

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Whitehead scenery and sacrament

Image of the day

Whitehead scenery

Whitehead on one of the better days so far this year. Thank you to the photographer 'Gas Drone' who takes his magnificent shots and shares them on Facebook.

He is a man under pressure at present having to work longer hours which with the persistent storms and rain have cut down on his opportunities to create his photographs and share the with us so generously. If you happen to be on Facebook please have a look at Gas Drone and if you like what you see do drop him a short line saying so.

Whitehead sacrament

It so happens that when CNI received this photograph a news item arrived from the Connor diocesan press officer of a parish confirmation in Whitehead.

A Confirmation Service held at St John's Church, Islandmagee, saw 10 candidates being confirmed by Bishop Kenneth Clarke recently.

Many family, friends and parishioners from St Patrick's, Whitehead and St John's, Islandmagee, attended to give their support and encouragement, as did the newly formed St Patrick's Church Choir. The Bishop made everyone feel welcome and his humour served to embrace and draw everyone in to the important Christian truths he had to share with the congregation



There were lots of highlights during the service, with 21-year-old Queen's University student Marc McCausland giving a very positive testimony about his faith and the way God is working in his life, and later in the service a solo was bravely sung by 12-year-old Alicia Rainey during one of the choir pieces.

The 10 members of the parish who were confirmed at the service were: Sophie Henderson, Devyn Henderson, Joyce Martin, Alicia Rainey, Jo Pawson, Marc McCausland, Campbell Coles, Lilah Tilson, Austin Jenkins and David Young.

Thanks were conveyed to Bishop Ken Clarke for leading the service at short notice, after Bishop George Davison was unable to attend due to a family bereavement, and to Canon

Mark Taylor, rector of the parish, for co-ordinating everything. The contribution of the choir and leader Loreto McAuley, for the music and to all those ladies who prepared and served a supper that followed have rightly been thankfully acknowledged.

News

Big-hearted Ballybay bakers

Those big-hearted Ballybay bakers have raised an incredible €9,000 for Christian Aid Ireland's work, and with donations still coming in, the total is set to rise.

They held their annual coffee morning and sale on Saturday 18 May when around 200 visitors from the wider Ballybay community enjoyed a coffee and sweet treat in exchange for a donation.

There was also the opportunity to buy cakes, jam, plants and flowers to take home.

The fundraiser was held at Second Ballybay Presbyterian Church Hall in the County Monaghan town to mark Christian Aid Week.

The event was organised by a team of people drawn from four Presbyterian churches in the area: First and Second Ballybay, Rockcorry and Drumkeen, which have a combined membership of around 160 families.



Left to right, Nan Bradford, Ena Gilliland, Roberta Ross and Wendy Sloan.

The proceeds of the coffee morning were boosted by a number of large donations made by individuals with links to the four churches.

The County Monaghan town has a special connection to Christian Aid Ireland:

- Ballybay was the birthplace of George McCullagh (1936-2021), one of our founders.
- Another son of Ballybay, Rev Lambert McAdoo (1937-2004) moved to minister at First Larne Presbyterian

June 1, 2024

Church in County Antrim where he inspired enormous support for our work.

- Ballybay was the home of Nan Hawthorne (née Brown, 1929-2011) whose many years of support for Christian Aid Ireland inspired her daughter Rosamond Bennett to become our Chief Executive.

Christian Aid Ireland is enormously grateful for the extraordinary support it receives from the Presbyterian community of Ballybay, and also wishes to thank everyone who came along to support the event.

Left to right, Nan Bradford, Ena Gilliland, Roberta Ross and Wendy Sloan.

Northwest Methodist Mission thanks their Global Mission Fellow from the Phillipines

Northwest Methodist Mission “took a moment to say Goodbye to our Global Mission Fellow Camille Bianca Manangan as she finishes her service and returns back to the Phillipines.

“During the past 2 years, your presence has been a beacon of light guiding and uplifting our community with your selfless acts of love and support. The countless hours you've spend at Ashmore House listening, caring and giving support to our residents have not gone unnoticed.

“We gona miss your smile and your encouraging words. Although we are sad to see you go, we are excited for the

June 1, 2024

new opportunities that await you and we are confident that your future endeavours will be impactful”.



Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission meets in Strasbourg

ARCIC III at its annual plenary meeting worked on its mandate of examining how the Church discerns local, regional and universal right ethical teaching.

The Commission stated that it has “adopted an approach of receptive ecumenical learning, whereby each dialogue partner seeks to identify elements of church life found in the other tradition which might be gifts for the enhancement of their own traditions. A large part of the Commission’s work in Strasbourg was therefore devoted to reflecting on moral

June 1, 2024

discernment in our two traditions and on what they can learn from each other's practices."

Read the full news story: [<https://bit.ly/3yzzPtT>]

Read the full communique: <https://bit.ly/3yw3X9y>

Cathedral Calls



Double cause for celebration in St Eunan's Cathedral Raphoe

There was double cause for celebration in St Eunan's Cathedral Raphoe as Rev Canon Mervyn Peoples was installed as Prebendary of Killymard and a member of the Cathedral Chapter on the day that he and his wife, Diane, celebrated their 48th wedding anniversary. The



couple's children and grandchildren were in the Cathedral.

The service was led by the Dean of Raphoe, Very Rev Liz Fitzgerald, and presided over by the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Andrew Forster.

The appointment was first announced last December by Bishop Andrew, and filled the vacancy in the Cathedral Chapter which followed the retirement of Rev Canon Judi McGaffin.

Canon Peoples has served in more than a dozen parishes in the diocese since his ordination, and clergy and parishioners from many of them were in St Eunan's for the service.

The sermon was given by the Rector of Agherton (Portstewart), Rev Malcolm Ferry, reciprocating the service done almost eight years earlier when Canon Peoples preached at the installation of the new Canon Ferry in St Columb's Cathedral.

In his sermon this evening, Rev Ferry said, "Knowing Mervyn for as long as I do, I know that honour, position and status do not fit well in the same sentence as the name 'Mervyn Peoples'. Mervyn was never one to look for – or be remotely interested in – the ladder of perceived success and fame. To use a football analogy, Mervyn did his talking 'on the pitch' of parish life by his work. He is a pastor first and foremost; a pastor second and always; and a pastor loved and respected.

After the sermon, the Diocesan Registrar, Rev Canon David Crooks, brought the new Canon forward and read the Bishop's Mandate, after which Dean Fitzgerald invited Canon Peoples to make the Chapter Declaration.

At a reception after the service Canon Peoples thanked the Bishop for conferring on him "the great privilege" of being a Canon in the ancient Cathedral of St Eunan, and Dean Fitzgerald for making the preparations for the Service of Installation.

He continued by thanking his wife saying Diane has been and continues to be a wonderful source of inspiration. Today, as you've heard, we celebrated our 48th wedding anniversary and each one of those years has been a blessing to me. It was pure chance that our anniversary fell on the date of my installation."

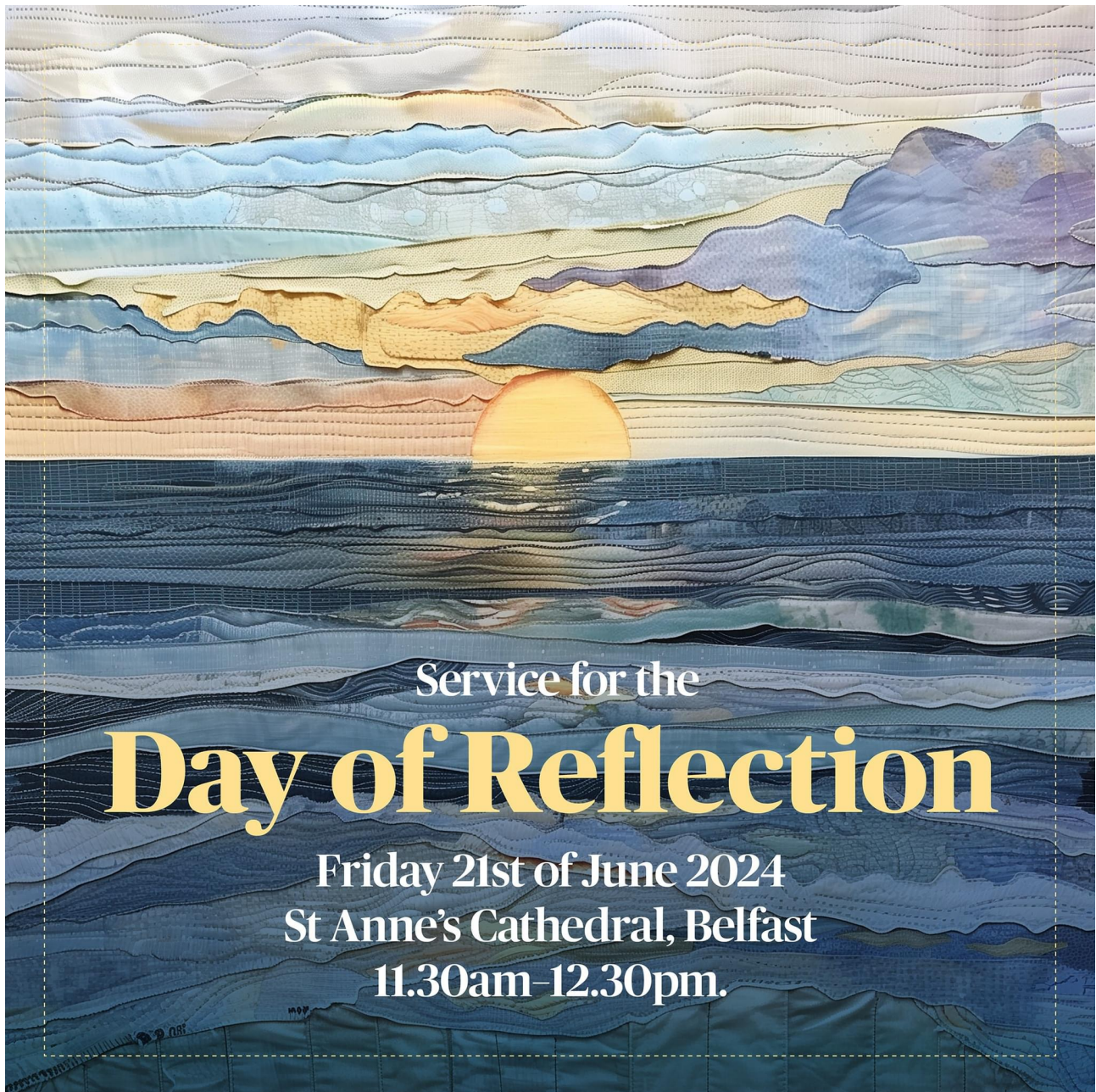


The Very Reverend Raymond Stewart, Dean of Derry, Canon John Merrick and members of St Columb's Cathedral attended the Installation of The Reverend Mervyn Peoples as Canon of St Eunan's Cathedral, Raphoe, on Tuesday 28th May 2024.

Raphoe conclusion - a popular bishop...

The proceedings were brought to a close by Bishop Andrew who said that sometimes the decisions that bishops made could make them unpopular and sometimes the decisions that bishops made could make them popular.

"Do you see making Canon Mervyn Peoples a canon, I tell you, that's made me very popular. It really has."



Corrymeela Day of Reflection in Belfast Cathedral

The 21 June has been designated as the Day of Reflection. On the longest day of the year we reflect on the conflict in and about Northern Ireland and on the better future we can form together.

The Leader of Corrymeela said, "We will be gathering at St. Anne's Cathedral in Belfast, 11.30 to 12.30 for a special

service: to remember, to acknowledge pain and to find healing.

“Join us. All are welcome”.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

New Alf McCreary book 'Keeping The Faith' pays tribute to victims of Northern Ireland Troubles...foreword by Lord Eames

Well-known author and award-winning journalist Alf McCreary has paid tribute to the Troubles victims of violence in his new book ‘Keeping the Faith’ which was launched in the Canada Room in Queen’s University on Thursday night.

Speaking to a large cross-community audience he spoke about his 60 years in journalism and referred to those who had suffered greatly and had rebuilt their lives after tragic losses.

He said: “I think particularly of people like **Gordon and Joan Wilson** who lost their daughter Marie in the no-warning Provisional IRA bomb at the Enniskillen Cenotaph in 1987, which killed 10 other people, and also Ronnie Hill who died 13 years later after a long coma.

“I came to know the Wilsons very well, and I found that their courage and deep Christian faith in dealing with their loss was most inspiring.”

Mr McCreary also mentioned **Alan Black**, the sole Protestant survivor of the Kingsmills massacre in 1976 in which 11 Protestant men were gunned down mercilessly by republican terrorists in an ambush on their way home from work.

“Alan and I are both from Bessbrook, and I have long admired his dignified fight for justice to bring those responsible to the courts. Alan wanted to attend tonight’s launch but he cannot be here due to ill-health. I phoned him this week and he told me that the pain never goes away. He also said that he would still campaign for as long as he was able on behalf of the victims’ families.”

Mr McCreary also mentioned the importance of holding on to hope and faith, and the need to continually promote the truth in a dangerous world of ‘fake news’.

Lord Eames, who wrote the foreword to the book, was unable to attend the launch, but sent a message which was read out to those present. He revealed that he is in hospital, but in good spirits, and looking forward to a discharge. In his message he made a strong plea for a Labour government, if elected, to repeal the Tories’ controversial legacy bill.

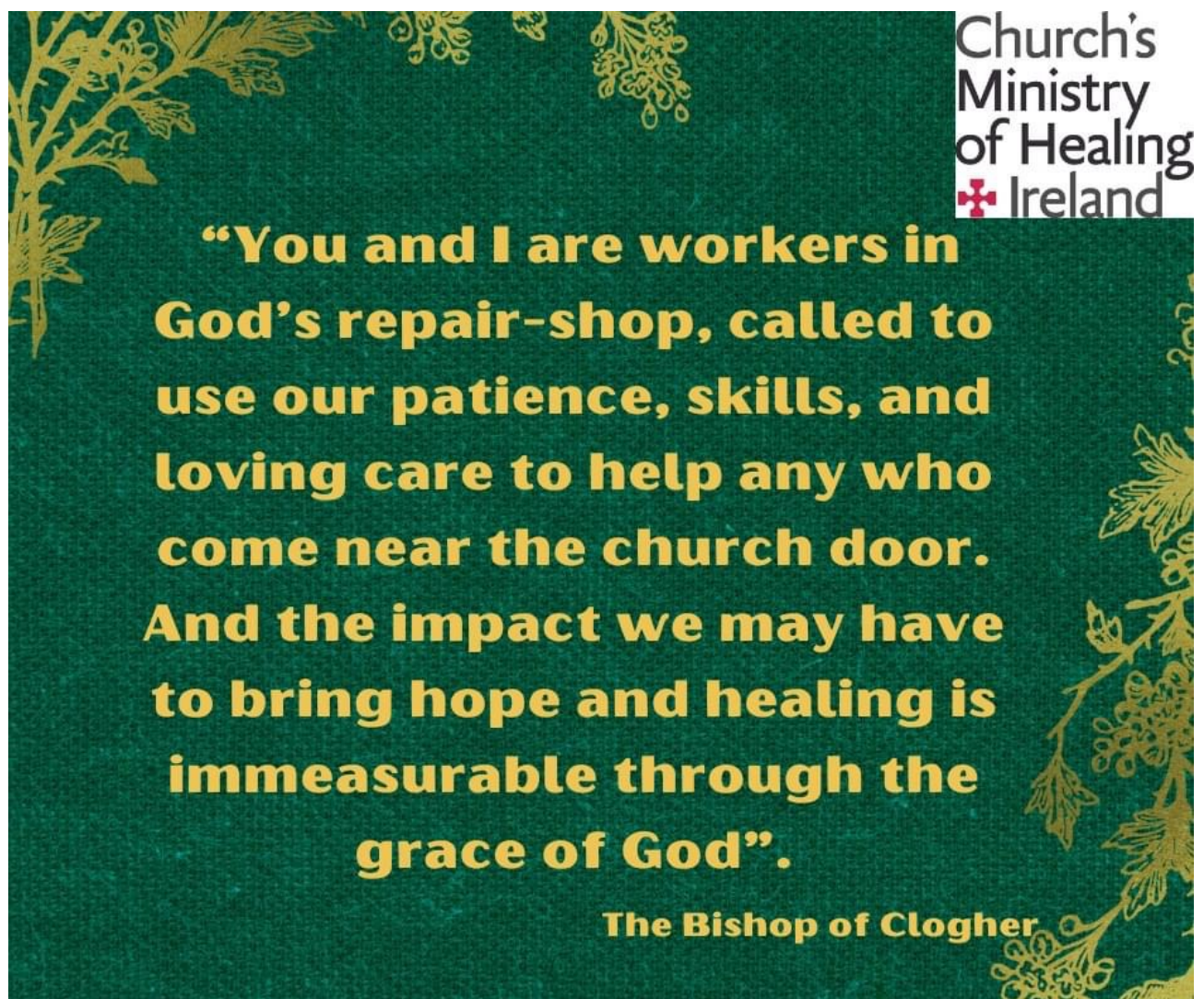
He said: “It is my deep regret that the Tory government, despite all our advice, persisted with the legacy bill ... I am not taking sides in the election, but I hope that Labour will

June 1, 2024

open that door again after the polls have given their verdict on July 4.”

Lord Eames co-authored with Denis Bradley the 2009 Consultative Report on the Past which dealt with legacy issues.

Lord Eames also paid tribute to Mr McCreary and his book and said: “It is a journey of self-discovery by an award-winning journalist who has spent decades recording events and human experiences that have fashioned the lives of others.



“He has reported not only on the Troubles but also on conflict situations in Vietnam, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Rwanda and elsewhere, and his book is a most readable account of the life of a compassionate observer of human nature.

“Alf McCreary has moved beyond any denominational interpretation of belief and has found in his observation of others a faith that endures beyond the walls of a single religious label.”

‘Keeping the Faith’ is published by Messenger Publication and is available in local bookshops and on Amazon, priced at £12.95 and €14.95.

In the media

Irish Catholic - A Saint Born in London and Loved in Ireland

The news that Blessed Carlo Acutis may soon be canonised has been greeted with delight in Ireland, where he already inspires great devotion. The first saint to wear Nikes may soon become a reality, Ian Dunn writes.

As we reported yesterday, Pope Francis has formally recognised a miracle attributed to the intercession of Blessed Carlo Acutis, a 15-year-old Italian teenager whose birth in 1991 will make him the first ‘millennial’ to become a saint. This will come as little surprise to his growing number of admirers around the world, including right here in Ireland.

Blessed Acutis was born and baptised in London to Italian parents in 1991, but the family moved back to Milan, Italy, while he was still a baby. He was an only child who loved football, Pokémon, and animals, yet more unusually, he rapidly developed a very strong faith. Neither of his parents were religious, yet from an early age, Carlo never wanted to pass a church without going in. He made his first communion early and developed a deep devotion to the Eucharist. “The Eucharist is my highway to Heaven!” he would say. And, “If we get in front of the sun, we get sun tans, but when we get in front of Jesus in the Eucharist, we become saints.”

From the age of 11, he never missed daily Mass and began visiting sites of Eucharistic miracles all over the world with his parents, documenting them on a website he created. He devoted hours each week to helping others, particularly those in distress. In early October 2006, Carlo became ill. His condition deteriorated, and he was diagnosed with leukaemia. He took the news calmly, immediately offering all his sufferings for the Pope, the Church, and his own direct entry into heaven. “I would like to leave this hospital,” he told his mother, “but I know I will not do so alive. I will give you signs, though, that I am with God.” He died on October 12, aged just 15.

As he had wished, Carlo was buried in Assisi at St. Mary Major’s “Chapel of the Stripping”, where St. Francis had returned his clothes to his father and embraced a different life. Among the thousands present for Carlo’s beatification at Assisi’s Basilica of St. Francis were many of his childhood friends. Presiding at the beatification service, Cardinal Agostino Vallini praised Carlo as an example of how young

people can use technology to spread the Gospel “to reach as many people as possible and help them know the beauty of friendship with the Lord.”

Since then, his story has attracted great devotion around the world, but particularly in Ireland. Some of his relics have toured the country, attracting huge crowds in Clogher, Knock, and County Down, where parish priest Fr Gerry McCloskey said, “The huge numbers of those wanting to venerate show that devotion to this young saint is increasing as many favours are being received through his intercession. Well over 5,500 people attended the two-day pilgrimage to get a blessing of the young boy’s relic.”

The ground was laid for those crowds during the pandemic when the Diocese of Cloyne ran online courses on Blessed Carlo’s life during lockdown. Our own Brendan O’Regan positively reviewed a documentary on the topic around this time, saying, ‘I liked the way the film ended with a roundup of quotes from Carlo – ‘To be always united with Jesus is the plan of my life’, ‘our goal must be infinite, not finite’, his description of the Eucharist as a ‘highway to Heaven’. At a time when most of us are deprived of receiving the Eucharist, it served as a reminder of why it should be so important to us, so central to our life of faith.’

Bishop Phonsie Cullinan explained the appeal as coming from a young man who was “obviously in love with God and in love with others and so cheerful”. He went on: “So many of our young people are going around with long faces, and how many of them are caught in depression and drug addiction? It’s chronic, and here we have a young man

who's telling us there is no need for all of this, Jesus loves you and just go for it and love him back."

Others, like Sacred Heart Missionary Fr Alan Neville, have focused on his work on the internet, seeing Blessed Carlo's efforts as a potent counterexample to much of the negativity on social media.

He described Blessed Acutis as being a "model of holiness that shows us how we can engage with a world that has incredible opportunities for us to share good news". "The internet is one of the most incredible opportunities for us in evangelisation, But it's an area I think we've been very slow to move into. The internet is the modern-day Areopagus; this is where St. Paul would have been, engaging with a place that is sometimes hostile to the Faith, but you know, you can work with hostility – these are people who are searching. We need to be able to get out there and give an account of the hope that's in us."

But Michael Kelly, our former editor, put it most succinctly. At a time when so many young people are turning away from the church, here is a hopeful counterexample. "To see one of their contemporaries held up as a model of holiness shows that living such a life is not an unrealistic ideal, but something that is possible with the help of God," he wrote. "As C.S. Lewis puts it: 'To become holy is rather like joining a secret society. To put it at the very lowest, it must be great fun!'"

June 1, 2024

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
