



**Image of the day  
St Columb's Cathedral, Derry**



## **Methodist church to review child safeguarding procedures**

**The Methodist Church in Ireland has begun a re-examination of all past reports of “safeguarding” concerns or issues within the church, Mark Rainey reports in the News Letter.**

A church spokesperson said the initiative is designed to ensure the safety of children and young people, and has not been prompted by any known problems.

The ‘Safeguarding Past Cases Review’ began in November 2020 with the final report anticipated in June 2023.

It began with requests for any comments and insights from all Methodist ministers and lay employees and the second phase will involve a request for all Methodist Circuits to respond – including an invitation for anyone to raise any concerns. In a statement, the church said: “Our purpose is to learn further from the past in order to enable the Methodist



## **Rev Dr Tom McKnight, President of the Methodist Church**

Church in Ireland to be as safe a space as it is possible to be.

“The Past Cases Review includes all ministers and lay employees, all circuits and individual congregations, and the Church is now seeking to make this review widely known so that anyone to whom this is relevant may hear and be able to make their view known.”

Methodist President, Rev Dr Tom McKnight said: “An important part of our current safeguarding responsibilities as a Church is to learn from any issues that may have arisen in

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the past. Commitment to such a task is part of our witness in today's world.”

The process is being chaired by Deborah Webster, a former Presbyterian Church safeguarding officer.

Ms Webster said she is confident the process will “ensure that children and young people involved in the life and ministry of the congregations will be better protected today and in the future as a result”.

## **Installation today of Dermot Farrell as Archbishop of Dublin**

The installation of Dermot Farrell as Archbishop of Dublin will take place today Tuesday 2 February in St. Mary's Pro Cathedral at 10.30. The Principal Celebrant will be Archbishop Farrell, he will be joined by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and His Excellency Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland.

Ahead of the Mass of Thanksgiving Archbishop Farrell said, “Since my appointment by Pope Francis on 29 December, I have been overwhelmed by the good wishes and support extended to me as I embark upon my new ministry as Archbishop of Dublin. I am acutely conscious that, to be effective, my broad pastoral role will require collaboration with many people and will involve difficult decisions. I will continue to keep you all in my prayers and I ask that you please pray that the Holy Spirit will help guide and strengthen me in my new role as Archbishop.”

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Due to public health restrictions caused by the coronavirus pandemic, this will not be a public Mass. However, you are invited to participate in the Mass which will be live-streamed on the cathedral webcam Watch & Listen Live | Archdiocese of Dublin ([dublindioocese.ie](http://dublindioocese.ie)) as well as on the Facebook page of the Archdiocese of Dublin.

Dermot Farrell was born in 1954, the eldest of seven children of the late Dermot and Carmel Farrell, in Garthy, Castletown-Geoghegan, Co Westmeath, in the Diocese of the Meath.

After his primary education in Castletown-Geoghegan and Streamstown, he attended Saint Finian's College, Mullingar. In September 1972 he began his studies for the priesthood at Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth, obtaining a Bachelor of Science Degree in 1976, as part of his philosophical studies. During his theological studies he was awarded a Bachelor in Divinity Degree in 1979 and a licence in Theology in 1981, both by the Pontifical University, Maynooth.

He was ordained to the priesthood in Saint Michael's Church, Castletown-Geoghegan on 7 June 1980.

Upon the completion of his studies he was appointed as Curate in the Cathedral Parish of Christ the King, Mullingar. In 1985 he began doctoral studies in the Gregorian University and, in 1988, was awarded a Doctoral Degree in Theology, for a dissertation entitled: The Dogmatic Foundations of Bernard Häring's Thought on Christian Morality as a Sacramental Way of Life.



His final year in Rome also saw him serving as a Director of Formation in the Pontifical Irish College.

Following his return from Rome he was appointed Curate in Tullamore Parish and in 1989-90 he began lecturing in Moral Theology at Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth. In 1990 the Maynooth College Trustees appointed him Executive Assistant to the President of College and to membership of the Faculty of Theology, holding the post of Director of the one-year Religious Studies Programme. In 1993 he was appointed Vice-President of Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth, and in 1996 was appointed President of the College, a position he held until his retirement in 2007.

In 1997 he was named as an Honorary Prelate of his Holiness. From September 2007 until 2018 he served as Parish Priest of Dunboyne and Kilbride Parish, Co Meath, and was appointed Vicar General of the Diocese of Meath in 2009.

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Bishop Farrell has extensive administrative experience: he has served on various boards and committees, among them, the Board of Allianz plc; the Governing Body of the National University of Ireland, Maynooth; the Theological Department Irish Inter-Church Committee, and as National Director of the Permanent Diaconate, and he is currently Chairman of Veritas Communications.

His appointment as Bishop of Ossory by Pope Francis was announced on 3 January 2018, and he was ordained bishop in Saint Mary's Cathedral, Kilkenny, on 11 March 2018.

He was elected Finance Secretary of the Irish Bishops' Conference in March 2019.

The Holy Father Pope Francis appointed Archbishop-elect Dermot Farrell as Archbishop of Dublin on 29 Dublin 2020.

Bishop Farrell's episcopal motto *Adiutorium nostrum in nomine Domini* ('Our help is in the name of the Lord') is taken from Psalm 124.

## **PCI - "Stop flawed dying Bill"**

**In its response to Oireachtas Committee on Justice's consultation on the Dying with Dignity Bill 2020, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) has said that it would 'leave vulnerable members of our society open to abuse, duress or the weight of a perceived expectation that they will relieve others of the burden of caring for them...' TDs were also warned that it was 'poorly drafted' and contained 'no robust or sufficient**

**safeguards.’ In short, PCI’s submission stated that the Bill should not proceed.**

Highlighting the key points raised by the PCI panel that advises the Church on social, political and economic matters in the State, former Moderator, Very Rev Dr Trevor Morrow, who was minister of Lucan Presbyterian Church for 31 years, said, “This Bill, which is poorly drafted and deeply flawed, raises serious and fundamental questions about the value that is placed on human life in Ireland, something that we firmly believe to be a gift from God.

“Our experience as pastors is that the components that contribute to a peaceful and dignified death are social, emotional, financial and spiritual. By focusing so restrictedly on the physical aspects of dying, this legislation fails to take account of these factors which can help to mitigate, or exacerbate, human suffering and distress.”

Dr Morrow continued, “It is notable that the Irish Association for Palliative Care has recommended that there should be no change in the law in order to legalise euthanasia. We believe that, rather than passing this Bill, TDs would be better focusing their time and energy on improving the care needs of those approaching the end of their lives in a consistent manner, providing support to help them live as well as possible in the time that they have left to them.”

In 2018, members of PCI’s General Assembly, attending from across Ireland, discussed this matter and [voted to oppose any legislation which allowed for assisted suicide, or euthanasia in these islands](#). At the same time, the Church strongly commended palliative care and called on the



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governments in both jurisdictions to ensure adequate resourcing of research and delivery in this important area.

Dr Morrow concluded by saying, “[Last autumn, when this Bill was initially debated in the Dáil, along with our Moderator, Dr Bruce, I wrote to all TDs](#) encouraging them to ‘commit to enhancing the quality of life for all Irish citizens, particularly those with terminal or life-limiting conditions, rather than ending it.’ The true measure of any society is how it treats its most vulnerable. This Bill serves only to increase, and not lessen, the vulnerability of those at the end of their life. On that ground alone, it is PCI’s recommendation that the Bill, having been given due consideration, should proceed no further.”

You can read PCI's submission [to the Committee on Justice here](#).

## **[Scouting and Guiding nominated for Nobel Peace Prize for global contribution towards peace and dialogue](#)**

<https://www.scout.org/scouts-nobel-peace-prize-2021-nomination>

**The World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM), together with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), have been nominated for the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize, recognising the outstanding contributions of Scouting and Guiding that have empowered hundreds of millions of young**

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## Scouts at the Kandersteg International Centre in Switzerland

**people to create a lasting culture of peace in their communities for more than a century.**

The Nobel nomination was submitted by Norwegian Liberty Party MP, Solveig Schytz, former Chief Commissioner of The Guides and Scouts of Norway and a current volunteer for the Scout Movement.

“The Scout Movement is all about giving young people the tools they need to solve the challenges of the future, while building strong civil society. This work is vital to world peace,” said Mrs. Solveig Schytz in her nomination.

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“At a time when our world is threatened by so many international challenges, be climate, wars or the pandemics, we need a counterweight to egoism and nationalism. We need to offer young people a chance to rally around a set of common values and the belief in service, not only to one’s own community, but to international society.”

Since its founding in 1907, the Scouting and Guiding Movements have centred around enabling young people with the leadership and life skills for them to promote peace and mutual understanding, and to be of service to their communities. Scouting helps to build a lasting culture of peace by incorporating the ideas of teamwork, unity, and intercultural understanding into its Youth Programme and activities.

Over the past decade alone, World Scouting’s flagship Messengers of Peace initiative has inspired Scouts around the world to take action in their communities by contributing to peace and sustainable development, contributing more than 16 million local projects and actions.

Scouting’s national, regional and world events are organised around the pillars of cross-cultural collaboration and peace-building, including World Scout Jamborees and JOTA-JOTI (Jamboree on the Air - Jamboree on the Internet) that connect millions of young people to be active global citizens. By teaching young people about the values of respect and duty to others, Scouts are working to build a world that is more peaceful and inclusive for people of all ages.



## Day of Prayer for Young People and Youth Ministry

**The Church of Ireland Youth Department is encouraging parishes across the island to set aside Sunday 14 February to pray for young people and everyone who serves them through youth ministry. The House of Bishops designated the last Sunday before Lent for this purpose.**

National Youth Officer Simon Henry says: “The CIYD Day of Prayer has gone from strength to strength over the past few years with widespread engagement across the island. Now more than ever, we need to continue to pray for our young people and engage them in prayer to foster and encourage a real and life-long relationship with God our Father. God is our ever-present hope in trouble and let us use the Day of Prayer to remind our young people of that this year.”

In 2019 CIYD published a book containing lots of ideas for the Day of Prayer. To get a copy please

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email [admin@ciyd.org](mailto:admin@ciyd.org). The book is also available in a PDF format.

## **'Hundreds of us were trafficked across the Border'**

**A new independent investigation into Northern Ireland's mother and baby homes and Magdalene Laundries announced last week is expected to look at the trafficking of children across the Border, Rodney Edwards writes in the Independent**

A research report found at least 10,640 women and girls entered mother and baby homes in Northern Ireland between 1922 and 1990, with 11pc of them being moved to the Republic.

The revelation has prompted questions over the legality of the cross-border adoptions of children.

The research confirms there is evidence that a number of children were moved from mother and baby homes in the North to others in the Republic and were then adopted there and in the United States and Britain.

Over the next six months, a victim-led inquiry will examine the role of both the Catholic and Protestant churches and the way in which each of the institutions operated on both sides of the Border.

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Children's Minister Roderic O'Gorman has "committed to consider the scope for co-operation" in the investigation, Northern Ireland First Minister Arlene Foster said.

Mark McCollum, who was born in a mother and baby home in Co Down in 1966 and then taken across the Border to an orphanage in Co Donegal, will join other survivors in coming up with the terms of reference for the investigation commissioned by the Northern Ireland Executive.

"The cross-border aspect has to form part of the investigation, and both the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive know that," Mr McCollum said. "It cannot ignore the fact hundreds of children like me were trafficked across the Border."

There was a culture of stigma, shame and secrecy attached to unmarried mothers in Northern Ireland, particularly during the early and middle decades of the 20th century and again in the 1970s and 1980s during the worst of the Troubles.

"There were checkpoints, there were army personnel manning the Border, how was this allowed to happen? We were taken from one jurisdiction to another," Mr McCollum said.

Thousands of young girls and women were sent to the homes by their families or church leaders.

Some were the victims of rape, incest or unlawful carnal knowledge

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In Mr McCollum's mother's case, she was a 16-year-old who became pregnant following a relationship with a British soldier.

"She did nothing wrong," said her son, who has two children of his own.

Mr McCollum spent most of his life trying to find his birth mother, only to be told last year that she had died in the north of England.

He now feels "hurt and failed" by institutions in Northern Ireland and the Republic.

During his search for his mother, he was prevented from legally accessing records in the North.

"I never got the chance to connect with her, and that hurts me," he said. "People like me have been silenced for too long and now feel disenfranchised by the way it has been handled."

Mr McCollum said he read the results of the independent inquiry into mother and baby homes in the Republic earlier this month, but felt "there were too many pieces of the jigsaw missing".

"There wasn't a focus on the Border like I thought there would be," he said.

"We were trafficked and the Church didn't recognise the Border. That's why it's vital that the investigation in the North looks at all of these key points."

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Last week's report shows that of the babies sent to Co Donegal from Co Down, 10 were recorded as being adopted in the Republic and 19 were returned to Northern Ireland to be adopted.

The records also indicate that 26 babies were adopted using the services of the St Patrick's Guild in Dublin, with 25 of them adopted in the Republic.

Three babies were adopted in Dublin through the Catholic Protection and Rescue Society of Ireland; three were adopted from the Holy Faith Convent in Eccles Street, Dublin; and two were adopted through St Anne's Adoption Agency in Cork.

All of these children went to live in the Republic.

The research also revealed a number of babies were taken to the United States, with one baby boy being taken from Northern Ireland to Co Donegal in 1967 and adopted by a couple in New York.

Another, born in 1960 and moved to St Patrick's Guild in Dublin, was adopted by a family in Illinois in 1963.

There has never been a more appropriate time to "highlight the wrongs", Mr McCollum said.

"I want to highlight the cruelty, the mistreatment of children like me," he said.

"It galls me when they say these homes were a place of refuge.



"Those involved had a warped sense of reality."

## How did Joe Biden get it so wrong on the EU?

**It is high time that the credulous US Left realised its romantic, idealised vision of Europe is a mirage, says Tim Stanley.**

Joe Biden bet his European policy on being anti-Brexit. He made a mistake. In hindsight, the Democratic leadership was always going to be against it and Northern Ireland offered the illusion of a moral rationale. The EU claimed to be essential to the peace process; everyone agrees that keeping an open border is optimal. When the Brexit negotiations appeared to threaten that consensus, Mr Biden was furious: "We can't allow the Good Friday Agreement that brought peace to Northern Ireland to become a casualty of Brexit," he said. "The border must stay open."

Then the EU tried to close it. And for the worst reasons possible.

In short, Britain decided to procure vaccines by itself and made a success of it. The EU stuck to its procedures and screwed up. The Americans assumed that the EU is motivated by the Enlightenment, progress and the quest for peace, but it's actually a ham-fisted protectionist bloc run by third-rate bureaucrats, many of whom couldn't get elected dog catcher in their own country, so they did what any desperate pen-pusher would do: overrode a critical part of the Brexit deal and effectively imposed an Irish border with

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the aim of controlling vaccine imports to the UK. The DUP, Sinn Féin and Dublin condemned them. It's the closest the EU will ever come to bringing peace to Ireland.

The single market provided the context for an open border, true, and Brussels spent a lot of money in Northern Ireland, no doubt. But, as David Trimble, one of the authors of the Good Friday Agreement, famously wrote, Britain's membership of the EU was not essential to the peace process, "because the EU had nothing to do with it – except that Michel Barnier turned up at the last moment for a photo opportunity". Ending the Troubles was achieved by the people of Northern Ireland. The border is a bilateral issue for London and Dublin.

If American politicians in both parties have struggled to understand this, it's down to romanticism, idealism and prejudice. The romantic cause is ethnic Irish politics: if you didn't already know Biden was an Irish American, he'll tell you within 30 seconds of meeting. The bond between the two countries is strengthened by Dublin's gift for soft diplomacy which, in recent years, has recast Ireland from Catholic shrine to liberal trailblazer.

The target audience is an American Left that has swallowed European liberal idealism like George Bernard Shaw revelling in the wonders of Stalinist agriculture. The EU is imagined as the opposite of conservative America: tolerant and internationalist. Donald Trump hated it, so it has to be good. The last president's enthusiasm for Brexit confirmed the prejudice, printed almost daily in The New York Times, that the UK is a post-apocalyptic hellscape run by Right-wing buffoons, that we were useful as a "bridge" between

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Washington and Brussels but, now that we've swanned off into the sunset, have become quite irrelevant.

This is why the vaccine scandal is so remarkable: it has taken all these certainties and blown them up. It's not the EU that led the way on immunisation, but Britain. It's the EU and European leaders who are raiding factories, spreading doubt about the vaccines and indulging in actual nationalism that, pushed to its logical conclusion, not only threatens the glorious liberal consensus to which we all must pay homage, but, rather more important, human life.

Dublin was not consulted and is deeply offended. Another reality exposed. Many Irish citizens put their fantastic increase in living standards since the Eighties down to European Union membership, but after the credit crunch they were compelled to undergo one of the harshest austerity programmes at Berlin's behest – treated not as a victim of the crisis, but a cause. Like the Greeks, they have long known that the EU's definition of solidarity includes overriding the human needs of individual member states in the interests of institutional integrity. The EU always comes first, even at the expense of its citizens.

Hopefully this will be a turning point in US attitudes towards Britain and Europe. Brexit is not the enemy; a post-Brexit Britain could be an engine of innovation, exactly the kind of "can-do" country the US wants to work with. The EU, by contrast, appears considerably less trustworthy.

Look on, America, and understand that this is why we voted to leave, not just because of who we wanted to be, but because we always knew what Brussels was really about.

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Tim Stanley writing in the Daily Telegraph



## Pointers for prayer

Pray for the Moderator as he seeks to give a lead to the Church at the start of 2021, and for plans being put in place for the General Assembly later this year and also as he seeks to provide encouragement and pastoral care for PCI's ministers.

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.

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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.

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.

## **Speaking to the Soul**

My child, never forget the things I have taught you. Store my commands in your heart. If you do this, you will live many years, and your life will be satisfying.

Proverbs 3:1-2 NLT

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What's your memory like? Time and again I trudge upstairs to get something and haven't a clue what I'm looking for by the time I get there! Pathetically, I try to find something else useful to do whilst I'm there to justify the journey! I would love to think that you have never had such an experience, but I have reason to believe that I might not be alone.

Forgetting things is part of the human condition and always has been, and the writer of Proverbs addresses the issue repeatedly. He urges us not to forget what we've been taught, whether it was by our parents or our spiritual teachers. This involves planning. We need to pepper our lives with reminders of the essential truths. We need to evolve a rhythm to our lives so that we are repeatedly reminded of what matters most.

From earliest times Jews had a variety of articles which gave them a constant reminder of the law. Phylacteries are small leather boxes which contain the Hebrew texts on vellum and are worn by some Jewish men at morning prayer as a reminder to keep the law. And on the door frame of their homes they affix a mezuzah, a decorative case containing the Jewish prayer, "Hear O Israel. The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

It's good for us all to build into our lives reminders of God's love and faithfulness. Triggers that will keep us on track and prevent us from forgetting about God. It doesn't matter how we do this. Some people have Bible verses on their walls or on fridge magnets or receive verses by email or app. What matters is that we don't forget. Supremely we have the Communion Service or Eucharist which Jesus gave to us as

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a way of ensuring that we would not forget his sacrificial death Facts and Faith for us on the Cross.

## QUESTION

What do you find the most effective way of reminding you of God's love?

## PRAYER

Loving Father, help me never to forget your perfect love for me and for this needy world. Amen.



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