

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Westminster Abbey**

## Image of the day

### Westminster Abbey

The fan vaulting in the Henry VII Lady Chapel at the east end of Westminster Abbey. The chapel was begun in 1503 and completed in 1516.

## People and places

### Deacons to serve in Down and Dromore

**The Revd Stuart Armstrong and the Revd Cosmin Pascu were ordained deacon by the Bishop of Down & Dromore at a service in Dromore Cathedral on Sunday 21 August.**

The Revd Armstrong will serve his internship in Magherally and Annaclone and the Revd Cosmin Pascu who has been ordained deacon will serve his internship in Magheralin.

Each outlined their path to ordination on the diocesan web site.

**The Revd Cosmin Pascu writes,** “I was born in Romania and for almost 18 years I grew up in two different orphanages. The village of Dacia, 80km from the city of Brasov, became my home for over 13 years. Growing up in a place that was affected by the powers of darkness and



sin, I found myself, a teenager, plunged into a place that was known for the spiritual, physical and emotional oppression that existed there.

“Yet God burst into this space, into this small village (which was hidden away) to bring His Son Jesus to a place where He was not wanted or welcome. In a place of darkness and great pain, Christ’s love, His death and resurrection have helped me to realise how much I was in need of his forgiveness, protection, rescue, care and love. God has found and reached down to me.

“At the age of 15, I was introduced to Jesus by a group of Christians who travelled from Ireland to the very orphanage where I grew up and showed me what it means to follow Jesus.

“In 2013, after serving Christ in different roles in Romania, God opened doors for me to come to study at Belfast Bible College. Once I graduated, God opened new doors and opportunities to serve Him and His church across Ireland by working with young people and students at All Saints’ Church in Belfast and moving after four years to work with the Christian Unions Ireland and Friends International.

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“To this day, Christ continues to be alive in my life, helping me not only to be able to serve Him where He brought me to St. Patrick’s Drumbeg with my family (Rachel and Beth) but also to be a living witness to His amazing work and Gospel in the work environment with the Lloyds Banking Group”.



**The Revd Stuart (Stu) Armstrong writes,** “I’m Stu, I’m 36, married to Janine, daddy to Ezra and Elah. We live in Waringstown and worship at Shankill Parish. I love board games, (very) heavy music and milkshakes. I’ve been in vocational ministry for almost 15 years now, and although side–stepping from youth ministry into ordained ministry, I am more convinced than ever of the need for parishes to prioritise mission to and spiritual formation of young people.

“My relationship with Jesus came alive as a young person. I honestly can’t remember a time that I didn’t accept the Gospel intellectually, but it wasn’t until I was 15 that I began to realise that following Jesus actually meant following Jesus. Someone once said “Jesus doesn’t want to be part of your life – He’ll have all of it or He’ll have none of it.” From this point on I have been committed to a whole life surrender to Jesus – even when I can’t understand what God is doing... like calling me into ordained ministry!

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“This has been a long and winding road, but eventually we found a spiritual home in the Church of Ireland. Here we found the fusion of all we love about the Church: daily rhythms prayer and Scripture; beautiful liturgy and contemporary worship; fresh expressions and age-old traditions; evangelism and justice; unity and diversity; quality youth and children’s ministry; and an openness to the things of the Spirit.

“It is these things, along with the close friendships formed during training that I will carry into my internship. I am so excited to get stuck into Parish ministry. The church needs people to live radical, Christ-centred, Spirit-empowered lives, and my sincere hope is to see people come to faith in Jesus and journey with them as they discover what this life looks like for them”.

The address was given by Revd James Burnett, Principal of Belfast Bible College. who preached on 1 Samuel 2: 35 – 35 – “I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind. I will firmly establish his priestly house, and they will minister before my anointed one always.”

## **Daily celebration of Latin Mass to end in Cork**

**The daily celebration of the Traditional Latin Mass (TLM) in Cork City is coming to an end in September, when the clerical changes for Cork and Ross come into effect.**

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The TLM is currently celebrated daily in St Peter's and Paul's Church in the centre of the city, but the parish priest Fr Patrick McCarthy has been appointed to a new position as chaplain to the Mercy Hospital.

Members of the TLM community in Cork said the change will have "a hard effect" on those who used to attend regularly.

## **Celebrating 400 years of worship in Lifford**

**"What a wonderful place," the Archdeacon of Raphoe said in St Lugadius' Church in Lifford, "what a blessing that this house has stood for 400 years, and that people have found God's heart here and been transformed by the word of God and by the Holy Spirit here."**

Venerable David Huss was preaching at a special service last Sunday celebrating the 400th anniversary of St Lugadius' Church, which is named after one of the twelve who accompanied St Columba to the Scottish island of Iona, almost 1,500 years ago. "How enthusiastic we should be not only to preserve it," Archdeacon Huss said, "but to enjoy it and to attend it."

The present church was built in 1621, and, sadly, the coronavirus pandemic thwarted plans to mark the anniversary last year, 400 years after the building's construction. On Sunday, though, parishioners and friends celebrated the achievement in style, with a service led by the Rural Dean, Rev Canon David Crooks, assisted by Canon John Deane and Archdeacon Huss, and



refreshments – and a special cake – afterwards, in the nearby Old Courthouse Building.

Archdeacon Huss chose two themes for his sermon: a wholesome heritage and a firm foundation. St Lugadius' Church – which was funded through the generous bequest of Sir Richard Hansard and his wife – was begun around 1621 and is one of only a few churches in Ulster still standing from that period. "This evening," the Archdeacon said, "we give thanks for that vision, 400 years ago, that a house of worship would be built, that the children of God would have a place to come and offer their prayers and praises to His holy name, to hear His word and to receive the sacraments."

St Lugadius' Church was a place of memories, the preacher said, a place of mission, a place that pointed to something

greater. “Church buildings serve as signposts. They stand in a country area, or an urban area, as a pointer to greater realities. That is why it is so important that we work to maintain the structure itself as well as the life that takes place within it.”

It was natural, on occasions such as today, Archdeacon Huss said, for people’s thoughts to turn to the future. “Perhaps we find it easier to celebrate the glories of the past than to be confident of what lies ahead,” he said, “because we’re at a time of change and [at] something of a turning point in society. If we even try to guess what the next 400 years hold it would be impossible; even the next 40 will almost certainly bring ongoing rapid change.”

The preacher suggested, though, that we could derive strength from Christ’s words in Matthew 7. “Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like the wise man who built his house on the rock...Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.’ He’s talking about firm foundations.

“And so, with our lives as Christian individuals and as the Christian Church, as we seek to build into the future and as we seek to navigate all that lies ahead, we need solid ground on which to stand and on which to build. What exactly is the firm foundation which Our Lord speaks of here in Matthew 7? Well, he says, ‘Whoever hears these words of mine and does them will be building on a firm foundation.’ The foundation is the Lord and His word, and putting it into practice. It is so tempting, in a time of change, to take comfort in tradition or to go running after innovation; to trust





old things just because they're old, or to look for new things just because they're new. It's so tempting to say, 'I was brought up with this so it must be right'; or to say, 'Everyone today is saying this, so that must be right.' But, no, we don't try simply to be traditional,

we don't try simply to be trendy, we try to be true to Christ. We build on His words."

There was still so much, Archdeacon Huss said, that the word of God had to say to today's world. "So many of the things that people value today – even those who have turned away from the faith – they will value freedom, equality, progress and kindness. These are Christian ideas. And even when our friends want to enjoy those fruits of

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Christianity without the roots of Christianity, they give us an opportunity to point them back to the foundation.”

A church that is going to be fit for the 21st century, the Archdeacon said, would be a church that taught like Jesus did: not clinging to tradition, not rushing to innovation, but taking the ancient ways and applying them to new problems.

After the service, members of the congregation walked the short distance to the Old Courthouse for afternoon tea. Two parish stalwarts, Audrey Starrett and Maurice Simms, cut a magnificent cake which had been baked specially for the occasion.

## **Dean of Christ Church's tribute to Rev Dr John Bartlett**

**It was with sadness that we learned of the death of Dr John Bartlett last Thursday. John was a true friend and loyal servant of the cathedral for many years of his life having served on both its board and chapter.**

John was a one time Precentor of the cathedral and in this role gave of his rich knowledge and keen enthusiasm for the music and liturgy of the cathedral. He was an active member of the board charged with steering the cathedral through many situations of economic and fabric crisis.

He was always levelheaded and both his intelligence and dedication helped to manage sometimes impossible situations.



The cathedral was fortunate to have such a great scholar in Dr Bartlett as a member of its clergy staff who shared his scholarly work through solid preaching. Such preaching could be both challenging and affirming at the same time and reflected a faith that was as solid

as a rock. We shall dearly miss him amongst us and we will feel a vacuum in his absence.

We are heartened to be left with a tribute to his scholarly work through his production of the lambic gospels for the three year lectionary the proceeds of which John directly donated to cathedral funds.

Words cannot express enough our deep sympathy for Olivia his wife who cherished John with a total self giving love.

It is our prayer that as the days go by we will gradually be able to come to terms with his passing and believe that one day we may all share eternal happiness at home with our God.

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Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

Dermot Dunne, Dean

## Clerical vacancy

**C of I Vacancies: Clerical - Incumbent – Parish of Moy & Charlemont (Diocese of Armagh): Applications are invited for the incumbency of the above parish which is currently vacant.**

Situated in the village of Moy, approximately 5 miles from Dungannon and 7 miles from Armagh. Easy access to M1 and to the West.

Good choice of primary, secondary and third level education in the area.

One church, morning and evening services each Sunday. Approximately 400 parishioners; wide range of parochial organisations.

The large rectory, in excellent order, is situated within church grounds as is the newly refurbished parish hall.

For further information and a parish profile please contact the Diocesan Secretary,  
Mrs J Leighton, Church House, 46 Abbey Street, Armagh,  
BT61 7DZ.

Telephone:

028 3752 2858.

Email: [office@armagh.anglican.org](mailto:office@armagh.anglican.org)

## World News

### Pope 'concern' as bishop is latest Catholic detainee in Nicaragua

**The Pope said on Sunday he was “concerned” by rising tensions between the state and the Catholic Church in Nicaragua, two days after bishop and regime critic Rolando Alvarez was detained.**

Pope Francis said he was following “closely with concern and sorrow” the situation in Nicaragua, amid a worsening standoff between the Church and a government accused of increasing authoritarianism.

“I would like to express my conviction and hope that through open and sincere dialogue, the basis for respectful and peaceful coexistence can still be found,” the head of the world’s 1.2 billion Catholics said after the Angelus prayer.

The Catholic Church in Nicaragua has been under increasing government pressure since opposition protests in 2018 were met with repression that resulted in hundreds of deaths.

Daniel Ortega, the president of Nicaragua, maintains that the protests were part of a Washington-backed opposition plot to unseat him, and accuses bishops of complicity. The Vatican has said Nicaragua expelled its ambassador to the country in March.



‘I would like to express my hope that through dialogue, respectful and peaceful coexistence can be found’  
Bishop Alvarez was detained on

Friday for “provocative” activities aimed at “destabilising” the Central American country. It followed two weeks under police siege at his official residence in Matagalpa, central Nicaragua, after he criticised the closure of Church radio stations and news channels.

Supporters said the bishop was taken “with violence” to an unknown location.

Eight others, including five priests, who had been holed up with the bishop, were taken to Managua with him, according to the Latin American Bishops Conference, and were all under investigation.

Later, the Church said Bishop Alvarez was being held at his “family home” where Cardinal Leopoldo Brenes was allowed to visit him.

The cardinal reported the bishop’s “physical condition has deteriorated” but his “spirit is strong”.

## Perspective

### The Call of the Lord by Archbishop Francis Duffy at Knock Novena

**This afternoon, under the banner A Journey of Hope, I invite you to reflect with me on the call of the Lord. I would like to look at three parts of the call of the Lord to us as believers.** I base my reflections to some extent on what is found in the recently published synthesis of the consultation that took place in preparation for the 2023 universal synod in Rome, and which was formally published here in Knock on Tuesday last during this year's Novena. The three reflections are firstly: the call to bring healing to those who are hurt by Church; secondly, the call to serve the Lord and his people in parish communities; and thirdly, the call of the Lord to follow him in our personal lives and circumstances.

#### The call of the Lord to bring healing to those hurt by Church

The darkest place in our Catholic story is clerical and institutional abuse. It is addressed in the synodal report clearly, directly and very movingly. It is referred to as an 'open wound' that was concealed by the Church for so long. Those who participated in the synodal preparations identified a sense of loss, anger, betrayal, estrangement, in

addition to the deeply personal and living sense of hurt. There is also a clear desire for healing.

I quote two submissions that put it so well and so clearly. One person said: 'We need to learn from the past. There is recognition that we are a Church in need of healing at every level and, as a survivor of abuse who engaged in the process remarked, we need to find a forum in which we can all heal together'. The second quotation reads: 'We must pledge ourselves to journey with survivors, to meet with them, preferably in small groups where dialogue is possible and opens us to the presence of the Spirit'. Healing is needed by so many people and also by the Church. The call of the Lord is to continue and to create environments where that healing can take place.

Significantly, the synthesis links abuse to other aspects of life where healing is needed, 'our understanding of sexuality and of power; the absence of women in decision making roles; transparency and accountability in governance; clericalism'. The synthesis invites the Church to examine how its own structures and way of operating contributed to this situation.

That healing that is so necessary extends to those who suffered abuse, clerical and institutional. It also extends to others who felt and continue to feel marginalised, stigmatised and judged by society and by Church because of sexual orientation, perceived position in society and being judged and found wanting. The Lord's call is to bring healing to those who suffer.



## **The call of the Lord to serve in the parish community**

The context in which the listening process took place over the last year is one of a Church with a falling practice rate and falling vocations to priesthood and religious life. The absence of so many people from our churches and the dramatic and continuing fall in the number of clergy and religious is leading to significant change in contemporary Irish Catholicism. This has begun to result in what is described as a 'shortage of clergy' and an ongoing increase in the number of parishes without a resident priest. No parish exists on its own, it is part of a diocese, and dioceses and parishes are addressing this steadily worsening situation. I have been in churches and parishes where there is no longer a resident priest, a neighbouring priest or a team of priests look after several parishes. I have seen the parish thriving, parishioners energies are turned, as is right, to making their place, their church, their parish, a welcoming, celebrating, and supportive community of faith. That is as it should be.

The call of the Lord is to make your parish faith community the very best it can be in terms of pastoral care, liturgy, sacraments, youth, catechesis, adult faith formation, local church heritage and identity – all with a single purpose: to help each person hear and respond to what Vatican II described as the 'Universal Call to Holiness'. There are diocesan services and other initiatives that will help you develop and engage your energies and your faith. The pastoral care and pastoral leadership will continue to be provided by a priest, albeit a priest shared with other parishes and not necessarily resident.

There is a rich history of Catholicism in every parish, but, there is no point in looking only to the past, only to past structures, practices and timetables, instead we learn from the past, look at the present and we plan for the future. Past practices or the way things 'always' were, cannot hold us back or curtail us. We allow the Holy Spirit to guide us, and to animate initiatives in the service of the Lord and his people.

This is the best of times to be involved in your parish, by being present, by participating, and for some, by being directly involved in making sure your parish can flourish, regardless of whether you have a resident priest. Remember if you already have such a priest now, resident or not, he will be looking after another parish or two or be part of a team, so please, look after him as well and look out for him and support him.

## **The call of the Lord to follow him**

This is the key and central call of being a Christian. We are all part of our culture and particular social contexts and part of the wider world, and it is a great world: "God saw all he had made and it was good" (Gen. 1:31). Think of so many technological, communications and medical advances and think also of all the good people do. These and so many more advances, and the generosity of spirit underpinning them are not universal, they are not everywhere and they are fragile, but there is a growing awareness of the need to care for people. There is also a growing awareness of the threat to our beautiful planet, 'our common home.' This is a vital awareness that will lead to its protection for future generations. It is in that context of beauty side by side with

flaws, that the Lord continues to call people to follow him as individuals who relate to and live among others. Daily life is where we find the Lord at work, in its ordinariness and extraordinariness, in its routines and in its surprises, in the love and affection and excitement of relationships, in looking forward and being hopeful, in coping with stress and disappointments and failure and successes, in sickness and in health, until death brings us face to face with God. We encounter the Lord through others, we encounter him in the sacraments, in prayer and most especially in the Mass.

There is a particular call of the Lord to priesthood and religious life; it's a call that continues to ring out but is not answered as before. It is a good time to be a priest in a parish, it is a good time to be a religious sister or brother or priest in one of great congregations or the new arrivals. It is great time to serve God and his people at this extraordinary time in Irish history. We are all called to be followers of the Lord in the circumstances in which we find ourselves, as single people, spouses, partners, in our family, with our friends, and in the community.

A key part of being followers of the Lord is to be people of hope. The call of the Lord is essentially to be an agent of hope. It is not so much an optimism or wishful thinking but a hope that is firmly based in the good news of Jesus Christ.

When he was with us at the World Meeting of Families in the summer of 2018, Pope Francis said it is 'the Spirit of God, who constantly breathes new life into our world, into our hearts, into our families, into our homes and parishes.' He said that 'each new day in the life of our families, and each new generation, brings the promise of a new

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Pentecost, a domestic Pentecost, a fresh outpouring of the Spirit, the Paraclete, whom Jesus sends as our Advocate, our Consoler and indeed our Encourager.’ The promise of the Holy Spirit remains with us today. It is the Holy Spirit who will guide us along the synodal pathway which the Holy Father has identified as the way forward for the Church in the twenty-first century. Let us remember and never forget that we are at the beginning of a new and exciting journey together.

I see hope in survivors telling their story and in the desire to have healing and peace. I see hope in the parish communities of faith who are prepared to walk together, building on the past but preparing for new ways. I see hope in the need for God and for his love and mercy for us as individuals and as a Church. The Lord calls us to follow him, to believe in him and to have hope in him.

Archbishop Francis Duffy is Archbishop of Tuam.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## Church News Ireland

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