

December 6, 2021

**CNI**  
CHURCH  
NEWS  
IRELAND

**Duchess of  
Cambridge  
hosting  
Christmas  
Carol Service at  
Westminster  
Abbey**

**Larne  
exhibition of  
Advent Quilts**

**Virtual visit to  
Christ Church  
Dublin, a  
Cathedral of  
Sanctuary**



**Save your Christmas stamps for the RNIB. Photo Ely Cathedral**

**Altnagelvin Hospital Choir Concert**

**Chamber Choir West concert, Enniskillen**

**Attack causes of migration, not those forced to flee, pope says on  
Lesbos**

**C of E Digital team wins series of awards for work during pandemic  
Jesus the compassionate healer by Thabo Makgoba**

## People and places



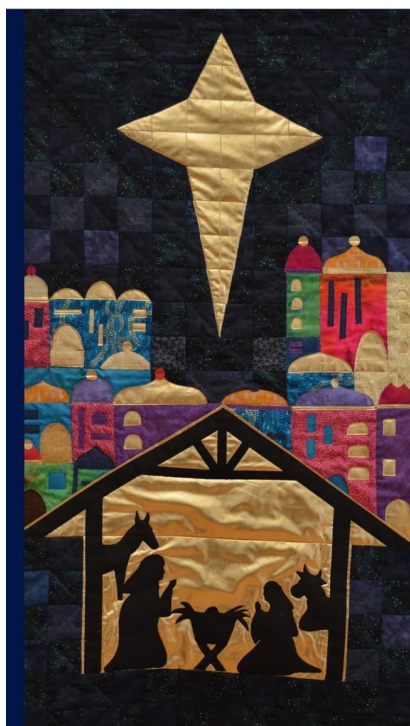
### Larne exhibition of Advent Quilts

**The Parish Piecemakers of St Cedma's, Larne, are once again running their wonderful exhibition of Advent Quilts.**

This unique collection of handcrafted quilts depicts the Christmas story as revealed in the nine lessons of the traditional carol service.

The quilts were created by the group members back in 2016, and were a real labour of love. We paid a visit to the nimble-fingered group as they were putting the finishing touches to the quilts in preparation for their first exhibition.

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## QUILTS FOR ADVENT

*The Christmas Story told in colourful hand-stitched quilts.*

We are delighted to invite you to, once again, have the opportunity to see these wonderful quilts which bring to life the reality of the first Christmas.

St Cedma's will be open on  
Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2pm - 4pm  
for visitors to enjoy the quilts.

### PLEASE NOTE

A one-way system will be in operation entering through the west door. We would ask everyone to respect the safety of others by wearing masks, sanitizing hands before entry and adhering to social distancing. We thank you for your co-operation in this and look forward to a joyful afternoon!

*St.Cedma's Parish Piecemakers*

They have been a popular display at Christmas each year since that first exhibition – even the pandemic didn't stop the group, who moved the exhibition online in 2020 – their video receiving more than 10,000 views!

This year, St Cedma's will be open from 2- 4pm on Sunday December 12 so people can see and enjoy these quilts which tell so beautifully the story of that first Christmas. Please note that Covid-19 guidelines will be in place

## **Virtual visit to Christ Church Dublin, a Cathedral of Sanctuary**

**Dublin & Glendalough diocese's second video for Advent 2021 visits Christ Church Cathedral which was designated Ireland's first Cathedral of Sanctuary in February 2016.**

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The award recognised their contribution to building a community to welcome newcomers. Watch the video below.

Inspired by the question put to Jesus: ‘But who is my neighbour?’ Christ Church Cathedral embarked on a journey to become a Cathedral of Sanctuary. At the end of the parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus asks ‘Which of these three was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?’ The teacher replied ‘The one who showed him mercy’ and Jesus said to him ‘Go and do likewise’. This was the rationale behind the decision to become a Cathedral of Sanctuary. Dean’s Vicar at Christ Church Cathedral, the Revd Abigail Sines, explains how their journey took shape.



Meanwhile Syrian architect and artist Muhammad Achour tells of his involvement with Christ Church through two exhibitions he organised there. Mohammad is a member of Places of Sanctuary, a member of Places of ARcture (a group of artists, architects and educators advocating for [churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org))

# Christmas Stamp appeal

**R N I B**  
See Christmas differently



**Collect your used stamps and help RNIB Open Christmas so blind and partially people feel more included.**

## Save your Christmas stamps for the RNIB

Join the good folk of Cloughfern Parish who have a collection box in both the church and the hall foyer. Church members will also be collecting from friends. A small, easy way to make a big difference

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engaging art and architecture within the youth in local communities and refugees camps) and a founder member of Art Nomads (a group of artists hailing from around the world). He facilitated an exhibition during Refugee Week this year in Christ Church Cathedral featuring art by school children in Aleppo, Syria. Visitors to the exhibition in Dublin were

invited to write down their reflections and messages for the children. These have been compiled into a book and are on their way back to the children in Aleppo.

Follyvi Simon is from Togo and speaks of how he has been embraced by the cathedral community. His involvement has helped him to learn many things and he speaks of the first time he read a lesson in English during a service marking Refugee Week this year. Abigail points out that this is very

Join the Chaplains of Altnagelvin Hospital  
and the Hospital Choir.  
Te Deum, by Mozart,  
Christmas favourites and Carols.

Carlisle Road Methodist Church, Derry  
Saturday 18th December  
at 7:30pm

This is a Free event.  
A retiring collection will be held  
in aid of Friends of Altnagelvin

Altnagelvin Hospital Choir  
Estb. 1994

In memory of Stella Burnside

The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service

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much a two-way process with the cathedral community being enriched through its reaching out to welcome newcomers.

You can learn more about Christ Church's work as a Cathedral of Sanctuary on their website [www.christchurchcathedral.ie/cathedral-of-sanctuary](http://www.christchurchcathedral.ie/cathedral-of-sanctuary).

You can learn about Places of Sanctuary here: [www.ireland.cityofsanctuary.org](http://www.ireland.cityofsanctuary.org)

## Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts and books

### Duchess of Cambridge hosting Christmas Carol Service at Westminster Abbey

**The Duchess of Cambridge is hosting a Christmas Carol Service at Westminster Abbey this Wednesday, 8 December. celebrating community heroes who have gone above and beyond during the pandemic.**

The service will be shown on ITV at 7.30pm on Christmas Eve. Tune in for an evening of music, readings and inspiring stories.

Kensington Palace said, "Spearheaded by the Duchess, the service will be a celebration of life in our communities, and illustrate how acts of kindness, empathy and love can nurture and reconnect us. Filmed for broadcast, it will be a moment for the nation to come together and look back on

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# A GIFT THIS CHRISTMAS

## A Concert of Choral Favourites

# CHAMBER CHOIR WEST

Conductor

David Baxter

Accompanists

Lynsey McCrea

Derick Weir

**ENNISKILLEN CATHEDRAL**

Monday 20 December, 8 pm

*Retiring collection jointly to CCW and Enniskillen Cathedral Organ Fund*



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the last eighteen months, to think not only of the unprecedented challenges that we have all faced as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to remember the positives: people and organisations pulling together in their communities, the small acts of kindness across different demographics and generations, and the unsung heroes who stepped up to help others."

A variety of guests will sing carols and give readings. It will air later in the month on ITV, though I think it likely we'll see arrival photos, etc. on Wednesday. It begins at 5 pm. It's been reported George, Charlotte and Louis might be in attendance.

## News Reports

### **Attack causes of migration, not those forced to flee, pope says on Lesbos**

**Standing in a tent on the shore, Pope Francis said the Mediterranean Sea, "the cradle of so many civilizations, now looks like a mirror of death."**

He was speaking Dec. 5 to Greek and U.N. officials, but especially residents at the Mavrovouni refugee camp, formally called the Reception and Identification Center. But he also was speaking to the nations of the European Union and to governments around the world.

About 2,200 people, including minors who made their journey across the sea without a parent or other adult, call Mavrovouni home. They live in orderly rows of tents and



small pre-fab shelters on the Greek island of Lesbos outside of Mytilene. The center replaced the infamous Moira camp after a fire in 2020.

The Greek government now moves refugees and asylum-seekers throughout the country, taking pressure — and media attention — off Lesbos and other islands close to Turkey. The Ministry of Migration and Asylum said that at the end of October, 4,352 migrants and refugees were living on Lesbos compared to the 18,872 who were there in October 2020.

While the government's idea is that asylum-seekers will spend only a few months in camps on Lesbos before moving to an apartment or being transferred to the

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mainland, many at Mavrovouni told reporters accompanying the pope that they had been there for years.

Mohammadi Zagul, a 34-year-old mother of five from Afghanistan, said she and her family have been on Lesbos for two years. They want to leave the camp and start a real life, she said, but it does not really matter in what country.

Christian Tango Mukalya, a 30-year-old Congolese Catholic who arrived on Lesbos more than a year ago with two of his three small children, told Pope Francis that he and the others want only “a safe place in Europe for the future of our families.”

“I am a pilgrim,” he said, “an asylum-seeker in search of a safe refuge” after “persecution and death threats in my country of origin.”

Visiting the camp on a Sunday morning, Pope Francis used verbs from the Advent Scripture readings to pray that God would “rouse” and “shake” and “awaken” the consciences of everyone to respond to the desperate plight of migrants and refugees in Greece and around the world.

With Greek President Katerina Sakellaropoulou in attendance, the pope once again called the European community to task for insisting countries where migrants arrive enforce European Union immigration policies but doing little to help those countries manage the migration flows.

Basically, he accused the European Union of hypocrisy.

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“In Europe there are those who persist in treating the problem as a matter that does not concern them,” the pope said. “How many conditions exist that are unworthy of human beings! How many hotspots where migrants and refugees live in borderline conditions, without glimpsing solutions on the horizon!”

And yet, he said, the EU “is constantly promoting” respect for human rights worldwide and insisting to others that “the dignity of each person ought to come before all else.”

A professed belief in human dignity, he said, must spur nations to work together to come up with intelligent, comprehensive policies to meet the immediate needs of those who feel forced to flee their homelands and to help them find a home where they and their families can start again.

“It is easy to stir up public opinion by instilling fear of others,” Pope Francis said. “Yet why do we fail to speak with equal vehemence about the exploitation of the poor, about seldom-mentioned but often well-financed wars, about economic agreements where the people have to pay, about covert deals to traffic in arms, favoring the proliferation of the arms trade?”

The causes of migration “should be attacked, not the poor people who pay the consequences and are even used for political propaganda,” he insisted.

Christians have a special obligation to reject political rhetoric that paints migrants as a threat, he said. “God loves us as his children; he wants us to be brothers and sisters. Instead, [churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)

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he is offended when we despise the men and women created in his image, leaving them at the mercy of the waves, in the wash of indifference, justified at times even in the name of supposedly Christian values.”

With a gentle breeze only slightly rippling the water behind him, Pope Francis urged everyone — government leaders and individual citizens — to look at the faces of the migrant children.

“May we find the courage to feel ashamed in their presence; in their innocence, they are our future,” he said. “They challenge our consciences and ask us: ‘What kind of world do you want to give us?’”

“Let us not hastily turn away from the shocking pictures of their tiny bodies lying lifeless on the beaches,” the pope said. “The Mediterranean, which for millennia has brought different peoples and distant lands together, is now becoming a grim cemetery without tombstones.”

“Please,” he pleaded, “let us stop this shipwreck of civilization!”

## **C of E Digital team wins series of awards for work during pandemic**

**The Church of England’s Digital Team has been praised for ‘incredible innovation and initiative’ as it won a series of awards for its output during the pandemic.**



A special Ash Wednesday Instagram filter, using Virtual Reality techniques, the popular Time to Pray app & podcast and the 2020 Advent and Christmas campaign 'Comfort and Joy' were among areas of work honoured at the annual 'Digital Impact Awards' in London.

Competitors included household names such as Lloyds Banking Group, Fidelity, Centrica and Nestle.

The judging panel said: “The Church of England has demonstrated incredible innovation and initiative in its adoption of digital tools to support the Christian community through the pandemic.

“From online services to a multi-channels Christmas campaign to apps and virtual reality filters...The digital in-house team demonstrated rigor and creativity as it built its

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various projects on a vast foundation of research, as they developed digital solutions to immediate problems.”

The full list of awards is below:

### Digital Impact Awards

- In House Digital Team of the Year – Church of England.
- The Church of England has won three golds in the Digital Impact Awards for:
  - o Best use of VR for the Ash Wednesday Instagram filter
  - o Best use of Audio for the Time to Pray app & podcast
  - o Best use of existing social media platforms for the 2020 Advent and Christmas campaign
- A further two silvers were awarded for:
  - o Best use of online video for the weekly online services
  - o Best digital employee communication for our Digital Labs training programme

## Perspective

### Jesus the compassionate healer by Thabo Makgoba

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke 18:31-43

31 Then he took the twelve aside and said to them, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. 32 For he will be handed over to the Gentiles; and he will be mocked and insulted and spat upon. 33 After they have flogged him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise again.” 34 But they understood nothing about all these

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things; in fact, what he said was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.

35 As he approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. 36 When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. 37 They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." 38 Then he shouted, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 39 Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet; but he shouted even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 40 Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, 41 "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me see again." 42 Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has saved you." 43 Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, praised God.

## Meditation

Humble. Peaceful. Dignified. Childlike. Firm. Probing. Challenging. To these attributes of Jesus revealed in the gospel reading, we add today Jesus the compassionate healer, he whose purpose is to restore people back to life and unity with God.

Through his healing ministry, he brought light to a dark world, cured many ailments and gave sight to the blind. In today's passage, a blind beggar (named Bartimaeus in Mark's account) breaks with custom, which is not to yell out to a rabbi, and from the side of the road calls to Jesus to get his attention. Ignoring the attempts of the crowd to hush him, he keeps on calling out.



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Key to the story is the beggar's acknowledgement of Jesus as the Son of David, the Messiah who has come to bring salvation. Jesus responds to the faith of a common beggar, and the crowd joins him in praising God for revealing his power in Jesus.

Mark's Gospel adds another touch: that Bartimaeus threw aside his cloak, which some commentators suggest would have contained all his possessions, and followed Jesus. The contrast with the rich ruler in yesterday's reading is clear.

The Jesuit theologian, Father Roc O'Connor, suggests that in this story blindness is a metaphor for what he calls "the all-too-human unwillingness to recognize whatever wounds, hurts, and diseases keep us from recognizing God, ourselves, and others." The faithful and fervent appeals of the beggar set us an example to follow in persisting, even in the face of opposition and rebuke, in seeking Christ's favor and blessing. And Christ will respond, especially to those

## *Larne Concert Choir*

present

# *A Carol Concert*

In St.Cedma's Parish Church  
Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30pm.

Retiring collection in aid of British Heart Foundation.  
Covid Restrictions will be observed.



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whom society frowns upon. He has more tenderness and compassion for the distressed than any of his followers.

✝ The Most Rev. Dr. Thabo Makgoba is Archbishop of the Diocese of Capetown, South Africa; metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province of Southern Africa; and chancellor of the University of the Western Cape.

## Poem for today

### An Old Man's Winter Night by Robert Frost

All out of doors looked darkly in at him  
Through the thin frost, almost in separate stars,  
That gathers on the pane in empty rooms.  
What kept his eyes from giving back the gaze  
Was the lamp tilted near them in his hand.  
What kept him from remembering what it was  
That brought him to that creaking room was age.  
He stood with barrels round him -- at a loss.  
And having scared the cellar under him  
In clomping there, he scared it once again  
In clomping off; -- and scared the outer night,  
Which has its sounds, familiar, like the roar  
Of trees and crack of branches, common things,  
But nothing so like beating on a box.  
A light he was to no one but himself  
Where now he sat, concerned with he knew what,  
A quiet light, and then not even that.  
He consigned to the moon, such as she was,  
So late-arising, to the broken moon

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As better than the sun in any case  
For such a charge, his snow upon the roof,  
His icicles along the wall to keep;  
And slept. The log that shifted with a jolt  
Once in the stove, disturbed him and he shifted,  
And eased his heavy breathing, but still slept.  
One aged man -- one man -- can't keep a house,  
A farm, a countryside, or if he can,  
It's thus he does it of a winter night.

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