

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Confirmation in Jerusalem**

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## Image of the day



## Confirmation in Jerusalem

**Nine Cathedral Youth were confirmed at St. George's on Transfiguration Sunday.**

Photo above - Archbishop Hosam preaches on the Transfiguration and the nine fruits of the Spirit.



The confirmation candidates listen attentively.



Each of the newly confirmed then offers one of the sets of the prayers in the Prayers of the Faithful in the liturgy.

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Here, Krista Naoum offers some of the intercessions.



Cutting the cake at the reception following

“On Sunday morning, it was our great joy for nine of our Cathedral youth to reaffirm their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour and to receive Archbishop Hosam's laying-on-of-hands and anointing with oil in the rite of Confirmation.

“Among those being confirmed was the Archbishop and Rafa Naoum's youngest daughter, Krista, making it a particularly special day for them and all of us living on the Cathedral Close.

“We congratulate the nine newly confirmed and their families, and we wish our young people all of God's blessings as they continue to grow in the knowledge and love of the Lord”.



## **Congratulations from a long time friend**

Canon Bill Adair, Rector at St Columba's Church, Portadown who was awarded the BEM in the New Year's Honour's list for services to the Church of Ireland's and unstinting service to the local community was congratulated by Billy Austin a long-term admirer and a very skilful artist.



## Australian school flags up Irish link

On Feb 1st the school flag was raised by two Form 1 boarder girls to mark the first day of the school year at Strathcona Girls Grammar School in Melbourne where King Hospital past pupil Lorna Beegan (1983-1989) is the new Principal.





## Prayerful welcome and farewell to CSMI partners in mission

**The Quills had a wonderful welcome at Magheralin Parish last Sunday evening who have come onboard as one of their official links.**

They'd the opportunity to share about their up and coming mission partner service in South Sudan, with Andrew preaching. Rev Simon Genoe then called on Bishop Ken Clarke and Rev Emma Gibson to pray for God's protection and blessing over them.

CMSI posts - Please pray with them as they approach their commissioning service this Sunday evening at 7pm in Christ Church Primacy, Balloo Road, Bangor BT19 7PG

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## 25 years ministry at Lisburn Cathedral

**Lisburn  
Cathedral has  
celebrated 25  
years of  
ministry there  
by Dean Sam  
and Mrs Paula  
Wright.**

A somewhat  
stunned couple  
rose to the  
occasion -

“Thank you for the flowers & cake that surprised us this morning.

“Thanks also to John Quigley and Billy Moore for their kind words of appreciation for our ministry over the last quarter century.

“We are also grateful to those who helped with cakes and buns, tea & coffee. It was a lovely surprise celebration morning”.





## **Towards Peace supports upcoming Day of Prayer for survivors of Abuse**

**Una Allen coordinator of the spritual support service Towards Peace, urges people of faith to mark the upcoming Day of Prayer for survivors of Abuse in a special way. Towards Peace is based in Columba Centre of Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth.**


Ms Allen said, "In 2014, hugely aware of the trauma and devastation caused by abuse perpetrated by some Catholic Church representatives, combined with the ongoing development of the spiritual impact of abuse, Bishops and

the Leaders of Religious Congregations in Ireland came together to establish Towards Peace. Our service offers spiritual support for anybody who has been abused, physically, emotionally, sexually and spiritually, in a Religious or Church environment. Now in its tenth year, and a sister-service to the Towards Healing counselling service, Towards Peace seeks to provide a pathway, a safe space where people who have been hurt can connect with their own spirituality, their sense of God and the Sacred – their own journey towards peace. The service is free and is also available to the families of those who have been affected.

“Research shows that abuse by members of the Church has a major impact on a person’s spiritual well-being. Towards Peace is a response to a request from a number of survivors, who despite having received counselling, are still struggling at some deeper level of themselves. These men and women speak of a loss of faith and a sense of rejection by a Church who betrayed them. They speak of their feelings of darkness, of a deep mistrust and suspicion of that Church which resulted for many, in the loss of a spiritual home. In many cases they speak of a sense of abandonment by God.

“At Towards Peace, support is provided to survivors through conversations with a spiritual director/companion, an ‘anam cara’ or soul friend who endeavours to help each person listen to their own conversations with God – whomever or however they perceive that to be – ever respectful that each person’s individual spiritual journey is his or her own.

“This is a shared experience. There is no sense of the spiritual companion bestowing knowledge or answers, or



# Candle of Atonement Prayer

Lord, forgive us our many sins.  
We grieve and repent with all our hearts for having offended you, for our great failings and neglect of the young and vulnerable.  
We place all of those who have been hurt by the Church in any way into your loving hands and under the protection of Our Blessed Mother.  
Lord, bring peace to their broken lives and show us all the way out of darkness and into the light of your Word.  
May we as the people of God be more fully human, more fully Christ-like and more fully your people, that we may see the errors of the past and go forward with renewed hope and faith in Christ and in our Church.  
Amen.

@catholicbishops

attempting to bring the survivor back to Church; rather it is a journeying together, unpacking the hurts and the wounds that may have lain dormant for years. There is no pre-determined road map on this journey. Each person travels at their own unique individual pace.

“Soul murder is a term which is often used to describe the effects of abuse, especially when the perpetrator is associated with the Church, because in this context, the abuse of power, particularly against somebody so vulnerable, strikes at the very heart of our belief and connection to a loving God. In light of this, and of the continuing fallout from the abuse both inside and outside the

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Church, in 2016 Pope Francis invited bishops around the world to establish a special day of prayer in the Church year to support the paths of human and spiritual recovery. In March 2023 he offered victims of abuse a special intention by praying for those who have suffered harm from members of the Church: that may they find within the Church herself a concrete response to their pain and suffering. This intention goes to the very heart of the mission of Towards Peace.”

Ms Allen concluded, “The Day of Prayer is not only for victims and survivors, but also for families and communities affected by grief for their loved one and takes place this year on 16 February next, the Friday following Ash Wednesday which heralds the beginning of Lent 2024. I encourage parishes to mark the Day of Prayer in a special way. For further information and resources see [www.towardspeace.ie](http://www.towardspeace.ie)”

## **+Gary Fyfe lifeboat hero 'saved so many people'**

**The funeral of a lifeboat volunteer who died after a crash has been held.**

Gary Fyfe, who saved “many lives” during his years working on the Red Bay lifeboat, passed away at the scene of the accident on Thursday night. The single-vehicle collision happened on the Kilnadore Road in Cushendall.

The funeral of the lifeboat volunteer has been held.

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Requiem Mass was held at St Patrick's and St Brigid's Church in Glenariffe.

His passing was “deeply regretted” by his wife, children, father, brother, sisters and the wider family circle.

The Red Bay Lifeboat group paid tribute to Mr Fyfe. It said: “Gary was a giant in our lifeboat station, a natural leader who everyone turned to for advice and guidance.

“He signed up to be a lifeboat volunteer on turning 17 years of age, and this year would have seen him receive his 30-year service medal for lifesaving.

“He became a helm on the inshore lifeboat and a coxswain on our station's all-weather lifeboat.

“Gary was responsible for saving many lives during his years on the Red Bay lifeboat.

“He never sought recognition or praise for his rescues but rather carried his achievements lightly and thought only of others.

“In our small but close community in Cushendall, Gary was an anchor for us all and his loss will be felt far and wide.

“His life, and the selfless way he lived it, touched so many people.”

Cushendun Boat Club also said it was “shocked and extremely saddened” by Mr Fyfe's passing.

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It said he was “a long time volunteer with the Red Bay Lifeboat who selflessly gave of his time, and put himself at risk to help others.

“Gary was a friend to many in the community and will be sorely missed,” it added.

Cushendall Sailing and Boating Club said Mr Fyfe served on its committee for over 20 years and was its current honorary secretary.

It continued: “Gary's contribution to our club has been immense. He was always first to offer help, no matter the task, and his advice and support was invaluable.”

## Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

### Royal College of Organists Summer Course

**This year's Summer Course is taking place in London from 29 July to 3 Aug, and booking is now open.**

“Our popular course for all ages and stages already promises to be another exciting event.

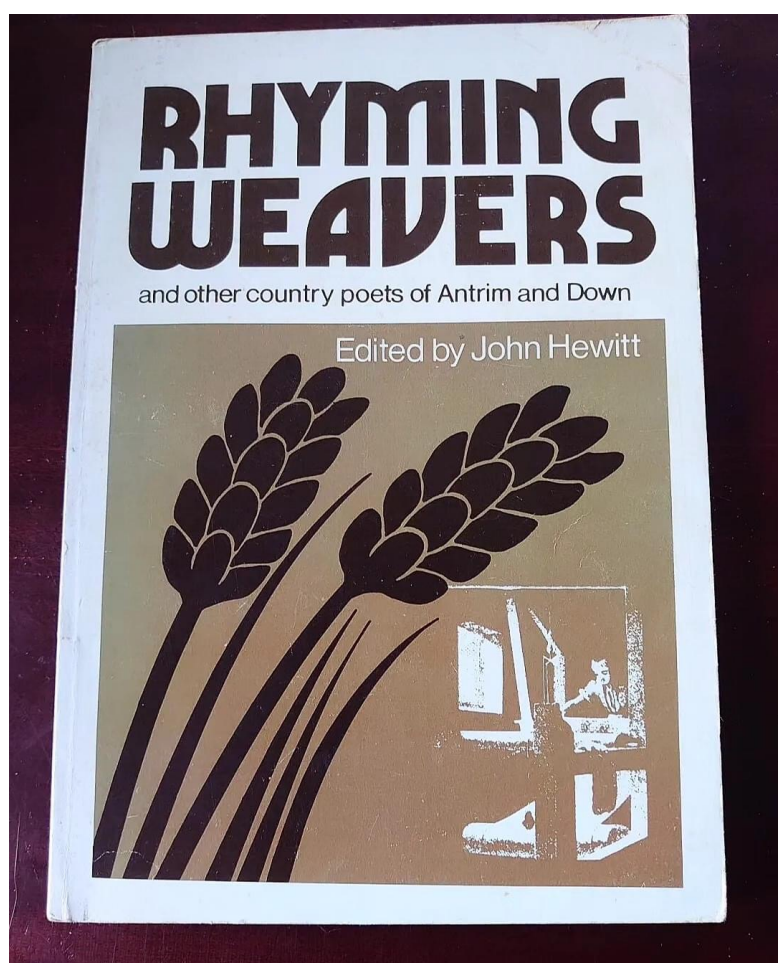
“Under the direction of Andrew Cantrill-Fenwick, participants can look forward to sessions on fundamentals of technique, improvisation, keyboard musicianship, as well as workshops and so much more.

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“We are delighted to announce that Anne Marsden-Thomas, William Dore, Frederick Stocken and Jeffrey Makinson will be providing tutorship across various sessions”.

Find out more and book here:

<https://bit.ly/3uxS15t>



**A celebration  
of the 50th  
anniversary of  
the publication  
of John  
Hewitt's  
"Rhyming  
Weavers"  
Anthology**

**Ulster University,  
Belfast Campus.  
Friday 1 March, 2pm  
– 6pm**

As a commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of John Hewitt's "Rhyming Weavers" anthology, the Royal Irish Academy, in association with range of partners including Ulster University and The John Hewitt Society, are hosting a celebration of the diversity of the literature and culture of eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Ulster in the new Belfast campus of Ulster

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University on the 1st March, 2 – 6pm, followed by a reception in Ulster University.

The key focus of the event is to celebrate the richness of the cultural heritages of Ulster during the period by featuring discussion panels on writings in both Ulster-Scots and Irish, poetry readings, as well as musical interludes and material culture.

Following opening speeches from Ulster University, The Rt. Hon, The Lord Mayor, Councillor Ryan Murphy and other distinguished guests,

Professor Paul Muldoon, Ireland Professor of Poetry, will discuss and recite his choice of readings for the event in both languages.

If you would like to join us, then please follow the link to register your attendance:

[ria.ie/rhyming-weavers-anniversary](http://ria.ie/rhyming-weavers-anniversary)



Mrs. Jones got a little too used to watching online worship from home.



## In the media

### **Pupils at many integrated schools mainly from one community due to their location - Belfast Telegraph**

**Report says societal barriers still hamper sector's impact and reach, Mark Bain, Education correspondent writes.**

A new report has found many schools which have gone integrated continue to draw pupils mainly from just one section of the community.

The latest paper from Ulster University's Transforming Education series looked specifically at the sector over the last four decades.

It found that while progress had been steady, the process of a school transforming remains “too arduous and demanding”, with “environmental, political and societal barriers preventing integrated schools having a deeper impact and reach”.

The report said: “In the school year 2022-23, the overall pupil profile of integrated schools — 35% Protestant, 34% Catholic, 31% Other — is broadly reflective of the community composition revealed in the census results.

“However, these aggregate figures mask a deeper imbalance.

“Whilst pupils from a Catholic background make up the majority of the student body in grant maintained integrated schools, they are notably less plentiful in controlled integrated schools — a trend which is particularly notable in the post-primary sector.

“Figures from the 2022-23 Department of Education school enrolment data show that only 15% of pupils who attend Priory Integrated College in Holywood are from a Catholic background despite the school having transformed in 1997. “Only 11% of pupils at Forthill Integrated College, Lisburn, (which transformed in 1998) identify as Catholic.

“Both are illustrative of the enduring demographic profile of the schools' locations and catchments as well as the fact that these schools were permitted to transform when there was a lack of balance in projected enrolments.

“This suggests that some controlled schools which have transformed to integrated schools may still be drawing pupils mainly from their previous, religiously-defined catchment areas.

“These schools were permitted to transform when there was a lack of balance in projected enrolments — a community imbalance could have implications for the 'living out' of integrated principles.”

At the start of the 2023-24 school year there were 70 integrated schools.

In total, 2,814 pupils applied for the 2,310 places available in integrated schools for the September 2021 intake.

In one of its final acts before the DUP collapsed it in 2022, Stormont passed Alliance MLA Kellie Armstrong's Integrated Education Bill.

The Bill required the Department of Education to increase the number of integrated school places and set targets for the number of children being educated in them.

The university report found, for many children, currently attaining a place at an integrated school “is currently not a realistic proposition as integrated schools remain rare”.

“This pattern of demand for places exceeding supply is, however, by no means consistent in applications to integrated schools,” the Ulster University report added.

“A number of integrated schools have experienced falling pupil numbers impacting on their long term viability.

“In 2009, Armagh Integrated College closed just five years after opening.

“Declining pupil enrolment at Down Academy (Downpatrick) led to a merger with Rowallane Integrated College to become Blackwater Integrated College in 2008.

“In October 2023, the department approved the closure of Blackwater Integrated College with a replacement integrated post-primary school to be built in the Mid Down area with an anticipated opening of September 2024.”

## **Thirty Christians killed in Israel's war with Hamas, say church sources - Catholic Herald**

### **Thirty Christians killed in Israel's war with Hamas, say church sources, Amy Balog writes**

A total of 30 Christians have lost their lives because of the conflict in Gaza, according to Church sources.

Out of about 1,000 Christians remaining, 19 were killed by military action and 11 died because of a lack of medical care in the four months since the war began.

Two women were shot dead by sniper fire at the Holy Family Catholic Church, Gaza City last December.

At the parish, a priest and seven religious Sisters have been looking after 560 Christians – including 140 children and 84 people over the age of 65.

In October, 17 people were killed while taking refuge at nearby St Porphyrios Greek Orthodox Church, when rockets hit the compound during an aerial attack on a Hamas command post.

A further 11 Christians have died from chronic illnesses left untreated because of the growing humanitarian crisis – one of them, 48-year-old Hani Abu Daud, passed away after

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hospitals became unable to provide dialysis treatments due to a lack of fuel and electricity.

George Akroush, director of the Project Development Office at the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, told Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN): “20 litres of diesel cost €200 \[£170], and only provide energy for the generators for two hours.”

He said that 10 more people are at risk of dying because of a lack of adequate treatment.

The situation is deteriorating by the day, with food and fuel becoming increasingly difficult to come by and no fully functional hospitals left in the Gaza Strip, according to the World Health Organization.

Water pumps have also stopped functioning, so residents have to try to manually extract water from wells, according to Mr Akroush.

He said: “Hygiene has become a serious issue, especially for the children, who are falling ill because of lack of water and basic supplies, such as flour and diapers.”

He highlighted that those sheltering in the churches have to exercise extreme caution when stepping outside because “any suspicious or dangerous movement will put your life at risk and might be your last.

“After four months under siege, they are tired, and many are sick.”

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Mr Akroush added that the mass destruction of homes and infrastructure makes the future of Christianity in the Gaza Strip uncertain.

He told ACN: “They say that 62 percent of the houses have been totally destroyed, and that reconstruction will last until 2093 according to some international and United Nations agencies active on the ground.

“With all of this, one has to ask what future is there for Christians in this country?

“What is going to happen? Nobody knows.

“Please, pray for us, do not forget the suffering of the Christians in this part of the world.”

International Catholic charity ACN has helped the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem to provide food coupons, medical aid and assistance with housing costs and tuition fees for Christians in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The charity supported the Patriarchate with £430,000 (€500,000) between January and April 2024, bringing the combined total amount of help given since last October to nearly £600,000 (€700,000).

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site



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## Church News Ireland

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