

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Easter Cross New Zealand**

April 23, 2022

## Image of the day

### Easter Cross New Zealand

Celebrating Easter day at Wanaka Anglican. Thanks Michael

## People and places



## Bishop can't cook, won't cook

Honours were shared between Bishop Andrew and Rev Paul Lyons when they came face-to-face in a special 'cook off' in St Mary's Church Parish Hall in Macosquin.





The 'Can't Cook, Won't Cook' event was the brainchild of Select Vestry member, Lilian Davis, and was organised as part of

the Parish of Camus-Juxta-Bann's 400th anniversary celebrations, which are taking place throughout this year.

The scores of parishioners and friends who crammed into the hall were treated first to a culinary masterclass by the renowned celebrity chef, Jenny Bristow, who made the preparation and cooking of a soda bread-Ulster Fry combination and a savoury tart look very easy. Regrettably, the Rector, Rev Lyons, and his Bishop followed soon afterwards and showed, very quickly, how difficult cookery can be.

Jenny – a native of Macosquin – had set their clergymen the task of making and baking a soda bread scone, followed by baked Alaska. Egged on by their enthusiastic audience, the would-be chefs threw themselves into the challenge wholeheartedly. At one point, word came through from the kitchen that one of the loaves of bread was a tad overdone but it didn't put either man off his stroke.



Bishop Andrew was 'up' for the challenge. 'He's an awful nice fellow,' he said of his rival, 'but he's not much of a baker.' The Bishop was soon made to eat his words.

At the end of the cook-off, braver members of the audience had a chance to sample the fare before the hall voted to decide who had won. The result was a triumph for diplomacy, with the Rector coming out tops in the soda bread contest and Bishop Andrew 'taking gold' with his baked Alaska.

The evening ended with a short reflection by Bishop Andrew about the staples in our lives – the things that matter most in our lives: food to eat, families who love us, homes to live in, job security. "It's interesting that whenever Jesus comes into the world," the Bishop said, "one of the messages that he tries to share with all of us is that the staple for life – the

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everyday necessity for life, the thing that sustains life, that blesses life, that enriches life – is being close to God. That's what matters.

"The one thing that Christians say is unchangeable, unshakeable, unconditional," Bishop Andrew said, "is God's love for us. As one writer says, there's nothing we can do to make God love us more, and there's nothing we can do to make God love us less. He loves us. And it strikes me that whenever we go 'off staple', whenever we go off what really matters in life, that's when we end up running into problems and into difficulties."

## **Mothers' Union Platinum Jubilee. tree planting**

**The All-Ireland President of Mothers' Union, June Butler, joined Diocesan President, Jacqui Armstrong, and members of the Derry and Raphoe Mothers' Union at a tree-planting ceremony on the outskirts of Londonderry on Thursday, to mark the Queen's forthcoming platinum jubilee.**

The women were greeted by blue skies and glorious sunshine as they gathered at Brackfield Wood, which skirts the River Faughan, just off the main Derry to Belfast Road near Killaloo. The area has been earmarked by the Woodland Trust for the cultivation of a centenary wood, and will eventually include 40,000 native trees commemorating soldiers who lost their lives during the First World War.





The MU members were met by staff from the Woodland Trust who provided them with spades which the women used to plant 70 trees – a mixture of native oak and cherry





## **All-Ireland President of Mothers' Union, June Butler**

trees. They were also addressed by one of the Trust's ambassadors, Patrick Cregg MBE, who outlined the organisation's plans for the wood.

The Diocesan President led the women in a prayer of thanksgiving for Her Majesty's 70 years of faithful service. Mrs Armstrong said the Queen had shown kindness and compassion, great integrity and wisdom. She had never been afraid to stand up and say, "I believe in God; I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is my rock and my salvation. She has had her roots firmly planted in the ground."

The tree-planting ceremony was the idea of Mrs Kathleen Finlay, who had written to the Queen to explain what the diocesan MU would be doing to mark the platinum jubilee. In

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her letter, Mrs Finlay said they hoped for only one thing for today's event – a sunny day – and the ladies certainly got their wish.

Ms Armstrong thanked the All-Ireland president and Mr Cregg for coming to the ceremony; the women (and Rev Canon Robert Clarke) who planted trees; and two of the Woodland Trust's staff – Dave Scott and Tommy Pringle – for advising on and assisting with the tree-planting, and for providing the tools.

## News reports

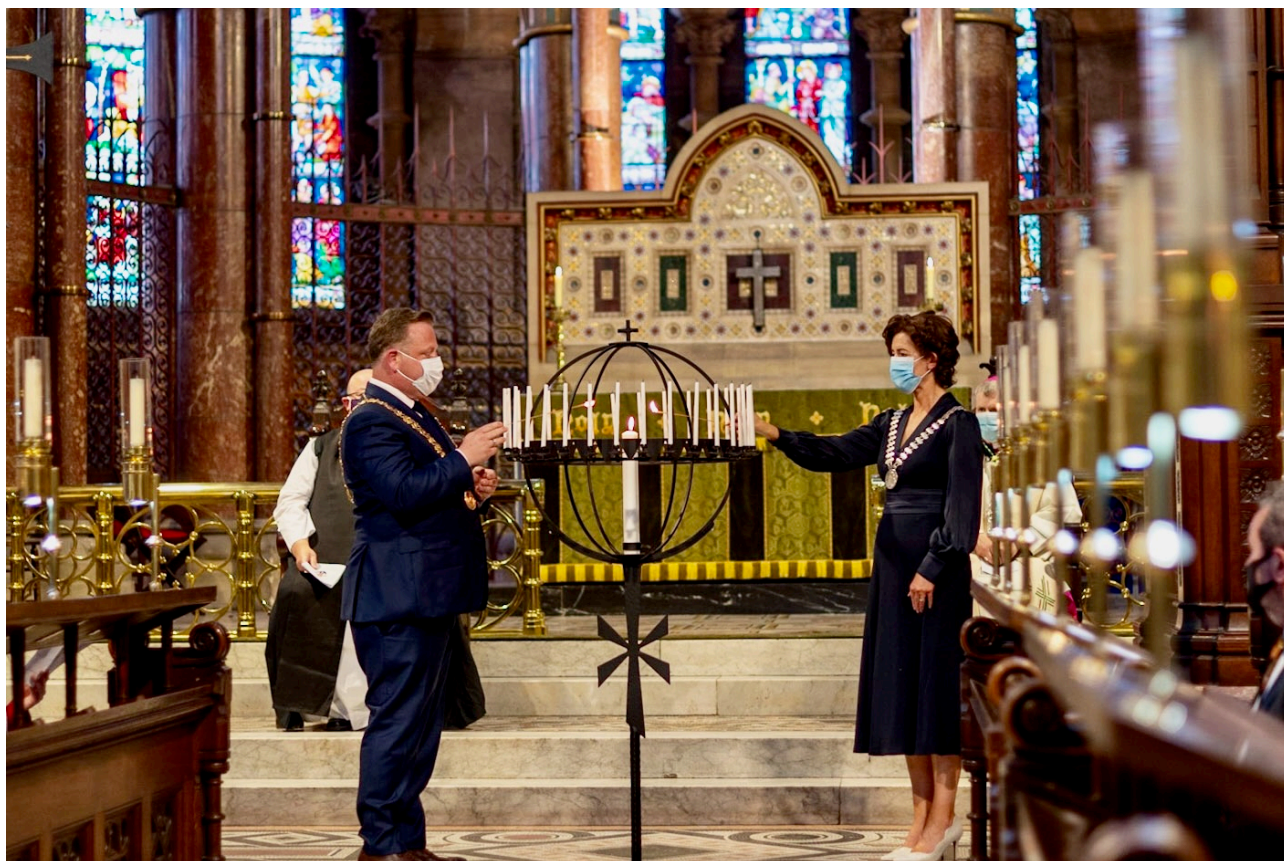
### **Bishop will mark centenaries of Bandon Valley killings with pastoral visits to West Cork Parishes**

**Next week (26th to 29th April 2022) will mark the centenaries of the Bandon Valley killings and the funerals which followed on those dates in 1922.**

The Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, Dr Paul Colton, has announced that he intends to mark the centenaries by making pastoral visits throughout next week to the parishes that were most closely affected by those events one hundred years ago.

Writing in the Cork, Cloyne and Ross Diocesan Magazine this month, Bishop Colton said that the historiography of that period and those events in the Bandon Valley 'has been written about extensively and debated with different narratives, emotions and responses elicited. Why it





**The Lord Mayor of Cork, Councillor Colm Kelleher, and the Mayor of County Cork, Councillor Gillian Coughlan, light the central candle during the Act of Remembrance in 2021.**

happened and what the motives of people were are elusive questions. What can we know with certainty at this remove?

The Bishop emphasised, however, that at another level the facts were straightforward. He wrote:

At one straightforward level what happened is clear. In that week, 14 people were killed: Michael O'Neill, Thomas Hornibrook, Samuel Hornibrook, Herbert Woods, James Buttimer, David Gray, Francis Fitzmaurice, Robert Howe, John Chinnery, Robert Nagle, Alexander Gerald McKinley, John Buttimer, James Greenfield and John Bradfield. Two

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of those were 16 years of age and the oldest was 82. Twelve were members of the Church of Ireland in this Diocese. Attempts were made on others' lives and they had to escape, many never to return. We know that in the years that followed many people from Cork, Cloyne and Ross felt insecure in this part of the world and left.'

Announcing his approach to the centenaries Bishop Colton said:

I am not in a position to adjudicate on the historiography of that period. As lead pastor in this Diocese today, however, my primary duty, having consulted with the local clergy, who have listened to descendants, is to ensure that in prayer and liturgy, these people and events are appropriately remembered in the context of this Decade of Centenaries. With that in mind, as Bishop, I will be spending the octave of 24th April to 1st May 2022 on pastoral visits to the parishes which were caught up in those events one hundred years ago.

Since 2014 Cork, Cloyne and Ross has been commemorating the centenaries of the period 1914 to 2024 in a programme called the Cork, Cloyne and Ross Centenaries Commemoration and Reconciliation Project co-funded by the Church of Ireland Priorities' Fund

One element of this was the creation of a memorial space for prayer and reflection was created in St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork which from 2014 to 2018 commemorated Cork people who were killed or wounded in the First World War. Since 2019, that space has been one of prayer and commemoration of those who died in the War of



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Independence and the Civil War. In 2021, led by the Lord Mayor of Cork, and the Mayor of Cork, County a Service was held to remember all those who died in Ireland during the War of Independence.

## Japan ordains first female bishop in east Asia



### Bishop-elect Maria Grace Tazu Sasamori

**The Nippon Sei Ko Kei (NSKK), the Anglican Communion in Japan, is set to ordain Maria Grace Tazu Sasamori as Bishop of Hokkaido, making her the first female bishop in east Asia.**

The service will take place today Saturday 23 April at 10 am JST (1 am GMT) at the Cathedral Church of Sapporo Christ

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Church. It will be presided over by the Primate of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai, Bishop Luke Kenichi Muto of the Diocese of Kyushu.

Covid restrictions means attendance is limited, but the service will be streamed live on the diocese website.

Bishop-elect Maria Grace, a priest from the Diocese of Tokyo, was elected to her new role in November 2021, at the 80th Synod of the Diocese of Hokkaido.

She is only the second female bishop in Asia, and the first in Japan and east Asia.

Her election was welcomed at the time by Mandy Marshall, Director for Gender Justice at the Anglican Communion Office, as “a real breakthrough”.

Marshall said the bishop-elect would “need our prayers as she steps into a very male space and has the pressure and holds the hopes of Anglican women in Japan”.

The NSKK become a province of the Anglican Communion in 1972. It now comprises 11 dioceses with some 32,000 church members.

Bishop-elect Maria Grace will succeed Bishop Nathaniel Makoto Uematsu, former Primate of the NSKK.

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## In the media

### **Priest slams SDLP and Sinn Fein from pulpit as he backs anti-abortion election candidate**

The Irish News - report by Mark Rainey

*Catholic Church has clarified that it “does not endorse any political party” after a west Belfast pulpit address in support of an anti-abortion election candidate.*

Earlier this week, Fr Patrick McCafferty told his Corpus Christi congregation in Ballymurphy they should vote for the Aontú’s Gerard Herdman on May 5.

The parish priest said he had always voted SDLP but “not any more – never again, never”.

Fr McCafferty came to wider prominence in late 2015 when he supported the late Pastor James McConnell as a character witness during a high-profile prosecution.

At the time, Fr McCafferty said the Whitewell preacher should not have been taken to court over anti-Islam remarks he made during a service streamed online – branding the police and PPS actions a “waste of public resources”.

On Easter Monday he told his congregation: “I don’t like to talk about politics from the pulpit but I have a responsibility as a priest to ask the faithful to vote in accordance with what the church teaches and what our faith believes.

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“The evil of abortion is irreconcilable with being a Catholic, and the evil of abortion is promoted by parties like Sinn Féin and the SDLP and the rest of them... the Alliance... and all that other crew.”

The priest singled out Green Party NI leader Clare Bailey for criticism – referring to her as “that woman” – over her private member’s bill that creates exclusion zones for pro-life protestors at abortion clinics, the Irish News reported. Last month MLAs voted in support Ms Bailey’s Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Bill.

A spokesman for the Down and Connor diocese said Fr McCafferty had “communicated in a personal capacity” during the service, and added: “The Catholic Church has consistently taught that every human life is worthy of respect and care from the moment of conception to natural death.

“This inviolable human right to the protection of life and the equal dignity of every person is the concern of every person and the whole of society.

“The Catholic Church does not endorse any political party. The Church encourages every citizen to exercise their right to freely vote with an informed conscience.”

## **Boris Johnson to face probe over claims he misled Parliament about lockdown parties**

BBC News:

Boris Johnson will be investigated by a Commons committee over claims he misled Parliament about parties in Downing Street during lockdown.



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<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-61177313>

## **No 10 could tear up NI Protocol to 'save peace'**

Belfast Telegraph

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/politics/northern-ireland-assembly-election-2022/no-10-could-tear-up-ni-protocol-to-save-peace-41576050.html>

The Financial Times

Reports that the government is preparing legislation that will give ministers sweeping powers to rip up the post-Brexit deal governing trade in Northern Ireland.

Whitehall insiders said Boris Johnson was developing the plans in case the Unionist parties, who oppose the protocol, refuse to re-enter the power-sharing executive following next month's election.

The change would allow ministers to stop checks on goods travelling to Northern Ireland from the UK. A government spokesperson said no decisions had yet been taken, the paper reports.

## **The first Centre for Zen Buddhism in Ireland will officially open in Dublin city centre this weekend.**

RTE.ie:

<https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2022/0421/1293593-zen-buddhism/>

## **Irish volunteers at the Ukraine border**

TheJournal.ie

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Irish volunteers at the Ukraine border ‘We're great at helping, but need to do more. It's a tragedy’

At a major humanitarian aid centre close to the Ukrainian border a small team of volunteers are helping refugees travel to Ireland.

<https://www.thejournal.ie/irish-team-help-ukrainian-refugees-przemysl-5744290-Apr2022/>

## **Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books**

### **Aspal, a new Irish cutting edge digital platform for faith formation**

“Aspal supports faith formation across Ireland by making learning more accessible to people” – Father Dermot Ryan

Aspal, a new cutting edge digital platform for faith formation, is now available for the benefit of people who wish to engage with and learn more about their Catholic faith. Aspal is the brainchild of the Adult Faith Development Group of the Diocese of Ossory in collaboration of Saint Patrick's Pontifical University, Maynooth. Easy to use, and with the ability to access content anywhere and at any time, the app and digital platform allows people to deepen their faith at a time of their convenience. The Aspal team has now made it possible to access to the best lecturers available throughout the island of Ireland.



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Launching the app Rev Dr Dermot Ryan, director of the Ossory Adult Faith Development Group, said, “this is but the first step on our digital journey to serve the Church across Ireland by providing the very best faith formation to users and to do so in a way that makes learning more accessible by deepening our knowledge and love of God. The past number of years have seen us migrate to the digital space to a much greater extent than heretofore. Meetings, which once necessitated physical gatherings, have now moved seamlessly online. Using similar technology developed over the past two years, the team at Aspal have built an online platform to enhance our faith formation.

“For anyone who wishes to deepen the faith and knowledge of Church teaching, I would encourage them to register on the Aspal app by logging on to [www.aspal.ie](http://www.aspal.ie) and from there they can choose the course that they wish to follow. A lot of the content on the app will be free, such as the upcoming course on the Synodal Pathway which will be launched in the coming weeks. Where there is a charge, the cost of a course has been kept to a minimum,” Father Ryan said.

In commissioning the first Aspal students – now trained to undertake roles in their parishes and pastoral areas – Bishop Denis Nulty, Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin and Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Ossory, said, “in preparing you for ministry in your parish communities we are but restoring old practices – albeit by using very modern technology – whereby people lead each other in prayer. In rural communities: were not animals and crops blessed by men and women who for years carried their Easter water home; were not prayers said as neighbours died; and, God spoken about in our domestic churches? Yours then is a

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future built on our strong past, yours is a baptism finding new life”.

Father Ryan continued, “the Aspal team, in collaboration with Saint Patrick’s Pontifical University, including the inspirational cooperation of Professor Séamus O’Connell, has delivered a weekly course on praying with the scriptures, lectio divina. Over 200 people followed the sessions which were released each week during Lent to enable participants deepen their understanding of, and love for, the scriptures. The pre-recorded sessions were supported by a number of live sessions which allowed for interaction, reinforced learning and provided wonderful moments of prayer together.

“In the coming weeks the Aspal team, through its collaboration with Saint Patrick’s Pontifical University, will offer all parishes and dioceses in Ireland an opportunity to offer faith formation to Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist thereby enabling those who help animate our liturgies to get the best possible preparation. This can be done in a time and place that best suits people in busy lives,” Father Ryan said.

According to Gemma Mulligan, who used the app to follow a Lenten Scripture course, “it was wonderful to have access to someone like Professor Séamus right in the comfort of our own home. Even though participants were from all corners of Ireland, it really felt like we were together in a room. It was a great way to learn, I will do more of this.”

Over the forthcoming weeks of the Easter season, and in the context of exploring the synodal journey, the Aspal team



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will support a collaboration between The Irish Institute for Pastoral Studies (Mary Immaculate College, Limerick), and Saint Patrick's Pontifical University, in a course which will involve the leading synodal minds in the Church – including from Sister Nathalie Becquart, the Undersecretary to the Synod of Bishops in the Vatican.

CNI Note - Aspal, the word for 'Apostle' in the Irish language, is so called to remind all those who participate that they are, by virtue of their Baptism, called to be sent – sent to share with others their faith. Download Aspal from the App Store and the Google Play Store or visit [aspal.ie](http://aspal.ie)

## Perspective

### The Very Reverend Colin Semper

#### **Cleric whose skills as a communicator led him to become BBC Radio Head of Religious Programmes**

The Very Reverend Colin Semper, who has died aged 84, became a Canon of Westminster Abbey in 1987, having previously spent five years as Provost of Coventry Cathedral; unhindered by any kind of intellectual pretension, he brought to both posts a boyish enthusiasm, a warm and open personality, a down-to-earth evaluation of people and situations, and outstanding gifts as a popular communicator.

These gifts were recognised early in his ministry when, on the recommendation of the then Bishop of Guildford, George Reindorp, he joined the staff of the BBC's Religious Broadcasting department. There he remained for 13 years,

proving to be not only a very good producer but also a first-class broadcaster in his own right, and in 1979 he became Head of Religious Programmes for BBC Radio.

Moving to Coventry in 1982, he was faced with a large and difficult task. His predecessor, Bill Williams, had been there since the new Cathedral had risen, phoenix-like, from the ashes of wartime bombing, and had put Coventry on the international map. Visitors from all parts of the world flocked to see Basil Spence's new building and, with the aid of their offerings, an extensive and imaginative ministry was developed.

By the time of Williams's retirement, however, numbers had fallen, the original team of canons had moved away to become bishops and deans, and financial problems demanded a severe retrenchment of the Cathedral's life. Such a task was not exactly to Semper's liking, and nor was it the best use of his own enterprising gifts, but he said that he would give five years to it, and this he did.

In the event, he proved to be the right man for the job. His cheerful manner and ever-hopeful view of the future enabled him to maintain the morale of the Cathedral community at a time when jobs were being axed and disenchantment often reared its head.

The new Provost would not be blamed, and he shared fully in the resolution of the financial crisis when the fine Provost's House was sold and he elected to live in what was no more than a pied-à-terre in the city centre.

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During this time he also did much to strengthen the links between the Cathedral and a diocese which, because of the great emphasis on international ministry, had come to feel abandoned by its mother church.

As Canon Treasurer at Westminster, Semper also made a considerable practical contribution. Again, it was not the job he would have chosen, but circumstances at the Abbey required him to take it, at a time of unprecedented change in the composition of the Chapter, and he not only came to enjoy the responsibilities but discharged them with skill and style. He was rewarded by acceptance back into the world of religious broadcasting, made possible by having a London base.

Colin Douglas Semper was born in Lincoln on February 5 1938. After Lincoln School and National Service he went – through the generosity of the Warden and admissions tutor – to Keble College, Oxford, where he secured a rare Fourth in Theology. It was not that he was dim: rather, he had neither interest in nor aptitude for academic theology. He was anxious to get on with the task of converting the world to Christianity, and he saw the life and teaching of Christ as something of sublime simplicity.

Two years at the theological college, Westcott House in Cambridge, repaired some of his academic deficiencies without dimming his vision, and 1963 he became a curate at Holy Trinity Church, Guildford. The bustling life of the town-centre civic church suited him well, and not surprisingly he proved to be specially effective in ministering to young people.



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On the strength of this, his next move was to Church House, Westminster, on the staff of the Advisory Council for the Church's Ministry. This was not a desk job, for he was put in charge of recruitment to the priesthood, and from 1966 to 1969 he visited schools up and down the country with a caravan that housed an exhibition about the Church's ordained ministry.

Semper's enthusiasm at a time when new ideas were bubbling in all the churches made him a welcome visitor to schools, and as a Selector at conferences for those seeking ordination he saw some of the fruits of his work.

After three hectic years, he went to BBC Radio as a producer. Here, his gifts as a popular communicator were quickly recognised, and his contributions to the lighter channels were particularly valued. His warm personality also won him many friends in Broadcasting House.

One of the programmes he produced was a discussion show for teenagers called Speakeasy, on which he worked closely with Jimmy Savile. He also helped Savile to write *God'll fix it*, published in 1979. It would later weigh heavily on Semper's mind that he had not raised the alarm about the now-notorious DJ, who "talked quite needlessly sometimes about young women".

Semper was named in Dame Janet Smith's 2016 report into Savile and the BBC as "a completely honest man" who nevertheless should have discussed his concerns with a manager. Dame Janet's report states: "I accept that Canon Semper did not 'know' that Savile had sex with under-age girls in the sense of ever seeing it happen, but he clearly did

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‘think’ that Savile had casual sex with a lot of girls, some of whom might have been under age.”

In 1975 he moved to Bush House as the BBC’s Overseas Religious Broadcasting Organiser; his brief was to bring enthusiasm and innovation to a department which had become staid and dull. He enjoyed having his own empire and quickly established cordial relations with all sections at Bush House, and he greatly expanded the output of religious programmes as well as their content.

Although his own views on church and society were not especially radical, he used a number of contributors whose broadcasts annoyed some foreign governments, and the frequency of communication between the Foreign Office and Bush House increased during his reign.

After four years of highly creative work in overseas broadcasting, Semper was recalled to Broadcasting House to be Head of Religious Programming (Radio) and deputy head of Religious Broadcasting. The following year he was appointed an Honorary Canon of Guildford Cathedral, partly in recognition of the importance of his ministry in broadcasting, but also in recognition of the fact that he had remained on the staff of Holy Trinity Church as an Honorary Curate.

By then, however, his days at the BBC were numbered, and three years in a senior post was not long enough for him to make a personal impact, though his experience and skill enabled him to speak and act with authority. Had the Church of St Martin-in-the-Fields in Trafalgar Square fallen vacant at the end of the 1970s he would probably have exercised an

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influential ministry there, but instead he went to Coventry and then to Westminster Abbey.

There he joined a new dean, Michael Mayne, who had been a BBC colleague, and besides his work as Treasurer Semper contributed a note of levity to what might otherwise have been an over-serious regime. For a time he also had a special concern for the Abbey's hordes of visitors, and he supervised a £1 million refurbishment of the Choir School.

It may have been something of a disappointment to him that he was not appointed as Mayne's successor in 1996, but, in any case, following a heart attack at the age of 58, he retired from Westminster Abbey, taking on a variety of appointments and voluntary positions. He served as Vicar of St Mary the Virgin, Frensham, and of the Church of the Good Shepherd at Dockenfield in Surrey.

Colin Semper married Janet Greaves in 1962; she died in 2011, and he is survived by their two sons.

Colin Semper, born February 5 1938, died April 13 2022

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## Church News Ireland

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