

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Ely Cathedral

January 7, 2023

Image of the day

Ely Cathedral

Photograph by David Illif of the ceiling of the nave and lantern of Ely Cathedral, viewed from the Octagon. From the web site “The Pillars of the Earth” which illustrates the inside of England's Medieval Cathedrals. See - [\[https://fiveminutehistory.com/the-pillars-of-the-earth-inside-englands-medieval-cathedrals/\]](https://fiveminutehistory.com/the-pillars-of-the-earth-inside-englands-medieval-cathedrals/)

People and places

St George's Day Awards for Scout leaders

Stephen Donaldson, Chief Commissioner of Scouts NI has conveyed warmest congratulations to the following members of Scouts NI who have been honoured by the Chief Scout in this year's St George's Day Awards list.

THE SILVER ACORN

In recognition of specially distinguished service

County Antrim - David Holmes, Eugene Neeson and Anne Nicholson.

Belfast County - Ian Berryman, John Lyons and Philip Patterson.

County Londonderry - Mandy Gourley, Colin Scott, Robert Simpson and Eric Wilson.

THE BAR TO THE SILVER ACORN



St George's Day Awards Congratulations



In recognition of further specially distinguished service
County Londonderry - Colin Rea.

THE SILVER WOLF

In recognition of service of the most exceptional character

County Antrim - Allister Law.

Belfast County - Maureen Campbell, Gordon Edgar, Carole
Scott and Ian Stewart.

County Londonderry - Evelyn Love.

News reports

Book Well's annual second- hand Christian Book Sale

**The Book
Well's now
annual**

**second-hand Christian Book Sale is taking place in the
Heyn Hall of St Marks, Dundela on Saturday 21st
January.**

Hundreds of kindly donated pre-loved books including commentaries, biographies, theology, Christian fiction, children's books and resources as well as Christian music CDs will be available. There is free admission, and no price will be set on the books. Proceeds will be going to The Larder, Belfast in Mersey Street, so if you're coming, all you are encouraged to do is take as many books as you like and give whatever you can.



[January 7, 2023](#)

Tea and coffee will also be available to purchase. The Book Well is also looking for willing volunteers who may be on hand to help on in the days running up to the sale, particularly the Friday, so if you can help in any way, please get in touch.

Songs of Praise is coming to Derry/ Londonderry



**Songs of Praise
is coming to
Derry/
Londonderry,
and the
organisers
would love you
to join them for
an evening of
traditional hymn-
singing!**

Come and join the congregation for the recording of traditional hymns and songs on Wednesday 8th February 2023 from 18.30pm – 21.30pm at The Guildhall, Derry/Londonderry

All tickets to the recordings are free of charge. To apply for tickets, please contact SOPcongregations@afantimedia.tv

[January 7, 2023](#)

with your name, contact number and the number of tickets you'd like.

Winter Madness is coming to Dublin



Dublin and Glendalough Youth Council states it is delighted to host the Summer Madness team in running a 'Winter Madness' event for youth groups and young adults.

[January 7, 2023](#)

Winter Madness will take place in Holy Trinity, Rathmines, on Saturday March 11 from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm. It will feature our own Rev Scott Evans as the speaker and Hollie McCullough and her band will be leading the praise and worship.

It is free to attend, and will give young people a taster of what Summer Madness is like. So come along for some hot chocolate, entertainment, games and worship.

Members of youth groups should attend with an adult. For more information please contact Emma Fawcett dgycc.office@gmail.com.

Killing of Christians in Nigeria darkens Christmas season

One Christian was killed and 53 were kidnapped on Dec. 25 in southern Kaduna state, Nigeria after more than 40 Christians were slain in the week leading up to Christmas, sources said.

Fulani herdsmen and other terrorists on Dec. 25 attacked Angwan Aku village in Kajuru County, Kaduna state, at about 10 a.m., area resident James Akawu said.

"Church worship service was about to commence when the attackers arrived at the village riding on motorbikes and shooting sporadically," Akawu told Morning Star News in a text message. "They killed one Christian and kidnapped 53 other Christians who are still being held captive."

[January 7, 2023](#)

In Kaura County, residents said herdsmen and other terrorists killed 40 Christians in Mallagum on Dec. 18 and another three Christians in Kagoro on Dec. 23, area sources said.

"We're being attacked again by terrorists. There are gunshots everywhere again this night," Kagoro town resident Jay Awan told Morning Star News in a Dec. 23 text message. "This is worse. Please we need help."



 St Philip and St James
Holywood Parish Church

Youth Work Vacancy

Job Title	Parish Youth Worker
Part Time	25hrs per week (negotiable)
	£15,500-17,000 (25hrs)
	depending on experience/qualifications

Closing Date for Applications
Wednesday 18th January 2023

More details at:
www.holywoodparishchurch.co.uk

[January 7, 2023](#)

One Christian was killed and 53 were kidnapped on Dec. 25 in southern Kaduna state, Nigeria after more than 40 Christians were slain in the week leading up to Christmas, sources said.

Fulani herdsmen and other terrorists on Dec. 25 attacked Angwan Aku village in Kajuru County, Kaduna state, at about 10 a.m., area resident James Akawu said.

"Church worship service was about to commence when the attackers arrived at the village riding on motorbikes and shooting sporadically," Akawu told Morning Star News in a text message. "They killed one Christian and kidnapped 53 other Christians who are still being held captive."



The poster features a dark blue background with yellow and white text. On the left and right sides, there are blue silhouettes of a soldier in a trench coat and a beret, saluting. In the top left corner, there is a circular emblem for the Veterans Commissioner Northern Ireland, featuring a crown, a ship's anchor, and a wreath. The main text is centered and reads: **VETERANS INFORMATION ROADSHOW**, **Londonderry**, **Wed 25 January 2023**, **3-5 pm**, **Waterside Royal British Legion,** **Iona Terrace,** **Londonderry BT47 6EY.** At the bottom, it says: **Further details please email commissioner@nivco.co.uk or phone 07971 833160**

In Kaura County, residents said herdsmen and other terrorists killed 40 Christians in Mallagum on Dec. 18 and another three Christians in Kagoro on Dec. 23, area sources said.

"We're being attacked again by terrorists. There are gunshots everywhere again this night," Kagoro town resident Jay Awan told Morning Star News in a Dec. 23 text message. "This is worse. Please we need help."

Another resident, Amos David, on Dec. 19 sent a text message saying Kagoro was attacked beginning the prior Sunday night.

"Homes and barns are still burning as I send out this message to you," he told Morning Star News.

The Rev. Stephen Panya Baba, president of the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), sent out a prayer request in a group text message on Dec. 23.

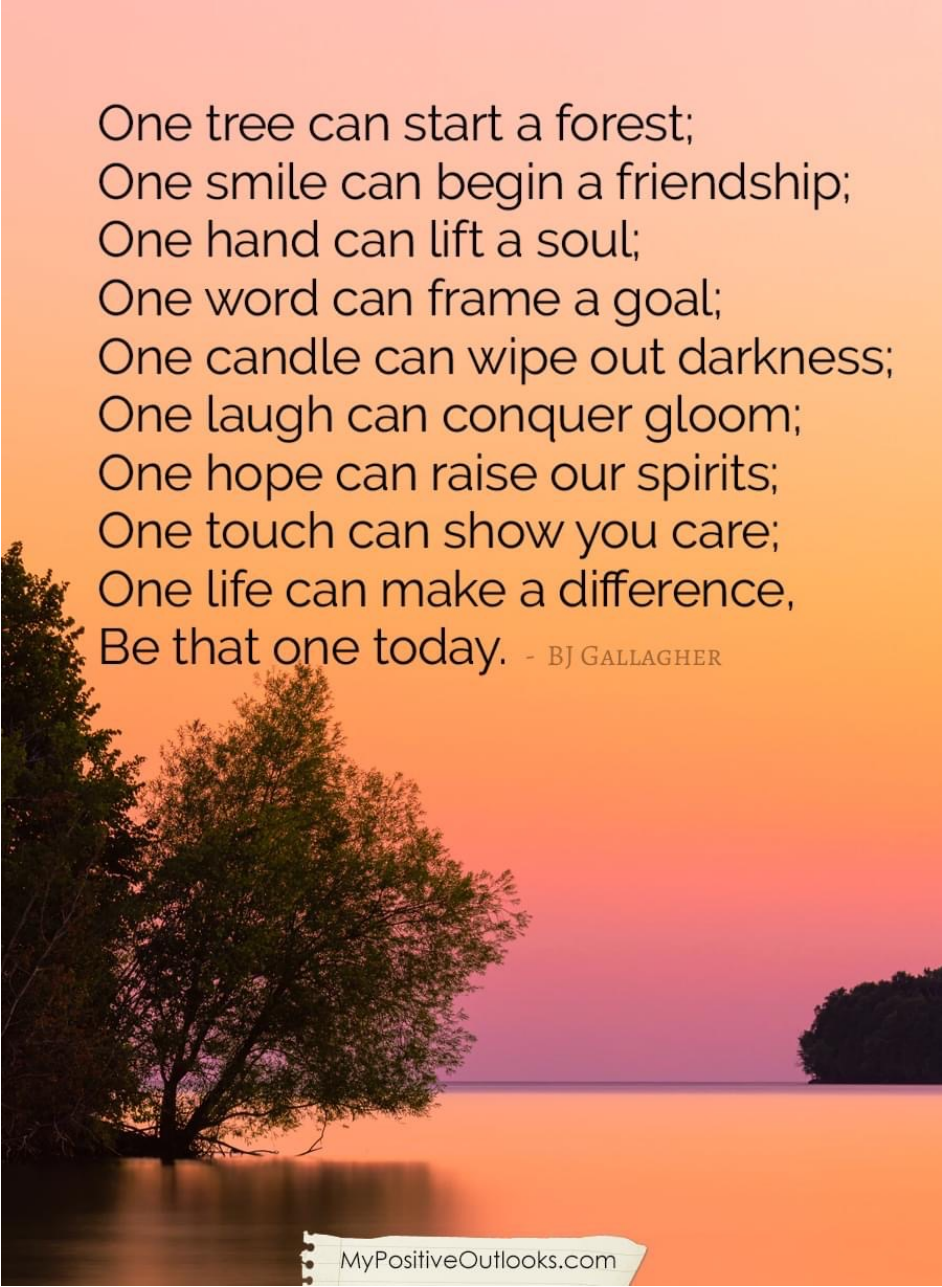
"Right now (9:45 p.m.) there are gunshots from the suspected Fulani herdsmen," Baba said, recalling that the assailants had struck nearby Mallagum the previous Sunday. "The dead were just buried yesterday, Thursday. Now in less than a week, they are back again."

Kagoro is home to the ECWA Theological Seminary, the ECWA College of Health Technology and several churches. Town resident Emmanuel Gandu said terrorists were destroying both lives and property.

[January 7, 2023](#)

"Family life has been disrupted, the lucky survivors have become refugees in their land waiting for palliatives in an endless genocide they can't understand," Gandu said. "Mass graves litter the community and the countryside. Our people can no longer go to their farms for fear of being gunned down or macheted."

Settlements and villages yet to be attacked have become ghost towns as people have fled, he said.



One tree can start a forest;
One smile can begin a friendship;
One hand can lift a soul;
One word can frame a goal;
One candle can wipe out darkness;
One laugh can conquer gloom;
One hope can raise our spirits;
One touch can show you care;
One life can make a difference,
Be that one today. - BJ GALLAGHER

"Lamentably, the Fulani terrorist attacks have continued unabated as they are heard chanting, 'Allah akbar [God is greater]' during the killing and destructive expeditions," Gandu said. "It is on record that Kagoro has suffered 13 deadly attacks with catastrophic consequences

[January 7, 2023](#)

from 2011 to 23/12/2022."

Without decisive and urgent action, he said, Christians in Kagoro may be wiped out.

In the media

Truth of the Troubles now trumps justice by Sean O'Neill

An amnesty bill for IRA killers is wrenching for bereaved families but might allow Northern Ireland to make its peace, Sean O'Neill writes in The Times.

No one knows how we settled on the Troubles as the label for the conflict in Northern Ireland between 1969 and 1998. It is a pathetically inadequate euphemism for a civil war in which 3,500 people died and some 40,000 were maimed. Shopping streets were bombed, busy pubs sprayed with gunfire, milkmen and postmen ambushed on their rounds and those who fell foul of paramilitary godfathers "disappeared" — abducted, tortured, killed and their bodies buried in unmarked graves.

Three decades of violence came to a stuttering end 25 years ago with the Good Friday agreement but the Troubles marked all of us who grew up in that era, permanently scarring memories and mindsets.

Today Northern Ireland remains an uneasy place, its sectarian divisions cemented by segregated schooling and

[January 7, 2023](#)

housing. A paramilitary rump lurks but the conflict has moved to other battlegrounds: language, culture, Brexit and stagnant local politics.

The old tensions remain in part because the Good Friday compromise did not create a mechanism for dealing with “legacy issues”. Paramilitary prisoners were set free and terrorist arsenals destroyed but there was no formula for how to resolve more than 1,000 unsolved killings. Since 1998 several initiatives have tried to address the poisoned past: reports by respected cross-community figures, historic inquiry units, political negotiations. None has been successful.

The latest initiative is the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill, awaiting committee stage in the Lords. The bill has been spurred by the campaign to end so-called vexatious prosecutions of former servicemen, such as the soldier Dennis Hutchings who died, aged 80, while on trial for the shooting of an unarmed man in 1974.

If passed, the bill would end Troubles-related investigations, prosecutions, inquests and civil actions. Some cases already in the court system would be halted. Instead, it would create an “information recovery” commission under which killers who give a true account of their actions could earn immunity from prosecution. The nearest comparison is South Africa’s truth and reconciliation commission, set up at the end of apartheid in 1996 and generally felt to have been effective.

By any measure this bill is extraordinary. A whole class of horrific crimes would be placed, by law, beyond the reach of

[January 7, 2023](#)

the criminal justice system. It would be unimaginable anywhere else in the UK but criminal justice in Northern Ireland has always run on different, often questionable lines: internment without trial, early release of terrorist prisoners, “comfort letters” for IRA members and no-jury courts for security trials.

Nevertheless, we should be clear about what it could mean. Should new evidence, perhaps a microscopic fragment of DNA, emerge linking a former IRA man to the 1987 Remembrance Day bombing in Enniskillen there will be no charges. Gerry Adams, the former Sinn Fein president, who was questioned for several days in 2014 about the IRA kidnap and murder of the Belfast mother Jean McConville, will never stand trial in connection with her death no matter what evidence might emerge. Neither will the suspect arrested in connection with the deaths of 21 people in the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings.

The bill would also fatally undermine the investigations of Operation Kenova into the activities of Freddie Scappaticci, aka Stakeknife, Britain’s most important double agent inside the IRA. Scappaticci led the IRA’s internal security unit, “the nutting squad”, which kidnapped, tortured and murdered suspected informants. Prosecutors have received 33 files on the case.

I cannot help but wonder if, after years of failing to tackle the legacy problem, the real energy behind this bill is the desire of the shadowy guardians of “national security” to ensure that the Stakeknife story is never aired in a court of law.

[January 7, 2023](#)

There is overwhelming opposition to the bill from across the community divide in the province. Critics say it extinguishes all hope of justice for thousands of people for whom the anguish of violent loss remains tangible. Yet the cold, hard reality is that in most unsolved cases, those hopes are already slender to the point of being non-existent.

The police do not have the resources to investigate the past. There is little evidence in many unsolved cases because terrorist groups did not keep records and their weapons (and therefore ballistic traces) were destroyed. The court system is already facing a huge backlog; 13 legacy inquests involving at least 26 deaths (mainly at the hands of security forces) are due to open this year and another 19 cases have yet to be listed. Meanwhile the suspected perpetrators grow older. Many have already died.

With the chances of traditional justice fading, it is with a heavy and conflicted heart that I find myself agreeing it is time to find a radical alternative. It would be unnecessarily cruel, however, to halt inquests or cases already under way. Active proceedings should be expedited to their conclusion and the Kenova investigations are too important to be hidden. The Stakeknife files contain evidence of brutal IRA crimes — but also evidence about the extent to which security agencies knew about or even facilitated those crimes. Those cases must run their course because it is essential that a democratic state holds itself to a higher standard — and is seen to do so.

For all other cases it is time to swallow the bitter pill: the prospect of meaningful justice is receding fast. The task of

[January 7, 2023](#)

finding the truth, the primary task of the proposed commission, is therefore more urgent.

And perhaps one day, when the work of truth-telling is done, the far more difficult task of reconciliation can begin."

Thursday January 04 2023, The Times

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Walkin' Home - tomorrow Sunday on BBC



Join Mark Thompson and Lolly Spence in a new three-part series for BBC iPlayer and BBC Northern Ireland

[January 7, 2023](#)

(BBC Two Northern Ireland) as they explore the 300-mile Ulster leg of the International Appalachian Trail, from the coastal town of Larne to Donegal.

The Appalachian Trail in the United States is one of the world's most famous hiking trails, spanning more than 2,000 miles and crossing 14 states. But geologists have discovered that it was once part of an ancient mountain range stretching from America to Europe – and so in recent years, new chapters of the International Trail have been created, including one in Ulster.

Walkin' Home follows Mark and Lolly as they hike the trail through four counties, taking in some of the most picturesque locations in Ulster along the way. They also meet people on the journey who help them explore Ulster's

**FRIDAY NIGHT
LIVE 2023**

SAMS
IRELAND
South American Mission Society

FRIDAY 3RD FEBRUARY
7.30PM
ANNAGHMORE CHURCH HALL (BT62 1NT)

ENLARGE EXPAND EXTEND

[January 7, 2023](#)

enduring links with the Appalachian region and discover more about the Ulster-Scots language and heritage.

Episode one finds the presenting duo in the coastal town of Larne, where they learn about the Ulster-Scots migrants who made the perilous journey to America during the 18th century.

In episode two Mark and Lolly pick up their journey from Kinbane Castle on the Antrim Coast, before heading west to cross the mighty River Bann, where they learn about settlements dating back thousands of years.

In the final episode Mark pays a visit to Ulster American Folk Park, Omagh for its annual Bluegrass Festival, while at Lough Eske – the gateway to Donegal’s rugged Bluestack Mountains – Lolly hears the story of Frances Browne, the ‘blind poetess of Ulster’.

Walkin’ Hame begins on Sunday 8 January on BBC Two Northern Ireland at 10pm and will also be available on BBC iPlayer. It is a Below-the Radar production for BBC Northern Ireland, with assistance from the Northern Ireland Screen Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund.

REVIVE | REFRESH | RENOVATE

It's only a few weeks until the 'R' Conference

REVIVE | REFRESH | RENOVATE is a day conference organised by Belfast Bible College for church leaders at the start of the new year to seek the Lord together.

[January 7, 2023](#)

Book today at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/r-conference-revive-refresh-renovate-tickets-482315888807>

Poem for today

A Prayer to the Three Kings by Evelyn Waugh

The prickly literary convert Evelyn Waugh reminds us that those of us who tend towards letters and learning have a special need of the prayers of the sophisticated Magi, with their fine tastes and strange offerings.

Like me, you were late in coming.
The shepherds were here long before,
even the cattle. They had joined
the chorus of angels
before you were started.

For you the primordial discipline
of the heavens had to be relaxed
and a new defiant light set to blaze amid
the disconcerted stars.

How laboriously you came, taking sights
and calculating, where the shepherds
had run barefoot. How odd you looked on the road,
attended by what outlandish liveries,
and laden with such preposterous gifts.

You came at length to the first stage
of your pilgrimage and the great star



stood still above you. What did you do?
You stopped to call on King Herod.
Deadly exchange of compliments
in which there began that un-ended war
of mobs and magistrates against the innocent.

Yet you came, and were not turned away.
You too found room before the manger.
Your gifts were not needed, but they were
accepted and put carefully by,
for they were brought with love.

In that new order of charity
that had just come to life,
there was room for you, too.
You were not lower in the eyes of

[January 7, 2023](#)

the holy family than the ox or the ass.

You are our special patrons,
and patrons of all latecomers,
of all who have a tedious journey to make to the truth,
of all who are confused with knowledge and speculation,
of all who through politeness make themselves partners in
guilt,
of all who stand in danger by reason of their talents.

May we, too, before and at the end
find kneeling-space in the straw.

For His sake Who did not reject your curious gifts,
pray always for all the learned,
the oblique, and the delicate.

Let them not be quite forgotten at the Throne of God
when the simple come into their kingdom.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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

