

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Queen's representative

Image of the day

Tributes to church member and former Lord Lieutenant

The death of former Lord Lieutenant of County Antrim, Mrs Joan Christie CVO OBE has evoked tributes throughout the county and from Dublin.

Mrs Joan Christie CVO OBE has passed away following a tragic car accident last week.

In 1976, Mrs Christie was awarded the MBE for services to the Government and then in 2005, she was awarded the OBE for services to Education.

In 2017, HM The Queen awarded Mrs Christie the Commander of the Victoria Order, a private honour for services directly to the Royal family.

She received an Honorary Freedom of the Borough from Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.

Mrs Christie was appointed as Lord-Lieutenant of County Antrim in 2008 and retired from the role in June 2019.



Front page photo - Mrs Christie is pictured with former Lord Lieutenant's Cadet, Emma Rea, from 1NI Bn Army Cadets, receiving her award

In a statement Councillor Stephanie Quigley of Coleraine said "I am totally heartbroken about this terrible tragedy. To have known Joan Christie was such a great privilege as she was the most beautiful lady in every way.

"She was kindness, love and dignity personified and carried out her role as the late Queen's representative with such grace and joy. She touched so many lives in a very special way.

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“I was so blessed to have held her hand and walked her to her seat at her retirement gala dinner in 2019, a moment I will never forget.

“My deepest condolences and prayers to her much loved family her son Marcus, her two daughters and the entire family circle. May her beautiful soul now rest in peace.”

A spokesperson for Bushmills British Legion said “We are extremely saddened and heartbroken this morning to learn of the passing of our dear friend and former Lord Lieutenant for Co.Antrim, Mrs Joan Christie CVO. We offer our deepest sympathy to her family and trust that God will comfort them in their time of sorrow. Being a regular attender at our Branch events over the years she will be sadly missed by us all.”

The Reserve Forces and Cadets Association said - It is with great sadness that we at RFCA (NI) have heard of the sudden passing of the former Lord Lieutenant of the County of Antrim, Mrs Joan Christie CVO OBE, who served until her retirement in 2019. Mrs Christie was also Honorary Colonel of 1st (NI) Battalion Army Cadets. Mrs Christie was a much loved member of the Reserves and Cadets Community in Northern Ireland and we would like to take this opportunity to pass on our heartfelt condolences to all the family circle at this very sad time.

The RBL Dublin recalled the support Mrs Christie had given to the all-Ireland acts of remembrance at Islandbridge.

News reports

Solemn, simple' funeral for Benedict XVI

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI will have a “solemn but simple” funeral this week, the Vatican said, in a ceremony that will be presided over by a sitting pope for the first time in centuries.

The funeral on Thursday will be in accordance with the former pontiff's wishes and will be led by Pope Francis. The unusual circumstances will mean the Vatican is navigating uncharted waters as normally the death of a

Healing Service
"Encountering Hope in 2023!"

7.30pm Thursday 5th January

St. Patrick's Church of Ireland
220 Newtownards Road
Ballymacarrett
Belfast

Br David Jardine
"Living hope"

Prayer Ministry and Anointing with Oil



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pope is followed by a conclave, in which cardinals gather in the Sistine Chapel to choose a new pontiff, but that will not be required this time.

Pope Francis, 86, paid tribute to his predecessor describing Benedict as “beloved” during a New Year’s Day service.

The Vatican released the first photos of Benedict following his death on Saturday at the age of 95, showing him resting on a catafalque in the chapel of the former convent inside the Vatican city state where he spent his retirement.

His head resting on a pillow, Benedict was dressed in red vestments and a cream-coloured mitre, his hands clutched a rosary.

His body was transferred to St Peter’s Basilica, where the faithful will be able to pay their respects. After the funeral, he will be buried in the papal tombs under the church.

Bishop returns to his baptismal roots

“January is about fresh starts and new beginnings. We make our New Year’s resolutions full of enthusiasm in the hope that they will last beyond the second week of January!” Bishop Adrian Wilkinson writes.

He continues, “So too in church we are encouraged to step out again in faith with new focus and commitment. On the Sunday after the Epiphany, we recall the Baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan by John, and so are reminded of our own baptism. Baptism is the start of a lifelong journey of

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commitment and service, but it is done in the company of other Christians and with the risen Christ. That is why having the presence of the faith community at services of public baptism is so important. We journey together and in the fellowship of others. Baptism is not a private undertaking, but a public commitment. In exceptional circumstances when emergency baptism is required, the Book of Common Prayer has a service for Receiving into the Congregation for those privately baptised so that this corporate aspect of our faith is denied to no one.



“This year, on the Sunday after the Epiphany (8th January), I will be presiding at a service in Killanne Union. My late father was rector of this parish when I was born, and so it is the place of my baptism. I have no memory of living there but I do look forward to joining the people in that parish, seeing for the first time the font in which I was baptised and maybe even finding the entry in the baptism register. Perhaps when you are attending church that Sunday, you might remember your parents and godparents and those who encouraged you in your faith.”

Armagh appointment

Parishes of Ballymore and Clare - After the process of a Board of Nomination, the Archbishop of Armagh has announced that the Rev'd Colin Darling, currently Rector of Killyleagh, Down & Dromore, has been appointed as Rector of Ballymore & Clare. The date of the Institution Service has yet to be confirmed.

Church Mission Society partner receives MBE for work to end female genital mutilation

Church Mission Society (CMS) has praised one of its partners after she was included in the King's New Year Honour list for her work to end female genital mutilation (FGM).

Dr Ann-Marie Wilson received an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) for services to the prevention of violence against women and girls.

She is a mission partner of CMS and founder of the charity, 28 Too Many, which has carried out extensive research into the prevalence of FGM.

Dr Wilson, who was diagnosed with incurable non-Hodgkin Lymphoma in 2015, has spent years collecting over 3,000 survivor stories and creating resources for advocacy towards ending the horrific practice.

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In addition to her work with the charity, she is an adviser to the UN, World Bank and Metropolitan Police on the issue of FGM.

She has dedicated her life to stamping out FGM in 28 countries where the practice is prevalent and recently succeeded in having it outlawed in Sudan after the 2020 publication of a legal report by her charity, 'Sudan: The Law and FGM'.

The report raised awareness about the scale of FGM in Sudan, affecting an estimated 87 per cent of girls and women between the ages of 15 and 49.

Following the release of the report, FGM was banned in Sudan and is now punishable by up to three years in prison.

Thine is the day, O God, thine also
the night; thou has established the
moon and the sun. ~ ~ Psalm 74:115



2022 marked the 10th anniversary of 28 Too Many. In the 10 years since its launch, it has achieved a 10 per cent reduction in FGM across 10 countries and has published over 120 research reports examining laws on the practice and calling on European governments to take action.

Debbie James, Church Mission Society's Deputy CEO, said it was "wonderful news" that Dr Wilson had been honoured with an MBE.

"She has shown remarkable dedication to the cause of anti-FGM campaigning. Her faithful service has highlighted a huge injustice and impacted the lives of thousands of women and girls," she said.

The Bishop of Truro, Rt Rev Philip Mounstephen, a former Executive Leader of CMS, called Dr Wilson "truly inspirational".

"In the face of significant challenges she has been an indefatigable campaigner, faithfully pursuing God's call to champion the rights and dignity of some of the world's most vulnerable women," he said.

"I'm in awe of all she's done and this honour is a fitting and hugely well-deserved recognition."

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In the media

The EU debate - The anti-EU side by Anthony Coughlan

Fifty years later, I still think EU membership was a mistake, Anthony Coughlan writes in the Irish Times

In 2001 and 2008 the Irish public showed clearly their concern at our trajectory, but our establishment was no longer willing to turn back

The European Commission building in Brussels: A constitutional revolution 'by stealth has made us citizens of a Federal EU, effectively a "United States of Europe", without most of us realising it or thinking through its implications'.

"In the 1972 Accession referendum that brought us into the EEC, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the Labour Party and the two recently divided Sinn Féin parties urged a No vote. But when it came to the poll it looked as if most voters said to themselves that if Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael – traditional political opponents – recommended joining, it must be a good thing. The huge Yes vote was equivalent to the combined vote of the State's two biggest parties.

Would people have voted the same way if they could have seen how the EEC/EC/EU has developed in the half-century since? I would myself, but it is idle to speculate. What matters is where we are now and what the future holds.

What has happened in between has been a monumental betrayal of democracy by Ireland's political establishment. Whether one regards joining the EEC as a mistake or not, membership was genuinely endorsed by Irish voters in 1973.

But when voters rejected the Nice Treaty in 2001 and the Lisbon Treaty in 2008, two things had changed: the Irish public showed clearly they were concerned at the direction of travel, but our establishment was no longer willing to turn back, no matter what the people wanted.

Ireland's neutrality debate is set to heat up in a radically new defence landscape

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The consequences of the rejection of the people's instincts and – more importantly – their instructions, have been profound. One was joining the single currency, which led to the reckless credit expansion by the Irish banks and the 2009 financial crisis. The other has been the constitutional revolution by stealth that has made us citizens of a Federal EU, effectively a “United States of Europe”, without most of us realising it or thinking through its implications.

A federation is a state, and to advance that goal has been the purpose of the eight EU-related referendums we have had since 1973

The 1950 Schuman Declaration, which the EU celebrates each year on May 9th, “Europe Day”, described the first supranational treaty establishing the European Coal and

Steel Community as “a first step in the federation of Europe”. A federation is a state, and to advance that goal has been the purpose of the eight EU-related referendums we have had since 1973. Do people remember the monstrous assault on national democracy across Europe which brought the EU constitution, that is now part of our Constitution, into being?

In 2004 there was the “Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe”, whose first article stated: “This Constitution establishes the European Union” – clearly a constitutionally different EU from what was called the EU previously. When the French and Dutch peoples rejected this in referendums, it was 99 per cent repackaged three years later as the Lisbon Treaty. Only Ireland was allowed a referendum on that. And when we voted to reject it in 2008, we were made to vote again in 2009 on exactly the same treaty to get a different result.

Poll findings lay down a challenge to advocates of unity

The EU constitution implemented by the Lisbon Treaty abolished the European Community that had been the repository of supranational powers up to then. It transferred those powers to the new European Union which Lisbon established, giving it legal personality for the first time. It gave this new EU powers over foreign and security policy, and crime and justice. It gave it the power to decide our human rights. It put EU law-making substantially on a population basis to the benefit of the big states. And it made us all real citizens of the post-Lisbon EU so that we all now have two citizenships, with state sovereignty divided between the supranational federal and the national/regional

level, just as in such classical federal states as the USA and Germany.

Ukraine? The Irish Constitution says that Ireland should stand for ‘the pacific settlement of international disputes’. Yet we are currently assisting one side militarily

One can only be a citizen of a state and all states consist of their citizens. The prime civic duty of each of us, with our two citizenships, is to obey EU law and national law. In any conflict between the two, European law has primacy.

Where are we now, post-Brexit? European Union membership has brought benefits of course, just as our membership of the British Union did, but on any objective assessment, the costs now outweigh the benefits. We are now net contributors to, rather than beneficiaries from, the EU budget. Today Ireland does more of its foreign trade with North America and the UK than it does with the continental EU. We really are closer to Boston than Berlin.

What of partition of Ireland? Can it ever be in Britain’s security interest – or indeed England’s – to facilitate a united Ireland as a member state of a European federation dominated by Franco-Germany? I doubt it. If that is so, then anyone who aspires to a reunified Ireland should logically be advocating Irexit – not least as a meaningful gesture to the “Britishness” of Northern unionists.

And Ukraine? The Irish Constitution says that Ireland should stand for “the pacific settlement of international disputes”. Yet we are currently assisting one side militarily while imposing economic sanctions on the other, for that is what

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EU policy demands of us as it subordinates Europe's interest to that of the US in the latter's proxy war with Russia, down to the last Ukrainian.

We need to look more objectively at the post-Lisbon EU and its policy trajectory. That means looking at it more critically than is our wont.

Anthony Coughlan is Associate Professor Emeritus in Social Policy at Trinity College Dublin. Irish Times Dec 31

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Prayer ministry training by Divine Healing Ministries

There is still time to register for prayer ministry training starting on Sunday 15th January. You can register by sending an email to:

fergus@divinehealingministries.org

This is very practical training to equip and encourage participants in prayer ministry.

The main themes covered in the sessions are:

Session 1 - Introduction to prayer ministry. How to begin.

Session 2 - Practical aspects of prayer ministry.

Session 3 - The Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Session 4 - Ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit.



PRAYER MINISTRY TRAINING

Location - The Mill, 7 Calvin Street, Belfast BT5 4NS
Sessions run 3:00pm - 5:00pm

Session 1 - 15th January
Session 2 - 29th January
Session 3 - 12th February
Session 4 - 26th February
Session 5 - 12th March

No set fee, donations are welcome
Spaces are limited so please sign up via email
to fergus@divinehealingministries.org



Session 5 - Praying for inner healing. Repentance and Inner Healing.

Other themes addressed in the training include:

Unforgiveness.

Depression.

Listening to the Lord and recognising His leading.

Qualities required for prayer ministry.

Deliverance ministry.

Recommended reading and resources.

Starting and growing a healing ministry.

The Word from York

Archbishop Stephen Cottrell preaches on the transforming power of grace, on the 250th anniversary of the hymn Amazing Grace being first sung in public.

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You can listen to the BBC Radio 4 Sunday Worship service cut & paste : <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001gk27>
Sermon available to read. Click or cut and paste:
<https://www.archbishopofyork.org/speaking-and-writing/sermons/bbc-radio-4-sermon-new-years-day>

Bishop Smith publishes book on Vatican II memories

Dr Michael Smith, Bishop Emeritus of Meath, has published a new book looking back on his time working at the Second Vatican Council in the early 1960s.

Bishop Smith, who retired in September 2018, served as a stenographer at ‘Vatican II’, which sat between 1962 and 1965 and was convened by Pope John XXIII to address the Catholic Church’s relations with the modern world.

‘Vatican Council Memories’, published by Veritas and launched at St Patrick’s College, Maynooth on Tuesday evening last, is Bishop Smith’s account of what he describes as his ‘university’ – the steep learning curve associated with being in a responsible role for all 168 days of the Council. Indeed, Bishop Smith is one of the few surviving Council-goers who attended the historic event in its entirety.

Sent to Italy by Fr Larry Fagan of St Finian’s College, young Michael Smith was studying for the priesthood the Irish College in Rome when he was called to work as a one of a group of stenographers contributing to the official record of the Council. As ‘Vatican II’ progressed, he was ordained a priest in March 1963.

To prepare for his stenography work, he had to learn an intricate system of Latin shorthand devised by a German professor, Dr Aloys Kennerknecht.

“It’s only a German who’d wake up one morning and say, ‘I’m going to draw up a system for Latin shorthand’, and have the determination to do it,” Bishop Smith said in an interview on his retirement in 2018.

After the student Michael Smith became Fr Michael Smith, postgraduate studies followed at the Pontifical Lateran University, and a doctorate in canon law under the supervision of Monsignor Giuseppe d’Ercole. While his study on the structure of the early Irish church progressed, a balance had to be struck between it and his attendance at Vatican II.

“We weren’t obliged to go every day, but it was too fascinating not to,” he said. “Every day was historic.

“I had a sense of the history. I had written an essay on Irish involvement in Vatican I, which was in 1870, for the journal in the Irish College. The Irish were more active in Vatican I in some ways than they were in Vatican II.”

Spending 168 days taking notes, transcribing audio and penetrating the variety of accents at the Council, the young Fr Michael Smith contributed handsomely to the official record of Vatican II.

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“I missed a lot of class, but you managed. It was fascinating, and I made lifetime friends, and met a lot of bishops,” he explained.

‘Vatican Council Memories’ (208 pp) offers readers a unique insight into the Council’s many remarkable moments, decisions and debates, highlighting the significant figures, including the many Irish participants, who helped shape this historic event. It is available from Veritas at €19.99.

Perspective

Thoughts on this World Day of Peace by Archbishop Eamon Martin

My thoughts on this World Day of Peace are once more with the family, loved ones and colleagues of Private Sean Rooney, the Irish peacekeeper whose funeral took place in Dundalk just before Christmas.

We continue to pray also for Private Shane Kearney and the other members of the 121st Infantry Battalion who were injured that day.

Private Rooney was the 48th Irish soldier to die in the cause of peace while serving with the United Nations peacekeeping force in Lebanon. During his funeral, the Bible verse that kept coming into my mind was “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God” (Mt 5:9).

Some people are prepared to make personal sacrifices and take heroic risks for peace; in Private Sean Rooney's case, he made the ultimate sacrifice – giving his life to protect the safety of others. It is worth asking ourselves today: what am I prepared to do in the cause of peace – at home; in my workplace and community; in my country and in the world?

Today is the World Day of Peace. Pope Francis situates his message for today in the context of the recent Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing war in Ukraine. Peace happens, he says, when we are prepared to go beyond our personal or national interests and think instead, “of the common good, recognizing that we belong to a greater community, and opening our minds and hearts to universal human fraternity.”

Interestingly, ten years ago, in his last Message for the World Day of Peace, the late Pope Benedict XVI – whom we remember especially in prayer during these days – made a similar point, saying that “the attainment of peace depends above all on recognizing that we are, in God, one human family.”

Pope Francis explains this concept further. He says:

“We cannot continue to focus simply on preserving ourselves; rather, the time has come for all of us to endeavour to heal our society and our planet, to lay the foundations for a more just and peaceful world, and to commit ourselves seriously to pursuing a good that is truly common.”

The Holy Father commends the way in which nations of the world united recently in tackling the spread of the coronavirus, Covid-19. People were prepared to sacrifice some of their personal freedoms – like going out, travelling, visiting loved ones – in the name of protecting life and the common good. However the Pope cautions how “the virus of war is more difficult to overcome than the viruses that compromise our bodies, because it comes, not from outside of us, but from within the human heart corrupted by sin (cf. Gospel of Mark 7:17-23).”

War and violence thrive on closed hearts, on cold, selfish and stony hearts, that are filled with suspicion and blame, with greed and the thirst for power, and which prefer the talking up of difference while closing down opportunities for reconciliation and hope. This is something that all of us on the island of Ireland should keep in mind as we mark in 2023 the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement.

The Agreement was an immense historic achievement which involved openness, sacrifice and risk taking. It provided an opportunity for a new beginning after such an awful period of death, injury, family trauma, devastation of property and livelihoods. Sadly, twenty five years on, the trauma and hurt of those horrific years remain substantially unhealed. Wounds within, and between, our communities remain open – wounds of body, mind, spirit and heart – and the legacy of suffering continues to fuel mistrust.

In our message for this New Year, the Christian Church leaders in Ireland express our great concern for the state of

the fragile peace on this island. We are more aware than ever that the work of peace is unfinished.

The vision of the Good Friday Agreement was one of 'partnership, equality and mutual respect' in relationships within and between these islands. The Agreement was never intended to be an event, or an end in itself. It sought, rather, to provide a framework upon which to build peace and a more prosperous future. The Agreement depended on people respectfully acknowledging that there are different, but 'equally legitimate, political aspirations' here. The Agreement was not a resolution of conflict; but, it did provide a roadmap towards transforming conflict through sincere good faith and a sustained commitment to its various arrangements and strands.

A quarter of a century later, we could honestly ask ourselves: have we done enough to secure the precious gift of peace, to dismantle the barriers which divide us, while strengthening the links and opportunities for love and mutual understanding? Are we sufficiently caring for the life and dignity of every person here, recognising their needs, their rights and freedoms? Are we open to establishing the full truth of our past, so as to enable justice and true remorse, and in that way facilitate forgiveness and healing?

In asking these questions I encourage everyone to approach the anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement positively and sensitively. It is vitally important to acknowledge and give thanks for the lives and livelihoods that have been saved, while honestly recognising a shared responsibility for its vision not yet being significantly accomplished.

The work of peacemaking and reconciliation involves sacrifice, respect for the other and openness to change. We owe it to the architects of the past – who built the Agreement by taking risks – to redouble our efforts for peace and reconciliation this year in the name of the common good.

Authentic peacemakers look beyond self interest, party interest, or even national interest in order to gain ‘the true and the good’ for all. In that sense they are open to the transcendent, recognising that true and lasting peace is found in God, and is God’s gift. Ten years ago, in his reflection on the words, “Blessed are the peacemakers”, the late Pope Benedict XVI reminded us that peace is both a gift of God, and at the same time is the fruit of human effort.

It is my prayer that in 2023 we shall all be open to making a special personal effort in the name of peace; to go beyond our selfish interests or desires in the name of something greater and more worthwhile.

For that intention I invoke the powerful blessing of Aaron, read today from the Book of Numbers 6:24-26:

“May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you peace.”

Archbishop Eamon Martin is Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland. This homily was delivered at 11.00am Mass last Sunday morning in Saint Patrick’s Cathedral, Armagh.

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Poem for today

The Sound Of The Sea

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The sea awoke at midnight from its sleep,
And round the pebbly beaches far and wide
I heard the first wave of the rising tide
Rush onward with uninterrupted sweep;
A voice out of the silence of the deep,
A sound mysteriously multiplied
As of a cataract from the mountain's side,
Or roar of winds upon a wooded steep.
So comes to us at times, from the unknown
And inaccessible solitudes of being,
The rushing of the sea-tides of the soul;
And inspirations, that we deem our own,
Are some divine foreshadowing and foreseeing
Of things beyond our reason or control.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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

