

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Easter hope**

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# People and places



## New Camino marks Kilbroney Church Bicentenary

**On Saturday 2 April a group in the village of Rostrevor walked out together along a new pilgrimage route, the St Bronach's Camino, the Revd Elizabeth Hanna writes.**

The walk was part of the bicentennial celebrations of Saint Bronach's (Kilbroney Parish) Church and the walk through the village was led by the Rector, the Rt Revd Darren McCartney, and author and artist Susan Farrell.

Walkers visited a number of locations associated with St Bronach in Rostrevor, heard about her history and how her influence remains strong to this day.

The Saint Bronach's Camino followed on from work done by a previous rector, Canon Dermot Jameson, through Saint Bronach's School of Celtic Studies. This group celebrated

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Saint Bronach's feast day on 2nd April every year with various events.

It was wonderful to revive and re-establish this act of devotion. Bronach was 'A disciple of Saint Patrick who built a refuge for sailors who were shipwrecked in Carlingford Lough.' If she came from the Slemish direction, and was tasked with going out across Ireland to spread Christianity, she would have done this by river and sea.

According to the genealogies of the saints she was the daughter of a King of Dalriada, mother of Saint Mo Chóe of Nendrum, and sister of a bishop. Historical records from her time are sparse but began with the introduction of monasteries and abbeys when the original inhabitants of Christian communities, both men and women, began to record Irish Christian history.

Bronach inherited her brother's bishop's crozier when he died making her an abbess. Abbesses at that time had equal power to bishops and princes and recognised no ecclesiastical superior except the Pope.

In times past the residents of the village on her Saint Day, 2nd April, walked with candles from the Faerie Glen Bridge along rights of way adjacent to the Kilbroney River up to her church, situated in what is now the Old Kilbroney Graveyard. This route is no longer passable.

From the shore the pilgrims made their way to Crag Graveyard. The old church ruins are believed to be that of Saint Paul's built in 1723/3. Perhaps this was the site of Bronach's first settlement? In those days this site could

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have been seen from the Lough and would be a refuge for travellers. The old church was replaced by Saint Bronach's in 1822 and the bell from Saint Paul's is on display there.

Pilgrims had a rest at Saint Bronach's for lunch and then moved on to Saint Mary Star of the Sea to see the bell. Here we listened to Siubhán Ó Dubháin's The Bell of Saint Bronach sung by Matthew McGrath and everyone had a chance to ring the bell which had been brought out of its secure niche for us.

The stained-glass window in Saint Mary Star of the Sea has a very beautiful image of Bronach with her crozier and bell. She is depicted in a highly stylised way, a very correct depiction of what perhaps a holy women should present as in a place of worship, head covered and humble. Notable is the red cloak. This is a sign of status and wealth in Irish Celtic society, suitable for the daughter of someone who has enough gold to be a slave owner.

Pilgrims continued to the old graveyard. The Celtic cross, the old church building, and the well, are all signs that a religious community did indeed exist here – Bronach's early Christian community, an abbey.

The holy well is dedicated to Saint Bronach with one legend saying that Bronach was killed by a pirate, (most likely a Viking raid) fell here and the spring burst out of the spot where she fell.

Those participating in the walk were awarded a Camino certificate.



## Cloudbase Communion above the Lagan

On Easter morning thirty parishioners of Derriaghy gathered to celebrate Jesus' rising. Holy Communion was shared at St Andrew's Church, Colin. Low cloud covered what can be a magnificent view over and along the Lagan Valley. Following the service, in the word's of a leading participant, "Then we were treated to bacon or sausage baps."

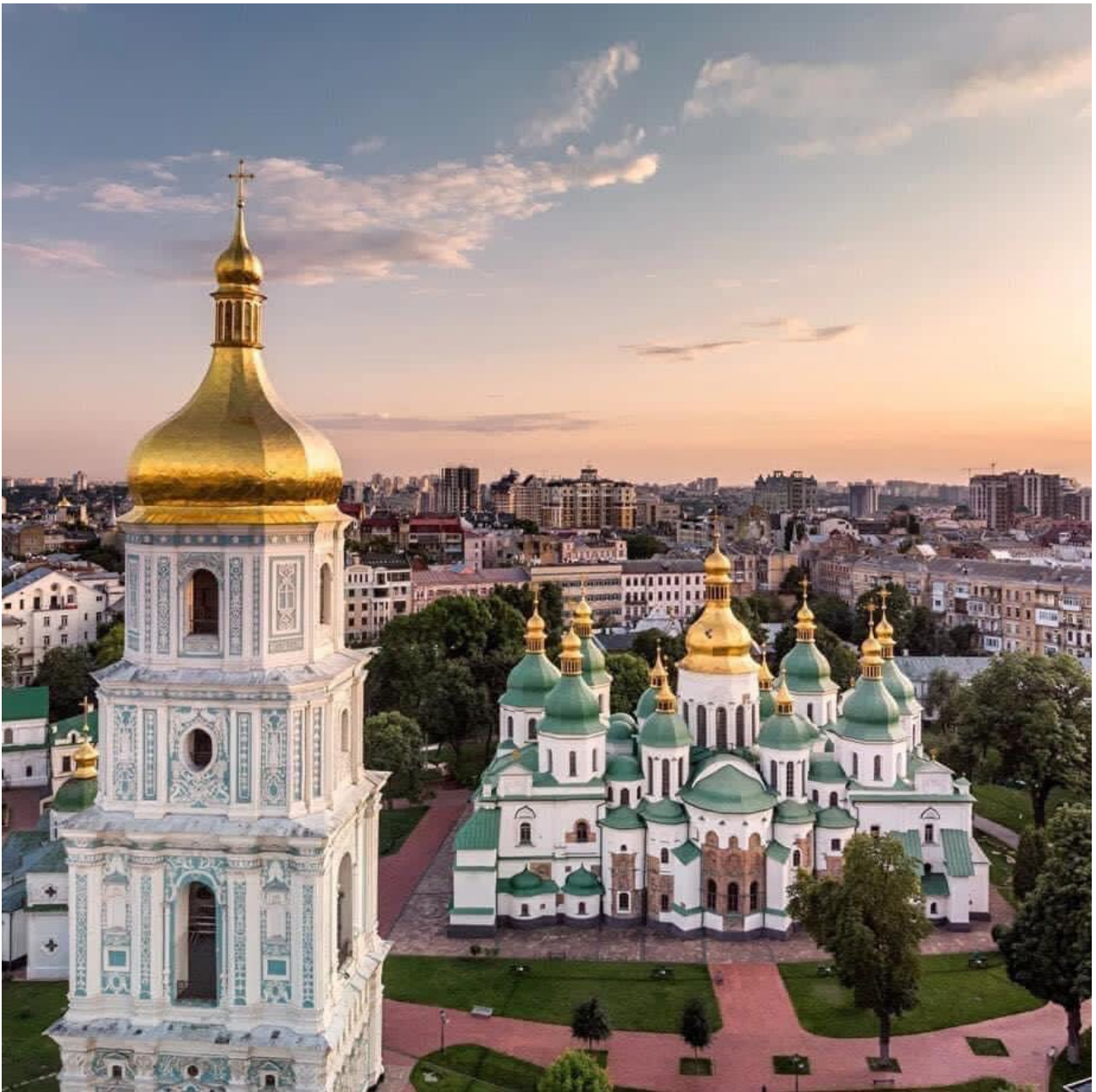
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## Playmobil Passion

Among the photos of Holy Week and Easter scenes made in Leggo and other play systems was this Passion scene using Playmobil.

Thank you Gladys Ganiel.





## **Songs of Hope - A night of uplifting music in aid of Ukrainian refugees in Ireland**

**Join Cappella, Discovery Gospel Choir, Rejoice Gospel Choir & Fingal Gospel Choir in the beautiful surroundings of the Church of St. John The Baptist, Seafield Road West, Clontarf, on Tuesday 28th June for a night of uplifting gospel favourites, guaranteed to soothe your soul.**

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Proceeds from the event will go to two Irish charities supporting Ukrainian refugees in Ireland, Doras and the Irish Refugee Council.

Tuesday, 28 June 2022, Doors: 7:30pm | Concert: 8pm

Tickets €15 - €20, available through Eventbrite

### **About Doras:**

Doras is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation working to promote and protect the rights of people from a migrant background in Ireland. Their vision for Ireland is a society where equality and respect for the human rights of migrants are social norms.

Their mission is to promote and uphold the human rights and well-being of migrants through personal advocacy, integration development and collaborative advocacy campaigns at the local and national level.

### **About The Irish Refugee Council:**

The Irish Refugee Council provides services and support for people seeking protection and people recognised as refugees in Ireland, and advocates for humane and dignified protection procedures and responses to people fleeing persecution.

The organisation works with people who have to flee their home country, as it is no longer safe for them to be there. The most visible example of this is people fleeing war or conflict.



## News reports

### Bishop of Derry says young people being ‘exploited’ in violent disorder

**The exploitation of young people by those behind the disorder that erupted following a Republican parade in Londonderry is “despicable”, a Catholic Bishop has said.**

Niall Deeney reports in The Irish News

Donal McKeown, Bishop of Derry, also hit out at the use of the city cemetery to launch attacks on police following the parade on Easter Monday.

Police came under attack from petrol bombs and masonry as they moved in to make arrests following the controversial parade, which featured masked men in paramilitary attire attempting to march in formation.

The attacks were launched from the city cemetery on the west bank of the Foyle.

Bishop McKeown, speaking to BBC Radio Foyle, said: “Parents will know that during so many years of the Troubles, so many of our young people ended up in the City Cemetery. It has been a sacred place.

“Even people who have no particular Church faith will always go along to the cemetery.

“It is sacred ground, it is protected space, and I think to use that as a base from which to launch more violence — it doesn’t matter who it was against — I think was a very sad reflection on those who were behind it.”

The Bishop suggested the violence had been “orchestrated”.

“Clearly it wasn’t spontaneous,” he said.

“You don’t come along with petrol bombs and petrol just on the off chance you might get a chance to throw them.

“This clearly was an orchestrated thing and I think it’s very disappointing. It casts some sort of a slur on the people of the area, who are a wonderful people. I’ve been there so often in Creggan. It casts a slur on the city in general and doesn’t offer hope for the future at a particularly difficult time for all of us.”

He suggested young people were being “exploited” by those ultimately responsible for the violence.

“I think young people can very easily allow themselves to be exploited by others who then end up not getting their hands dirty,” he said.

“That’s a really despicable way of working with our young people. Getting a criminal record, ending up in trouble, hurting themselves, injuring somebody else — that is not really a basis for their future.

“We want them to have employment, we want them to have hope, we want them to have dreams.

“This doesn’t really help teenagers to believe that they can be wonderful contributors to a healthy society, which is what we all want in this part of the world.”...

... Bishop McKeown, meanwhile, called for dialogue to continue behind the scenes to prevent such trouble occurring again in the future.

“I think Derry has really always led the way in ensuring that conversations keep taking place,” he said.

“I condemn actions that are wrong and damaging to the city. I don’t go around condemning people. You have to be sure that everyone can be part of a shared future in the city.

“That means keeping channels open. This city is very good at people working in the background to try and keep everybody on board, to try and construct something that is positive for the future.”

He continued: “All I can do is encourage those wonderful people who work quietly in the background to keep up the work. They are the ones who are the real architects of the future. They are the ones who will give us something to hope for.”

Bishop McKeown added: “The area needs to have confidence in its wonderful cultural tradition, and not to look back with sadness or to look forward in anger.”

## Irish Churches Conference focus on Creation Care



Canon Andrew Orr, Chair of Eco–Congregation Ireland, opens the conference.

**A major gathering of 100 delegates across several of Ireland’s Churches met at the Dromantine Centre, Newry, on April 8 to consider their role and way forward in response to the current environmental crisis.**

The Irish Churches Creation Care Conference was organised by divestment campaigner Stephen Trew and sponsored by the Church of Ireland’s Church and Society Commission with the aims of deepening understanding of the theology of creation care and developing missional opportunities to put this in practice locally.

The conference was opened by Canon Andrew Orr, Chair of Eco–Congregation Ireland, who remarked that it was ‘up to us as Churches to take real, practical action’ to reduce carbon emissions, increase biodiversity, expand our mission

and connect communities, for example through a shared interest in environmental issues.

Distinguished climate scientist Professor Katharine Heyhoe brought a motivational introduction by Zoom, noting that – if global problems could be likened to a series of buckets – climate change is not just another one but the hole in each of them, and that ‘it quite literally affects every single other thing at the top of our priority lists.’

People ‘have the values that they need to care’ with most of us being worried about global warming but not knowing what to do about it. Prof Heyhoe quoted 1 Timothy 1.7 – “For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” – to speak of our ability to act out of love and make good decisions, using our voices to advocate for others and seeking solutions.

An exploration of the goodness, glory and goal of creation then followed with Dr Chris Wright taking the audience on a journey through Scripture and drawing out God’s relationship with all that he has made. “A good creation reveals a good God through his handiwork,” Dr Wright said as he highlighted the intrinsic value of creation; Old Testament passages reflected God’s care of wilderness land which had no obvious economic value.

Workshops focused on transforming Churches and communities through creation care (led by Dr Ruth Valerio from Tearfund), the international mission aspect of climate change (with Christian Aid’s Bob Kikuyu), youth and climate grief (with Church of England ordinand Hannah Malcolm and Northern Irish campaigner and writer Rosalind Skillen),

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and developing a climate action plan (with architect and former Trócaire CEO Justin Kilcullen).



[Tori and Isabella address and impress the delegates.](#)

The potential next steps for Churches were discussed by a panel of senior Church representatives: Presbyterian Moderator Dr David Bruce; Methodist President Dr Sahr Yambasu; Archbishop John McDowell; and Bishop Martin Hayes, the Irish Episcopal Conference's co-ordinator for Laudato si' – Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical on care for 'our common home'.

Dr Bruce reflected on his recent conversations about environmental issues with farmers, including around nitrates, land management and soil quality, and the need to keep a balanced perspective, avoiding the extremes of the

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worship of and the exploitation of Creation. Dr Yambasu explained that the raw materials for electric cars and wind turbines were usually sourced from the developing world, and suggested that consumers consider paying a premium to restore land damaged by mining for those materials.

Archbishop McDowell saw the Church's job as to persuade, which was in keeping with the Gospel and the respect which Jesus had for a free response from people. The context was changing a culture in the long run, bearing in mind that there are 25,000 small farmers in Northern Ireland alone who love their way of life and work but are often "caught in the middle" in terms of environmental policy.

Bishop Hayes provided an update on putting Laudato si' into practice in an Irish context, including the decision by the Irish Episcopal Conference in 2018 to divest from fossil fuels within five years and encouraging communities and groups to describe their vision for the care of the Earth and to measure progress in accordance with their goals (through self-assessment).

All those attending were moved and inspired by a talk by two young people from Tori and Isabella, two secondary school students who help to lead the 'Lighten Our Darkness' initiative in Mullingar Union of Parishes, Co. Westmeath. The young people were preparing for a dramatic presentation on Palm Sunday (April 10) to show the importance of action to care for the environment, conversations with others in the community on reducing waste, and a project – with the theme of 'God's Gardens of Hope' – to improve biodiversity in 12 local churchyards.

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In closing remarks, Archbishop McDowell noted that the Covid–19 pandemic had increased public understanding of and respect for science and Churches were following the science in acting against climate change. Prayer, he continued, is bringing the presence of God into situations and a change in culture – achieved through our own efforts and by prayer – is always miraculous. The Archbishop closed the conference with an intercession from the Book of Common Prayer on Creation in Christ: “Almighty God, maker of all good things: Father, Lord of all creation, in Christ you have shown us the purpose of your providence, and call us to be responsible in the world. May we delight in your purpose and work to bring all things to their true end; through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

You can now watch the talks from the conference on YouTube at this link: <https://youtu.be/UzJfDH2PPhQ>

## **World Council of Churches faces calls to expel Russian Orthodox Church**

**The World Council of Churches is under pressure to oust the Russian Orthodox Church from its ranks, with detractors arguing the church’s leader, Patriarch Kirill, invalidated its membership by backing Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and involving the church in the global political machinations of Russian President Vladimir Putin.**

The debate garnered a response on April 11 from the Rev. Ioan Sauca, acting general secretary of the WCC, which



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claims 352 member churches representing roughly 580 million Christians around the world.

Sauca, a priest in the Romanian Orthodox Church who has visited Ukrainian refugees and publicly criticized Kirill's response to the invasion, pushed back on the suggestion of expelling the ROC, arguing doing so would deviate from the WCC's historic mission to enhance ecumenical dialogue.

“It is easy to exclude, excommunicate, demonize; but we are called as WCC to use a free and safe platform of encounter and dialogue, to meet and listen to one another even if and when we disagree,” Sauca said in a lengthy series of statements posted to the WCC website.

“This has always been the WCC, and I would suffer greatly if during my time this vocation will be lost and the nature of the WCC changes.”

But Sauca may be facing increasing headwinds as the WCC, a global Christian ecumenical group founded in 1948 in the aftermath of World War II, prepares for a major meeting of its central committee in June. With the war continuing to rage in Ukraine, where Russian forces have been accused of committing war crimes against civilians, a growing chorus of Christian voices is questioning whether the WCC should cut ties with what is seen as a complicit ROC.

In late March, Czech theologian, pastor and ecumenical leader Pavel Cerný published an editorial insisting the ROC has long sought to use the WCC for its own purposes. In the wake of Kirill's support for the Ukraine invasion, Cerný said

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that “the ROC should not be permitted to continue as a WCC member until it turns away from this false path of religious nationalism.”

Two days later, the Rev. Rob Schenck, an evangelical Christian and president of the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute in Washington, D.C., published his own editorial at Religion News Service calling on the WCC to sanction Kirill and referring to him as “a propaganda tool for Putin.”

“Supporters of the effort to oust Kirill from the WCC believe he has disqualified the ecclesial entity he embodies by effectively endorsing Putin’s military campaign to annex Ukraine and failing to oppose the attendant mass violence against a peaceful nation,” Schenck wrote. “Not only does Putin’s bloody and mostly Christian-on-Christian conflict subvert the WCC’s mission statement, but it stands in stark contradiction to and rejection of Jesus’ high priestly prayer to his heavenly Father, ‘that they may be one as we are one’ (John 17:11b).”

Schenck was echoed shortly thereafter by former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, onetime head of the Anglican Communion, who told the BBC there is a “strong case” for removing the Russian church from the WCC.

“When a church is actively supporting a war of aggression, failing to condemn nakedly obvious breaches in any kind of ethical conduct in wartime, then other churches do have the right to raise the question and challenge the church and to say, ‘Unless you can say ... something recognizably

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Christian about this, we have to look again at your membership,” Williams said.

The pushback is part of a broader wave of criticism directed at Kirill, who has long aided Putin’s political ambitions and laid the spiritual groundwork to justify the Russian invasion of Ukraine. His rhetoric since the invasion began — such as referring to Russia’s enemies in Ukraine as “evil forces” and suggesting the war is part of a larger “metaphysical” battle against the West and “gay parades” — stoked outrage among religious leaders the world over, including Sauca himself.

## Perspective

### An Easter Message by Bishop Noel Treanor

**The Message of Easter is the celebration of life over death, of hope over despair, of offers of assurance in situations of vulnerability.**

The scriptures attest to how the resurrected Christ awakened faith. They tell of how He awakened new hope and new understanding in the disciples and then entrusted them to be courageous messengers of this Easter hope. His risen presence gave them new purpose and a new identity.

From the moment of that first Easter morning, across the centuries, Christians have celebrated the Risen Christ and joyfully proclaimed a message of hope and new life.

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This is our history, our mission and our legacy. The Risen Christ also calls us to be messengers of an Easter vision in our personal circumstances, in our time and in our world.

In the Jewish religious tradition, during the meal of Passover, the youngest child asks a series of questions as they try to make sense of this ritual meal. Remembering and recalling the events of the past and responding to these inquiries, the Jewish parent helps the child to understand the significance of this traditional celebration. This dialogue between generations therefore becomes an opportunity to share and to pass on faith and meaning.

Within our Christian homes this Easter, conversation between children and parents also presents opportunities to share and to pass on faith and hope.

We all need to hear the Easter message again. With each gift of newborn life, God imparts an opportunity to hear the message of Easter anew. Generations of young people are entrusted with taking up the mission and there are seedlings of growth sprouting anew in our parishes and Pastoral Communities. The synodal pathway started by Pope Francis presents such an opportunity for us all. It is an opportunity to give new vitality to our own involvement in our faith communities and so grow our understanding that we all shape the life and experience of the Church.

As in the past, there are indeed many challenges to face. The years of the pandemic have had an impact on our pastoral communities and faith practice and it is as if we are all emerging from the tomb into the light of a new dawn.

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In our world, hatred and violence continues to live in the hearts of many. Death and Resurrection is a tangible reality in countries of crisis and conflict. The joyful message of Easter this year is obscured by scenes of death and destruction and the forced displacement of families from their homes in Ukraine and other war-stricken regions across the world. Yet many others are peacemakers who have arisen to offer support as these families arrive to our shores seeking safety.

May this Easter time be an opportunity for us all, with renewed vision and hope, to take up again Christ's Mission to be messengers of life over death, of hope over despair, of offers of assurance in situations of vulnerability and as Easter people to act as peacemakers.

Yours in Christ,  
+Noel Treanor  
Bishop of Down and Connor

## Poem for today

### Once Alien Here by John Hewitt

Once alien here my fathers built their house,  
claimed, drained, and gave the land the shapes of use,  
and for their urgent labour grudged no more  
than shuffled pennies from the hoarded store  
of well rubbed words that had left their overtones  
in the ripe England of the mounded downs.

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The sullen Irish limping to the hills  
bore with them the enchantments and the spells  
that in the clans' free days hung gay and rich  
on every twig of every thorny hedge,  
and gave the rain-pocked stone a meaning past  
the blurred engraving of the fibrous frost.

So I, because of all the buried men  
in Ulster clay, because of rock and glen  
and mist and cloud and quality of air  
as native in my thought as any here,  
who now would seek a native mode to tell  
our stubborn wisdom individual,  
yet lacking skill in either scale of song,  
the graver English, lyric Irish tongue,  
must let this rich earth so enhance the blood  
with steady pulse where now is plunging mood  
till thought and image may, identified,  
find easy voice to utter each aright.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## Church News Ireland

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