

December 2, 2021

CNI
CHURCH
NEWS
IRELAND



**Image of the
day**

**Advent
Light**

**Photo by
David Wynn**

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Image of the day - Archbishop Michael Jackson reading at the Advent service in Christ Church Cathedral on Sunday

News Reports

Black Santa focus on charities supporting refugees in Northern Ireland

Almost a year on from a deliberate fire at a building which supports refugees in Northern Ireland, the 2021 Belfast Black Santa campaign is raising awareness of displaced people and hoping to tackle prejudice.

The fire at the Multi–Cultural Association took place on the day that the charities who benefitted from the 2020 fundraiser were brought together in celebration by the Dean of St Anne’s Cathedral. The fire was judged a deliberate hate crime by the police.

Dean Stephen Forde felt the power of the fundraising appeal, now in its 45th year, could be focused on supporting refugees and helping to create a more inclusive society for all.

“The intolerance of difference is the root cause of many of our problems in Northern Ireland,” Dean Forde remarked. “Yet we know that our communities can be sources of incredible support and love for people. I hope to use the appeal this year to tackle prejudice and misconception, and to change the reality for some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

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“Fortunately few of us will experience what forces some people to flee as refugees. Those who come here because of their fear of persecution for such as reasons as race, religion, sexuality do so because they believe they will be safer in this place. But the likelihood of a minority ethnic person experiencing a racist attack in Northern Ireland is 17 times higher than a person from a Catholic or Protestant background experiencing a sectarian attack. As a society, and as individuals we need to do more to stand up to hate crime in Northern Ireland. I hope this focus from the Black Santa Appeal goes some way to supporting the people who need it most.”

The Belfast Black Santa Sit Out campaign was started in 1976 by Dean Sammy Crooks. All the money gathered is donated to local charities with a proportion given to Christian Aid. None of the money raised goes to Belfast Cathedral. As well as charities which support refugees, the money raised by this year’s Appeal will support over 200 other local charities, including those which care for people with disabilities, children and the elderly; the improvement of employment opportunities for young people and a host of small charities which cannot afford paid fund-raisers. The funds raised in the weeks before Christmas are distributed to charities at the Good Samaritans’ Service, held in the Cathedral early in the year following each Sit-out.

He added: “It is an honour to continue this tradition and to help people support over 200 charities in Northern Ireland. The continuing impact of the pandemic means fundraising for charities has once again been impacted severely and this campaign is a really important source of help.

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Dean Stephen Forde pictured outside St Anne's Cathedral with Nemat and Melika, refugees from Syria and Algeria who are supported by Footprints Women's Centre.

“The Black Santa Appeal is something I look forward to every year, and know that it’s a Christmas tradition for many people here. This year we’re delighted to be supported by a number of Northern Ireland’s influencers on social media, and I hope it will mean the beginning of a new tradition for many more people.”

Dean Stephen Forde will begin the annual Sit-Out on Monday 13th December until Christmas Eve on 24th. People can visit the Cathedral and donate directly to the famous barrel either through cash donations or use contactless transaction. The Appeal website (www.belfastblacksanta.org) will accept online donations throughout the month of December. It is also possible to purchase original merchandise to support the Black Santa Appeal, including a beanie hat designed by the local artist James Ashe and made by the social enterprise Orchardville. Interviews with a number of the charities that will benefit from this year’s appeal are also featured on the website.

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The professional services firm PwC is once again supporting the Cathedral with volunteers to deliver the online campaign. Last year it helped raise well over £200,000 for the Appeal. Lynne Rainey, PwC Partner and Purpose Lead in NI, commented: “It’s a privilege to support Dean Forde as well as the many charity organisations across Northern Ireland for a second year through the Belfast Black Santa campaign.”

Ms Rainey added: “The juxtaposition of the Good Samaritan’s Service taking place at the same time as the attack on the Multi–Cultural Association highlights the importance of this year’s focus from the Cathedral. No–one wants to become a refugee but those who are forced to, deserve help and support. Our society is at its best when it’s inclusive and welcoming, and we all benefit from increased diversity and learning from other cultures. I hope everyone gets behind this year’s appeal.”

Plague of drugs is raging out of control,’ Dublin Archbishop warns

Dublin is experiencing a plague of drugs which is raging out of control, Catholic Archbishop Dermot Farrell has said, reports Patsy McGarry in the Irish Times

In Ireland generally, taking drugs for some people was now the same as having a drink, he said.

“The ‘normalisation’ of a drugs culture in Ireland is a major societal issue,” he said.

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“Even in the midst of the pandemic, another ‘epidemic’ — that of crack cocaine and the violence that follows in its wake,” has taken hold, he said. “The causes of the crack cocaine epidemic we are experiencing in this city, and more widely across the country, are complex and deep-seated,” but he believed “the plague of drugs, which rages out of control, can be effectively addressed if we all work together.”

Speaking at a Mass in St Andrews Church on Westland Row, he said that, “based on the goodwill and the many dedicated efforts of community groups, government and religious leaders” these causes can be addressed.

The solution “does not lie only in stemming the flood of illegal drugs, dismantling the drug gangs and cartels, more effective policing, reforming the criminal justice system,

Family Christingle Service



**Come and make a
Christingle and
celebrate the
Light of the World**

**Christ Church, Carrowdore
Sunday 5th December
4.00pm**

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investment in historically disadvantaged areas, but it's also a matter of character," he said.

"The real response is not just a better drugs programme, but a willingness to journey with the families whose members are ensnared by unscrupulous peddlers of drugs, peddlers of death. To bring people back we need to accompany them," he said.

We were "all brothers and sisters inextricably connected to each other. If we lose that sense of interconnectedness, we also lose our sense of compassion, empathy and responsibility for each other."

There were "people in this city, in the Church, in our schools, in our estates and in our families who are committed to the care of those afflicted by drugs," he said. They were "marked by a striving to minister to those caught in the cycle of addiction," he said.

Waiting, as marked by the season of Advent, "has moved to the centre of our lives in ways that we couldn't have imagined two short years ago: the omnipresent waiting for Covid-19 tests, and then the waiting for the result. Now many are eagerly waiting for a Covid-19 booster."

There were "people with terminal illnesses waiting to depart this life" and "there are families waiting for the contagion of drugs to be eradicated," he said.

Courtesy The Irish Times 29/11/2021

Failure to rollout vaccines globally is costing lives, Christian Aid warns

International humanitarian charity, Christian Aid, has warned the UK Government must join the growing international consensus and waive vaccine patents and the debt of developing countries or see more lives threatened by COVID variants.

Jennifer Larbie, UK Advocacy and Policy Lead at Christian Aid, described the Omicron COVID variant as a reminder of “the failure to rollout vaccines globally is costing lives” and called on the UK Government to agree global action ahead of hosting a summit of G7 Foreign Ministers next weekend.

Despite reports, 82 countries are set to miss the internationally agreed adult vaccination target of 40% by December. The UK has delivered just 11% of committed vaccine doses for developing countries and only this month disposed of 600,000 AZ vaccine doses after they expired.

The intervention follows the inconclusive meeting of G7 health ministers held today to discuss the Omicron COVID variant. While G7 Ministers recognised the “strategic relevance of ensuring access to vaccines”, no further commitments were made.

Jennifer Larbie, UK Advocacy and Policy Lead at Christian Aid, said:

“The Omicron COVID variant is the latest reminder that the failure to rollout vaccines globally is costing lives.

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“The best way to prevent the emergence of vaccine-resistant variants of COVID-19 is by ensuring universal access to vaccines in every country. However, a lack of leadership from the UK has created a world of ‘have jobs and have nots’.

“World leaders have an obligation to remove the barriers preventing the rapid rollout of vaccines in the global south. That means urgently waiving patents, which the UK has shamefully opposed, and a comprehensive debt cancellation package.

“With the UK hosting the G7 Foreign Ministers meeting next week, the clock is ticking. The fair global distribution of vaccines isn't about charity, it is about justice and keeping promises. It is about doing what is right to protect every citizen in our global community.”

The G7 joint statement on the Omicron variant can be found here -

[[] <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/g7-joint-statement-on-the-omicron-variant>]

Christian Aid has worked on issues of vaccine equity since the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. The charity was early supporters and members of the People's Vaccine Alliance.

Gordon Brown, former Prime Minister and World Health Organisation ambassador for global health financing, has warned the UK is lagging behind the EU and US by pledging only 100 million doses and has released only 11% of that total in the 5 months since.

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Writing for the WHO, Gordon Brown also states “six adults are receiving their booster shots in middle- and high-income countries for every one adult now being inoculated each day in a low-income country and 90% of African health workers remain unprotected.”

[[] <https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/historic-world-health-assembly-session-offers-new-chance-to-prepare-for-future-pandemics>]

People and places

Rural Clare choir prepares children's cancer charity CD in farm shed

A truly delightful and inspiring story is told by Jim O'Brien in the Farming supplement of the Irish Independent. The members of Ballyea Parish Choir and their friends have been rehearsing in the shed for the last few months, preparing to record a CD.

George Benn, whose idea it was to record the CD, has a remarkable story

“I had a band for 54 years until I developed health problems, including heart issues and prostate cancer,” said George.

“When recovering from the cancer in 2019 I wanted to do something for cancer research, so I got the idea of holding a concert in aid of children's cancer research at Crumlin Hospital.”

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Along with the new Clare anthem, album contains a mix of songs including The Water is Wide, A River Rolls On, Hard Times and The Sally Gardens.

The Slatted House can be bought at local shops in and around Ennis. Or by texting Ann O'Flanagan at 086 6001586. All proceeds go to support children's cancer research at Our Lady's Children's Hospital, Crumlin

[[] <https://www.independent.ie/business/farming/rural-life/why-this-co-clare-choir-turned-a-farm-shed-into-a-recording-studio-41101309.html>]

A Christmas Concert of Hope in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin

Focus Ireland and Dublin Ukulele Collective's Christmas Concert of Hope in Christ Church Cathedral is on this Monday, 6 December 2021, 7.00pm

This annual Christmas Concert of Hope at Christ Church Cathedral in association with Iarnród Éireann is taking place this festive season, for two nights on December 6th and 7th.

The evenings, arranged by Dublin Ukulele Collective musical director Dave Flood, promises to be a magical night of some Ireland's best choirs including:

Monday 6th Dec performances by:

Balbriggan Gospel Choir

Dublin Ukulele Collective

Special guests including Mundy and others

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Tuesday 7th

Dec

performances

by:

Rejoice Gospel
Choir

Fingal Gospel
Choir

Dublin Ukulele
Collective

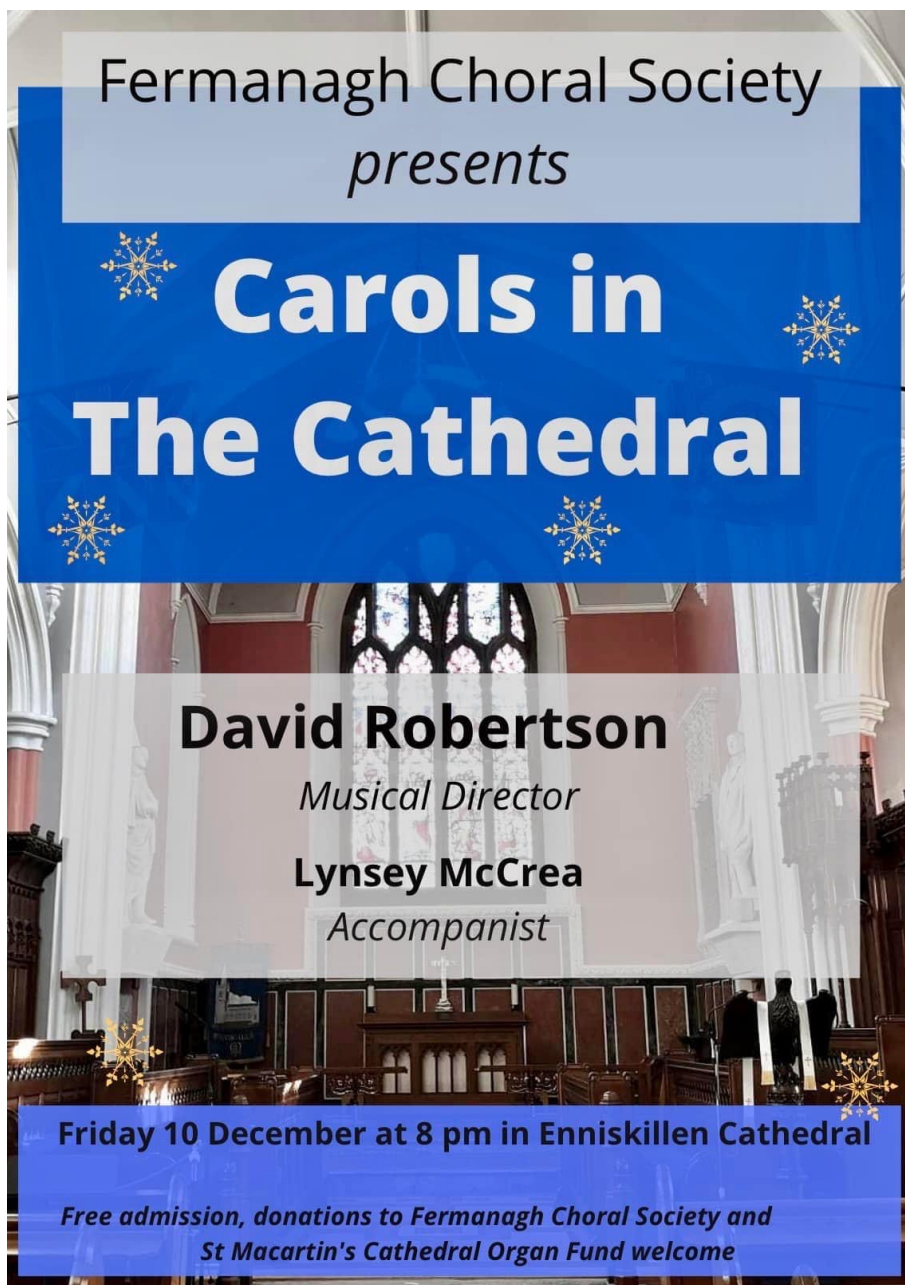
Special guests
including Mary
Coughlan and
others

An incredibly
special event,
proudly
supported by
Iarnród Éireann.

Funds raised
through these
concerts will directly benefit Focus Ireland's homelessness
services.

Focus Ireland is Challenging homelessness and Changing
lives. Focus Ireland works hard to prevent and end
homelessness. Focus Ireland works with people who are
homeless or are at risk of losing their homes across
Ireland. It is a time of significant demand for homeless and
housing services. There are almost 10,000 people homeless
across Ireland today, 1 in 3 are children.

churchnewsireland@gmail.org



Fermanagh Choral Society
presents

Carols in The Cathedral

David Robertson
Musical Director

Lynsey McCrea
Accompanist

Friday 10 December at 8 pm in Enniskillen Cathedral

*Free admission, donations to Fermanagh Choral Society and
St Macartin's Cathedral Organ Fund welcome*



MU Generosity spotted on Facebook

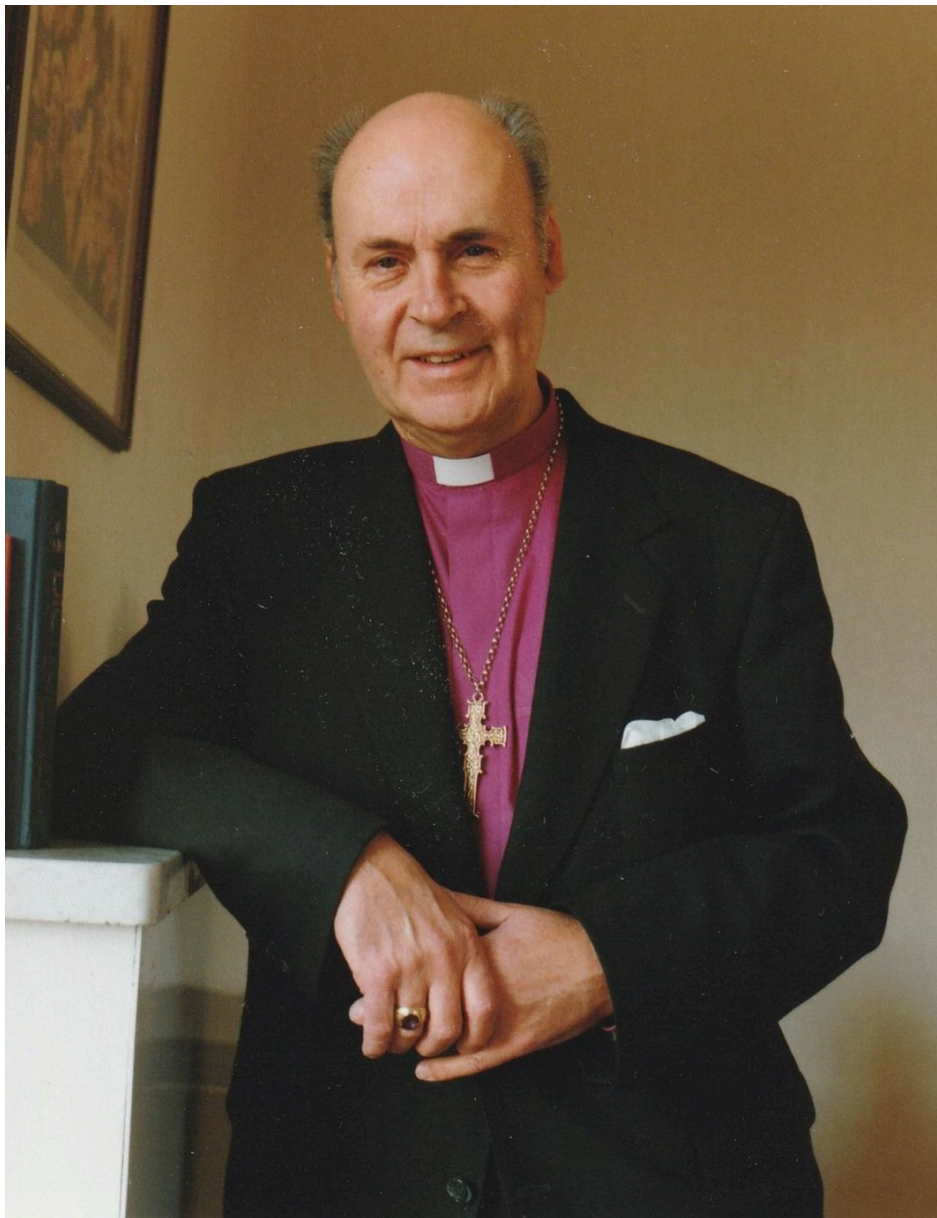
Wonderful Mothers' Union members - THANK YOU! Your amazing generosity to Foyle Women's Aid, Omagh Women's Aid and Donegal Domestic Violence Services is hugely appreciated. And what a terrific selection of craft

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items and wash bags for our hospitals. Just imagine the smiling faces of appreciation in the months ahead. God Bless YOU, your talents and your kindness.

Death of Bishop John Taylor

The Scottish Episcopal Church and friends in Ireland were saddened to learn of the death of the Rt Rev John Taylor, former Bishop of Glasgow & Galloway.



Bishop John was ordained to the priesthood in 1957, and served as Curate at St Margaret of Scotland, Aberdeen before becoming Curate in Charge and then Rector at Holy Cross, Glasgow. He remained in the Diocese of Glasgow & Galloway for the rest of his active ministry, including many years as Rector at St

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Ninian Glasgow and then at St John the Evangelist, Dumfries.

He served as a Canon of St Mary's Cathedral in Glasgow from 1979 until he was consecrated Bishop of Glasgow & Galloway in May 1991. He retired in 1998, and latterly held a Warrant for the Diocese of Glasgow & Galloway.

In recent years he lived in Kirriemuir, and it was there that he died earlier this month, aged 89. May Bishop John rest in peace and rise in glory.

Appreciation: Kevin Dalton

Patrick Semple writes in The Irish Times

Kevin Dalton was a remarkable man. He grew up in an orphanage and had no formal secondary education. He had a lifelong ambition to be a clergyman, and in due course was ordained in the Church of Ireland and had a successful ministry, retiring as rector of Monkstown, Co Dublin where he served for 28 years.

Kevin left the orphanage, aged 15, and worked on a farm in Co Tipperary where he ended up running a chicken project. In Tipperary he had access to a library and read voraciously. He saw no future with the chickens, and in 1951 he made his way to Dublin. He first got a delivery job before later moving to a job in a flour mill where he qualified as a miller.

However, his strong sense of vocation had not gone away. He studied for the Trinity College entrance exam on his own,

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getting help with Latin from a work colleague during lunchtime at the mill.

While at Trinity, he recruited actors from amongst his friends, many of whom had never acted before, and produced a number of John B Keane plays in aid of famine relief in Ethiopia. He was also elected auditor of the College Theological Society. During the long summer university holidays he sustained himself financially by working at the mill.

Kevin was ordained in 1966 for the parish of Stillorgan, but before he started there he went to CDSP Divinity School California on a World Council of Churches scholarship to study for a BD degree. He was greatly enamoured with the US and returned there on holiday many times to friends he had made while in California.

One of his first projects in Stillorgan, which lasted for his six years in the parish, was to set up a youth club. It was a great success. In the summer he used to take away young people to parishes in remote parts of Ireland where Church of Ireland parishioners were thin on the ground. There they cut grass and tidied graveyards.

After Stillorgan he became rector of Drumcondra/North Strand and in 1979 he was appointed rector of Monkstown, considered by clergy of the Church of Ireland as a “plum” parish, where he stayed until he retired at the compulsory retirement age of 75, in 2007. He was puzzled to know as to why he had to stop then, given that he still had plenty of energy.

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All through his ministry he used that energy in the service of people. One friend on learning of his death referred to “his distinctiveness and abomination of humbug”.

During his life he kept a close eye on the racing page of the daily paper. A relaxing evening for Kevin was to play poker with friends from the days before he was ordained.

He died on November 4th leaving his wife Jennifer, daughters Tara and Sally-Ann, grandchildren Daniel, Ella-Rose and Lily, and his sister Mary.

Courtesy The Irish Times 29/11/2021

Perspective

An Advent letter from Archbishop Michael Jackson

The early days of December in any year seem unending in their darkness for those of us who live in the Northern Hemisphere. For many people, this is a great trial and a great strain. The early days of December also coincide with the foothills of that most evocative of Seasons, The Season of Advent, in The Christian Calendar. It is the beginning of The Christian Year after all and therefore a time of celebration. In Advent, we grapple with preparation and with penitence, with the coming of Jesus Christ in infancy and hope along with the recognition of the consequences in judgement and ultimacy of his being one of us and of his life lived on earth among folk like us. So it was in their day; so it

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is in our day. There is a great deal going on in this time of encircling gloom. Seize it!

The days of December understandably seem long but need not be boring. But we can use these long days to take hold of the light and to be a light to others. This is the gift that Christian people are and need to be to our world today – and no money is required to do this. The loss and the grief that people carry as a result of the on-going impact of the coronavirus and its many mutations, as it works its way speedily through the Greek alphabet, are incalculable. However hard they are to calculate, nevertheless they are increasingly tangible and increasingly visible. The zoom platform, once a novelty of conducting and of attending meetings from the security of one's own home, is fast approaching saturation of use. Many people have taken advantage once too often of the fact that others are working from home by making assumptions that, because they are at home, they can slot in more and more meetings without any sense of being able to say: Enough! Please stop! Others are subject to unbreakable cycles of loneliness and unending cycles of domestic abuse. Many feel a despair they never expected to have to own.

Into this world which is fast becoming a shadow world, a landscape of wraiths, people want light and warmth to shine and to be felt. It is the comfort of which the prophet Isaiah speaks so fervently and so dynamically. People want and need a smile, a glance, a recognition that they are there and are doing their best to make something of life and of living. My encouragement to those of us who are still functioning well is that we shed and share such light for others in Advent and at Christmas in whatever ways are possible,

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sensitive and appropriate. These are times of urgency. These are times of generosity. These are times to 'put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life ...' You and I carry the gift of light. This is the time to offer it and to share it and to ignite it.

People want a Christmas that they can enjoy and that they can remember. Being at church remains for many people still today woven into the experience of Christmas. And, unthinkably, for two years in a row, this experience of being in church has not been there for people in the ways people, whether they came often or occasionally to church throughout the year, expect. This too is a form of bereavement and loss right across our society. It also weakens for everyone the connection between the social and the religious Christmas, making the commercial Christmas the dominant and overarching one. And this creates further and deeper exclusions once we introduce economic expectations. And there is something more. Christians are energized in their outreach and their engagement with those of Faiths other than their own and with people of no faith or no expressed faith by Christ, shedding his light and love in The Twelve Days of Christmas: Christ the Light of The World connecting the year we know with the year we are still to get to know. This is our faith and this is our time and this is our opportunity to share the core of our Faith.

I am well-aware of the fact that clergy along with others in parishes right across The United Dioceses have moved from open churches shrinking in numbers beyond recognition, to streamed worship to worshipping on-line, to offering significant encouragement to their parishioners to

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return to church. For all of this I, along with countless others, am extremely grateful. Let us all remember that we led the way when there really was no way! We are all of us uneasy now about what sort of worship will be possible at Christmas 2021. Inventiveness and sensitivity have come together in ways many had never envisaged. These new ways of worshipping have enabled us to offer genuine encounters with God within a framework of community gathering on-line. Many have also found that their sense of parish family has grown throughout this time. Those who were parishioners in time past and who now live elsewhere have been able to join in and participate – present from afar. People have been able to connect again with parishes and communities for whom they previously had an affection. This also has been a real enhancement of our self-understanding as children of God and as children of the light. The old ways need to be respected too as there are clergy and people who effectively live in black holes of connectivity where there is no functioning Broadband worth talking about. Whatever good things you offer this year, I can guarantee that people will appreciate them, so please be assured of this. Whatever simple steps you take to make Christmas meaningful for the people in your care, they will rejoice that you have done so.

A long time ago, in one of the letters I wrote, I suggested that, in these pandemic times, not only does the conventional wisdom hold that it is more blessed to give than to receive but that there is a new wisdom too: it is equally blessed to receive as to give. Our relationship with neighbours as people we perhaps never knew or felt we needed to know before, nearly two years on, cuts both ways: giving and receiving now greatly need one another.

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We are all in this together; we are still all in this together. So, I ask that you be willing to receive from others whatever their act of kindness might be to you as well as feeling that you must give to them. It is in these surprise encounters of take and give that Christ will be shared this Christmas. It will be a Christmas like no other but, then, every Christmas is like this – differently each time.

St Luke 2.15: Come, let us go straight to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.'

Poem for today

The Second Coming by William Butler Yeats

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert

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A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

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