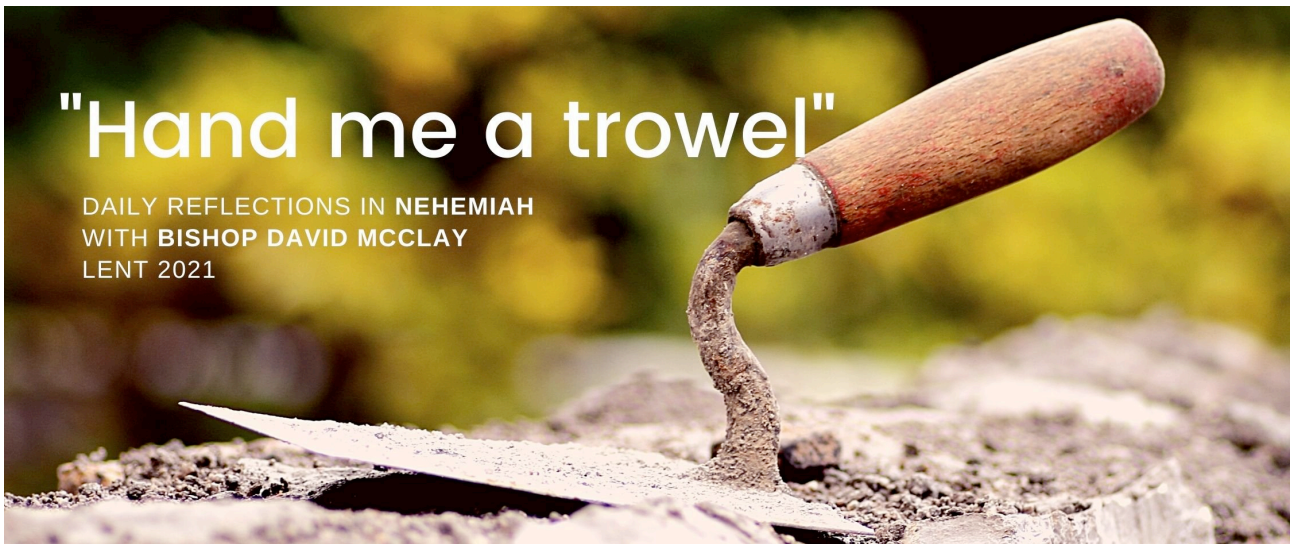


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**Image of the day**

**Bangor Abbey**



## **Building programme at Bangor Abbey is stimulus of Bishop's Lenten talks**

**The recently refurbished Bangor Abbey is the setting for Bishop David McClay's Lent series from Nehemiah, a book which teaches so much about building and rebuilding.**

This Lent, you can join Bishop David for his series of 40 daily reflections on Nehemiah. The diocese will be sharing a short film every day from Ash Wednesday 17 February, to Palm Sunday 28 March. In this introduction, Bishop David explains why he has named the series, "Hand me a trowel".  
[[ <https://www.downanddromore.org/news/2021/01/introducing-our-series-for-lent-2021> ]

In the following short film the Abbey's rector, Canon Ronnie Nesbitt, talks about the project which will allow this historic building to give shape and expression to the gospel of Jesus Christ for many years to come.



## **Canon Ronnie Nesbitt, Rector of Bangor Abbey**

[[ <https://www.downanddromore.org/news/2021/02/building-and-rebuilding-in-bangor-abbey> ]

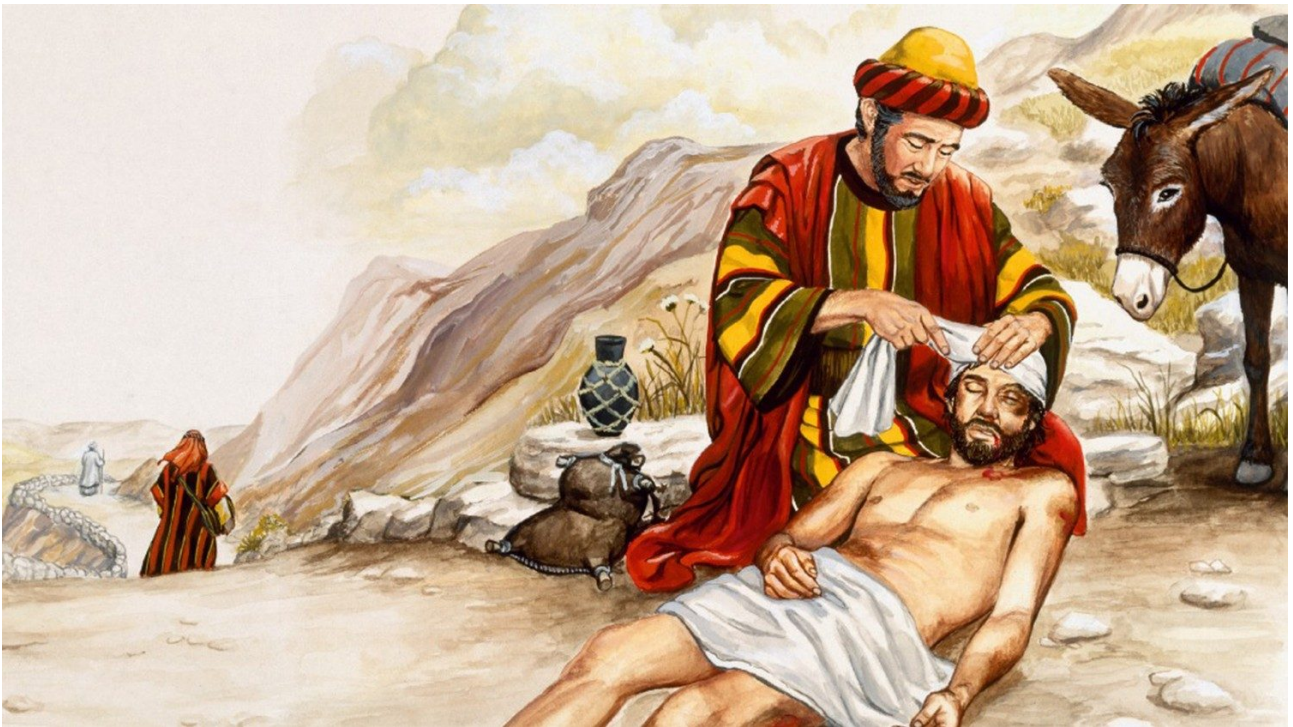
## **Irish Bishop welcomes International Day of Human Fraternity**

**The Chair of the Council for Justice and Peace of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ, of Raphoe, has warmly welcomed the first International Day of Human Fraternity.**

### **Peaceful co-existence**

The Bishop expressed the hope that, on this day, there would be an increase in efforts “toward inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue, the promotion of a culture of tolerance and acceptance of others and of living together peacefully.”

Quoting from The Document on Human Fraternity for World



Peace and Living Together, signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb in Abu Dhabi in 2019, the Bishop said he hoped that this fraternal approach “would contribute significantly to reducing many economic, social, political and environmental problems that weigh so heavily on a large part of humanity”.

## Unity over division

This document, he said, “shows us clearly that there is more that unites us all as human beings, and as believers in God, than that which is too readily focused on as cause for division.”

Bishop McGuckian said that the text, alongside the most recent Papal Encyclical, Fratelli tutti, “highlights the common bonds of humanity that unite us, and the challenges that face us all, including ongoing injustice in the world, poverty, extremism and environmental degradation.”

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## **The Good Samaritan**

He noted that in the face of these challenges, “Pope Francis in Fratelli tutti points repeatedly to the Good Samaritan as the guide for our own actions towards others.”

Bishop McGuckian went on to say that “The Good Samaritan became a true neighbour to the wounded Judean by not passing by, too preoccupied with his own affairs, but by approaching and making himself present.”

In so doing, the Bishop pointed out, “he crosses all cultural, religious and historical barriers to care for his fellow man.”

## **February issue of C of I Gazette is available**

The Editor of The Gazette writes - Our first issue of 2021 is now online, and our print edition is available.

In what has been a difficult start to the year, we have reaction to the Mother and Baby Homes Report, including Rev Stephen Farrell on why he chose to broadcast a service of lament and repentance from Zion Parish Church.

In Opinion, the leader of the UUP, Dr Steve Aiken, has written a response to Neale Richmond’s vision of a shared island after Brexit, and how he endeavours to improve understanding and tolerance across our diverse society,

Rev Dr Lester Scott writes about how we can draw on the faith story of Elijah to help each other during the pandemic,

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with a particular focus on mental health.

Our big interview this month is with National President of The Girl's Brigade Ireland, Hazel Ensor, who talks about her lifelong journey with GB, and how the four pillars of the organisation, ensure an inclusive and fulfilling environment for all members.

Health and Nutrition coach Rachel Young has advice on how to eat healthily, for the body, and the mind and how we can avoid overeating during lockdown.

Look out for our special reader's competition to celebrate the commemorative stamp issued by An Post to mark the 150th Anniversary of the Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, which features on our cover this month.

There are all the usual features including Mothers' Union reports, Liturgical Notes the Diocesan Focus and the Archive of the Month.

[[] <https://gazette.ireland.anglican.org/your-february-gazette/>

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



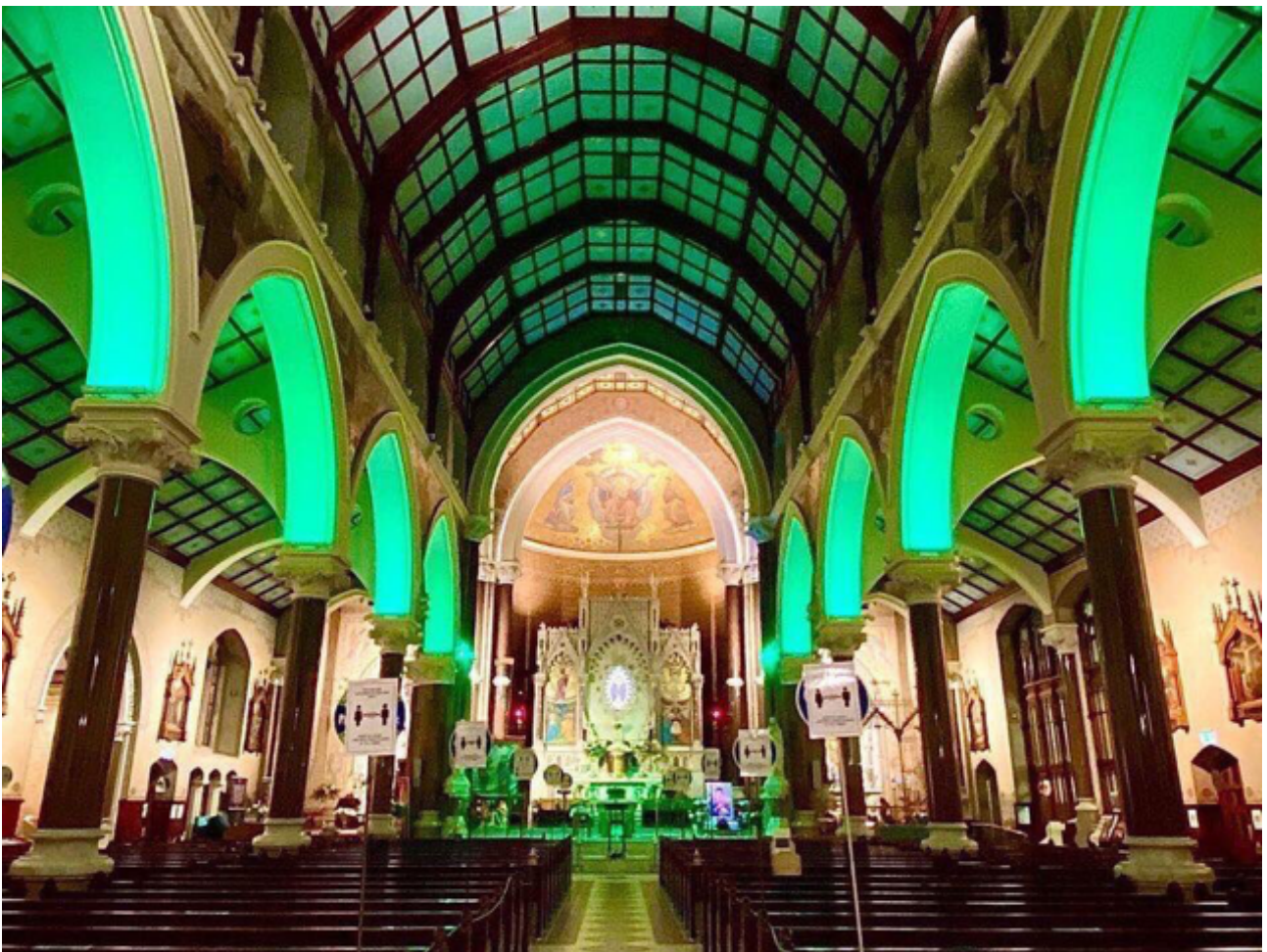
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## 'Relentless march of death' haunts order

The shock struck Fr Paddy Moran suddenly over lunch last week. A Spiritan father, he lives with three others in his community at St Mary's Church in Rathmines in Dublin.

"Somebody asked: 'Who's being buried next?' Because it has been one funeral every day this week, the four of us looked at each other and we couldn't remember. It was extraordinarily sad and upsetting," he said. "The relentless march of death."

The Spiritan fathers are among several religious to have lost



### Clonard Monastery, Belfast

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

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members to Covid-19. Ten Spiritan priests from the order have died in the third wave. Eight tested positive for Covid-19. All but one were residents of Nazareth House, the Spiritan residence in Dublin.

Five died over three days last week, and the last of the funerals took place at Kimmage Manor church last Friday. Following lobbying from the Association of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland, the Health Service Executive has included religious orders in the vaccination priority list for those over 65 in congregated settings.

Religious had been excluded because their residences are not classified as nursing homes. The roll-out for the vaccine for religious will begin in Donegal, Leitrim, Cavan and Monaghan from this week. "It was the first bit of good news for a while," Fr Paddy said.

The congregation live in bubbles in their own communities, shielding from the virus. Of the 136 Spiritans in Ireland, 10 are in their 90s, 52 in their 80s, 47 in their 70s.

Many of the older residents of Nazareth House, where the biggest outbreak occurred, are isolated from the outside world apart from emails and phone calls.

Sometimes, a request comes out for a bottle or two of whiskey, rather than a prayer book or rosary beads, said Fr Paddy.

"We're social beings, we live in a community, we're used to living with each other. To not be able to get to visit each other is a real source of upset and distress."



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The men who died were missionaries who sailed on ships to Africa decades ago, he added.

"We had wanted our men to have more time for themselves, for their families, and for us. We didn't want to lose that treasury of stories and memories that they have.

"And, of course, we didn't want them to all suddenly be lost to us so quickly. We're so proud of the men, of all they did, the contribution they made, at home and overseas."

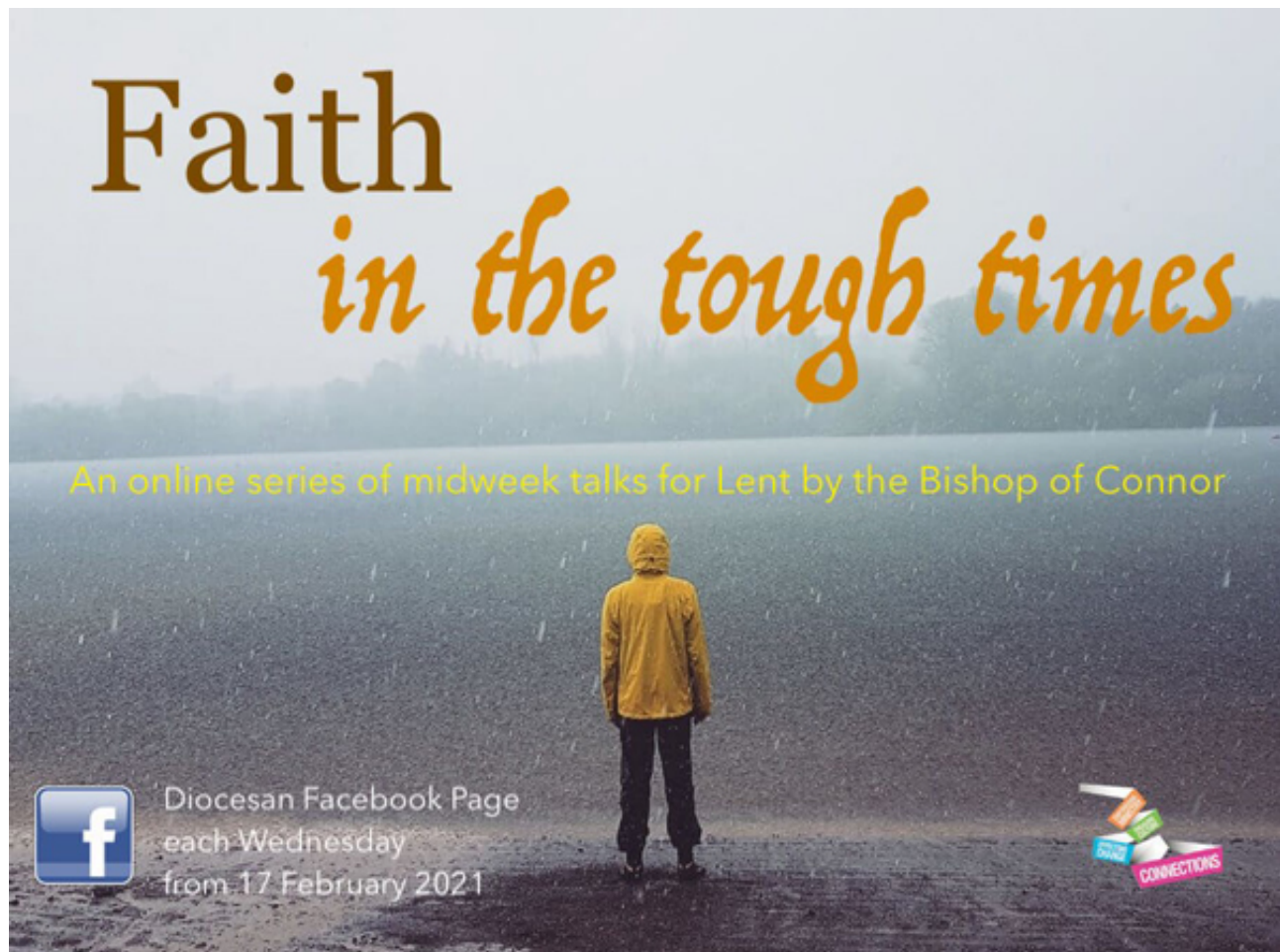
Report by Maeve Sheehan courtesy of the Sunday Independent 7.02.2021

## **Broadcasts, resources and webinars**

**Connor Lent talks - Bishop George Davison** will give a series of six online Lent Talks, beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 17, on the theme: Faith in the tough times. The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison, will give a series of six online Lent Talks, beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 17.

The bishop will look at various aspects of how our faith sustains us as the series progresses. Bishop George will include a few questions which might assist any parishes who wish to hold an online discussion group after listening to each talk.

It is planned to premiere the Lent Talks on the diocesan Facebook page on Wednesday mornings (7am) during Lent.



Each talk will then be available for download for use at any time.

Looking ahead to the series, Bishop George said: “The challenges of the past year have brought disruption to the way in which we relate to one another in our parishes.

“In this series of midweek talks for Lent, I hope to explore some of the ways that our faith in Christ not only sustains us through the difficult days, but challenges us to grow in Christian love and service to one another and the communities where God has placed us.”

Read more at [ <https://bit.ly/39RzTqo>. ]

**Daily prayer for the Lambeth Conference** - Prayer Journey is from the MU Worldwide President, Sheran

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Harper: "We draw near to the God of peace with thanks for our reconciliation, through the work of the cross. We offer ourselves as peacemakers in a world that cries out for peace...."

Get involved: [ <https://www.lambethconference.org/resources/prayers/> ]

**Lenten talks: What would Pope Francis do?** - To mark the eighth anniversary of Pope Francis' election, the Edinburgh Jesuit Centre will be hosting a series of talks



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each Tuesday in Lent, by prominent Catholic voices exploring the teaching of Pope Francis. Speakers will be: Austen Ivereigh, Sr Imelda Poole MBE, James Martin SJ, Christopher Lamb, Dr Lorna Gold and Sr Gemma Simmonds CJ. See further details below:

Tuesday 23 February 7.30pm  
Austen Ivereigh on Social Justice

Tuesday 2 March 7.30pm  
Sr Imelda Poole MBE on Refugees and Migration

Tuesday 9 March 7.30pm  
James Martin SJ on LGBTQ+ Ministry

Tuesday 16 March 7.30pm  
Christopher Lamb on Church Hierarchy

Tuesday 23 March 7.30pm  
Dr Lorna Gold on Pope Francis on the Environment

Tuesday 30 March 7.30pm  
Gemma Simmonds CJ on Women in the Church  
Zoom Login Information: [ <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2365092814> ] or Meeting ID: 236 509 2814

The talks will also be streaming to Facebook Live. View by typing Edinburgh Jesuit Centre into Facebook

For more information contact  
[ [edinburghjesuitcentre@jesuit.org.uk](mailto:edinburghjesuitcentre@jesuit.org.uk) ]

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**Perspectives from the Frontline - The Council for Christians and Jews Northern Ireland** will be hosting a Zoom Event on Wed the 17th March at 7pm UK time.

'Perspectives from the Frontline' with Aryeh Myers. "Aryeh Myers is a Paramedic who has worked with the London Ambulance Service and currently with Magan David Adom in Israel. Over the years he has gathered some fascinating observations from both his his work and daily life, these observations are at times written down and posted to Facebook, usually prompting various responses and discussions..... One such post resulted in the video that was posted by the committee of CCJ NI for Holocaust Memorial Day this year. Aryeh is the nephew of Rabbi Singer so has links with the Belfast Jewish Community and we look forward to hearing him speak" If you would like further info or to book for the event send an email to Sharon Lough (co-secretary) and she will forward the details. Email - [ccs.belfast@gmail.com](mailto:ccs.belfast@gmail.com)

## **Opinion - There is a solution to the Irish border dilemma**

### **Vernon Bogdanor writes**

**To settle this sensitive issue, it is paramount that we put the concerns of Northern Irish citizens first**

No plan, declared the Prussian general, Helmuth von Moltke, survives contact with the enemy. The Northern Ireland Protocol has fallen at the first whiff of grapeshot.

The protocol requires Northern Ireland to remain within the EU internal market for goods. It therefore imposes a

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regulatory border in the Irish Sea. Goods travelling from Great Britain to Northern Ireland must meet country of origin formalities to ensure that a percentage of the contents derive from Britain rather than from outside the EU. That means customs declarations and other paperwork. To deal with it, businesses are having to pay for assistance from customs specialists.

Were Britain to agree a trade deal with the United States, America would demand access for its food products. But the EU might not admit, for example, hormone-treated beef. So the deal would have to be with Great Britain, not Northern Ireland.

These arrangements arguably breach the 1800 Act of Union which provides for Northern Ireland “the same privileges” and “encouragements” in trade as the rest of the UK.

Would any EU state accept a regulatory border and, in effect, a customs border within its own territory?

The chief executives of the major supermarkets and other large companies have told Michael Gove, the Cabinet Office Minister, that disruption is “inevitable” and the protocol “unworkable”. Northern Ireland will be faced with higher costs, higher prices and business bankruptcies.

Even worse, the BBC’s Northern Ireland editor has received a package from England with a customs label attached. Sending parcels from one part of the UK to another has become an international transaction.

Gove has pleaded for flexibility with EU commissioner Maros Sefcovic, and seeks a further grace period for

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supermarkets, parcel transactions and medicines. But that would not resolve the fundamental problem, which is constitutional not economic.

Would any EU member state accept a regulatory border and, in effect, a customs border within its own territory. Would France accept a border cutting off Alsace-Lorraine? Would Italy accept a border cutting off the Alto Adige? The protocol, moreover, was agreed without Northern Ireland's consent, a breach of the spirit of the Belfast Agreement.

Northern Ireland is required to accept EU regulatory rules but without a vote on what they are – regulation without representation. The province's interests in the EU will no doubt be represented by Ireland but that would also be a breach of the spirit of the Belfast Agreement, which did not provide for joint authority in Northern Ireland, let alone joint sovereignty.

The protocol, however, cannot simply be abandoned. It is part of the Withdrawal Agreement, which Britain signed and ratified. To invoke Article 16 providing for unilateral but temporary suspension would merely paper over the cracks.

But there is an escape route. Boris Johnson insisted that the Northern Ireland Assembly be allowed to vote on the protocol in 2024. Assembly elections are due in 2022. They may well prove to be a referendum on the protocol. Since hostility to it is widely felt across the province, there may be a majority to reject it. In that case, the Assembly could insist on bringing forward the vote to 2022.

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Sadly, Brexit resurrects the issue of sovereignty, an existential matter. Either the regulatory border is in the Irish Sea, as nationalists want, or it is on the island of Ireland, which Unionists want, and should also be what a Unionist government at Westminster ought to want.

But a Unionist government negotiated a nationalist solution. Anything else, some suggest, would be too dangerous since it would lead to a revival of IRA terrorism – a somewhat disreputable argument: accept our solution, or else. But continuing with the protocol could also lead to a revival of terrorism from Unionist militants.

The issue should not be decided on that basis, but on the basis of which solution is fairest to the citizens of Northern Ireland, who are British taxpayers now deprived of their equal citizenship. That fundamental consideration points to a border on the island of Ireland, though checks need not actually take place on the border. It would be less onerous to administer than checks in the Irish Sea since Northern Ireland's trade with Great Britain is so much greater than its trade with Ireland.

Before the 2016 referendum, both John Major and Tony Blair warned that Brexit would pose problems for Northern Ireland. That was one of the reasons why I supported Remain. But Brexit is yesterday's argument. Today's argument is about the cohesion of the kingdom.

Vernon Bogdanor is Professor of Government at King's College London. His book 'Beyond Brexit: Towards a British Constitution' has just been reissued in paperback by Tauris



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Read more at [telegraph.co.uk/opinion](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion)

## Pointers for prayer

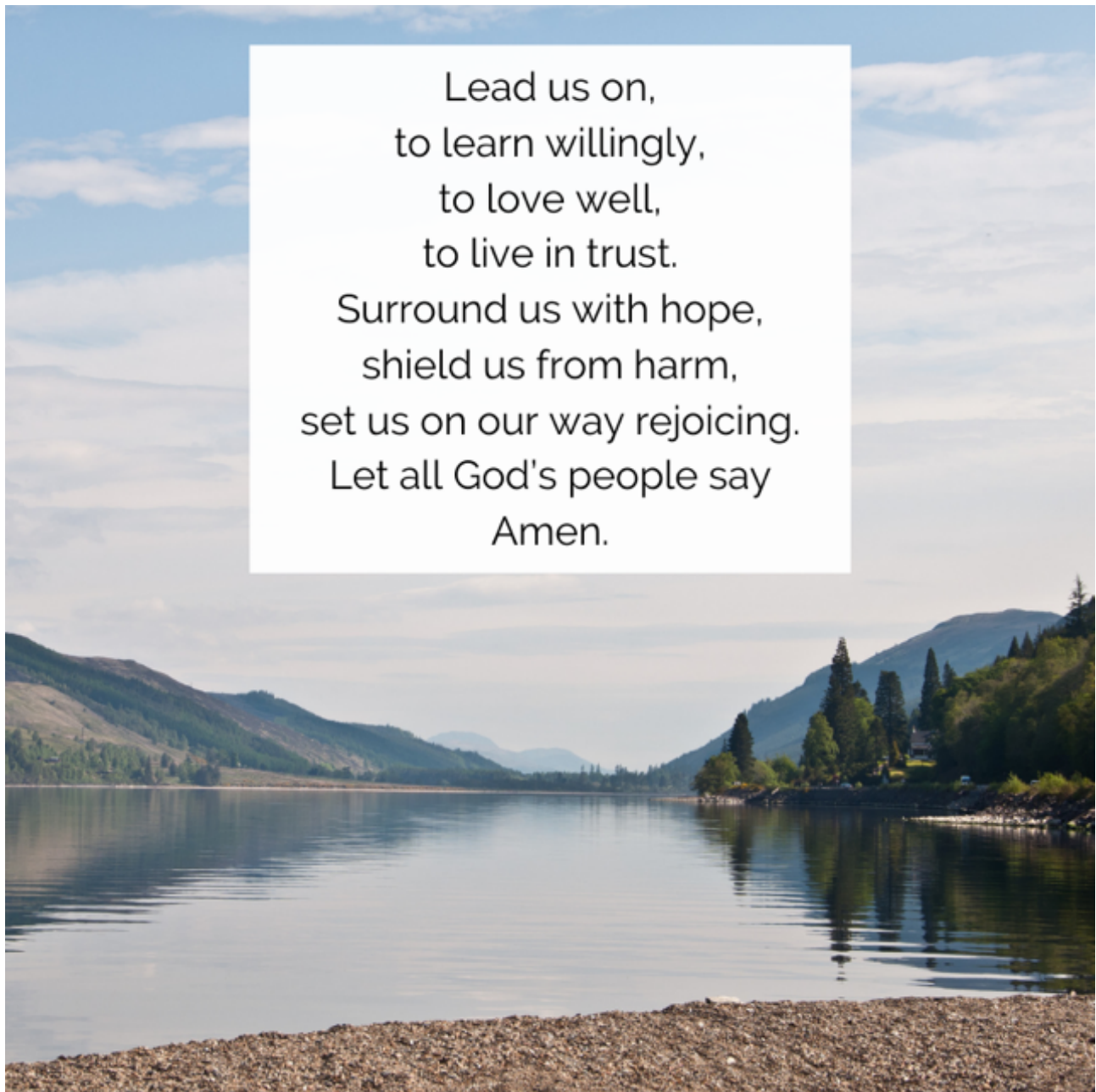
It has been announced that on Ascension Day - 13 May 2021, Bishop Hosam Naoum will be installed as Bishop of the Diocese of Jerusalem, bearing the title Archbishop. Please pray for Bishop Naoum, his family and the Diocese.

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 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.

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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

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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.



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