



## On the rocks

**Residents near Ferryland, Newfoundland, view the first iceberg of the season as it looms off the Avalon Peninsula, known in Canada as “Iceberg Alley”.**

## **Rock The Frock unique wedding fair in Belfast Cathedral**

There is a very unique wedding fair happening in Belfast Cathedral.

The stunning location in the heart of the Cathedral Quarter is set to host Rock The Frock, a vintage and handmade wedding fair.

It will take place in the cathedral on Saturday, May 6, and will showcase wedding exhibitors offering handmade, vintage, bespoke and DIY wedding services for creative couples.

The event is being dubbed "a celebration of the genius crafty and creative wedding talent that we have right here in Ireland".

With 50 vintage sellers, bridal designers and bespoke wedding suppliers, it all makes for a less ordinary feel with a twist on the traditional.

The fair will take place from 12noon to 5pm on May 6 at Belfast Cathedral. Admission costs £3 and proceeds go to the upkeep of the Cathedral. Admission to the Cathedral normally costs £5 but this will be reduced to £3 on the day and will

include access to the fair and all parts of the Cathedral open to the public

More information on the event and the exhibitor list can be found online at [frockfairsni.com](http://frockfairsni.com) their Facebook page.

## **Mass of Hope for Belfast's homeless community**

Saint Patrick's Church, Donegall Street is set to host a Mass of Hope for Belfast's homeless community. At the Mass, a new soup-kitchen will be opened. It will provide a safety-net and vital lifeline to those experiencing poverty and homelessness.

The initiative is in response to Pope Francis' call to reach out to those in need with concrete acts of mercy. Already, the parish has received pledges of support from community workers and volunteers. Local people are keen to make a difference and show their solidarity with those who have fallen on hard times.

Mass, which will take place on Wednesday 26 April at 7.00pm, will be a joyful celebration with music and song by Belfast City Gospel Choir. It

will provide the city's homeless with an opportunity to gather and give their testimony in an atmosphere of faith and friendship. Everyone is welcome.

- + Saint Patrick's, founded in 1815, is one of Belfast's oldest and most historic city-centre churches.
- + Saint Patrick's is a major contributor to the cultural and civic life of Belfast. It is home to a world-famous painting by Sir John Lavery.
- + Saint Patrick's played host to an historic royal visit by the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall in 2015.
- + Saint Patrick's hosted the Door of Mercy for the Diocese of Down and Connor in 2016.

## **Dublin parish to host diocesan Messy Church**

St Matthias' Church in Killiney–Ballybrack is holding a Diocesan Come&C Messy Church on Sunday May 21 from 4.00 pm to 6.00 pm. Everyone is invited to join them and experience Messy Church. The theme for the afternoon is 'The Unbelievable Truth – Jesus is Alive' and all are welcome.

St Matthias' Church Killiney - Ballybrack, started Messy Church in September 2015 and it has been growing from strength to strength ever since. Messy Church is a way of being Church for all ages involving craft, celebration and hospitality. The parish runs Messy Church once a month for two hours on a Sunday afternoon in the parish centre and church. It is informal and easy for people attending to invite family, friends and neighbours to Come & C. Their attendance ranges from 60 to 90 people each month and it is established as part of the regular worship services.

The initiative is extremely well supported by parishioners of St Matthias'. It involves approximately 20 people to run the Messy Church Service, including a Welcome Team, a Craft Team and a Hospitality Team. The initiative has been successful in attracting people and families who were not attending Church to come to Messy Church, some now also attend 10.30 Sunday Worship and one mother has joined the Select Vestry.

Alistair Doyle, who coordinates Messy Church in St Matthias' points out that Messy Church is mentioned in the Come&C Booklet as being an activity supported by lay voluntary activity. It was also mentioned by most groups at the High



School Come&C Event in June 2015 and at subsequent Rural Deanery Meetings. However, he notes, there are very few Church of Ireland parishes in the dioceses running Messy Church.

“There are no other registered Messy Churches of any denomination in Dublin & Glendalough. There are now almost 3,700 churches worldwide, of all Christian denominations running Messy Church and the pace of churches adopting it is accelerating. There are nearly 30 registered Messy Churches in Ireland, and over 20 in Northern Ireland,

however less than 10 in the South, mostly in Cork and now only one in Dublin,” he explains.

“Messy Church of course fits with the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion, as it gives the Messy Church Team the opportunity to Tell, Teach and Tend to an intergenerational congregation. It provides a great informal way of inviting friends, families and neighbours to Come&C, introducing them to us and for those who have not attended church before, introducing them to Jesus,” Alistair adds.

Messy Church started 14 years ago in a Church of England Parish in Portsmouth, faced with many of the challenges that many parishes experience today, in attracting new people and engaging families and young people.

Lots more information can be found at [www.messychurch.org.uk](http://www.messychurch.org.uk) . St Matthias' Church is on Church Road, Ballybrack, County Dublin. The parish website is [www.stmatthias.ie](http://www.stmatthias.ie).

## **Bishop's shock at desecration of Longford Church**

Bishop Francis Duffy, Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnois, has expressed his shock and  
[churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)

sadness at the desecration of St Michael's Church, Shroid, in Longford parish.

The church was broken into and the tabernacle has been stolen. The break-in was discovered on Easter Sunday morning. The church had not been in use over the Easter period when all parish ceremonies took place in Saint Mel's Cathedral in Longford town.

Bishop Duffy visited the scene of the break-in this morning. Speaking afterwards he said, "This act of desecration is disrespectful to religion and to the local community. It is extremely upsetting for the parishioners and the clergy here in Longford that something like this could happen, but especially during Holy Week.

"The tabernacle is the centre piece of every Mass as it holds the sacred Communion hosts. It holds the bread that we believe has been transformed into the body of Christ. That is what we believe and that is why this act of desecration is so distressing.

"The tabernacle is of great significance to the local parish here. We would love to be able to get it back so I appeal this Easter Sunday morning for anyone with any information to



contact the Gardai at Longford Garda Station on 043 335 0570.”



## **Archbishop Eamon Martin to launch HOPE camp in Limavady**

HOPE Summer Camp in Limavady will be launched on July 30th 2017 by Archbishop Eamon Martin, Primate Of All Ireland.

HOPE stands for "Help Our Parish Evolve" and the theme of the Summer Camp is "Faith - Fun - Friendship."

HOPE also recently agreed a three year deal with O'Neills to produce their bespoke Sports top and leisure range.

The HOPE Summer Camp is the largest Camp of its kind in the whole of Ireland. The Camp is now in its 5th Year. Last year all 300 places in the camp were filled in 20 hours!

The Application Process opens on Sunday 23rd April at 8pm. Anyone looking to develop this Camp for their parish for Summer 2018 and beyond should get in touch with HOPE Limavady via their website or the Parish Office

## **Church of Scotland takes a fresh look at pilgrimage**

This year the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland will be asked to reverse centuries of



hostility to the ancient practice of pilgrimage and to affirm its place within the life of the church.

This year the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland will be asked to reverse centuries of hostility to the ancient practice of pilgrimage and to affirm its place within the life of the church.

The Camino de Santiago, Europe's most popular pilgrimage route, attracts 250,000 pilgrims annually, up from just a few thousand during the 1970s.

Now the tradition is seeing a massive resurgence in Scotland with six major pilgrimage routes



***View from the St Magnus Way pilgrimage route.***

under development and enthusiasm for spiritual journeying rising every year.

Last month, the National Lottery announced new funding of £399,000 to develop the Fife Pilgrims way, a 70-mile route that will travel from Culross and South Queensferry to St Andrews. On Easter Sunday (16 April 2017), the 900th Anniversary of St Magnus' death, a new pilgrimage route in his honour was launched in Orkney.

The Rev Dr Richard Frazer, Convener of the Kirk's Church and Society Council believes pilgrimages offer a genuine and meaningful spiritual pathway for modern-day Christians.



***Waymarker along the St Magnus Way pilgrimage route***

“Worship comes in many forms and pilgrimage is one of them,” Dr Frazer said. “The habits of Sunday morning services, as noble and as good as they are, do not necessarily reach people who have a profound spiritual hunger but have never developed those habits.

“People who walk the Camino may not be conventionally religious, but very few who reach Santiago de Compostella would deny the journey there was a spiritual experience.

“In a time when the Church is looking for new ways to touch the hearts of all people, pilgrimage is a very powerful tool.”

In the first centuries AD, Jerusalem and other Biblical sites quickly became a destination for early Christians.

Known as the People of the Way, those first Christians were instructed to journey so that they might spread the good news. They obeyed and over centuries the missionary saints became legends. Saints and their exploits became associated with special places: St Columba and Iona; St Ninian and Whithorn; St Cuthbert and Lindisfarne; St Magnus and Orkney; St Mungo and Glasgow; St Andrew and St Andrews.

During the Middle Ages when pilgrimage was practised throughout Europe, these places became important sites for worshippers. The streets of St Andrews were specially designed to accommodate the crowds of pilgrims who travelled there.

But during the Reformation people rebelled against abuses such as selling pardons for sins and making money from supposedly sacred

objects like pieces of saints clothing, locks of hair or bones.

Reformers viewed pilgrimages as superstitious and discouraged them, and they fell out of favour across Europe for a time. Yet the idea never went away. John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, for example, viewed pilgrimage as a metaphor for the challenges we face on our pathway through life.

"I think pilgrimages were viewed as superstition because people believed that you could be healed by the water from a special well or by the bones of a saint," Dr Frazer said. "That is why Robert the Bruce, who is said to have suffered from leprosy travelled twice to Whithorn, a site made sacred by St Ninian."

"But what those who frowned on pilgrimage missed is that the most important part of pilgrimage is not the destination but the journey. It is on the journey that we meet others and find Christ in the stranger.

"It's unfortunate that in reforming some wrongful practices, we may have neglected a way to worship that is meaningful to so many."

Jesus spent his entire ministry on the move, Dr Frazer notes, sometimes going off alone to remote places to pray and prepare for the trials he would face. And after Christ's resurrection it was on the Road to Emmaus that he revealed himself to disciples. "They offered hospitality to a stranger and then realised they had been in the presence of the risen Christ. And it's quite common to encounter Christ through welcoming people you have never met before. The sharing of hospitality is a sacred thing; it's very sacramental."

The Rev David McNeish, minister for Birsay, Harray and Sandwick in Orkney, says the St Magnus Way came about after a small group of people from different churches came together to discuss a pilgrimage route on the island.

"When we started talking about a pilgrim route St Magnus, who is the patron saint of Orkney, was the first person who came to mind. After his martyrdom on the island of Egilsay, his body was brought to Birsay on the mainland. Then 20 years later, when the seat of power moved to Kirkwall, his bones were taken there. So there was a journey Magnus himself took after his death, as



well as evidence of people making pilgrimage to Orkney in the Middle Ages.”

From just an idea in Autumn 2015, the St Magnus Way pilgrimage route quickly took on a life of its own. A range of groups have already granted funding to the project, including the European LEADER fund, the Society of the Friends of St Magnus Cathedral, the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, the local community council, Tesco and the Church of Scotland.

Historians from the University of the Highlands and Islands are helping to define the most accurate route and to write the story that will unfold along the way.

As well as placing waymarkers along the route, the Orkney Pilgrimage group is developing a phone app which will link to Bluetooth beacons that tell the story of St Magnus and provide background on places to stay or to find refreshment. Pilgrims will also find spiritual reflections for their journey.

David McNeish says spiritual journeying has a timeless appeal. “The idea of walking and

reflecting and engaging with God in the landscape and in the stories of the early Christians feels very relevant to people today. We talk a lot about the drop in attendance at Sunday services and about other ways to worship. Pilgrimage is a way for a lot of people to reconnect with their spirituality and with the Church.

“Rather than asking people to come inside the church, we are coming outside to encourage faith in new ways. As a pilgrim you get a chance to encounter God as you walk in the great cathedral of nature.”

Nick Cooke, secretary of the Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum, said the new Fife route will bring tourism to rural communities that need a boost. “Fife was a huge pilgrimage centre in the Middle Ages and by bringing walkers and cyclists to the middle of Fife this route will help revive some vulnerable rural communities.”

\* More about the European LEADER Fund [here](#)

\* Church of Scotland [http://  
www.churchofscotland.org.uk/](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/)

## Today in Church History - April 20

**April 20, 1139:** The Second Lateran Council, led by Pope Innocent II and attended by 1,000 church leaders, opens in Rome. The council focused on reforming the church in the wake of the East-West schism (1054) and preserving the temporal possessions of the clergy.

**April 20, 1233 (some say 1232):** Pope Gregory IX appoints full-time papal inquisitors and gives the Dominican order authority to carry out the Inquisition. For their vigilant and persistent work, the order won the moniker "Domini canes" or "God's dogs."

**April 20, 1441:** At the Council of Florence, Pope Eugenius IV issues the bull "Etsi non dubitemus," declaring the pope to be superior to church councils.

**April 20, 1494:** Johann Agricola, Saxon theologian and reformer, is born. He studied under Martin Luther at Wittenberg, and the two worked closely until Agricola embraced antinomianism—an overextension of the doctrine of "justification by faith" that asserted Christians are exempt from the need to observe any moral law. A violent controversy with Luther began, and it persisted even after Agricola recanted (Luther was one of very few who refused to accept the recantation).

**April 20, 1718:** David Brainerd, missionary to New England's Native Americans, is born in Haddam, Connecticut. Expelled from Yale for attending a revival meeting, Brainerd attained fame after his death (at age 29, from tuberculosis) when Jonathan Edwards published his journal. The diary inspired countless other missionaries, including William Carey, who is called "the father of modern missions" (see issue 8: Jonathan Edwards and issue 77: Jonathan Edwards).

**April 20, 1853:** Fugitive slave Harriet Tubman, who had escaped from the eastern shore of Maryland four years earlier, makes a return trip to the South to rescue other slaves. By the time slavery was abolished, she had made 19 such trips, liberating at least 300 fellow African Americans.

**GET CNI HEADLINES EACH DAY**

**Facebook and Twitter**

**Click on logo at CNI Home page**

**[www.churchnewsireland.org](http://www.churchnewsireland.org)**

**+ Please share CNI with your friends**

**[www.churchnewsireland.org](http://www.churchnewsireland.org)**