



Image of the day
New Episcopal church in Israel

Irish interest in new church in Diocese of Jerusalem

Last Tuesday (February 2) was a historic day for Dublin and Glendalough's diocesan partners in the Diocese of Jerusalem.

For the first time since the establishment of Israel in 1948, a brand new Episcopal church was consecrated in the Holy Land: Christ the King Church in Tarshiha in Upper Galilee, near the Lebanese border.

At noon on Tuesday, Archbishop Suheil Dawani, Bishop Hosam Naoum and diocesan clergy gathered with Fr Hatim Jirvis and representatives from his congregation for a moving service of consecration for the beautiful new building.

Over the past three years, the parish has partnered with congregations in Switzerland, Germany, and Austria, who have contributed towards the construction of the church and its integrated parish hall. Both were built on land donated by the town itself.

People of Dublin & Glendalough have heard about the building of the church in Tarshiba during visits to the dioceses by Archbishop Dawani and his clergy. Archbishop Michael Jackson has congratulated all associated with the new church building.

“It is always good to learn of fresh developments in the Diocese of Jerusalem,” he said. “The construction and



dedication of a new church building is a very gladdening **Archbishop Suheil thanks Fr. Hatim for all his hard work and that of his congregation in building the new church. (Photo courtesy of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem)**

event in the life of the Christian community. Suddenly there is a house of prayer and a place of

God's presence where there was not one before."

"On behalf of the Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough I congratulate everyone associated prayerfully and practically and generously with the Church of Christ the King in these days," he added.

The Diocese of Jerusalem and the United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough have been engaged in a deepening

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friendship since January 2016 when Archbishop Dawani and Archbishop Jackson signed the Epiphany Agreement.

The agreement commits to developing a link relationship of equal partners between the two dioceses which is sustainable, practical, effective, mutually supportive and mutually enriching.

The aim of the link is to strengthen mission and evangelism in the church communities in both dioceses, to increase awareness between the dioceses of their solidarity in the cause of Christ, to respect and learn of and from each other's cultural heritage and to enable the world to recognise more clearly God's mission.

The Presbyterian Herald is back

After a significant absence, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's denominational magazine, The Presbyterian Herald, is back.

In any given year, the 10,000 Herald subscribers would receive eight monthly copies and two double editions, July and August and a Christmas/New Year edition. As Herald editor, Sarah Harding, explained, the magazine's production team had to pause publication back in March, with the Easter edition, due to the pandemic, "but the Herald is back for 2021, and we will be publishing four bumper editions throughout this coming year," she said.

"The decision was taken to allow for flexibility, as well as reducing risk around production and distribution. In this first

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edition of the year, which we have called ‘Standing in hope’, we look back at 2020 and hear the stories and experiences of Presbyterians across Ireland. We also take a global perspective and hear how people from our partner churches around the world are coping. As we look forward into this year, our Moderator, Dr David Bruce, encourages us to be people of resilience and hope – facing whatever lies ahead together.”

Sarah continued, “In this issue we also sought to reflect the wide range of experiences of the pandemic. In the article ‘Taking stock’, for example, several Presbyterians share their thoughts. Despite the many difficulties and uncertainties, I think that there is a bold resilience that



Sunrise Cork Cathedral

comes through in these articles, with God's people continuing to trust him in all situations."

With a publication heritage going back to the Missionary Herald, first published in 1843, the new 64- page Winter edition of the Presbyterian Herald includes regular features 'News in the round', 'As I see it' and news from the home and overseas mission fields in the 'Mission Connect' supplement - including prayer points. There are also articles on how each of our virtual lives have been transformed, as a result of the pandemic, and on the home front there is also a report on how staff and residents in PCI's residential care homes have coped throughout the current crisis.

With so much that has changed over the past 10 months, even the publication of the Herald had to be undertaken to ensure the teams' safety, with much of the production taking place remotely. "We recognise it's been a very difficult time for everyone, I also appreciate that many of our readers may be feeling a little disconnected from their congregations, or indeed the wider Presbyterian family," Sarah said.

"We hope, however, that through the Herald our readers in congregations across Ireland might regain some of that connection – and the good news is that for 2021 the Herald will be free to everyone, so please can I encourage you to avail of this offer. On a personal note, I would like to thank the team and contributors who made this edition possible, and our subscribers and agents for their patience and support throughout this time. I would also like to welcome any new readers to the magazine."

It is intended that each edition will be physically printed, unless restrictions make this unfeasible. While copies of the Winter edition have been distributed to PCI's Herald Agents, who will ensure subscribers receive them safely, it is also available to view free of charge as a PDF copy here on the PCI website presbyterianireland.org/herald, and also as a digital copy which can be accessed at issuu.com/presbyterianireland.

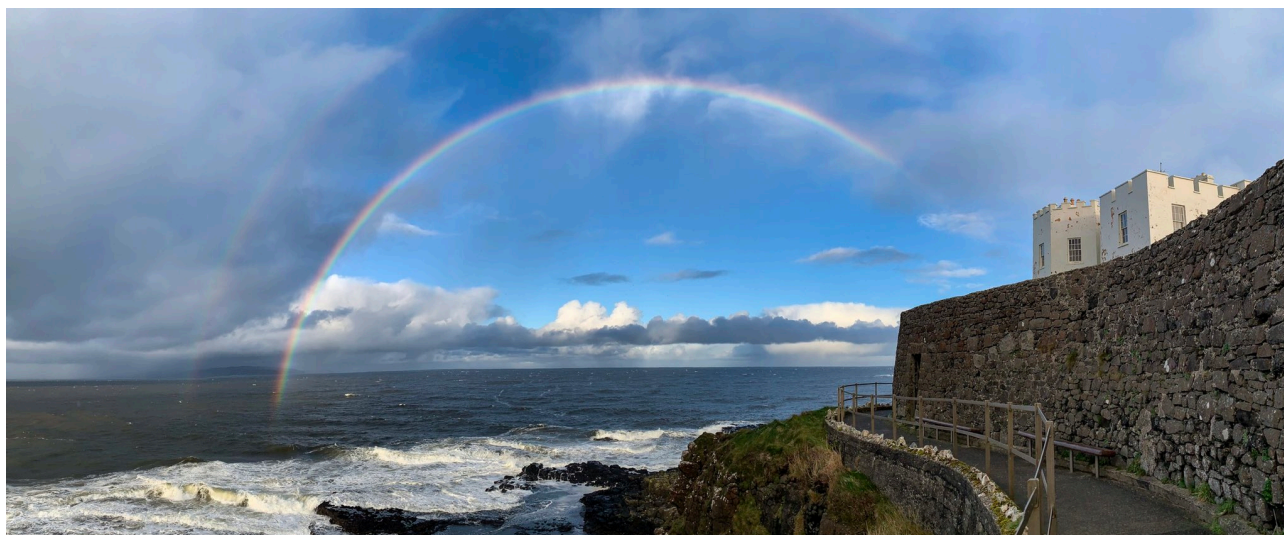
The Spring edition of the Presbyterian Herald will be available in April.

C of I concern for children and domestic abuse

On Thursday, 21st January 2021, a 53-year old man from Dublin became the first person in the Republic of Ireland to be convicted of the crime of 'coercive control'.

He was sentenced to over ten years in prison after two years of vicious and cruel attacks on his former partner who was commended for her resolve throughout the legal process, and her actions and courage in the face of 'unimaginable intimidation and terror'.

The C of I Safeguarding Board states - This crime was introduced into legislation by the Domestic Violence Act 2018 in the Republic, which makes a number of significant, positive and long lobbied for changes to this crucial area of law.



In the past, a culture of ‘turning a blind eye’ to what went on between couples meant that often the victims of crimes and abuse were left alone and unsupported in their suffering. It is better understood now that this culture of collusion has to change – a shift that is also assisted by the introduction of mandatory reporting of abuse against children under the national Children First guidance.

Coercive control is a persistent pattern of controlling, coercive and threatening behaviour which includes all or some forms of domestic abuse (which may be emotional, physical, financial, and/or sexual, including threats) by a partner, spouse or ex. Coercive control can very seriously damage someone’s physical and emotional well-being and have lifelong impacts on the well-being of children exposed to it.

National data suggest around one in seven women and one in sixteen men in the State have experienced severe domestic abuse. The same study found just 29% of women and 5% of men had reported abusive behaviour to the police. In Northern Ireland, police deal with around 2,500 reports of domestic abuse each month.

Children can be both direct and indirect victims of abuse and there is a strong correlation between domestic abuse and child abuse. Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, recognises domestic violence as emotional abuse of the child and recommends that child protection referrals are made where a child is present in a home where domestic violence is a concern. This includes a child under a year old.

At a time when families are restricted to home, where stress is so high and where normal routines and social connections are not possible, domestic abuse is a huge concern across our island. Anecdotal evidence suggests that domestic abuse has increased since the beginning of the pandemic. Women's Aid, for example, reported a 41% increase in the calls they received from the start of the Republic's restrictions to the end of November 2020. The Police Service of Northern Ireland responded to 549 more



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domestic abuse incidents in April and May last year than in the same months in 2019.

If you are experiencing abuse or have concerns about a child in this situation, help and support is available by calling 101 or 999 in an emergency or through the following helplines:

Republic of Ireland

The 24-hour confidential Women's Aid helpline on 1800 341 900.

Men's Aid offers support between 9am and 5pm, from Monday to Friday, on 01 554 3811 and a listing of other sources of help which may be able to help outside those hours is available at mensaid.ie/useful-services

The Crime Victims Helpline can be reached on Freephone 116 006, from Monday to Saturday.

Northern Ireland

The 24-hour Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline on 0808 802 1414.

Victim Support Northern Ireland provides a helpline on 028 9024 3133, during office hours, and the UK-wide National Supportline can be called at any time on 0845 30 30 900.

C of I Contact Details

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Safeguarding Trust is the Church of Ireland's Code of Good Practice for Ministry with Children.

Adult Safeguarding is the Church of Ireland's Code of Good Practice for Ministry with Adults at Risk.

All policy documents and supporting information are available on our Safeguarding website:

[www.sg.ireland.anglican.org]

Opinion - Ireland in the 20th century contained not one rotten little state, but two

The impact of this month's Mother and Baby Homes report came home to me personally through texts from my two daughters, both proud Irish-speaking feminists in their early thirties. "I felt deeply sad and sick to my stomach", said one. "I've never felt so ashamed of this country," said the other, Andy Pollak writes

As so often, the horror of it was best articulated by Fintan O'Toole. He wrote about "the reign of terror" suffered by the young pregnant women and the "culture of fear which fused the physical and the spiritual, the social and the religious, into a single, overwhelming system of domination." O'Toole has absolutely no doubt where the main guilt lay. "That power, for the vast majority of us, was wielded by one institution and one institution only: the Catholic Church."



In 1969 London-based, Dublin-born journalist Alan Bistic quoted the words of a Catholic social worker about unmarried pregnant Irish girls in England: "The fear in these girls has to be seen to be believed. It is only by endless gentleness that we can persuade them that going back [to Ireland] to have their baby wouldn't be so awful. What sort of society do you have in Ireland that puts the girls into this state?"

O'Toole tries to answer this question, acknowledging "the cruelty of Irish society, its obsessions with respectability and property, its misogyny and its snobbery, its endless capacity (honed by generations of mass emigration) to make its own realities disappear. But the driving force of this cruelty was spiritual terrorism. The sum of all fears was the dread of perdition. It was within this orbit that, as [Edna] O'Brien put it, the female body was 'blackened by the fear of sin'. There was no such thing as 'society' as distinct from this domination of damnation, no neutral State beyond its reach. It pervaded everything and invaded each of our bodies. The brutal institutions of social control – industrial schools, Magdalen asylums and mother and baby homes – were the outward signs of this inward terror."¹

In the words of the great Leitrim writer John McGahern, who was driven from his job as a teacher at the instigation of the Archbishop of Dublin, John Charles McQuaid: "In that



Warrenpoint and the Newry River from the Fathom Viewing Point

country, individual thought and speech were discouraged... By 1950, against the whole spirit of the 1916 Proclamation, the State had become a theocracy in all but name. The Church controlled nearly all of education, the hospitals, the orphanages, the juvenile prison systems, the parish halls. Church and State worked hand in hand... The breaking of pelvic bones took place during difficult births in hospitals because it was thought to be more in conformity with Catholic teaching than Caesarean section, presumably because it was considered more 'natural'. Minorities were deprived of the right to divorce. Learning Irish was seen as a means of keeping much foreign corrupting influence out."

Meanwhile the country was so impoverished that in the 1950s half a million people were forced to emigrate, most of them to England. It was an irony beyond irony that this was precisely the time the Irish government chose to mount an

utterly futile international campaign to end partition. Little wonder that Northern Protestants, snug in their own bigoted, anti-Catholic statelet, scoffed at this attempt to incorporate them into such a Catholic-run dystopia.

And weren't they right? The truth is that the Republic of Ireland in the middle decades of the last century was a rotten little place, antipathetic to women, children and anybody who deviated from the path of obedience to the all-powerful Church and its servants in an inward-looking and impecunious 'ourselves alone' State. We have been told repeatedly what a dreadful place Northern Ireland was for the 70 years between the 1920s and the 1990s. After the seemingly endless series of recent reports into Catholic Church-related abuses of the weak, the poor and the deviant, it is surely time to confess that the independent Irish State wasn't much better. And this is not at all to deny that similar abuses – rooted in the Victorian and post-Victorian age's cruel attitudes to such people – also took place in the North or in Protestant-run homes in the South like Dublin's Bethany Home.

So what are the lessons of this for those of us who would like one day to see the peoples of Ireland coming together in one constitutional arrangement? It would be easy to dismiss all these scandals as the product of a dark and bygone age, which has now triumphantly passed as the popular votes in the same sex marriage and abortion referenda have turned the present-day republic into one of Europe's most liberal societies. However the Catholic Church, much diminished but still powerful, continues to wield huge influence – often now through clever trust arrangements – over many of the country's hospitals and more than 90% of its schools. In the



same week that the Mother and Baby Homes report was published, the former master of the National Maternity Hospital, Dr Peter Boylan, outlined in a letter to the Irish Times how that hospital in its brand-new form would be taken over by one of several “private Vatican controlled entities beyond the reach of the State.”²

And the Republic is not exactly a land flowing with milk and honey (despite the astonishing finding of a UN survey last month that it is now the country with the second highest quality of life in the world – after Norway – when measured by income, education, health and length of life). It is one of the most unequal societies in Europe before progressive tax and welfare systems equalise those divisions considerably. It has shocking levels of child poverty, hospital waiting lists, mental illness, social housing shortages and homelessness. The Direct Provision system for asylum-seekers is a national scandal. After the Covid-19 pandemic is over – in common with many other smaller countries – it will face gargantuan and near-unsustainable levels of debt.

So maybe it is time to be a little self-reflective and lay off on the drumbeat announcements that Irish unity is inevitable and just around the corner after one or two Border Polls over the next decade (and will be the solution to all our problems). Maybe we should work for some more years to make our republic a more decent, equal and inclusive society, respectful of other cultures besides our own Irish nationalist one, before expecting Northerners to want to cast aside their Britishness (and fine British institutions like the National Health Service) to come in with us.

It cost the wealthy Germans two trillion euros for new infrastructure alone to help unite their country, with an overwhelming majority of people in favour of that outcome, very few against and people prepared to put up with significant tax increases to bring it about peacefully and harmoniously. Will we be able to muster a quarter of that sum to do the same for our country, when something like a sixth of the population – and half of the population of the present Northern Ireland – will be bitterly opposed to it (and a small number may be prepared to use violence to resist it)? And when we refuse to pay even a small but environmentally urgent water tax?

Is the message from Sinn Fein and other ‘advanced’ nationalists that we want a much closer relationship with the North for the good of all the people of the island, and are prepared to work over a period of time towards complex constitutional and other arrangements (building on the extremely complex Good Friday Agreement) to that end? Or is it rather that once we get the narrowest of narrow wins in a Border Poll, the historic British-imposed wrong of partition will be ended and we will have a unitary state that effectively

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takes over the North? That is what the Irish political establishment was endlessly demanding for much of the bad old 20th century (read Clare O'Halloran's seminal book, Partition and the Limits of Irish Nationalism, if you doubt me). Despite their sometimes honeyed words, it seems to me that what Sinn Féin is offering is little different. And to judge by the brazenness of many Sinn Féiners in Belfast these days – supremely confident that *tiocfaidh ár lá* – their attitudes have not changed one iota. 'The boot will soon be on the other foot' is what that strutting confidence says to me.

Courtesy of Andy Pollak's Ireland web site, 29.01.2021
[[<https://2irelands2gether.com/2021/01/29/ireland-in-the-20th-century-contained-not-one-rotten-little-state-but-two/>]

Broadcasts, resources and webinars

The Prophets Are Weeping - On Wednesday past 3 February RTÉ 2 television re-broadcast, The Prophets Are Weeping, as part of its Future Visions series, which was written and directed by Philip McKinley, a Masters in Theology student in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute.

If you missed the programme on Wednesday you can watch it here

[[<https://www.rte.ie/player/series/future-visions/SI0000006073?epguid=AI0000003362>]

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The programme, which was originally aired in 2019, was filmed in both Jerusalem and Dublin and strongly features St George and St Thomas' Church, just off Dublin's O'Connell Street. The church and Discovery Gospel Choir, which is based there, feature as a significant backdrop and inspiration for a new re-envisioning of Ireland's capital thoroughfare.



The Prophets Are Weeping draws on the ancient wisdom of the Prophet Jeremiah to shape Dublin city centre's future. The programme features inspiring examples from The Haven Community in Harold's Cross, the Sanctuary in Stoneybatter and Third Space in Smithfield.

The Future Visions series explored a variety of new ideas for Ireland's future from a number of different contributors and perspectives. It was a Yellow Asylum Films Production for The Tony Ryan Trust in association with RTÉ.

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Guild of Health and St Raphael - On the anniversary of the first lockdown, we are honoured to be hosting The Bishop of London as she delivers a lecture on the impact of the pandemic on mental health and the church. 23rd March 2021 at 7pm

This is a free online event - grab a ticket now!

<https://gohealth.org.uk/shop/booking/the-bishop-of-londons-faith-and-mental-health-lecture/?category=all>



What would Pope Francis do - To mark the eighth anniversary of Pope Francis' election the Edinburgh Jesuit Centre is delighted to announce a number of prominent Catholic voices exploring the teachings of Pope Francis. Join us each Tuesday in Lent as we delve into some of the key issues that are defining Francis' papacy.



Join us on Zoom by following the link below. We shall also be streaming to Facebook Live.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2365092814> or Meeting ID: 236 509 2814

View on Facebook live by typing Edinburgh Jesuit Centre into Facebook, For more information contact edinburghjesuitcentre@jesuit.org.uk

Pointers for prayer

Pray that the right person will be appointed to lead Church Army in the next chapter. Pray for wisdom for the Board members as they meet to decide who will be appointed.

We think today of families who are struggling to cope with the ongoing restrictions to normal life, especially those who live in small homes with no outside space. We pray for an

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abundance of tolerance to help ease their less than ideal circumstances.

Today we give thanks for young climate activists. A UN survey shows that demand for green business and jobs is particularly high among young people, who have been a driving force behind getting the issue onto the political agenda.

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.

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.

Speaking to the Soul

We can say with confidence and a clear conscience that we have lived with a God-given holiness and sincerity in all our dealings. We have depended on God's grace, not on our own human wisdom. That is how we have conducted ourselves before the world, and especially toward you.

2 Corinthians 1:12 NLT

Life isn't always easy. It certainly wasn't for Paul, whose ministry often came under vicious attack. I have always found his relationship with the church in Corinth particularly painful because this was a church that he had helped to establish. He loved them passionately and was desperately eager for them to grow and thrive in the Lord. However, time and again they were a great disappointment to him. But it got even worse when they started making cruel and totally unfounded accusations against him.

Nothing is harder than people accusing you falsely. It can easily happen, and it is so incredibly painful. When you know in your heart of hearts that you have acted out of love and concern, it is agonizing to be accused of acting out of selfinterest. Paul's response is that he is absolutely convinced that he has acted in the right way towards God. At the end of the day it doesn't matter what other people make of his ministry. What matters is what God makes of it, and Paul is utterly convinced that he has ministered in the right way.

I have had the privilege of working with hundreds of church leaders over the years and I have often seen them being accused by others. It's always painful and difficult. What happens in those moments is that it is easy to focus on the detail of the accusation. But what matters most is that we stand before God and assess where we are before him. If we are, like Paul, convinced that we have acted in a way that is honouring to God then we should give thanks and enjoy the peace which God gives us. It is still appropriate to answer our critics, but we will be doing so not in our own strength and wisdom but in God's.

QUESTION

What would you do if you were falsely accused?

PRAYER

Dear Father, thank you that you don't leave me when times are hard. Help me always to respond to criticism with grace, wisdom and love. Amen.



