

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – European Epiphany**

January 6, 2023

## Image of the day

### European Epiphany

At St Boniface, Antwerp. Your prayers would be appreciated for the Archdeaconry of North-West Europe and Archdeacon Sam Van Leer. For St Boniface, Antwerp and the Antwerp Mission to Seafarers.

## News reports

### The funeral of Pope Benedict XVI

**Archbishop Dermot Farrell with Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and Archbishop Eamon Martin at the funeral of Pope Benedict XVI in St Peter's Square.**





At Saint Peter's Basilica, Vatican, Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh with Archbishop Dermot Farrell of Dublin Diocese joined more than 100,000 people of all ages and



nationalities filing by the body of the late Pope Benedict XVI and praying for the happy repose of his soul. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis

## **New Chaplain for Mission to Seafarers in Belfast**

**The Rev Mark Reid has taken up a new role as Chaplain to the Mission to Seafarers, based at the Flying Angel Centre in Belfast Port.**

Mark, who is married to Nicola and father to Rachel (24), grew up in Carnmoney Parish and prior to ordination worked in manufacturing.



He was a parish reader in Kilbride Parish, Doagh, for three years before he was ordained as a deacon in the Non-Stipendiary Ministry (NSM) in 2006, licensed to Glenavy Parish, and as priest a year later. Mark was NSM curate in Glenavy until 2012 and was also a part-time chaplain for the Royal Engineers in Aldergrove for several years.

In 2012, he was appointed NSM priest-in-charge of Upper Falls, and in 2017, he completed the transfer course to full-time (stipendiary) ministry.

He succeeds the Rev Colin Hall-Thompson, who retired in November 2021, as Mission to Seafarers Chaplain.

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Mark speaks about his new role and the work of the Mission to Seafarers in next month's issue of the diocesan magazine Connor Connections.

## **Persian Bibles at Portstewart Christmas services**

**A number of young men currently living as refugees and asylum seekers in a Portstewart Hotel have been attending services in Agherton Parish Church.**

And on Christmas Eve, three of these young men played a special role in the parish Christingle Service at 6pm and the 11pm Holy Communion service, reading from the Gospel of Matthew in their own language from their Persian Bibles.

The passages were translated into English to be followed by the congregation on screens as the three young men read aloud.

Organised by Ballymena Presbytery

## *Serving in School*

**A Morning to Equip + Encourage**

Saturday 28th January

2nd Broughshane Church Hall

10 a.m.-noon

(Tea + coffee served from 9.45)

**An event for teachers, assistants + all working in schools**

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The rector, the Rev Malcolm Ferry, said: “It really brought to life the fact that the wise men who joined Mary and Joseph at the crib faced cultural and language barriers.”

The men are among a group of around 19 who enjoy the facilities of Agherton Parish Hall each Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, when the parish opens its doors to give them a change of scene from their hotel rooms.

Malcolm said: “It’s massive for the boys to get out of the hotel to play sport together a couple of afternoons a week.”

## **Lisburn Cathedral to celebrate 400th anniversary of worship on the cathedral site**

**Christ Church Cathedral, Lisburn, is set for a year of celebration in 2023, as it marks the 400th anniversary of worship on the cathedral site in the heart of the city.**

The first church on the site was built by Sir Fulke Conway who, when he moved from England to settle in Lisburn, constructed his castle in the park adjacent to the site of what was then called St Thomas’ Church, serving the castle family and staff and the small population of the immediate area.

Some 40 years later, Charles II established the church to be the Cathedral Church of Down and Connor, and later Lisburn Cathedral was recognised as the cathedral of the Diocese of Connor.



The original church was left in ruins after a rebel army attack on Lisburn in 1641. It was restored but was destroyed by fire, as was most of the town, in 1707. Again the cathedral was rebuilt – the foundation stone was laid in 1708. The current chancel was added in 1889.

## HISTORIC EVENTS

The cathedral has connections with such historic events as the American War of Independence, the Siege of Delhi 1798, and the United Irishmen. Also, the Huguenot settlement in Ireland, the development of the linen industry and events following the killing of the Mayor of Cork and the subsequent murder in Lisburn of the senior police officer whose men were accused of that murder.

The first event in the year of celebration is '400 minutes of Prayer' on Saturday January 7, beginning at 9.30am.





The Rt Rev Sam Wright, Dean of Connor and rector of Christ Church Cathedral, Lisburn, presents a copy of the 400th anniversary calendar to the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison. Photo: Norman Briggs.

People can call in for however long they would like for both silent and led prayer.

A service to officially launch the 400th anniversary will be held on Sunday January 15, and will be attended by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison, and other dignitaries.

On May 15, there will be a Gala Dinner, open to all, at a venue to be confirmed.

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A celebration weekend will run from June 9-11, featuring a Friday night party, a 1623-themed afternoon tea on the Saturday, and celebration service on the Sunday afternoon. Organisers are in the process of contacting former curates, vestry members, parishioners who have moved out of the area, and people who were married or confirmed in the cathedral over the last 30 years to invite them to the weekend's events.

Several themed open days are planned for July and August, along with a series of talks on the history of the cathedral.

A concert featuring New Irish Arts will take place on the last weekend in September, and a 400th anniversary closing service will be held before Christmas.

## PERMANENT MARKER

The cathedral is also considering ways of creating a permanent marker of this historic year, with ideas including a new Prayer Garden; a memorial in conjunction with Lisburn Museum, and cataloguing the contents of the cathedral's 'History Room' – currently in a state of dishevelment – to make the information freely available online.

As part of the 400th anniversary celebrations, a 2023 calendar has been published. Images featured include an aerial view of the cathedral site, the old Huguenot graves in the churchyard, the refurbished interior (2012), Harvest, Remembrance, Easter outreach in the Hillhall Estate, the old Cathedral Gates (1925), hope in the face of Covid-19, and more.

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Copies will be on sale at £4, with all funds raised being funnelled back into the cathedral.

Welcoming people to attend services and events as part of the year of celebration, the Dean of Connor and rector of Lisburn Cathedral, the Very Rev Sam Wright said: “Over the past 400 years, through many times of trials and challenges, joy and celebrations, worship has been given to Almighty God on the site where Lisburn Cathedral sits today.

“Throughout this anniversary year, it is our desire to give thanks to God for his faithfulness and for the many generations of Christian people who have provided a faithful witness to the Gospel in Lisburn and beyond. At the same time we look forward to, and pray for that worship, Christian teaching, prayer and outreach continuing and flourishing into the future.”

Any group or individual interested in attending these events or wanting to arrange a separate visit can make contact via the cathedral website or Facebook.

## **4 Corners Festival dares to dream**

**The annual 4 Corners Festival has announced its dates for 2023 and this year’s theme which will be Dreams... Visions for Belfast.**

The festival will feature a range of art, music, discussion, sport, debates and faith-based events from January 27 to February 5 in venues across the city.



Now in its 11th year, the festival was conceived as a way to inspire people from across the city to transform it for the peace and wellbeing of all.

It features innovative events designed to entice people out of their own ‘corners’ of the city and into new places where they will encounter new perspectives, new ideas and hopefully meet new friends.

Co-founder, Father Martin Magill explained that while in the past there was a focus on peace-making, the festival was about the next step.

“I see the 4 Corners Festival as making a contribution towards peace building,” he said.

“The idea of people getting to know one another, spending time with one another, building relationships and I see the festival really as a catalyst to help encourage that building of relationships.

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Fellow co-founder, Reverend Steve Stockman said the traditional divides have changed much in recent years and that's one of the things that keeps him involved.

“It is those moments where people come to a part of the city they've been in before and they meet somebody across whatever the divides are,” he explained.

“Of course, we have the traditional Catholic/Protestant divide and that's one of our major divides in Belfast, but there are other races in Belfast now too so there are all those kinds of divides, but there's also class divides.”

Included in this year's busy programme will be a photographic exhibition and discussion of homelessness in the city, women in peace building, visions of Belfast, and will conclude with the theme of 'the city where dreams become reality'.

2023 marks a number of significant anniversaries: 25 years since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement and 60 years since Martin Luther King's 'I Had A Dream' speech. The 2023 festival explores whether the dreams behind these historic events have been realised and if we still hold enough hope to dream big for Belfast.

“Martin Luther King Jr didn't have a complaint. He had a dream. Likewise, we want to ask, what are our dreams for our city, now?” said Reverend Stockman, adding: “Our hope is that as we hear the dreams of the homeless, young loyalists, women in leadership, sportsmen and musicians as well as church leaders that we be inspired to live out our dreams.”

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“I think just being asked what your dream is, what your vision is, is sometimes enough because I don’t think we walk around enough saying ‘what are our dreams for how we can change the city’,” he explained.

“Once you start thinking about it and what you’d like to change or see differently, then perhaps it would provoke us and inspire us into imagining it and becoming part of the change itself.”

Father Magill shares similar sentiments when it comes to his own vision for the city. He explained: “My vision is of a city at peace with itself. It is about tackling the issue of poverty and creating an integrated city where people can live in whatever part of the city they want to.

“The festival’s theme has got a message this year for our world because we’re living in such a fragile, broken world at this moment.”

One of the many events of the upcoming festival will see 48 young people from four youth clubs become involved with social action and meeting one and other, as well as service providers from the police, ambulance, fire service and the council.

Although faith is an important component of the 4 Corners Festival, Father Magill explained it is not exclusively for ‘believers’.

“Every one of us who are part of the planning committee are coming from places of faith, however, we welcome those who don’t come from a place of faith,” he said.

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“We’re trying to be the gospel that some people don’t actually get to read.

“I suppose in many ways we would see it as the living out of the gospel, the loving of your enemy, the making of peace, of loving one another, and we try to put into practice those words.”

Reverend Stockman echoes the sentiment, saying, “There are events for everybody, not just for those who believe the same things that we believe. Each and every one of us living in Belfast have dreams for a better future.

“We hope 4 Corners will help people listen to each other’s dreams, and keep working towards a more peaceful and just city.”

A full programme will be released over the coming weeks. Please visit: [4cornersfestival.com/the-festival](http://4cornersfestival.com/the-festival)

## **30 Christian graves defiled in Jerusalem**

**The Archbishop of Canterbury and the UK Government have condemned the “blasphemous” desecration of more than 30 Christian graves in Jerusalem on Wednesday”**

Israeli police launched a hunt for the vandals after more than 30 graves, including Commonwealth war graves and one containing the remains of Private J Stewart, of the Highland Light Infantry, who died on May 14 1921, were

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vandalised at the Protestant Cemetery, south of Jerusalem's Old City on Sunday. No suspects had been detained as of yesterday evening.

Sunday's attack came shortly after Benjamin Netanyahu was sworn in as Israel's prime minister to lead the most Right-wing, religiously conservative government in the country's history.

Archbishop Justin Welby said: "The desecration of Christian graves in Jerusalem is a blasphemous act. I join the Chief Rabbi and religious leaders in Jerusalem in condemning it and hope those responsible will be brought swiftly to justice."

The British Government also condemned the vandalism, which is suspected of having been carried out by Jewish extremists. Security footage of the incident shows what appears to be two youths wearing the religious Jewish garments of the kippah and knotted tassels vandalising the graves.

"This is the latest in a string of attacks against Christians and their property in and around the Old City," the UK - government's consulate tweeted. "The perpetrators of religiously motivated attacks should be held accountable."

Jerusalem's Anglican Archbishop, Hosam Naoum, said: "This [was a] hate crime towards Christians, which we absolutely reject and condemn." The cemetery, established in 1848, is watched over by Anglicans and Lutherans in Jerusalem, where tensions have risen over the appointment of a new government with extremist elements.



# Perspective

## The Ecumenical Legacy of Pope Benedict XVI

**In an address the day after he was elected pope, Benedict XVI pledged to work for the full and visible unity of all Christ's followers and to do everything in his power to promote the fundamental cause of ecumenism.**

“Good intentions do not suffice for this,” he said in his first message at the end of mass with the College of Cardinals in the Sistine Chapel on 20 April 2005. “Concrete gestures that enter hearts and stir consciences are essential.”

Some were sceptical about the German-born pope's ecumenical commitment given his reputation in his previous position as prefect of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. In 2000, in the statement “Dominus Iesus,” the congregation asserted that Protestant communities “are not Churches in the proper sense.”

Yet Benedict was the first pope to have come from a country with a roughly equal balance between Protestants and Catholics, and one that had been at the very centre of the 16th-century Reformation.

As Professor Joseph Ratzinger, he was also the first pope to have belonged to a committee of the World Council of

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Churches (WCC). In 1968, when for the first time Roman Catholics were appointed as full members of the WCC's Commission on Faith and Order, Ratzinger was among them. In 1971, he addressed the commission on religion and culture.

In Germany, as archbishop of Munich und Freising, Ratzinger became the Roman Catholic co-chair alongside Protestant Bishop Eduard Lohse of a joint ecumenical commission that sought to find ways of bridging the centuries-old rift between the two traditions.

Scholars have noted his decisive role in the 1999 Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation, which dealt with one of the central issues in the 16th-century Reformation that divided the followers of Martin Luther and the papacy.

In 2011, he was the first pope since the Reformation to visit the Augustinian monastery – now a Protestant church – in the German city of Erfurt where Luther trained as a monk.

At a meeting there with Protestant leaders, Benedict praised Luther's quest to understand how to receive the grace of God as the "the deep passion and driving force of his whole life's journey."

However, at the ecumenical prayer service at the monastery, he said that "talk of an 'ecumenical gift'" expected from his visit represented a misreading of faith and of ecumenism. While he said he did not need to specify the gift, it was understood to be a reference to a widespread

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desire for Protestant–Catholic couples to be able to receive communion together.

Benedict’s invitation in 2012 to Dr Rowan Williams to become the first archbishop of Canterbury to address a synod of bishops in Rome said something of the pontiff’s appreciation for the Anglican leader. However, the Vatican’s decision to set up an “ordinariate” to receive disaffected Anglicans led to widespread irritation.

It was with the Orthodox churches of the East to which most hopes for greater unity were directed. In 1976, Ratzinger had suggested that from a theological perspective, the union of the churches of East and West was fundamentally possible, although the spiritual preparation had not advanced sufficiently.

Within a short time of Benedict becoming pope, long-standing issues that had prevented meetings of the Catholic–Orthodox international dialogue commission were swept aside.

In November 2006, Pope Benedict visited the Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew I, for the feast day of St Andrew, considered to be the founder of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, the former name for present-day Istanbul.

By 2007, the Catholic–Orthodox commission had drawn up the Ravenna document on conciliarity and primacy, seen as a first step towards overcoming the thousand-year disagreement on papal primacy, although the early momentum was lost in the years that followed.

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Nevertheless, by the time of his decision in 2013 to step down as pope – something unprecedented in the modern era – Pope Benedict had set in motion a dynamic that could be continued by his successor, Pope Francis, in his quest for ecumenical dialogue.

## Poem for today

### The Cold Heaven by William Butler Yeats

Suddenly I saw the cold and rook-delighting heaven  
That seemed as though ice burned and was but the more  
ice,  
And thereupon imagination and heart were driven  
So wild that every casual thought of that and this  
Vanished, and left but memories, that should be out of  
season  
With the hot blood of youth, of love crossed long ago;  
And I took all the blame out of all sense and reason,  
Until I cried and trembled and rocked to and fro,  
Riddled with light. Ah! when the ghost begins to quicken,  
Confusion of the death-bed over, is it sent  
Out naked on the roads, as the books say, and stricken  
By the injustice of the skies for punishment?

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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# Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at [houstonmckelvey@mac.com](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

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