

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Autism in the Air

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Image of the day



Another successful year of 'Autism in the Air' complete

Now in its 10th year, this incredible initiative aided by Belfast City Airport continues to support children with autism and their families by helping them

experience the airport journey in a calm, supportive environment.

Thanks to the programme, which provides a safe space where children can



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build confidence and familiarity with the airport experience, more families are able to take a well-deserved break or summer holiday this year.

Want to learn more or get involved? Email:
autismintheair@qub.ac.uk

News

Hill of Tara outdoor service

The Hill of Tara outdoor service this year took place in beautiful sunshine at the ancient seat of the High Kings of Ireland.

Canon William Steacy (Athlone) was the preacher and he spoke about exciting new developments in Pioneer Ministry Ireland.

Dublin diocesan Youth Ambassadors prepare for Jubilee of Youth pilgrimage in Rome

On Sunday the Diocesan Ambassadors for the Jubilee of Youth pilgrimage in Rome headed to Glendalough for a preparation retreat day.

They were joined by some parish youth leaders & emerging leaders from the Diocesan Youth Ministry Leadership course. It was a fantastic day accompanying one another

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along the trail in conversation, silence, and prayer, beginning to build a community of young adult leaders throughout the Diocese. And after all that adventure, food was much needed and welcome, along with some well deserved ice-cream from Kevin's Cone!

The group head to Rome on July 28th so be sure to follow their journey online over these coming weeks and the time ahead!

Vicar-turned-DJ lied to quit 'exploitative' Gogglebox TV show

A Vicar has admitted lying to escape the “exploitative” television show Gogglebox.

The **Rev Kate Bottley**, who is now a BBC Radio 2 DJ, said she and her husband Graham told Channel 4 bosses in 2016 they wanted a temporary break while their daughter took her GCSEs.

But the couple failed to mention they had no plans to return and did not appear on the show again.

The 50-year-old said she chose to leave the programme because it “took over our life” and she was contractually barred from appearing on other TV shows. “There was stuff coming in that I wanted to have a go at that I just wasn't able contractually to do,” she said.



Concert in the Cathedral of the Assumption
Followed by an Irish Music Night in Carlow Town

.....

Saturday 12th July, 8 p.m.
Cathedral of the Assumption,
Carlow Town


TURAS COLUMBANUS
THE COLUMBAN WAY
.....
XXVI Columbanus Day
11-13 July 2025



“It so happened that it came around the time Ruby was doing her GCSEs so the excuse we gave was ‘We’re going to take some time away while she does her exams’.”

Bottley has since become a familiar face on radio and television, which funds her ministry in the Church of England. “I wish I’d known how much it took over our life for two-and-a-half years,” she told the Walking the Dog podcast. “It’s reality TV, it’s by its nature consensual exploitation.

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“So they come into your home. They’re filming in your home – it was quite intrusive really. But we consented to that intrusion, but I didn’t fully know just how.”

She revealed her children sat in their bedrooms every Tuesday and Thursday night during filming.

“My kids didn’t have friends round for a lot [of the time], didn’t have help with their homework. Things like that. And we got paid very little. So all the money we got from it went on the electricity, the internet connection that they were using, and the food to be hospitable to six [crew] people in my home two nights a week.

‘It was a good two-and-half years but it got to the point where we were overwhelmed’

“It was a good two-and-a-half years but we couldn’t have done any more. It got to the point where we were just a bit overwhelmed.”

The Rev Bottley was vicar of Blyth, Scrooby and Ranskill in Nottinghamshire when she first appeared on Gogglebox in 2014.

Ecumenical Decade of Climate Justice Action launched

The World Council of Churches has launched a ten-year Ecumenical Decade of Climate Justice Action, bringing together voices from across six continents.

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The Anglican Communion was represented at the event, with Archbishop Julio Murray, Chair of the Anglican Communion Environmental Network, presiding over the plenary session. The Revd Dr Rachel Mash also spoke powerfully on the urgent need for Christian climate action, calling climate change “the human rights issue of our time.”



The Most Revd Julio Murray, Bishop of Panama and former Archbishop of Central America, chairs the plenary session launching the Ecumenical Decade of Climate Justice Action.

The session concluded with a strong call for churches to move from charity to justice, and from words to action.

Read the full article: <https://bit.ly/44o7P96>

Bishop of Blackburn calls out Church's silence on grooming gangs



The bishop of Blackburn has said Church of England leaders have been "collectively silent" on the issue of grooming gangs, despite having local knowledge and hearing "rumours, stories and concerns".

Writing in The Church of England Newspaper, Bishop Rt Rev Philip North, reflected on Baroness Louise Casey's recent report, which found: authorities had "shied away from" addressing ethnicity in grooming gang investigations.

He admitted that, like many others, he had "said nothing", and asked: "Why did I so readily believe the voices that claimed that calling for an inquiry was a collusion with the far right?"

He acknowledged the tension Church leaders feel between addressing difficult issues and preserving important interfaith relationships.

Bishop North also addressed a perceived disconnect between the Church and working-class communities, warning, ignoring their concerns on topics like grooming, immigration and energy costs risks creating a political vacuum, saying: "We are either silent or actively at odds with the issues that most trouble working-class neighbourhoods."

He concluded by encouraging other church leaders to examine their own "fear-driven silence" and consider the Church's responsibility to listen and respond more courageously.

Education

Northern Ireland's first Immersive Classroom launched

The Education Authority, BT and W5 have launched Northern Ireland's first Immersive Classroom - a fully interactive, multi-sensory space designed to support pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with additional needs.

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Officially opened by Education Minister, Paul Givan, the Immersive Classroom uses cutting-edge technology to create a place where content comes to life across the walls and floors, and learning becomes an adventure!

Find out more: <https://www.eani.org.uk/news/immersive-classroom-designed-to-support-school-children-at-belfasts-w5>



<https://vimeo.com/1082481618/48ba8f5ee1>

Belfast High School recent law graduates

Congratulations to our Class of 2021 Head Boy and Head Girl, Josh Cruickshank and Amy Armstrong, who graduated from the University of Glasgow School of Law on Wednesday 25 June - Josh (Law with French) and Amy (Law).





Education Minister Paul Givan is pictured with key officials from Miami Dade and Orange County.

NI Education Minister explores system in Orange county...

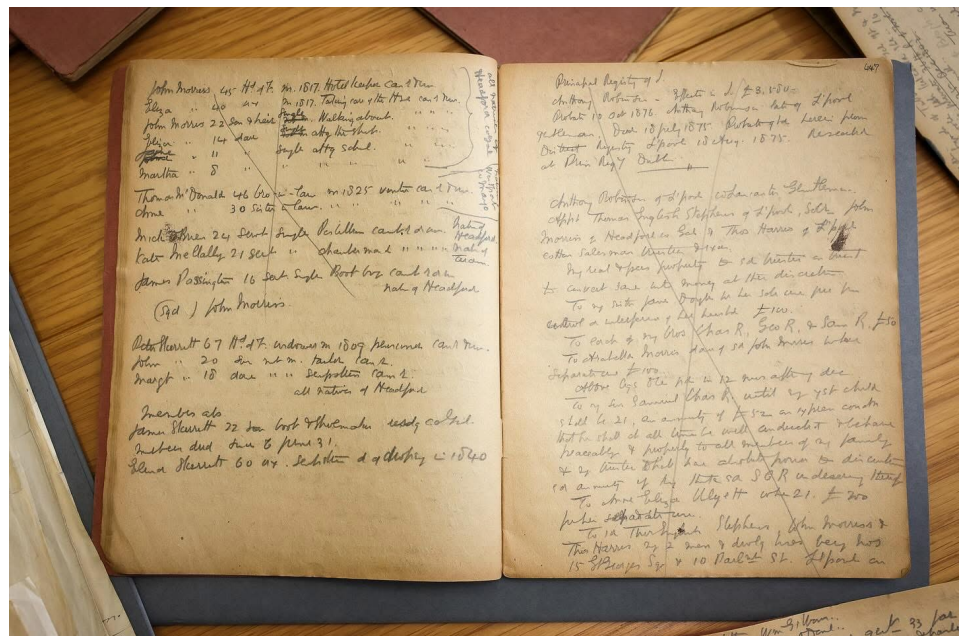
Education Minister Paul Givan MLA has addressed the Core Knowledge Foundation's National Conference in Florida, where he outlined his vision for reforming and improving education delivery in Northern Ireland.

The Minister also attended a number of meetings with key officials from Miami Dade and Orange County to discuss the Florida school system, performance and curriculum and standards.



Find out more at www.education-ni.gov.uk/news/givan-heralds-international-recognition-transformed

Trinity College Dublin lead in recovery of family history records



The release of newly recovered census transcripts is allowing

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people with an interest in family history to delve even further into their past!



The Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland (VRTI) has just released 175,000 new historical records, including 60,000 pre-and-post famine names for citizen researchers to explore online.

Led by Trinity College Dublin and supported by the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport, the VRTI brings together historians, computer scientists, archivists, and librarians, who are working to digitally recreate Ireland's public record office and its collections, which were destroyed by a fire in 1922.

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Pictured above inspecting transcriptions of the destroyed 19th-century census are Zoë Reid, Keeper of Manuscripts, National Archives, Ireland and Brian Gurrin, Population and Census Specialist, Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland.

Uncovered amongst the records are notebooks containing names of two households, transcribed from the 1841 census for Headford, County Galway (image 2), and transcriptions made by genealogists and historians of the 19th-century census, as well as one of only four surviving volumes of 1821 census returns (both image 3) To read more and to search the digital records for yourself, visit the link in our bio!



Cathedral Calls

Saint Mary's Cathedral Choir, Limerick

Limerick Parish and Cathedral - A heartfelt thank you to our wonderful Saint Mary's Cathedral Choir, who finished up for the season on St Peter's Day.

Your dedication, talent, and hard work over the past year have greatly enriched our worship and brought beauty to every service.

We're now looking ahead to the new season and inviting new voices to join us!

If you enjoy singing and would like to be part of this cherished tradition, please get in touch at cathedral@limerick.anglican.org



The Sound Of Music in St Anne's Cathedral

The beating heart of their musical at Belfast Cathedral last week - high up in the hills, they had the most stunning 20 piece orchestra, playing every note of one of the most gorgeous scores musical theatre has to offer. Well done Belfast Operatic.

Events

Music in Belfast from the Sistine Chapel

On Friday 25 July, from 6-7pm, The Ulster Consort with Matthew Owen celebrate the 500th anniversary of one of the finest composers of the Renaissance, Palestrina, in this concert of glorious music from the Sistine Chapel, Rome.

Also featured is the Allegri 'Miserere mei', one of the most famous pieces of choral music ever written.

Join us, if you can, in the beautiful surroundings of St Patrick's Church, Donegall Street, Belfast, for an hour of sublime music from 16th and 17th century Italy.

Tickets are available at the door, or via this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/glories-of-the-sistine-chapel-tickets-1250017870099>

THE ULSTER CONSORT

Glories of the Sistine Chapel

THE MUSIC OF ALLEGRI AND PALESTRINA

Friday 25 July, 6pm – 7pm

St Patrick's Church, Donegall Street,
Belfast, BT1 2FL

Tickets: £15 available in advance via
[eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk), and on the evening at the door

Allegri	<i>Miserere mei, Deus</i>
Palestrina	<i>Sicut cervus</i>
Palestrina	<i>Exultate Deo</i>
Palestrina	<i>Missa Aeterna Christi munera</i>
Palestrina	<i>Pater noster</i>
Allegri	<i>Beatus vir</i>

THE ULSTER CONSORT
MATTHEW OWENS conductor

Palestrina was one of the foremost composers of the Renaissance and wrote extensively for the singers of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. The Ulster Consort celebrates his 500th anniversary with a performance of one of his best-loved mass settings, alongside other music from this glorious chapel, including that of Gregorio Allegri, whose best known work – *Miserere mei, Deus* – is normally sung in Lent but provides a moment for poignant reflection at any point in the year.



St Patrick's Coleraine summer concert season

If you happen to be near the north coast, St Patrick's summer concert season starts shortly.

These lunchtime recitals are free in the backdrop of historical St Patrick's Church in the centre of Coleraine. There's also lunch too!



The poster features a stylized illustration of a harp and a piano keyboard in blue and yellow. Below the illustration, the text 'SUMMER MUSIC' is written in large, bold, blue and yellow letters. Underneath, it says 'at St Patrick's Coleraine' in a smaller, grey font. A Facebook logo is visible to the left of the text. The poster lists four concert dates and performers: Thursday 31 July (Fiona Gryson, Harp), Thursday 14 August (Ruth McGinley, Piano), Thursday 7 August (Niamh Wright & Fiona Gormley, Mezzosoprano & Accompanist), and Thursday 21 August (Neale Agnew, Organ). A yellow banner at the bottom states 'Thursdays from 12.30pm / Free Admission / Refreshments Provided'. At the very bottom, the St Patrick's logo is displayed with the tagline 'At the heart of the community, with the community on our heart.'

Thursday 31 July
Fiona Gryson
Harp

Thursday 14 August
Ruth McGinley
Piano

Thursday 7 August
Niamh Wright & Fiona Gormley
Mezzosoprano & Accompanist


Thursday 21 August
Neale Agnew
Organ

Thursdays from 12.30pm / Free Admission / Refreshments Provided

St Patrick's At the heart of the community, with the community on our heart.

Mini-pilgrimage will give insight into the beautiful island of Achill

The next Spiritual Tourism & Pilgrimage Event will be at Dugort, part of the Aughaval Group of Parishes on the afternoon of Sunday, 20th July, 2025.




*A Mini-Pilgrimage
on Achill*

Starting at St. Thomas' Church,
Dugort at 3pm

Sunday 20th of July 2025

Book now at tlk.ie/spiritualtourism/

Contact Valerie: 087 2276868 or
Email spiritualtourism@tlk.ie



More info below - and don't forget to register your interest as soon as you can!

‘This ‘mini-pilgrimage’ organised and hosted by Tuam, Killala and Limerick will give insight into the beautiful island of Achill, its spiritual sites and heritage, and in particular the Dugort and ‘Colony’ side of the island.

It will include moments of gentle prayer and reflection in the great outdoors - beneath the mountain, on the road, and by

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the shore. The simple provision of companionship and victuals will offer, we hope, nourishment of body, mind and spirit. **This occasion is for those of any faith or none.**

Outline for the afternoon:

2.30pm - Meet at The Strand Hotel carpark – Eircode F28 NY97

2.45pm - Short Walk to St Thomas' Church, Dugort

3pm – Gathering, with Compline.

Churchyard – Walk and Talk and 'Circling Prayers'

Congregate at the Colony

Comfort and Hospitality Stop - at the old schoolhouse (St Thomas' Hall)

Seascape and Descent to the Shore

6pm - Farewell Blessing

Footnotes:

We kindly request that all attendees register for this event, to accurately determine the number of participants.

The pleasure of this event will involve spending the afternoon with all who choose to attend.

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There will be no charge for this event however please feel free to leave a donation at the church to cover costs by the parish

There is limited car parking at the church. Alternative parking is available at the Strand Hotel – Please Park down by the wall nearest the beach

Please allow 15 minutes to walk to the church

Nearest facilities – if of interest:

An Dún (Dugort, Achill Island – F28 TW83) offer Breakfast, Brunch and Lunch.

4pm – 9pm: Refreshments and Food are available at the Strand Hotel if you so wish to partake - after the event.

The beach and the sand dunes if bringing a picnic.

Valerie Raitt

Email: spiritualtourism@tlk.ie Phone: 087 2276868

Diocesan Co-Ordinator for Spiritual Tourism & Pilgrimage

This link will bring you straight to the registration form:-
<https://tlk.ie/spiritual-tourism-book/?tour=Achill>

Perspective

“I’ve never felt such a strong connection with God anywhere like I did here.”

—Mel Gibson, during his visit to the Hilandar Monastery on Mount Athos 🛐



Mel Gibson walks Mount Athos, the Holy Mountain in Greece

A devout Christian’s pilgrimage to Orthodoxy’s stronghold. "I have never felt a connection to God anywhere like I did here."

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Hollywood icon, devout Christian, and filmmaker Mel Gibson has arrived at the revered **Hilandar Monastery on Mount Athos, Greece**—the heart of Orthodox spirituality.

According to Sputnik, Gibson will spend several days immersed in the sacred life of the Holy Serbian Imperial Lavra, one of the most profound spiritual strongholds of the Orthodox world.

This is not just a visit—it is a pilgrimage.

Welcomed warmly by the brotherhood of monks, Gibson described his journey to the “Holy Mountain” as life-changing.

"I have never felt a deeper connection to God than I do here," he humbly shared.

For Orthodox Christians worldwide, Gibson’s journey is a powerful reminder of the timeless call to return to the roots of faith, silence, and prayer. In a world of noise, Mount Athos remains a beacon for the soul—a place where heaven and earth meet.

Gibson’s reverence for Orthodoxy and his search for truth bring global attention to the sacred treasures of our faith.

In the media

China’s Iran Strategy - Bloomberg

With the US-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Iran holding, attention has shifted to what the conflict

means for China and the balance of power between Washington and Beijing, Edward Johnson writes in Bloomberg Weekend.

President Xi Jinping has strengthened ties with Tehran in recent years, welcoming it into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2023 and then BRICS — bolstering both groups' ability to challenge US power on the world stage. And as a net importer of crude oil with growing economic ties in the Middle East, China has a lot at stake in the region.

The conflict presents Xi with an opportunity to style himself as more of a stabilizing force than the Trump administration. China will “primarily use the situation as a way of painting the United States as the unreliable global partner,” John Liu, who oversees Bloomberg’s China coverage from Beijing, told the [Big Take Asia podcast]

The risk to China’s energy security also appears to be contained, with Donald Trump giving Beijing the green light to continue buying oil from Iran, despite US sanctions. China gets about 14% of its crude from Iran, and about 45% of its oil imports pass through the Strait of Hormuz — which remains open despite Tehran’s threat of a blockade.

All of that is positive for China. But its decision to stay on the sidelines, other than [condemning] the US and Israeli strikes, risks undermining the appeal of aligning with Beijing. Meanwhile, the B2 bomber strikes showed the US remains the “only global power with reach anywhere in the world,” Liu said.

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Last week, China hosted a meeting of SCO defense ministers that included Iran's Aziz Nasirzadeh. Xi will miss the July 6-7 BRICS summit in Rio de Janeiro, however, an absence that will do little to help him expand China's global influence via the bloc.

While some commentators suggest the conflict has another potential silver lining for China – distracting Washington from strategic competition with Beijing in the Asia-Pacific – it's unlikely to impact China's long-term calculations on Taiwan and the South China Sea. The Trump administration has signaled quite clearly it's not going to take its eye off the region, according to Jenni Marsh, who leads Bloomberg's economic and government

“For Xi Jinping, the calculation of his ambitions around Taiwan probably are much more long-term,” she told a panel discussion at a Bloomberg event last week in Hong Kong. The Iran conflict “does not mean that China would invade Taiwan because Trump is caught up somewhere else.”

Heritage

Margaret Teresa Pender

Poet and Author. - Margaret Pender was born Margaret Teresa Doherty in 1848 in Ballytwedy, County Antrim.

Her parents were farmer, Daniel, and Margaret Doherty (née White). Her father was from a poor Catholic background, and her mother was from a wealthier Presbyterian family.

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Margaret was the youngest daughter of the couple's 7 children.

There was a literary and nationalist tradition in the family, her maternal grandfather, William White, and her mother were poets. Margaret started to write verse from a young age. She was educated at home, as well as attending Ballyrobin National School and Convent of Mercy, Belfast. She trained to be a teacher, and taught for a short time in Aghagallon.



She married Hugh Owen Pender, a printer, in 1869 and moved to Belfast. She was published in the Shamrock, the Belfast Morning News and The Nation, winning a number of poetry competitions. She wrote under the pseudonyms "Marguerite", "Colleen", and "M.T.P.". She also wrote serialised novels and short stories.

In 1916, her novel O'Neill of the Glen was the source material for the first indigenous Irish film, O'Neil of the Glen (1916). The film was the first work of the Film Company of

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Ireland, and was adapted for the screen by W. T. Lysaght. Margaret Pender died at her home 7 Newington Street, Belfast, on 17th, March 1920. She had three daughters and two sons. Photo courtesy Northern Ireland Historical Photographical Society EPC.

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

Church News Ireland

www.churchnewsireland.org

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

Please recommend to your friends

