



**Image of the day - Wells Cathedral**



## **Archbishop Diarmuid Martin praised for ‘courage, tenacity and compassion’**

### **‘We owe him a lot’: Political leaders, religious figures and abuse survivors pay tribute**

Catholic Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin, who formally stands down next Tuesday, has been praised for his “courage, tenacity and compassion,” by President Michael D Higgins in one of many tributes, Patsy McGarry writes in *The Irish Times*.

Tánaiste Leo Varadkar has spoken of the archbishop’s “empathy and Christianity” while former president Mary McAleese said he had “brought honest and principled leadership to the vexed issue of clerical sexual abuse of children and a dreadful history of episcopal mismanagement”.

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Dublin abuse survivor Marie Collins described Archbishop Martin as “a light in the darkness of the church response to the clerical child abuse crisis”. Others to praise his record in Dublin, since appointment as coadjutor archbishop in May 2003, include church and faith leaders, as well as more abuse survivors.

Mr Higgins said: “Archbishop Diarmuid Martin has my best wishes for a retirement with health and fulfilment. Sabina and I will keep the warmth of his welcomes to us in our heart.”

The President said the archbishop “faced many challenges in administration and necessary changes. His forthrightness in sharing these challenges with the public and his personal responses with courage, tenacity and compassion will be remembered with affection and appreciation. May I send his successor Archbishop Dermot Farrell every good wish for now and the future in the great challenges he undertakes.”

Mr Varadkar said that since the archbishop returned to Dublin “he has offered a new kind of leadership in the Catholic Church. One marked by his characteristic openness, honesty, humility and compassion.”

His “custodianship of the Dublin archdiocese came at a time of unparalleled social change in our history. Thanks to his leadership there was a real change of culture when it came to protecting children and attempting to ease the suffering of the past. This brave and important work was never easy and I pay tribute to his courage and dedication.”

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The archbishop “was central to the pope’s visit [in 2018], a major event for the entire country, which opened a new chapter in our relationship with the Catholic Church”.

Mr Varadkar continued: “I will never forget opening St Francis Hospice in Blanchardstown alongside him when I was minister for health on the same day as we counted the votes in the 2015 marriage equality referendum. His generous response to that result, though he opposed it, really demonstrated his empathy and Christianity.”

Ms McAleese said Archbishop Martin goes into “a well deserved and I hope long, heathy and happy retirement after exceptional and sensitive service during tumultuous years. He brought honest and principled leadership to the vexed issue of clerical sexual abuse of children and a dreadful history of episcopal mismanagement and leaves office having done his utmost to ensure the best child protection measures are in place.”

‘A valued friend’

Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin Michael Jackson said Archbishop Martin had 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 welcome by Archbishop Martin to a city which is his own.”

Abuse survivor Ms Collins said that “during his time in office Archbishop Martin has been a light in the darkness of the church response to the clerical child abuse crisis. His condemnation of this and understanding of the effects on victims have gone beyond words to positive actions:



opening his files, co-operating with the Murphy Commission investigation, setting up a professional child safeguarding office and supporting many survivors quietly without fuss.”

Many times “his words and actions may not have been popular with his colleagues but he had the courage to take the right course rather than the easy one. I wish more would have followed his example. Though sad to see Archbishop Martin move on, I wish him well in his retirement.”

Rabbi Zalman Lent of the Dublin Hebrew Congregation said that “over many years of interfaith dialogue, Archbishop Martin never failed to be gracious, welcoming and humble; a man of sincerity and dignity. It has been an honour and a privilege working with and alongside him, and on behalf of the Jewish community in Ireland I would like to wish him a long and happy retirement in the very best of health.”

Dublin abuse survivor Darren McGavin said it was with “the utmost respect, humility, honesty and gratitude” he noted



Archbishop Martin’s “deserved retirement”. He recalled how “we have met on several occasions along with Angela Copley RIP, to discuss, collaborate and deliberate as how best to be of service to those survivor of clerical sexual abuse and rape in our diocese and especially our community in Ballyfermot. Unfortunately we lost some victims of these atrocities to suicide. May their souls rest in peace eternally.”

Chair of the Irish Muslim Peace & Integration Council Shaykh Umar Al-Qadri said: “Archbishop Martin has been a personal friend and a friend of the Irish Muslim community since my earliest days in Ireland. Never missing a chance to reach out to us in solidarity and friendship, he was always ready to go the extra mile in developing interfaith and charitable initiatives. I was extremely proud to have him as

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our guest in the first ever Eid prayer to be held in Croke Park last year.”

Amnesty International Ireland executive director Colm O’Gorman said: “I want to pay him a personal tribute and wish him all the best. He is a man of enormous integrity, decency, compassion and empathy. He made a huge difference in his role as Archbishop of Dublin, we owe him a lot.”

Report courtesy The Irish Times, 30.01.2021

## **Vicar vaccinating the vulnerable in South London**

**A retired hospital consultant, who is also a priest working in South London, has vaccinated 200 vulnerable people in her Diocese.**

Canon Dr Sue Clarke decided to put her medical background to use as the Covid-19 vaccine began its roll out across England, [including in historic cathedrals](#).

Having been vaccinated herself, she now volunteers as a vaccinator with a local GP surgery after completing online training and re-establishing her General Medical Council (GMC) registration.

The actual injection takes “five minutes per patient,” [Dr Clarke said](#), yet she had already met “some extraordinary people.

“The oldest was an incredibly fit 96 year old and the youngest a 36 year old front line worker.”



The people Dr Clarke vaccinated were originally from all over the world including India, Madagascar, the Philippines, Malta, Norway, many countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Republic of Ireland.

The joy and excitement at receiving the vaccine was palpable – including one gentleman who: “Still had his pyjamas on under his outdoor clothes - he had rushed round to the hall to ensure he arrived in time.”

While some were visibly moved by the experience, including a parent who was caring for their young child with disabilities, others had more basic emotions.

She explained: “There was the confession from a young pharmacist that he was terrified of needles and injections and the fear that he was not going to cope – he did!”



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However, not all those coming forward for vaccination expect their local vicar to be administering the jab.

“A number of parishioners were surprised to see me in scrubs wielding a syringe,” she joked.

After her first days of vaccinating, Dr Clarke has encouraged everyone to “continue to pray for those involved in vaccine manufacture, logistics of distribution, practicalities of administration and all of us that we together may play a part, however small it seems, in overcoming the pandemic.”

## **President repeals America’s ‘global gag’ on abortion cash**

**Joe Biden has revoked the controversial anti-abortion “global gag rule” in the latest round of executive orders aimed at unravelling the Trump administration’s health policies.**

The rule, officially called the Mexico City policy, prohibited international charities from receiving United States funding if they provided education, referrals or services for legal abortions – even if they did not use the US money for those specific services.

The policy has long been a political football in the US, having been introduced by every Republican president since Ronald Reagan in 1984 and repealed by every Democrat. But Mr Trump dramatically expanded its scope.

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Under previous administrations the policy applied to family planning funding – roughly \$600m (£440m) a year – but the Trump administration extended the rules to all aspects of global health, including funds for HIV, nutrition and malaria programmes. This totals around \$9bn (£6.5bn) of aid annually.

The repeal – which had been expected and was introduced on the eve of the anti-abortion movement’s annual March for Life, held virtually this year – is likely to draw ire from conservatives and religious groups but has been welcomed by development agencies.

“Over the past four years, the expanded global gag rule has had a negative and lasting impact on millions of vulnerable girls and women,” said Rose Caldwell, chief executive of Plan International UK. “The decision to repeal the rule comes not a moment too soon.”

But many have warned that the “chilling effect” of the global gag will take years to reverse.

“For the entirety of Trump’s administration, [the policy] has reduced our donor income by \$30m [£22m] a year – funding that had previously supported us to reach an estimated two million women,” said Simon Cooke, chief executive of MSI Reproductive Choices.

“Today marks the first step towards a brighter future but there is still a steep hill to climb,” he added.

## **Knock Shrine to host special online faith discussions during Lent**

**Ash Wednesday falls on 17 February and heralds the beginning of Lent 2021.**

This year Knock Shrine will host a new series of online discussions to help engage Christians during Lent, under the title 'Living Christian Faith – Lenten Conversations'.

***What nurtures our faith and what challenges it today?***

***Where do we find hope and joy in our lives?***

***How can our faith build mental strength, wellbeing and resilience?***

***How has the Covid pandemic impacted upon our faith?***

These are just some of the questions that will be explored over the 6 weeks of Lent during a new series of online discussions on the topic of 'Living Christian Faith'. Faith Renewal at Knock Shrine is all about reaching out to people. This will open a conversation on contemporary issues of faith and church life.

Chaired by Father Eamonn Conway DD, Priest in Tuam diocese and Professor of Theology at Mary Immaculate College, the conversations will explore a different theme each week and guest speakers will discuss some of the important questions we all face in living out our faith.

The discussions will be streamed online via the Knock Shrine website offering people from all over the world the



opportunity to engage in relevant topics and to hear from a range of people, from those in public life such as Baroness Nuala O’Loan and Senator Ronan Mullen to groups of young teachers and members of the clergy.

**Thursday 18 February** *‘Living Christian Faith in the Family’*  
Saint John Paul spoke about how the future of humanity passes by way of the family. Patrick and Linda Treacy, who have four children and run a centre for domestic spirituality called [Integritas](#) from their home, will speak about the joys and challenges of living Christian Faith as a family today.

**Thursday 25 February** *‘Living Christian Faith as Young Adults’*

A group of young Irish adults, for whom Christian Faith is of great importance, will discuss the strength it gives them and how we can better communicate the joy of the Gospel today.

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**Thursday 4 March** *‘Living Christian Faith in the Classroom as Young Teachers’*

Three recently qualified primary teachers explain how their religious faith is important to them and how it influences their work as teachers in the classroom.

**Thursday 11 March** *‘Living Christian Faith in Public Life’*

Baroness Nuala O’Loan, Senator Ronan Mullen and discuss their own faith, how it informs their public service and the challenges people of faith encounter in the public sphere today.

**Thursday 18 March** *‘Proclaiming Christian Faith as a priest or religious today’*

Sr Ursula Lawler, lecturer in Christian Ethics at Mary Immaculate College, returned missionary and editor of the *Africa Magazine*, Father Sean Deegan SPS; Ballyhaunis Parish Priest Father Stephen Farragher and Father Eamonn Conway will discuss living priesthood and religious life today in conversation with young *Irish Catholic* journalist Jason Osbourne.

**Thursday 25 March** *‘Studying Christian Faith’*

Máire McDonald is Vice Principal of a busy secondary school in Dublin. Judith King is an internationally recognised psychotherapist and Margaret Naughton is a busy hospital chaplain. Yet they have all found time to fulfil their passion of doing a PhD in theological studies. They share with us how their theological studies enriches their faith and their work.

The talks will be streamed at 8.30pm every Thursday during Lent.

## **The babies in Brussels threw toys out of their pram**

**The EU's attempt to launch a vaccine war to cover its own incompetence is a low blow that revealed its selfishness.**

In the Battle of Brexit, we've become used to familiar heroes and villains. The prevailing narrative usually has Team Brussels as the good guys, while Boris Johnson's Brexit Britain stands for everything that is cheap, shoddy and nasty.

The roles were well and truly reversed by the EU's move to trigger Article 16 and block Covid-19 vaccines entering Northern Ireland. Despite the subsequent backtracking, the bloc inflicted more damage on itself in a few hours than Leavers have done over the past four years.

It embarrassed and shamed itself, and it must own its own mess if it's to begin to restore its tarnished reputation.

Since the 2016 referendum, a trail of senior EU figures have visited Northern Ireland. They sermonised on podiums, and stood in border fields, telling us how committed they were to protecting our peace process.

Yet the first minute they're presented with an inconvenience, the spirit of the Good Friday Agreement goes out the window and they're in bully mode, preparing for a hard border.

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We know what Boris Johnson is. His relationship with the truth has at times been as elastic as Donald Trump's. But those affable EU blokes seemed to genuinely care as they parroted phrases about the special circumstances in Northern Ireland. Had they ascended any further up the moral high ground, they'd have developed nose bleeds.

The British Government's record on Covid-19 is absolutely horrendous. It has done almost everything wrong, as the UK's appalling death rate shows.

Yet credit where credit's due: on the vaccination issue, it's been superb, although of course there's room for all to go wrong in the not too distant future. But, so far, 7.8m people have received their first jab — more than six of biggest EU countries combined.

The bloc sat on its hands while London placed orders during the summer. Brussels bureaucracy also meant slower authorisation of individual vaccines.

The UK has inoculated about 11% of its population, the EU 2%. The inefficiency that critics have long pointed out is in full public view during this pandemic. Rather than admit to its own failures, Brussels and the likes of Stella Kyriakides, the European Commissioner in charge of health, threw the proverbial toys out of the pram.

With the ink on the Northern Ireland protocol barely a month dry, the EU threatened to rip it up. It not only handed a massive propaganda victory to its opponents, but set a precedent.

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It claimed that “societal difficulties” would be caused by the lack of vaccines.

This provides ample ammunition for Jim Allister, Jamie Bryson and those in the DUP who want to trigger Article 16 over food supply issues.

The EU showed that selfishness and arrogance aren't just Tory traits. The Remain parties here wasted no time in calling Brussels out. Alliance said the planned move was unjustified and unwarranted, Sinn Fein branded it ill-judged, and the SDLP said it was at odds with the spirit of “cooperation, compromise and solidarity across national borders” needed to fight Covid-19.

Regardless of their strong words, the EU has made these parties' job of defending the Northern Ireland protocol much more difficult.

Brussels' attempt to launch a vaccine war to cover its own incompetence was a very low blow — and both sides in our Brexit divide know it.

## **Broadcasts, resources and webinars**

**First Aid for Mental Health Workshops** - Down and Dromore Youth Council will be hosting a series of four First Aid for Mental Health Workshops delivered by Tom Tate from ‘WhyMind?’.

The workshops are free and will be delivered via Zoom.



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Each workshop is for one of four specific target groups: young people, those aged 18–25, church leaders, and parents. They will last around one hour and will cover:

- Introduction to first aid for mental health
- Practical steps for helping others
- Signs/symptoms
- Listening skills
- Signposting

These workshops are designed to help us recognise signs in people's lives that show all is not well and how to signpost people towards help and support.

Wednesday 10 Feb at 7.00 pm: For young people aged 14 – 18

Wednesday 24 February at 7.00 pm: For those aged 18 – 25

Wednesday 3 March at 7.00 pm: For those in any form of church leadership

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Wednesday 10 March at 7.00 pm: For Parents

Tom Tate has over a decade of experience working full time in youth and community work. He is a qualified counsellor and psychotherapist and an accredited member of the Irish Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy. As such, he adheres fully to the code of ethics and is committed to regular supervision.

Tom is based in Cavan town and holds a degree in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy from IICP, a diploma in the same from Zestlife College, and a Bachelor of Divinity from QUB.

To register for any of these four workshops please visit:  
[ [whymind\\_workshops.eventbrite.com](http://whymind_workshops.eventbrite.com) ]

### **Leadership Training Day with Canon Ian Parkinson -**

This offers an invaluable day of interactive, online leadership training with Canon Ian Parkinson, one of the foremost teachers in this area.

Covering four key areas of Christian leadership, the training is aimed at those involved in church leadership such as:

Home group and bible study leaders

Programme and church organisation leaders

Parish and Diocesan Readers

Those who feel called into leadership roles

The training event is FREE and comprises 4 interactive hour-long sessions, via Zoom, on Saturday 27 February 2021.

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## Topics

10.00–11.00 am Leadership in the Christian tradition

11.30 –12.30 pm Leading ourselves well (part 1) Being rooted in Christ

1.30 –2.30 pm Leading ourselves well (part 2) Sustaining and resourcing ourselves

3.00–4.00 pm The ministry of all God's people Equipping others to minister

Canon Ian Parkinson is a highly regarded leadership specialist, author and visiting lecturer at several theological colleges. His book 'Understanding Christian Leadership' is used as a core reading text for training modules across the UK. Ian was the Leadership specialist for Theological Education at CPAS and has just taken up the post of Associate Archdeacon in the Diocese of Sheffield.

To register please go to  
[ [christianleadership2021.eventbrite.com](http://christianleadership2021.eventbrite.com) ]

For further information please email  
[ [andrew@downanddromore.org](mailto:andrew@downanddromore.org) ]

**Webinar: The President's Faith** - Christopher Lamb will be talking to Massimo Faggioli about his groundbreaking new book on President Joe Biden's Catholicism.

To book your tickets visit: <http://thetablet.co.uk/events>

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**Arts and Crafts Churches by Alec Hamilton** - “This comprehensive overview provides the first detailed account of the phenomenon of the Arts & Crafts church, examining 150 of the finest examples, mostly built between 1884 and 1918 in England, Scotland, and Wales. Arts & Crafts studies tend to focus on houses and furniture; churches were no longer central to architects’ practice. A handful of well-known churches have been written about extensively, but these famous examples obscure the existence of scores of churches that express Arts & Crafts ideas every bit as vividly. They also are rarely set alongside each other, nor seen within the wider context of not only how they were built, but why. These churches are visually arresting, with often quaint, far-fetched, or capricious exteriors. Internally, they often contain beautiful elements, including reredoses, pulpits, stained glass, and altars. They also tell a fascinating story about religion as Britain entered the age of modernity. While the architects were often religiously skeptical, they were still committed to making beauty. Author Alec Hamilton sets out the social and political context in which these churches were designed and constructed in the introductory section. The book is then divided into regional sections. Each section is headed by a short essay highlighting key architects and descriptions of notable churches within each region.” (Lund Humphries, £45 (£40.50); 978-1-84822-321-9).

## **Pointers for prayer**

We remember with thanks the numerous Mothers’ Union members who, over the years, have used their God-given gifts to change the world. We pray that, in our day, we’ll also



be willing to use our gifts to help transform lives and communities

Today we pray for Mozambique. A cholera outbreak combined with a growing humanitarian crisis after fighting in a northern province displaced more than 500,000 people last year has led to the UN calling for help in the region.

Today we give thanks for those raising awareness of leprosy around the world. It's World Leprosy Day next week, when advocates challenge myths and spread awareness about leprosy, which is totally curable, globally.

We pray today for the church across the world, especially in places where they are experiencing hardship and persecution. We stand together with our sisters and brothers and pray for God to bring relief from their circumstances.

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Lord Jesus, you prayed that we would all be united together so the world would believe and experience your love. Help us to put aside that which keeps us apart and work together to share your love through our actions and our lives.

Let's remember and thank God today for friends and connections with different church traditions, and pray that we'll fully embrace and enjoy the richness of diversity that we all bring to worship and service.

Today we pray for those facing food insecurity globally. Coronavirus, conflict and cuts to UN funding are increasing the risks of food insecurity and malnutrition in 2021, in particular in South Sudan.

Prolonged restrictions and times of isolation can lead to a loss of confidence in venturing out and interacting with others. We pray for all who are experiencing this and ask God to help us gently reach out with encouragement and understanding.

## **Speaking to the Soul**

My child, listen when your father corrects you. Don't neglect your mother's instruction. What you learn from them will crown you with grace and be a chain of honour around your neck.

Proverbs 1:8-9 NLT

I would be fascinated to know what you remember your parents teaching you. Their words shape the whole of our lives. I remember my father insisting that we show "instant

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obedience”. I presumably remember it so clearly because we so often failed to do it! I remember my mother giving us great encouragement when we were kind to others. My parents are no longer with us but their influence lives on. I can still hear their words of guidance, encouragement and warning.

Since we became foster parents five years ago we have been encouraged to spend a lot of time reflecting on parenting skills. One point that is often and helpfully made is that parents are never perfect, and that what we need to be is “good enough parents”. I like that expression. We won’t always get it right but because of our love for our children we will, with God’s help, always seek to be good enough.

Parents are referred to repeatedly throughout the book of Proverbs and the key theme is discipline. This could easily sound harsh, but it is in fact a loving word. No parent who truly loves their child will let them do whatever they wish. The result would inevitably be disastrous. Loving discipline gives security and direction to children and gives them firm foundations for the whole of their lives.

Families take many shapes and these verses remind us that we need to do everything we can to support family life. The early years are absolutely crucial for the whole of life and each of us needs to invest in the lives of children in whatever way we can.

## QUESTION

What opportunities do you have to support family life?

## PRAYER

[churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)

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Loving Father, give us your strength and grace so that we will be able to have the right influence on the children in our lives, and support those who have the awesome responsibility of being parents. Amen.

