



Image of the day - the Royal Maundies

HM The Queen awards Maundy monies to church recipients in Northern Ireland

Royal Maundy is one of the most ancient ceremonies retained in the Anglican Churches of England and Ireland. At a service held annually on Maundy Thursday, the Sovereign presents gifts of monies as an act of humility and charity in Holy Week. The tradition dates back to 600AD.

April 3, 2021

Myrtle Kerr

This year the Royal Maundy Service was due to take place at the Abbey but the impact of the coronavirus pandemic has made it impossible to assemble a congregation and



recipients (one man and one woman for every year of the Her Majesty's age). So, in 2021, the Maundy has been marked instead by The Queen sending the beneficiaries two leather purses: one red and one white, containing specially minted monies. The coins were blessed at the Chapel Royal, St James's Palace, before being posted to recipients.

The Royal Maundy Service is usually one of the most colourful events in the royal calendar and is often attended by other members of the Royal Family, as well as Yeomen of the Queen's Bodyguard.

A Northern Ireland peace campaigner has been honoured with Maundy money.

Myrtle Kerr worked tirelessly for reconciliation during the Troubles alongside her husband, the late Rev Cecil Kerr. They founded the Christian Renewal Centre in Co Down.

Mrs Kerr is a parishioner of Kilbroney Parish, Rostrevor, and was nominated by the Bishop of Down and Dromore, the Rt Rev David McClay.

April 3, 2021

Bishop McClay said: “Over several decades, Myrtle and Cecil worked tirelessly for peace and reconciliation and played a significant role in all that eventually led to the peace process.”

Paddy Wallace, a parishioner of All Saints’, Antrim, and former All Ireland President of the Mothers’ Union has received the gift of Maundy Money the year.

Paddy was nominated for the Royal Maundy by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison. Her citation reads:

“Paddy has been an active member of the parish of All Saints’, Antrim, for many years. Over those years she has served diligently and humbly in a number of roles. She is well-known throughout the diocese and the whole Church of Ireland having served firstly as Connor Diocesan President, and then as All-Ireland President of the Mothers’ Union. In these roles she endeared herself to many across the island with her unique blend of warmth, encouragement and professionalism.

“At the first parish branch meeting after Paddy was elected as All Ireland President of the Mothers’ Union, she told the members that her most important role was still being a member of All Saints’, Antrim, Mothers’ Union.

“This is but one example of Paddy’s humility. Over the years she has exercised a ministry of encouragement and hospitality to her vicar, and other clergy and many of the parishioners. Even when holding high offices in the Mothers’ Union, she always found time to fulfil many more

April 3, 2021

Paddy Wallace

everyday commitments in the parish such as arranging the Flower Guild.

“Paddy’s working life was that of a teacher. In the 1980s she was promoted to the role of vice-principal of Parkhall

College, Antrim

– one of the three secondary schools that then served the town. As such, she was a member of the senior management team that raised the school from being Antrim’s third ranked secondary school to first position in the same rankings.

“An enlarged Parkhall is now the town’s sole secondary school and it is thriving. Its success is largely due to the foresight of that senior management group, to which Paddy made a significant contribution.”

Paddy, 80, is married to John and the couple have three sons. She said news that she was to receive Maundy Money had been very exciting. “I was quite overawed. I did not expect it in the slightest. I am very honoured,” she said.

churchnewsireland@gmail.org



April 3, 2021

As has been a Connor tradition in relation to the Royal Maundy, Bishop George also nominated a member of another denomination, and this year that nominee was Mr **Dougie Crowe** from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Dougie, 75, was brought up in north Belfast before a move to North Down, but his heart is still in north Belfast and especially the local Carrs Glen Community, an area with many challenging social issues.

Dougie is a lifelong member of Eglinton Presbyterian Church where administrative skills honed during a professional career in the insurance business were put to good use in his service to church and community. He has been Clerk of Kirk Session for 22 years.

He has been a long-time member of the 92nd Belfast Company of the Boys Brigade, serving as an officer for more than 50 years – including 11 of those as captain of the company.

Dougie is also a member of Eglinton Men's Indoor Bowling Club which provides a valuable opportunity for men of the church and community to meet.

Totally committed to the wider work of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Dougie uses his professional skills to great advantage in committees, boards and councils of the church, most often in areas of administration and finance. He retains a great passion for the United Appeal for Mission and serves as a trustee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as well as serving as Chairman of PCI's Pension Trustees.



Avril McNee, a former President and stalwart of the Diocesan Mothers' Union, and Diocesan Reader **Albert Moore** from the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe have been honoured by The Queen with Maundy Gifts this year.

Elizabeth McClure - has been a member of Woods Parish Church for more than 50 years following marriage to her late husband Richard. Throughout that time she has immersed herself in Parish and community life both locally and Diocesan wide. Elizabeth continues to be a member of the Church choir and Mothers' Union. For many years member of the Select Vestry – during which time she held the offices of Churchwarden, Parochial nominator and Hon Treasurer. Also heavily involved locally in the Girl Guiding movement – an interest which continues to this day. She is a former Trustee and President of Armagh Diocesan Mothers' Union, during which time she also sat on the All Ireland Council of MU. Served as a lay member on the Board of St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh. For many years a lay member of the Armagh Diocesan Synod and Council. From 2003-2020 served as one of the two lay Hon. Secretaries to the Diocesan Synod and Council, bringing her good common sense, wise council, and gentle manner to that role. For many years she was also a lay member of the General

April 3, 2021

Synod of the Church of Ireland. She served as a governor on both Woods Primary School and the Rainey Endowed Grammar School, including terms as Hon Secretary, vice-chair and chair of the Board of Governors of Rainey Endowed. Elizabeth's faith is central to her life. She embodies the very best of that utterly devoted lay person commitment to serve God and her community using the gifts she has been given. She is highly regarded and respected by all who know her.

Neville Pogue, alongside his wife Myrtle, has been a dedicated volunteer for Southern Area Hospice Services for more than twenty years. His service during that time has been truly inspiring. Neville gives so freely of his time and skills to help raise funds for Southern Area Hospice to enable them to continue their work providing specialist palliative care and support to local people who are living with Cancer and other life-limiting illnesses, such as Multiple Sclerosis and Motor Neurone Disease. Over the years Neville has assisted with many Hospice organised events as well as, together with Myrtle, organising their own fundraising events. Neville and Myrtle are regular faces at Craft Fayres and Markets throughout the area selling their goods in aid of the Hospice. They host coffee mornings, assist with ticket sales and attend community events and cheque presentation to speak about the work of their local Hospice. Neville and Myrtle are true ambassadors for Southern Area Hospice, both in their own local community and far beyond. Their unwavering dedication and community spirit has helped Southern Area Hospice to continue to provide specialist services to patients and families.



Pope's letter to former Moderator emphasises value of dialogue

The Rev Dr Norman Hamilton hopes that the engagement modelled by Pope Francis's response to his Irish News article about a papal encyclical will encourage further challenging conversations across Ireland, William Scholes writes in The Irish News.

Dr Hamilton, a former Presbyterian Moderator, said last night he had enjoyed a "very good day" with "a lot of really positive feedback" after this newspaper reported that, in a unique development, the Pope had written personally to him.

Pope Francis told Dr Hamilton he wanted to express his appreciation "for the thoughtful observations you made in

April 3, 2021

your article on my Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti in the Irish News".

Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin, who drew the article to the Pope's attention, described it as "perhaps unprecedented in the context of Northern Ireland and its history".

"I also think the Holy Father would be extremely pleased to know that a minister of the Presbyterian Church is open to giving his views on the Holy Father's encyclical in a newspaper that is widely read by those of the Catholic faith," he said.

Dr Hamilton, who played an important role mediating in the Holy Cross dispute and has a long commitment to civic engagement and building civic relationships beyond the Church, said the fact that the Pope himself had written to him emphasised the importance of being open to dialogue.

"I hope this would help start a conversation and ongoing debate on the full range of issues that affect us all," he said.

Churches had a tendency to talk about familiar issues and while these were important, he said it was vital that the Churches "also contributed to discussions on loneliness, social justice, poverty and the sorts of issues raised in Fratelli Tutti".

"I want people to think properly about the things that come their way, and to be able to talk about them properly with each other," he said.

April 3, 2021

Dr Hamilton said Protestant and Catholic clergy were among those to contact him about his correspondence.

Archbishop Martin said it was a "kindly and significant gesture from Pope Francis, in the spirit of Fratelli Tutti" while Belfast priest Fr Martin Magill said it was "lovely to see a good news story make the front page".

‘We are not locked out of communication, understanding and belonging at Easter 2021’ – Message from Archbishop Jackson of Dublin

“Easter heralds resurrection and rejoicing. At the time of Easter 2021, such delight in the divine presence after the divine absence is something with which every Christian worldwide is vibrantly in touch. The public and communal celebration of Easter still eludes us because of the need to adhere to Restrictions for the good of others and for the safety of ourselves. This remains a time of restraint by all for the good of all.

“I have no doubt that, for many of us, holding together in the one embrace light and hope is well-nigh impossible at Easter 2021. The instinctive gesture, the unrehearsed reaching out, the equally natural response, the wide smile – none of these is available to us at a time when, in so many ways, we need them most. Lockdown has made us feel that anywhere we go, we should not really be there and anyone we meet, we should not be delaying with them. Every interchange and every interaction fuels anxiety.

“Let us treasure the early morning meeting of Mary Magdalene and Jesus in the garden. It begins with a false start, a misrecognition. But the element that unlocks it is the voice. Mary recognizes the voice of her Master and all of the old instincts of friendship flood back to her. While she may not touch him, she recognizes him and is recognized by him. This is enough to send her flying off to the other disciples with words that could fit into any form of social media: I have seen the Lord!

“Recognition brings understanding. Understanding brings communication. Communication brings belonging. Belonging brings sharing. From none of this are we locked out at Easter 2021.”

Orange Order in Belfast 'reviewing engagement with PSNI' over Bobby Storey funeral

THE Orange Order in Belfast is "reviewing" engagement with the PSNI ahead of the July marching season, amid the fallout from veteran IRA man Bobby Storey's funeral, Bimpe Archer writes in The Irish News.

The declaration by Belfast County Grand Lodge follows a decision not to prosecute any Sinn Féin members after more than 1,500 mourners - including Deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill - gathered at various locations in west Belfast last June.



Prosecutors are reviewing their decision, having announced on Tuesday changes to Covid restrictions up until hours before the funeral and organisers' discussions with police made the chances of a successful court case unlikely.

The Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland branded the funeral "effectively an orchestrated republican show of strength", an event which "more than any other, undermined" public confidence in coronavirus restrictions.

It said the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) decision "signals that republicans are above the law... they themselves had played a central role in laying down for others to follow and obey", adding it "greatly undermines public confidence in the criminal justice system".

The Orange Order expressed "great concern" at the details of consultation between organisers and the PSNI before the

April 3, 2021

funeral, "particularly as that interaction has seemingly helped those, who so clearly breached Covid-19 regulations, avoid prosecution".

It contrasted it to its own experience of PPS decisions "not to prosecute those who have carried out hate crimes against our organisation - even when clear evidence was available".

"Every family who suffered loss, but obeyed the rules are the victims of this reckless law breaking by the Republican Movement. They have been further let down by a discredited justice system."

However, the Belfast Grand Lodge went further, questioning why the PSNI only recommended 24 people for prosecution when there were "thousands" of attendees with "video footage in which everyone can be clearly identified".

"As a county (lodge)we have engaged with the PSNI, yet that didn't stop prosecutions, which resulted from serious police mistakes; for republicans, engaging with the PSNI is now a mitigation against prosecution," it said.

"The PPS excuse that the law was confusing, is unbelievable in that some of the accused were involved in making those same laws.

"Belfast County Grand Lodge, over the coming period will review their engagement with the PSNI, taking account of how they and the PPS rectify this unacceptable two-tier approach that appears to continually favour republicanism."

April 3, 2021

The development comes just three months before the start of the loyalist marching season, a historically contentious period in Belfast which has been largely peaceful in recent years.

Last year the organisation agreed to suspend its parades in a bid to help stop the spread of Covid-19.

The Orange Order has already withdrawn from involvement in the Shared Island Unit in anger over the Northern Ireland Protocol which has created a border in the Irish Sea, warning north-south relations are on the brink of falling into a "downward spiral".

Courtesy The Irish News 02.04.2021

Books, Broadcasts, resources and webinars

At home with the Gettys

Join Keith and Christine Getty on BBC for a special documentary. The couple say... "As we discuss our journey of writing hymns for the church, what our family has been doing during the lockdown, and sing some of our favourite songs from the North Coast of Ireland at Downpatrick Cathedral. We hope you can tune in!" The programme was aired on Thursday last but is being repeated tomorrow Sunday, 4 April in Northern Ireland at 6.30PM BST on BBC 2. It is also available across the UK on the BBC digital platform, and on demand on BBC iPlayer. See also <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-56571444>

Media review

It's time for Simon Byrne to go, says UUP leader Steve Aiken

Belfast Telegraph

UUP leader Steve Aiken has said PSNI Chief Constable Simon Byrne has lost the support of a large section of the community in Northern Ireland and must now go. Mr Aiken was speaking after his party called for Mr Byrne to resign on Thursday evening.

[[] <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/politics/its-time-for-simon-byrne-to-go-says-uup-leader-steve-aiken-40267722.html>]

Children with autism rejected by 'posh' schools

Irish Examiner

Teddy O'Reilly's parents had to try 22 different schools before he got a place in junior infants. The O'Reillys live in Terenure, in the heart of salubrious south Dublin. Teddy has autism, but the law guarantees that he is entitled to an education, the same as every other child. Yet his parents couldn't get a place for Teddy in a local school. It was as if children with autism weren't born in that part of the city.

[[] <https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-40256579.html>]

Council's clean-up budget wiped out by removal of loyalist anti-protocol graffiti

Belfast Telegraph

A council which has seen graffiti threats to staff working at border control inspections in Larne has spent its budget on cleaning the walls up. Ninety incidents of graffiti have been

April 3, 2021

reported to Mid and East Antrim Borough Council over the past two months.

[[] <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/councils-clean-up-budget-wiped-out-by-removal-of-loyalist-anti-protocol-graffiti-40266895.html>]

UUP's Beattie attacks Sinn Fein over Storey funeral debate

Belfast Telegraph

UUP's Doug Beattie rounds on SF for contributing for just 4 minutes to 2hr Assy debate on Bobby Storey funeral Covid breaches. "Claw back your compassion, your integrity, your moral authority. Apologise, and then resign," he tells MO'N & Conor Murphy.

UK Taxpayers funded EU factory at heart of vaccine row

Daily Telegraph

British taxpayers have invested millions of pounds in a Dutch vaccine factory at the centre of the threatened blockade by the European Commission, The Daily Telegraph can disclose. The Halix factory in Leiden was equipped to produce doses of the Oxford vaccine after Matt Hancock approved a major investment last April. The money, reported to be in the region of £21 million, was meant to secure vital shipments for the UK, but Brussels has threatened to ban exports and yesterday vowed "no negotiation" with Downing Street, insisting that the doses should be diverted to EU nations. A leaked letter disclosed that Oxford University scientists urged the Netherlands, as a major EU nation, to invest in the Halix factory alongside the UK last April, but the deal was never signed.

April 3, 2021

[[] <http://digitaleditions.telegraph.co.uk/data/556/reader/reader.html?social#!preferred/0/package/556/pub/556/page/2/article/158329>]

Half-day Fridays as top firm takes the initiative on flexible working

Belfast Telegraph

Accountancy firm PwC, which has around 2,000 staff in Northern Ireland, has said employees will be encouraged to take a half day on Fridays after a condensed week as part of future flexible working. The firm, which employs 22,000 UK-wide, said it wanted to allow greater flexibility to workers post-pandemic. There are three aspects to its plan — allowing people to decide their own working pattern every day, allowing people to continue working from home but with at least 40% of their time in the office, and taking a half day on a Friday in July and August after condensing their work into the rest of the week.

=====

Witness - The Cross is a sign for our troubled times - In midst of uncertainty, separation and death, the events of the first Good Friday give us all hope still - Vincent Nichols

This Easter double bank holiday is welcome, a proper breather, even if we are still inhibited by the restrictions, eased only a little as yet. The days from Good Friday to Easter Monday are rich in meaning and rightly marked by a stepping back from work.

The words of an ancient sermon, preached on Holy Saturday in the early third century, have a resonance for these days of rest: “What is happening?” the preacher asked. “Today there is a great silence over the earth, a great silence and stillness.” These words prompt reflection.

“The earth was in terror,” he continued. Yes, indeed, many have feared and wondered how the terror of this pandemic would unfold. The past year has brought death and separation, often from those closest to us.

In the midst of this loss, so much has happened over these past months to make us doubt our own integrity: sins of the past brought into the light; revised history lessons of immense discomfort for the authors of predominant narratives; a betrayal of young people, so many unaccompanied in the dark alleys of internet pornography. The list is long and touches us all.

In response it is so easy to cast around for a place in which to lay the blame. Whose fault is this? Where did that virus come from? Who looked the other way? Why was this not stopped? The weight of guilt, a real weight, is passed from hand to hand. Where is its repository so that we can live tomorrow with hope?

In response, the ancient preacher creates a dialogue between the Christ, risen from the dead, and imprisoned Adam, the figure of us all. “Awake, O sleeper,” cries the risen Lord. “I have not made you to be held a prisoner. Arise from the dead; I am the life of the dead. O man, work of my hands, arise!”

As a youngster I was prone to worrying and anxiety. I still am. My mother taught me a profound lesson, although I am a slow learner. At the end of each day, she said, I was to parcel up my worries, wrap them with a ribbon and place them at the foot of the Cross of Jesus. That was the place to put all of my fear, my guilt, my burdens. In that repository the cycle of anxiety, blame and retaliation can come to a close. For there, in the one hanging on that cross, was the power of the divine and the vulnerability of the human, capable of lifting the burden, absorbing its pain and showing the way to new life through repentance and responsibility.

The ancient preacher put it like this: “Look at the spittle on my face, which I received because of you, in order to restore you. See the blows on my cheeks, which I accepted in order to refashion you. See the scourging of my back which I accepted in order to disperse the load of your sins which was laid upon your back.”

In this way, the Cross of Jesus, held before the world today, is the key to our living together. Without this gift of God’s mercy, revealed in Jesus, mediated by him in a thousand different ways, we find ourselves increasingly locked in our past, unable to shift its load, and rendered incapable of building together a better tomorrow.

At the heart of that better tomorrow, there must be justice. And there must be mercy. These two flow from the Cross. As the Gospel of John constantly points out, the light of Jesus is a light of judgment. In that light true justice can be fashioned, a justice captured in the image of the Kingdom of

April 3, 2021

God. It is a justice, an ordering of things, for which we long and for which humanity cries out.

Yet a key feature of the coming of this Kingdom, this better world with its justice, love and mercy, is that we are all, without exception, called to play our part in bringing it about. This vision of justice is not simply something that will be delivered to me – by whom is never satisfactorily defined – but something in which I am an active participant.

Only then will the crucifixion come to an end, a crucifixion to be seen in so many places and in so many lives. Only then will the words of the risen Christ echo throughout creation: “Arise, work of my hands, arise you who were fashioned in my image. Rise, let us go hence.”

Cardinal Vincent Nichols is Archbishop of Westminster and president of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales



Pointers for prayer

April 3, 2021

Your name is glorified
even in the anguish of your Son's death.
Grant us the courage
to receive your anointed servant
who embodies a wisdom and love
that is foolishness to the world.
Empower us in witness
so that all the world may recognize
in the scandal of the cross the mystery of reconciliation.
Amen.

Faithful Midwife,
as you delivered the Hebrews safely
out of the long labour of slavery,
so, morning by morning,
you draw us forth into the new day.
Surround us with a cloud of witnesses,
and sustain us by your powerful word,
that, in the night of loneliness and fear,
we, being weary, may not lose heart
but push toward the joy that is to come, labouring with Christ
to give birth to your promised kingdom. 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 3, 2021

Christ our God,
your love is poured out in death for our sakes.
Hold us in your embrace
as we wait for Easter's dawn.
Comfort us with the promise that no power on earth, not
even death itself, can separate us from your love;
and strengthen us to wait
until you are revealed to us
in all your risen glory. Amen.

Speaking to the Soul

By this time it was about noon, and darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock. The light from the sun was gone. And suddenly, the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn down the middle. Then Jesus shouted, "Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!" And with those words he breathed his last.

Luke 23:44-46 NLT

These incredible words take us to the heart of Good Friday. Good is hardly the word. This is the most incredibly, amazing, wonderful day that has ever happened in which God showed us just how much he loved us. Anyone can use words of love, but words are cheap and can easily be said. It's only when we see actions that we know that love is real, and when Jesus died on the cross we discover the full extent of God's love for us in sending his own son to give everything for us.

April 3, 2021

Jesus' death on the cross changed everything. As he died the thick curtain in the Temple was torn in two. That curtain was the barrier that ensured that people were kept out of the Holy of Holies. Only the High Priest was able to go into that holiest place of all, and he was only permitted to do so once a year. Nothing could have been more significant than the tearing of the curtain, and it proclaimed to the world that through the death of Jesus everyone was welcome into the holy presence of God.

This Easter millions of Christians around the world will celebrate Jesus' death and resurrection. But Good News belongs to the world, not just to us. As we give thanks for God's amazing generosity to us let us pray for our families, neighbours and communities and all those for whom the life, death and resurrection of Jesus mean nothing at all. Let's keep in mind the torn curtain and remind ourselves that Jesus came to show his complete love for them just as much as for us.

QUESTION

What does Good Friday tell you about God's love for you personally?

PRAYER

Lord God, thank you that you have shown me complete love through the death of Jesus on the Cross. Help me to live in the light of that love and be constantly eager to pass it on to others. Amen

