.

This shed becomes their refuge,
And a gift beyond all worth.
Inside this place of safety
Is a most amazing birth.

As angels sing
Here comes the King,
And lowly shepherds praises bring,
The Son of God comes down to Earth.

Above his star is blazing
Now the brightest in the sky.
Signalling his presence
As a blessing from on high.
Proclaiming peace,
Let warring cease;
The promised comes to grant release,
And all who heed, will never die.

With this gift from heaven
God has opened up a door.
Calling all his people in,
Both righteous and impure.
This baby seed
Destined to bleed,
Whose love is always guaranteed;
Is Jesus Christ, our guarantor!

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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