

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – new Missionary Aviation flights

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New Missionary Aviation flights

After months of preparation, Missionary Aviation Fellowship's (MAF) first operational flight took off in Guinea on Saturday last. See News reports

People and places

Service takes place 100 years on to remembers victims of Bandon Valley massacre

A Church of Ireland service has taken place to remember the Bandon Valley massacre which took place 100 years ago this week, Ronan McGreevy reports in the Irish Times

The service took place in St Mary's Church of Ireland church in Dunmanway, Co Cork. Presided over by the Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, Dr Paul Colton, it remembered 14 men who were killed locally between April 26th and April 28th in 1922. Thirteen of them were Protestants.

They were Thomas and 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. All were shot, the youngest was 16, and the oldest 82.

An IRA commandant, Michael O'Neill, from Timoleague, Co Cork, was killed by Herbert Woods, sparking the bloodbath.

The killings by unidentified armed men, which happened after the Truce but before the start of the Civil War, were condemned by both pro-Treaty and anti-Treaty leaders, including president of Dáil Éireann Arthur Griffith and leading anti-Treaty figure Éamon De Valera.

The question if the motivation for killing the men was solely sectarian has never been definitively established.

In advance of the event President Michael D Higgins hoped remembrance of such events would be done “ethically and with moral purpose, allowing for an inclusive reflection, open to all sides, including those who left our shores, those left below, and those who were left in a minority status, North or South, to suffer discrimination in any aspects of life”.

St Mary's Cathedral hosts enthronement of new Tuam Bishop

The new Church of Ireland Bishop of the United Dioceses of Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe was enthroned at a ceremony at St Mary's Cathedral in the town on Sunday afternoon last.



The Rt Reverend Michael Burrows, former Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory, was elected by the Episcopal College to his new role last January.

He succeeds the Rt Reverend Patrick Rooke (formerly Bishop of Tuam, Killala and Achonry) and the Rt Reverend Dr Kenneth Kearon (formerly Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe), who both retired at the end of October 2021, at which time the two dioceses were united.

The first of his six enthronements took place at Tuam Cathedral on Sunday, 24th April, 2022.

The rest are as follows:-

Killaloe Friday 29th April 7.30pm

Killala Sunday 1st May 4.00pm

Limerick Saturday 7th May 3.00pm

Clonfert Thursday 19th May 7.30pm

Kilfenora Sunday 22nd May 4.00pm

West Belfast priest tells of `very moving' audience with Pope Francis in Rome

A west Belfast priest has described an audience with the Pope in Rome this week as "very moving", Marie Louise McConville reports in The Irish News

Fr Martin Magill, who is parish priest of St John's Church on the Falls Road, praised Pope Francis for his "down to earth" nature.

Fr Magill and Presbyterian minister Rev Steve Stockman, who is based at Fitzroy Presbyterian Church in south Belfast, had been invited to the Vatican to celebrate a festival they co-created, which marked its 10th anniversary this year.

The 4 Corners Festival seeks to inspire people from across Belfast to transform it for the peace and well being of all.

The festival features innovative events designed to entice people out of their own 'corners' of the city and into new places where they will encounter new perspectives, new ideas and make new friends.



Fr Martin Magill (right), parish priest of St John's Church on the Falls Road in west Belfast and Presbyterian minister Rev Steve Stockman, who is based at Fitzroy Presbyterian Church in south Belfast, had a private audience with Pope Francis in the Vatican

In Rome, Fr Magill and Rev Stockman were part of a wider Belfast delegation made up of members of Queen University's Catholic Chaplaincy team, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary, and a number of students.

Speaking to The Irish News, Fr Magill said the audience with the pontiff had been "a lovely experience".

The cleric said on arriving, Pope Francis greeted everyone before taking a seat among them.

"He said `I have an address written here but I'm not going to read it. You can read it for yourselves later. Let's have a conversation. Would you like to ask me some questions?"

Fr Magill said the QUB students were able to question the Pope about various issues including asking him about his own student days, to which he responded with a "lovely sense of humour".

"He spoke about the value of the lives we lead," he said.

"He encouraged them in having a good sense of humour in the joy of their faith and really be a witness to that.

"He had a lovely suggestion they would have a copy of the gospels in their pocket. A small copy.

"He then naturally moved into the area of ecumenism and he talked about the importance of recognising that other Christians of other faiths actually help us in that mission of sharing the gospel today.

"He spoke of his own experience growing up and I found that very moving. The first ecumenical word that he heard was from his grandmother.

"He was talking about the value of people of different denominations practicing together, working together, witnessing together, being involved in acts of charity".

Fr Magill said some of the QUB students then sang an Irish Blessing for the Pope and at the end of the gathering, the Pontiff asked them to perform again.

Fr Magill said he found the audience with the Pope "very moving on a number of levels".

"I loved the relaxed atmosphere of it," he said.

"Pope Francis put us very much at ease.

"I loved the fact that the students were able to ask questions and when the Pope talked about his own experience, his humorous way of talking about his university life and his grandmother.

"He was very humble and down to earth. It was a lovely experience".

Courtesy The Irish News 27 April, 2022

Casting net in new water theme of Howth institution

The Parish of St Mary's Howth set out on a new adventure on Wednesday last (April 27) as parishioners and their new Rector began their journey together.

The Revd Philip Heak was instituted by Archbishop Michael Jackson at a service which welcomed parishioners and people from the wider community of Howth, clerical colleagues and friends and family, including Philip's wife, Cristabel.

The preacher was the Rt Revd Patrick Rooke, retired Bishop of Tuam, who had known Philip since he went to be Rector of Ballymore Parish, Tandragee, in 1988 when Philip was a teenager. He had encouraged him to go forward for ordination and had followed his progress since.

Drawing on the Gospel reading [Luke 5: 1–11 ‘Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch’], Bishop Rooke observed that this was an appropriate analogy for the seaside town of Howth. However, he said Simon had caught nothing after fishing all night long but the same could not be said for Philip, having served a curacy in Lisburn and a second curacy in St Nicholas’s, Galway, as Diocesan Youth Officer in Cashel, Ferns and Ossory for six years before moving to Naas as Rector for 16 years.

The Bishop added that Philip’s personable character had endeared him to many and he had no doubt that he would bring much to the life and witness of his new parish and to the community of Howth.

“After 16 years, Philip is casting his net in new water. This is an opportunity for personal growth and experience in an attractive and thriving part of Dublin. A new match is being made,” he commented. “The arrival of a new Rector always brings hopes and aspirations. For the new Rector it is a matter of casting the net in deep water and hoping for the best. One never really knows what to expect and it can be overwhelming at first.”

He continued: “For Philip and Cristabel, they set out on a new journey tonight. In answering this call as a couple, they are venturing out in faith and they deserve the support of



parishioners.” He added that while a new Rector may do things differently, one of the benefits of a new incumbent is that they challenge parishioners to do new things.

He issued four challenges to the parish based on lessons for the church during the pandemic. Firstly, he urged the parish to consider how to build stronger links with the community and ask what networks of support the parish could offer to Howth. He challenged the parish to make good use of new technology. Clergy had learned new tricks during the pandemic and now churches and cathedrals were reaching around the world. He advised people to appreciate what they took for granted. What was lost during lockdowns and the war in Ukraine reminded people of this, he said. Finally, he reminded Philip not to lose sight of what really mattered and to identify his priorities and keep them close.

Speaking after the service, Archbishop Jackson thanked all who had helped to prepare for the institution. He said that it

was encouraging, after the last two years, that everyone could be together for the service and he encouraged parishioners to take that forward. He thanked Bishop Rooke for highlighting the new Rector's positive skills and said that the new ministry was a gift to the parish. He thanked the Rural Dean, Canon Lesley Robinson, for her tireless work.

Representing the great ecumenical friendship that exists in the Howth area, Fr Gerard Tanham commented that the different traditions in the area had learned from each other and learned what they had in common.

News reports

Non-religious marriages outnumbered Catholic marriages in 2021, new CSO figures show

Catholic ceremonies accounted for 39% of all marriages, compared to 43.3% non-religious ceremonies in 2021.

Non-religious marriages are continuing to outnumber Catholic marriages last year, with over a third of couples opting for a non-religious ceremony.

According to new figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO), 43.3% of couples who had a wedding last year opted for a non-religious ceremony. This is a slight drop from 2020, where 49.8% of marriages were non-religious.

This compares to Catholic marriage ceremonies accounting for 39% of all marriages in 2021, which is slightly higher than the 2020 figure of 34.6% but lower than 2019, 2018 and 2017.

Compared to equivalent marriage figures from 1980, the number of Catholic marriages is down significantly (96%) while the number of non-religious marriage ceremonies has risen exponentially (2%).

In 2021, there were a total of 17,217 marriages compared to just 9,523 in 2020. The 2020 figure is reduced likely due to Covid-19 regulations which put significant restrictions on wedding ceremonies.

A majority of the marriages that took place in 2021 were opposite-sex marriages at 16,717 in total.

The CSO reported that there were also 500 same-sex marriages in 2021. Of these, 252 were male same-sex marriages and 248 were female same-sex marriages.

The most popular month for a marriage in 2021 was August, with one in seven marriages taking place in that month, while the least popular month was January. One in three marriages took place in the last three months of 2021.

See also

[\[https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2022/0429/1295119-cso-marriage-figures/\]](https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2022/0429/1295119-cso-marriage-figures/)

New MAF flights in Guinea

After months of preparation, Missionary Aviation Fellowship's (MAF) first operational flight took off in Guinea on Saturday last.

MAF's Roy Rissanen and Emil Kundig flew from the capital Conakry to Nzérékoré in the south, to pick up a US missionary couple destined for a crucial conference in Conakry.

MAF's short flight saved them two days of gruelling road travel.

MAF's new service will be a game changer for them – supporting their Bible translation work and developing farming practices in the region, without the burden of challenging overland travel.

Dave Fyock, MAF International CEO, says:

“It gives me great joy that our flights in Guinea have begun. I'm grateful for the hard work of many people who have enabled us to reach this day of celebration. Special thanks to MAF US who've worked diligently with us to reach this point.

We praise God for opening a way to bring help, hope and healing through our services to the isolated communities of Guinea. Please pray for this programme - particularly for the right people to fill the vacancies we have on the team, and that God would 'establish the work of our hands.'”

In the media

Eight members of Green Pastures Church step down amid reports of 'internal governance issues'

Irish News

Eight senior members of the Green Pastures Church in Ballymena have stepped down amid reports of "internal governance issues", Suzanne McGonigle writes.

In an email to the congregation, the eight members of the 'executive team' also denied their resignations were part of "a plot to overthrow our lead pastor" adding that it was "simply nonsense and has NO basis in reality".

The evangelical church is led by Pastor Jeff Wright, the former owner of Wrightbus.

It is understood the church has been at the centre of an "internal matter of church governance" in recent weeks.

In the email circulated on social media, the eight members said it was "with the heaviest and most sorrowful of hearts that each of us intend to tender our resignations to the board from our duties and employment with Green Pastures Church".

They said "the board has sought to act with integrity and in good faith at all times as it has navigated this challenging and complex situation".

The letter also stated that they "wanted to address one of the rumours that we have heard - that this was all the result

of a plot to overthrow our lead pastor and immediately install someone else that has been lined up as his replacement" adding "this is simply nonsense and has NO basis in reality".

The Charity Commission also told the Belfast Telegraph that the Green Pastures Church had recently made them "aware of some internal governance issues".

"The commission is monitoring the situation and engaging with the charity but an investigation has not been opened at this time," it said.

[[] <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2022/04/29/news/eight-members-of-green-pastures-church-step-down-amid-reports-of-internal-governance-issues--2655011/>]

Former church trustees fail in bid to have €1.8m bankruptcies annulled by High Court

Breaking News Ireland

Two former trustees of a non-denominational church have failed to have their bankruptcies annulled by the High Court.

Brendan and Sheila Hade were trustees for the Victory Christian Fellowship (VCF) and were adjudicated bankrupt in 2019 arising out of default on a €2.2 million loan advanced to them in 2008 by Bank of Scotland (BoS).

The couple, along with another man, as trustees of the VCF, had also been advanced €17.6 million by BoS to build a "new church and centre" on lands at Firhouse Road in south Dublin.

In December 2013, the High Court entered judgment against them in favour of BoS for €18.5 million in relation to that loan.

BoS sold their own loan to Feniton Property Finance in 2016 and applied to have them adjudicated bankrupt on the basis of €1.8 million still due.

Before this, however, BoS called in receivers over two properties they owned, including their home at Rockbrook Rathfarnham, Dublin, which had been used as security for the €2.2 million loan.

More at -

[[] <https://www.breakingnews.ie/ireland/former-church-trustees-fail-in-bid-to-have-e1-8m-bankruptcies-annulled-by-high-court-1296948.html>]

Also - Irish Examiner

[[] <https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/courtandcrime/arid-40861166.html>]

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

PCI PODCAST #57 Reshaping our thinking about women's ministry: exploring ways of growing deeper together across the generations



It is increasingly apparent that there is a growing generational gap within women's ministry that makes it more and more difficult to build an effective ministry to women of all ages. How can we think differently about women's ministry and what approaches can we adopt to help us grow deeper together?

To give an insight into how we, both individually and corporately can do this better, we draw learning from experiences of women's ministry in this conversation with

April 30, 2022

Pauline Kennedy, Amy Summerfield the guest speaker at the forthcoming PW Annual Conference, Deborah Sloan, a member of Orangefield Presbyterian in Belfast, and Linda Beattie from Joymount Presbyterian in Carrickfergus.

Listen via link below or search for Podcasts from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland wherever you get your podcasts from -

<https://audioboom.com/channels/5019668>

You can read more about the **PW annual conference** as it returns in person here:

<https://www.presbyterianireland.org/News/April-2022/PW-set-to-return-to-Assembly-Buildings.aspx>

Perspective

The Pope & the Moscow Patriarch

Pope Francis is undoubtedly grieved by the carnage in Ukraine. And when the Catholic Church's chief ecumenical officer, Cardinal Kurt Koch, tells journalists he shares the papal conviction that religious justifications of aggression are "blasphemy" — a wicked use of the things of God — we may be sure that this, too, is Francis's view of things.

Why, then, should Pope Francis meet with Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', as some personalities and

movements in the Church were once urging? Since the invasion of February 24, Kirill has repeatedly deployed religious justifications for Russia's barbaric assault on Ukraine. Is Kirill not, then, a blasphemer?

Some of those promoting a second Francis/Kirill encounter were likely thinking of the "optics." Two religious leaders meeting in wartime to pray for peace would, they imagined, vividly demonstrate the Christian capacity to rise above ethnic hatred and national passion in the name of Easter faith and universal moral norms. That, however, was fantasy based on fallacy.

Kirill Gundayev began his ecclesiastical career at the World Council of Churches in a job that would only be given to someone completely trusted by, and likely working with, the KGB, the Soviet secret intelligence service. During his years as Russian Orthodox patriarch, Kirill has promoted an expansive vision of the "Russian world" that falsifies the Christian history of the eastern Slavs and underwrites a revival of czarist and Stalinist imperialism. Kirill is also a mouthpiece in the Russian disinformation campaign proclaiming the tyrant Vladimir Putin as the savior of civilization against Western decadence — a lie that dupes many Catholics.

A meeting between the current Bishop of Rome and the current Patriarch of Moscow would not have been a meeting of two religious leaders. It would have been a meeting between a religious leader and an instrument of Russian state power.

But, some might have replied, that's the point. By continuing the personal dialogue with Kirill he opened in Havana in 2015, Francis would have empowered Kirill to have a tempering effect on Putin while positioning the Vatican as honest broker in arranging a negotiated peace in Ukraine.

That, too, is fantasy.

First, in the Putin-Kirill relationship, the patriarch has no real leverage. The tyrant-president does not look to the patriarch for strategic counsel, and he certainly doesn't look to him for moral correction. He looks to Kirill for support and for cover. Which he gets.

The sad fact is that its subservience to the state precludes the Russian Orthodox leadership speaking truth to Kremlin power or calling the post-communist czar to conversion. What Kirill and his associates (like his principal ecumenist, Metropolitan Hilarion Alfayev) do provide is a faux-religious justification for Putin's imperial ambitions, while assuring the Russians who commit horrendous acts of violence against civilians that they are true patriots and sons of the motherland.

Second, the idea of the Vatican as global honest broker is based on a misconception of how the Holy See can exert influence in the today's world. Today's Vatican is not the early 19th century's Papal States: a third-tier European power that nonetheless exercised leverage at events like the Congress of Vienna in 1814-1815. The Papal States no longer exist, and neither does the world of Metternich, Castlereigh and Cardinal Ercole Colsalvi, Pope Pius VII's brilliant and effective secretary of state.

As John Paul II demonstrated, though, the Holy See does have power in today's world: the power of moral witness, which begins by calling things by their right names. Vatican commentary in the Ukraine war's second month used a more honest vocabulary than was displayed in the war's first weeks. Still, as of Easter, the papal and Vatican voice remained more a voice of lamentation than a prophetic voice denouncing aggression and naming the aggressor. That flaw was compounded by imprudent words suggesting that no wars are ever morally legitimate, which is not true of Ukraine's defense of its territory, and of the cultural and political transformation of the country that began with the Maidan Revolution of Dignity in Kyiv in 2013-2014.

By the wanton slaughter of innocents in Bucha, in Mariupol', and throughout Ukraine, Vladimir Putin has stigmatized himself with the mark of Cain. Kirill has tried to mask that stigma. For the Bishop of Rome to have met with Kirill as if the Russian were a true religious leader would have bitterly disappointed Catholic and Orthodox Ukrainians, who would not unreasonably have regarded it as a betrayal; it would have depleted the Holy See's moral capital in world affairs; and it would have contributed nothing to peace.

Acknowledgment - The post The Pope & the Moscow Patriarch appeared first on The Tablet. April 29, 2022

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at houstonmckelvey@mac.com
