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## **Tribute to Dean Norman Lynas by the Bishop of Cashel, Ferns & Ossory**

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## Demise of basket collections leads to growing fears for finances in the church



**The head of the Catholic Church in Ireland says he believes the Government and public health authorities have “neglected” people’s spiritual well-being, Sarah Mac Donald writes in the Irish Independent**

Speaking on Good Friday, Archbishop Eamon Martin said churches should not have to wait until a return to Level 2 restrictions before they could open their doors to public worship.

Dr Martin made his comments on RTÉ radio’s News at One as churches in Ireland remained closed for Easter celebrations for the second year in a row.

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He said people were aware of the importance of mental, emotional and physical well-being. “The virus also has the potential to shake us spiritually,” he said.

The church leader said that as soon as Level 5 restrictions were lifted “churches should be able to gather safely because we’re talking about very large buildings which are well ventilated.”

The archbishop, whose Armagh diocese straddles the Border and has some parishes in Northern Ireland – where churches reopened to public worship on March 26 – said: “We would have really hoped to have some opportunity to gather in cautious, small numbers for Holy Week and Easter, as we’re doing in Northern Ireland.”

Speaking about the impact of the pandemic on finances, Dr Martin acknowledged that “a lot of parishes are suffering” and, on average, there had been a decline in income of between 30-60pc.

While churches used to rely on basket collections as a primary source of income, according to one Dublin priest, parishes have been “forced overnight” into embracing the cashless society due to the pandemic.

Fr Aquinas Duffy, acting moderator of St Brigid’s Church in Cabinteely, told the Irish Independent: “I don’t see it ever going back to passing baskets around in the church.”

With churches closed for the majority of the last six months, a ‘pay and go’ card facility is being used by some who come into the church for private prayer. According to Fr Duffy,

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electronic donations have not replaced the money that used to come through baskets on a Sunday.

“There is a crisis yet to be faced for the church, in terms of finances,” he said.

Irish Independent April 03 2021

## **Race report findings deeply disturbing, says black C of E bishop**

**The findings of a government report on race are “deeply disturbing”, the Church of England’s first black female bishop has said as she warned that ministers should not be allowed to “wash their hands” of the problem.**

The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities published its long-awaited report last week which concluded that Britain is no longer a place “where the system is deliberately rigged against ethnic minorities”.

It found that Britain should be seen as “a model for other white-majority countries” because of the success of its ethnic minority population in education and, to a lesser extent, the economy.

The report prompted a backlash from Labour MPs, charities and academics who accused the Government of “keeping us debating about the existence of racism rather than doing anything about it”. **The Bishop of Dover, the Rt Rev Rose Hudson-Wilkin** – who became the Church of England’s first black female bishop in 2019 – said it was too early to



conclude that Britain's achievements on ethnic diversity were a model for other countries. She said: "I know we are in Holy Week, but the Government cannot 'do a Pilate' and use this report to wash its hands of this problem." Her comments mark the most senior figure within the Church to intervene in the aftermath of the report's publication.

She told the Church Times: "When I walk into major establishments and no longer see black people in a majority as cleaners and servers; when I see in all walks of life a diversity in all areas of leadership ... then I will be the first one to shout that we are a model for other 'white-majority countries'."

The lived experience of people "tells a different story to that being shared by this report", she said. "There is a great danger that those of us who have achieved great heights look down on others and blame them for the calamities being visited upon them... Do we have a problem

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concerning families? Yes, I believe we do, but this will not be fixed by simply blaming the families.”

In response to the Bishop’s comments, a spokesman for the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities said that the report “found evidence that outright racism does exist in the UK” and has made strong recommendations that the equalities watchdog be given the resource it needs to tackle the issue in this country. “However, the report also highlights many instances of success among our ethnic minority groups, in education and health, something we should recognise and learn from.”

## **Presiding Bishop Michael Curry’s 2021 Easter message**

**“Our work goes on. Our labor for love continues,” Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop and Primate Michael B. Curry said in his Easter 2021 Message, “We will not cease, and we will not give up until this world reflects less our nightmare and more God’s dream where there’s plenty good room for all God’s children. Hallelujah anyhow.”**

The following is the text of the Presiding Bishop’s Easter 2021 Message:

### **Easter 2021 Message**

When I get to heaven — and I know it may sound presumptuous for me to say it, but I live by grace and believe in amazing grace — when I get to heaven, I certainly



want to see the Lord. But I want to see dear members of family and friends, those who have gone on before, the many people I want to sit down and have some conversation with. Of all the biblical people, aside from the Lord himself, when I get to heaven, I want to meet Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene, who was one of the people, one of the women, who followed the way and teachings of Jesus and who probably provided much of the funding for his movement. Mary Magdalene, who with some of the other women and only one of the male disciples, stood with his mother, Mary, at the cross as he died. Mary Magdalene, who, even after he died, on that Easter morning, got up with some of the other women early in the morning, before the day had begun, in the dark, got up to perform the rituals of love to anoint the body of Jesus in his grave.

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I want to ask her, “Mary, tell me what got you up that day. Tell me what got you to go to the tomb early in the morning when it was dark, and you could barely see. Why did you get up and go to anoint his body? Mark’s Gospel says that you and the other women said to each other, you knew that Jesus had been buried in that tomb that had been provided by Joseph of Arimathea, with Nicodemus’ help, but a large stone had been rolled in front of the doorway, into the tomb. And one of the women said to the other, ‘Who will roll away the stone for us?’ You knew the stone was there. You knew you couldn’t move it. And yet you got up and you went anyway. Mary, tell me your secret.”

I suspect she probably will say, “Well, we didn’t know how we were going to roll away the stone, but we loved him, and we got up and went anyway. It was hard because it was dark, but we loved him, and we got up and we went anyway. Those roads could be dangerous at night, but we love Jesus, and we got up and we went anyway. Who will roll away the stone for us? We did not know, but we loved him, and we got up and we went anyway. And let me tell you what love can do for you. When we got to the tomb, the stone had already been rolled away. And we shouted our hallelujahs, and shouted our hallelujahs. He is risen.”

Last year in March, on March 13th to be precise, another Mary Magdalene, her name, Barbara, Barbara Clementine Harris, bishop of the church, a voice of love, and justice, and compassion, a voice of deep and profound faith, first woman to be consecrated a bishop in Anglican Christianity, died and entered eternal life. This was early in the pandemic. Fortunately for us, Dean Kelly Brown Douglas had worked with Bishop Barbara to make sure that her memoir was



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completed, and they completed it. She gave it the title from the words of a gospel song that says, and I quote:

Hallelujah anyhow  
Never let your troubles get you down  
Whenever troubles come your way  
Hold your hands up high and say  
Hallelujah anyhow!

Those words characterize the life of Bishop Barbara: hallelujah anyhow. In spite of hardship and difficulty, hallelujah anyhow. In spite of injustice and bigotry, hallelujah anyhow. In spite of war and violence, hallelujah anyhow.

And that, my friends, is the spirit of Mary Magdalene. That, my friends, is the tenacity of those who would follow in the footsteps of Jesus and his way of love. In spite of hardship and toil, hallelujah anyhow. In spite of the fact that this Easter is the anniversary of the assassination and the martyrdom of Martin Luther King, Jr., hallelujah anyhow. In spite of the fact that these are hard times, hallelujah anyhow.

Our work goes on. Our labor for love continues. We will not cease, and we will not give up until this world reflects less our nightmare and more God's dream where there's plenty good room for all God's children. Hallelujah anyhow.

When I get to heaven, I can't wait to hear Mary Magdalene and Bishop Barbara tell me he's risen. Hallelujah anyhow. Amen.



## Tribute to Dean Norman Lynas

**The Bishop of Cashel, Ferns & Ossory, the Right Rev'd Michael Burrows writes of Dean Norman...**

News of the death In the United States of Norman Lynas will undoubtedly and rightly cause a wave of sadness to pass over Kilkenny....yet that sadness will be accompanied by a myriad of grateful memories. Our sadness is of course accentuated by our awareness of the extraordinarily difficult times Norman and his family have experienced since his catastrophic accident last summer. Reading online posts describing their courage, positivity, faith and resilience in the intervening months has been an inspiration.

Inevitably we look back now at Norman through the lens of recent suffering, and our memory is textured by the mood that Good Friday inevitably brings. Yet it is right that we remember Norman as he really was and as we knew him - full of energy and ideas and faithfulness and fun. Norman was a hard worker, a devoted priest and a kindly pastor .... and he was the life and soul of a good party too. He loved to view the whole of life as a foretaste of the heavenly banquet.

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I've known Norman since our paths first crossed in TCD in the late 1970's. I recall his scholarly yet enthusiastic contributions at Synods, his rich sense of the very tapestry of Anglicanism. His appointment to Kilkenny as a really very young dean and rector in 1991 was in so many ways inspired. He brought the experience and wisdom of his Ulster background to the South East, and came rapidly to relish the life of the Southern church. He was one of those people who seemed to straddle successfully the various facets that make up the layered life of the Church of Ireland. He was a true pastor, who shed godly cheerfulness but was never trite. People in situations of sadness and loss welcomed his presence in the midst of their need. His impact on the wider civic life of Kilkenny was remarkable. Amid his many liturgical duties he found time... as a good dean must do ...to know, love and understand the fabric of the cathedral. He rejoiced particularly in the rebuilding of the organ. Curates with whom he worked and for whom he was an inspiration loved him.

Norman welcomed me to Kilkenny in 2006 with memorable warmth ; I remember him coming to the house with presents that first Christmas when I felt new and rather strange. His smile on the doorstep and his generosity made Claire say (and I suspect her reaction was by no means untypical) - 'That visit made Christmas for us!'

Soon after I arrived Norman realised that having served for close on two decades in a ministerial task of vast proportions it might be prudent to consider something very different. Hence his departure to Bermuda, a place he had come to love ...it was an adventurous and noble decision, which brought much sadness to Kilkenny at the time. Yet for

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him it was the commencement of a whole new fruitful chapter of which others can better speak. Tragedy struck soon after the move with Nichola's sudden death (and many had regarded them as almost inseparable), yet Norman displayed courage and resilience, stuck it out in Bermuda, and eventually found great renewed happiness in life and love. It is now fitting that all that is mortal of him should return to Hillsborough to be buried alongside Nichola.

Our hearts go out especially to Tristan (happily still in our midst in Kilkenny) and to Adam as they mourn their father; we are conscious of how unspeakably difficult recent months have been for them. They, and we, can be sustained by the memory of a larger-than-life figure, characterised by generosity, whose priestly ministry cheered as well as sanctified so many of those with whom he had to do. The ancient stones of St Canice's will somehow know that they bear the footmarks of a very fine dean.

As a hymn sums it up regarding Norman and others like him -

'These stones that have echoed their praises are holy, and dear is the ground where their feet have once trod; Yet here they confessed they were strangers and pilgrims, and still they were seeking the city of God'.

The following message of sympathy was also issued - "It was with great sadness that we learned, of the death of Dean Norman Lynas (Dean of Ossory 1991-2010). The Dean & Chapter of St Canice's Cathedral, together with the parishioners of the Kilkenny Union of Parishes offer our deepest sympathies to Mary-Claire, Tristan and Adam. "

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

### **Hope in Times of Fear: The Resurrection and the Meaning of Easter by Timothy Kelleher**

The resurrection of Jesus is at the heart of the Christian faith, bringing God's power - which will some day heal and renew the world - into our lives now. That power is here only partially, but substantially; and this gives Christians a realistic, but irrepressible, hope. It is a hope for change in our lives and in our society; a hope that changes Christians in every way, shaping every aspect of our lives.

But it is only together with the cross that we see the particular way resurrection hope shapes us. We are delivered by a Saviour who triumphed through weakness and loss; who came to riches through becoming poor; and to exalted life through the experience of death. And having come to new life by admitting our own weakness and inability to save ourselves, we live the rest of our lives according to this pattern: the way up is to go down; the way to true power and influence is to serve; the way to be truly rich is to give all we have; the way to real happiness is to work for the happiness of others.

Hope in Times of Fear unlocks the meaning of both the cross and Jesus' resurrection. Here the central message of the Christian faith is revealed - with unshakable belief, piercing insight and a profound message of hope for the world.

[[] <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Hope-Times-Fear-Resurrection-Meaning/dp/> ]

## **The Madness of Grief: A Memoir of Love and Loss by Reverend Richard Coles**

Emotionally charged yet clear-sighted and reflective, the Reverend Richard Coles's account of grief in the wake of his partner's sudden death provides much comfort and profound insight into the nature of life, death, religion and community.

Whether it is pastoral care for the bereaved, discussions about the afterlife, or being called out to perform the last rites, death is part of the Reverend Richard Coles's life and work. But when his partner the Reverend David Coles died, shortly before Christmas in 2019, much about death took Coles by surprise. For one thing, David's death at the early age of forty-three was unexpected.

The man that so often assists others to examine life's moral questions now found himself in need of help. He began to look to others for guidance to steer him through his grief. The flock was leading the shepherd. Much about grief surprised him: the volume of 'sadmin' you have to do when someone dies, how much harder it is travelling for work alone, even the pain of typing a text message to your partner - then realising you are alone.

The Reverend Richard Coles's deeply personal account of life after grief will resonate, unforgettably, with anyone who has lost a loved one.

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Publisher: Orion Publishing Co. ISBN: 9781474619622.

Number of pages: 192

16.99. Waterstones 14.99

[[] <https://www.waterstones.com/book/the-madness-of-grief/reverend-richard-coles/9781474619622> ]

## **Media review**

### **Catholic primate of Ireland calls for return of worship after restrictions**

The Irish Times

Speaking on Good Friday, Archbishop Martin said church leaders hoped people of faith would have been allowed to gather in small numbers for Holy ...

[[] <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/coronavirus/archbishop-hopes-vaccine-rollout-spells-end-of-very-long-lent-1.4527365> ]

### **75% of fines for Covid-19 breaches have been issued to men**

The Journal.ie

Nearly half of offences that have led to a fine happened on a weekend.

[[] <https://www.thejournal.ie/covid-19-restrictions-breaches-fines-5399100-Apr2021/> ]

### **Brexit: Counting the cost of the Irish sea border**

BBC News

[[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-56597642> ]

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## **'After the year we've had, we need our faith more than ever'**

Belfast Telegraph

Roma Downey was just 10 years old when she first found solace in her faith — a devotion which has weaved its way through her life and shaped much of her Hollywood career. The Derry born actress, author and producer, renowned for her award-winning role in CBS show *Touched by an Angel* and epic biblical productions with husband Mark Burnett, was left grief-stricken when her beloved mum Maureen died suddenly from a heart attack in 1970.

The loss had a profound impact on the young Roma; her childhood innocence and security replaced overnight by anguish and fear. But her father Paddy's strong faith reassured her and she clung onto the hope that she would see her mum again. The 'promise of heaven' kept her going through those dark days. he

'After the year we've had, we need our faith more than ever'

## **Witness - How do we understand the cross of Jesus Christ? The Archbishop of York writes**

*Archbishop Stephen Cottrell contributed the most recent Credo Column in The Times. His article follows in full...*

How do we understand the cross of Jesus Christ?

Perhaps the only way is to stand under it? To become part of the story, seeing there, not so much a carefully worked out plan, but the tenacity of love. When we do our worst, God does God's best.



The cross is humanity at its worst: it demonstrates, in painful detail, our terrible cruelty and the way we often use our ingenious cleverness to hurt others.

The death of Jesus is horribly familiar. Across the world are so many similarly pointless and cruel deaths. We can even become immune to their horrors. And the cross was a supremely clever way of killing people, carefully designed to make the death struggle last days. Jesus' rather quick death was unusual.

In the face of such wickedness, what does God do? Well, God goes on loving. Hence, when people ask me: where is God in all the suffering of the world? I usually reply, he is where we put him. He is on the cross.

This is the first message of the Christian faith: in Jesus Christ, God plumbs the depths of our humanity, receiving the worst that we can do, but also revealing the best. Jesus forgives his executioners. He reaches out to those who die alongside him.

At our best, the Church which bears the cross, does the same, not peddling theories about love or trying to explain God (as if God were a thing that could be explained) but tenaciously loving, and inviting people to stand under the cross. And begin to understand.

Knowing my love of the Scottish artist, Craigie Aitchison, and especially his paintings of the crucifixion, when I moved back to Yorkshire last year, friends and colleagues in

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Chelmsford bought me one of his prints. It hangs above the fireplace in my study at Bishophorpe Palace.

Like all his paintings of the crucifixion, a solitary Christ inhabits an empty, though vividly colourful, landscape.

Throughout this difficult locked-down year, I have lived with this image of the isolated Jesus. I have often turned to it, finding there a connection to the isolations all of us have been experiencing this year. Without touch and embrace, without companionship, we are without the very things that we give and receive beyond words as expressions of our love. Yet, in our isolation, we serve each other. Our separation has become an expression of our love.

God shows his love for us by joining us and then allowing himself to be separated from us. While we were still sinners, says St Paul, Christ died for us. That is, while we were still very far from being the people we want to be, let alone the people God wants us to be, God comes to us in Jesus. We received him. And we rejected him.

And we misunderstand the story if we conclude that it was only wicked people that did this. The story is clear: Jesus was killed by very respectable people, by ordinary people. Those who accepted him, then rejected him. And we are part of this.

The solitary Jesus, the left alone and abandoned Jesus, speaks to our own feelings of sadness and isolation, yet at the same time strengthens us, showing that God is present with us even in our lonely abandonment of God and of each other.

And for a purpose: the purposes of love, that are only worked out by loving and will never do anything to compromise love and therefore takes the terrible risk of rejection and isolation.

This is the Good Friday, the Easter faith: God is united with us in our loss and separation, even in our dying; and we are united with God in the triumph of love that is the resurrection. For if love goes on loving, then, eventually, the sting of spite and the sneer of death is so rebuked and so emasculated, that it can do nothing else, but love in return.

Might this tenacious loving even reach into the depths of my own isolation and dismantle the walls of separation that I have so carefully built around myself?

In the gospel story, there are a few people at the cross. Mainly women, who show a strength and a faithfulness that most of the men cannot muster.

In Craigie Aitchison's crucifixions there may be no other people, but there are usually animals. Often there is a dog standing at the foot of the cross and looking up at Jesus.

I don't quite know what this means, except perhaps that we, too, are called to that sort of obedient faithfulness: to stand and watch; even to lay down our burdens. And then, acknowledging our failings, our separations and our cruelties, to understand, and to love in return.

## Pointers for prayer



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.

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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.

Love divine,  
in raising Christ to new life  
you opened the path of salvation to all peoples.  
Send us out, with the joy of Mary Magdalene,  
to proclaim that we have seen the Lord,  
so that all the world may celebrate with you  
the banquet of your peace. Amen.

## Speaking to the Soul

**As his body was taken away, the women from Galilee followed and saw the tomb where his body was placed. Then they went home and prepared spices and ointments to anoint his body. But by the time they were finished the Sabbath had begun, so they rested as required by the law.**

Luke 23:55-56 NLT

There is something beautifully impressive about these verses. The women must have been totally devastated by the death of their Lord. I would imagine that they were experiencing a mixture of devastation, anger and also fear that the Romans might be coming after them next. But,

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amidst all of this, they were concerned to do the right thing and to anoint the body of Jesus.

On the Friday itself there was very little time to do anything. Jesus had died at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and the Jewish Sabbath began at about 6 o'clock. Joseph of Arimathea asked for the body of Jesus and he probably did so to avoid the corpse being left to the dogs and vultures which was normal practice with the bodies of criminals. Joseph was an interesting character in that he was a member of the Jewish Council but clearly thought well of Jesus. He was, we are told, waiting for the Kingdom of God. He had a lot of work to do to remove the body from the cross and place it in his family tomb before dusk

The women had no time to anoint Jesus' body, but they found out where the body had been laid so that they could return early on Sunday morning, once the Sabbath was over. They scurried off home to prepare the spices and ointments. I find it deeply moving that amidst their deep grief we see their devotion to Jesus and their determination to do the right things for him. When a crisis hits us, it is very easy for us to turn in on ourselves and do nothing. But they didn't. They turned to those practical things that they could do to show their love for the Lord. Tragic as the circumstances were, preparing for Jesus' burial was the very best that they could do.

## QUESTION

What do you learn from the devotion of the women?

## PRAYER

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Loving God, we thank you for the simple, practical devotion of the women. Help us to keep serving you however tough the circumstances. Amen

