



**Image of the day -
Playmobil gathering for yesterday's children's talk on
the feeding of five thousand**

Reports

Bishop of Cork on Centenaries

Visitors to St Fin Barre's cathedral, Cork, may notice a 'neutral' space in which they're invited to pray and reflect on some of the most harrowing events in recent Irish history.

It's part of the Diocese of Cork, Cloyne & Ross's 'Centenaries, Commemoration and Reconciliation Project'. Anniversaries which some feared might sow division are instead being reimagined as opportunities for reconciliation, the C of I Correspondent writes in The Irish Times.

The Bishop of Cork, Dr Paul Colton, has been reflecting on the subject of commemorating events from 100 years ago in an interview with Paul McFadden for the 'Journey in Self-Belief' project in Maynooth University. Growing up in Cork, Bishop Colton came to know "very intimately" the stories of some of the things that happened there and also of stories being told in different ways by different people and became aware of some of the complexity of the period.

As a Protestant in Cork, the young Paul Colton became conscious of difference: "We didn't put out a papal flag on Corpus Christi – we were about the only ones on the



road who didn't. And then you happen to be at your friend's house, at teatime, and as a seven-year-old you're talking away and then you look around and you realise they're all quiet because it's the time of the Angelus. So, I grew up fascinated by interaction with this difference, and it sort of compelled me towards understanding and ecumenism."

Returning to Cork as Bishop, in 1999, "in the run-in to the Decade of Centenaries," he decided that the Churches should get involved. "As Churches, we're told by Saint Paul that we're entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation. So, whatever we're doing – whether it's within ourselves, with our neighbour and even, most challengingly, with our enemy – reconciliation is a watchword."

"There's something of that, too, in my own family story," the Bishop disclosed. "The Coltons only came to Ireland

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in the late 19th century as part of what was then ‘*the Army*’, and they all served. In contrast, my wife’s family were from north west Cork, and they were very close to some of the things that went on during this very period. They were living within a stone’s throw, for example, of Kilmichael.

“It’s not that long ago, a hundred years, so that’s why there’s a rawness still for some people, because people want to be loyal to their own, and yet people have also made a journey, themselves, to something new, and I see that in my own children as well.”

From 2014 to 2018, St Fin Barre’s became a World War One remembrance space. In 2016, Dr Colton and the Dean of Cork, the Very Revd Nigel Dunne, worked with the Western Front Association and local people to humanise commemoration of the Battle of the Somme: “So, that space then fulfilled that purpose during those four years.”

Creating space for the War of Independence and Civil War periods has proved more problematical. Evidently, there are still people carrying hurts generations later: “There are certainly people who don’t want to talk about it. One parishioner said to one clergyman here, ‘Tell the Bishop to leave well alone’, you know. Let’s just be delighted where we are now, don’t go digging things up, we don’t want to do that.’ I have to respect that, too. I have to respect the silence.”

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Dr Colton is the Convenor of the General Synod's Historical Centenaries Working Group.

Persecution of Christians across the globe focus of Bangor Worldwide Missionary Convention

Bangor Worldwide is preparing to host its 85th Missionary Convention between Friday August 20 and Sunday August 29.

The majority of the events will be held at Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church, Bangor, Co Down, including (in a change to what was previously advertised) the special opening day's events on Saturday August 21.

Chairman Tom Clarke said: "We are starting our Convention with Faith, Freedom and the Future – exploring the persecution of Christians across the globe. Former Bishop of Rochester, Michael Nazir-Ali will be our main speaker – he was also the Bishop of Raiwind in Pakistan.

"Also taking part will be Fiona Bruce MP and Jim Shannon MP, who will explain how the UK government supports freedom of religion. There will be an afternoon session starting at 3.30pm and an evening meeting at 7pm and Mark Johnston will lead our praise at both events.



“A Story Box exhibition will run from 2.30 to 6.30pm – a unique feature specially created for this event by several mission agencies who will bring to life what faith as a persecuted Christian looks like.”

Mr Clarke added: “Numbers will be restricted because of the current Coronavirus regulations, so we would kindly ask that people register online. A booking link will be available from 2nd August on our website.

“Bible teaching is an important part of our Convention and we will be holding morning Bible studies each weekday at 11.30am. This year, Jonathan Lamb, minister-at-large with Keswick Ministries will be leading these sessions looking at the book of Habakkuk. Registration is also required online.”

For more information on these and all the events taking place during the convention, visit the website

www.worldwidemission.org or follow on social media – @BangorWorldwide on Twitter; Bangor Worldwide Missionary Convention on Facebook.

Anglicans launch weekly 25-mile pilgrimage to clean up Welsh beaches

The bishop of St. Asaph has blessed more than 30 people as they set off on a litter-picking walk, talk and prayer pilgrimage from Talacre to Llandudno.

Bishop Gregory Cameron joined people from churches along the north Wales coast for Shore to Shore, a weekly journey for people to walk a section of the beach and coastal path, stopping to talk and pray as well as picking up litter. The 25-mile route has been split into six sections, varying in length from three miles to six miles.

Launching Shore to Shore this week, Cameron said, “It is a pleasure to join you on the beach today as you set off. The shore was an important place for Jesus to meet with people and hear their stories. Shore to Shore is a straightforward and down to earth example of the church seeking to serve its local community and make a difference. We’re encouraging congregations to open their church doors, to leave their building behind and meet the needs of their local community. As we begin the school summer holidays, beaches here will be busier than ever and we hope to do our bit to keep them clean and tidy.”

Shore to Shore is part of a coastal strategy to reinvigorate church life by the sea in north Wales. Many of the churches

are based in large Victorian buildings in need of substantial modernization. Some of the communities they serve are among the most deprived in Wales and have suffered disproportionately through the COVID-19 pandemic.

People and places

Taney teacher retires pledging a gift in her Will to Christian Aid Ireland

When Shirley Chee was a child, her parents fostered a little girl who'd been injured in the war in Eritrea.

Fifty years on, as she begins her retirement, Shirley is pledging a gift in her Will to help Christian Aid rebuild other lives torn apart by conflict and poverty. Lisa Fagan, communications officer with Christian Aid, spoke to Dr Shirley Chee.

Shirley Chee welcomes me into her home in Greystones, County Wicklow. She teaches 4th class at Taney Parish Primary School, a Church of Ireland school in nearby Dundrum. And from the get-go, her passion for teaching and music is clear: "I love the Old Testament stories. I play the piano and I sing with the children – I do a rollicking good RE lesson", she laughs.

Born in Limerick and brought up in Killiney, Shirley was the eldest of three children:

"Mum was Baptist and Dad was Brethren but when they married, they joined Dun Laoghaire Methodist Church."



The family fostered a little girl from The Bird's Nest, a children's home in Dun Laoghaire:

“She was from Eritrea and had been injured in the war. She stayed with us at weekends and in the holidays. Eventually her mum was found and she returned to Eritrea.”

Shirley Chee

This experience sparked a lifelong interest in Africa and by the time she was in her 20s, Shirley was secretary of the Christian Aid group in Dublin Central Mission:

“I was inspired by Rev John Parkin. He was fantastic, a real character. We used to raise money by holding suppers in the church hall – I remember doling out bowls of stew – and we ran sponsored walks.”

By her early 30s, she'd completed a Master's degree and a PhD in education, specialising in the teaching of music. One summer, during the school holidays, she volunteered at a school in Uganda.

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Shirley retired from teaching last week, after a career spanning 40 years.

She has decided to leave a gift in her Will to Christian Aid. What prompted her to do it?

“It’s the same reason that I support organ donation – to make sure that what I have is put to good use when I’m gone.

“I want to help children like the little girl my parents fostered, children displaced by war. And I love the way that Christian Aid helps people boost their incomes by selling honey or vegetables, so they can send their children to school.”

She adds: “Justice is very important to me, I want to be fair and equal to all. It’s the reason I have always supported Fair Trade and Traidcraft.”

Justice was important in deciding how to divide out her assets:

“I don’t have very much, just this house, but I decided that I would give a tenth to God – that’s the share Christian Aid will receive. The rest is being divided out among the people in my life, including my niece and nephew and my four stepchildren.”

Although Shirley’s marriage ended recently, her relationship with her stepchildren remains strong.

How is she planning to spend her time in retirement?

“I love art and gardening and music, of course. I play the piano, the recorder and the cello and I sing in a choir.”

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Will the Wicklow hills be alive with The Sound of Music, I wonder? She laughs.

Like the governess-turned-stepmother to the Von Trapp children in the famous musical, our heroine Shirley is a teacher and stepmother, a singer and musician. Like Maria, she's fun-loving, kind-hearted and guided by a strong moral compass. Now that she has retired, you get the feeling that a whole new chapter in Shirley's life is about to begin. And the beginning, as we learn in the musical, is a very good place to start.

Cafe opens at church on Derry's Walls

Bishop Andrew Forster took advantage of the hot weather and a window in his diary, to pay his first visit to Londonderry city centre's newest eatery on Thursday morning.

The Bishop of Derry and Raphoe wanted to encourage the staff and volunteers who have made The Wee Church Café a welcome and popular addition to the city's food scene.

The café, which opened last month, is part of St Augustine's Parish Church's mission in the city. Its Rector, the Rev Nigel Cairns, who was present to welcome the Bishop, said the café is part of his church's mission on the west bank. Visitors are free to use the prayer station in the café, and in the Wee Church itself.

Bishop Andrew said he wanted to pray with and for the team, and to bless and encourage them. He also paid



tribute to the leadership provided by the Rector. The Bishop sampled some of the fare on offer – choosing the warm croissant with crisp bacon, melting brie and chutney. The Rector opted for the toasted sourdough with avocado, roast tomato and sour cream. Even though the pair ate outdoors, the aroma was appropriately heavenly.

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St Augustine's Church is built on the site of St Columba's monastery and prior to Covid was attracting around thirty thousand visitors a year. "Those are the numbers we're aspiring to, again, once things open up fully," Mr Cairns said. The Wee Church Café is accessible from Bishop Street car park and Palace Street, and it will be open from 10am–4pm, Thursday through to Saturday, for the rest of the tourist season.

Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars



Looking for an evening of giant, poverty-beating, community-building fun?

You've found it! On Saturday 20 November 2021, churches and groups from every corner of the UK will take part in

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Tearfund's Big Quiz Night – and you can be part of it. Find out more here -

[[] <https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/big-quiz-night>]



‘Lift Every Voice and Sing’ to feature special preaching, music

The Union of Black Episcopalians (UBE) invites all to join a virtual churchwide revival July 27-30 that will feature stirring

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music, testimonies, learning, and messages from Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and others.

For four nights, Black Episcopalians will lead The Episcopal Church in worship and preaching, focusing on the following themes inspired by the hymn Lift Every Voice and Sing: gifts from the past, challenges in the present, and promise for the future. All services will be livestreamed. The UBE revival also includes daytime sessions featuring panel and group discussions, prayer, and fellowship opportunities. Register for these enriching sessions at [<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/episcopal-revivals/ube-revival/>.]

King's College Chapel re-opens

It's great that King's College Chapel is now open to visitors again. Find out more here: <https://bit.ly/VisitingKings>

Poem for today

The Country Clergy by R.S.Thomas

I see them working in old rectories
By the sun's light, by candlelight,
Venerable men, their black cloth
A little dusty, a little green
With holy mildew. And yet their skulls,
Ripening over so many prayers,
Toppled into the same grave
With oafs and yokels. They left no books,
Memorial to their lonely thought

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In grey parishes; rather they wrote
On men's hearts and in the minds
Of young children sublime words
Too soon forgotten. God in his time
Or out of time will correct this.

It's great that King's College Chapel is now open to visitors again. Find out more here: <https://bit.ly/VisitingKings>

Pointers for prayer

Gospel Reading: Matthew 14.22-33

Immediately after feeding the crowd with the five loaves and two fish, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake. But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.' Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in

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the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'



That the power of Christ may uphold us in peril and in our weakness, we pray in his name.

¶The Church of Christ

Lord, your Church finds itself in the midst of a tempest, as did that boat on the Sea of Galilee. The pounding waves that we hear are in part attempts by the world to understand and live harmoniously with the Church, and in part attempts at submerging the Church once and for all by those who have lost patience with what seems like hypocrisy and intransigence. The Church itself, for its part, causes turbulence in its dealings with the world in which we all live and move and have our being by seeming to seek only to condemn. Oh God, we ask you to help us raise our gaze once more heavenwards.

Lord, we beseech you to still first the waves and then our souls: in your mercy, hear our prayer

¶Creation, human society, the Sovereign and those in authority

Lord, when we see conflict between nations on every side, we feel powerless to help and fear to intervene lest we only exacerbate the situation. If there is a way to build understanding and to reduce fear, please show us how we might help to do this. Calm the storms, we pray, that trouble the world and deliver us from fear so that we may see love and faithfulness coming together, and justice and mercy embracing. Then may the world live in peace with each other, based on your love, truth and light.
Lord, we beseech you to still first the waves and then our souls: in your mercy, hear our prayer

¶The local community

Lord, give us the wisdom to know that so many of our difficulties are beyond our abilities to resolve unaided. In the storms of life, bid us come to you so that we, who are aware of our weakness, may be made strong in you. Give our community the confidence to believe that you will guide the future as you have the past. When we set out in faith to join you in the storms of life, let us not hesitate, lest we begin to sink, and need a miracle to survive.
Lord, we beseech you to still first the waves and then our souls: in your mercy, hear our prayer

¶Those who suffer

Lord, buoy up all those who feel themselves sinking beneath the waves of pain and sorrow. When we are in danger of being overwhelmed, increase our faith, and through every

storm of life help us to keep our gaze fixed on you. If we should falter, or look down at the perils below us, we ask you to stretch out your hand to raise us up once more. So may we learn to hold fast to you, through good or ill, until we have passed through the valley of the shadows.
Lord, we beseech you to still first the waves and then our souls: in your mercy, hear our prayer

¶The communion of saints

Lord, we bring before you all those who have travelled over the tempestuous sea of this mortal life to reach the heavenly harbour of peace and felicity. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.
Lord, we beseech you to still first the waves and then our souls: in your mercy, hear our prayer

Speaking to the Soul

Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ.

Philippians 1:27 NLT

The residents of Philippi were very proud of their city which was a Roman Colony. They had been rewarded by the Emperor Octavian after his defeat of Antony and Cleopatra. The city was in Macedonia and is now part of northern Greece, but the Philippians enjoyed all the same privileges as if they were living in Italy. Citizenship was a big issue for them and they were delighted to enjoy the legal and tax advantages which came with their status. But Paul tells

them that far more significant than this was the fact that they were citizens of heaven. Being a Philippian was a temporary arrangement unlike their eternal citizenship of heaven.

Paul was not saying that it was unimportant that they were Roman citizens. He had much to say about the importance of Christians living as responsible members of their community. In his letter to the church in Rome, at the heart of the empire, he wrote that those who followed Christ had a responsibility to submit to the governing authorities because they had been established by God. (Romans 13.1) Christians should do everything in their power to support their communities and to live as responsible citizens, but they would do so with the knowledge that their principal identity was their heavenly one.

There were many pressures upon the church in Philippi. Although Paul's letter is particularly positive it is clear that there were plenty of challenges, both from people outside the church and from those inside the fellowship who were squabbling with one another. Paul knew that they must live by the highest standards and so he urged them to live a life that was worthy of the Good News about Christ. The church wasn't their little private club, but a group of people drawn together by the Spirit to proclaim the amazing news of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever our churches might be facing at present we all need to hear the same challenge to live a life that is worthy of Christ.

QUESTION

What does it mean to you to be a citizen of heaven?

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PRAYER

Dear Lord, thank you for the eternal security that we have in knowing you and help us to contribute positively to our temporary homes here on earth. Amen

