



**Image of the day - Madonna and child**



## New Ecumenical Canon installed at Christ Church Cathedral

*Fr Tom Layden SJ (was installed as Ecumenical Canon of Christ Church Cathedral on the Feast of the Epiphany. He is pictured (left) with Archbishop Michael Jackson and Dean Dermot Dunne.*

**Christ Church Cathedral welcomed a new member to its Chapter on the Feast of the Epiphany (Wednesday December 6). Tom Layden SJ was installed as Ecumenical Canon of the cathedral by Dean Dermot Dunne during a said Eucharist .**

The service was broadcast online with no congregation in the cathedral. The preacher was Archbishop Michael Jackson.



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Fr Tom Layden is a former Provincial of the Jesuit Order in Ireland and is involved in ecumenism and church unity. He has been appointed to the canonry in succession to Fr David Tuohy SJ.

In his sermon Archbishop Jackson said it was a great pleasure to witness Tom's installation. "Tom is a Jesuit who brings the gifts of scholarship, humanity, administration, liturgy, ecumenism and reconciliation. He is no stranger to the Anglican tradition having completed his doctoral research in Canada in an Anglican university. He is committed to Ireland South and North in his living, his preaching and contributing at every level. We welcome Tom on this Feast of the Epiphany," he said.

Dean Dermot Dunne also welcomed the appointment: "I was happy with the appointment of Fr Tom Layden SJ as the



second Ecumenical Canon on the cathedral chapter. Tom is a worthy successor to Fr David Tuohy who sadly passed away last year. Tom brings to this role a life of great experience and deep thought. A true ecumenist, Tom will engage with the cathedral in a life giving and supporting way bringing a different perspective to the life of faith and what we share through our common baptism,” he said.

Turning to the Gosepl reading [St Matthew 2: 1–12] the Archbishop spoke about ‘lessons in being wise’ which could be learned from the visit of the Three Wise from the East to the infant Jesus.

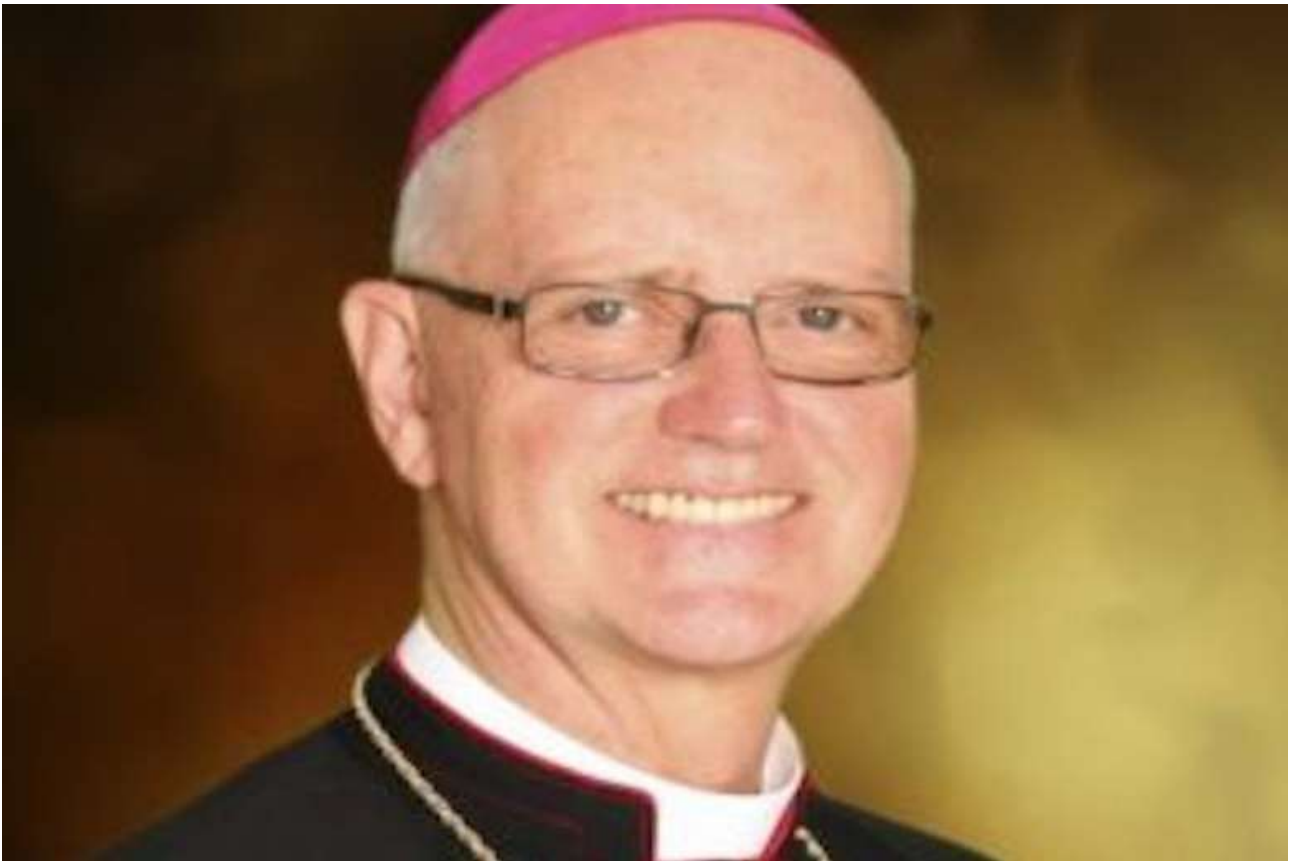
At a time when we are all reentering severe lockdown to flatten our now virtual curve, he suggested that there were lessons to be learned from the Wise Men in caution, selfcare and common sense.

## **Irish archbishop appointed nuncio to Kuwait and Qatar**

Pope Francis has appointed Archbishop Eugene M. Nugent apostolic nuncio to Kuwait and Qatar.

Archbishop Nugent, 62, originally from Scariff in County Clare in Ireland, has spent the last six years as nuncio to Haiti and will transfer to Kuwait in mid-February.

A graduate in Celtic Studies from the National University of Ireland (Maynooth) and subsequently in theology and canon law at the Gregorian University in Rome, Archbishop Nugent also studied diplomacy and international relations at the



Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy in Rome. He was ordained in Scariff on July 9, 1983, for Killaloe Diocese.

Having entered the diplomatic service of the Holy See on July 1, 1992, at the age of 33, he worked as secretary in the nunciatures in Turkey, Israel and the Palestinian Territories and subsequently at the Holy See study mission in Hong Kong from 2000 until 2010.

On Feb. 13, 2010, he was appointed by Pope Benedict XVI apostolic nuncio and titular archbishop of Dunshaughlin. From 2010 until 2015, he was apostolic nuncio to Madagascar, Mauritius and the Seychelles as well as being apostolic delegate to the Comoros Islands and the island of La Reunion in the Indian Ocean.

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On Jan. 10, 2015, he was appointed apostolic nuncio to Haiti where he worked on the reconstruction of churches following the devastating earthquake of 2010. In 2019 and 2020, the Apostolic Nunciature in Port au Prince hosted a series of meetings under the auspices of the UN Mission in Haiti and the Organization of American States with a view to facilitating a political dialogue in order to end the political crisis in the Caribbean nation. The dialogue is still ongoing, with elections scheduled for later in 2021.

Although Christianity arrived in the Arabian peninsula before Islam, the Church there is a migrant and pilgrim Church, composed almost exclusively of expatriates. From the early 1990s, the Church has developed rapidly under the pastoral care of the Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Arabia. However, restrictions on the number of priests, the small number of churches and the limited space available in churches are significant pastoral challenges.

## **Christ Church Cathedral backdrop for lightshow highlighting domestic violence campaign**

Christ Church Cathedral was one of the landmark buildings chosen to be a backdrop for a light show on Nollaig na mBan (December 6) which launched a new campaign on domestic violence.

As the Christmas lights were switched off and decorations packed away, Safe Ireland turned the spotlight on domestic





*Cupid by Ellen McDermott was one of the images projected onto Christ Church Cathedral on Nollaig na mBan.*

violence and what can be done to make Ireland a safer place for women and children in 2021.

Safe Ireland has partnered with award-winning creatives Herstory and film director Marion Bergin for the Mother and Child campaign. The campaign features a powerful new one minute film advert that depicts the shrinking world of a woman and child living with control and abuse. You can watch the film [here](#).

The darkness of the film is complemented with a standout Herstory light show, illuminating landmark buildings like the GPO and Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin with images that celebrate the diversity, strength, autonomy and

resilience of women in Ireland today. The light show features images from the award winning photographer Ellen McDermott, a dynamic new photographic series by photographer Myriam Riand and conceptual artist Áine O'Brien and the powerful new Safe Ireland advert created by Marion Bergin.

Safe Ireland observes that at the centre of Christmas are a mother and child. However, Christmas is a highly stressful time for those living with an abuser and new lockdown restrictions add to concerns that women and children may be further entrapped for an extended period of time.

“We believe we have a real chance to change the relentless cycle of violence and abuse this year. We made really significant strides in 2020 in raising public and political consciousness about the dangers for women and children trapped with abusers. In 2021, we can do even more to transform how we all understand and respond to the scourge of domestic abuse,” Safe Ireland says.

You can learn more about the campaign on the Safe Ireland website: <https://www.safeireland.ie/>

## **Catholic Bishops in NI - “As many people as possible stay at home for the sake of health, life and the Common Good”**

Catholic Bishops in NI have stated - Following further briefing (on Thursday) by the Chief Medical Officer and the Chief Scientific Officer, and in consultation with The Executive Office, we are very concerned at the current



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serious public health position in which Northern Ireland finds itself: with the extremely high level of transmission of the Covid-19 virus; the continuing escalation of numbers in hospital and intensive care; the number of associated deaths; and, the increasingly unsustainable pressure on our healthcare staff. The clear message from health officials is that this situation is going to worsen significantly over the coming weeks.

We recognise the efforts of so many in our parishes who have been working to ensure that our gatherings for public worship are as safe as possible and we welcome the continuing engagement between the faith communities and the NI Executive which has led to consensus between us on the importance of people being able to gather in person for worship. At this time, however, we acknowledge and



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support the unequivocal message from public health authorities that the movement and gathering of people should be minimised and that as many people as possible stay at home for the sake of health, life and the Common Good.

In light of our ongoing consultations and of the current serious and worsening situation, and in line with clear public health guidance that people should stay at home, we have decided that for a limited period (from midnight on Thursday 7 January until

Saturday 6

February 2021,

subject to review

in late January),

the celebration of

the Eucharist and

other liturgies

should take place

without the

physical presence

of the faithful –

with the exception

of marriage,

funeral, baptismal

liturgies and drive-

in services

(subject to

regulations).

Arrangements for

recording and/or

livestreaming, and

making individual



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visits for private prayer are also permissible in accordance with regulations. We encourage parishes, where possible, to continue to broadcast the celebration of Mass – and other devotions and prayer services – online and on other media, knowing that faith and prayer can be a tremendous support to individuals and society during these difficult times.

We make this decision reluctantly, conscious that not being able to gather for public worship can cause pain for all the faithful, but in the hope that this limited period of sacrifice will be for the protection of life and health and for the greater good of all. We once more ask for prayers for the sick, the bereaved and all those whose livelihoods have been particularly impacted by the pandemic. We keep in our prayers all health workers, carers, chaplains and other





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essential workers. We welcome the announcement that a similar position is being taken by the leaders of the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Methodist Church in Ireland and many other denominations and faith communities in response to the unequivocal message from public health authorities that as many people as possible stay at home at this time.

Most Rev Eamon Martin DD, Archbishop of Armagh & Primate of All-Ireland,

Apostolic Administrator of Dromore

Most Rev Noel Treanor DD, Bishop of Down and Connor

Most Rev Donal McKeown DD, Bishop of Derry

Most Rev Larry Duffy DD, Bishop of Clogher

Most Rev Michael Router DD, Auxiliary Bishop of Armagh

## **ISE at 50 webinar - Ecumenical Movement and Reconciliation in Ireland and Beyond**

Bishop Trevor Williams, who was formerly Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe and Leader of the Corrymeela Community, will be among the speakers at the Irish School of Ecumenics seminar entitled 'Ecumenical Movement and Reconciliation in Ireland and Beyond: Like wheat that springs up green', on Thursday, 28th January, at 5.00pm.

Bishop Williams will be speaking alongside:

– Prof Linda Hogan, Professor of Ecumenics, School of Religion, Trinity College Dublin;

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- Dr Salters Sterling, ISE Trust Steering Committee; formerly Academic Secretary, Trinity College Dublin;
- Dr Damian Jackson, Programme Officer, Irish Council of Churches and the Irish Inter–Church Meeting; and
- The Revd Dr Simone Sinn, Professor of Ecumenical Theology, Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Geneva, and Programme Executive of the Faith and Order Commission, World Council of Churches.

**'To be a Christian means to forgive  
the inexcusable, because God has  
forgiven the inexcusable in you.'**

**C.S. Lewis**



The roundtable discussion will be chaired by Prof. Geraldine Smyth OP, Adjunct Associate Professor, School of Religion, Trinity College Dublin, and formerly Head of Irish School of Ecumenics.

Mr Dermot McCarthy, Chair of ISE Trust Steering Committee, will open the ISE at 50 Webinar.

Prof Siobhán Garrigan, Head of School of Religion, Trinity College Dublin, will offer a congratulatory message.

This is part of the webinar series to celebrate Irish School of Ecumenics – ISE at 50. The School was founded in 1970 by Fr Michael Hurley SJ. Inspired by the ground-breaking ecumenical vision of the Second Vatican Council (1962), he opened a new window of ecumenical understanding, overcoming prevailing suspicion of ecumenism in Ireland, and other wider challenges, to see that ISE was established as a graduate institute of ecumenical teaching and scholarship, as well as dialogue and service in society.

Fr Hurley's vision was of a place where people from diverse backgrounds and disciplinary perspectives could explore the meaning and possibilities of peace and reconciliation together. From seeds sown and nurtured in times of challenge and change, ISE has spread in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and beyond, shaping initiatives of reconciliation and partnerships for transformation throughout the period of violent conflict and in the making of peace through research and teaching programmes at every level, and community-based projects of inter-cultural and



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ecumenical understanding, inter–religious encounter and engagement in peace–building.

Living up to its founding motto, Floreat ut Pereat, ISE has flourished, now recognised nationally and globally through the work of its staff, students and graduates. Within the School of Religion in Trinity College Dublin, ISE continues to make its mark in research collaboration and in ecumenical and social renewal worldwide: ‘Like wheat that springs up green.’

As Michael Hurley observed in 2008, “All the institutions of the ecumenical movement are not only born to die” but “they live to die as soon as ever possible, as soon as the task is completed.” Although now 10 years since Michael Hurley passed away, challenges remain soul–sized in multiple and resurgent divisions not alone in Ireland, but geopolitically, and across the Planet Earth, demonstrating that the ecumenical task is not yet complete. ISE continues to reflect, theologically, politically, and socially, on the role of the ecumenical movement for reconciliation within the wider Oikumene (the whole inhabited Earth), engaging in inter–Church reconciliation, inter–religious dialogue and partnership, and promoting justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.

Please pass on this information to any others who you think might be interested in participating and share it within your networks. Please book for this event via Eventbrite and the booking link is available here.

<https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/ecumenical-movement-and-reconciliation-in-ireland-and-beyond-tickets-132770940457?aff=erelexpmlt>

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



## **CMSI launches appeal after violence in Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Following a significant increase in insecurity, violence and mass displacements in the eastern area of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Church Mission Society Ireland (CMSI) has launched an appeal in support of its partners in the region.

Over the past two weeks, CMSI has received updates from a number of its friends and partners in DR Congo, including Bishop Ilesomo of North Kivu Diocese. They each shared heart-breaking stories of an upsurge in brutal attacks, killings and kidnappings: unspeakable cruelty unseen by the outside world. These events have seen thousands of people fleeing from their homes in fear. Many have arrived in





## **Bishop Ilesomo, of North Kivu Diocese, Anglican Church of the Congo.**

Butembo town and have come to the Anglican Cathedral for help.

Bishop Ilesomo has organised his people to help manage emergency support of food and shelter. Almost 2,000 people have already registered, having arrived footsore in Butembo with nothing. The Church's resources are limited and there has been precious little assistance from aid agencies or government, so CMSI's partners have asked for help from the Church of Ireland.

In launching the DRC Appeal, CMSI's Mission Director, Jenny Smyth, said: "Here is an opportunity to respond in



support of the local church as it provides for those seeking help in desperation. As their willing hands work, we can give the funds needed to supply food, pots and pans, blankets, shelter and jerrycans.”

In endorsing the CMSI Appeal, the Rt Revd Ferran Glenfield, Bishop of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh and a member of the Church of Ireland Council for Mission, said: “The eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo is one of the most unstable geopolitical regions on earth. CMS Ireland has learned through their partners on the ground of an appalling flare-up of violence which is consuming people and property. They have launched an emergency appeal to help those affected by the recent contagion and I commend this response for your prayers and generosity.”

You can support the DR Congo Appeal via the CMSI website – [www.cmsireland.org](http://www.cmsireland.org) – or by sending a cheque to CMSI’s offices – at Sir Thomas & Lady Dixon Park, 237 Upper Malone Road, Belfast, BT17 9LA – made payable to ‘CMS Ireland’ and marked ‘DRC Appeal’ on the back.

## **Churches’ Refugee Network: launch of ‘God With Us’ worship resource**

Join the Churches’ Refugee Network (CRN) at its first meeting of 2021 – on Thursday, 28th January, at 2.00pm – to help mark the launch of ‘God With Us’, a new resource for clergy, preachers, worship leaders and all Christians involved in organising group prayer or discussion on the theme of refugees, migration and sanctuary.

Attendees can register to join by Zoom

<https://jubilee-plus.org/refugee-network/news/>

## **Coping with pandemic as Cork rector is instituted**

We have had to get used to is things not going to plan in pandemic, Bishop of Cork

Caption - Socially distanced and with face-coverings momentarily removed for the photograph are the Revd Meurig Williams, Bishop Paul Colton, Dean Nigel Dunne, and Archdeacon Adrian Wilkinson. Picture: Jim Coughlan.

On the Feast of the Epiphany, 6th January, during the online Service broadcast using webcam, the Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, Dr Paul Colton, instituted the Reverend Meurig Williams to the incumbency of Mallow Union of Parishes.

Accompanied only by the Archdeacon of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, the Venerable Adrian Wilkinson, and the Dean of Cork, the Very Reverend Nigel Dunne, with no congregation present, Bishop Colton said that one of the aspects of the pandemic we have had to get used to is things not going to plan.

Bishop Colton said: "This Epiphany Eucharist tonight is not as we might have wished. I should be in Saint James' Church in Mallow. We should be there in great numbers, joined by clergy and lay people from all over the Diocese



and local community, to welcome your new Rector, the Reverend Meurig Williams. Since his arrival on 18th December he might ordinarily have expected to be able to go out and about in the community but instead he has been confined to his home: isolated and in quarantine. In the weeks ahead you should be meeting him on Sundays at church and in your homes as he makes his way around the parish. But you, and he, will have to be patient and understanding, because the pandemic allows for none of this. ‘Things do not go to plan.’

“And we see things not going to plan either in tonight’s Gospel – on this Feast of the Epiphany: ‘And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.’ (Matthew 2.12)”

Meurig Williams was born in Bangor, North Wales, where his father was a Baptist minister and grew up in a Welsh—



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speaking home. After studying modern languages at the University of Aberystwyth, including a year in Bordeaux, he was a teacher in a secondary school near Cardiff for four years.

He returned to the University of Wales to study theology and trained for ordination at Westcott House, Cambridge. He was ordained in Bangor Cathedral in 1992 and served a curacy in the port town of Holyhead.

He subsequently served as Incumbent of Pwllheli, a market town in rural North–West Wales; and then became an Incumbent in Cardiff. He returned to Bangor as Archdeacon in 2005. In 2011, he moved to become Commissary to the Bishop in Europe – a role which he combined with being Archdeacon of North–West Europe (serving Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) before his appointment



as Archdeacon of France in 2016. There he had oversight of 83 congregations across France, many of which serve scattered, rural populations.

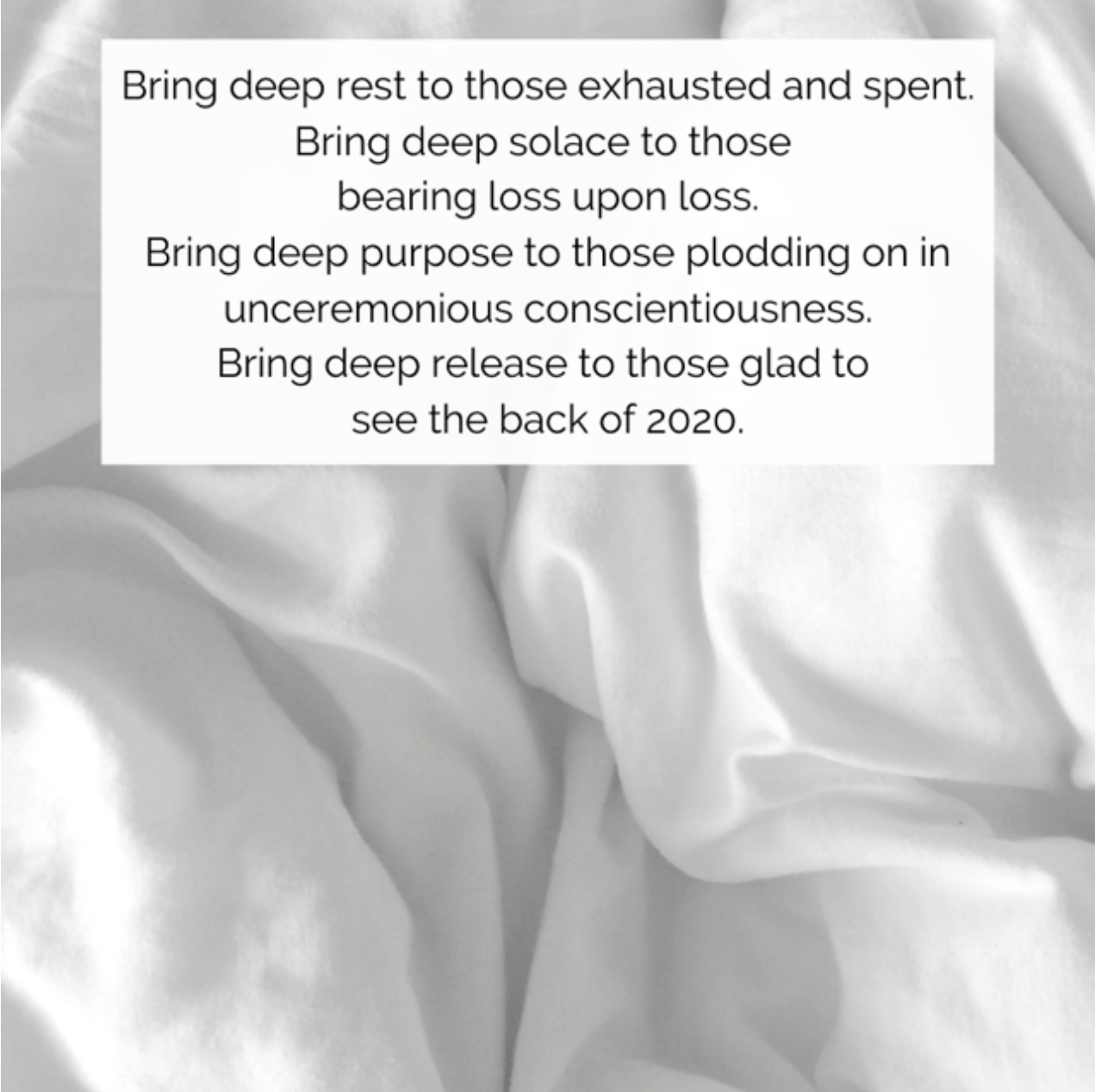
Meurig has been involved in fostering strong ecumenical relationships throughout his ministry, and is currently involved in discussions between the Church of England and the French Protestant churches. He also has good working relationships with the Roman Catholic Church in France and, as a fluent French-speaking Anglican, has contributed to various ecumenical conferences, including at the Catholic Institute in Paris.

## Pointers for prayer

Today we pray for the USA. As pro-Trump supporters attempted to stage a violent coup at the Capitol, several people were killed or injured. We pray for stable democracy and an end to divisions in the USA as a new president is inaugurated this month.

Whether or not we've made any specific New Year resolutions we pray for the resolve to grow in our faith and relationship with God this year. We ask for a closer walk with Christ as we navigate the unusual circumstances of the months ahead.

Today we pray for teachers and students. As the new term starts, schools have faced a lack of clarity over reopening which has made it more difficult to plan appropriate education for students and has left teachers and support staff without clear guidance.



Bring deep rest to those exhausted and spent.  
Bring deep solace to those  
bearing loss upon loss.  
Bring deep purpose to those plodding on in  
unceremonious conscientiousness.  
Bring deep release to those glad to  
see the back of 2020.

Today we pray for disarmament and non-proliferation treaties. As Iran have accelerated their nuclear programme and with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons about to come into force, we pray for constructive relationships between nations.

As we begin a new year that none of us would have imagined this time last January, we pray for God to give a



sense of purpose and faith that he has good plans for us, however the year unfolds.

We pray today for all who are facing the new year alone, having lost loved ones recently. We ask that God will give them hope for the future, and show us how we can come alongside them with comfort and companionship.

## Speaking to the soul

Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness.

Genesis 1:3-4 NLT

It would be impossible to exaggerate the importance of light. Without light there is no life. It's as simple as that. So it is not surprising to discover that on day one of creation God created light. No life could occur until that had happened. But with the introduction of light, life was able to burst out in all its amazing variety over the following days as God created vegetation, fish, animals, birds and human beings.

I love the way in which John begins his gospel. He clearly has these opening verses of Genesis in mind and he makes it clear that Jesus was with God his Father in the act of creation. He writes about Jesus as the Word of God, the one through whom God spoke to the world. In John 1:4 he wrote, “The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone.” Sadly, however the light that Jesus brought into the world wasn't what everyone wanted. In one of the most agonising verses in the Bible

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John notes that even Jesus' own people did not receive him.  
(John 1:11)

The light of Jesus still shines brightly in our world today, but that light is never imposed. We have a choice as to whether we accept it, or stagger about in the dark. On the face of it, it doesn't sound like much of a choice. Why would anyone choose darkness? Why would anyone want to stagger around, bumping into obstacles and exposing themselves to danger when the light is on offer? But the fact is that, incredibly, many people do choose the darkness and sometimes, truth to tell, so do we.

Let's deliberately open ourselves to Jesus' light today. It's like pulling back the bedroom curtains at the start of the day. There is no law which tells us that we have to do this, but we do it because we want to welcome the light. Let's welcome the light of Jesus today!

## QUESTION

As you think of your life, where is there greatest need for the light of Jesus today?

## PRAYER

Loving Lord, I invite you to shine your light into my life today.  
Amen.



