

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – RNLB still on call

Image of the day

RNLI still on call

This past week saw the RNLI being rightly honoured for its years of service. Portrush is the nearest station to where CNI is prepared. Good friends are amongst the crew. Today's image shows our local boat in a training exercise off the White Cliffs coastline near to the lifeboat station.

The image is idyllic. However it marks the coastline where the Spanish Armada finally perished.

And it is no less dangerous today. It is a combination of cliffs and submerged banks of volcanic rock where twice each day tides flood at speed in to the channel between Ireland and Scotland from the north Atlantic ocean.

Ask any seafarer from a Master Mariner to a competent recreational navigator who has crossed these waters for their opinion. Advising caution will not be omitted.

Dangers can afflict the sea-goer from those on surf boards to those in ocean going vessels.

The final recourse to recovery most often rests in the skills and commitment of male and female volunteers.

Please keep these folk and their committed supporters in your thoughts, prayers and generosity.

News



ECI Climate Justice Candle visits Bunclody

The Eco Church Ireland candle visited a St Brigid's Day ecumenical evensong, an ecumenical service to celebrate the Conversion of St Paul, a visit to Carrigduff National School, Bunclody and a St Brigid's Day Quiet Day in Ballyvaloo Retreat Centre near Blackwater, on the Wexford coast.

Read more here <https://tinyurl.com/nhb2xx9m>



St Patrick's free fun event in Ballyclare

Fantastic free fun event in St John's parish Ballyclare for all the family....

but you need to **BOOK A PLACE**.
Details and QR code on the ad below. Don't miss out on all the fun register now and enjoy and learn about all things St Patrick.



Bangor Drama Club proudly presents

SAINT PATRICK

An evening of traditional music, Irish dancing and storytelling



Thursday 14th March 2024, 8pm,
Studio 1A, Hamilton Rd, Bangor

Tickets £12 - Bangor VIC, Tower
House, Quay St. - 028 91 270069

www.bangordramaclub.com



Proudly Supporting
Chest

ST PATRICK'S TABLE QUIZ NIGHT

SATURDAY 16TH MARCH 2024

6.30PM UNTIL 9PM

PORTSTEWART PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HALL

BRING YOUR TEAM FOR A FUN-FILLED
NIGHT WITH IRISH STEW AND APPLE PIE
SERVED DURING THE EVENING

TEAMS MUST CONSIST OF ADULTS AND
CHILDREN
MAX OF 8 PEOPLE TO A TEAM

Book your team in with Michelle by 14th March
07470120152

REGISTERED CHARITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND
(NIC 105562)



Walking pilgrimage on St Patrick's Day in Belfast

In this cross-community journey, those taking part 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 (Mosaic above in Belfast Cathedral) is now widely accepted as a common Christian saint who crossed the ford

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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.

The leader on the pilgrimage will be Kiran Young Wimberly, a Presbyterian (USA) minister and spiritual director living in Ballycastle, County Antrim. She is also a musician and podcaster; a retreat and pilgrimage leader; and a consultant in spirituality and resilience.

Kiran says, “I’m delighted to be leading this walking pilgrimage on St Patrick’s Day in Belfast. An opportunity to walk in the footsteps of Patrick, from the Farset river to the location of his first church, on the Shankill. This pilgrimage is open to all religious/spiritual traditions and none, and as we visit sites significant to Patrick’s story we will also reflect on how it can speak into our lives today. There will be moments of reflection, prayer, and some singing along the way. This will also be an opportunity to meet people from a variety of backgrounds as we walk the footsteps of Patrick together.”

The pilgrimage is open to all religious/spiritual traditions and none.

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Event information:

Sunday 17 March 1pm - 3pm

-  1pm - Start Point: The Big Fish on Donegall Quay
Belfast BT1 3NG
-  3pm - End Point: St. Matthew's Church, Shankill Road
-  3:30pm - Transport will leave St. Matthew's Church and return to the Big Fish

Tickets available via website

[\[https://allevents.in/belfast/st-patricks-pilgrimage/80001021376739?ref=eventlist-cat#\]](https://allevents.in/belfast/st-patricks-pilgrimage/80001021376739?ref=eventlist-cat#)

Archbishop McDowell appeals in London for renewed good relations across Irish Sea

Archbishop John McDowell called for new bonds of affection and friendship to be built between Britain and Ireland, with more living connections between the City of London and places and projects in Northern Ireland.

He made his remarks while preaching the Spital Sermon in the Guild Church of St Lawrence Jewry next Guildhall, at the Lord Mayor's invitation, on Thursday afternoon (7th March).

“We remain in one another's hands,” Archbishop McDowell stated, “And it is now more important than ever because, for all its achievements, the 1998 Agreement ended a war but did not consolidate a peace.



St Patrick's hill

“Peacemaking and peace–building are two quite different enterprises and require quite different skills. One required back channels and constructive ambiguity and a staying of the hand. The other requires painful, open conversations in plain language that leads to the reaching out of the hand; and to a confidence that the voice and the hands are working together. Both require the courage to acknowledge that we are in one another’s hands and the wisdom to know that none will be secure until all are secure.”

The annual sermon has been a fixture in the City’s calendar since the late 14th Century and is preached by a bishop, who has been invited to do so by the Lord Mayor and the Court of Aldermen.

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The Guild Church takes its title from the Priory or Hospital of St Mary Without Bishopsgate (otherwise known as St Mary Spital), which was founded in 1197, and the sermon was established to raise funds for the care of the hospital's patients.

The archbishop's address is in full below. See Perspective on page 17.

Cathedral call

St Patrick's Weekend 2024 at Belfast Cathedral

The Cathedral will be holding several special events for St Patrick's Weekend and St Patrick's Day, as part of Belfast City Council's St Patrick's Festival Weekend.

On **Friday 15th, Anúna** will be performing in the Cathedral. On **Saturday 16th, Young at Art's Kiddie Ceili** will be held in the nave. See details at this link from Belfast City Council.

On **St Patrick's Day, Sunday 17th**, at 11am the Cathedral will be the venue for the St Patrick's Day Festal Choral Eucharist for the City of Belfast with the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Revd George Davison, as the special preacher.

The Communion setting will be by Christopher Boodle, a former Belfast Cathedral organist, with the anthem 'Irish Blessing' to music composed by Jack Wilson.



At the conclusion of the Cathedral Quarter festivities in Cathedral Gardens and Writers Square, **Evensong of St Patrick's Day** will be sung by the Cathedral Choir at 5.30.

This service is open to all who have attended the other events. The anthem will be John Rutter's popular 'Clare Benediction' and the organ voluntary is Toccata by Belfast composer Philip Hammond. The cathedral will also be open to visitors throughout St Patrick's Day afternoon on the Sunday.

Visitors to the Cathedral may be familiar with the St Patrick mosaic (see above) which is a prominent feature near its

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entrance and stained glass windows of the saint at the baptistery.

The Cathedral Church of St Anne, Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1 2HB

www.belfastcathedral.org



Crucifixion

A meditation on the sacred passion of the Holy Redeemer; an oratorio by **Sir John Stainer**.

Sung by the Osborne Singers
Soloists Michael Brown and Glenn Tweedle
Organist Richard Campbell
Guest conductor Colln Scott

St Patrick's Day services in the C of I Cathedral in Armagh

**Services will be
taking place at
10.00am, 11.30am
with Archbishop
John McDowell and
3.15pm.**



“On the Hill around which Armagh first grew, this Cathedral which stands on the site of Patrick’s ‘Great Stone Church’, continues to be a place of Christian prayer and worship”.

See - <https://www.ireland.anglican.org/news/12256/st-patricks-day-services-inSt>

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Parenting Teens for a Life of Faith online training session

**BRF, Bible Reading Fellowship writes - Parenting Teens
for a Life of Faith is a ground-breaking new course from**

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Parenting for Faith which will launch later in March.

Aimed at parents/ carers of the 11-18 age group, the six-session video course, based on the book of the same name, is presented

by Rachel Turner and offers tried-and-tested tools for everyday discipleship with this age group.



On Wednesday 13 March we're running two online training events to introduce church leaders, children's and families and youth leaders to the course. Hear from Rachel and the Parenting for Faith team, watch clips from the course and have your questions answered. In Rachel's trademark style, the course is relatable, humorous and practical, covering how teens connect with God, what they think of him, and what happens when they don't want to engage with church.

Whether you're a youth leader wanting to engage parents, a church leader or a children and families worker supporting parents of tweens and teens, this training will inspire you

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with what's possible when we equip whole families for discipleship. By the end of the session, you'll feel envisioned and confident to run a Parenting Teens course in your church or community.

And don't take our word for it, here are some comments from pilot course attendees:

'One of our [teenager's] parents does not usually come to church regularly, but has been every week recently during the course...

'They have all been reading their Bibles and are keen to come to an Alpha course in the new year!'

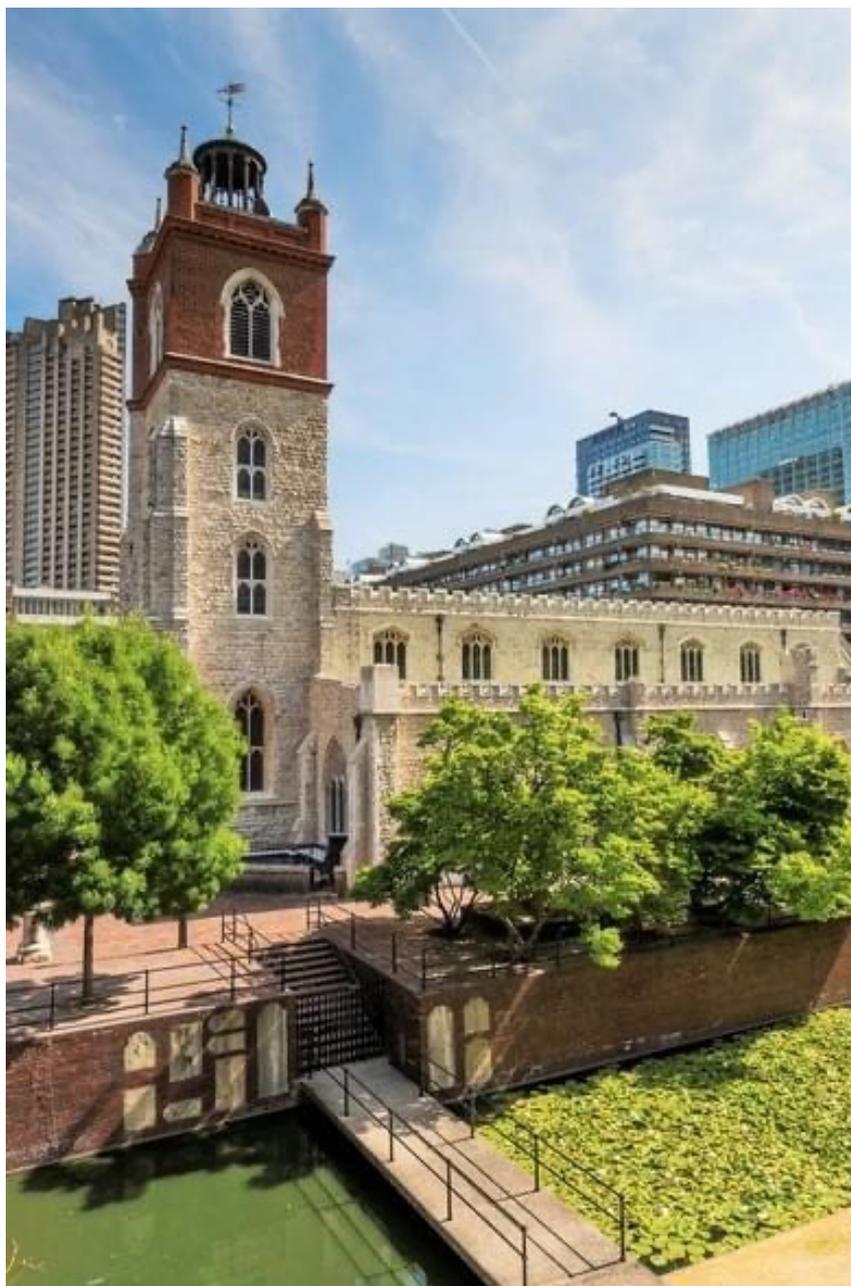
'I saw parents become confident with their teens, they were able to understand behaviours, attitudes etc and guilt became a thing of the past!'

'One lady who is a children's church volunteer and a mature Christian said that it had completely changed her approach to discipling her children. She kept saying, "Why has no one explained it like this before? It's not rocket science - it's the truth."'

We can't wait to welcome you there!

BRF - on 13 March 2024: 10.00 -11.30 GMT or 20.00-21.30 GMT £10.00

Book now [<https://www.brfoonline.org.uk/products/parenting-for-faith-teens-training-online>]



RCO - Royal College of Organists Summer Course

Will you be joining us for our flagship Summer Course this year?

Taking place in London from 29 July to 3 Aug, it's for all ages and stages and it 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.

Anne Marsden Thomas, William Dore, Frederick Stocken and Jeffrey Makinson will be providing tutorship across various sessions. Don't miss out! Book your place here: <https://bit.ly/3uxS15t>

Perspective

Appeal in London for renewed good relations across Irish Sea - Archbishop McDowell

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In anim an Áthair, agus a Mhic agus a Spíorad Naomh.

First, of course, to thank the Lord Mayor for his very kind invitation to preach the Spital Sermon, and to Michael and Elizabeth for their very generous hospitality both last night and today.

I am particularly grateful that the invitation has come at this time when any opportunity for sympathetic conversations between the people of these two islands has never been more important. As we look out at the world today, who would want to be alone in it; who would not want to have close friends? Who is not now convinced that in order to connect to prosper, we need also to connect to feel safe and secure?

We are, by definition, in one another's hands.

The City of London is associated by people all over the world with a certain form of prosperity. Sometimes that financial prosperity had a healthy foundation and sometimes less so. I would suggest that the longer lasting that prosperity has been, the more likely that it had its beginnings in good relationships. Until not that long ago, no



Archbishop McDowell in a recent visit to the Belfast Synagogue

matter how complicated the contract or how elaborate the financial instrument, any deal was made better by a shake of the hand. That may not have been what made it legal, but it is what made it mutual and what made it human. It's hardly a coincidence that the words peace and prosperity are usually joined together.

We are in one another's hands.

In that Iron Age origin story we heard earlier about how a family were on the way to becoming a tribe, and eventually a nation, a mother used the hands of her favourite son to mislead and confuse her dying husband, the founder of the

dynasty, and the man of faith. The voice was the voice of Jacob but the hands were the hands of Esau. One thing was said but another thing was done. There are all sorts of reasons why the deception could be justified, after all Jacob was the stronger candidate as we would say. Dishonesty will always call in reason to justify its methods but the story is not included in the canon as an heroic tale but as a moral one.

We are in one another's hands, and how we deal with one another will work itself out across the wide arc of history.

We are not far from St Patrick's Day and I can identify fully with Patrick when he describes himself as "I, Patrick, a sinner and the most unlettered of men, the least amongst the faithful..." It can be rather terrifying to look up at the list of the Abbots and Archbishops of Armagh in the Cathedral and see Patrick's name first on the list and, 105 later, my own at the end. It also helps give perspective.

Ireland was evangelised by British missionaries, including Patrick, whose spiritual children in turn re-evangelised much of Britain and many parts of Europe centuries later. The most outstanding philosopher in Latin Christianity for its first 900 years was an Irish monk called John Scotus Eriugena. In those days, any reference to someone as Scotus meant that they were Irish.

There is a phrase, probably of Scottish origin, though now used by everyone in the north of Ireland – "through other" – which usually means untidy or dishevelled. In one of his poems Seamus Heaney gave the phrase an alternative meaning – we are 'through other' in the sense that we are

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mixed in with one another, genetically and socially interconnected. If that is true of people within Northern Ireland, it is also true of the people of Great Britain and the people of Ireland.

We don't need to look back to the Middle Ages to witness this interconnectedness. Michael Mainelli has strong connections with Ireland and his two immediate predecessors, Vincent Keaveny and Nick Lyons are also Irish. As it happens, one of the first serious books on Irish history I ever read was TW Moody's treatment of the Londonderry Plantation by some of the City's Livery Companies, and my daughter was enrolled for a time in the Honourable the Irish Society Primary School when I was an incumbent in Coleraine.

It was once said that the greatest unsung heroes of the Peace Process in Northern Ireland were the tax-payers of the South of England. Hands that gave because giving bought time to work out an end to that long period of tragic violence that many of us thought would never end.

We had great celebrations and reminiscences last year to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement. And it was indeed a remarkable achievement of Anglo-Irish statecraft with a good portion of American assistance. And perhaps, in a way that will only be revealed on the Day of the Lord, an achievement of the quiet peacemakers in every city, and town and village.

As we have found out by subsequent events, that peacemaking was also facilitated by common membership of the European Union, and the time and trouble which it

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has taken to square the circle of the perfectly predictable difficulties which Brexit caused in this regard is the reason why Irish affairs have dominated public affairs in this country in a way which they hadn't for many decades. The absence of that institutional connection needs to be made up for through other means of cooperation and through bonds of affection and friendship.

We remain in one another's hands.

And it is now more important than ever because, for all its achievements, the 1998 Agreement ended a war but did not consolidate a peace. Peacemaking and peace-building are two quite different enterprises and require quite different skills. One required back channels and constructive ambiguity and a staying of the hand. The other requires painful, open conversations in plain language that leads to the reaching out of the hand; and to a confidence that the voice and the hands are working together. Both require the courage to acknowledge that we are in one another's hands and the wisdom to know that none will be secure until all are secure.

It was of great significance that the Lord Mayor's first visit after his election last year outside this island was to Northern Ireland. You may also know that the King's first visit outside Britain after his Coronation was similarly to Northern Ireland – this time to Armagh. It was an immense privilege to welcome him for a short, personal Service of Blessing by the Irish Church Leaders in St Patrick's Cathedral.

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It is well beyond my field of expertise to outline, particularly in a commercial sense, how co-operation across the Irish Sea can work to our mutual benefit. However, I can see how the bonds of affection can be strengthened if each of the great institutions of the City of London had a living connection with some place or project, in Northern Ireland.

And is it perhaps too self-serving to ask that when you hear the disparaging word, or see the shrug of the shoulders and the roll of the eyes when the island of Ireland is mentioned, that you say inwardly or outwardly that at least some of that burden is ours to help carry, because we are through other with them, and they are our friends and our neighbours. That we are in one another's hands.

For it is in those little, out of the way intentions and deeds that peace is built or destroyed. Not by the "cunning hand" sometimes noted by the psalmist, nor often by the "mighty hand and outstretched arm", except to deliver from slavery; but by the hand raised in blessing – because blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons and daughters of God.

In the media

Jesuits Ireland - Leaving one home for another

A large congregation turned out to bid farewell to Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ at a Mass of Thanksgiving

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in St Eunan's Cathedral » Letterkenny at 7 pm on Monday 26 February 2024.

Almost seven years ago he was ordained bishop there and the people of Donegal were invited to come and say a final goodbye to him as he leaves to take up his appointment as Bishop of Down and Connor, the second biggest diocese in Ireland.

A statement issued from St. Eunan's Cathedral, Letterkenny noted that the people of Donegal were conflicted about their Bishop's new appointment. " If on the one hand we are honoured that the Holy Father, Pope Francis, should have recognised in our Bishop qualities that made him suitable to



**Bishop Alan will take up his
ministry and mission as
Bishop of Down & Connor
on Tuesday 19th March**

**O God, Bless your servant Alan whom you have chosen as
shepherd of the Church of Down and Connor
St Malachy & St MacNissi, pray for him**

lead the second largest diocese in Ireland – Down and Connor, we are also sincerely sorry to lose someone whom the community has taken to itself in many and different ways.”

The statement spoke about how ‘Bishop Alan’ was an avid runner who formed not only friendships and made good acquaintances but who also unintentionally built up goodwill and affection for himself and the mission of the Church.”

The statement noted that not only did his people appreciate “his brisk celebration of the Mass,” but more importantly they appreciated “his insightful preaching of the gospel, apt both for understanding the mission of the Church in our context today, and the dynamics of faith and life that are the stuff of our spiritual journeys,” it said, adding, “Our affection for him has grown in his easy way and the readiness of his involvement in any good thing he has been asked to attend.”

Bishop Alan McGuckian was not found wanting when the Covid 19 pandemic struck. His Mass was broadcast live on RTE online, and many parishioners expressed gratitude for what they called his ‘prayerful leadership’ during the worst of the Covid lockdown, saying it was invaluable, life-giving and, for many, life-saving.

“By means of ‘An Tobar Domhain’, centred on the rosary and the ‘Examen’ (a prayer drawn from the Jesuit spiritual art of discernment), he not only accompanied people spiritually and humanly but also placed a spiritual tool in our hands that would be a good legacy of his time with us if we were to practice it carefully still.”

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The statement continued by saying there is a “real sense of loss at his going,’ but added that parishioners are aware that his leadership has put in place good things to help the diocese and each parish chart a way for a challenging future, with real faith and trust in the Spirit’s guidance and love for our Faith.

Bishop Alan is the Jesuit who founded the online prayer website sacredspace.com » which celebrates its 25 anniversary this year. Always the innovator he went on as Bishop of Raphoe to create a pilgrim walk in the footsteps of St Colmcille, the patron saint of Derry. He led the pilgrimage for several years as its popularity grew. In the statement, tribute was also paid to him in this regard. Listen here to his interview about the pilgrimage »

“We entrust him to the intercession of St. Colmcille, whose footsteps he followed along Slí Cholmcille, and whose example and life he set before with new vitality... We pray that the Bishop Martyr Blessed Conor O’Devenney, a native of the Drumkeen area and the martyred Bishop of Down and Connor, may intercede for him... And we send with him an assurance of friendship and prayerful accompaniment for his new mission.”

After their farewell Mass parishioners joined their Bishop for the last time with reminiscing and refreshments, in the nearby Loreto Secondary School.

Reporting on his transition the Donegal News noted that “Humble, compassionate, and inspirational were among the many positive words used repeatedly to describe outgoing Bishop of Raphoe, Bishop Alan McGuckian, during a series

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of celebrations to mark his departure from the diocese this week.”

Bishop Alan told the paper, “I came here on the 9th of June and I will never forget that day. Standing in the Cathedral, I looked out on some of the same people who were here tonight for the last Mass. In Donegal, I felt so at home. I was sure that I’d be buried here.” He added, “I’m leaving one home to go to another. There’s a real sadness but I’m also going with readiness and enthusiasm for what comes next.”

The bishop also described his feelings at the farewell Mass on Monday evening saying, “My heart just soared when I heard the opening hymn. It was a deeply spiritual evening for me. There was something very special about seeing people from every parish in the diocese, and choirs from every parish too,”

The Donegal News wished Bishop Alan well as he embarks on his new journey as Bishop of Down and Connor, saying the community of Raphoe “bids him a fond farewell, united in faith and gratitude for the impact he has made on their lives and the diocese as a whole.”

There was also a final blessing from the people of St Eunan’s, “Faoi bhat na Maighdeana thú i gcónaí, a Easbaig dhíl.”

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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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
