



Image of the day - Gifts of love in Ballybeen and Dublin



Violence on streets ‘should stop immediately’ say C of I bishops

In a statement issued yesterday, Easter Monday, April 5, the Church of Ireland bishops in Northern Ireland condemned recent disturbances in the province as ‘wrong’ and called for an end to the rioting and destruction.

In their statement, the Northern Ireland bishops said:

“The violence which has been happening in parts of Northern Ireland over the past week is wrong and should stop immediately. People may feel aggrieved at things which have happened in the political sphere recently, but that is where any grievances should be addressed – in the political arena – and any response to these grievances should remain constitutional and legal.

“It is never acceptable for anyone to attack police officers with petrol bombs, stones and fireworks, and to risk causing them serious injury or worse. The PSNI do an incredibly difficult job and deserve our support. People may have criticisms of policing but there is a forum for this, and any criticisms should always be expressed respectfully.

“There may be lifelong consequences, too, for some of the younger people involved in the past week’s disturbances, who could end up with prison sentences, criminal records or life-changing injuries. We urge them not to become involved

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in rioting and not to do anything which they might regret for the rest of their lives.

“Rioting and destruction are never the answer. They destroy neighbourhoods and divide our community.”

The statement concluded: “It is ironic that the recent trouble should have occurred during Holy Week and Easter, such a special time in the Christian calendar. Easter is normally an occasion when we are reminded of the possibility of hope through Christ’s resurrection and when we, as God’s people, are challenged to work towards a better and more hopeful future.

“It is incumbent on all of us to choose our words and actions carefully – at all times – and to do and say nothing which would jeopardise peace or upset the fragile equilibrium on which our political system depends.”

+ John Armagh, + Andrew Derry and Raphoe, + David Down and Dromore, + George Connor

Among the areas affected are Newtownabbey and Carrickfergus, both of which lie within the Diocese of Connor.

Referring to this, the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison added: “There are many people who have concerns with the aspects of the political process in Northern Ireland at the moment. However despite the frustrations that may be felt, a return to violence on the streets of our towns and cities is not the answer.”



‘Gifts of Love’ shared in Ballybeen and Dublin

During Holy Week, St Mary’s Ballybeen (above) reached out to some of their most vulnerable members with the delivery of over 100 ‘Afternoon Tea Boxes’.

The included card said, ‘As we celebrate the hope of Easter, giving thanks for the forgiveness and new life Christ offers through his death and resurrection, please know that we are praying for you and that we are here for you. If you need help or prayer in this time, please feel free to be in touch.’

The project has been a source of joy to the givers and the recipients.

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Children and young people in Ballybeen were not left out either with the delivery of 180 'Make Your Own Pizza Boxes' and the message, 'A Gift of Love from St. Mary's Church'.

This initiative was funded by a grant from Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and the Department for Communities.

Those children directly connected to St Mary's Kids' Church ministry also received a hand-written Easter card, a craft and an Easter activity book from the parish and the Girls' Brigade and Boys' Brigade gave out Easter eggs.

The Cathedral Crafters at Christ Church Dublin, Mothers' Union members in Dublin & Glendalough and the Sandyford ICA created a delightful collection of mini-Easter baskets and chicks (all filled with delicious creme eggs! See page 1)-- so many were received by the Cathedral that the organisers were able to drop off these small Easter treats to the Cathedral's neighbours in two nearby direct provision centres, with enough leftover to send a few down to the hardworking staff in the Mendicity Institution.

Almost 90 new church communities established in Diocese of London alone

London has seen a wave of new Church of England congregations in the last few years, with everything from a German-language Eucharist service to 'disco worship'.

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The Diocese of London, which covers much of the capital north of the River Thames, is celebrating the establishment of 87 new worshipping communities



since February 2018 – with a vast range of styles and approaches, some more formal than others.

They include a ‘Shh free’ Mass - set up at St Barnabas, Ealing, with services specifically designed to be welcoming to younger people and families.

“We wanted Eucharist, complete with a Gospel Choir, that both reflected our Anglo-Catholic background and welcomed parents with young children,” explained the Revd Fiona Jack.

“After almost four years these shorter and interactive sermons have been embraced by new families and the existing congregation.

“It’s been such a success that some of the young people have gone on to become members of our Serving Team.”

The ‘Silent disco worship’ at All Hallows’ Bow, is also an example of a new congregation being founded within an existing church.



French connect

There are 14 new communities holding services in languages other than English, such as Japanese and Yoruba, as the Church reflects the international nature of London.

The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, said: "In these new worshipping communities we have 87 reasons to celebrate. They are a signal of the strength of the Church in London, and together they are making a special, eclectic, contribution to life in the capital.

"There are new, thriving foreign-language services, a Deaf Church and a new silent disco service. In St Francis at the Engine Room, we have the first new, purpose-built church in

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the capital in 40 years, and in Genesis we have our first purpose-built floating church.

“London is a wonderfully diverse, creative city; it is through emulating that diversity and creativity that the Church will continue to grow and thrive.

"After a uniquely challenging year, it is inspiring to reflect on all that our church communities, new and old, have achieved. Whether it is St Dionis – one of our new worshipping communities – collating PPE kit bags for a local NHS trust at the height of the pandemic, or Westminster Abbey – one of London’s oldest church buildings – supporting the vaccination effort, the Church has helped to spread hope during the pandemic.

“It is wonderful news that 87 new worshipping communities have opened in London, helping to spread hope and the Good News of Jesus further still.”

Moderator to follow in the footsteps of Celtic saints this Holy Week

This Holy Week Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, will embark on a 90-mile pilgrimage around his local authority area of Angus.

Starting on Monday 29 March, the walk will include some sites which have been used in Christian worship for more than 1,000 years.

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Dr Fair plans to provide updates on the Moderator's Facebook page as he goes, which will allow for people to join in with the journey.

He said: "Pilgrimage is something that Christians have done forever - for centuries.

"In uncertain times it's good to remember that we are part of a much longer, bigger story and it takes us along paths where Christians walked long before we showed up.

"Jesus says 'come follow me' and that by definition means to go somewhere. Walking symbolises that we are called to be pilgrims, to be disciples and by definition that means we are going somewhere - Jesus is always leading us, ahead of us and we follow.

The route will start and finish at Arbroath Abbey, which was first used as a place of worship in the 12th century, and each day Dr Fair will cover around 15 miles on foot.

"You begin to think 'I wonder what it has seen in 900 years'," he said.

"We think the last year has been all consuming, but what has happened in all those years? There's been wars, the Black Death and all kinds of things.

"When we go to ancient places we're reminded that we are part of a much bigger story, and that what we are enduring at the moment is a kind of passing phase but the long story is still there.



Rev Dr Martin Fair will walk around 15 miles a day.

"On the first day I'll be going to Aberlemno, which has got standing stones of Celtic origins dating back to between 500AD and 800AD. It's this reminder that the story is long before we were here and that will continue after we are here."

For those who may feel unable to physically take part in a pilgrimage, Dr Fair is keen that they feel able to join via him.

"Some people might be at home thinking 'I can't do that kind of thing', but it's about an inward journey too which is why I'm doing it at Easter - so you can do a pilgrimage from your own front room.

"The early morning devotions at 8am in Holy Week, which will be on the Church of Scotland's online channels, will help people to do this.

"I'll be passing through a village called Eassie, there's a stone there which is considered to be one of the best preserved Pictish era standing stones anywhere with Christian symbols on it and it dates to the 600s.

"I'll also pass St Orland's stone, St Fergus' well - these are people who were bringing the Christian gospel to Scotland 1.400 years' ago."

Part of the appeal for Dr Fair will be the chance to spend time outdoors, when so much of the last year has been passed indoors and in front of computer screens.

"In very basic terms it's a very personal trip and a chance to spend a week experiencing and appreciating creation which will be a highlight.

"Many people have said that if you look at the Angus Glens they look like a handprint with five fingers, so that sense of enjoying the goodness of God's creation will be way up there in terms of what I'm looking forward to."

Dr Fair's itinerary

Monday - Arbroath Abbey to Brechin Cathedral.

Tuesday - Aberlemno to Forfar via Resteneth Priory.

Wednesday - Bagavies Loch to Glamis to Eassie.

Thursday - The Minister's Walk from Glen Prosen to Glen Clova to Loch Brandy.

Friday - Loch Brandy to Tarfside, Glen Esk.

Saturday - Dundee to Arbroath Abbey.

Books, Broadcasts, resources and webinars

Linen Hall Remembers the Belfast Blitz in April – event schedule out now

Eighty years ago, Belfast was hit with a massive and sustained air attack by the Luftwaffe. On 7 April hear the stories from the women of Belfast who saw first-hand the effects of the Blitz.

April event schedule:

Memories of the Belfast Blitz

With Scott Edgar

Wednesday 7 April at 7.00pm

Online ZOOM event

Belfast was heavily bombed during WWII. The city contributed significantly towards the Allied war effort producing ships, aircraft and munitions, so was an obvious target for the Luftwaffe. The attacks in April and May 1941 killed more than 1,000 people. This is the story of the women who saw first-hand the effects of the Blitz on the working class. Book at www.linenhall.com

How the Unification of Italy led to the Partition of Ireland

With Dr James Dingley

Wednesday 14 April at 7.00pm

Online ZOOM event

Two major factors, economics and religion, created the greatest division in Ireland that proved insuperable by 1921. In this online talk, Dr James Dingley will explore how both of

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these factors were directly related to the unification of Italy (1860-71) known as the Risorgimento. Dr James Dingley is a former international lecturer and NATO instructor on terrorism and editor of: *Combating Terrorism in Northern Ireland* (2008, Routledge). Book online at www.linenhall.com.

Club Leabhar – Irish Language Reading Group

Saturday 24 April at 12.00pm

Online ZOOM event

Speak Irish? Or want to brush up on your skills? Take part in our free Irish book club.

April's title is: *Ceo Bruithne* by Colin Ryan (available through An Ceathrú Póilí in An Chultúrlann amongst other places).

To register contact: info@linenhall.com

LGBT History Club

Cross-border LGBT activism in Ireland 1977 – 1999

By Abigail Fletcher

Tuesday 27 April at 8.00pm

Online ZOOM event

A public talk by Abigail Fletcher (PhD researcher, University of Edinburgh). Hosted by the LGBT History Club & the LGBT Heritage Project in collaboration with the Linen Hall Library Belfast. If you would like to attend, please email: Dr Richard O'Leary history@hereni.org

Linen Hall Reading Group

Thursday 29 April at 1.00pm

Online ZOOM event

The Linen Hall's popular reading group meets via the ZOOM conferencing platform (<https://zoom.us/>). This month we're delighted to welcome the author of the chosen title

churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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Geraldine Quigley who will join the group for a Q&A session following the general discussion session. To attend the virtual group, please email info@linenhall.com. April's title is Music Love Drugs War by Geraldine Quigley (2019, Fig Tree)

The Linen Hall Library is currently closed to the public due to COVID-19 restrictions. Please keep an eye on our website and social networks for updated information.

The Linen Hall Library's social network channels can be found at: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

Media review

Church of Ireland bishops call for immediate halt to violence

Belfast Telegraph

Church of Ireland bishops call for immediate halt to violence. Police have been attacked with petrol bombs and other objects as loyalist unrest turned ...

[[] <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/church-of-ireland-bishops-call-for-immediate-halt-to-violence-40276292.html>]

Limerick church 'desecrated by vandals' on Easter Sunday

Limerick Leader

Sacrilegious vandals attacked a County Limerick church in the early hours of ... He said his thoughts were with the Church of Ireland community in ...

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[[] <https://www.limerickleader.ie/news/home/622481/limerick-church-desecrated-by-vandals-on-easter-sunday.html>]

People need hope this Easter - Archbishop Eamon Martin

LMFM

The Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh has also based his Easter message on the theme of hope this year.

Archbishop John McDowell says the ...

[[] <https://www.lmfm.ie/news/lmfm-news/people-need-hope-this-easter-archbishop-eamon-martin/>]

Return of congregations to NI churches is huge emotional and spiritual leap

Belfast Newsletter

... Presbyterian and Church of Ireland congregations have resumed in-person services across Northern Ireland. Picture By: Arthur Allison/Pacemaker.

[[] <https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/return-of-congregations-to-ni-churches-is-huge-emotional-and-spiritual-leap-3189261>]

Return of worshippers to Northern Ireland churches is an uplifting moment, say clerics

Belfast Telegraph

Church services resumed across Northern Ireland yesterday as the main denominations started a gradual return to in-person worship on Easter ...

[[] <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/return-of-worshippers-to-northern-ireland-churches-is-an-uplifting-moment-say-clerics-40274279.html>]

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The first Black bishop in Britain who fought racism, had streets named after him and was honoured by the Queen

MyLondon

Wilfred Denniston Wood became Bishop of Croydon in 1985 in a period where racial tensions in Britain were at fever pitch .The South London borough received the first Black Church of England ...

[[] <https://www.mylondon.news/news/south-london-news/first-black-bishop-britain-who-20303311>]

Pope urges vaccines for poor in Easter message

RTE.ie

The Catholic Church began a "cautious" return on 26 March, while the Church of Ireland, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches resumed in-person ...

[[] <https://www.rte.ie/news/2021/0404/1207837-easter-celebrations-restrictions/>]

Opinion - Nobody knows how we would vote if it really meant a united Ireland - Eoghan Harris

Things are getting worse in Northern Ireland, and most of my readers have been taught to blame the wrong side and let Sinn Féin off the hook.

Accordingly, I am asking my readers to summon their better angels and look at the situation through the eyes of middle-class unionists and working- class loyalists, rather than the shifty eyes of Sinn Féin and its bourgeois supporters north and south.

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By bourgeois supporters I mean the new breed of university nationalists, north and south, who can be found on Twitter shamelessly and coarsely calling unionists "planters" who should "pack up and go". In night and fog?

Let me give you the most recent example of why lack of balanced reporting leads so many of us to wrongly demonise decent northern Protestants, including Arlene Foster.

Last Thursday, the PSNI confirmed that the IRA was still involved with Sinn Féin. Imagine you are a unionist listening to that, a day after hearing Sinn Féin would get away with its blatant breaches at the Storey funeral.

Actually you didn't get any chance to empathise with unionists — because, to my knowledge, the PSNI confirmation was not reported on Friday, never mind dug into, by RTÉ.

For months now, The Irish Times has been publicising the Ireland's Future lobby, and its supporters, who are pushing for a border poll and "conversations" about Irish unity. They keep nagging although unionists repeatedly tell them they will not talk about a united Ireland, especially because, as Simon Coveney rightly reminded the Ireland's Future lobby, it was about "a preordained outcome".

Thanks to an Irish media which plays to posh Hibernians, there are three things we don't know about northern Protestants.

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First, we don't know that most northern Protestants, including the DUP, are decent people. How could you know when RTÉ mostly shows you Sammy Wilson's angry red face?

Second, we don't realise how shocked northern Protestants were when their Catholic neighbours — even after the most foul sectarian atrocities by the IRA — still voted for Sinn Féin rather than the SDLP.

Finally, most of you may have forgotten that northern nationalists have had civil rights since 1974.

So what exactly are the civil rights beefs of northern nationalists — apart from the agitation for the largely forgotten Irish Language Act?

The answer, we are told, is that northern nationalists want a united Ireland and are pushing for a border poll to advance that agenda.

But when I ask northern nationalists working in the Republic if they think there will be a united Ireland, they say no. Why? "Things are still too good for us up there."

As no poll can tell us how nationalists would vote if saying "yes" really meant a united Ireland within months, let me make two predictions.

First, I am fairly certain most nationalists of Northern Ireland will not vote themselves out of the United Kingdom, because they prefer the status quo to an uncertain future.

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Second, I am absolutely certain southern nationalists will not vote for a united Ireland because it costs too much, would cause too many security headaches — and, above all, they prefer the Republic to remain as it is.

Accordingly, I believe the continual nagging in The Irish Times by the Ireland's Future lobby will get nowhere and is nothing more than what Seamus Heaney might call "craking".

Craking, a wonderful word from a book* giving examples of Heaney's "hearth" language, is defined as "talking incessantly; talking persistently; complaining or whining".

Last Thursday week, The Irish Times published the first of two craking polemics by supporters of border polls and talks about Irish unity. The title of Paul Larkin's piece, 'Defining the "sub-polity" that is Northern Ireland', told us plenty about his politics, as did his Twitter dig at Tommie Gorman, dismissing his "interview" with Arlene Foster as a "cosy chat".

Larkin, in nationalist nitpicking mode, claimed Northern Ireland is not a "real" province. This is pure ignorance, as the number and boundaries of Ireland's provinces fluctuated for hundreds of years. Ironically — an irony likely to be lost on Larkin — it was only after English administration in the 17th century that they assumed their current clear form. More worryingly, Larkin's loaded language about unionists would cause raised eyebrows if directed at Irish Muslims. He describes the political culture of unionism as the product of "febrile dank corruption" with a "dissolute heart" and "fake moral codes".

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On one hand, he sees an "aristocracy of ruin" in the "inner circles" of "powerful unionists".

On the other hand, there are those moronic dupes who are ever ready to do their bidding: "loyalist death squads" and the "fetid and bone- chilling rooms" in which they dwell.

Language like this should have been left behind in the 1950s and has no place in decent democratic discourse.

Last Tuesday, Professor Colin Harvey of Ireland's Future followed up, with a piece titled 'We cannot put off doing our homework on a border poll any longer'.

He also tried to take out an insurance policy in case anyone like me quoted John Hume or Seamus Mallon to challenge his case.

"The now tokenistic use of selective quotations from John Hume or Seamus Mallon, often by those with little interest in, or direct knowledge of, the 'Northern experience' is everywhere present."

Let me put a question to Professor Harvey. Why would anyone need "direct knowledge" to quote John Hume or Seamus Mallon when these two men are supplying that knowledge themselves? That said, let me supply him with two "tokenistic" quotes.

A recent blog by Andy Pollak quoted an essay John Hume wrote in 1989 for the London Review of Books, just after the

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first round of the Hume- Adams talks, in which he spelt out his political philosophy.

Having called out unionist supremacy in the past, Hume went on to condemn the "undiluted fascism" of the IRA and Sinn Féin, for believing they were the "pure Irish master race".

He followed up: "They have also the other hallmark of fascism — the need for a scapegoat; as they see it, the Brits are to blame for everything — even their own atrocities!"

Professor Harvey should pay particular attention to Hume's view of civil rights in 1989. "If I were to lead a civil rights campaign in Northern Ireland today, the main target would be the IRA. It is they who carry out the greatest infringements of human and civil rights, with their murders and bombings, their executions without trial, their kneecappings and punishment shootings. The most fundamental human right is the right to life. Who in Northern Ireland takes the most human lives?"

Let me also direct Professor Harvey to a "tokenistic" quote from Seamus Mallon in the course of an interview in 2018 with veteran Irish Times reporter Peter Murtagh, during which Mallon corrosively scourged the Provisional IRA campaign: "Every action that they took was increasingly sectarian."

Clearly thinking of the slur of "planters", Mallon reminded us that "unionists, most of whom have lived here for about 400 years, are also Irish; that this also is their homeland".

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* 'From Aftergrass to Yellow Boots: A Glossary of Seamus Heaney's Hearth Language' by Maura Johnston, published by Colmcille Press

Courtesy the Sunday Independent 04.04.2021



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

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of Jesus' resurrection,
and the world was changed forever.
Teach us to keep faith with them,
that our witness may be as bold,
our love as deep,
and our faith as true. Amen.

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

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

Very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance.

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So they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus.

Luke 24:1-3 NLT

The women were determined to get to the tomb as early as possible to anoint Jesus' body. They have had Saturday to recover from the terrible events of the previous day, and as the sun rises on Sunday they are determined to get to the tomb before anyone else. Imagine the shock when they get there to find that it is empty. Their astonishment and surprise is then magnified many times when they meet two men in dazzling robes. They question the women as to why they are looking for Jesus in the tomb, because he had risen from death.

We cannot be exactly sure where the tomb was where Jesus body was laid. That is hardly surprising since he only spent about 36 hours in it! In Jerusalem there are two main places that are identified as the possible site of Jesus' tomb and one of them is in a beautiful garden, called the Garden Tomb. I have been there many times and the guides always take pleasure in telling the visitors that the one completely authentic fact about the tomb is that it is empty! And that's what matters before anything else. Everything in the Christian faith turns on the fact that Jesus rose from death.

The apostle Paul speaks very plainly in his first letter to the Corinthians about the importance of the resurrection. He wrote, "If Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins." (1 Corinthians 15.17) In short, if Jesus didn't rise from death then Christianity is pointless. Paul staked his life on the fact that Jesus was the Son of God and that through his death and

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resurrection Jesus broke the power of sin and death. As we thank God for the blessing of Easter let us praise him that through these amazing historical events we are able to live a new life, not just now but for eternity.

QUESTION

How would you explain to a non-Christian friend the importance of Jesus' resurrection?

PRAYER

Living Lord Jesus, help us to live each day in the light of your resurrection. Amen

