

# Church News Ireland



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## Image of the day

### Ballintoy Harbour

**Ballintoy Harbour is a small, picturesque fishing port located near the village of Ballintoy on the north coast of County Antrim.**

It is known for its stunning natural beauty, with dramatic cliffs, rocky outcrops, and clear blue waters. The harbour is a popular tourist destination, attracting visitors from all over the world who come to enjoy the scenery, walk along the coastal paths, and perhaps even spot some of the local wildlife.

The harbour itself is quite small, consisting of a stone quay and a few small buildings. There is a cafe located at the harbour, where visitors can enjoy a meal or a cup of coffee while taking in the views. The harbour is also a popular spot for fishing, and visitors can often see local anglers casting their lines from the quay.

In addition to its natural beauty, Ballintoy Harbour is also known for its role in the HBO television series "**Game of Thrones**." The harbour was used as a filming location for several scenes in the show, and it has since become a popular destination for fans of the series.

Overall, Ballintoy Harbour is a beautiful and charming place to visit. It is a great place to relax and enjoy the natural beauty of the North Antrim coast. The easiest marker to turn

coastwards from the main road is the distinctive and well known white parish church.

Thanks once more to Gaz Drone photography.

## News

### Nominating the next Archbishop of Canterbury

**As part of the nomination process for the next Archbishop of Canterbury, the Church of England has launched a public consultation inviting input from around the Anglican Communion. The consultation runs from February 7 to March 28.**

The consultation is an opportunity to gather the views of a wide range of people from across the Anglican Communion on the gifts, qualities and skills needed in the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury. Those who take part will also be able to submit names for the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC) to consider.

The CNC will use the themes that emerge through this process to inform the Commission on the needs of the mission of the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion.

The role of the CNC is to discern whom God may be calling to the ministry. The CNC is a 20-member body, including 17 voting members and up to 3 nonvoting members. 5 of the

voting members are representatives from the Anglican Communion.

Once the full membership of the CNC is known in March, the Commission will convene for its first meeting in May, followed by two further meetings – one in July and one in September. Through these, the Commission will agree the 'Role Profile' and 'Person Specification' for the next Archbishop of Canterbury, and discern the longlist, to shortlist and to interview candidates.

It is not possible to apply for the role of Archbishop of Canterbury. Instead, individuals will be invited into a careful and prayerful process of discernment.

## **C of E Synod approves new Clergy Conduct Measure**

**The new Clergy Conduct Measure (CCM) received final approval from the General Synod on Wednesday afternoon to replace the much-criticised Clergy Discipline Measure (CDM).**

The Measure passed overwhelmingly in all three houses of the Synod, with no votes against and only three recorded abstentions.

Members warmly welcomed the radical overhaul of clergy discipline, especially the new minor grievance track and protections against vexatious complaints.



Bishop Street, Derry - Packed with charm, culture and a deep sense of history, Bishop Street is more than just a road - it is a journey through the heart of Derry's past and present. Whether you want to discover more of the city's history, indulge in the local flavours at the cafes and restaurants - or you simply just love exploring charming streets - Bishop Street is certainly worth a stroll when you VisitDerry

A number of speakers, including the Archbishop of York, said that the CCM would help to rebuild trust in the workings of the Church of England.

Canon Kate Wharton (Liverpool), a member of the steering committee for the Measure, reminded the Synod of the significant changes being introduced by the CCM, which would divide complaints into three pathways, depending on the severity of the allegations.

There would also be streamlining of bureaucracy, the abolition of the 12-month time limit for serious misconduct, the integration of safeguarding professionals into the process, better protections against vexatious complaints, and more information-sharing between dioceses and provinces. Deposition from Holy Orders had been reintroduced for the most serious offences.

“To say we need to implement these reforms seems like an understatement in light of recent events,” Canon Wharton concluded. “The current system is sick, and we need a healthier one to take us forward.”

Many contributors to the debate spoke of the terrible toll that the CDM had taken on clergy who had been unfairly accused and dragged through a years-long stressful and complex judicial process.

Amanda Robbie (Lichfield) said that her husband now suffered from lifelong health problems because of the stress of a vexatious complaint against him. Rebecca Hunt (Portsmouth) told members that she knew of one priest who



*The Children of Lir at Ballycastle against the backdrop of Fair Head*

had a complaint made against him for not visiting a parishioner while they were in hospital.

The new grievance track available under the CCM should keep minor disputes out of an “inflexible and cruel” tribunal process, Canon Wharton said, as well as protect clergy from complaints arising from pastoral breakdown or doctrinal differences.

The full details of how the CCM would work in practice are still to come, including a definition of the distinction between misconduct and serious misconduct, and will be debated

during July's Synod meeting, when the CCM's rules and code of conduct are due to be brought.

Members nodded through some minor amendments that would bring those clergy working for Royal Peculiars into formal disciplinary proceedings for the first time.

When the Measure came to a vote for final approval, it was carried in all three Houses: Bishops 25-0, with no recorded abstentions; Clergy 128-0, with one recorded abstentions; Laity 145-0, with two recorded abstentions.

## **Mass attendance rises in the UK, though still far below pre-pandemic levels**

**Though not yet near pre-pandemic levels, Mass attendance numbers are on the rise in England and Wales, according to figures from the national bishops' conference.**

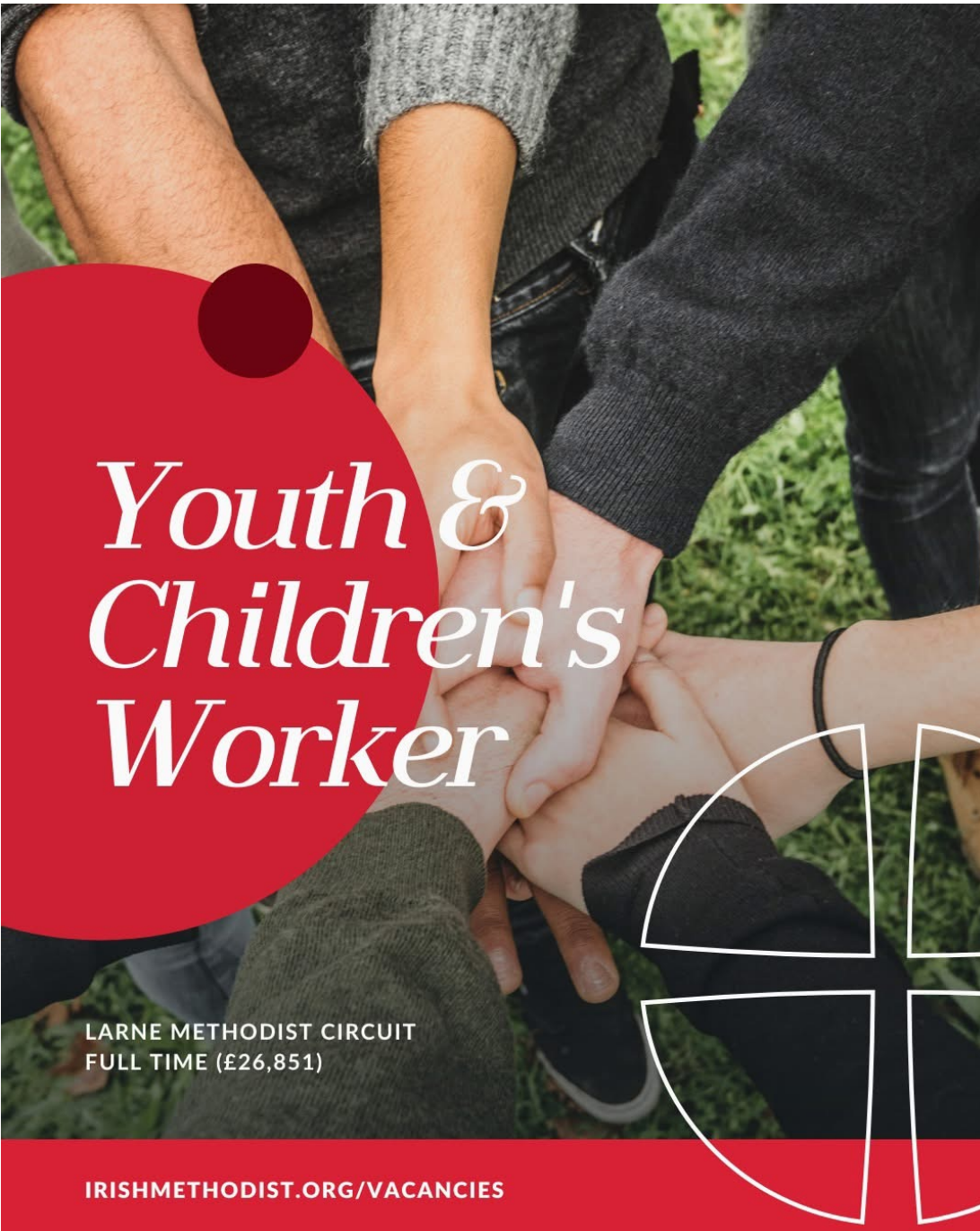
In 2023, an estimated nearly 555,000 people attended Sunday Mass in England and Wales, a roughly 50,000-person increase over 2022, a spokesman for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales told CNA via email.

The spokesman described the figure as “not a full return to pre-COVID levels, but it is an improvement on recent years.” He also noted that the figure may be a “slight underestimation as some parishes may not have given their figures when their diocese requested them.”

February 15, 2025

Stephen Bullivant, director of the Benedict XVI Centre for Religion and Society at St. Mary's University in Twickenham, London, told CNA he is "tentatively hopeful that this trend for modest (re)growth will continue in subsequent years."

He pointed to a 2024 article he wrote for the Tablet in which he noted that while Mass attendance in the U.K. has significantly decreased over the past several decades — leading to projections of a near-extinction of Catholicism —



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### *Cloisters at Canterbury Cathedral*

such dire projections seem unlikely due to signs of growth in some areas of U.K. Catholic life. That said, Mass attendance stood at roughly 829,000 across England, Wales, and Scotland on a “typical Sunday” in 2019, Bullivant wrote, meaning attendance still has a long way to climb before it reaches pre-pandemic levels, if ever.

## **Ex-bishop admits historical indecent assaults on boy**


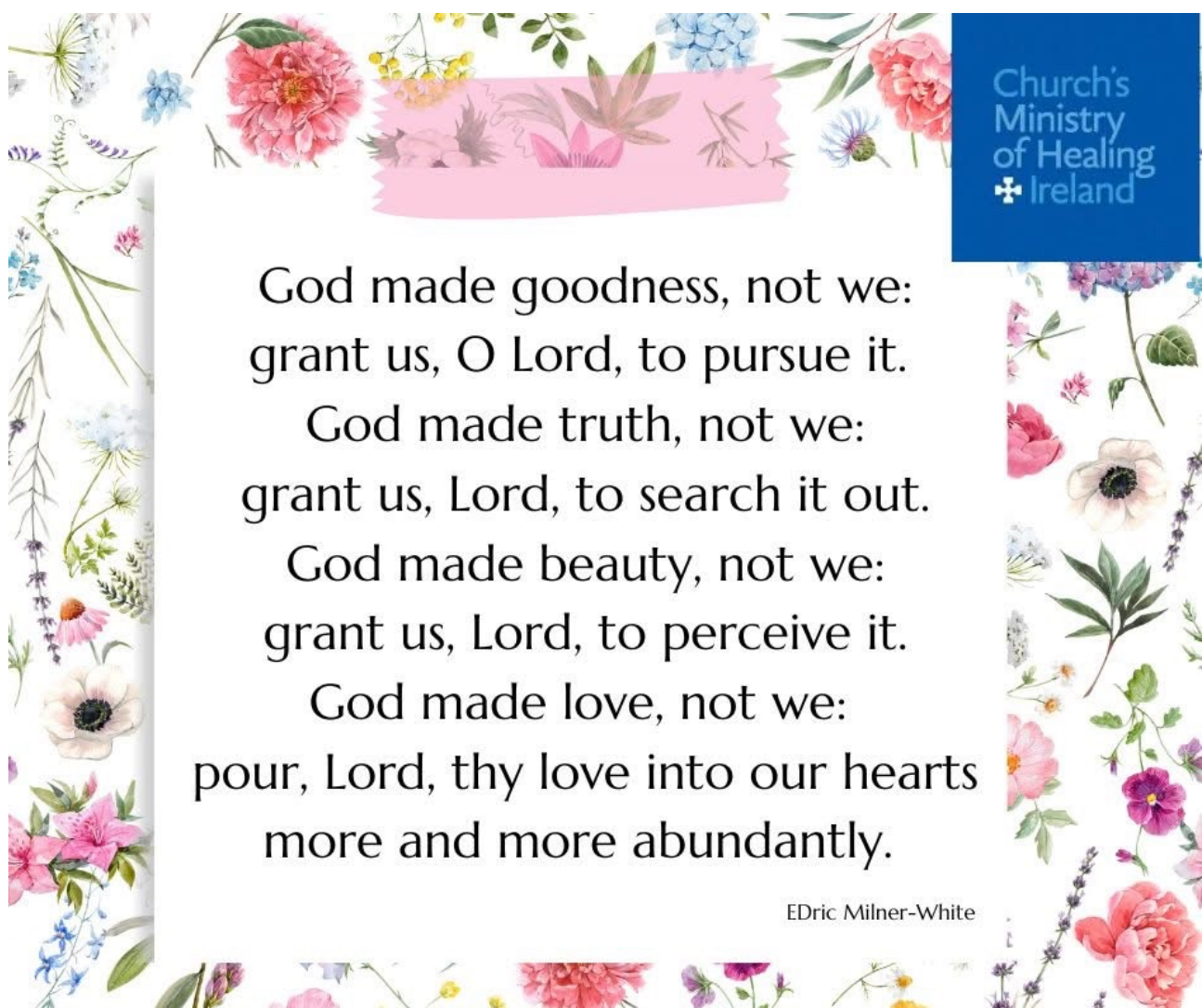
**A former bishop has admitted indecent assault on a child, the Church in Wales has said in a statement, BBC News Wales reports.**

February 15, 2025

Anthony Pierce, who was bishop of Swansea and Brecon between 1999 and 2008, appeared at Swansea Crown Court on Friday.

He admitted five counts of indecent assault on a male child under the age of 16, the church said.

It added the offences date from between 1985 and 1990, when Mr Pierce was a parish priest in West Cross, Swansea. Mr Pierce has been remanded on bail and a provisional date of 7 March has been set for sentencing at Swansea Crown Court, the church said.



God made goodness, not we:  
grant us, O Lord, to pursue it.

God made truth, not we:  
grant us, Lord, to search it out.

God made beauty, not we:  
grant us, Lord, to perceive it.

God made love, not we:  
pour, Lord, thy love into our hearts  
more and more abundantly.

EDric Milner-White

Allegations came to the church's attention in 2023 when the survivor made a disclosure to its safeguarding officer.

It said the disclosure was immediately passed to the police.

It added following sentencing, the Church in Wales Disciplinary Tribunal would consider further appropriate action.

More at - [<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ce85pr119r8o>]

## **Jesuit report 'step in right direction' - One in Four CEO**

**The Chief Executive of One in Four has said she has no doubt that more people will be named as perpetrators and abusers, both by religious orders and other organisations, RTE News reports.**

It comes after the Jesuit Order named a further 15 deceased Jesuits who have been the subject of child sexual abuse complaints, eight of whom were already the subject of complaint during their lifetimes.

The other seven first became the subject of complaint after their deaths.

All allegations in these cases have been reported to gardaí and statutory authorities.

Deirdre Kenny welcomed the publication of the report from the Jesuits Order yesterday, but said past experience has proven that organisations have protected themselves.

"This information, being drip fed for decades, is not particularly helpful but I've no doubt - we've known from the scoping inquiry - there are thousands of people out there," she said.

## Who are the 15 Jesuits named in publication?

**A document entitled 'The Naming of Deceased Jesuits Regarding Child Sexual Abuse Complaints' has been published by the Jesuit Order. RTE News.**

A further 15 deceased Jesuits who have been the subject of child sexual abuse complaints, eight of whom were already the subject of complaint during their lifetimes, were named.

More -

[\[https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2025/0212/1496290-jesuit-report/\]](https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2025/0212/1496290-jesuit-report/)

## Vatican charity says Trump administration's gutting of USAID is 'reckless' and could kill millions

**The Vatican's charity said Monday that U.S. plans to gut USAID were "reckless" and could kill millions, while Pope Francis' point man on development urged the**



*The Northern Ireland Ambassador to the United States...*

**Trump administration to remember Christian principles about caring for others, Associated Press.**

Cardinal Michael Czerny, a Czech-born Canadian Jesuit, is one of the cardinals most closely associated with Francis' pontificate and heads the Vatican office responsible for migrants, the environment, the church's Caritas Internationalis charity and development.

February 15, 2025

Caritas on Monday warned that millions of people could die as a result of the “ruthless” U.S. decision to “recklessly” stop USAID funding, and hundreds of millions more will be condemned to “dehumanizing poverty.”

USAID is the main international humanitarian and development arm of the U.S. government and in 2023 managed more than \$40 billion in combined appropriations, accounting for around 40% of the global aid budget. The Trump administration and billionaire ally Elon Musk have targeted USAID hardest so far in their challenge of federal government spending: A sweeping funding freeze has shut down most of USAID’s programs worldwide, though a federal judge on Friday put a temporary halt to plans to pull thousands of agency staffers off the job.

More at -

[\[https://apnews.com/article/vatican-us-usaid-pope-migration-6bf064630ff58022ab133f5375f5b5ef\]](https://apnews.com/article/vatican-us-usaid-pope-migration-6bf064630ff58022ab133f5375f5b5ef)

## Cathedral Calls

### Appointment of Dean of Down

**Bishop David McClay of Down & Dromore has appointed the Revd Henry Blair as Dean of Down.**

Rev Blair will be instituted as rector of the Lecale Area Mission Partnership (LAMP) on Wednesday 26 February and installed as Dean in Down Cathedral on Sunday 2 March.



He succeeds Dean Henry Hull who retired in December 2023.

Bishop McClay said, "I am delighted that in addition to his new role as rector of LAMP the Revd Henry Blair (Photo above) has accepted the role of Dean of Down.

"A cathedral church today needs increasingly to be a centre of mission. Our heritage of St Patrick's life and ministry gives Down Cathedral a mission focus and the impetus and opportunity for the proclamation of the Gospel.

"Henry's demonstrated zeal for that same Gospel and his love for the worldwide church makes him an outstanding candidate to become the next Dean of Down and rector of LAMP.

"Please pray for him as he undertakes both these roles."

Henry is the Ireland National Director for Sharing of Ministry Abroad (SOMA), prior to which he was Incumbent of the Parish of Tullanisken and Clonoe in the Diocese of Armagh.

February 15, 2025

He was ordained in 2004 and has a background in both agriculture and accountancy. Henry is married to Helen and they have four grown up sons and three grandchildren.

He said of his appointment, "Helen and I are looking forward to the new season of ministry as rector of the Lecale Area Mission Partnership and getting to know everyone in the area. My appointment as Dean of Down comes as a pleasant surprise and I thank Bishop David for the trust that he is placing in me in this role. We do pray that God will bless our ministry in Down Cathedral and the parish as we see God's kingdom grow in the Lecale area."

## Clergy and ministry

**Very  
Revd  
Tim &  
Mrs  
Karen  
Wright  
in  
Short**

Church News Ireland



## Term Mission in Wengen

**Tim and Karen Wright have been involved with Short Term Mission for over twenty years and have served the wider ICS family for much of that time.**

Tim has had an exciting ministry for over thirty-five years across the Continent including time as Vicar, RAF Chaplain and Dean of a Cathedral. They live in Northern Ireland.

They have three adult sons who make their homes in Japan, England and Northern Ireland. It's been a few years since we have been in Wengen but we are looking forward to be returning this winter.

<https://www.ics-uk.org/wengen>

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

### Safer Internet Day - three tips

**The National Cyber Security Centre is sharing top 3 tips for staying secure online on Safer Internet Day.**

Follow the link to learn more about cyber security:

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



The graphic features a dark blue background. At the top center is the Royal Coat of Arms, followed by the text 'KING CHARLES III CHARITABLE FUND' in gold. Below this, the title 'SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME IS NOW OPEN' is written in large, bold, white capital letters. Two white starburst icons precede the text 'GRANTS OF UP TO £15,000 OVER 3 YEARS ARE AVAILABLE' and 'APPLY BETWEEN 10-24 FEBRUARY'. In the bottom right corner is a circular logo for CACD (Church Action on Debt and Disability) with the text 'CACD' at the top and 'FOR CALM, COURAGE AND CONFIDENCE' around the bottom.

## King Charles III Charitable Fund now open

### The King Charles III Charitable Fund small grants programme is now open

Grants of up to £15,000 over 3 years are available for organisations working across social inclusion / health & wellbeing funding themes and priority areas.



Apply between 10-24 February

Before applying, check out what they've funded before & read the guidance notes: <https://tinyurl.com/3znmwv67>

## Part-time worship leader in Lurgan

Queen Street Methodist Church in Lurgan are recruiting a part-time worship leader.

February 15, 2025

→ For job description and to apply now, visit:  
[irishmethodist.org/vacancies](http://irishmethodist.org/vacancies)



## BALLYNATURE DAY – 1 March 2025

**Ballynure and District Community Association invite everyone to Ballynature Day. Saturday 1 March 2025 (10:00 am to 4 pm). Ballynure Presbyterian Church Halls, Ballynure Village, near Ballyclare, Co Antrim**



- Don't miss one of Northern Ireland's best nature events
- A FUN event for all and entrance is FREE
- **Over 30 stands** to visit, including Northern Ireland conservation organisations and many more
- Find out all about our native wildlife and birds of prey
- Also see and learn bushcraft, blacksmith, wood carving, artists, etc
- Loads of crafts, storytelling and facepainting for children

## Ballynature Day is back in Ballynure



Ballynature Day is back in Ballynure Village on Saturday 1 March from 10am - 4pm. Over 30 stands to visit



# WE ARE HIRING

- Classroom Assistants (Junior School)
- Classroom Assistants (Senior School)
- Head of Nutrition and Health Science

plus crafts, storytelling, facepainting for the kids and lots more. Everyone welcome.

## **Northern Ireland War Memorial half-term free family fun**

Follow the Museum Explorer Trail around the museum and see what you can discover about Northern Ireland during the Second World War. 🧑

Search for Chad, learn about clothing rationing and uncover a secret message.

We're open: Monday to Friday from 10am to 4:30pm and EVERY Saturday from 12pm-4pm. Free admission. Find us at: 21 Talbot Street, Belfast, BT1 2LD (opposite Belfast Cathedral south side).

## Perspective

### Saint Oliver Plunkett honoured on the 400th anniversary of his birth

**The 400th anniversary of the birth of the martyred Saint Oliver Plunkett was celebrated at a service of prayer, reflection and celebration in Saint Peter's Jubilee Church, Drogheda, Co Louth, Archdiocese of Armagh, on 12 February.**

Those gathered included Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland; Father Eugene Sweeney, Parish Priest of Saint Peter's Church; Father Paul Clayton-Lea, editor of Intercom, who launched the 'Saint Oliver Plunkett 400' commemorative booklet; local clergy; Councillor Paddy McQuillan Mayor/Cathaoirleach of Drogheda Borough District; Councillor Kevin Callan, Cathaoirleach, Louth County Council; members/councillors of LCC, Drogheda urban and rural; Joe McGuinness, Acting Chief Executive, LCC; David Conway, Chief Executive Designate, LCC; Colette Moss, Senior Executive Officer, LCC; Moya Rodgers, Acting Arts Officer, LCC, as well as staff and students from Saint Oliver's National School, and from Saint Oliver's Community College.

Father Sweeney said: “Oliver Plunkett lived at a remarkably difficult and chaotic time. His resilience, courage and constant efforts for peace and justice are truly inspiring, and therefore it is appropriate to honour his memory not just in Ireland but further afield.

“We warmly welcome all to the National Shrine of Saint Oliver at Saint Peter’s Church, Drogheda, in this special year to honour the martyred Archbishop. We urge pilgrims to pray for peace throughout the world through his intercession, to share with the Lord in the Saint’s presence all their hopes and joys, and leave to him their stresses and sufferings, trials and tribulations.

“We are honoured that Saint Peter’s Church has been designated a Jubilee Church in this Jubilee Year of Hope. Saint Oliver Plunkett did not succumb to despair, and neither should we 400 years later.”

## 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)

# Church News Ireland

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

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

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