

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Bringing in the bales

August 19, 2022

Image of the day

Bringing in the bales

Hay baling at Killadeas Church near Enniskillen. Photo courtesy Keith Rooney

People and places



Church concern for Ukrainian refugees in Ireland

Archbishop Farrell welcomed the new Apostolic Visitor to Ireland for the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Bishop

August 19, 2022

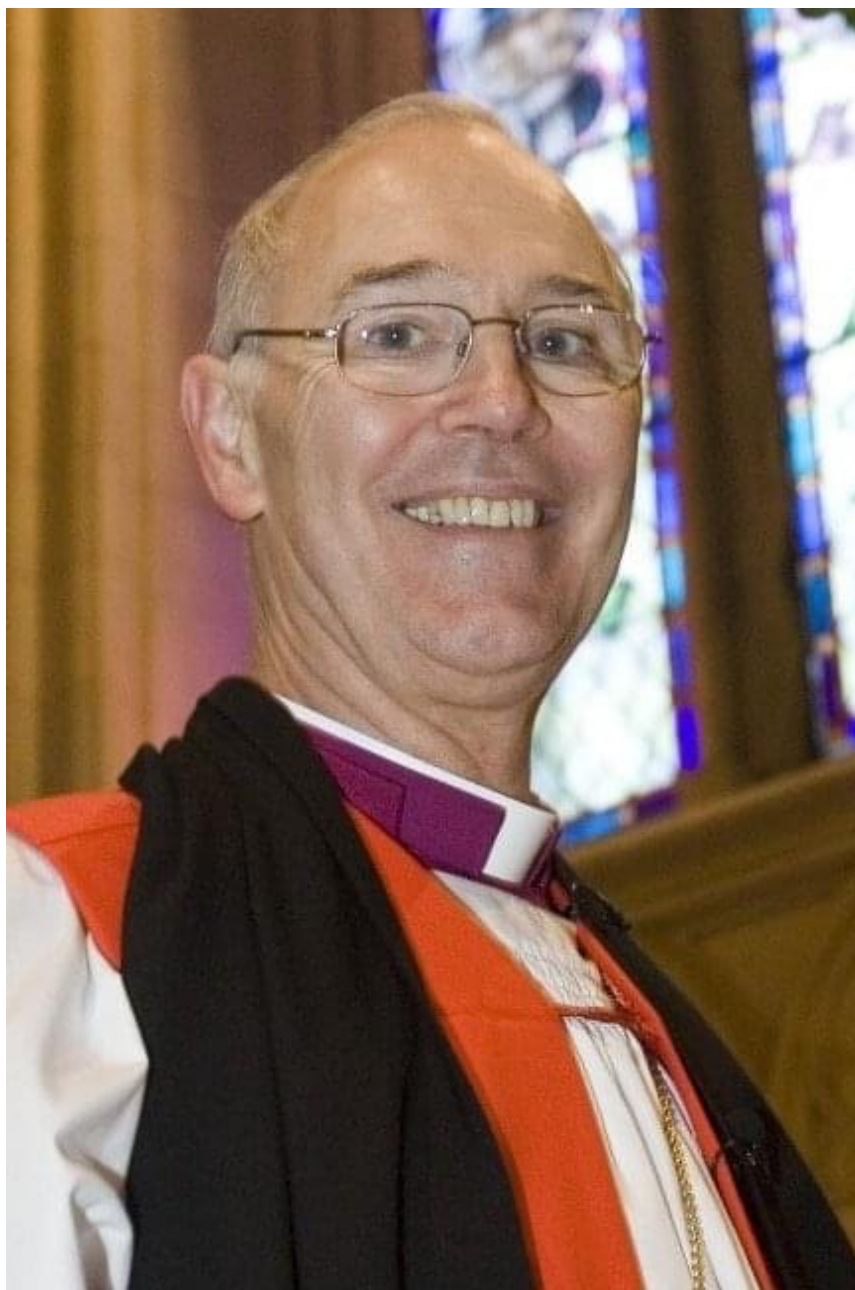
Kenneth Nowakowski, to Archbishop's House this week. They discussed, inter alia, the provision of sacraments and pastoral ministry for Ukrainian refugees in Ireland.



Former Archbishop on Armagh Library's Greek Inscription

Above the public entrance of Armagh Robinson Library there is a Greek inscription, which has been translated as the 'healing place of the soul'.

On Wednesday 7 September 2022 at 7.30pm the Library will host a talk in the Long Room, exploring the source of this motto which Archbishop Richard Robinson chose for the Library he erected in Armagh in 1771. The title of the talk will be 'I Met a Traveller from an Antique Land: There and Back Again.'



The speaker will be the Rt Revd Dr Alan Harper, who was the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, as well as Chairman of the Library's Governors and Guardians, from 2007 to 2012.

Before entering the ministry, Bishop Harper was a successful archaeologist and administrator. He was a member of the Historic Monuments

Council of Northern Ireland from 1980 to 1989, and Chairman from 1989 to 1995. In 1996 he was awarded an OBE for Services to Conservation in Northern Ireland.

Speaking ahead of the talk, Bishop Harper, said, "All in all, Primate Robinson's tantalising inscription led me on a journey with many a false step, visiting three continents, spanning three millennia and all in pursuit of four little Greek words. But what do those four words really mean? Join me and I'll explain."

August 19, 2022

There is no charge for the talk, though donations towards the Library's current Endowment Appeal are welcome.

Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

To reserve a place please email

admin@armaghrobinsonlibrary.co.uk or call 028 3752 3142.

Methodist Church outlines support for provision of school uniforms

The Methodist Church in Ireland, through its Council on Social Responsibility, has called upon Methodists to support those who are struggling with the Cost of Living Crisis, with particular regard for provision of school uniforms.

For ideas of how you can help and to read the statement in full visit: bit.ly/3dArAmP

The Council on Social Responsibility commented -

This is an immensely difficult time for so many people. There are very many people who were already struggling to make ends meet at the start of this year. However, the persistent rise in the cost of living is presenting even more widespread challenges.

In particular, many parents are worried at the costs involved with school uniforms and other necessities at this time of year. As a church we commend the various initiatives that have been helping support parents in this regard these past weeks and encourage churches to continue to appeal to

August 19, 2022

politicians and community leaders to counter the causes of the rises. We want to particularly ask church members and others to make ourselves aware of how we can respond with compassionate practicality during these weeks and beyond to the needs of families in our local areas.

HERE ARE SOME IDEAS

You may have other thoughts about how to respond.

Find out about your local "pre-loved" school uniform shop/school uniform bank. Let your congregation, friends and family know about it.



Healing Service
"Today is the Day of your Miracle"

7.30pm Thursday 1st September

St. Patrick's Church of Ireland
Ballymacarrett
220 Newtownards Road
Belfast, BT4 1GZ

Br David Jardine -
"Healing through Surrender"

Prayer Ministry and Anointing with oil



DHM
Divine Healing
MINISTRIES



August 19, 2022

Donate any good quality spare uniform that you have. Offer to volunteer. If there's no school uniform bank in your area why not start one?

Host a second-hand uniform sale in your local school.

Ask parents to donate their outgrown or unused uniform. Gather and wash the uniform and sell to raise funds for a local charity.

**AN EVENING WITH
BRIAN McLAREN
& GARETH HIGGINS**

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 7, 7PM
TRINITY COLLEGE CHAPEL
DUBLIN

how not to be afraid
SEVEN WAYS TO LIVE WHEN EVERYTHING SEEMS TERRIFYING
gareth higgins
Foreword by Kathleen Norris

Do I Stay Christian?
A GUIDE FOR THE DOUBTERS, THE DISAPPOINTED, AND THE DISILLUSIONED
BRIAN D. McLAREN
Author of *Faith After Doubt*

Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

TCD
CHURCH OF IRELAND CHAPLAINCY

THE GOOD SUMMIT

DETAILS AT WWW.HOWNOTTOBEAFRAID.COM

August 19, 2022

Host a "Bring and swap" evening for parents in your local school or church.

Form a team of parents and/or church friends, provide a meal or dessert and invite people to "bring and swap" outgrown or unused items of uniform, winter coats and school shoes. Gather some uniform in advance so that there is more than enough to go around.

Make up stationery packs to donate to your local school.

Find out first from the school what supplies families will need to provide this year.

India - 180 years of Presbyterian partnership celebrated

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) celebrated its oldest official partnership this week when senior PCI representatives welcomed to Belfast the Right Reverend Silvans Christian, Bishop of the Church of North India's (CNI) Diocese of Gujarat.

The relationship with Gujarat spans 180 years and began with PCI's foundation in July 1840. During the first session of the Church's inaugural General Assembly when, according to the minutes, Rev James Glasgow of Castledawson and Rev A Kerr of Portadown '...consented to proceed as Missionaries to India...for the solemn work of the Assembly's Foreign Mission.'



Pictured in Assembly Buildings in Belfast are (LtoR) Rev Trevor Gribben, Clerk of PCI's General Assembly, Rt Rev Silvans Christian, Bishop of the Diocese of Gujarat, Church of North India, Heather Clements, Convener of Council for Global Mission's Global Mission Committee, Rev Stephen McCracken, Council Convener, and Rev Uel Marrs, Council Secretary.

Between 1840 and the late 1960s around 300 PCI missionaries served in various capacities in Gujarat. Accompanied by his wife Jenis, during Bishop Silvans' three-day visit they met with the Moderator, Right Reverend Dr John Kirkpatrick, and his wife Joan, members of the

August 19, 2022



Pictured in Assembly Buildings in Belfast are (LtoR) Rev John Faris, great great grandson of Rev James Glasgow, PCI's first missionary to Gujrat in 1840, Rt Rev Silvans Christian, Bishop of the Diocese of Gujarat, and his wife Jenis, with Mrs Frances Martin, the wife of the late Rev Alan Martin, who served as missionaries in Gujarat from 1963 to 1968.

Council for Global Mission and had lunch with some of those who had a connection with the denomination's work in Gujarat over the years. This included Mrs Frances Martin, wife of the late Rev Alan Martin, who served as missionaries in Gujarat from 1963 to 1968. Rev John Faris and Alastair

August 19, 2022

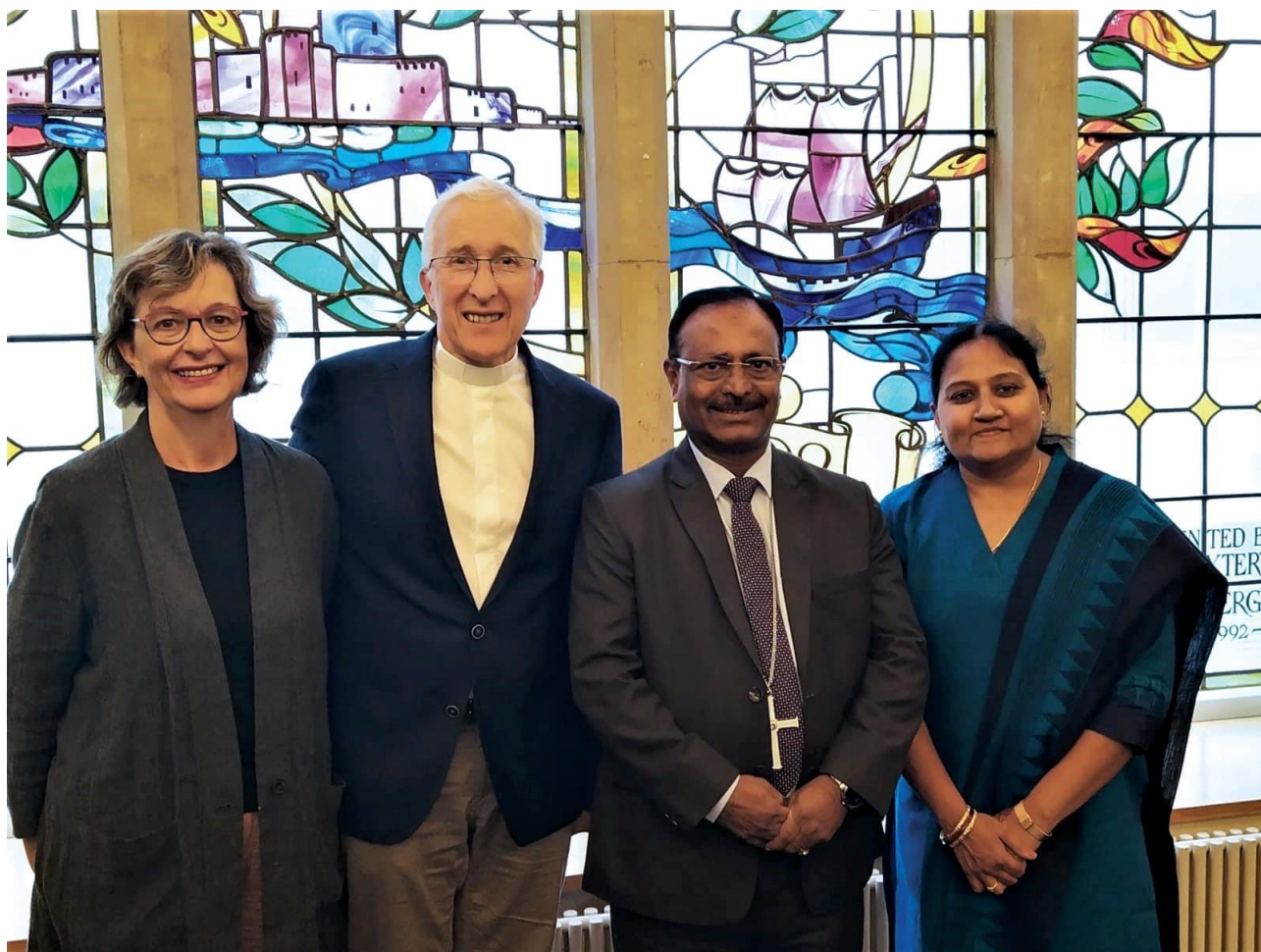
Rankin, great great grandsons of Rev James Glasgow, were also present.

Welcoming Bishop Silvans, Dr Kirkpatrick said, “It was a real pleasure to meet Bishop Silvans and his wife Jenis, and have the opportunity to talk and pray together. To learn of the life and growth of the Church of North India was a tremendous encouragement to us here in Ireland. At the same time, to hear how our brothers and sisters in Christ continue to live through challenging times, not least the loss of 12 pastors and other leaders as a result of Covid, for example, was inspirational.”

The Moderator continued, “This week saw the 75th anniversary of India’s independence from Britain. As time and history march on, I am pleased to say that our relationship with CNI continues. While we both have challenges that stem from the cultures in which we live, as we talked I saw both faith and joy, a demonstration of the Grace of God. Bishop Silvans visit has been a wonderful encouragement.”

Located on the subcontinent’s western coast the predominantly Hindu state has a population of around 73 million people and is roughly the same size as Cambodia. Today PCI relates to the Church of North India with a primary focus on the Diocese of Gujarat. The Church was formed in 1970 when six denominations came together to form one united church, which is spread over two-thirds of India's land area and has 1.3 million members worshipping in 3,000 congregations across 26 dioceses. Bishop Silvans has led the Diocese of Gujarat since his consecration as bishop in 2012.

August 19, 2022



PCI's Moderator, Rt Rev Dr John Kirkpatrick with Rt Rev Silvans Christian, Bishop of the Diocese of Gujarat, Church of North India, with their wives Joan (left) and Jenis (right) during Bishop Silvans three-day visit to PCI to mark 182 years of partnership between Irish Presbyterians and the church in Gujarat.

During a special lunch held in honour of the Bishop and Mrs Christian, Bishop Silvans spoke of how many people in Gujarat would still refer to PCI as 'the Mother Church'. Bringing 'special greetings' to PCI he said, "It is a great honour and joy to be here in this wonderful land praising God for a partnership that we have been so blessed by.

"This is a unique moment as we celebrate the relationship between the Church in Gujarat and the Presbyterian Church

August 19, 2022

in Ireland. I give thanks to God for a partnership that spans nearly 200 years. Today we are a growing church. My parents saw the work of missionaries from Ireland and the United States, but from the 1970s local leaders have led the way in our shared theology and passion for mission.”

Bishop Silvans concluded by saying, “Across the Diocese, especially in the rural and tribal areas, we have a practical missional strategy organising free classes where we can teach. We have also set up medical clinics. Even though we face many challenges, we are seeing many people come to a faith in Jesus Christ. God is good and is blessing our work, just as he blessed, and continues to bless, the work of Irish Presbyterians.”

Speaking after his first event as the new Convener of the Council for Global Mission, Rev Stephen McCracken, minister of First Ballymoney Presbyterian Church said, “We partner with many churches, Christian institutions and mission organisations around the world, but while they are all important, our partnership with Gujarat is special, as it was the very first place overseas that PCI sent missionaries to spread the Good News of the Gospel.

“Since then our partnerships around the world have grown and developed, especially in practical areas of ministry where we now have 27 Global Mission Workers, who are supported directly by PCI, working in 11 countries.

Mr McCracken, who was himself a missionary for seven years in Malawi continued, “We were delighted to be able to welcome Bishop Silvans to Ireland for the first time since 2013, and to hear first-hand of the work God is doing in

August 19, 2022

Gujarat, where the first seeds were sown by missionaries from our church 182 years ago. While we have been both blessed and challenged by what we have heard, we look forward to developing our relationship as we continue to hold our brothers and sisters in Christ across India in our prayers.”

In the media

Mary Lou McDonald and the forgotten people of the Northern Ireland troubles by Andy Pollak

The title of this blog, ‘Two Irelands Together’, was not chosen by accident. My core contention in writing this column is that for more than 400 years there have been two clashing politico-religious cultures on this island – Catholic nationalist and Protestant unionist – and that for the past century these have been forced into the ‘narrow ground’ of Northern Ireland, with disastrous consequences for all concerned.

I hold that before Irish people can come together peacefully and harmoniously in the same political unit, there have to be mechanisms in place to allow them to come together in other ways – socially, culturally, economically. That wise man, the business leader Sir George Quigley (who died in 2013), observed that major constitutional change in Ireland “has to obtain legitimacy if it is not to prove destabilising and even impermanent. Achieving legitimacy in this context must surely start with the recognition that there are in this

situation two mutually opposed ‘principles of legitimacy’ which are strongly held – one nationalist and one unionist – and that some common ground would have to be found on which the divergent aspirations are transcended in a general consensus. The Good Friday Agreement recognises this in its espousal of the principle of consent for constitutional change. It would be a delusion to suppose that change could be achieved through some simple majoritarian process rather than by negotiation.”¹

There is precious little common ground at the moment. This came home to me last month when I read Sinn Fein leader Mary-Lou McDonald’s speech to the National Press Club in Canberra in Australia in the same week that I visited the victims organisation, the South East Fermanagh Foundation (SEFF), in Lisnaskea in Fermanagh.

McDonald is a powerful orator who clearly believes it is her destiny to become the woman who will unite Ireland. In Australia (as elsewhere) she made headlines by predicting that a Border Poll on Irish reunification would take place “in this decade.” Her reply to any question about the risk of renewed violence in the North in the event of an extremely narrow vote for unity in that poll – this time certainly led by loyalists – is always the same. “The war is over”, she says.

It is worth quoting her words in Canberra at more length. She was asked by a journalist how she would ensure that such a Border Poll did not reignite violence in Northern Ireland. “The process for reunification will be orderly. It will be peaceful, and it will be democratic. I will not give an inch on that, and really believe there is a strong onus on every political representative and leader to state that categorically.

August 19, 2022

I will not even countenance the scenario you have painted. That cannot happen under any circumstances, and I say that as one of the effigies that was hanged on a bonfire. People decided for peace. The truth is – a big bonfire, a bus lit on the Falls Road – these are very limited phenomena. The war is over. We are moving to the future, and there is no appetite across wide society to return to armed actions and conflict. I cannot accept – I don't think any democrat could accept – that some unspoken possibility of perhaps tensions somewhere would throw us off our democratic course.”²

When McDonald says “the war is over”, what she really means is that the guerrilla/terrorist war the Provisional IRA waged in Northern Ireland and Britain for nearly 30 years is not necessary any more because Sinn Fein are winning the battle to move towards Irish unity very effectively now without violence. They are already the largest party in Northern Ireland and will certainly be the largest party in the Republic after the next election, in early 2025 at the latest. And they have reached this enviable position by playing down the drive for unity – their core ideology – in both jurisdictions, and focussing on the housing, health and cost-of-living issues that really concern ordinary people, and are so urgent now that we are in an inflationary spiral caused by the war in Ukraine and the resulting potentially catastrophic rises in the cost of oil, gas, wheat and other staples.

However her declaration that as leader of Sinn Fein (the party of the IRA) she will “not give an inch” on her determination that the process of reunification will be orderly and peaceful is extraordinarily arrogant and hypocritical. Arrogant because order and peace in the North in the event

of a very narrow vote for unity are not within her gift. Hypocritical because, in common with everyone in her party, absolute and unconditional support for the IRA's 1970-1997 campaign of violence is a compulsory requirement for membership. When was the last time you heard anyone in Sinn Fein criticising the actions of the IRA? The answer is 'never'. And the IRA Army Council is still there somewhere in the background, with Garda Commissioner Drew Harris confirming this as recently as 2020.

McDonald's arrogance is there too in her fanatical belief – common to all republicans – that unity is inevitable, that there is no alternative."We've built the peace [after 30 years of IRA murder and mayhem – AP], and we now look to the next phase: the reunification of Ireland. We are living in the end days of partition. The momentum behind Irish unity is unprecedented," she said in Canberra. My understanding of the Good Friday Agreement was not that Irish unity would be the next step, but that the reconciliation of the warring communities in Northern Ireland would be the first step along a road that could possibly – but not inevitably – lead to unity.

Which brings me to the victims group in Fermanagh. At the back of a half-empty factory estate in Lisnaskea are the comfortless offices (a far cry from the splendour of the National Press Club in Canberra) of the South East Fermanagh Foundation (SEFF), overseen by an impressive young man from south Armagh called Kenny Donaldson. Donaldson is adamant and even-handed in his insistence that republican and loyalist paramilitaries and the security forces must all be held to account for past atrocities.

August 19, 2022

For the past 24 years his group has undertaken the difficult, unsung work of representing, counselling and providing services for those whose family members were killed by republican and loyalist paramilitaries in Northern Ireland, the Republic, Britain and further afield during the Northern conflict. For obvious reasons, their work focuses in particular, although not exclusively, on civilians and members of the British and Northern Ireland security forces killed (murdered, they would say) by republican paramilitaries ('terrorists' they would call them in unionist South Fermanagh, which was one of the Provisional IRA's most active 'killing fields').

As Sinn Fein strides towards gaining political power in Ireland and both recognition and respectability internationally, these are the forgotten people. There are literally thousands of people on SEFF's books, most of them unknown to the uncaring world outside their families and friends. Who, for example, has heard of the five BBC engineers and building workers who died when they were blown up by a landmine on their way to repair a TV transmitter on Brougher Mountain on the Fermanagh-Tyrone border in February 1971? Nobody has ever been prosecuted for this atrocity, although it was widely believed to be an IRA bomb meant for the security forces (the battery used as the device's power source had been bought in Ballinamore, Co Leitrim). For the sad record, those who died were BBC engineers Malcom Henson from Lancashire and William Thomas from Carmarthen in south Wales; and local men George Beck, John Eakins and Harry Edgar, all from Kilkeel, County Down.

Who remembers the names of the 21 civilian victims of the November 1974 pub bombings in Birmingham, admitted by a former senior IRA man in 2014 but never officially claimed by that organisation? In Ireland this terrible attack is largely remembered because six innocent Birmingham-based Irishmen served 16 years in jail for it before a lengthy campaign led to their convictions being quashed by the Court of Appeal “It is often said that the greatest act of injustice was experienced by the Birmingham Six, but surely the greater injustice was the decision taken by a terrorist organisation to mass murder innocents – and to this day continues to deny victims and survivors the truth of the events that unfolded on that fateful day which saw their loved ones massacred,” says SEFF in one of its publications.

Who remembers the 11 Royal Marine bandsmen who died in an IRA bomb at their barracks in Deal in Kent in September 1989? Or Maheshkumar Islania, an RAF corporal originally from India, and his six-month-old daughter Nivruti, who were shot dead by IRA gunmen in Wildenrath in Germany in the following month? Or the two Australian tourists – Stephen Melrose and Nick Spanos – who were killed in front of their wife and girlfriend in May 1990 by black-clad gunmen when they stopped for a meal in a Dutch town which was popular with off-duty British servicemen? Or Tom Oliver, a County Louth farmer and father of seven, who was abducted and killed by the IRA in July 1991, his body dumped over the border in south Armagh?

All these people left behind stricken families and devastated lives. They are just a few examples of the thousands of

people who are obliterated from memory as Sinn Fein march onto their promised land of unlikely all-Ireland amity and harmony. There has not been a single prosecution of anyone involved in any of these IRA attacks. There has not been a scintilla of admission (with the singular exception of the Birmingham bombings man), let alone repentance, from those responsible. Nobody in this republic knows or cares about them. It is little wonder that Northern unionists ask if the lives of these forgotten people – and so many like them – are worth less than those who were killed by the British Army in Derry and Ballymurphy, whose cases have been the subject of constant and highly publicised international campaigns over half a century.

The South East Fermanagh Foundation continues its unheralded work from its offices in Northern Ireland and Britain. One of its publications, *Terrorism Knows no Borders*, also features 56 people (out of an estimated total of 105) killed in the Republic by the UVF, the IRA and the INLA, including those who died in the 1974 Dublin and Monaghan bombings, Lord Mountbatten and his companions blown up on his boat in Mullaghmore in 1989, and other civilians, soldiers, prison officers and gardai. Another publication, *Uniting Innocent Victims*, includes victims of ETA attacks in the Basque country. Kenny Donaldson is currently in Rwanda on a study visit to learn how they have worked to bring people together in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide in that country.

One of SEFF's most moving projects is a travelling exhibition of quilts, remembering the individual people from all sides who were killed/murdered during the Northern 'Troubles'. The project's three key messages are: "1)

violence was futile and totally unjustified; 2) those remembered were wholly innocent, and 3) the legacy of those represented will live on amongst those left behind.”

In its introductory brochure, the organisation says:

“Memorial quilts allow us to tell the story of the ‘Troubles’ in a very human way, encouraging people viewing the patches to consider the individual being remembered and not simply the badge or affiliation they had with a particular organisation which for some made them a ‘legitimate target’ for assassination. These individuals’ lives had worth not only to their families but to their colleagues, friends and the wider community at large. Ordinary men, women and children from right across the community were treated as collateral damage during the ‘Troubles’, and this continued with the concessions granted [to] terrorism and its political annexes within the Belfast Agreement and subsequent agreements (both overt and covert). This continues to exist to this day due to the justice, truth and accountability deficit being borne by innocent victims/survivors of terrorism.”

This is a small voice for justice and truth that needs to be heard throughout this indifferent island. In this jurisdiction it is all but silent. And with Sinn Fein moving into government here in the near future, it will not only be silent, but officially silenced too.

1 The Journal of Cross Border Studies in Ireland, No.8, Spring 2013, p.27

2 <https://www.irishtimes.com/politics/2022/07/20/united-ireland-poll-will-occur-by-2030-mcdonald-forecasts/>

Poem for today

In Kerry

by John Millington Synge

We heard the thrushes by the shore and sea,
And saw the golden star's nativity,
Then round we went the lane by Thomas Flynn,
Across the church where bones lie out and in;
And there I asked beneath a lonely cloud
Of strange delight, with one bird singing loud,
What change you'd wrought in graveyard, rock and sea,
This new wild paradise to wake for me. . . .
Yet knew no more than knew those merry sins
Had built this stack of thigh-bones, jaws and shins.
I stood upon the hills, when heaven's wide arch

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this sit

Church News Ireland

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

