



Image of the day -towards Slemish

A fun Easter in Ballyholme



Revd Jan Stevenson, Community Pastor for St Columbanus, Ballyholme, writes with news of the fun activities that took place in the village over the Easter weekend. Jan is part of the ‘Love Ballyholme’ Team which brings together Ballyholme residents, businesses, churches and schools.

“It was Good Friday in Ballyholme, and out of nowhere, colourful Easter eggs, rabbits and chicks appeared in windows all over the village. Beside them was a solitary letter, to be collected to crack the code. Boys and girls downloaded their clues from the [Love Ballyholme Facebook page](#) and the hunt began.

“Starting at the shops then onto Morningside, down the Esplanade to Waverley Drive and back to our church... Some found all 14 letters, some did not, but the phrase “hopping bunnies” became the phrase on many lips.

“On Easter Monday between 2–4.00 pm, there was a steady stream of 90–100 children collecting Easter prizes from the front steps of our church (adhering to all the Covid rules.)

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What a lovely thing it was to see children and parents who really appreciated a safe fun outdoor activity for their kids. Ballyholme Parish has just moved up a notch in our locality and gained the accolade “The Church That Gives Away Chocolate”!

“Entries for the Easter Colouring Competition flowed into the local Boots store, and it was a difficult task choosing a winner from each of the 4 age categories. A huge well done to everyone who entered!

Beach cleanup

“What next I hear you ask? Well litter picking on the beach, of course! We’ll be coming together outdoors (safely of course) on Saturday 8 May from 10.00 am at Banks Lane carpark opposite Ballymacconnell Road. This is a family friendly event and litter pickers, gloves and bags will be supplied.

“This is a great way to visibly serve our community and to show care for our environment and our love for God who made it.”

Celebration of Easter 2021 began in Youghal at 700 year old Medieval Monument

The celebration of Easter at the 801 year old St. Mary’s Collegiate Church in Youghal began this year at the ‘Easter Sepulchre’: a medieval structure built into the wall of the Church, and one of very few left in Ireland.

Priest in charge Canon Andrew Orr said,
churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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It was only when I attended an online lecture on St. Mary's by Fr. Colmán O Clabaigh last January that I discovered the true purpose of this beautiful monument.



It is an Easter Sepulchre or tomb. It dates back to the

extension of

the church in the 14th century and was a central feature of the Easter celebrations in St. Mary's (and every church) in medieval times. A wooden structure would have been built out about two metres into the sanctuary and covered with cloth hangings to look like a cave. On Good Friday, after the services were finished, a consecrated Communion host, the wooden cross and perhaps other symbols of the passion, would have been brought into the Cave and symbolically buried by placing them either inside the stone tomb or on the shelf in a wooden box.

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Parishioners would then have stood guard all through Easter Eve until early Easter morning when the host would have been symbolically raised from the tomb and elevated for all the people to see.

This ceremony was followed by a sung drama in which the women (the three Marys) come to this tomb and find it empty. A script written for this play in Dublin in the 14th century still survives, and reminds us of the drama and spectacle that the ceremonies of Holy Week and Easter would have been in those times.

There are very few of these Easter Sepulchres still left in Ireland and the one in Youghal is by far the best preserved.

Canon Orr continued

So it seems appropriate, and a link to our long history, that, at this spot, we should have lit our Easter Paschal candle this year and welcomed the resurrection.

Moderator: Ongoing civil unrest must stop

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Right Reverend Dr David Bruce, has joined in condemnation of the ongoing violence which has escalated in parts of Northern Ireland in recent days, saying, “there is no place for the street violence, rioting and other unlawful behaviour such as has been witnessed, and I call on those involved and those orchestrating it to stop immediately, before more people are injured or someone is killed.”

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In his statement, Dr Bruce said, “As Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland I want to join with many others across society in the clear condemnation of the violence which has escalated in recent days. There is no place for the street violence, rioting and other unlawful behaviour such as has been witnessed, and I call on those involved and those orchestrating it to stop immediately, before more people are injured or someone is killed.

“On behalf of the Presbyterian Church, I offer our unequivocal support to the PSNI in these difficult days. Police officers are themselves not separate from us, but part of our local communities. Those who are serving on the ground, and may find themselves on the front line, along with the senior leadership of the PSNI, deserve our clear support at this time. In particular my prayers are with those who have been injured in the course of their duties with the hope that they recover quickly.”

Dr Bruce continued, “It is important that we recognise that there are significant underlying issues in communities across Northern Ireland, and particularly amongst those who feel that their identity has been threatened and undermined as a result of Brexit and the Protocol. This is compounded by a growing sense of hopelessness manifested in a lack of economic progress, reduced opportunities for employment, and educational disadvantage.

“In seeking to build a peaceful and reconciled society, these issues can, and will, only be solved through political will and leadership across that society. Whilst our elected representatives at Stormont have the primary responsibility for these matters of policy, the UK and Irish governments,

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along with the EU itself, must all be actively involved in finding ways to rebuild confidence amongst those who feel marginalised and that their identity has been undermined. Their voices need to be heard and their genuine concerns addressed.”

The Moderator concluded by saying, “Violence on the streets is not a legitimate response to these concerns, especially when over the past year these very communities have stepped up to support one another during the Covid-19 pandemic. The events of recent nights have brought fear and foreboding back onto the streets and have the potential to undo much of this positive and quiet work. This must not happen.” Dean speaks out Church ‘complicit’ in discrimination

The C of E is complicit in a culture where minorities are being treated “like germs”, the Dean of St Paul’s Cathedral claims

The Very Reverend Dr David Ison, said the Church and its God “appear inhuman to many” because it is “complicit” in “structural discrimination” against women, black, poor and LGBT people.

In a piece written for Via Media, the blog of Jayne Ozanne – the Church of England’s most prominent LGBT campaigner – the Dean said the Church “goes further than society does” in its discrimination.

The advert states: “You will be the Archbishop’s chief companion, support and critical friend for developing and

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refining this vision, aligning his work with the dioceses and central structures of the Church of England, ensuring his time is used effectively and strategically, and making it happen.”

Nicholas Drayson to Lead South American Province

The Rt. Rev. Nicholas Drayson, Bishop of Northern Argentina, was elected as Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Anglican Church of South America at a synod held on March 27. He succeeds the Most Rev. Gregory Venables, who retired from the role last year.

Under Venables’ leadership, the Anglican Church of South America played a significant role in Anglican realignment, and was active in the formation and leadership of the **GAFCON network**. The provincial synod that elected Drayson also notably reaffirmed its support for **Lambeth Resolution 1.10**, which articulates the Church’s traditional doctrine of human sexuality.

Drayson, 63, will continue to serve in Northern Argentina, where he has been bishop since 2011. An English evangelical, he studied at Keble College and Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, and has served in the South American mission field for most of his ministry, though he has also served in the Church of England and the Reformed Episcopal Church of Spain.

His own mission work has been focused on Argentina’s indigenous people, especially the Chorotes of Argentina’s

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northeastern frontier, who traditionally lived by hunting and gathering along the Pilcomayo River. Drayson translated the New Testament into their language in 1997, working under the auspices of the South American Mission Society, which has played a central role in the spread of Anglicanism in the region.

Since its foundation as the Patagonian Mission by Allen Gardiner, a British sea captain, in 1844, the South American Mission Society has largely focused its work on remote indigenous people who have largely been unreached by the Roman Catholic Church. The society was founded with semi-independent branches in English-speaking provinces. In recent decades, many of these have merged with the venerable evangelical Church Mission Society. SAMS-USA, which like the Anglican Church in North America and Trinity School for Ministry is based in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, retains the society's historic abbreviation, but now styles itself "the Society for Anglican Missionaries and Senders," and supports several missionaries working outside of South America.

The Anglican Church of South America unites six dioceses with about 25,000 Anglicans from Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay. It was known as "the Province of the Southern Cone of America" from its formation in 1981 until being renamed in 2014. The former title was technically more accurate, as some Anglican churches in South America are part of different provinces. Dioceses in Columbia, Ecuador, and Venezuela are part of the Episcopal Church; the Diocese of Guyana is a member of the Church in the Province of the West Indies; and independent Anglican provinces have been formed in Brazil

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and Chile. Anglicans in the Falkland Islands form one of the small extra-provincial churches directly under the Archbishop of Canterbury's oversight.

Due to the practical and financial challenges of such pioneering mission work, the province relies more heavily on church leaders sent out from the U.K. and North America than other Anglican provinces in the Global South. Of the province's six diocesan bishops, only two, the Rt. Rev. Jorge Luis Aguilar of Peru and the Rt. Rev. Brian Williams of Argentina are native South Americans. The four others include Drayson and another Englishman, a Canadian, and a native of Singapore.

In addition to his evangelistic and pastoral ministry in Argentina, Drayson's public witness has focused on advocating for communities harmed by climate change, and he is one of the "eco-bishops," an international group coordinated by the Communion's Environmental Network. He has also represented the province in the Anglican Consultative Council.

Unlike some provinces in the GAFCON network, the Anglican Church in South America has actively participated in the councils and networks of the Canterbury-focused Anglican Communion. The province did, however, formally sever relationships with the Episcopal Church after the consecration of Gene Robinson in 2003, and is in full communion with the Anglican Church in North America. As the Western hemisphere's only GAFCON-affiliated province, and with leaders well-connected in worldwide evangelical Anglican circles, it has played a significant role in helping

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conservative dioceses and congregations transition out of progressive-majority churches.

In 2007-2009, when majorities of the Episcopal Dioceses of San Joaquin, Pittsburgh, Fort Worth, and Quincy voted to leave the Episcopal Church, they were received “on an emergency and temporary basis” as dioceses of what was then the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone. A similar arrangement had been used to receive the 72 parishes of the Anglican Network in Canada in 2005. All five groups became founding dioceses of the Anglican Church of North America in 2009. The conservative Diocese of Recife in Northeastern Brazil also affiliated with the Province of the Southern Cone in 2005. It has since expanded into the Anglican Church in Brazil, and is recognized as a province by GAFCON but not by the Anglican Communion, which recognizes the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil as the authorized Anglican presence in that nation.

News Briefs

Former Head Choristers selected for National Youth Choir NI.

St Columb's Cathedral Choir Derry is delighted that Leo Collins and Lukas Lynch have both been successful in auditioning for the National Youth Choir NI. They will now go forward and take part in a residential week in Belfast with other successful choir members. Leo and Lukas are former Head Choristers who have only recently (during the pandemic) joined the back rows of the choir stalls. It is a fantastic achievement and we would like to wish the boys

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the very best in their journey. Well done and very well deserved



Lambeth Award for former Church Army CEO

Congrats to Des Scott on his Lambeth Award. On his retirement it truly is a very deserved award recognising his passion for social justice and working with people and communities to attain their full potential.

Books, Broadcasts, resources and webinars

Faith Pictures

This is a free resource from the Church Army, to help Christians of all traditions talk about their own story of faith with confidence. Faith Pictures is six sessions long, each one building on the last to help Christians to see where God has been present in their lives, how they can talk about that



confidently, and how God is active in the world around us and wants us to join in with Him. Ready to run online or in person, download Faith Pictures for free at this link [\[\[\] https://resources.churcharmy.org/resources/faith%E2%80%93pictures/\]](https://resources.churcharmy.org/resources/faith%E2%80%93pictures/)

Beyond Institutional Care: Rethinking How We Care for Vulnerable Children

Tearfund Ireland have announced a new conference! "Beyond Institutional Care: Rethinking How We Care for Vulnerable Children" explores the topic of Care Reform and why volunteering in orphanages is changing. 14th May - free event.

[\[\[\] https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/beyond-institutional-care-rethinking-how-we-care-for-vulnerable-children-tickets-148599811035?\]](https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/beyond-institutional-care-rethinking-how-we-care-for-vulnerable-children-tickets-148599811035?)

Comedian's Prayer Book

The title is a worry, isn't it?... God is a tough audience as far as audible response is concerned, but at least you don't have to explain the references. In this collection of prayers, much-loved comedian, broadcaster and radio host Frank

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Skinner has tried to retain the bare candour of the rehearsal-room improvisation - to show what faith feels like, from the inside - but infused it with all the production values required to make it a passable public entertainment. In it are his convictions, his questions, his fears, his doubts, his elations - all presented in an eavesdropper-friendly form. Hell, Judgement, atheism, money, faith and the X-Men all feature: it's a bit like reading the Bible, except you only get one side of the conversation, and all the jokes are left in.
Amazon Kindle Edition £6.99

Media review

Interview with the Archbishop of Canterbury

Financial Times

[<https://www.ft.com/content/8e831398-8a44-4d8c-b1bc-1642278e5ebb>]

Feature on conversion therapy in Christian settings. Notes the 2017 General Synod vote supporting a ban.

Cosmopolitan

[<https://www.cosmopolitan.com/uk/reports/a35992313/conversion-therapy-uk/>]

Obituary - Hans Küng

Times

[<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/hans-kueng-obituary-qvfd5wprl>]

Catholic Review

[<https://catholicreview.org/swiss-born-father-hans-kung-theologian-dies-at-93/>]

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Interview with the Revd Richard Coles about his book The Madness of Grief: A Memoir of Loss and Love.

Independent

[<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/addiction-one-northamptonshire-lord-coke-b1827175.html>]

Opinion - Sinn Fein a grim reminder of bullying unionist regime - Alban Maginnes

*Republican party were in the wrongs but anger misdirected
at PSNI*

The iron law of Ulster Unionist politics is that sectarian solidarity ultimately trumps everything else. So, in accordance with that commandment, after delaying for two whole days, the Ulster Unionists joined all the other unionist parties in demanding the resignation of Simon Byrne, the Chief Constable of the PSNI, Alban Maginnes writes in the Belfast Telegraph.

In doing so, Sinn Fein must have given a huge sigh of relief, as the unionist parties had wrongly focussed their collective ire not on Sinn Fein's outrageous misbehaviour at the Bobby Storey funeral, but at the Chief Constable. It is a classic case of firing at the wrong target.

In attempting to justify the UUP's sudden change of heart, its leader, Steve Aiken, in a cringe-worthy interview on the Nolan Show, dismally failed to explain their sudden challenge to the Chief Constable's continued leadership.

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Mr Aiken repeated the mantra that the unionist party and the unionist community no longer had any confidence in Simon Byrne.

Repeatedly pressed, in a superb cross-examination by Nolan, Mr Aiken failed to come up with any credible explanation as to why.

At the end of the horrendous interview, few listening to the programme would have retained much confidence in Mr Aiken's own leadership.

Last week, the Nolan Show provided a valuable broadcasting platform that allowed the ordinary listener an opportunity to understand the unfolding situation. Simon Byrne boldly allowed himself to be grilled by Nolan. He did well and withstood Nolan's tough questioning. Alan Todd, the police Gold Commander in charge of the Storey funeral, was confident and convincing on the same programme.

That is not to say, that the police still do not have awkward questions to answer. Those important answers may be forthcoming in the upcoming examination and report of HM Inspectorate of Constabulary.

One perplexing aspect is why a funeral parade was deemed necessary to go all the way down the Andersonstown Road from St Agnes's Church to Milltown cemetery.

As there was no interment of Mr Storey's remains at the republican plot at Milltown graveyard, why was it necessary to parade down the road?

Why couldn't the deceased's remains have been respectfully conveyed directly by hearse to the crematorium at Roselawn, via Kennedy Way?

If Sinn Fein insisted on this to the police, why was that permitted, as this was not an essential part of the funeral at all?

Nor, was this unnecessary parade consistent with the coronavirus public health restrictions.

The reality is, that Sinn Fein wanted to show off by way of public demonstration their power and support in west Belfast.

In many ways, Sinn Fein are a grim reminder of what it was like to live under the all-powerful, bullying unionist regime.

The imperious unionist Establishment simply did what they liked and arrogantly ignored everybody else.

Michelle O'Neill has instead given empty forms of apology and has ignored the overwhelming vote of censure by the Assembly.

She has yet to say, in a forthright manner, that in retrospect she should not have gone to the funeral, or that she undermined the public health message on combating coronavirus.

But the institutional arrogance of Sinn Fein prevents any such contrition by her, or any of their leadership.

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They are too powerful and too proud to be contrite, even though the very institutions that they are running in tandem with the other parties, are now in grave peril.

Like the unionists of old, they have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing.

What seems to have been forgotten in the cacophony of voices surrounding this issue is that it was the police who recommended the prosecutions of 24 Sinn Fein representatives, who had attended the funeral.

It was the Public Prosecution Service that subsequently rejected these recommendations on the grounds that the coronavirus regulations were themselves confusing and difficult to understand and also that there had been prior engagement between the police and Sinn Fein.

The implication of the latter being that the police had thereby compromised the prosecutions.

This rift between what the police saw as an appropriate engagement with Sinn Fein and the PPS's interpretation as an inappropriate action is problematic for future working relations between these two agencies.

The PPS's decision-making is itself now under review and those decisions may yet be revisited.

This is a big challenge for the PPS, who were faced with the most sensitive and politically charged cases of recent times.

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Despite their legitimate reservations, the question arises as to why the PPS didn't just allow the cases to go to court and let the court decide.

This would have been the best way of testing the issues that they were concerned about.

Now, we have aimless loyalist rioting on our streets. This is scarcely surprising, given the febrile state of our politics. Inflammatory language in the public arena produces incendiary results. Meanwhile, Sinn Fein must be laughing at their Houdini-like escape.

Courtesy Belfast Telegraph 07.04.2021

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
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

That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! “Peace be with you,” he said. As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord!
John 20:19-20 NLT

John records three occasions when Jesus met with his disciples after his resurrection. The first was on Easter day itself, the day of resurrection. The disciples were understandably nervous. The authorities had organised the crucifixion of Jesus and so, logically, they were quite likely to come after his disciples next. They had heard from some of the women that they had met the risen Lord but it would seem that they were unsure what to make of this incredible news.

Into this nervous, fearful situation came the risen Jesus. Suddenly and miraculously he was standing there with them. One can hardly begin to imagine the riot of emotions that they must have experienced in that moment. On the one hand it was everything that they most wanted. The death of Jesus was devastating for them so the thought that he was alive again was absolutely wonderful. But then they had to deal with the fact that dead people don't rise from death. That isn't what happens. Into this amazing situation Jesus came and pronounced peace. He then showed them the wounds in his hands and his side, and they realised that the humanly impossible had actually happened. Jesus had

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risen from death. They were overjoyed, records John, drawing on his own personal experience of that amazing evening.

This historic story is important for us today because Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit, promises to be with us whenever we meet in his name. There will be many occasions when we also face times of challenge and disappointment and, amazingly and miraculously, Jesus comes and stands in the midst of us.

QUESTION

In what way have you experienced Jesus' presence with you as you have met with Christian brothers and sisters?

PRAYER

Thank you, living Lord Jesus, that you promise to be with us when we meet together. Amen

