

# Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Guide dogs family event

## **Image for today -** Guide dogs for the Blind NI family event

### **News -**

New furniture at All Saint's Derry beloved Charity Shop  
Dunkerrin to host tractor run on Sunday  
Grant funding available for heritage projects in Offaly

### **Education -**

EA's Chief Executive visits Belfast Met catering staff  
Are universities ready to support technology-driven lifelong learning?  
RBAI launches Well-being podcast  
Give it a Go: Get into Sport, Health & Fitness with James Hume!

### **Cathedral Calls -**

Embrace difference with love, Racial Justice Sunday  
Service

### **Clergy and ministry -**

Congrats to Fr Michael Shortall

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

St. Patrick's Pilgrimage starts at The Big Fish, Belfast  
National Youth Choir Northern Ireland auditions  
The story of the Ulster Scots in Ards - Walking Tour

### **Perspective -**

Ireland to be reconsecrated to the Sacred Heart in June

### **Speaking to the soul -**

Short reading and a prayer daily on this site



February 13, 2025

## Image of the day



## Guide dogs for the Blind NI family event

**Some spaces are still available for this Family Event at Belfast's Ulster Museum!**




Saturday 22nd March



10:00 AM – 3:00 PM



Children with a vision impairment plus one parent/ guardian are free. Immediate family members are £7.50. Booking is essential

 Please contact the Family Events Team directly at [familyevents@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:familyevents@guidedogs.org.uk) for a booking form.

Following a welcome arrival at 10, families are free to explore the museum, attend the discovery centres and have the option to attend the exclusive sensory workshop that Ulster Museum is kindly providing for our Guide Dog guests.

At midday, we will be serving everyone a delicious lunch; a great opportunity to sit down and meet other families! Staff from our Children and Young People's Services will also be available throughout the day to provide valuable information, advice, and guidance.

## News

### New furniture at All Saint's Derry beloved Charity Shop

**The Furniture Outlet offers affordable furniture while supporting the work of the church.**

**Location:** Old Ebrington Centre, just below the Charity Shop and Café (where Sure Start was previously located).

**Opening Hours:** Monday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday  
10am-4pm



**Furniture Donations Welcome:** If you're replacing any furniture, please consider donating it to the outlet. You don't even have to worry about transporting it, our collection service will come to you!

For more information or to arrange a donation/collection, please contact Reloved Furniture Outlet by phone (02871 341110) or simply stop by in person.

"Thank you for helping us make a difference in the lives of those who need it most".





## **Dunkerrin to host tractor run on Sunday**

**Dunkerrin Church of Ireland are hosting their annual Tractor Run on Sunday, February 16, in aid of Night Nurse & Irish Cancer Society.**

Registration from 12 noon, tractor run at 2pm. Auction on the day with refreshments in the Community Centre, Dunkerrin.

## **Grant funding available for heritage projects in Offaly**

**Heritage Council's Community Heritage Grant Scheme is now open for applications**

The Heritage Council is now accepting applications from community groups and not for profit non-governmental organisations in Offaly for its Community Heritage Grant

Scheme 2024. All relevant information is available from the Heritage Council's website.

A broad range of project types are eligible for funding under the scheme including:

Conservation works to collections, objects or places, including natural heritage projects e.g. control of invasive species or habitat restoration works; conservation works to buildings, including churches; stabilisation works to ruined structures;

Surveys, reports, plans, and audits to inform the future management of buildings and monuments, habitats, collections, or objects.

Accessibility projects that make heritage activities more accessible for people with disabilities e.g. building ramps, automatic doors, handrails, tactile interpretation

Projects that help people engage more with their heritage e.g. interactive maps, videos, virtual exhibitions, podcasts, websites

Purchase of specialised equipment e.g archival boxing for vulnerable documents, monitoring equipment for humidity or light, interpretation/multimedia equipment, specialised software

Projects that address the heritage of minority groups e.g. an oral history project documenting Traveller heritage

Training in traditional skills and crafts e.g. workshops on skills such as roofing, thatch, dry stone walling etc.

Citizen science projects on environmental conservation.

A recently funded project under this scheme in Offaly was the conservation plan to repair and stabilise three badly damaged items from the Parsonstown Poor Law Union archives in Birr, including the indoor registers of the workhouse from the famine era. For an overview of all projects funded under the scheme in previous years, see the website.

The minimum grant that can be requested through the scheme is €500. The maximum is €25,000.

## Education

### EA's Chief Executive visits Belfast Met catering staff

**The EA's Chief Executive, Richard Pengelly, attended Belfast Met recently to visit some of their catering staff during their professional cookery training.**

As part of their professional development pathway, catering assistants have been given the opportunity to take part in accredited cookery training.

Working with the five Further Education colleges across Northern Ireland, 57 staff are taking part in the training.





Stephen Briggs, head of EA Catering, accompanied Mr Pengelly to Belfast Met and met catering staff and some of the lecturers.

The training will allow catering assistants to attain professional qualifications and progress their careers within EA Catering.



## Are universities ready to support technology-driven lifelong learning?

**The rise of edtech, AI and the demand for upskilling has redefined the role of universities in supporting lifelong learners. From personalised learning pathways to seamless mobile access, institutions must adapt to stay relevant.**

Read the latest article in Times Higher Education from Daniel Hill, MD of EMEA at Instructure, to explore how modernising virtual learning environments (VLEs) can bridge the gap between education and evolving workforce needs.

Discover how modernisation can empower learners and institutions: <https://bit.ly/4jwO5qg>

## RBAI launches Well-being podcast

**RBAI has launched a Well-being podcast which will feature senior pupils, and teachers with senior pastoral responsibilities and alumni.**

The podcast aims to provide advice and guidance on managing Well-being, making the most of opportunities at school and uncovers some favourite memories of RBAI.

Episode 1, featuring an interview with the Head of School, George Craigan, is now live. In the first episode, George

February 13, 2025

reveals his top tips for Well-being and gives his views on the importance of extra-curricular activities at RBAI.

Listen to Episode 1 on Spotify

## **Give it a Go: Get into Sport, Health & Fitness with James Hume!**

**What does it take to make it in professional sport? Ulster Rugby star James Hume knows—and he's ready to share his journey with you.**

From training hard to representing Ireland on the international stage, James will reveal what it takes to build a winning mindset, stay at the top of your game, and make sport a part of your life. 🏆

FREE online event.

Don't just watch from the sidelines—register now!  
<https://tinyurl.com/fblni-GIAGevents-Feb2025>

## **Cathedral Calls**

### **Embrace difference with love, Racial Justice Sunday Service**

**“The world needs to see us embracing one another's difference with love and harmony as one people of God,” said the Revd Kevin Ronne who was the preacher**





**at Choral Evensong in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin to mark Racial Justice Sunday on February 9.**

“They need to know that colour is beautiful and only the very sad cannot see how beautiful the colours of God and Jesus Christ are. We are the colour of God and Jesus Christ,” he added.

The service took place in the presence of the Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Revd John McDowell and members of his Reference Group on Ethnic Diversity, Inclusion and Racial Justice. It was introduced by the Dean, the Very Revd William Morton, who outlined the work of the Primate's Reference Group and the background to Racial Justice Sunday.

The group advises the Archbishop of Armagh on ways in which the Church of Ireland can reflect upon and practice

February 13, 2025

the full inclusion of ethnic minority and migrant members in church and wider society.

The theme of this year's Racial Justice Sunday was, 'Coat of Many Colours', reflecting the increasing diversity that exists in churches in Ireland.

In his sermon, the Revd Kevin Ronne said that we needed to be the vine and see the branches coming in from all over the world. He said that colour was one of those branches and white and black were both beautiful.



## **The Revd Kevin Ronne**

Kevin is Rector of Raheny and Coolock in Dublin and a member of the Primate's Reference Group. He is from South Africa and spoke of his own experiences growing up



during the time of Apartheid as a member of a bi-racial family, his father being European and mother French Mauritian.

“I was born with twins inside of me. These twins I wrestled with all of my life. I had a black twin and I had a white twin. Sometimes they were good. Other times they left me quite angry. When we deal with racial prejudice we deal with colourism. And colourism is found within your very own because you belong to neither – for the one you are not right because you are too white and for the other you are not right because you are too brown. So where do we fit into the scheme of things?” he asked.

He said growing up in the Apartheid era he knew that white was good and black was bad. “The more white you were the more blessed you were, the more prosperous you were. The more black you were... well you didn’t want to be black,” he commented.

But he said inside his church he began to discover that difference was beautiful and black was magnificent and from the Scriptures he realised that the Creator was a loving Creator. “This Creator loves me so I am exactly the right person to be. I am not you and you are not me,” he said.

But he said that the world we live in does not appreciate the beauty and joy of colour. He asked if Christians had a responsibility in this regard. “How many people of the Church of God are truly speaking in our communities, talking about this difficult topic. To me it is not difficult. It is a topic I like to engage with. When I found that the brown and the black and the pink were a good thing... and when I



accepted that I learned to accept you and all other people. We can love. The answer lies in taking the chance on each other, loving each other,” Kevin stated.

“People of God, racism is real. It lives among us. We as the people of God can make the difference. We can say ‘no’ to this racism. We can say ‘yes’ to the goodness of God... that the colours of the world are beautiful. But we need to do it if we are to be part of the vine.” He observed that Jesus said people would know the people of God by the love they have for one another. “We all need to stand up as the Christian family of God and let them see the love of God in action,” he said. He urged people not to be afraid to use the words black or white as they were the words given to describe colours, but do not let that be the excuse not to love each other.

Racial Justice Sunday is an initiative of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, of which the Church of Ireland is a co-founding member.

**This year marks the 30th anniversary of Racial Justice Sunday, which was established by the Methodist Church in 1995 following the tragic racist murder of Black teenager Stephen Lawrence in southeast London in April 1993.**

Members of the Primate's Reference Group on Ethnic Diversity, Inclusion and Racial Justice with the Archbishop of Armagh following the Racial Justice Sunday Service in St Patrick's Cathedral.

## Clergy and ministry

### Congrats to Fr Michael Shortall

**Congratulations to Fr Michael Shortall who has been appointed President of St Patrick's College Maynooth.**

This is a terrific promotion and a great honour for Fr Michael and his family on the Yellow Road, Castlecomer.

It is a wonderful appointment for Fr Michael. This involves him in very important work in the Irish church as President of the National Seminary and the training of young priests. He replaces Prof Michael Mullaney, who has stepped down from that role.

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

### St. Patrick's Pilgrimage starts at The Big Fish - Belfast

**St. Patrick's Pilgrimage with Jim Deeds & Cheryl Meban is on Monday, 17 March 2025, leaving The Big Fish - Belfast at 12.00pm**

12pm - Start Point - 'The Big Fish' on Donegall Quay



Visiting Belfast Cathedral (photo above) and St. Patrick's Church, Donegall St. enroute

2pm - End Point – St. Matthew's Church, Shankill Road where refreshments will be provided.

2:30pm - Transport will leave St. Matthew's Church and return to the Big Fish.

This event is also taking place on Monday 14th March. Please check the Belfast TradFest website for further details.

In this cross-community journey, we will visit sites linked to St Patrick's story and reflect on how it can speak into our lives today, with moments for reflection, prayer and song along the way.



St Patrick is now widely accepted as a common Christian saint who crossed the ford at the Farset river near the Big Fish and made his way through what is now the Cathedral Quarter to establish the “Church of St. Patrick of the White Ford” which later became known as “The Old Church” or Shankill.

Meeting at the Big Fish and walking through the Cathedral Quarter, visiting Belfast Cathedral and St. Patrick’s Church which houses a fragment of the bone of St. Patrick, taken from Downpatrick to Rome a thousand years ago and returned to Belfast in the 1860’s, finishing at St. Matthew’s Church on the Shankill Road, site of the first church in Belfast, which it is believed was founded by St. Patrick.

Open to all religious/spiritual traditions and none.  
[www.belfasttradfest.com](http://www.belfasttradfest.com)

## **National Youth Choir Northern Ireland**

### **Open audition evening for all five choirs**

with NYCNI Artistic Director; Andrew Nunn.  
Thursday, 20 February 2025 at  
Malone Presbyterian Church Halls  
Belfast BT9 6GT

Further details: [www.nycni.org](http://www.nycni.org)  
[admin@nycni.org](mailto:admin@nycni.org)



**National Youth Choir  
Northern Ireland  
Open Audition Evening**

**COME AND  
JOIN OUR  
NYCNI CHOIRS**

**THURSDAY 20TH  
FEBRUARY  
6PM-9PM**

**MALONE PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH HALLS,  
BELFAST, BT9 6GT**

**EMAIL : ADMIN@NYCNL.ORG  
FOR AN AUDITION**

**WWW.NYCNL.ORG**

National Youth Choir Northern Ireland

PRINCIPAL FUNDER  
arts council

The poster features a circular inset image of a youth choir performing. The background is dark blue with a red banner at the top and a yellow banner on the left. The text is in white and yellow for emphasis.

## The story of the Ulster Scots in Ards - Walking Tour

**There's still time to book your space on this animated walking tour of Newtownards exploring its rich Ulster-Scots history.**

From the settlement of the Montgomery's in 1606 to the execution of the Reverend William Warwick from Kircubbin Presbyterian in 1798, see how these historic characters played a fundamental role in the development of Newtownards as we know it today.

As always, Valhalla Street Theatre will bring to life these historic stories through drama and performance and give the audience a unique insight into our local history that is both fascinating and entertaining.

February 13, 2025

Departs from Ards Arts Centre

Sun 16 Feb: 11am (the 2pm walk is now SOLD OUT) £5

For more info and booking, visit: <https://andculture.org.uk/whats-on/leid-and-lairn-story-ulster-scots-ards>

## Perspective

### Ireland to be reconsecrated to the Sacred Heart in June

**Ireland will be reconsecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus June 22 in a special Mass celebrated by Archbishop Eamon C. Martin at the International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine in Knock, County Mayo.**

Ireland's bishops consecrated the country to the Sacred Heart for the first time in June 1873. The Church celebrates June as the Month of the Sacred Heart, and the feast day occurs annually on the Friday following the second Sunday after Pentecost. This year, it falls on June 27.

According to the Jesuits in Ireland, the countrywide spread of devotion to the Sacred Heart was first initiated by Jesuit Father James Cullen's 1887 appointment as director for Ireland's branch of the Apostleship of Prayer. A 1937 study estimated that about a million faithful were consecrated to the Sacred Heart in connection with the nation's Apostleship of Prayer.



Consecrating the family to the Sacred Heart was a common practice in Ireland until the 1960s. Families displayed a picture of the Sacred Heart in a central place in their home and kept a lamp burning in front of it.

All-Ireland Sacred Heart Crusade aims to promote devotion to the Sacred Heart throughout the nation in preparation for the June reconsecration, CatholicNews.ie reported Feb. 5. Irish musician Dana Scallan launched the Crusade Feb. 2 during a Sacred Heart Concert in Abbeyleix, County Laois. The event drew attendees from across Ireland and featured four Sacred Heart statues blessed by Pope Francis. These statues will journey throughout the country accompanied by several priests, including Father Shane Gallagher and Father John Mockler.

“The Sacred Heart has brought us all together in His love,” Fr. Mockler said at the event. “My prayer is that the flames of love of the Sacred Heart will penetrate our country and the heart of every person.”

During the annual retreat of the Bishops of Ireland at the shrine, Archbishop Martin, the Primate of All Ireland, introduced an initiative to promote the Sacred Heart Devotion across Ireland as part of the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

## 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**

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