

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Honour to whom honour

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News -

Christian Aid Week energy at St Columba's, Knock
Church leaders meet in Rostrevor: "Called to Hope"
Pope Leo appoints Bishop Leahy to Dicastery for
Interreligious Dialogue
Lambeth Palace London home of Archbishops of
Canterbury finishes major £40 million renovation

Education -

RBAI at First Tech Challenge UK Final
Ulster University Honorary Graduates

Cathedral Calls -

Westminster Memorial of the Month - the Navigators
Prayer for new Primate at St James Cathedral, Toronto

Events -

Bushmills through the wars exhibition

Heritage -

The Titanic, the exiled Kaiser and
Ballymena born Alexander Carlisle

Speaking to the soul -

Short reading and a prayer daily on this site

Image of the day



Honour to whom honour

The President of France and his wife visited Westminster Abbey during their recent State Visit. The President laid a wreath at The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.



Christian Aid Week energy at St Columba's, Knock

Joyce Stevenson, CA's energetic representative at St Columba's Church of Ireland in Knock, east Belfast has been in touch to tell us about her Christian Aid Week fundraising.



She and her merry band of helpers raised £1,600 with a sale of pre-loved women's clothing at which they also offered tea, coffee and home-baked treats.

A church collection and 'delivery-only' house-to-house collection brought in another £3,700.

July 10, 2025

A coffee morning and bake sale after church one Sunday raised a further £400, bringing their total for this year to £5,700.

What a magnificent total! Naturally, we're 'over-joyced.'

Joyce told us:

"We're always trying to find new ways of raising money. The clothing sale encouraged different volunteers to come forward to help."

Please join us in thanking Joyce (2nd from left) and everyone at St Columba's for the hard work and generosity that produced this amazing result.

Church leaders meet in Rostrevor: "Called to Hope"

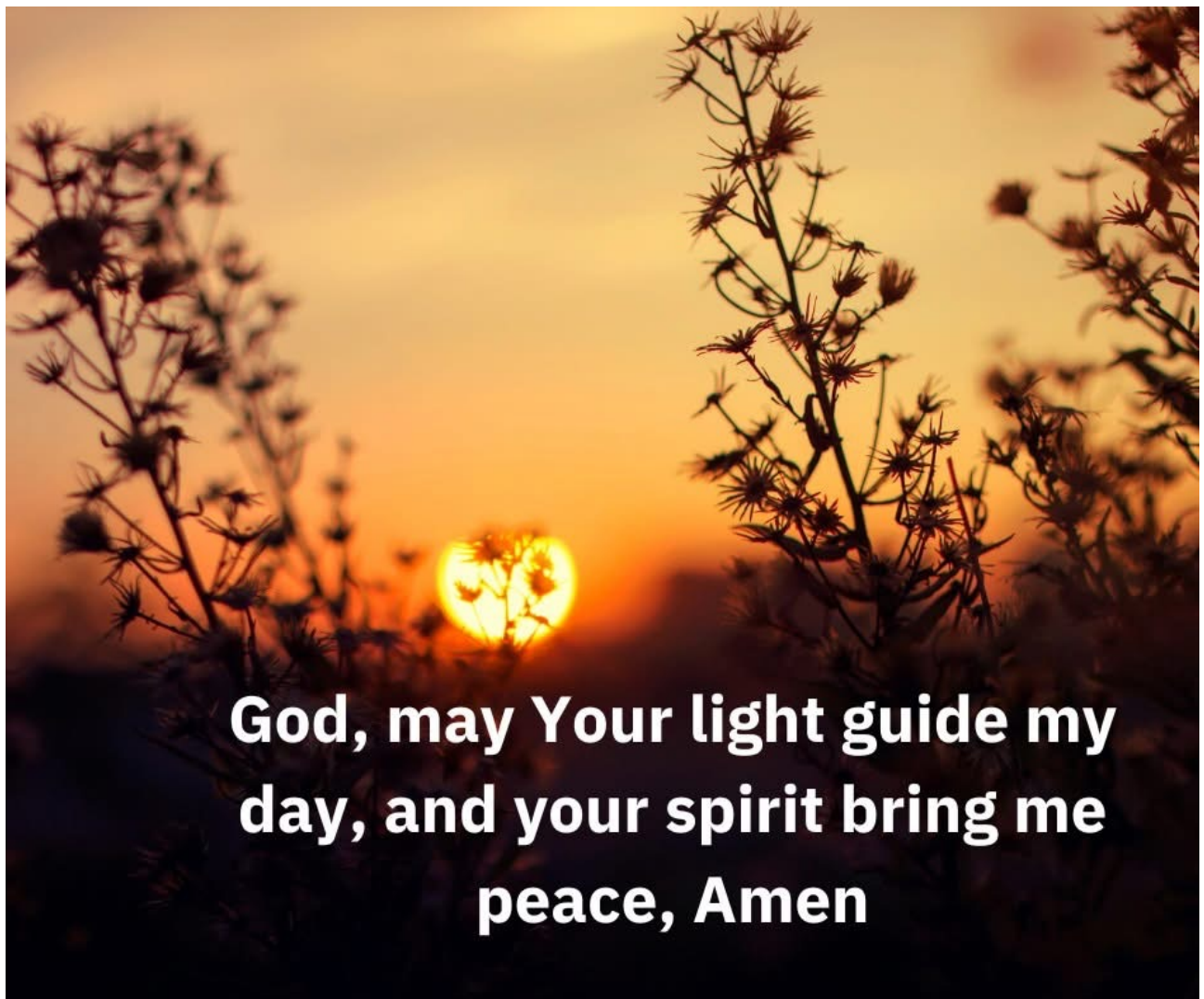
On Wednesday 2nd July 2025, bishops, ministers, and lay leaders from across Ireland gathered at the Benedictine Monastery in Rostrevor for a day of ecumenical reflection and dialogue under the theme "Called to Hope – Key Players of Dialogue".

Organised by the Focolare Movement and hosted with the generous hospitality of Abbot Mark-Ephrem and the monastic community, the meeting built on last year's fruitful gathering and offered a space to deepen relationships across churches and traditions.

July 10, 2025

Opening with words of welcome from Bishop Trevor Williams (emeritus Church of Ireland Bishop of Limerick) and Bishop Brendan Leahy (Catholic Bishop of Limerick), the day focused not on doctrinal debates but on lived experience and the shared journey of faith. Rev Karen Campbell and Dr Paul Manook led the opening prayer, setting the tone for a day of attentive listening and mutual encouragement.

A key moment was the reflection offered by Rev David Campton, Superintendent of the Belfast Central Mission, who drew deeply from scripture, personal journey, and cultural references to explore the theme of hope. Quoting Lamentations, he spoke of the call to "wait quietly for the



salvation of the Lord," linking the prophetic tradition to the challenges and promises of our own times.

Rev Campton reminded participants that "hope is not an analgesic" or simply seeing the glass half full. Rather, he described hope as a "kernel with grit"—something deep and resilient, not dependent on circumstances. He shared a personal moment of calling from 1985, hearing a divine summons amid the tensions of Northern Ireland's past. "The most certain calls often come when things feel hopeless," he said, referencing Paul's words that hope only exists where it cannot yet be seen.

He wove in poetry, music, and pop culture—from Emily Dickinson's "hope is the thing with feathers" to Beck's lyric "sometimes gone is all I have." Even the line from the show *Ted Lasso*—"it's the hope that kills you"—was flipped on its head. "No," Campton said, "I believe in hope. I believe in belief. I know who I have put my hope in."

He closed by reminding the gathering that we are a post-Pentecost people, animated by a Holy Spirit not just for extraordinary moments but for the everyday. "The Acts of the Apostles is unfinished," he said. "The story is still being written."

The afternoon brought testimonies from participants who attended the international ecumenical congresses on the same theme in Welwyn Garden City and Castelgandolfo. They shared powerful reflections on being "pilgrims of hope" in a world facing polarisation, climate crisis, and the lingering consequences of the pandemic.

Throughout the day, a spirit of unity and attentive presence marked the conversations. The gathering concluded with a heartfelt prayer, requested by Rev Bogdan Cardu, for the Christian community in Syria, following the recent tragic church bombing in Al-Suqaylabiyah. This prayer, brought the gathering to a close, with many leaving renewed in their shared mission—not just to wait for hope, but to live and act with it.

As Bishop Trevor and Bishop Brendan concluded, the call to hope is not a passive one. It is a pilgrimage we are all invited to walk—together.

Pope Leo appoints Bishop Leahy to Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue

Statement of Bishop Leahy on his appointment to key Vatican department for Interreligious Dialogue

Bishop of Limerick Brendan Leahy has said that religions must be part of the solution to peace in the world rather than be blamed for divisions, following his appointment by Pope Leo to a key Vatican interreligious department.

The 47th bishop of Limerick has been appointed as a member of the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue, which is dedicated to fostering respectful and meaningful relations between the Catholic Church and other religions worldwide.

Bishop Leahy, who will continue his role in Limerick, has also been appointed previously to the Vatican's Dicastery of



Bishop Brendan Leahy: “Religion must unite not divide”

Culture and Education as well as its Dicastery for Clergy – positions he continues to hold.

The Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue is one of the most strategically important bodies in the Vatican, with its work having far-reaching implications for peacebuilding, cultural understanding, and global religious cooperation.

Dicasteries exist to support the Pope in his pastoral and administrative duties. They help implement his vision and decisions across the global Church. Its objectives are to encourage mutual understanding and respect between Catholics and followers of other religions; promote collaboration in areas of shared values, like human dignity, peace, and justice and address religious tensions and work toward peaceful coexistence.

The timing of the appointment is fitting as this year marks the 60th anniversary of the Vatican II declaration, *Nostra Aetate*, on dialogue among religions, a foundational text that continues to guide the mission of the Catholic Church today.

Expressing his delight over the appointment, Bishop Leahy said that Pope Leo, from the very beginning of his pontification, has called our time ‘a time for dialogue and building bridges’.

“I am deeply honoured to receive this appointment from Pope Leo. Peace is something very precious, that we all yearn for and we all hurt and pain when it is absent. It is in the soul of all Christians, and this appointment is, therefore, a responsibility that I take very seriously and am truly privileged to have.”

Bishop Leahy has had a 40 year involvement in interreligious dialogues in Ireland and abroad and since his appointment as Bishop of Limerick in 2013 has been in ongoing contact with the Mid-West Interfaith Network and has visited the Mosque in Dooradoyle on a number of occasions. He has also published articles on theological aspects of interreligious dialogue.

“I am really looking forward to working closely with the members of the Dicastery in Rome in promoting the Catholic Church’s outreach to members of other faith communities.

“With so many dark clouds in our world today, it is important to recognise that religions are part of the solution. So often religions are blamed for divisions, but the reality is that

religions promote values and practices that are positive contributions to community-building and harmony.

“It is those aspects of religions that need to be highlighted and lived together. The ‘Golden Rule’ is found in all religions and that is ‘do unto others as you would want done unto you’. It is no coincidence that we all share this,” he said.

Bishop Leahy also said that given the increase in Ireland in recent decades in the number of members of other religions, each needs to be open and welcoming to others. “This has brought greater diversity to our island and has enriched us. We need to open ourselves to become neighbours to one another. Young people often show us the way in this as they quite spontaneously become friends,” he added.

Lambeth Palace London home of Archbishops of Canterbury finishes major £40 million renovation

After three years, the historic London home of the Archbishops of Canterbury has finished a major £40 million renovation, its first in over 70 years.

The Lambeth Palace project preserved key features like the Great Hall’s timber roof and upgraded infrastructure, including improved accessibility with ramps, lifts and modern facilities.

The refurbishment also embraced sustainability, installing solar panels, air source heat pumps and energy-efficient



windows to help meet the Church of England's net-zero goals.

In a statement, Michael Minta, director of bishoprics and cathedrals and Lambeth Palace, said: "The refurbishment... ensures it can remain a global base for mission and hospitality for the Church for generations to come."

However, some critics have shared their concerns about the development online, with one X user writing: "When parishes struggle, benefits are cut, abuse Redress is yet again delayed... spending £40m on refurbishment do stick in one's craw."

Another user shared his concerns for the £40m price tag, writing: "It makes you feel sick."

However, many connected with Lambeth Palace have praised the renovation.

Rev Tosin Oladipo, chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, said: “Lambeth Palace is a place of prayer and worship... we are delighted this refurbishment means Lambeth can continue to fulfil this role.”

Architect Stephen Smith noted the challenge of blending historic preservation with modern upgrades, saying: the work “appears as if we’d never been there at all.”

A spokesperson for the Church Commissioners told Premier news: “Lambeth Palace was in urgent need of substantial repairs to bring its heating, electrics and plumbing up to modern standards – there was a high risk of a catastrophic failure of these systems.

The palace has also been made more accessible for staff and visitors with disabilities, and its energy supply has been made much more sustainable.

This refurbishment was the first in nearly seventy years – and was funded entirely by the Church Commissioners. As well as being a nationally significant historic site, Lambeth Palace is crucial to the ministry of Archbishops of Canterbury, the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion.

The Commissioners have a responsibility to maintain it as a place of prayer, hospitality and service to the Church.”

Education



RBAl at First Tech Challenge UK Final

Congratulations to the RBAl senior robotics team who have recently returned from competing in the UK Finals in London.

The team earned their place in the finals by winning the Belfast heat in April and rose to the challenge of competing alongside the top 64 teams from regional heats across the UK.

The team are grateful for the support of The Outsource Group and The Belfast Old Instonians Association (BOIA)

July 10, 2025

who helped
with
sponsorship
for the trip.

They enjoyed
a day of
sightseeing
across
London
before
competing at
the 2 day
event held at
the Copper
Box Arena,
Olympic
Park.

They
competed
brilliantly and
were a credit
to themselves and the school.



Ulster University Honorary Graduates

David Clements, David Linton and Alastair Bell

**We were delighted to award Honorary Doctorates to
three individuals making a difference.**



David Clements is being honoured for his outstanding service as Honorary Treasurer at Ulster University. David, a Fellow of Chartered Accountants Ireland, retired in 2014 from a career spent with PwC and now works in the voluntary and not for profit sectors in the areas of education,

healthcare and the economically and socially marginalised.



Dave Linton, founder and CEO of multi-award winning Madlug, is being awarded an Honorary Doctorate for his outstanding contribution to the business sector. Madlug is a business which, for every item purchased, provides a pack-away travel bag to a child in the care system, preventing them

from having to use unsuitable bags when moving location.

Alastair Bell, is also being awarded an Honorary Doctorate for his outstanding contribution to the business sector. Alastair, an Ulster University alumnus, is an active investor and mentor in high-growth technology businesses within



Northern Ireland, helping innovative software companies thrive in global markets.

Congratulations to all three on this well-deserved recognition!

Read more: <https://ow.ly/qZcc50Wj5iq>

Cathedral Calls

Westminster Memorial of the Month

Our Memorial Of The Month for July is the Navigators' Memorial in the Abbey's south cloister, which honours the life and work of Captain James Cook, Sir Francis Drake, and Sir Francis Chichester.



July 10, 2025

You can find out more about the memorial at 10-minute talks at 10:30am on Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout July, when you'll be able to explore the story behind the memorial and the feats of these three seafaring pioneers.

The drop-in sessions are free with entry to the Abbey, and there's no need to book.

Find out more and plan your visit: www.westminster-abbey.org/visit-us/plan-your-visit/memorial-of-the-month



Prayer for new Primate at St James Cathedral, Toronto

On Sunday, the first Sunday after the election of the new Primate, the Anglican Church of Canada from coast to coast to coast we pray together for, him, The Most Reverend Shane Parker.

May he be strengthened for the work ahead.

Events

Bushmills through the wars exhibition

Bushmills through the wars opens on Friday, 11th July and runs to Monday, 21st July 2025 in Dunluce Parochial Hall, Bushmills

The organisers write: "The official opening will be Friday at 11.30; Opened by Catherine Champion, Kieth Beattie and Micheal Fryer from the Northern Ireland War Memorial.

"This year we have a dispatch riders motorbike on display and the story of local man John Gault. Fiona and Miss Wendy will be there to represent all the animals who served and died in both wars. Matt with his brilliant American GI display and Lewis with his ever growing WW2 display of artefacts.

Stop and speak to John and Laura about their uniforms. Rations and fashions Women's role either serving abroad or at home. Plenty for all ages to see. The story of evacuees. Make your own labels and dress up ! take part in our quiz.

"There will be a raffle with great prizes. This year all money goes to the Bishop's Appeal, The poppy appeal and MS Society, Ballymoney.

Weekdays and Saturdays 10.30 to 5.30
Sundays 2 to 5.30

July 10, 2025

Entrance per adult is £5. Teenagers £2. Children free entrance

"Visit our themed Forget - Me - Not cafe for home made scones with cream and jam and shortbread. See you there !, 21st July 2025. Dunluce Parochial Hall, Bushmills. Oak out for the Military Jeep and RAF staff car.

Heritage

The Titanic, the exiled Kaiser and Ballymena born Alexander Carlisle

Alexander Carlisle, one of the men who designed the famous ship RMS Titanic, was born on 8th July in 1854 in Ballymena.

Aged 16, he became a premium apprentice in Harland & Wolff, which was rapidly becoming one of the world's leading shipyards. A talented individual, he had a meteoric rise within the company, being appointed chief draughtsman and in 1878 shipyard manager.

He was closely involved with the designing of all the yard's major liners and steamers right up until his retirement in 1910. In 1889 his designs for the Teutonic, a ship commissioned by the White Star line, were said to be the finest designs ever submitted to the admiralty.

Just before he retired, he worked on the blueprints of the revolutionary and huge new White Star ships, the Olympic,

July 10, 2025

the Britannic, and their more famous sister the Titanic. He was also responsible for the beautiful decor of the ships.

Carlisle was linked with the Titanic in other ways, too. His sister, Margaret, married William Pirrie, the chairman of Harland & Wolff. His great-uncle was the renowned Presbyterian minister Henry Montgomery who was linked to the United Irishmen.

Carlisle had moved to London after 1910 to be close to his brothers. He knew many leading figures in European business and politics, and was friendly with Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany.

After visiting the deposed kaiser in exile in the Netherlands, Carlisle fell ill and died in London on 5 March 1926.

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

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**Link in Monday through Saturday from
early morning**

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