

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – An icon for Killaloe

News

An icon for Killaloe

Recently the icon that Ian Knowles painted commissioned for the celebration of the 800th anniversary of the consecration 1225 arrived at St Flannan's Cathedral.

Many thanks to SuperValu, Killaloe who took delivery of the parcel which was sent from Milan. Dean Richard Marsh collected it from beside a pallet of baked beans in their voluminous storeroom!

Bishop Michael Burrows will dedicate it on 31st August at 5pm. There's still time to donate to this wonderful project and there is a link below.

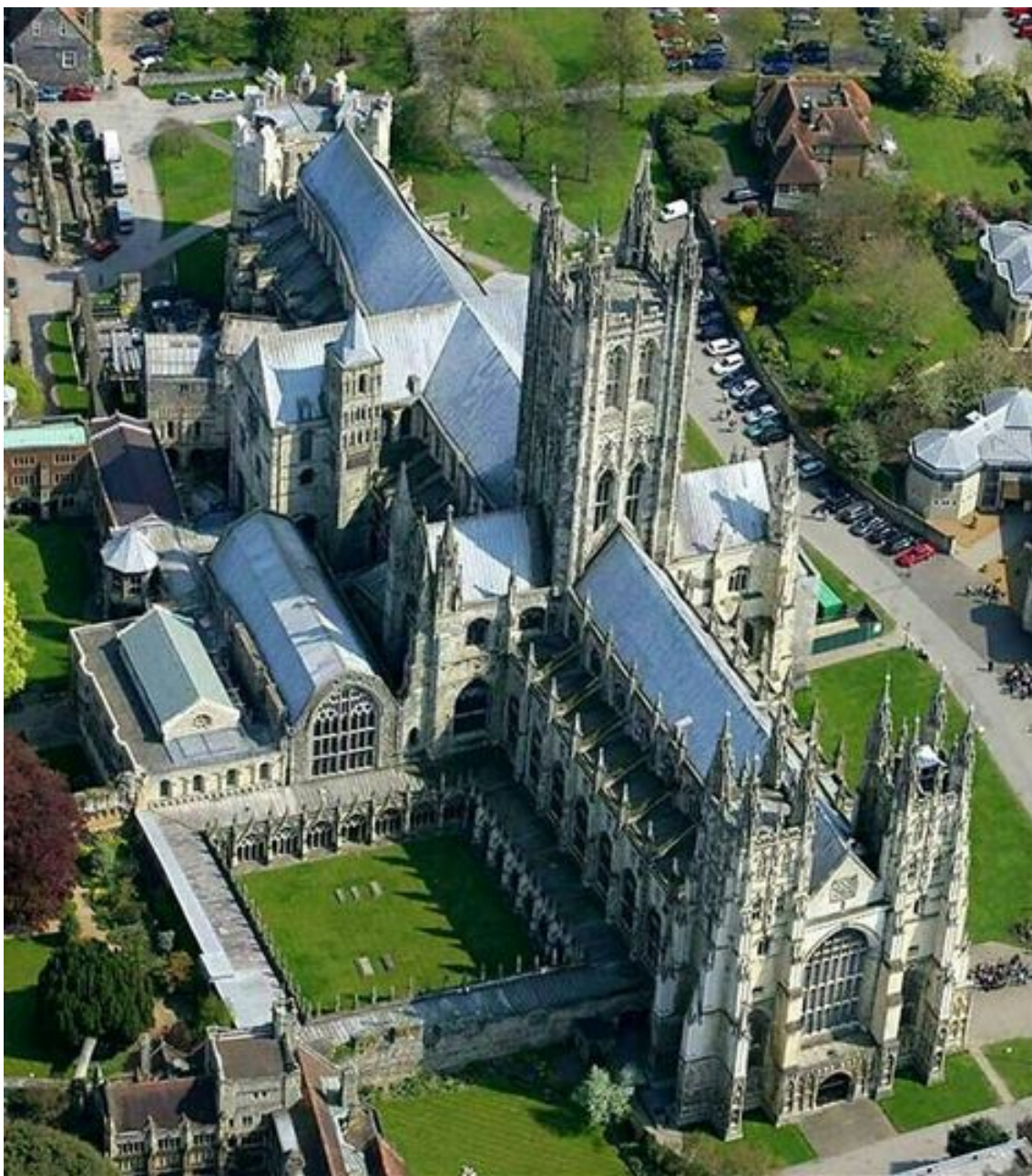
Writing about the proposal to obtain an icon Dean Marsh commented - The year 2025 holds a very special significance for us. It marks the 800th anniversary of the



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consecration of the sacred St Flannan's Cathedral in Killaloe. This monument has served as a beacon of faith, love, and devotion for centuries and to commemorate this magnificent milestone, we have planned something truly wonderful.

We are embarking on a journey to commission an exquisite icon of our beloved patron saint - a symbol of unwavering faith, profound wisdom, and divine protection. This piece of



Canterbury Cathedral

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sacred art will not just be an icon; it will be a testament to the rich tradition that binds our community together, resonating with our shared history and cultural identity.

We have chosen icon painter, Ian Knowles as our artist. Ian was the founder and director of the Icon School in Bethlehem and has undertaken numerous commissions.

His recent work includes an icon for St Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny and the crucifix in the crossing of Lichfield Cathedral, UK .

To make this ambitious undertaking a reality, we are reaching out to you on iDonate for your kind support and generosity.

Every euro counts and will play a vital role in breathing life into this project. We are overwhelmed and deeply grateful for any support you can extend to realize this grand endeavor.

By choosing to participate, you become a part of the 800-year-long legacy of Killaloe's Cathedral, contributing to the continuity of our collective spiritual journey. We invite you to share this journey with us, to mark this grand occasion with a gesture that will be remembered for generations.

Thank you for considering a donation on iDonate - your generosity will help us continue our rich tradition and deepen our connection with our patron saint -

<https://www.idonate.ie/crowdfunder/stflannansicon>



Templepatrick team home after busy ministry trip to India

A team of six from Templepatrick Parish has returned home after a ministry trip to the Indian Christian Mission Centre in Salem, Tamil Nadu.

All aboard the sleeper bus! The Rev Jacqueline Mould and young members of the Templepatrick team which travelled to India.

They were accompanied on the trip from July 21 to August 1 by a team of 13 youth and adults from Belvoir Parish, Diocese of Down and Dromore. The Templepatrick team comprised Josh Brobyn, Rory Gordon, Matthew Mould,

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Katie Wallace, the Rev Jacqueline Mould and the rector, the Rev Jeremy Mould.

The group helped run a Bible Club for 45 primary school aged children. Their trip was supported by the Connor Mission Support Fund.

They visited an orphanage, took a church service, attended a Lamp Lighting Ceremony and the opening ceremony at a brick-making factory, visited a local school and leper colony, and enjoyed a Cultural Show featuring Indian worship dances by boys and girls from the orphanage and nursing college.

Gaol time for Retired Clergy Association members

Eleven members of the Retired Clergy Association (NI), together with five spouses, recently found themselves incarcerated in gaol, but readers and colleagues will be glad to know (or maybe not!!) that they were released after a short time! Clifford Skillen writes.

The imprisonment was part of a visit which members made to the former Crumlin Road Gaol, now a visitor attraction following extensive renovations. The Gaol dates back to 1845 and finally closed its doors as a working prison in 1996.

The visit took the form of an approximately 90-minute, self-guided, interactive tour, facilitated by audio and video presentations, holograms and information boards and wall



Inside Crumlin Road gaol

placards positioned at appropriate points throughout the site.

Areas of the Gaol which were covered in the tour included the Tunnel (a former access underneath the Crumlin Road to the Courthouse), the historic Holding Cells, the Gaol Circle, C-Wing, the Condemned Cell, the Hangman's Cell and Execution Chamber and the Graveyard, all of which illustrated a wide range of areas of past prison life.

Given the history of the Gaol, some aspects of the tour naturally did not lend itself to 'easy' or 'enjoyable' viewing, but members agreed that the whole experience gave a fascinating and worthwhile insight into the history of what were difficult social and political times over the last century and a half.



Mission trip to Kondoa - update from Bishop of Derry and Raphoe

Bishop Andrew Forster has had the pleasure and joy of renewing acquaintance with the Bishop of Kondoa, Rt Rev Dr Given Gaula, on this week's mission trip to his partner diocese in Tanzania. Bishop Andrew and his wife Heather are there for a week-long visit and they've been adhering to a hectic schedule in challenging conditions.

The two bishops confirmed more than 80 candidates in two churches, in the first of a number of such services this week. The second of those churches meets outside and was only planted 5 years ago (in the last year alone, there, 78 adults were baptised after coming to faith in Jesus).



"We have been very warmly welcomed and well looked after," Bishop Andrew reports. "It is very humbling to meet clergy and parishioners in Kondoa who regularly pray for us in Derry and Raphoe. Over the next few days, we will visit some other parishes and diocesan projects including the women's empowerment program and the local Bible College.

"The services outside have really tested my mettle – three hours long, in searing heat, while fully robed. On Sunday,

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I'm looking forward to preaching and helping confirm candidates at the Cathedral of Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles, in the town of Kondoa. The cathedral was built in 2022 – a contrast to our ancient cathedrals back home!"



Throughout their visit, the Bishop and Heather are stay at the Mothers' Union guesthouse in Kondoa. Mothers' Union is particularly active in the Diocese of Kondoa – many of those who have come to faith over the last decade are women – and MU has been empowering them by teaching

them life skills, as well as providing literacy and numeracy courses. Heather will meet many of the women on her visits to some of the MU outreach projects.

The partnership between the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe and the Diocese of Kondoa was facilitated by Jenny Smyth of CMS Ireland.

Pipe Organ Preservation Company tribute to Master organ builder Gerry Egan

We are very saddened by the loss of our former colleague who was an organbuilder with a huge wealth of experience for an amazing 70 years. Gerry worked in 20 countries and we think 13 US states.

He grew up in Chorley Lancashire and started his apprenticeship in 1955 with Rushworth & Dreaper in Liverpool. In London he worked with Gray & Davidson, Hill Norman & Beard, J W Walker and N P Mander.

At 21 he was foreman for Walker's rebuild of Holywood Parish Church. He returned to Northern Ireland in 1978 and almost single handed did the site work for the Ulster Hall and St George's Belfast.

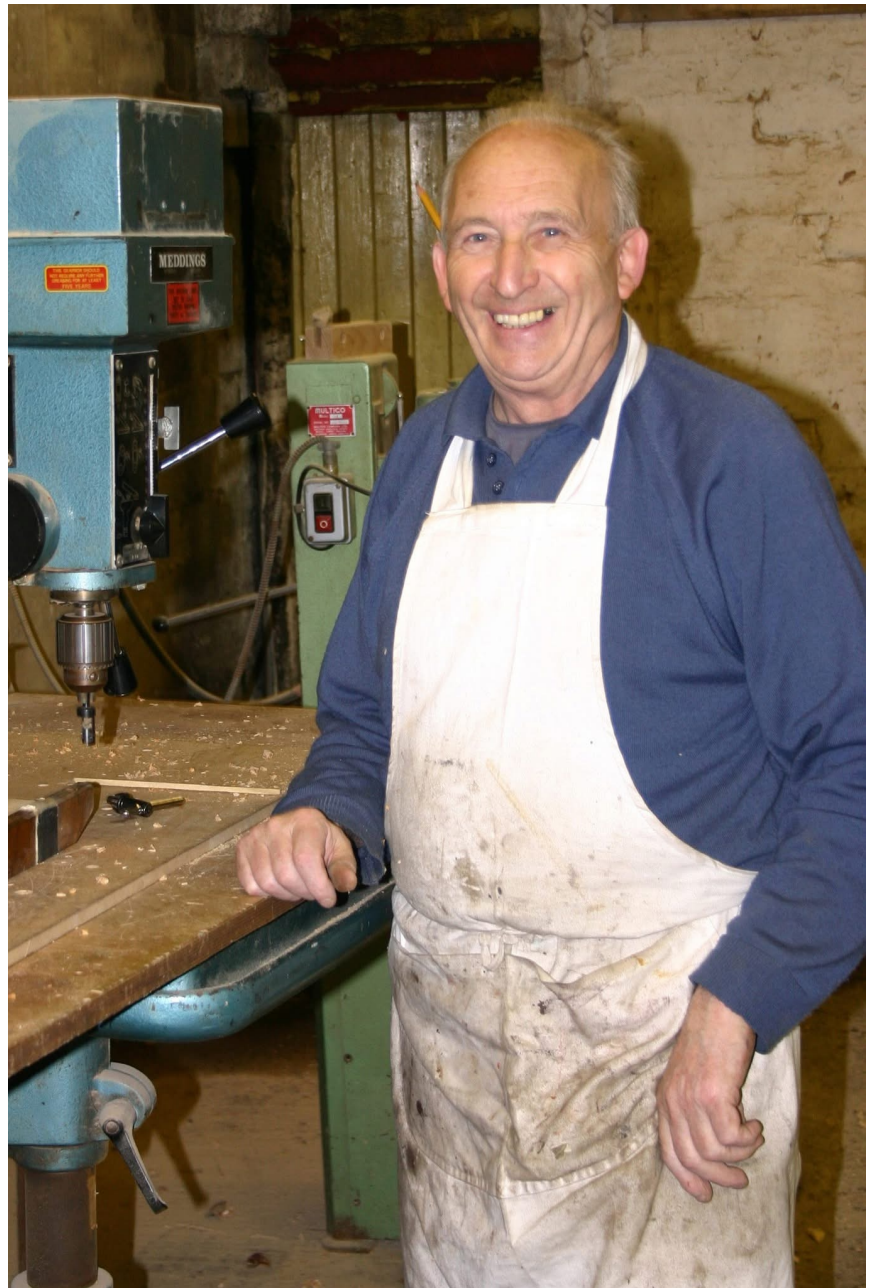
Staying on he worked for Wells Kennedy in Lisburn 1979-1981 and then again 1997-2013. In 1992 he rebuilt the Telford organ in the Falkland Islands on his own followed by Birmingham Cathedral for Nicholsons in 1993. He was involved in the Royal Albert Hall for Manders in 2002/3 and regularly did the USA tunings for Walkers.

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He joined Pipe Organ Preservation Co. in 2013 for 5 years beginning with the new organ for St Patrick's Lisburn.

Afterwards Gerry settled doing subcontracting work for various firms notably Cavan Cathedral for O'Donovan Organs.

Gerry Egan
14 Oct 1939 - 14
Aug 2025



Late in life he became very involved with the Ulster Gliding Centre and the Royal British Legion.

Gerry's attitude to organs was outstanding - he wasn't daunted by any task and he came up with many solutions from his vast experience.

Priest slams 'dark forces' of drugs trade after death of parishioner
He leaves behind a son and daughter and several grandchildren.

Education



NI continues to be highest performing region in UK at A Level

Education Minister Paul Givan MLA visited Rathmore Grammar School as students across Northern Ireland received their BTEC, AS and A Level examination results.

Around a third of our A level students were awarded the highest grades of A* to A and Northern Ireland continues to be the highest performing region in the United Kingdom at these grades.

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Find out more: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/news/minister-congratulates-students-receiving-btec-and-level-results-education>

Belfast HS Principal's Prize for Outstanding Performance at A Level

David Beattie, formerly of Carnmoney PS, and Leo Zhang, formerly of Carrick Model PS were presented with a school bursary in recognition of their outstanding A Level results



David achieved A*A*A*A grades in Chemistry, Computer Science, Mathematics and Physics and is taking up his offer from Queen's University to read Software Engineering. Leo, having achieved A*A*A*A grades in Computer Science, Further Mathematics, Mathematics and Physics, will be reading Computer Science at Churchill College, Cambridge.

Cathedral Calls



The feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary - Westminster Abbey

This detail of the Madonna enthroned, holding a rose, with the Christ Child, is from a 15th-century altarpiece by Florentine artist Bicci di Lorenzo (1375-1452), which is on permanent display in the Abbey Galleries.

St. Cecilia's Day fundraiser in Belfast for Corrymeela

This St. Cecilia's Day, why not join us for an unforgettable evening of music at Belfast Cathedral.

This once-in-a-lifetime musical experience showcasing composer Joanna Forbes L'Estrange's breathtaking choral reimagining of Vivaldi's The Four Seasons, will be raising funds for The Corrymeela Community.

Tickets are £15 and are available now:
<https://square.link/u/r9jfcn85>

Summer Tours of Armagh Palace

The Archbishop's tours take place on two Sundays per month in June, July, August at 2pm.

The tour begins at the Palace and lasts approximately 75 minutes and is suitable for age 8+. Parking is available adjacent to the Palace.

Take a special opportunity to see behind the doors of The Primate's Palace, built by Archbishop Robinson and used as the home of the Church of Ireland Archbishops from 1770 until the 1970's. Your guide will welcome all visitors to this magnificent building providing you with a fascinating tour lasting approximately 75 minutes. The Palace was designed by famous architect Thomas Cooley in the classical style, originally it had 2 storeys and a basement.

Another floor and raised portico were added in 1825 under the prime ship of Lord John George Beresford.

Your guide will share their knowledge of the building including the story of former Archbishop of Armagh, Richard Robinson 1765 to 1794, a colourful personality, often known as the “Builder of Armagh.”

In addition, you will be treated to a feast for the eyes with the exhibition of the “Artist in Residence” local man J B Vallely, who has had a career in art and music spanning over 6 decades. His paintings are renowned nationally and internationally with diverse themes such as music, sport, mythology, dance and historical events, a unique event not to be missed.

Please see this link to book your tickets
armagh-navancentre.ticketsolve.com

Clergy and ministry

Institution of Rector in Stranorlar

Rev'd Johnny Lowden instituted as Rector in Stranorlar, Derry & Raphoe, ending two-year vacancy.

Members of three parishes in Donegal came face-to-face ‘officially’ with their new Rector for the first time, on Friday evening (20th June 2025), as Rev'd Johnny Lowden was instituted as the incumbent of the Stranorlar, Meenglass & Kiltcevogue Cofl Group in the beautiful Finn Valley. It was a glorious evening for a service.

In the media

Priest slams 'dark forces' of drugs trade after death of parishioner

A Catholic priest has warned that the “scourge of drugs” is having a “devastating” impact on rural communities and causing the deaths of too many young people, Allison Morris writes in The Belfast Telegraph

Fr Paul Fraser labelled those who profit from the sale of illegal substances as “dark forces”.

He said young people have become “collateral damage” in the drugs trade.

Fr Fraser, the parish priest of Ardstraw West in Co Tyrone, which covers the Castlederg, Dregish and Drumnabe areas, said he felt it was his duty to speak out following the death of a 31-year-old parishioner.

Michael McHugh, from the Aghyaran area, died in July. He had struggled with addiction. His family have supported Fr Fraser in speaking out.

“Put it this way, Michael would still be here if it wasn't for drugs. And that's the real tragedy,” the priest said.

Fr Fraser praised Mr McHugh's parents for bravely highlighting the issue.



He said that since he condemned those responsible for profiting from drugs from the pulpit, during Mr McHugh's Requiem Mass, he has had overwhelming support from parishioners.

The priest said the drugs trade is affecting every part of life in NI.

“People think this is a big city problem, but rural communities are suffering as well, and it is causing a mental health crisis,” he added.

“People start off thinking it's harmless, but drug-induced psychosis is a real issue and we can see that with recent tragedies that have happened in rural communities.

“I was a priest in the Creggan before coming here, and I thought I'd seen and heard it all. But rural communities are

suffering as well, and that is maybe not spoken about as much as it should be.”

Mr McHugh, who had a partner and two children, was said to be an accomplished mechanic, in demand for his skills fixing agricultural equipment.

His family are well respected in the Castlederg area.

Following his death, his loved ones made the decision to donate his organs.

Fr Fraser said this act of selflessness from a grieving family was “in stark contrast” to the action of the “dark forces” who are profiting from the sale of drugs.

“I suspect most people know those responsible but no one wants to say,” he added.

“I have spoken to Michael's parents and they are angry at the drugs issue — understandably so.”

The priest said Mr McHugh's parents did not want another family to suffer.

“We are seeing really small towns having a crisis of mental health, and I suspect a lot of that is being created by drug abuse and misuse,” he said.

In a hard-hitting homily during Mr McHugh's funeral last month, first reported by the Ulster Herald, Fr Fraser told mourners that addiction “can consume even the strongest, most intelligent and most compassionate people”.

“The substance we think liberates us is in fact the very thing that controls and imprisons us,” he said.

“Drugs and alcohol are false friends that take us down the path to addiction.

“There is no doubt they are a scourge on our community.”

Fr Fraser added: “Michael was collateral damage, like so many in our community — our family, our neighbours, our friends. Addiction is an illness that wraps itself around life and does not let go easily. It drowns out the joys, the love and even the hope.”

Israel plan to bury idea of a Palestinian state

Daily Telegraph - Israel has announced it will build an enormous settlement in the West Bank to effectively “bury the idea of a Palestinian state”.

<http://digitaleditions.telegraph.co.uk/data/2158/reader/reader.html?social#!preferred/0/package/2158/pub/2158/page/46/article/NaN>

BBC News - Israeli far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has said plans to build more than 3,000 homes in a controversial settlement project in the occupied West Bank will "bury the idea of a Palestinian state".

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ckgdzxpkkdd7o>

BBC News: Bowen: Netanyahu is presiding over a divided Israel - the fault lines are now chasms

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c3r441zyw27o>

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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**Link in Monday through Saturday from
early morning**

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