

Church News Ireland



Image of
the day

Cloughfern Parish Church – Easter Day

Image of the day

Cross at Cloughfern Parish Church - Easter Day.

Contrast with the same cross shown here on Saturday last. Please see CNI post on Saturday April 16.

People and places

Butterflies of Hope

The Rainbows, Brownies and Guides at St Matthew's Parish Church, Belfast, created lovely Butterflies of Hope. They are now on display on their church gates for everyone to see.





Easter Messy Church in Kilkenny Cathedral

Many children, fun and laughter... Making Easter cards, Easter gardens from biscuits, decorations for Easter tree, stained glass windows and Easter bunnies. Everyone aced the Dean's quiz and lots and lots of chocolate, squash, biscuits (and tea and coffee for the adults) were enjoyed too!

Thanks were expressed to all who planned, prepared, and participated and... all who cleaned up afterwards!

Two photos on next page.



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Good Friday Walk of Witness - Dublin

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The Archbishops of Dublin led the Walk of Witness between their two cathedrals



Good Friday Walk of Witness - Lisburn

An inter-denominational Walk of Witness by the churches in Lisburn city centre.

Church members receive Royal Maundy

Congratulations to Melvyn Lockhart (Deputy Governor CLCGB) who was presented with the Royal Maundy coins at a service in St. George's Chapel in Windsor on Maundy Thursday 14th April 2022.

As a tradition the Royals gifted Maundy money to men and women in recognition of their service to the Church and local community. Melvyn was nominated by the Most Revd John McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland in recognition of his faithful and loyal service in



Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade leader receives Royal Maundy in Windsor

leading and guiding the Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade in Ulster over the past decade.

The service was attended by Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall after Buckingham Palace announced the Queen wouldn't be able to attend.

Warmest congratulations to Mr Jim Johnston, who is one of this year's recipients of the Royal Maundy money.

Accompanied by his daughter Carolyn Jackson, Jim received his Maundy coins from Prince Charles at the special service yesterday in St George's Chapel, Windsor.

Bishop David McClay of Down & Dromore nominated Jim for his extensive charitable work in Northern Ireland. He is a retired financial advisor and a former director of the Ardbarron Trust.

Jim had an 'unforgettable' day at Windsor.

"It was both a surprise and delight to open the invitation from the Queen to be a guest at the Maundy Thursday Service in Windsor Chapel," he said.

"The occasion was so special and significant. Though Her Majesty was unable to attend Prince Charles took her place. The St George's Chapel was magnificent in every way. The warm welcome, the caring staff and the informal excellence of all the detailed arrangements leaves me short of superlatives.

"The Service highlighted the supremacy of Jesus Christ and the significance of His Life and actions , referring generously to this in two Lessons – John 13:1 –15 and Matthew 25: 31 –46 (I have set you an example, you are to do as I have done for you).

Prince Charles then graciously gave 2 leather purses of coins, one white and one red, to each of us, with his words of thank you. Very touching. The Reception in another magnificent building gave time to meet with other

appreciative guests. An unforgettable day and I am grateful for such an honour.”

In recommending Jim as a Maundy Money recipient Bishop David said:

“As a successful businessman Jim ensured that large portions of the business’s profits were poured into community projects that would meet the needs of the most vulnerable in our society. Jim has spent and continues to spend significant time mentoring and encouraging those who find themselves working in tough environments. His work has enabled him to build contacts across a variety of denominations. In everything that Jim has undertaken he has displayed hard work, integrity, generosity and a concern to serve those whom others would overlook.”

Also honoured this year, Mrs Daphne Wright.

Daphne was unable to travel to St George’s Chapel, Windsor, for the special service on Thursday and so Bishop David presented her with the coins at her home in Hollywood today. Daphne said that she was “surprised and humbled” to be honoured in this way.

The bishop nominated Daphne, a former civil servant, for her lifetime of service to community organisations at home and abroad. In recommending her as a recipient, he said:

“Daphne has served on a variety of community organisations over many decades and is also supported by her husband Gordon, who also is very involved in community initiatives.



“Daphne has the ability to identify need and to connect those places of need with those who help meet that need. For some years she has served in a variety of different charities including The DOCK, in the Titanic Quarter of East Belfast. This charity was set up to meet the needs of the people in that area of East Belfast where the Harland and Wolf Ship building industry had once been strong.

“Unfortunately, Daphne suffered a severe stroke a couple of years ago but continues from her home and in whatever way she can to encourage those who are involved in community outreach on the ground.

“As someone with a deep Christian faith, Daphne prays a lot for those who serve and those who work in needy areas. She also spends time making telephone calls to offer words of encouragement to those who are diligently serving the need of the most broken and who are in need of a listening ear.”

Daphne Wright

Daphne is a parishioner of St Philip and St James' Hollywood and has been a Christian all of her life. For over 20 years her administration skills have been used to good

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effect as trustee and treasurer within two charitable trusts, chiefly Friends of Asha (Delhi), when she served as Asha Coordinator for all of Ireland, a post from which she has just recently retired due to ill-health.

In 2010 Daphne was part of the foundational team at The Dock in the Titanic Quarter and for many years has been an active supporter of Tearfund. From 2001 until recently she was Treasurer for the local Holywood Tearfund and also held the post of Treasurer for Holywood Music Festival. She has always been active in her local church, particularly in music and children's ministry.

Congratulations to George Briggs, a parishioner of St Mark's Parish Church, Ballysillan, who was presented with the Royal Maundy at the service in Windsor.



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George Briggs was nominated by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison, who also nominated a member of the Roman Catholic Church, **Mary Waide**.

Bishop George said: “Mr George Briggs has faithfully served the people of his local community, his parish and the wider Church of Ireland.

“He has given of himself in many ways, serving as a representative on Diocesan and General Synods for many years, as well as being a valued member of the Connor Diocesan Council and a number of its subcommittees.

“In addition to the numerous roles he has held over the years in his home parish of St Mark’s Ballysillan, George played a key part in the life of St Columba’s, Whiterock, in recent times. Following the rebuilding of that church, he chaired the Management Committee as a diocesan representative.”

The Bishop continued: “Outside his church commitments, George has served on the boards of a number of local charities and organisations which have benefited from the skills acquired through his business career.”

Bishop George’s other nominee, **Mrs Mary Waide**, is on the regional board of the St Vincent De Paul and has done charity and diocesan work with the Diocese of Down and Connor for more than 40 years.

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News reports

Walled City Passion: The Easter story reimagined for Londonderry in 2022 with Teenage Kicks soundtrack

The age-old themes of religious and political intrigue with betrayal and bloodshed are being played out in a re-imagined version of the Easter story on the walls of Londonderry, Philip Bradfield writes in the News Letter.

The Walled City Passion is a retelling of the last hours of Jesus before his crucifixion.

The multi-platform drama explores how a violent incident at a peace festival in the city threatens to destabilize both is and the wider world.

The Passion opened on Thursday afternoon and is being performed twice daily over the Easter holidays.

It is the brainchild of former school friends who grew up in the city, Church of Ireland Archdeacon Robert Miller and playwright Jonathan Burgess.

Rev Miller said the project began as a conversation between them during lockdown about how they could tell the Easter story to a new audience.

Inspired by a similar project in Manchester, they have adapted local music such as the famous ‘Teenage Kicks’ into the story, sung by 700 schoolchildren.

“Jonathan and I were at school together and had already done quite a bit of work together around the peace building,” he told the News Letter.

He says the cross in the 2022 retelling comes in the shape of a dagger used by the Judas figure of ‘Jude’, a zealot-type paramilitary who is hoping for the violent overthrow of the occupiers.

The Christ figure he betrays is “Christopher” who is preaching a movement of peace and love.

Jude plots with the religious establishment – the Caiaphas Organisation – with whom he is diametrically opposed ideologically. His aim is to try and force Christopher into a direct confrontation with the establishment and prompt a revolution.

Jonathan Burgess told the News Letter: “Yes, that is pretty much correct. We have the Caiaphas Organisation as the people from the indigenous community who are looking to keep power within that community. Jude is representative of the people in that community who are pitching for armed resistance.”

He says that “Governor Hart” is the Pontius Pilate figure and “our occupying force” while Christopher wants “a peaceful regime change”.

People are ‘stretched to breaking point’ says Catholic Archbishop of Dublin

Advises parishes ‘to be courageous in moving beyond ways that no longer work in the Ireland of today’

People in Ireland are “pushed to limits most of us have never experienced before, Catholic Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell said on Friday reports Patsy McGarry in the Irish Times.

He said that “families, health-care systems and economies were all stretched to breaking point.”

In a reflection on the Good Friday ‘Way of the Cross’ procession from the Wellington monument to the Papal Cross in the Phoenix Park, he continued “the war in Ukraine has raised our levels of anxiety and opened our hearts with compassion for those who have died, who are injured, homeless or refugees.”

He wondered whether “perhaps for too long many of us have been passive bystanders in the crowd, watching at a distance the suffering, the daily struggle for survival of so many in our world without ever really being touched by their pain or moved into action. We remember today the people of Syria, Yemen, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Afghanistan and Ukraine to name a few areas of conflict in the world.”

It was the first Good Friday 'Way of the Cross' procession in the Phoenix Park for three years and Archbishop Farrell's first since his appointment to Dublin in December 2020. Reflecting on the pandemic he said, at the third station where Jesus falls the first time, how "the virus has brought us all to our knees."

The annual event is organised by lay Catholic Communion and Liberation group.

Pastoral letter

In a pastoral letter for Easter 2022 Archbishop Farrell told the Dublin faithful it was time to address "the specific challenges we face as a diocese." It was "very clear that the future will not look like the past. Our world has changed," he said. He invited each parish community to reflect on its own situation.

"Truly, we need to be courageous in moving beyond ways that no longer work in the Ireland of today," he said. "The work we are now beginning will require commitment over the coming year and more," he said.

In a sermon on Wednesday he said that in Dublin soon, with fewer priests, it "will be necessary to welcome new forms of ministry on the part of the women and men, serving and leading in their parishes alongside ordained clergy. We have already seen the power of new technology to connect with people in new and unexpected ways." But, he emphasised, "the future of the Church is its people, because the Church is its people."

In Ennis Co Clare this week Bishop of Killaloe Fintan Monahan commissioned 24 lay people to serve in ministries of pastoral care and catechetics/faith development.

“These new ministries are part of a diocesan response to the changing face of the Church in recent times, and this includes fewer priests. Whereas once there was at least one priest in every parish, now many parishes have no resident priest, rather they are served by the priests of the local pastoral area,” he said at a Mass in the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul on Wednesday.

Parishes would in future “be served by a team of priests and lay ministers working together to meet local pastoral needs. Some roles traditionally undertaken by priests will in future be carried out by the new lay ministers,” he said.

In what he described as “a truly historic” event, at St Muredach’s Cathedral in Ballina Co Mayo, Bishop of Killala John Fleming and priests of the diocese renewed their “commitment to priesthood in the presence of representatives of every Parish Pastoral Council in this diocese” for the first time ever.

“This is truly a very significant expression of placing hope in faith for the future,” he said. Speaking of “a new pathway in our diocese” he said “let me give the last word to Albert Camus: Don’t walk behind me; I may not lead. Don’t walk in front of me; I may not follow. Just walk beside me and be my friend.”

In the media



I'm shocked by my church leaders in Moscow' - priest in Ukraine

BBC News

The Russian Orthodox Church has echoed the rhetoric of the Kremlin in justifying the war in Ukraine. It is a stance that appears to be driving large numbers of Ukrainian priests and parishioners to turn their backs on Moscow.

"I will never forget the moment when I woke up early to go to mass, only to suddenly hear the shocking sounds of bombing," says Father Nicolay Pluzhnik.

"The wonderful woman who cooked at our church and her son, who was in a wheelchair, were both killed when an artillery shell hit their apartment. I now know of several other of our parishioners who have died."

Like most clergy in the region of north-eastern Ukraine where he is from, Father Pluzhnik belonged to the branch of

the Russian Orthodox Church which takes its direction from its religious leadership in Moscow.

But now, he says, has applied to join the Ukrainian Orthodox Church - which was finally granted independence from the Russian Orthodox Church in 2019, in a move never recognised by Russia.

He says many fellow priests who followed Patriarch Kirill in Moscow are doing the same because of the Church leader's stance on the war. More at -

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-61109104>

BBC News: UK Rwanda asylum plan against international law, says UN refugee agency

Plans to send some asylum seekers from the UK to Rwanda are a breach of international law, the UN's refugee agency has said.

[<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-61122241>]

BBC News: Fergal Keane - Ukraine, the UN and history's greatest broken promise

Accounts of atrocities committed by Russian troops against Ukrainian civilians are emerging daily. There are calls for President Putin and others to be prosecuted for war crimes - but how likely is that to happen? Given its past record, and failure to stop this war which has seen more than 11 million people flee their homes, the BBC's Fergal Keane considers whether the international community will be able to unite.

[<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-61021862>]

York Press : Archbishop of York's Easter message

'The cross and resurrection of Christ give us hope and show us that things can change. This is the good news we

celebrate this Easter weekend.' Read the Archbishop's Easter message in today's York Press
<https://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/20063755.families-facing-ghastly-decisions-whether-switch-radiator/>

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

St Paul's Cathedral has launched a new website

The team at St Paul's state - It includes a library of resources from the Adult Learning department at St Paul's about Christian life, spirituality and social justice. There are films and podcasts from events over the years, so if there's anything you missed or would like to revisit, we hope you'll find it there and perhaps something new as well. There are resources which we hope will deepen your experience of Lent and Easter, the Bible, prayer, racial justice, music, poetry and art, among many other things. Leading speakers and writers include Rowan Williams, Paula Gooder, Michael Curry, David Suchet, Mark Oakley, Esther de Waal and many, many more.

You'll also be able to find news of all our upcoming Christian spirituality, theology and social justice events, in person and online, and book in directly.

The site – still hosted at [stpauls.co.uk] stpauls.co.uk – also features a number other new improvements and has been newly developed to make information about visiting

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and worshipping at St Paul's more accessible, and to help us better connect with our global community. It includes -

A searchable What's on calendar, which shows both one-off events – from Christian Learning events to special services – and our permanent exhibitions

New guidance on attending services, which is designed for people who have not been to a church service before, and explains a typical service at St Paul's

An animated timeline of the Cathedral, which charts the history of our building from its consecration, through multiple fires, power struggles and spectacular celebrations

Improved planning for visiting, which provides key information for those coming to visit us, including how to get to St Paul's, what ticket types are available, and what's on

A new donation portal, with more information for our visitors on the myriad ways they can support us

A more accessible site, including to mobile users.

Perspective

We must halt the flow of trafficked people

Editorial comment in the Daily Telegraph 17/04/2022

The Archbishop of Canterbury has called the policy of sending illegal immigrants to Rwanda morally wrong and unbecoming of a supposedly Christian country. Many will agree with him. In the Book of Matthew, the disciples are told to see everyone, including strangers, as God in the flesh. “As you did it to one of the least of these my brothers,” says Jesus, “you did it to me.”

But supporters of the policy will no doubt point out that, far from being vindictive, the idea is to prevent an even greater evil: people smuggling.

Thousands of migrants, many of them young men in search of prosperity, not fleeing persecution, have paid large sums to travel through several perfectly safe countries in order to cross the Channel. Last November, a dinghy sank off France, killing at least 27. Successive governments have struggled to control the flow of trafficked people, but so long as migrants believe that once on British soil they can stay – legally or otherwise – they will continue to come. The Rwandan policy is designed to send an alternative message: do not make the effort. You will only wind up in Africa.

The plan has critics on the Tory benches, too, and given the objections of human rights lawyers, as well as the Home Office’s abysmal record on delivery, it might not even come off the ground. But on the matter of motivation, the Archbishop is being deeply unfair.

His comments bring to mind the publication of the Church of England’s 1985 report *Faith in the City*, in which clerics argued that spiritual and material poverty was exacerbated

by Thatcherism, being supposedly Darwinian and ungenerous. Margaret Thatcher, a committed Christian, replied that God had made man free to choose good, and that charity, as an exercise of that free will, was both morally superior to socialism and more effective. She agreed with the clerics that we must try to alleviate suffering, she just disagreed on the method. And she was right to note that Left-wing policies that promise salvation on Earth very often lead to greater pain. Parts of Britain were poor because decades of socialism had killed competitiveness, and the welfare state sapped the desire to self-improve.

Today, Left-wing critics of the Rwandan policy must explain what it is they would do instead. Allow the boats to continue? Allow anyone to come here, by whatever means they wish? This would result in a most unChristian outcome, a survival of the fittest dash across the world that would trigger an almighty backlash among voters who believe a nation is not a nation unless it can control its borders. The path to misery is often paved with good intentions.

Poem for today

The Coasters by John Hewitt

"You coasted along
To larger houses, gadgets, more machines
To golf and weekend bungalows,
Caravans when the children were small,
the Mediterranean, later, with the wife.

You did not go to Church often,
Weddings were special;
But you kept your name on the books
Against eventualities;
And the parson called, or the curate.

You showed a sense of responsibility,
With subscriptions to worthwhile causes
And service in voluntary organisations;
And, anyhow, this did the business no harm,
No harm at all.
Relations were improving. A good
useful life. You coasted along.

You even had a friend of two of the other sort,
Coasting too: your ways ran parallel.
Their children and yours seldom met, though,
Being at different schools.
You visited each other, decent folk with a sense
Of humour. Introduced, even, to
One of their clergy. And then you smiled
In the looking-glass, admiring, a
Little moved by, your broadmindedness.
Your father would never have known
One of them. Come to think of it,
When you were young, your own home was never
Visited by one of the other sort.

Relations were improving. The annual processions
began to look rather like folk-festivals.

When that noisy preacher started,
he seemed old-fashioned, a survival.

Later you remarked on his vehemence,
a bit on the rough side.
But you said, admit, you said in the club,
'You know, there's something in what he says'.

And you who seldom had time to read a book,
what with reports and the colour-supplements,
denounced censorship.
And you who never had an adventurous thought
were positive that the church of the other sort
vetoes thought.
And you who simply put up with marriage
for the children's sake, deplored
the attitude of the other sort
to divorce.
You coasted along.
And all the time, though you never noticed,
The old lies festered;
the ignorant became more thoroughly infected;
there were gains, of course;
you never saw any go barefoot.

The government permanent, sustained
by the regular plebiscites of loyalty.
You always voted but never
put a sticker on your car;
a card in the window
would not have been seen from the street.
Faces changed on posters, names too, often,
but the same families, the same class of people.
A Minister once called you by your first name.
You coasted along
and the sores suppurated and spread.

Now the fever is high and raging;
Who would have guessed it, coasting along?
The ignorant-sick thresh about in delirium
And tear at the scabs with dirty finger-nails.
The cloud of infection hangs over the city,
A quick change of wind and it
Might spill over the leafy suburbs.
You coasted along."

John Hewitt 1969

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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