



**Image of the day - St Fin Barre's Cathedral
on Christmas morning 2021**

December 28, 2021

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People and places

New Diocesan Curate for Clogher

The Bishop of Clogher, the Right Revd Dr Ian Ellis has appointed Revd Alison Irvine as Diocesan Curate.

Revd Irvine has been serving as Curate Assistant in Dunboyne and Rathmolyon Unions in the Diocese of Meath and Kildare.

Bishop Ian Ellis welcomed her back to her native diocese, saying; “I am delighted that Revd Alison Irvine has accepted my invitation to become a Diocesan Curate in this Diocese. Alison grew up in Clogher Diocese attending school in Enniskillen. When I was Rector of Rossorry, she spent the student placement year of her training in the parish and we came to appreciate her many talents and warm personality. Since ordination she has served for three years as Assistant Curate in Dunboyne Union in Meath Diocese and has gained much experience of ministry in a wide range of settings. I am most grateful to Bishop Pat Storey and Alison's Rector, Revd Eugene Griffin for liaising with us to allow her to join this diocese in the early New Year. We look forward to Alison returning to Clogher in this unique role providing liturgical and pastoral ministry to a number of vacant parishes under my direction.”

Speaking about her appointment announced at Christmas services, Revd Irvine said; I am very grateful and humbled

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to be given the opportunity to serve God and minister to the people of Clogher Diocese, as Diocesan Curate. I have lived away through study and for work on a number of occasions and for many years, but each time I felt the pull to come home.

“I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in study, living and working in the Republic of Ireland for the past six years. However, I am excited to start this new chapter working to further God’s Kingdom.”



“Throughout my life and wherever I have lived I have actively partaken in Church life within my parish and Diocese, through singing, youth work and committees. During the pandemic we have all suffered greatly from the restrictions placed upon us. As these lift, I look forward to everyone coming together in community and fellowship with song, worship and prayer.”

“I look forward to getting to know all those who live within the parishes where I will serve and how best to utilise talents and skills to form closer relationship to Jesus as we live with the challenges created by the pandemic within Church life and daily life.”

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A native of Clogher Diocese, Revd Irvine attended Manchester University and before her training for ordination, had a career with the trade union movement.

She served as Deacon-Intern with Revd Isaac Delamere in Tullamore prior to her ordination to the Priesthood in St. Mary's Church, Maynooth by the Bishop of Meath and Kildare, the Most Revd Pat Storey in September 2018. She is from a well-known church family in Clogher Diocese; her father, John is a Diocesan Reader and one of her brothers, Adrian, is a Parish Reader.

Revd Irvine is expected to take up her post as Diocesan Curate in February 2022.

Christmas insight from Cork

Sermon preached by the Right Reverend Dr Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross in Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork, on Christmas Day 2021

“Think also of the personal heaps in the lives of the main protagonists in the Christmas story – Joseph's and Mary's lives turned on their head by the message of the angel, and all that on top of having to travel for the census, and then to crown it all, nowhere for them to stay: not at home and vulnerable. Shepherds getting on with their ordinary work also being disrupted and the Magi also – I'm sure they could've done without this open-ended journey into the faraway unknown. And so the story continues ... lives in a heap ... not least after the massacre of infants ordered by the said Herod and the escape to Egypt. Lives in a heap!



“This, dear friends, is where we are invited to find hope, solace, encouragement, joy, love, and, ultimately, faith, this Christmas, in this event, in this Good News, in this God-given moment of the Word made flesh, of the birth of Emmanuel, God with us. Lives may be in a heap but the Christmas message remains the same throughout history whatever else is going on in our own lives or around us.

“One headline summed up the advice of one politician – ‘Christmas can go ahead, but be careful!’ I know what was being advised, of course, but to that we might say: ‘It is Christmas. Regardless.’ Our human predicaments and circumstances might strip Christmas back to the bare essentials, but it is still Christmas. The message is still the same.

‘The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;...’ (Isaiah 9.2a))

January Clogher Institutions

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Thursday 20th January – Service of Institution of the Revd Lindsey Farrell as incumbent of Christ Church, Maguiresbridge and St. Michael's Derrybrusk in Maguiresbridge at 7.30pm conducted by the Bishop of Clogher, the Right Revd Dr. Ian Ellis.

Thursday 27th January – Service of Institution of the Revd William Jeffrey, as incumbent of Lisbellaw with Coolbuck at 7.30pm conducted by the Bishop of Clogher, the Right Revd Dr. Ian Ellis.

Tribute to Canon Colin Moore

The death has taken place of Canon Colin Moore, a former rector in Armagh Diocese and Diocesan and Provincial Registrar.

Canon John McKegney posted the following personal tribute on Facebook. He writes -

“Yesterday, Christmas Day, I heard with sadness of the death of my friend, colleague and contemporary from the year of ‘72, Canon Colin Moore.

“Colin’s roots were in St. Mark’s and his whole ministry was spent in Armagh mostly as the rector of the Parish of Newtownhamilton and Ballymoyer Union where he was a dedicated, much loved, priest and pastor. He served the wider church with distinction as a meticulous Diocesan and Provincial Registrar and as a Canon of St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Armagh

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“Many of us will remember him how he cared for his wife Belinda after she had a profound stroke over thirty years ago without neglecting his parochial and diocesan work. He never gave up and was always cheerful. In retirement they were regular worshippers in the Cathedral until Belinda’s death exactly three months ago. Thereafter Colin, already weakened by illness, cut a lonely figure as he attended week by week but always put a brave face on his life.”

The funeral took place on Monday 28 (St John the Evangelist’s Day), at St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Armagh. We give thanks to God for Colin’s life, work, witness and faithful ministry for nearly fifty years and prayerful sympathy is for his family, particularly his children David and Karen, in their time of sorrow.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts and books

Christmas premier: Stories of a Generation with Pope Francis

Stories of a Generation with Pope Francis, is a new four-part Netflix series inspired by Sharing the Wisdom of Time, the award-winning book written by Pope Francis with Antonio Spadaro.

The book came about in response to Pope Francis's request that the wisdom of older people be shared through their recounting of stories to younger friends and relatives.



The documentary series was presented at the Rome Film Festival in October, with the world premiere screening of the first episode 'Love'. It will be available on Netflix from Saturday 25 December in all countries where the service is active.

The series, by Simona Ercolani, offers 18 stories from five continents - exploring the third age as a treasure to be discovered. It is narrated through the eyes of young film makers - all under 30. Each of the four episodes touches on one of the great themes that unite human beings - love, dreams, struggle, work - through the events and experiences of women and men representing ethnic groups, social status and religions from all over the world. The

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interviews are interspersed with conversations between Antonio Spadaro and Pope Francis.

The first episode of Stories of a Generation with Pope Francis, entitled 'Love' - addresses the great and universal theme of love. Pope Francis is asked about the meaning of love and talks about the relationship with his grandmother Rosa and the passion for tango. For the first time, Oscar-winning director Martin Scorsese reveals aspects of his life through an intimate interview, shot by his daughter, director and actress Francesca Scorsese, and accompanied by previously unpublished family videos.

After losing her daughter during the dictatorship of the generals in Argentina and losing the traces of her nephew - stolen from his mother in prison - Estela Barnes de Carlotto became involved in the movement of the Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo, a group of indomitable elderly searching for their disappeared children.

The celebrated English ethologist Jane Goodall retraces the studies that revolutionized the way humans relate to animals, revealing the secret behind her work: love.

The life of Vito Fiorino, an ice cream maker from Lampedusa, changed forever on October 3, 2013, when he rescued 47 drowning castaways on his small boat. The one in which he participates, despite himself, is one of the most frightening tragedies of migrants in the Mediterranean Sea, which has caused the death of 368 people.

Carlos and Cristina Solis have been married for more than 50 years, they live in Montevideo, Uruguay, and have kept

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their love alive to the rhythm of tango, a passion they share with Pope Francis.

Messenger Publications have reprinted the book to coincide with the launch of the Netflix series.

Watch the trailer for Stories of a Generation here:
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNfGamlwy3Y]

What did these writers say about Christmas?

In his latest blog, which is accompanied by several videos, Lord Alton of Liverpool asks: 'What did writers like TS Eliot, JRR Tolkien, CS Lewis, Dorothy L Sayers, John Donne, Lord Tennyson, Gerard Manley Hopkins and GK Chesterton have to say about Christmas?'

He continues: 'Tolkien wrote Noel as a poem for his parish magazine in Abingdon. It had been forgotten for decades. It can be heard here, beautifully set to music by Jonathan Noel'

To read more, see:

[www.davidalton.net/2021/12/23/what-did-writers-like-t-s-eliot-j-r-r-tolkien-c-s-lewis-dorothy-l-sayers-john-donne-lord-tennyson-gerard-manley-hopkins-and-g-k-chesterton-have-to-say-about-christmas/]

Carols by Candlelight from HTB

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Carols by Candlelight - a beautiful, uplifting evening of your favourite Christmas carols with the HTB Chamber Choir and Orchestra.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_s2dh0RlCc]

Joy to the World - from Mount Merrion

Continue to celebrate with these wonderful carols recorded last year by Mount Merrion Church. Link at -

[[] <https://www.downanddromore.org/news/2021/12/joy-to-the-worldjoyful-joyful-we-adore-thee>]

News Reports

Archbishop Desmond Tutu was a prophetic voice in the church and the world

The Secretary General of the Anglican Communion has said Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who has died at the age of 90, was a “prophetic voice in the church and the world.”

Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, Josiah Idowu-Fearon, has said: “The death of Archbishop Desmond Tutu is a huge loss to the Anglican Church of Southern Africa and to the whole of the Anglican Communion.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu was a driving force behind the movement to end the policy of racial segregation and



discrimination enforced by the white minority government against the black majority in South Africa from 1948 until 1991. He was awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 1984.

Archbishop Josiah said Desmond Tutu had been “a prophetic voice in the church and in the world”.

“When he spoke, people listened. He was a lively and engaging contributor to the Anglican Communion and its constituent bodies, and used his gifts to greatly enrich the Communion. His commitment to justice and peace, and particularly to racial justice and reconciliation, was and continues to be an example to us all.

“He was a great Disciple of Christ: as a priest and bishop he was a committed pastor and preacher. He will continue to inspire generations to come. We commend him into the arms of his Creator, and Saviour, and join with the whole Communion in praying for his family at this time.”

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The current Archbishop of Cape Town, Thabo Makgoba, said: “While we mourn his passing, as Christians and people of faith we must also celebrate the life of a deeply spiritual person whose alpha and omega – his starting point and his ending point – was his relationship with our Creator. He took God, God’s purpose and God’s creation deadly seriously. Prayer, the Scriptures and his ministry to the people God entrusted to his care were at the heart of his life.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: “Archbishop Desmond Tutu was a prophet and a priest, a man of words and action – one who embodied the hope and joy that were the foundations of his life. Even in our profound sorrow we give thanks for a life so well lived. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.”

The Church of South Africa will plan his funeral and other memorial services, in accordance with his instructions, and with the support of the South African Government and the City of Cape Town.

I would back a border poll, says primate

The leader of the Catholic Church in Ireland, Archbishop Eamon Martin, has said he would back a border poll for a United Ireland.

In the Sunday Independent and Belfast he stressed that he believes all of the political leaders throughout the island need to “open up questions of identity and belonging and to honestly face them”.

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The Irish primate emphasised that there were “a whole bunch of new people living in this island now who have other cultures, other identities and other senses of belonging”.

“It is up to all of us who believe in a United Ireland to be able to present to everyone as to why political unity on this island, of whatever nature, would be, will be more prosperous, more welcoming, more peaceful, more diverse, and more accommodating than our current arrangement is,” he said.

With the coronavirus having severely dented the church's finances the cleric warned that some rural churches throughout Ireland could end up closing their doors for good.

“It has to be a possibility, yes. We have to recognise the numbers are down therefore we don't have the same needs or the same ability to maintain all of our properties,” he said.

He also believed the numbers of vocations to the priesthood “will continue to decline until there is an increase in practice” and said he accepts “that Ireland is no longer able to provide enough vocations to be able to sustain the sacramental life that we have become used to”.

On the subject of clerical abuse, he does not believe the Catholic Church should ever move on from its past when asked if it will ever recover from the hurt it has caused to so many.

“If by recovering you mean move on, I don't think so, I don't think they should. I've always been very reluctant to suggest that the church has the right to leave it behind. Because if

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we are walking daily with victims of abuse, and if we want to show empathy for them, then we need to accept that we don't have the right to recover.” He added he finds it “extremely difficult to comprehend how one of my brother priests could have so betrayed his promise of priesthood”.

Courtesy the Sunday Independent/ Belfast Telegraph

Perspective

South Africa must emulate Arch's unabashed honesty to truly prosper by Peter Hain

Fearless, passionate, inspiring – and, to some, uncomfortably honest – Desmond Tutu, along with Nelson Mandela, was one of the most special people I have ever met.

Our first encounter was in 1998, when he received an honorary degree from Cardiff University, and I, a Labour government minister at the time, was invited as guest of honour. Arch, as he was known, burst into one of his characteristic giggles. “A pair of anti-apartheid subversives like us being honoured by the establishment!” he declared with an infectiously riotous laugh at the irony.

I will remember Arch most for his engagingly impish camaraderie along with his blunt honesty in speaking truth to power – whether to the old apartheid rulers or the new post-apartheid ones. They all resented him, which was why

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people all respected him. No one could ever curb Arch's courage or independent spirit.

Possessing an inspirational way with words, he seemed always to capture the moment so perfectly. A fearless preacher able to rouse a great audience to raucous excitement, he could also drop to a whisper, pausing, holding everyone in the palm of his hand.

He was a visionary activist who cut through to all, revolutionary or ruler, poor or powerful. But it was his irrepressible eloquence as a Christian leader that made him almost invincible, first as Anglican dean of Johannesburg, as secretary of the Interdenominational South African Council of Churches, and then as Archbishop of Cape Town.

When Mandela and his fellow anti-apartheid leaders were two decades into their imprisonment on Robben Island, Arch came to increasing prominence as an opponent of racist tyranny, speaking at rallies and funerals, leading protests, his voice heard across the world.

Apartheid's brutal police state had assassinated, tortured, jailed and silenced critics, but they couldn't really do that to the Archbishop of Cape Town, with his multiracial congregation and his increasingly prominent global Christian platform.

Arch's initial joyous engagements with Mandela in February 1990, after Mandela had been freed, epitomised the triumph of good over evil, two great figures heralding the onset of the "rainbow nation". "Mandela", he said, "became the icon,

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the moral giant so revered by the world, because he had demonstrated that former enemies could become friends.”

Tutu also epitomised integrity. So when Winnie Mandela appeared before him at the Truth and Reconciliation commission, established by President Mandela, Arch was firm about her tragic descent from brave fighter for justice and victim of police oppression, into criminal complicity in murder.

He was also firm with former president FW de Klerk, who had released Mandela and negotiated his transition to the presidency, but refused to apologise for apartheid crimes committed on his watch. De Klerk stormed out of the commission after it heard evidence of atrocities by apartheid security agents.

Even after his close friend Mandela became president, he was not silent.

MPs were under fire for accepting big salary rises. Tutu quipped: “The government stopped the gravy train long enough to get on it.” A few months later, Mandela announced a cut in the salaries of MPs and of the president.

After his divorce from Winnie, Mandela was accompanied at official functions by the outstanding African figure Graça Machel, visibly enchanted by her warmth, grace and love of children. But this arrangement occasioned some criticism from Tutu, until they married on Mandela’s 80th birthday – July 18, 1998.

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Tutu found himself the unflinching custodian of the “rainbow nation”, critical of Mandela’s successors – first Thabo Mbeki for his Aids denialism, then Jacob Zuma for his shameless corruption and betrayal of the values of the freedom struggle.

Unusually for a Christian leader, he publicly favoured assisted dying. He was an inspiration for human rights, speaking out against homophobic laws in Uganda. He supported democracy in Myanmar (formerly Burma), yet wrote with sorrow to Aung San Suu Kyi about her collusion over the Rohingya massacres. South Africa is a beacon for hope over evil, for non-racialism over apartheid, and a wonderful tourist destination. But its future depends upon learning from Tutu and emulating his legacy.

Lord Hain’s memoirs “A Pretoria Boy: South Africa’s ‘Public Enemy Number One’” was published by Icon

Poem for today

A Christmas Prayer by Robert Louis Stevenson

O God, our loving Father, help us
Rightly to remember the birth of Jesus,
That we may share in the song of the
Angels, the gladness of the shepherds
And the worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the
Door of love all over the world.

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Deliver us from evil by the blessing
That Christ brings, and teach us
To be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy
To be thy children and the Christmas
Evening bring us to our beds with
Grateful thoughts, forgiving, and
Forgiven, for Jesus's sake.

Amen.

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friends**

www.churchnewsireland.org

