

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Rural reponsibility**

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Short reading and a prayer daily on this site



May 5, 2025

## Image of the day

### Rural reponsibility - may start early

## News



Pray for Billy Smyth and Tom Finlay from St John's Parish in Moira, as they visit our partners in Uganda and Yei, South Sudan. Pray for God's protection and covering, as they carry out some practical and monitoring work at the VTC in Yei and bring encouragement to our local mission partner Toti Jacobs ministering in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement, western Uganda.



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equipping the church **in mission**

## **Moira's CMS partners to visit Uganda and South Sudan Rural reponsibility**

**“Pray for Billy Smyth and Tom Finlay from St John's Parish in Moira, as they visit our partners in Uganda and Yei, South Sudan...**

**“Pray for God's protection and covering, as they carry out some practical and monitoring work at the VTC in Yei and bring encouragement to our local mission partner Toti Jacobs ministering in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement, western Uganda”.**

## **Wonderful premiere at Organ Serenades for a May Evening**

**On Friday 2 May at First Church, Belfast, Andrew Forbes, Director of Music at Glasgow Cathedral, performed on the beautiful Lewis Organ. The premiere of Roxanna Panufnik's Agnus Dei will live long in the memory.**

**The evening also included music by Debussy, Dubois, James Horner, and The Beatles...and admission to the recital was free.**

## **Generosity in Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe**

**On the evening of Thursday 1st May, 2025 in the Maldron Hotel, Oranmore, the proceeds from Mission**



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## Sunday 2024 was presented to the Galway Samaritans and The Church's Ministry of Healing: Ireland.

The United Diocesan Council for Mission is a Church of Ireland body established by the United Diocese of Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe with a mission to provide opportunities which will facilitate and encourage throughout the United Dioceses Christian spiritual growth and fellowship, based on the 'Five Marks of Mission' of the Anglican Communion.



*(L to R), Olive Kenny, Bishop Michael Burrows, Rev. Canon Jane Gilbraith, David Frizelle, Catherine Smith (of the CMH:I), Patrick Lonergan, Edward Hardy.*



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*(L to R) Bishop Michael Burrows, Rev. Canon Jane Galbraith, David Frizelle, Sinead Ó hÁinle, Patrick Lonergan (both of the Samaritans) and Edward Hardy*

“Once a year, on “Mission Sunday” we fund-raise in our parishes for two chosen charities. This provides our parishioners with a focused opportunity to show generosity to worthy charities, at home and abroad, who need our support”.

Mission Sunday in 2024 fell on Sunday 24th November and on that occasion we chose the Samaritans and the Church of Ireland’s Ministry of Healing (Ireland). Both charities

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provide support for people in distress and as our speakers at a recent Mission Evening demonstrated, are profoundly complementary.

Both, too, ensure that all donated funds go to the work of each charity as all work is on a voluntary basis. On the evening of Thursday 1st May, in the Maldron Hotel, Oranmore, each charity was presented with a cheque for €3,506.50 towards their work. Catherine Smith received the cheque on behalf of the CHM:I and Sinead Ó hÁinle and Patrick Lonergan received theirs on behalf of the Samaritans. “We warmly recommend the work of both charities to our members and thank them for their support”.

## **Mothers Union Knickers Night raises awareness of domestic abuse campaign**

**It's not very often that you hear the words 'Mothers' Union' and 'knickers' used in the same sentence! However, a Mothers' Union branch in Liverpool recently hosted a 'Knicker Night', raising awareness for the RISE UP campaign, doing amazing work and enrolling two new members.**

RISE UP is the MU campaign to raise awareness of domestic abuse across Britain and Ireland. The acronym stands for Respond, Inform, Support, Empower, Unite and Pray. It is our goal that our members and churches will work together to be a part of the change and combat domestic abuse.



Collaborating with two local charities, the night was organised in response to the need for new underwear for women arriving for services from Wigan Women's Aid. Many women have no other clothing, including underwear, when coming for safety after difficult circumstances.

Guests of the night included local counsellor Jenny Bullen and the CEO of DIAS Domestic Abuse Centre, Jane Martin. DIAS is a specialist provider of support, advice and counselling for those affected by domestic abuse.

The evening resulted in an amazing 238 pairs of new knickers being donated, with committee member Jane Fennel donating 17 handbags filled with toiletries to DIAS. Members of other MU branches and churches continually contribute to the Women's Aid, donating items such as bedding, towels and clothing in response to need.

26 members and 11 visitors also attended after the event was shared in the local community. Two people signed up as Mothers' Union members on the night as a direct result of the RISE UP campaign.



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The evening started with prayers for those who are survivors of domestic abuse or have been affected by it, followed by a quiz on the topic, which was utilised as a learning opportunity. The feedback after the event was positive, with attendees stating they had learnt a great deal. Games were also played, and an encouraging evening was had by all.

“I feel privileged to be part of such a dynamic Mothers Union” - Patricia Hamilton-Whittaker, Branch Secretary

Find out more about our RISE UP campaign, and how to get involved with this and other MU projects in your local area today.

## **Priest's message of forgiveness at funeral of controversial bishop**

**Mourners at the funeral of controversial bishop Brendan Comiskey have been told one moment cannot define a person's life or legacy.**

Bishop Brendan Comiskey, who died recently at the age of 89, quit as bishop of the Ferns diocese in the Republic in 2002 after acknowledging failings in his handling of complaints against notorious priest Fr Sean Fortune.

The diocese's much-criticised response to allegations against Fortune — who took his own life in 1999 while on bail awaiting trial on a litany of child abuse charges — and other clerics in its parishes prompted the landmark Ferns Inquiry.

The subsequent report in 2005 was damning of the diocese's handling of clerical abuse allegations across a four-decade period.

He was in the news again recently as a grave in Co Monaghan exhumed by experts searching for Disappeared victim Joe Lynskey belonged to the family of the former bishop. Mr Lynskey, a former monk from Belfast who joined the IRA, was abducted, murdered and secretly buried in 1972.

Requiem Mass for Bishop Comiskey, who was originally from Co Monaghan, was held in the Church of the Sacred Heart in Clondalkin in west Dublin. Fr Jim Fegan told mourners who gathered for the service the bishop “believed deeply in the power of kindness and that every person deserved to be treated with dignity and respect”.

Fr Fegan said: “Leadership is never easy, and Brendan experienced his own unique mix of gifts, challenges and life lessons, and there were times when he felt he did not meet the expectations that had been set before him, but yet it is very important to recognise that failure in one aspect does not define the entirety of a person's life or their great legacy.”

He went on to quote the statement Bishop Comiskey made upon his resignation. He had asked for forgiveness and acknowledged while he had tried to do his best, his best was “not good enough”.



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After the service the bishop's remains were taken for burial in Annyalla Cemetery in Co Monaghan.

## Education

### Laurel Hill Community College SistersIN

**SistersIN class of 2025 had an exciting trip to the ICC in Belfast on April 7th to celebrate their participation this year.**

They visited many stalls from employers and universities (gathering lots of freebies!) and heard talks from a variety of business leaders.

Finally, they heard speeches from Deputy First Minister Emma Little-Pengelly and First Minister Michelle O'Neil who announced their intention to support the SistersIN programme by participating as mentors next year.

We are looking forward to our own celebration on Tuesday 17th June to round off a very successful year.  
Congratulations Class of 2025!

### Calling all St Malachy's Alumni

**Reconnect with the College, help revive fond memories and take that journey back to where it all began!**

The College will celebrate its 200th anniversary in 2033 and there are exciting plans ahead to help support the young men on their educational and personal journeys.

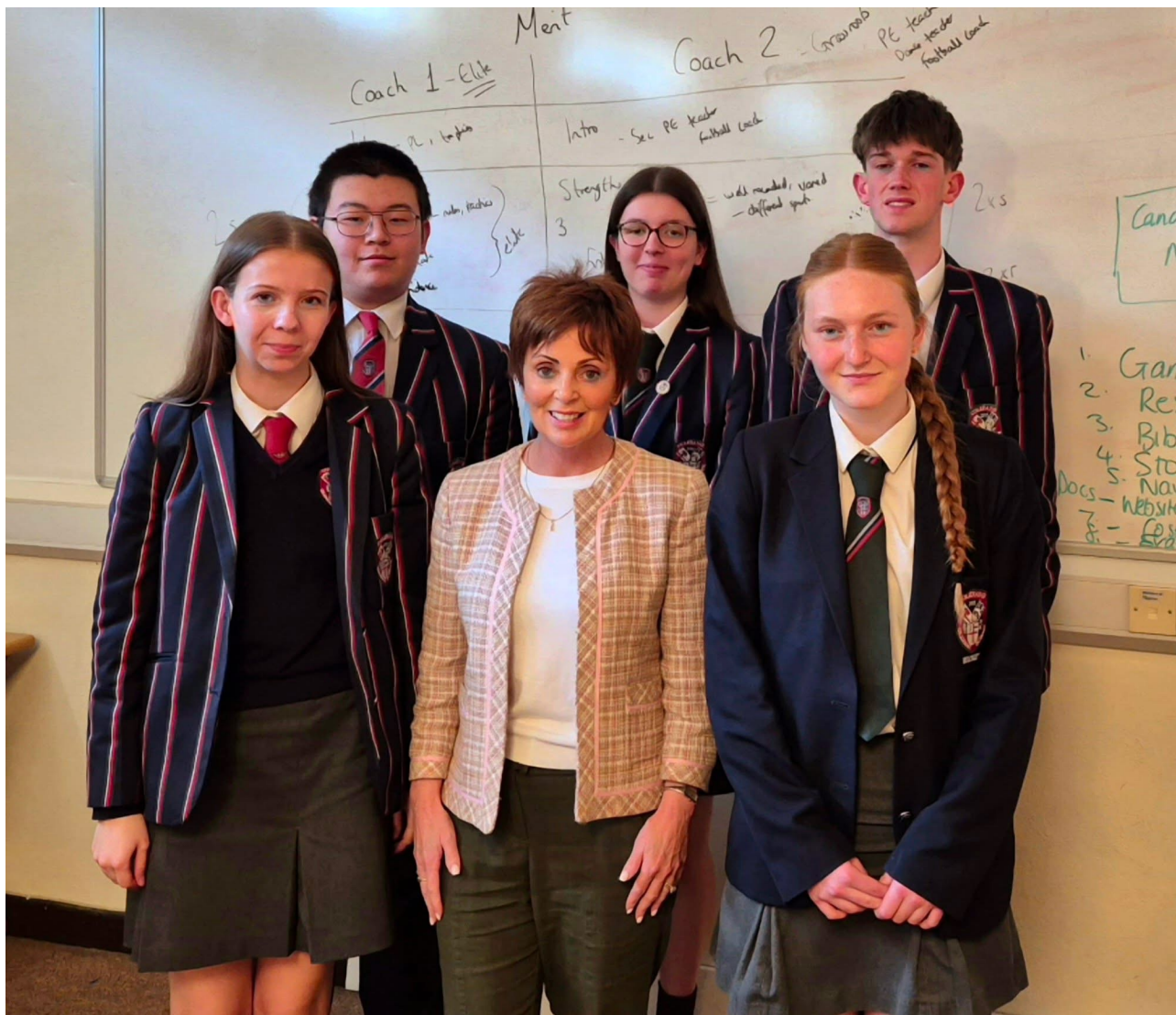
Adrian Fulton (Class of 1989) has recently been appointed as the Alumni Officer, a new post created to reach out to former students, to help reconnect them to the College and build a more cohesive, connected College network. We would be grateful if you would take just a couple of minutes to complete the very short questionnaire by clicking the following link: <https://forms.gle/5ePFHpPYFTcVUgqh8>

We very much look forward to hearing from you!

## Coleraine Grammar School in the Irish Chemistry Olympiad







## **CGS takes on the challenge: Year 13 Pupils Compete in the Irish Chemistry Olympiad**

In an impressive display of dedication and intellectual prowess, our Year 13 Chemistry students participated in the first round of the Chemistry Olympiad Ireland, a prestigious competition designed to challenge and inspire the next generation of chemists. The event took place online on Friday, 7th March, from 12:30pm to 2:00pm, marking a significant achievement for the students.

Under the watchful eye of Mrs. Reid, these bright sparks embarked upon a rigorous and challenging examination.

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The competition, known for its demanding nature, requires participants to not only apply their extensive knowledge of chemistry but also to solve complex problems and make educated guesses. This year's cohort demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to their academic pursuits, working diligently over their lunch break to complete the time-bound examination.

## Cathedral Calls

### Clogher Diocese Mothers' Union 125th anniversary

Clogher Diocese Mothers' Union celebrated their 125th anniversary at a Festival Service in St Macartin's Cathedral, Enniskillen.

The service was conducted by Dean Kenneth Hall assisted by Bishop Ian Ellis and Rev Maureen









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Desborough, Mothers' Union Diocesan Chaplain.

The preacher was Archdeacon Stephen McBride, Mothers' Union Chaplain in Ireland, from Antrim.

During the service Bishop Ian Ellis commissioned new trustees.

Clogher Mothers' Union was led by Mrs Heather Ellis, Diocesan President and guests included immediate Past All Ireland MU President, Mrs June Butler and local civic leaders.



It was a colourful event with a parade of standards from branches throughout the Diocese.

## Events


### Learning & Development Workshop Day: Creation: Looking After Our Earthly Home

**Saturday 10th May, 11am – 4pm. Cornerstone Methodist Church (Cairnshill, Belfast)**

We'll begin with an interactive Bible study, followed by input from the MCI Council for Social Responsibility Environmental Action Group, exploring:

-  Sustainable practices in caring for God's creation
-  How to apply the MCI Environmental Policy in local contexts

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 Resources and ideas for worship and discipleship around environmental stewardship

This event is designed to support Local Preachers in Training and accredited Local Preachers, but all are welcome who wish to grow in faith and practice.



Register here: <https://forms.office.com/e/gNab23FRc6>

## **Down and Connor Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine**

**In this Jubilee Year of Hope join us on the Down and Connor Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine.**

Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ will celebrate the Eucharist at 3.00pm.

The price £45 per person includes luxury coach and refreshments. Early booking is advised. Full details below.

## **Keith and Kristin Getty prepare for Sing! 2025**

**124 days until Sing! 2025... Yes, we're counting!**

“We can't wait to gather together in Nashville this September. Join us as we journey through the greatest hymns of all time, learn dozens of new hymns as a part of the official launch of the Sing! Hymnal, and think deeply about how we can continue to pass rich, Biblical songs



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onward through the generations. Learn more and register:  
[singconference.com](http://singconference.com)



**Dare to Hope**  
**YOUNG ADULT  
FAITH GATHERING**

Event for 18 to 30 year olds

Principal Speaker: Fr Conor McDonagh

A variety of workshops including:

- Serving Jesus on the Edge,
- Breaking Open the Word of God,
- How to Speak About Our Faith,
- Reconciliation Service and much more

Celebration of the Eucharist with Bishop Fintan Gavin

**Saturday, June 14th 2025**  
in The Youth Village, Knock Shrine  
9.30am – 5.30pm

Cost €20 | Bookings via Eventbrite



IRISH CATHOLIC  
BISHOPS' CONFERENCE  
COMHDHÁIL EASPAG CAITLICEACH ÉIREANN



KNOCK  
Ireland's International Eucharistic  
and Marian Shrine

## Resources

### Funding opportunity for local groups

**Belfast City Airport's Community Fund is now open for applications.**



“If you're part of a community group, charity, school, sports team, or other local initiative in Greater Belfast, Ards, or North Down, we want to hear from you.

Apply by 23rd May to let us help bring your project to life:  
<https://bit.ly/CommunityFund2025>

## Perspective

### **Marathon star Gladys defies expectations by staying in here and now for every race**

FORMER WINNER OF BELFAST EVENT IS STILL  
CHURNING OUT GREAT TIMES AT AGE OF 48

JAMES MCNANEY writes in the Belfast Telegraph

**Gladys Ganiel has a lot of demands on her time. Alongside being an academic at Queen's University Belfast, she is also a mother and a dedicated marathon runner.**

She is successful in both her work and her hobby: she is a professor of the Sociology of Religion at QUB, and still runs impressive times in marathons, having previously competed at the Commonwealth Games.

She finds creative ways to fit training into her packed schedule: “I commute to work by running, so it's very efficient.”

“If you're playing in football or a team sport, you can't really get your training in by commuting to work. You can make it fit quite well around your life.

“The shortest route I can take after I drop my son to school is about three miles. But you obviously want to be running more than that if you're doing a marathon.

“I would, in general, be running extra and finding little places to go off and take a longer route.”

Originally from the US state of Maine, Gladys is in the last stages of preparation for this year's marathon in her adopted home, a race which she has pedigree in.

She won the women's category of the Belfast marathon in 2022, and improved upon that time by a couple of minutes in 2024. The increased level of competition meant she notched a fourth-place finish last year, but Gladys is mostly happy to still be out running at the age of 48.



“To be perfectly honest, I didn't think I would still be as competitive in athletics at my age as I am now.

“Before Covid, I ran internationally, I ran the Commonwealth Games, I ran European Championships and stuff but I'm still running similar times as I was when I was an international athlete. People have gotten faster and the shoe technology has gotten better, but yet at the same time, I'm still competitive, at a sub elite level.

“I didn't think I would be running as fast as I am at this age. I've been doing the Belfast Marathon and Dublin Marathon, for the last few years. They're the biggest races on the island. I look at it as a sort of retirement project, but also as a science experiment.

“Last year in Dublin, aged 47 in October, I ran 2:39. If you told me I would have run that time at that age, 10 years ago, I would never have believed it.

“I think what's keeping it going now is the curiosity of how long I can maintain this, because at some point I know I will get significantly slower. I hope Sunday is not that day.”

Gladys is “convinced” that running helps her work as an academic: “I remember reading that CS Lewis used to go on long walks, and when he came back from his walk, he was able to be more creative and write better.

“It's roughly the same thing. He wasn't training for the marathon, but any sort of exercise that takes you on to a different plane, I suppose, where you're not intellectualizing so much.

“It gives your brain a break and allows the subconscious to rest and then come up with more creative ideas.”

Gladys has found that the task of balancing academic and athletic demands has actually improved both interests.

“If you can establish a routine, that's probably like 90% of the battle.”

Gladys is running this year in support of Christian Aid's 70k in May campaign. The charity is asking people to commit to 70 kilometres of any kind of movement — walking, running, cycling — to raise funds for people battling extreme poverty, with a focus this year on the climate crisis.

Describing herself as a “church-goer” Gladys says she is happy to do, “anything to help draw attention to the work they do internationally”. “Any big marathon, has a lot of people running for charity, but I think in the case of Belfast, with some of the controversy around having the race on a Sunday, you know you're doing good on a Sunday.

“This is a Christian organisation. You're helping people throughout the world, and putting your feet where your mouth is. I suppose that Christianity is about doing and acting, and trying to support people who are less fortunate is a key aspect of it.”

It is Gladys's job to think about religion, in her role at QUB: “I've done two big books on religion during the Troubles that raise issues about the legacy of the past and how Christians or churches might continue to try to contribute to healing in Northern Ireland.

“The academic study of religion, you're not doing it from a confessional perspective, you're kind of studying religion as an object.

“In some ways you have to separate that. But at the same time, you don't deny if you are a Christian as well.

The marathon route takes runners all around the city, but Gladys says the strain of the task prevents her from noticing her surroundings: “What's usually on your mind is how much pain you're in.”

“If you get it right, you're in the present moment. In some senses, it's almost like prayer or meditation.

“If you do achieve the flow state, you're probably not noticing a lot.”

## Poem for today

### White Hawthorn in the West of Ireland

By Eavan Boland

I drove west  
in the season between seasons.  
I left behind suburban gardens.  
Lawnmowers. Small talk.

Under low skies, past splashes of coltsfoot  
I assumed  
the hard shyness of Atlantic light



and the superstitious aura of hawthorn.

All I wanted then was to fill my arms with  
sharp flowers,  
to seem, from a distance, to be part of  
that ivory, downhill rush. But I knew,

I had always known  
the custom was  
not to touch hawthorn.  
Not to bring it indoors for the sake of

the luck  
such constraint would forfeit —  
a child might die, perhaps, or an unexplained  
fever speckle heifers. So I left it

stirring on those hills  
with a fluency  
only water has. And, like water, able  
to redefine land. And free to seem to be —

for anglers,  
and for travelers astray in  
the unmarked lights of a May dusk —  
the only language spoken in those parts.

## 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)

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# Church News Ireland

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

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