

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Palm Sunday with Chloe of Clogher

January 6, 2024



Image of the day

Palm Sunday with Chloe of Clogher



A few photos from Lisbellaw Parish's morning Palm Sunday procession to the church. Indebtedness and thanks as always to the Fermanagh Fun Farm for the loan of their lovely donkey, Chloe.

News

St Patrick's Drumbeg Palm Sunday Village walk



St Patrick's Drumbeg parishioners were out on the road for Palm Sunday for their Palm Sunday Village walk of prayer, praise, readings and witness.



50+ years service at ‘Church on the Hill’

After a fabulous BB display at Maghaberry last week there was a big thank you to the officers and leaders for all their hard work throughout the year.

It was the last display for Colin and Sylvia Ferguson who are stepping back after a combined total of 50+ years of service to the Boys Brigade. “We thank God for you both and pray blessing over you in the days ahead”. Maghaberry is a Methodist - Church of Ireland Covenant Church.

[<https://www.thechurchonthehill.org.uk/>]

[<https://www.facebook.com/churchonthehillmaghaberry/>]

Bushy Park Church plans columbarium wall for cremated remains

St James' Church in Bushy Park is seeking permission to build a columbarium wall for cremated remains.

24% of people in Ireland are now choosing cremation over burial

Appointed to St Donard's Bloomfield



Revd Jan Stevenson has been appointed Incumbent of St Donard's, Parish of Bloomfield in the Diocese of Down.

Jan was ordained in 1994 and is currently serving as Community Pastor in St Columbanus, Ballyholme.

A date for the service of institution will be announced in due course.



Churches offer up prayers for Princess of Wales and her family

Anglican churches around Britain prayed for the Princess of Wales and her family on Sunday past, after she disclosed she is having treatment for cancer.

The Princess, who is 42 and has three children, will be in the prayers of Christian worshippers, who ask God to grant her family “faith, hope, and knowledge of your love”.

The Church of England published a suggested prayer, to be used by churches. The Prayer for HRH the Princess of Wales reads: “Gracious God. We pray for the continued recovery of the Princess of Wales, for her husband, and for their family. Grant to them, and to all who are affected by

January 6, 2024

sickness, faith, hope, and knowledge of your love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

Some churches have chosen to share further thoughts, with Westminster Abbey publishing a social media message to say: “”Everyone at Westminster Abbey wishes the Princess of Wales well following the news of her cancer diagnosis.”

The Dean of Westminster, the Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle, said: “In the face of this news, it is our hope that Her Royal Highness will feel sustained by the love that surrounds her and find renewed hope in the prayers that we offer.” The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Justin Welby, said on Friday: “I join the whole country, and the world, in praying for her full recovery.

“I take this opportunity to praise her for her spirit of optimism in the face of such difficult news, and am pleased to hear that she is feeling stronger every day. Her bravery in sharing in this way and her continued commitment to supporting others speaks to her compassion and sense of service.

“Please join with me in praying for the Royal family as they deal with this private matter and I would urge people to respect their privacy at this time.”

Other religions have also offered good wishes to the Princess.

Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis, sent a message on Saturday night, which said: “Now that Shabbat has concluded, I join people throughout the UK and across the globe in expressing my sadness in learning that the Princess of Wales is battling cancer and I extend heartfelt

January 6, 2024

wishes to her for a ‘refuah shelema’ – a swift and complete recovery.”

Frail Pope gives homily a miss at Palm Sunday Mass in the Vatican

Pope Francis decided at the last minute to skip his homily during Palm Sunday Mass in St Peter's Square, avoiding a strenuous speech at the start of a busy Holy Week that will test his increasingly frail health.

Francis — affected by bad knees and persistent respiratory problems — also did not participate in the procession of cardinals around the obelisk in the piazza at the start of the Mass.

Instead, the 87-year-old pontiff blessed the palm fronds and olive branches carried by the faithful from the altar.

Francis had been expected to deliver a homily halfway through the service and a prepared text had been distributed to journalists.

But when an aide presented Francis with his glasses to begin reading, the Pope made clear he would not deliver the remarks, leaving the crowd waiting in silence.

The Vatican press office said the homily was replaced by “a moment of silence and prayer”.

Francis did pronounce prayers throughout the service and offered a long appeal for peace at the end of the Mass.



He said he was praying for the families of those killed in what he called an “inhuman” attack at a Moscow concert hall and also asked for prayers for “the martyred Ukraine” and people of Gaza.

Palm Sunday kicks off a busy week for Francis leading up to Easter Sunday when the faithful commemorate the resurrection of Christ.

On Thursday Francis is due to travel to a Rome women's prison for the traditional washing of the feet ritual. On Friday he is scheduled to preside over the torchlit Way of the Cross procession at Rome's Colosseum re-enacting Christ's crucifixion.

The following day marks the Easter Vigil, during which Francis presides over a solemn night-time service in the basilica, followed by Easter Sunday Mass in St Peter's Square.

January 6, 2024

The Holy Week schedule is challenging for popes even under the best of circumstances.

But that is especially true this year for Francis, who has been battling on and off all winter what he and the Vatican have described as a case of the flu, bronchitis or a cold.

At this time last year he was in hospital for three days with bronchitis, but then rallied to get through Holy Week.

Joint Holy Week & Easter Message from the Archbishops of Armagh

“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation”. (2 Corinthians 5:18–19)

“Never mind”. Although it’s an easy phrase to say, and we’ve probably all used it at times to mask our own shortcomings or those of the ones we love, those words “Never mind” are two of the most demoralising in any language.

The events of Holy Week and Easter are the exact opposite of “Never Mind”. Christians have attempted to explain the meaning the Cross and Passion in a host of ways. But amidst all the theories, there is complete agreement that God did mind. God cared that the creation which he loves with an everlasting love was alienated from him, and God Himself bore the cost of reconciling it to Him.

January 6, 2024

God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ. ... In one sense that was the end of the matter. God had done something which we could not do. But in another sense it was only the beginning of the matter as God has entrusted to us both the 'message' and the ongoing 'ministry' of reconciliation.

This time last year, when we marked the twenty–fifth anniversary of the signing of Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, we asked people to remember what a significant and gracious achievement that was. Among its many virtues it carried the message of reconciliation and held out the promise of a truly reconciled society in Northern Ireland and within “the totality of relationships” across these islands.

One year on, rather than simply re–emphasising the message of reconciliation, we prefer – in all humility and admitting our own failings – to call Christians, and all people of goodwill, to the ministry of reconciliation. Reconciliation is not merely an optional extra to the work of peacemaking; it is an imperative – an essential duty and service.

No doubt these twin ideas of the message and ministry of reconciliation occurred to St Paul because of his own experience as an apostle. He had tramped around the Mediterranean world proclaiming the 'good news' that the world had been reconciled to God by the Cross and Resurrection of Christ. Although the number of ready believers was initially small in number, and for the most part insignificant in social status, still together they began the transformation of the world and gave it the gift of its most enduring symbol – the Cross.

Paul also discovered that it was never a case of “job done”. As soon as he moved on from one newly established Christian community to the next city, he left behind innumerable disagreements, rivalries, misunderstandings and sometimes worse. So, as we would say, he embedded his message by his ministry – his service to the continuing and always unfinished work of reconciliation.

He wrote to, and sometimes re-visited, the churches he had established – advising, encouraging, admonishing, pleading, explaining and warning. He knew that his work would never be done because everywhere there were forces and influences and individuals which undermined the work of reconciling and restoring broken relationships.

Within our own broken society, the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement has held out the challenging ‘message’ of reconciliation. However, it will only be put into effect if we commit ourselves to the ‘ministry’ (i.e. the service) of reconciliation. Christian people have a particular calling to this work of service, knowing ourselves to be indebted to God in a way we can never repay. We have been forgiven much and are called to love much.

Meaningful reconciliation here is the unfinished work of peace. We all have a part to play in the service of building a reconciled society: governments, in the framing of policy and legislation and in the rebuilding of relationships at the highest levels; civic society, in fulfilling their varied tasks with competence and honesty; individual citizens, in remembering that great societies are those which take into account not only their debt to the past, but also their obligations to those yet to be born.

January 6, 2024

We are thankful these days for having recently witnessed in Northern Ireland ‘a little resurrection’ of certain institutions, which in themselves are necessary but which in reality are impotent things without the ministry of reconciliation which we each hold in our hands. “Never mind” is not an option.



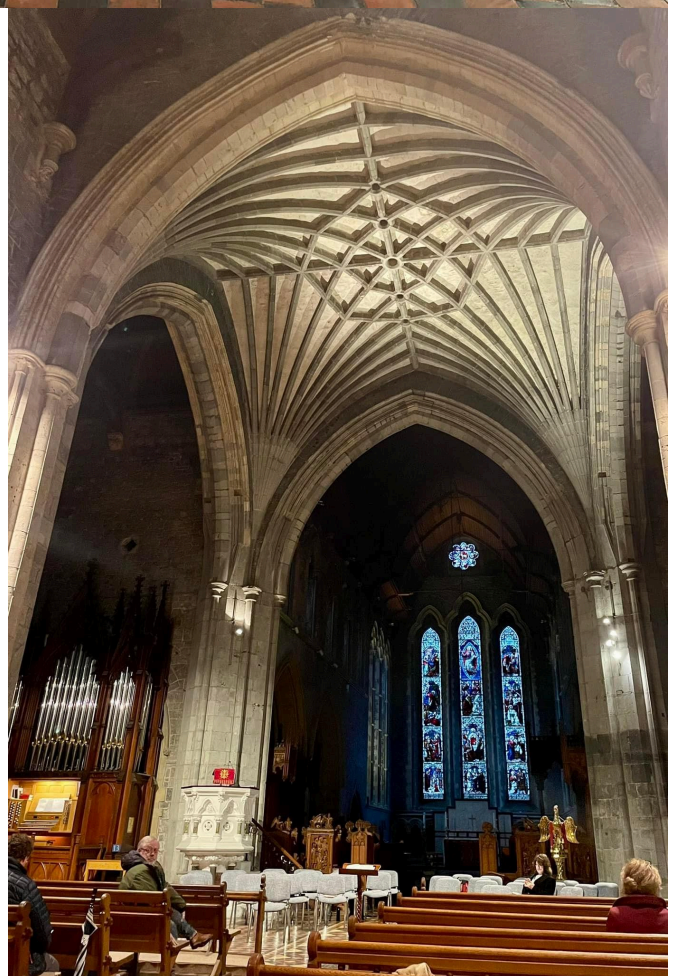
Cathedral call

Stainer at St Canice's, Kilkenny

The Crucifixion by Sir John Stainer was presented by St Canice's Cathedral Choir and Sandford and St Philip's Parishes Choral Union.



As the bishop noted “It was the perfect way to begin Holy Week”



Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Synodality Explored: Facing the Future Together

Friday 19th and Saturday, 20th April
at St. John's Welcome Centre,
Knock Shrine



IN ASSOCIATION WITH NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA

Keynote speaker on both days will be
CARDINAL MARIO GRECH
Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops.

Facilitator: **Professor Eamonn Conway**
Advisor to the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops



Day 1 The Synod: A Global View
Day 2 The Synod: Ireland and the World

Speakers will include:

- **Julieann Moran**
is General Secretary of the Synodal Pathway in Ireland.
- **Fr. Declan Hurley**
served as Co-Chair of the National Steering Committee for the Synodal Pathway in Ireland and is Vicar General of the Diocese of Meath.
- **Professor Renée Köhler-Ryan**
Notre Dame University, Australia, is a voting Member of the 16th General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops representing Oceania.
- **Rev. Dr Dermot Ryan**
Director of Adult Faith Development for the Diocese of Ossory.
Invited lecturer at Maynooth University & Carlow College.

www.knockshrine.ie
All welcome, no pre-booking required

KNOCK
Ireland's International Eucharistic
and Marian Shrine



January 6, 2024



Groundbreaking service on RTÉ One



Sunday morning featured a groundbreaking and beautiful service on RTÉ One television for Palm Sunday.

It was led by the Primate's Reference

Group on Ethnic Diversity, Inclusion and Racial Justice. This year, Palm Sunday shares the same week with the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.



Therefore the service explored the welcome of Jesus into Jerusalem and the welcome of the other into our hearts. The service is now available on the RTÉ Player -

January 6, 2024

<https://www.rte.ie/player/series/service/SI0000002989?epguid=IH10003122-24-0006>

In the media

BBC News NI - Belfast deaf church with the warmth of home

Churches are places where people gather to hear the word of God but in one south Belfast church holy words are signed, Conor Neeson writes

Kinghan Church, on Botanic Avenue, is a worshipping community for those who are deaf and hearing-impaired. 'KC', as it is affectionately known, was founded in 1857 by Rev John Kinghan, a Presbyterian minister who became the principal of the Ulster Society for the Promotion of the Education of the Deaf, the Dumb and the Blind in Belfast. About 1898, the church moved from its site on the city's Sandy Row to its current location before going through extensive renovation and remodelling in the early 1990s.

For more than 150 years, the church has provided an escape from isolation for those in the deaf community.

Mary Carson, from Belfast, has been attending Kinghan Church since she was a child and describes it as "feeling like home".

"I've been coming to KC from the age of eight and I still come now, I have been coming all those years," she said.

January 6, 2024

"I don't know if you want to know what age I am but I'm actually 82 years old."

Mary says she loves the church and is grateful for all it offers.

"When I come here, it's just so easy to chat to everyone because everyone is like me, they are deaf," she said.

"There is a lovely happy atmosphere and we get on so well together and honestly it's where I feel so much love coming to me from KC."

Mary says the rest of the congregation are her "best friends"; many of whom she has known most her life.

"Obviously over the years some people have passed on but then new people come and there is younger people who come in and I really enjoy that as well."

'I should be retired'

Rev Canon Will Murphy began his ministry with deaf people almost 45 years ago but he is the first to admit he did not at first believe it would be a lifelong ministry.

"I thought I would do maybe 12 years in ministry, my predecessor had done eight but it just continued," he said.

"I should be retired X years ago but I am still doing it, still loving it because they are a loving community."

Rev Murphy said it was odd to leave music and singing behind for this "totally different atmosphere" but he quickly found it had "a warmth of its own".

"I came from a hearing community, from a hearing church, I had never met a deaf person," he said.

"My first task was to learn sign language, which to be honest I am still learning."

Rev Murphy said the church is a great place for overcoming the isolation that so many deaf people feel.

"They come together not just for worship, but for tea, coffee and friendship and fellowship."

However, Rev Murphy admits there are some differences when it comes to giving a service to the deaf community. "If a deaf person closes their eyes, end of contact with the service," he said.

"In a hearing church you can close your eyes and continue to listen but if you see that happening it's time to shut up and get out and finish the service."

In the intervening years, Rev Murphy said there have been great advances in communication with the mobile phone being the biggest.

"When I came to ministry to contact a deaf person at home you would phone the next door neighbour."

Rev Murphy said the mobile had "revolutionised the life of deaf people".

CODA

January 6, 2024

Rosie Budd has been coming to Kinghan Church for her whole life.

She was christened there, she was married there, she had been a committee member there but she is not deaf.

Rosie grew up as a CODA, a child of deaf adults. Her father, John Heron, became deaf in his childhood and her late mother Coralie was deaf from birth.

"Growing up it was always my experience to come to this church, I came to the youth club here and it just felt part of my life.

"I have had people say to me 'well surely you're not a member of the Kinghan Church because you're not actually deaf' and I say 'no I am very much a member'."

Rosie said the church has always had a ethos of being a place for deaf people and their families to worship.

"It is a church like any other and it is open to everyone."

John said: "I think why I want to come is because I want to come and be where other deaf people are and chat in sign language.

"That's the element that's most important for me."

'Famous'

Now 91, Rosie says it is as important as ever that her dad knows the church is always there for him.

January 6, 2024

But during the Covid pandemic, John struggled with not being able to come to church and did not enjoy the online services.

"He started signing hymns and I would film him and they would have been put on the Kinghan Church Facebook page.

"They were shared many many times and he has had 4,000 or 5,000 likes on his Facebook posts and think he is now considered famous in our little world."

Photos at -

[<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-68648856>]

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
