



Image of the day - Christingle Cork



C of I tribute to Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and Archbishop Michael Jackson at Christ Church Cathedral on the Feast of St Laurence O'Toole in November 2018.

Archbishop Michael Jackson has paid tribute to Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, who announced his retirement this week. His successor is Archbishop-elect Dermot Farrell, Bishop of Ossory.

Archbishop Jackson stated:

“I want to wish Archbishop Diarmuid Martin all that is best in his retirement. Archbishop Martin has been a valued friend, both ecumenically and personally and I have appreciated

the mutual trust that we have enjoyed as Archbishops of Dublin.

“From the day I arrived here as Archbishop of Dublin, I felt welcomed by Archbishop Martin to a city which is his own.

“Archbishop Martin is a confident and compassionate exponent of the Gospel.

“He has helped to develop the ecumenical landscape of the diocese. There is a number of events each year which we share publicly including the annual Good Friday Walk of Witness which we lead together from Christ Church Cathedral to St Mary’s pro Cathedral. We regularly take part together in Ecumenical Bible Week.

“I also wish his successor, Bishop Dermot Farrell, Bishop of Ossory, every blessing as he takes on this work of service and of leadership in Dublin.”

Leave TikTok to kids, urges priest who went viral

A priest who became a viral sensation during lockdown has urged his fellow clergymen to leave TikTok to young people. Father Pat Ward drew over 2,000 viewers for his livestreamed masses during lockdown.

Fr Pat Ward, from Arranmore Island in Co Donegal, was named an inspirational hero in the Gala and Virgin Media Inspiration Awards for his inventive online masses.



Fr Pat Ward, from Arranmore

After he started livestreaming his masses back in March due to pandemic restrictions, Fr Pat quickly drew a large following from all over the world, with upwards of 2,000 people tuning in.

A video of him using an Alexa speaker to play Daniel O'Donnell in St Columba's chapel in Burtonport quickly became an online sensation.

But Fr Pat has urged his fellow priests to give young people their own online space, joking that the church has “flattened Facebook”.

He said: “I do feel that we've kind of flattened Facebook a wee bit for some people, because every Sunday mass is all over Facebook.”

He added: “I kind of feel that TikTok is for young people. We shouldn't invade their space. We've driven them out of Facebook already.

“They find it boring because old people are on trying to be funny. Young people aren't impressed by that kind of thing.

“I do have a TikTok account. I think it's hilarious, a lot of it.

“Some people are really, really inventive with the things that they do. I do like going through it and wasting time watching it.

“But I honestly think it should be left for young ones. They need a space that's not invaded by oldies.”

Fr Pat gained a following from all over the world for his livestreamed masses, including viewers in Norway, Australia and the US.

“We actually had to change the mass time to accommodate viewers in America because it was a bit early for them,” he said.

Combining meditation and prayer with humour and musical numbers on his ukulele, he quickly became an online hit.

He said: “There was a lot of fear at that time too. I was trying to talk calmly to people about the situation we were in.

“I brought the ukulele just for company. People liked that too, and I made up a few songs.

“It was something that calmed them in a time of uncertainty and they felt it was something that they needed. I was quite happy with that.”

Terry Waite pens children's book Tommy Twitchnose

He is best known as a humanitarian, inspirational speaker and author and will always be remembered for being held captive after negotiating for the release of hostages in Lebanon, David Morgan writes in the Warrington Guardian.

But, even in his 80s, Terry Waite is finding new ways to reinvent himself.

The former Lymm resident's writing has previously seen him tackle his own experiences as a special envoy for the Church of England, poetry and even comedy.

Now he has released his first children's story – The Tales of Tommy Twitchnose – that he wrote during the lockdown periods.

It is about the adventures of a Tweed jacket-wearing mouse in the village of 'Cheesethorpe' with a message for youngsters about respecting nature.

And the 81-year-old has become so immersed in Tommy's world – inspired by Beatrix Potter's stories – that he has two more volumes ready to be published.



Terry Waite is finding new ways to reinvent himself

“I remembered my own childhood when I first learned to love books,” said Terry, who used to work for grocer Henry Milling’s.

“They were first read to me and then I was able to read them for myself. I made all kinds of pictures in my mind so that the characters I read about became alive.

“I wanted to write stories that would be gentle and encourage children to have respect for the animal kingdom and so I wrote in the style of Beatrix Potter.

“Not that I compare myself with that great writer but that is the style I adopted.”

The inspiration for Tommy himself was closer to home for Terry, who now lives in Suffolk.

The former Stockton Heath Secondary Modern School student added: “The story began when friends of mine moved into a converted barn in Suffolk.

“They went away for a holiday and on their return discovered that mice had eaten their slippers!

“I laughed about this and this set me thinking about writing a story about Tommy Twitchnose and his family and friends.

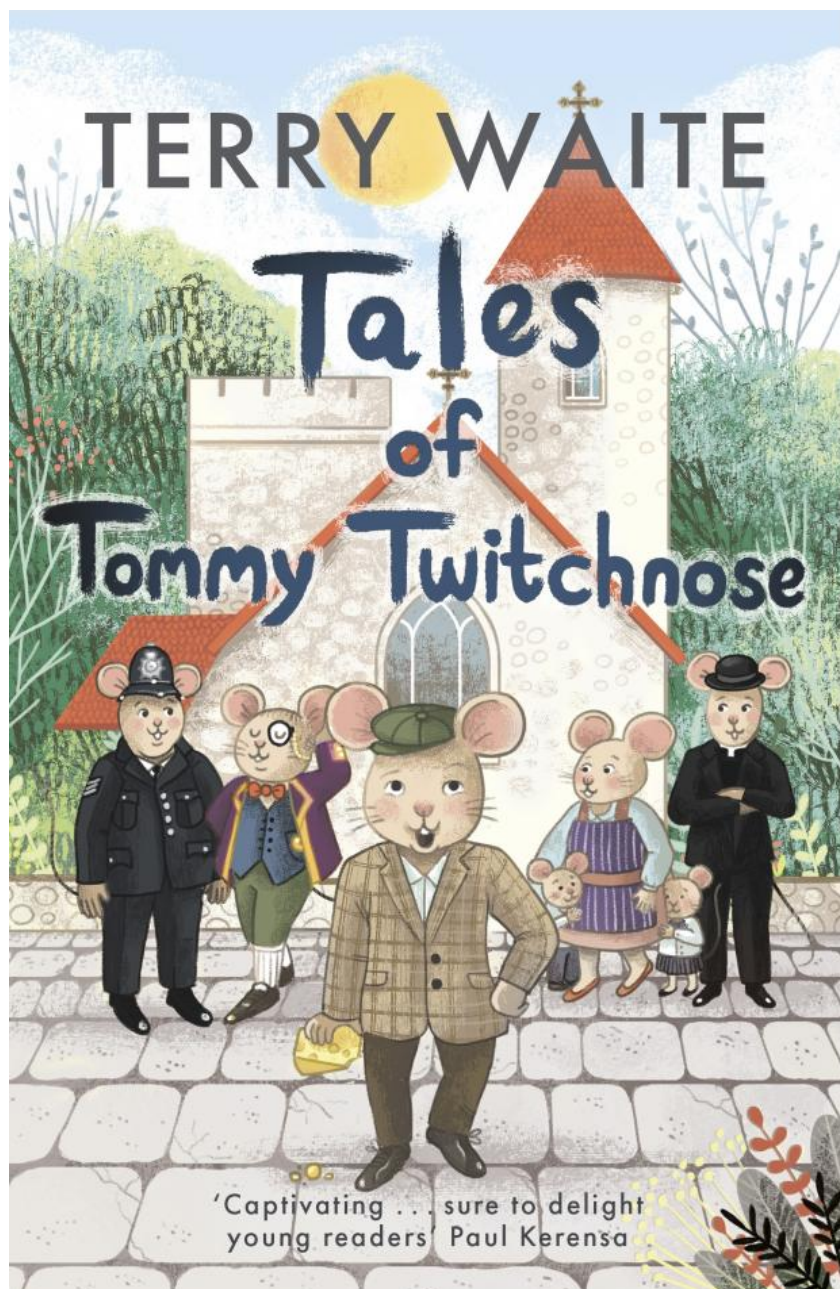
“Boris, the tortoise actually is a real tortoise who lives in the garden of the old barn. The moles run the underground railway. Nelson the seagull flies wounded animals on his back to the animal hospital.

“Lord Whiskers has a snooty wife who if she gave you a stare could freeze custard at ten paces.

“All good fun but conveying the message that we need to realise that all animals have a world of their own which we should respect.”

Terry told Weekend his versatility as an author still surprises people – and even himself.

He said: “People expect me always to write about hostages and my time in captivity. Well, I have written about that – Taken on Trust – but I have also written a book of poetry and reflections – Out of the Silence. I am not overly keen on poetry but I wanted to capture an emotion or a place in as
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few words as possible.

“I have also written a humorous book about funny things that happened when I travelled with the then Archbishop of Canterbury – Travels with a Primate –and another book about solitary places and people I have visited or met – Solitude. Now I’m writing stories for children and am wondering what might come next.”

Last year, Terry did 28,000 miles in the car and there was overseas travel on top of that. So the pandemic year has been very different for him – but equally busy.

He said: “I founded Hostage International years ago and each week online have an hour with either former hostages or their family members who are recovering after facing a most traumatic time.

“I have also tried to do what I can for the homeless through the charity, Emmaus, of which I am president.

“Then there is YCare, which I helped found more than 30 years ago, and works to assist young people overseas find employment and make a decent living.

“It is in the process of reshaping and so this takes a lot of time. There has been no shortage of things to do.

“However I have felt real sympathy for those who have found the year very difficult. It has been tough on those who have lost their jobs or have been bereaved.”

Terry also gave a speech during Warrington Male Voice Choir’s virtual Christmas concert.

He has been working with the choir since the IRA bomb in Bridge Street killed Tim Parry and Johnathan Ball in 1993 – accompanying them on trips to promote peace in Northern Ireland.

Terry added: “Music has always played a big part in my life and I really am honoured to be president of the Warrington Male Voice Choir. The choir have been working for peace and harmony for very many years. They show a true northern and British spirit: ‘We will not be beaten’.”

Talking of not being beaten, Terry concluded with a message of hope for 2021.

He said: “The coming year will be tough for many people. What I hope is that we will be able to draw on our

inner resources and support each other with compassion and understanding. I was a child in the war years and the problems we faced then seemed insurmountable. We survived because we pulled together as a nation and in many instances cared for each other.

“We were not perfect but we were determined to get through a disaster. If we have the inner spirit we shall survive.”

Boko Haram militants raided mostly Christian village in Northern Nigeria on Christmas Eve

At least seven people have died, and seven others are missing after Boko Haram militants raided a mostly Christian village in Northern Nigeria on Christmas Eve.

The attackers burnt a church, abducted a priest and sacked medical and food supplies in the village of Pyemi, near Chibok, where 200 schoolgirls were kidnapped in 2014.

The group had previously released a threat saying Christians would be attacked and killed during the Christmas season following another attack that killed 27 people in a small town in Southern Nigeria.

Rev. Daniel Mbaya, General Secretary for the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria (EYN), said: “We had the information three days before the attack, and Security agencies were informed. They [Boko Haram] had sent word that they were coming to do “Christmas” in town and specifically mentioned Garkida. Most people fled into the bush.”

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari said in a statement he was committed to “remain unyielding in confronting the Boko Haram insurgency as well as other forms of criminality”.

Nathan Johnson, International Christian Concern’s Regional Manager for Africa, said, “Boko Haram promised that they would attack Christians and fulfilled this promise. Many say that Boko Haram does not hate Christianity, however, this attack shows their true intention towards Christians in Nigeria.”

Last year, the radicalised group released a video showing the killing of 11 Christians in Nigeria’s Borno State on Christmas day.

“This is the second year in a row where Christians have been slaughtered by the group on Christmas Eve. It is time for the Nigerian government to end these atrocities,” Mr Johnson said.

According to the UN, Boko Haram has killed at least 36,000 and uprooted two million people from their homes.

The long read

The exceptionalism of daughters of the Irish clergymen

A review in the Irish Times of some of the remarkable women who were the daughters of the rectories and deaneries...



Slieve of St Patrick, near Ballymena

“It is remarkable that some of the very earliest women to graduate as doctors were the daughters of clergymen. Emily Campbell, born in Tralee and the daughter of Rev William Chestnut, graduated from the College of Surgeons in Edinburgh...

“The chief professional interest of Amelia Grogan, daughter of Rev John Grogan and a graduate of the Royal University of Ireland, was psychiatry. Katherine Maguire, daughter of Rev John Maguire, showed particular interest in the social conditions of the poor and worked in public health.

“Ella Webb was the daughter of the dean of St Patrick’s Cathedral. Webb graduated with first place from the old Catholic University in Cecilia Street in 1904. Kathleen Lynn, the pioneering doctor who founded St Ultan’s hospital for
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children, was also the daughter of a clergyman. And there were more.

“Many other clergy daughters were successful in a range of areas from literature to law. Louie Rickard was a novelist; Helen Waddell and Maude Clarke, graduates of Queen’s university, were academics.

[[] <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/the-exceptionalism-of-daughters-of-the-irish-clergymen-1.4444749>]

News briefs

Templebreedy Group of Parishes (Cork) had a wonderful Christingle (Christ-Light) Service on ZOOM recently.

Everyone received instructions of what they needed for the service, which until now was annually held in the Church.

It was a celebration of ‘God: The Light of the World.’

Christmas is a time for traditions, and the Christingle is a tradition with a long history. It has its origins in the Moravian Church dating back to 1747.

It is a physical three-



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dimensional symbol of God as the Light of the World, and it expresses what he has given for us and to us. As a beautiful reminder of God's love.



Degrees of excellence for Karen and Christina -

Congratulations to two members of the Connor Diocesan Development Team, who both recently graduated with a Master's Degree in Theology.

Connor Youth Officer Christina Baillie and Church Army Evangelist with the North Belfast Centre of Mission, Karen Webb, embarked on the degree with the University of Cumbria unaware the other was also undertaking the course!

Christina, who has been with Connor Diocese for five years, already holds an Undergraduate Degree in Social Work from Queen's University, Belfast.

“I wanted to learn more about God at a deeper level and to consider a wider range of academic thought on theological issues,” Christina said.

“In addition, I hoped for an experience which would advance my own theological understanding as this applies to my role, by equipping me to engage in complex issues and seek to share these with young people.”

She was delighted to discover Karen was also doing the degree. “It was lovely having a colleague to walk with on this journey of study and great knowing Karen also ‘got it’ around keeping up with our study while also working full-time over the past two years,” Christina added.

Her dissertation was an inter-disciplinary study considering how social work methods of reflection and anti-oppressive practice could help to challenge the bias which individuals bring to the Bible as they read.

Karen, who works at Connect Base in Shankill Road, and has been with Connor Diocese since 2015, has a Joint Honours Degree in Computers and Business from Queen’s University and has Church Army Training through University of York.

“God inspired me to do the Master’s – a chance lifting of a leaflet at Summer Madness two years ago – and a conversation with one of the staff from Belfast Bible College,” Karen said.

“Every obstacle I put up for not doing it was knocked down, and so I found myself applying on the last day of applications!

“Christina and I both doing it was amazing! I was at uni the first time with her dad who did computer science with me! I was so thankful to have someone I knew and worked with – I was the oldest woman doing it by a generation, but Christina and all the other young women made me feel part of the gang. I reclaimed my youth!”

Karen’s dissertation was a research project into the question: ‘How might the Anglican Church in the Greater Shankill Area of Belfast adjust to their changing context?’

She said: “I was able to send out questionnaires to both clergy and laity in the parishes in the Mid-Belfast Rural Deanery and my dissertation analyses those results and makes recommendations.”

Death of the Very Revd Victor Stacey, former Dean of St Patrick’s Cathedral

The death has taken place this morning (Wednesday 30 December 2020) of former Dean of St Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin, the Very Revd Victor Stacey. Victor was elected Dean of the National Cathedral in February 2012 and retired in March 2016. Prior to that he served as Rector of Christ Church Dun Laoghaire for 17 years and Santry with Glasnevin for eight years.

Archbishop Michael Jackson paid tribute to Dean Stacey this afternoon.

“Victor served the United Dioceses of Dublin & Glendalough both pastorally and as Provincial and Diocesan Registrar prior to his election as Dean of St Patrick’s Cathedral. He will be remembered for his careful custodianship of the cathedral in both its civic and liturgical life and in welcoming visitor and pilgrim alike. Many will also remember with great affection his gentle manner and his instinct for friendship. In recent times he has borne chronic ailment with great dignity,” the Archbishop said.



Dean Stacey was born in 1944 and was educated at Kilkenny College, the National University of Ireland, Trinity College Dublin and Queen’s University Belfast and CITC. He was ordained a deacon in 1972 and priested the following year. He served curacies in Derriaghy and Knock. He was Rector of Ballymacarrett from 1979 to 1986; Santry with Glasnevin from 1986 to 1995 and Dun Laoghaire from 1995 to 2012.

Late of Bunclody, Co Wexford, Victor passed away in Brabazon House, Sandymount. He was the son of the late
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George and Nora and brother of Joy and the late Gillian. He is deeply regretted by his sister, brothers-in-law, nephews, nieces, godchildren and friends.

Due to current restrictions a private Funeral Service will be held. A livestream will be available at <https://vimeo.com/event/153499> at 4pm on Saturday (2 January). A memorial service will take place at a later date.

Pointers for prayer



Today we pray for people who will be homeless in 2021. As we look towards the new year, people experiencing homelessness will once again be faced with a new set of distinct challenges.

Today we pray for COP26. The global climate conference, rescheduled from 2020, will be taking place in Glasgow in 2021. We pray for ambition and action from world leaders

on climate change, and pray that those already affected by climate chaos would be kept safe.

May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph & Mary, and the peace of the Christ-child be yours this Christmas and the blessing of the Father, Son & Holy Spirit be with you. Amen

Almighty God, you make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of your Son Jesus Christ. Grant that, as we joyfully receive him as our redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our judge. Amen.

Today we pray for the transformation which Jesus brings. This Christmas, we remember the coming of Jesus to our world, and the promise of hope which that brings with it.

Today we pray for those facing redundancy at present. This year, record numbers of people were made redundant during lockdowns and waves of the coronavirus, as Government support changed.

Speaking to the soul

Halfway through packing for their pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the Temple and its sacrifice, the covenant and its blood, Joseph is distracted by the keening of the child. He had never noticed before how like grief a baby's cry could be – wailing for the womb, mourning the waters from which it was drawn out and adopted into the world. Half-turning, he would scoop up the infant and cradle him, soothe him from the pain to come; but his mother already has him in her arms, holding him to one breast, whispering secrets.

Halfway through the night, a shepherd shifts uneasily in sleep, dreaming of a terrifying light, a polyphony of voices, but it is only the sheep bleating. They, too, still watch the sky for the return of angels.

Halfway through their journey, the astronomers, looking for their own light, rail at the cloud cover and complain to their camels. They set up camp in the desert, closer than they think to the site of God's deliverance.

Halfway through dinner, Herod belches and clutches his chest. Heartburn. For all the heat of its name, his blood runs cold each time he is reminded of his mortality. He is out of sorts, and he is afraid.

Halfway through a prayer, Anna pauses. She can hear Simeon greeting another young couple with his practised patter, putting them at ease with his restless eyes and excitement, as though every infant coming through these portals might be, at last, the Messiah. As she hears them murmuring by, gossiping under their breath about Simeon's zealous optimism, for the first time in decades, Anna realizes that she is hungry.

Halfway through the prayer of confession, I stumble across the words, "We have not loved you with our whole heart."

On the sixth day, halfway through Christmas, with the wholesomeness of God's love lying in a manger and the heartlessness of Herod running riot in the streets; with God's Incarnate One being prepared for his first wound, and his mother slowly healing, but her catching her heart in her mouth each time he sighs; on the sixth day, Joseph half-turns back, forgetting to pack up the bread he had picked up

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before the baby cried, his heart halfway to heaven and his spirit halfway to madness with the wonder of it all.

