



**Image of the day - the transepts re-emerge at St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin : Photo by Scott Hayes**



## **C of E Archbishops launch new Commission on Reimagining Care**

**The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have announced a new commission aimed at developing a radical and inspiring vision, drawing on Christian theology and tradition, that reimagines care and support. The Commission will set out proposals to achieve this vision.**

The origin of the Commission lies in Archbishop Justin's 2018 book 'Reimagining Britain: Foundations for Hope'. As the Archbishop articulated in a key chapter, 'Health – and Healing for Brokenness', caring equally for the health of all, regardless of perceived economic or societal value, is a clear sign of our values.

April 22, 2021

The Commission aims to articulate the enduring values and principles which should underpin care and caring. It will seek to shape how we respond to ageing and disability in our society, challenging existing attitudes and models of care, where appropriate, and highlighting the positive and where things are working well.

The Commission will aim to contribute to the national debate on the purpose of care and support and inform how care is provided in future, by identifying practical ideas, informed by extensive listening, and gathering examples of good practice. The Commission's work aims to support the work of churches in communities across the country and to shape public policy as it relates to the nature and provision of care.

The Commission will comprise up to 12 members, each bringing specific expertise and experience in the area, and will welcome contributions to its thinking from as broad a range of individuals and organisations as possible including all church traditions and other faith communities.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said:

“At the heart of Jesus’ teaching is the belief that every single person deserves to receive the dignity and love that God offers them in abundance. Adults who need help and support to meet their needs are an integral part of our society, as are those who offer care in many different ways. We are called to welcome their gifts, learn from their experiences and support them where needed. Our prayer is that this Commission might be radical, visionary and challenging. We hope it may help us hear the voices of those who have been ignored, address the issues that have long been considered ‘too difficult’ and deeply examine the

April 22, 2021

values we hold which are at the heart of how we treat those we live within society.”

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, said:

“We have been drawn back to the core values of society and community during the last 12 months. Society is richer when there is dignity for all and we treat one another with compassion. We have become more aware of gaps in our society: we have not sufficiently valued and loved many people in care and those living with a disability. This Commission will advocate for them and will explore what it means to provide effective care and support in their communities. I will be praying for its work over the coming months.”

The CEO of Ageing Better, Dr Anna Dixon MBE, who will Chair the Commission, said:

“Sadly, today too many people are without the care and support they need to live a full life. I am delighted to have been asked to Chair the Archbishops’ Commission on Reimagining Care.

“There is an urgent need for a new vision for care that is clear about its purpose and value and the values that underpin it. A vision that puts people and relationships at its heart and redefines the status of caregivers, both paid and unpaid, and those who need care and support.

“We need to make some radical changes if we are to support one another to live well and fully participate regardless of age and ability; this is an issue for all of us, for the church, other faith communities and wider society.”



April 22, 2021

The Bishop of Carlisle, James Newcome, who will Co-Chair the Commission, said:

“I am delighted to be involved with the Archbishops’ Commission on Reimagining Care, which will be tackling one of the most urgent and far-reaching issues of our day. We have an excellent Chair and are already in touch with a number of highly experienced potential commissioners, so I look forward to stimulating meetings and a suitably challenging report.’

## Notes

- Dr Anna Dixon MBE is the Chief Executive of the Centre for Ageing Better, a charitable foundation that works to create a society where everyone enjoys later life. She served as a member of the Advisory Group to the Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland (Sept 2020-Jan 2021). Anna was Director of Strategy and Chief Analyst at the Department of Health from 2013-2015. She has also held positions at The King’s Fund, the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), the Department of Health and the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. In 2005-6 she was awarded a Harkness Fellowship in Health Policy by the Commonwealth Fund of New York. Anna has a PhD in Social Policy from the LSE.
- Bishop James is the Bishop of Carlisle. He is the lead bishop on health and social care/medical ethics and sits in the House of Lords. As well as having personal experience of social care in his family, he has been closely involved with the care system in Cumbria.

April 22, 2021

- Full membership of the Commission will be reported at a later date.

## Patterns of racism in church culture revealed in audit of US-based Episcopal Church leadership



Members of the US-based Episcopal Church's Executive Council join hands and sing at the conclusion of a racial reconciliation training in Chaska, Minnesota, in October 2018

*Official report assesses racial makeup and perceptions of the church's leadership and summarises race influences on church culture.*

The US-based Episcopal Church publicly released a report on Monday (19 April) that assesses the racial makeup and

April 22, 2021

perceptions of a broad sampling of the church's leadership and summarises how race influences internal church culture. The release of the 72-page report, nearly three years in the making, also sheds light on nine dominant patterns of racism that were identified during interviews with dozens of church leaders, writes David Paulsen of Episcopal News Service.

The audit confirmed that the church's leadership, like its membership, is overwhelmingly white, and it found that white leaders and leaders of colour tend to perceive discrimination differently. People of colour said they have often felt marginalised – despite the church's professed commitment to racial reconciliation. White Episcopalians, on the other hand, frequently weren't aware of how race has shaped their lives and their church.

The Racial Justice Audit of Episcopal Leadership was conducted on behalf of the church by the Massachusetts-based Mission Institute. More than 1,300 people completed a written survey offered to five leadership groups: the House of Bishops, the House of Deputies, Executive Council, church-wide staff members and leaders from 28 dioceses. Additional narrative interviews were conducted with 64 participants who had expressed a willingness to share personal stories and observations with the institute's researchers.

“This racial audit has attempted to magnify the voices of people of colour in the church, while also maintaining a spotlight on the systems and structures created and maintained by the white dominant culture,” the Mission Institute said in unveiling its findings. By putting those findings into their historical context, the institute concluded

April 22, 2021

that “even though we have come far in addressing racism within the church, we still have a long way to go.”

Episcopal leaders see the audit as part of the church’s efforts to become more inclusive and to bridge racial divides in an increasingly diverse America. Since 2017, those efforts have centred on Becoming Beloved Community, the church’s cornerstone racial reconciliation initiative. It aims to deepen conversations about the church’s historic complicity with slavery, segregation and other racist systems while enlisting all Episcopalians in the work of racial healing. One of its four components is telling the truth about churches and race.

“This racial justice audit, I think for the first time, has given us a real picture of the dynamics and the reality of structural and institutional racism among us,” Presiding Bishop Michael Curry said in a press release announcing the report. “It has given us a baseline of where we are, to help us understand where we can, and must, by God’s grace, go.”

The report offers eight general recommendations for the church as it continues to engage at the parish and community level, from prioritising racial justice to providing financial support to communities still dealing with the effects of racial oppression. It recommends conducting follow-up audits of church leadership every five years, as well as expanding the audits to dioceses and congregations. It calls for a new system of accountability, ensuring the church steps up its racial justice work. And it cites the need to educate white Episcopalians about the church’s racial dynamics, including through promotion of the audit’s results.



April 22, 2021

The results were first unveiled earlier this year to each participating group, starting with an Executive Council committee in January. About 200 diocesan leaders attended three online discussions of the results in March, and the Mission Institute presented the report to the House of Bishops on 12 March at the bishops' online retreat. Similar online sessions were offered to the church-wide staff on 23 March and the House of Deputies on 15 April.

Along with releasing the report to the wider church yesterday, Episcopal leaders have prepared resources to help all Episcopalians understand the significance of the audit's findings while discerning how they can be a part of the church's continued efforts to combat systemic racism. Three webinars will be offered, on 11 May, 1 June and 29 June.

“Racism exists in our church, and we can no longer ignore it or look the other way or pretend that it's not there,” the church's racial reconciliation officer, Isaiah Shaneequa Brokenleg, told ENS. “My hope is that we would recognise the racism in our church and change it.”

- [Click here](#) to read David Paulsen's full in-depth report on Episcopal News Service.

## **Moderator's message on the Queen's 95th birthday**

**While acknowledging that this is a 'time of deep personal sadness' the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), Right Rev Dr David Bruce, has written to Her Majesty The Queen to offer the Church's**

April 22, 2021

**congratulations on her 95th birthday today (21 April), and to assure her of his, and the denomination's, continued prayers.**

In his letter, Dr Bruce wrote, "At this time of deep personal sadness, when you and the Royal Family have laid to rest a devoted husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, I continue to pray that you each may know the peace of God that transcends all understanding, and the compassion of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is new every morning.

"While you remain in our prayers I also wish to offer, on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the greetings of the General Assembly as we acknowledge Your Majesty's 95th birthday and offer, even in these sad times, our heartfelt congratulations to you.

"This is also an opportunity to acknowledge Your Majesty's devoted public service and unstinting sense of duty to the people of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth. The Apostle Paul's words in Colossians come to mind when he wrote,

'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters...'

"These words I believe, are exemplified in your remarkable life of service. Throughout Your Majesty's long life of devotion to duty and discipleship, I give thanks for your godly example to us all."

## **Books, Broadcasts, resources and webinars**

### **Archbishop Michael Jackson's Reflection for the Third Sunday of Easter**

Archbishop Michael Jackson continues his sermon series for the Season of Easter 2021 with a reflection for the Third Sunday of Easter (April 18).

His reflection (which you can watch at link below) is based on St Luke 24: 36b – 48. “They said, Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening up the scriptures to us?” [St Luke 24: 32]

The series continues each Sunday on YouTube Channel [ ] [youtube.com/c/TheUnitedDiocesesofDublinandGlendalough](https://www.youtube.com/c/TheUnitedDiocesesofDublinandGlendalough)

[ ]

[ [ ] <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpwKaiHV1NRG9kAhwf2BRsw/featured> ]

### **Institution to Parish of Annalong**

Revd Geoff Hamilton will be instituted as Incumbent of the Parish of Annalong on Thursday evening 22 April. The preacher will be Revd Canon Malcolm Kingston, Rector of St Mark's, Armagh where Geoff has been serving his curacy. Please note that due to COVID restrictions, attendance at the service in Kilhorne is by ticket only but it will also be broadcast on the parish YouTube channel at this link.

[ [ ] <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpwKaiHV1NRG9kAhwf2BRsw/featured> ]

### **Thy Kingdom Come**

April 22, 2021

This year's Thy Kingdom Come will happen from 13th - 23rd May.

Watch the webinar re. this year's plans including new resources and lots of ways churches, families and individuals can be involved.

Watch the webinar here-

[[] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A00k78VubMw> ]

Click here to find out more about the 100,000 copies giveaway -

[[] <https://www.cpo.org.uk/thykingdomcome> ]

Thy Kingdom Come 13th May - 23rd May 2021

### **Journey with Mary**

This booklet has been written for those who have a devotion to Our Lady to pray 'Thy Kingdom Come'. It is a guide to praying with Mary for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit using themes and a basic structure of prayer that takes the user through this eleven days of prayer.

[[] <https://www.cpo.org.uk/product.aspx?prod=V5650BT&cat=3745> ]

### **Connor Diocesan Mothers Union Spring Council 2021**

The Council meeting will be held this Saturday April 24 from 10:30 am - 12:30 pm . It will commence with a short church service at 10.30 am conducted by Connor Diocesan Chaplain, Archdeacon Stephen McBride; Spring Council will follow at 11am.

### **Connor Synod to take place online**

The annual Synod of the Diocese of Connor, scheduled to take place on Thursday June 24 2021, will be held online rather than in-person



April 22, 2021

## **Marriage Course Webinar**

In order to resource local church leaders and those involved with couples, the Church of Ireland Marriage Council is organising a one-hour online webinar on Thursday April 29 at 2pm.

The Marriage Council has three aims:

To provide support to couples considering marriage;  
Supporting and enriching married couples in their life together;

Resourcing local ministers and others involved in marriage support within the local church.

The webinar on April 29 is being delivered in partnership with Alpha Ireland, and will inform those attending of the resources available from Alpha around marriage preparation and marriage enrichment.

Marriage Council Chair, the Rev Jonny Campbell-Smyth, rector of Ballynure and Ballyeaston, said: “We would love to see many leaders gather so as a Church we can be resourced to support couples within our local parishes.”

Book online at [ <https://coimarriagecouncil.eventbrite.ie> ]

## **Media review**

**Ruth Dudley Edwards: Prince Philip proved we're not prisoners of our past**

Belfast Newsletter

April 22, 2021

I contrast his approach to life with others, such as the Irish writer Tim Pat Coogan. He has written many big selling books that are popular with people of a ...

[[] <https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/opinion/columnists/ruth-dudley-edwards-more-than-most-prince-philip-proved-that-we-are-not-prisoners-of-our-past-3207372> ]

## **Ex-church elder backs UUP bid to ban conversion therapy in Northern Ireland**

Belfast Telegraph

A former Presbyterian elder dismissed over his same-sex marriage has said a DUP amendment to a motion to ban conversion therapy would allow the practice to continue in another guise.

Steven Smyrl appealed to MLAs to support an Ulster Unionist motion banning the 'therapy' which will be debated in the Assembly today.

He said: "With great simplicity and clarity, the motion states the blatantly obvious, which is that 'it is fundamentally wrong to view our LGBTQ community as requiring a fix or cure'.

[[] <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/ex-church-elder-backs-uup-bid-to-ban-conversion-therapy-in-northern-ireland-40332812.html> ]

## **Canon Peter Ball, Canon Residentiary and Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral from 1984 to 1990**

Daily Telegraph

[ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/obituaries/2021/04/14/canon-peter-ball-much-loved-priest-decided-cathedral-life-not/> ]

## **Tristram Fane Saunders 'A rare insight into the Duke as a religious thinker'**

[churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)

April 22, 2021

Daily Telegraph

[ ] <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/radio/what-to-listen-to/rare-insight-duke-religious-thinker/>

[ ]

**Report on concerns that the current regulations on funerals are unduly cautious with calls to relax restrictions on numbers of attendees.**

Daily Mail

[ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9493423/Boris-Johnson-faces-fury-ludicrous-restrictions-funerals-England.html>

**Media focus - Nolan documentary was soul searching, powerful television - Alban Maginness**

*The popular presenter gave great insight into faith in a secular world.*

There has always been criticism of **the Nolan Show** for its confrontational and populist style. On the other hand, there has been praise for its immediacy in dealing with topical subjects and its accessibility for ordinary listeners to air their opinions.

But despite all the criticisms of Stephen Nolan, his show still remains the most listened to on Radio Ulster and it undoubtedly shapes everyday debate. His influence on broadcasting has been extraordinary and towers above everybody else.

April 22, 2021

Last week, Stephen Nolan left the radio studio and embarked on a TV programme entitled, Finding Faith, about God and religious belief, as espoused by a number of impressive individuals.

It was a surprising topic for a man who declares himself as having no religious beliefs. Indeed, in the programme, he made his lack of religious belief abundantly clear, but made it plain that he personally would love to have faith in God. Throughout the television programme he revealed himself in a most humbling and exceptionally moving way. His openness and honesty were uplifting.

What may have been intended to be a programme about people of faith, also became a programme about non-belief and the struggle by a non-believer, namely Stephen Nolan, to believe in something more than professional, or material success.

In modern post-Christian Western culture, religion is largely absent, or ignored in media circles. If it does raise its head, it is marginalised, or mocked as some sort of archaic nonsense that should be discarded.

Today British and Irish society have largely rejected religious belief as an irrelevance. We no longer need any spiritual dimension to guide our lives. That's why we live in a barren spiritual wasteland.

The predominant Christian ethic, that shaped and formed European culture, has been replaced by moral relativism, which means that you can do what you want, if you believe that it is right for you. Values are transient and disposable,



April 22, 2021

and your individual way of living is value free and, in reality, valueless.

But Stephen Nolan's interviewees were individually exceptional and impressive, giving their faith in God an absolute place in their, lives, despite enormous personal difficulties.

The programme packed a powerful punch on behalf of religious belief. Take the deeply moving story of Melanie Grimsley, whom Stephen rightfully described, as a beautiful person, whose story blew his mind.

She was horrifically burnt as a two-year-old girl in a car fire, that in addition killed her three-year-old sister. Melanie underwent multiple surgical procedures to reconstruct her face and other parts of her body.

Attempts to transplant her hair tragically failed, but despite all her intense pain, extensive disfigurement and suffering, and after a serious struggle with her faith, she reached a profound belief in God.

Stephen stated that he was envious of her faith in God. Although he longs to believe in something, Stephen has only experienced silence and feels as if he hitting a brick wall.

While very little rattles him professionally, Stephen admitted that at his very core, he is not settled, despite his obvious success and money.

April 22, 2021

Another powerful interviewee was **Beryl Quigley**, the widow of prison governor, Bill McConnell, who was shot dead in front of her, outside their Belfast home in 1984.

Due to her deep Christian faith, at that awful moment of murder, she felt the presence of God calling her to forgive her husband's murderers. She chose, as in the Our Father, to forgive those who trespassed against her. Without her Christian faith, she would not have been able to forgive this evil act.

Another interviewee was **Bobby Mathieson**, a convicted UVF murderer, who had turned his life around and had become a believing Christian.

Clearly Bobby Mathieson had suffered hugely from the guilt of the violent things that he had carried out as a UVF man. Such was his remorse, he had had a mental breakdown and even attempted to kill himself.

Although he has repented, he still longs for forgiveness from those whom he hurt.

Gentler, but no less powerful, was the testimony of **Pastor Mark McClurg**, who during his life-threatening coronavirus illness felt the very presence of God holding his hand beside him in his hospital bed. He believes that his trust in God saved his life.

Stephen concluded, if someone who murdered another human being can find contentment, that he himself did not have, then it is worth pursuing that belief in God even more. He said: "I lust for that contentment."

April 22, 2021

At the programme's conclusion, **Fr Brian D'Arcy** advised Stephen to just let God in and don't confuse religion with God, as God is love, compassion and understanding.

Stephen Nolan ended his insightful TV programme by repeating his great desire to believe in God.

One hopes he finds that belief in God and the contentment that he deserves.

Courtesy the Belfast Telegraph 21.04.2021



## Pointers for prayer

Almighty God,  
who hast given thine only Son  
to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin,  
and also an ensample of godly life;  
Give us grace that we may always  
most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit,  
and also daily endeavour ourselves

April 22, 2021

to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life;  
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Mighty God,  
in whom we know the power of redemption,  
you stand among us in the shadows of our time.  
As we move through every sorrow and trial of this life,  
uphold us with knowledge of the final morning  
when, in the glorious presence of your risen Son,  
we will share in his resurrection,  
redeemed and restored to the fullness of life  
and forever freed to be your people. Amen.

Living God,  
long ago, faithful women  
proclaimed the good news  
of Jesus' resurrection,  
and the world was changed forever.  
Teach us to keep faith with them,  
that our witness may be as bold,  
our love as deep,  
and our faith as true. Amen.

Creator of the universe,  
you made the world in beauty,  
and restore all things in glory  
through the victory of Jesus Christ.  
We pray that, wherever your image is still disfigured  
by poverty, sickness, selfishness, war and greed,  
the new creation in Jesus Christ may appear in justice, love,  
and peace,  
to the glory of your name. Amen.



April 22, 2021

O God, your Son remained with his disciples after his resurrection, teaching them to love all people as neighbours. As his disciples in this age, we offer our prayers on behalf of the universe in which we are privileged to live and our neighbours with whom we share it...  
...Open our hearts to your power moving around us and between us and within us, until your glory is revealed in our love of both friend and enemy, in communities transformed by justice and compassion, and in the healing of all that is broken. Amen.

## Speaking to the Soul

**A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armour so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. Ephesians 6:10-11 NLT**

Just imagine if someone were to walk onto a battlefield wearing casual clothes and whistling a merry tune to themselves. The thought is absurd. No one would do that. If you knew that you were heading into battle then, obviously, you would go fully equipped. Paul has made it absolutely clear to his readers that they are an Easter People. He has informed them that they have nothing short of the resurrection power of God at work in their lives. But, at the same time, he has reminded them that they are involved in a daily struggle with the powers of evil. Paul's conclusion, as

April 22, 2021

he draws this letter to an end, is that they must go into every day fully equipped for the battles that they are going to face.

The wonderful truth that Paul shares is that God perfectly equips us for the challenges that we might face. He gives us truth which is like a belt. It keeps everything firmly in place. He gives us a breastplate of righteousness. That is to say because of what Jesus has done for us on the cross our spiritual vital organs are totally protected. Our feet are equipped with the gospel of peace and he gives us a shield which can protect us from all the flaming arrows of the evil one. We're totally protected.

Because we are an Easter People we can step forward with confidence in God. Whatever the devil might throw at us, we know that we are fully protected. That isn't to deny the reality of the battle or to suggest that it won't hurt us at times. But we can be sure that, at the end of the day, however hot and fierce the battle might be, we will still be standing.

## QUESTION

What part of the armour do you need to put more firmly in place in your life?

## PRAYER

Loving God, thank you that you have perfectly equipped me to face every challenge that the devil might throw at me. Help me to put on every piece of the armour that you have lovingly provided for me. Amen

April 22, 2021

