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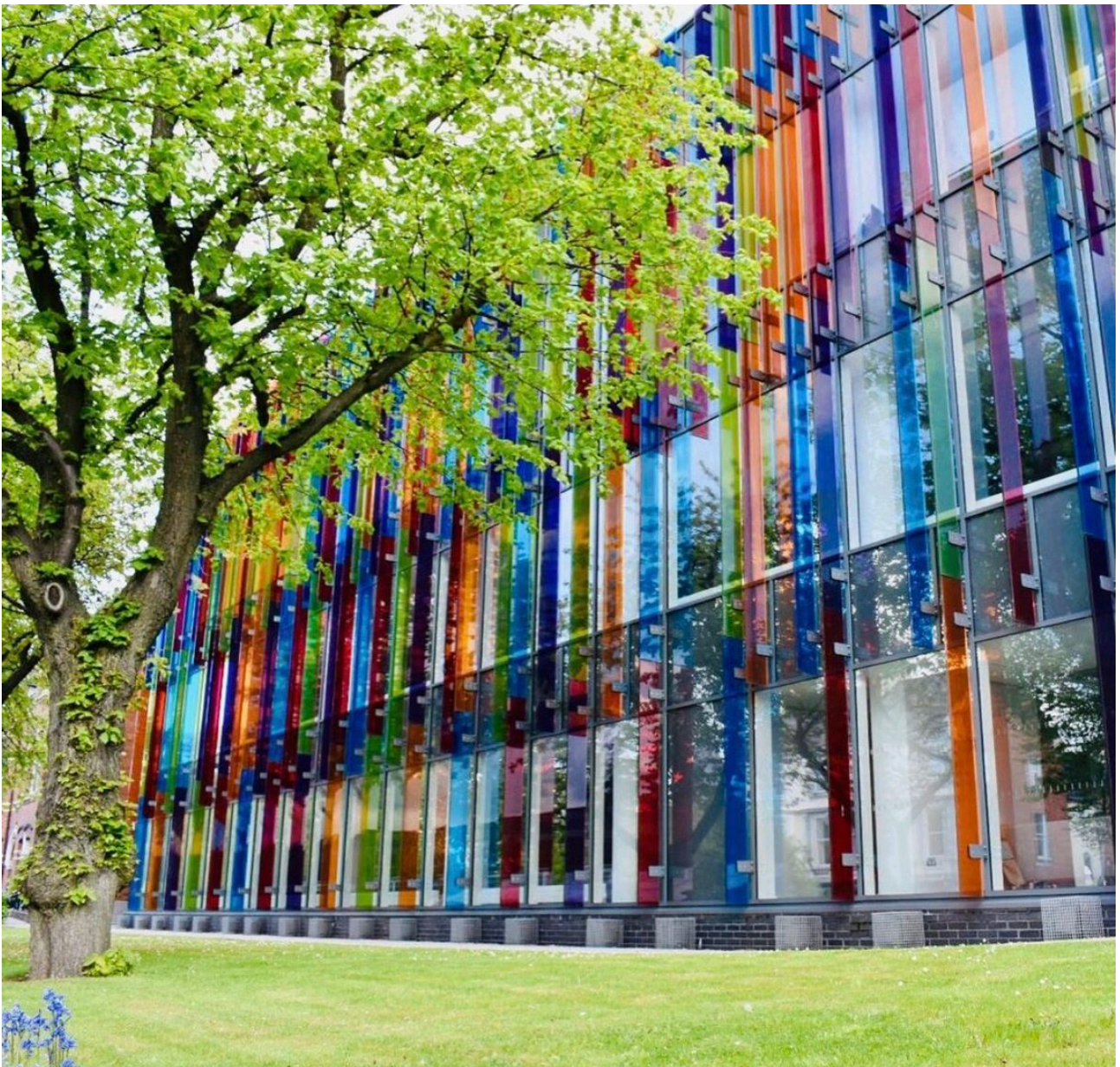


Image of the day - Queen's University, Belfast

Reports

Methodists in England to allow same-sex marriage after synod vote

The Methodist Church has voted to allow same-sex marriage in a move hailed as a “momentous step on the road to justice and inclusion”.

After debates at the Methodist Conference on June 30, 29 of the 30 Methodist synods in Britain confirmed that they were in support of provisional resolutions to allow the practice.

The move makes it the biggest Christian denomination to approve same-sex marriages.

There are about 164,000 members of the Methodist Church across more than 4,000 churches.

‘There was a general view that the church cannot close its eyes to what is happening in society’

Same-sex marriage is not allowed in the Church of England or the Roman Catholic Church. However, it is welcomed in the Scottish Episcopal Church and United Reformed Church. Methodist Church officials hope the first same-sex weddings in Methodist chapels will take place in the autumn.

The resolution was passed by the conference after 254 votes in favour and 46 against.

During the proceedings, the Rev Dr Jonathan Hustler, secretary of the Methodist Conference, acknowledged the “depth of feeling, pain and anxiety that there is”.

On the topic of same-sex cohabitation, it was noted by the conference that “there was a general view that the church cannot close its eyes to what is happening in society”.

Freedom of conscience clauses mean that ministers will not be forced to conduct such weddings if they oppose the move.

Dignity & Worth, a campaign group that champions the LGBTQ+ community in the Methodist Church, said that “the Methodist Conference has taken a momentous step on the road to justice and inclusion”.

Irish Methodist comment

The Rev Dr Heather Morris, General Secretary and Secretary of Conference for the Methodist Church in Ireland, commented -

“The Methodist Church in Britain has been carefully reflecting on human sexuality for many years and have made their decision today with grace and integrity.

“The Methodist Church in Ireland is a separate and autonomous body which continues to affirm that marriage is between one man and one woman. We too continue to deliberate on these issues, deeply mindful that this is an area on which Christians disagree and that this deliberation

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profoundly affects the lives of many people within and beyond the Church.”

Lambeth Award for Community Service presented to Dr Margaret Kennedy



From left: the Revd Rebecca Guildea; the Revd David Mungavin, Rector of Greystones; Dr Margaret Kennedy; and Archbishop Michael Jackson.

Decades of service on behalf of those who are most marginalised in society, including victims of clerical abuse, were recognised on Wednesday, 30th June, when Dr Margaret Kennedy was presented with her Langton Award for Community Service by the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland, the Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, at St Patrick's Church, Greystones, Co. Wicklow.

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The award is among the Lambeth Awards given by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby, to acknowledge contributions to the Church and wider society.

Dr Kennedy's award is for rendering outstanding service to victims and survivors of Church-related sexual abuse through founding Minister And Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors (MACSAS), an organisation run by survivors, in the late 1990s following requests from survivors with whom she had worked through Christian Survivors of Sexual Abuse (CSSA), which she had also founded in 1989.

Dr Kennedy recalled the work of CSSA and MACSAS to date and paid tribute to the organisations' supporters and those whom it supported in a slide show of their events over the years. "I did it out of real care and love for the people that I worked with," she remarked. "We loved each other; we faced the horrors together and it was absolutely fantastic."

Archbishop Jackson remarked: "I am privileged to meet Dr Margaret Kennedy and to learn more of her work in a most vital and sensitive area of human life. Margaret tells her story with openness and conviction, with dedication and altruism. Her positivity is infectious.

"The Church of Ireland seeks to uphold and develop good practice, positive care and the dignity of those affected by abuse through its safeguarding support, its dedicated staff, and its consistent raising of awareness of safety as a primary right for all associated with its activities.

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“Margaret has shared with us her rich experience and capacity to change structures. In the present day, she gives us hope in the future.

“I have great pleasure in conveying to Margaret the good wishes of Archbishop Diarmuid Martin who knows both Kennedy sisters and who would have been with us had he not been elsewhere unavoidably today.”

MACSAS continues to fight for changes in safeguarding practice and improved responses to survivors of abuse across all Christian denominations. MACSAS has played a significant role in the Church of England’s journey to offer a professional and compassionate safeguarding service, and offers individual advocacy and support to victims of abuse, a helpline staffed by trained volunteers, and advice and assistance to survivors.

Her commendation notes that Margaret’s contribution to society “goes well beyond” her work with MACSAS and includes campaigning against disability inequality and abuse, inadequate housing provision for disabled people, and inadequacies in the Health Service Executive. Her advocacy strongly continues despite her experience of a very rare neuro–muscular degenerative disease (which she shares with her identical twin sister, Ann), being in constant pain and using a wheelchair.

A former nurse and social worker, she prides herself on her ability to stir things up. When she received her PhD she was also presented with a symbolic wooden spoon and, as she herself says, “I’m still stirring things up from my wheelchair.”

Postponement of Sacraments – Confirmation and First Holy Communion - Statements from Bishops of Raphoe and Limerick

Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ , Bishop of Raphoe has written - It is with a heavy heart that I have to inform priests, young people and their families and the staff in our schools of the need to postpone our Confirmations yet again. The government, at very short notice, has declared that Confirmations and First Holy Communions ‘are off’. I know that all of our schools and parishes were making preparations to have small ceremonies in complete compliance with the Covid 19 guidelines. The Government have made it clear that NPHEC have called for this deferment as a result of the rising threat from the very contagious Delta variant. This sudden decision will be a cause of deep disappointment to all those involved. Again I am very sorry that that we need to comply with this decision and I recognise the great inconvenience this causes to so many people.

The Bishop of Limerick Brendan Leahy has written to parishes to advise that, further to a communication from the Taoiseach’s department this afternoon, First Holy Communion and Confirmation ceremonies are to be deferred until further notice and no ceremonies should be rescheduled until public health advice allows.

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In a letter addressing parents and children, teachers and priests, Bishop Leahy said it is with great regret that, following both the email from the Taoiseach's department today and last week's recommendation from the HSE, it is necessary to defer First Holy Communion and Confirmation ceremonies until further notice.

“Due to the uncertainty at the moment regarding the impact of the Delta variant, we have been strongly advised that no ceremonies should be rescheduled until public health advice allows,” Bishop Leahy wrote in the letter.

“I deeply regret that we are in this position again of having to defer these special celebrations that you all had committed to and were so looking forward to. Your preparations still stand.

“However, I appreciate this is a huge disappointment to all concerned and I would dearly wish if circumstances were different. It is not something we anticipated a number of weeks back when we were requested to defer until after the anticipated post July 5th lifting of restrictions.

“But given that the Taoiseach's request, based on public health advice, has come so quickly following last week's recommendation from the HSE in the Mid-West, it is clear that there is really no choice but to take this on board.”

Bishop Leahy acknowledged the huge inconvenience and disappointment this will be to families. “I also regret the timing and that families have only a matter of days to react ahead of the first scheduled ceremonies next week. While this is very difficult for people to take, we should not ignore

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warnings given about the substantial threat from the Delta variant and subsequent advice from the Taoiseach's department relating to this.

“If anything, this latest COVID-19 set-back is reminding us all again of our vulnerability. COVID has, indeed, reminded us of many things but, above all, our need to do whatever we can to protect the vulnerable in society. So, it is with a heavy heart that I ask you to accede to the Government's strong advice to defer,” he concluded.

People and places

Sponsored wheelchair push for Aware exceeds its targets

Wednesday, 30th June was a time to celebrate a remarkable fundraising effort by Simon Malley. Beginning on 9th April, he undertook a sponsored wheelchair push, to raise funds for Aware. This came to end at St David's Church of Ireland church in Naas on the afternoon of 30th June.

After spending the last year in lockdown and being restricted to a 5km radius, Simon wondered how many kms he could do in his wheelchair in a month without leaving his 5km restriction. He set himself an initial goal of 200 km which he hoped to achieve between the 9th April and 30th June to raise much needed funds for the charity Aware.

He has far exceeded his targets. Not only did he push over 1,000kms, raising almost €3,000. The end of this amazing



Left to right: the Rev Carol Hennessy, Archdeacon Leslie Stevenson, Simon Malley, Bishop Pat Storey, Dean Tim Wright, the Rev Philip Heak and Mr Drew Flood (Aware).

feat was marked by a special service, held in accordance with government pandemic guidelines. Given the pandemic the service was strictly private but there was an opportunity to watch it online.

It was an opportunity to offer thanks to God for the work of Aware and celebrate Simon's achievement. Mr Drew Flood spoke on the work of Aware. Talking of how Simon had done something even more than raising significant funds for the work of Aware, he said: "What Simon has done is absolutely superb. He had broken down the stigma about mental health. He has opened up the conversation." He also

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complimented his resilience and determination in completing the task he set himself.

Talking about why he has set himself this challenge, Simon said, “With everything that has happened over this last year I wanted to make people aware of the great work and help that is available through the work of Aware.” He also thanked everyone who had given him so much support and encouragement.

Bishop Pat Storey, who attended the Service, commended Simon. She said, “This last 18 months has been so tough for people across the country. It makes us all the more appreciative of the work of Aware. Simon had the inspiration and drive to do something remarkable, to raise funds for Aware. The achievement is truly worthy of celebration.”

Aware is one of the partners in the dioceses of Meath and Kildare’s ‘Mind Yourself’ project – to raise awareness of mental health issues and point people to where they can find support and help. Aware is a national organisation providing free support, education and information services to those impacted by anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder and related mood conditions.

Ordination anniversaries

Congratulations to the Reverend Canon Michael Kennedy who has celebrated the 58th anniversary of his ordination. Canon Kennedy officiated at the St Peter's Day celebration

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of the Eucharist in Armagh Cathedral and is pictured along with his wife Jean.

On June 30 at the midweek Eucharist the Revd Canon Neville Hughes and the Venerable Paul Dundas (Archdeacon of Dalriada). On that day 30 years ago Canon Hughes and Archdeacon Dundas were ordained deacon in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh. The



Dean extended prayerful best wishes to them both on this significant date and anniversary.

Bishop's tribute to Bertie Pollock

The death has taken place of Church of Ireland stalwart and prominent Tyrone businessman Bertie Pollock. The lifelong Edenderry parishioner passed away on June 30, surrounded by his family.

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Bertie, who was 77, made an enormous contribution to Church life at all levels. He served for many years as secretary to the Select Vestry of Edenderry Parish Church; at diocesan level in Derry and Raphoe he was a long-time member of Synod, Diocesan

Council and the Glebes and Property Committee; and at central Church level, he served as Diocesan representative to the RCB and General Synod. He was a surveyor by profession and ran a very successful estate agent and auctioneer business in Omagh.

Bertie is survived by his wife Coral, their two sons Adrian and Keith, daughters-in-law Beverley and Ruth, and three grandchildren.

The Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, the Rt Rev Andrew Forster, described Bertie as one of the Church's unsung heroes. "Like his fellow parishioners, I will miss Bertie enormously," the Bishop said. "His was one of the many friendly faces you could count on meeting down through the years at RCB and General Synod.

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“For decades he attended to the administration of parochial, diocesan and central Church committees, dealing with the vital work that enabled clergy like me to focus on ministry. In that sense he was one of our Church’s unsung heroes, but all of us who knew him were well aware of the huge contribution he made. He was a man of deep faith, who served God well. I thank God for Bertie’s friendship and support.

“I offer my sincere condolences to his wife Coral, to Adrian and Keith, to the wider Pollock family and to Bertie’s fellow parishioners in Edenderry.”

Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars

The summer Herald now available on line

The summer Herald is now available to download as a PDF and read via Issuu. The Editor, Sarah Harding, introduces the edition which includes...

- * Unmuted hope – David Bruce on being Moderator for another year
- * Has culture been cancelled? How ‘free’ is free speech?
- * COP26 or cop out? Engaging effectively with climate change
- * Mind matters – Building emotional resilience in children

Download to read for free from: [<https://bit.ly/3herald>]

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Online photographic exhibition of St Thomas's Church, Dublin



The RCB Library's Archive of the Month for July showcases a remarkable collection of photographs depicting a service marking the laying of the foundation stone for St Thomas's Church in Dublin on 28 June, 1930.

These photos illustrate the pomp and grandeur of the ceremony, capturing some of the leading figures of the Church of Ireland at the time, as well as glimpses of the everyday life of Dubliners during this period, and the interest that such a ceremony held for those passing by.

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The construction of the new St Thomas's church was a noteworthy event in many different respects. The destruction of the old St Thomas's church was lamented in newspapers in July 1922 as second only to the destruction of the Four Courts in terms of the loss for Dublin, and indeed Ireland as a whole. For the parishioners of St Thomas, it meant enduring a period of 'exile', according to the Archbishop of Dublin. A new building meant a new life and focus for the parishioners, and contributed greatly to the redesign of the streetscape and architecture of Dublin that took place in the 1920s and early 1930s. It was also important to the Church of Ireland as a whole, representing the first (and indeed, only) church built in inner-city Dublin following the Civil War.

In addition to this, the building itself was rightly praised as an 'architectural gem', and this was recognised by the awards that it won in the years following its construction.

The old church of St Thomas's – The parish of St Thomas was created in 1749 by an act of the Irish Parliament. This came about as the result of the older parish of St Mary being considered too large to be administered to by one single incumbent, and so the parish of St Thomas came in to effect on 24 March 1749, being predominantly the eastern part of the parish of St Mary. The specific boundaries of this new parish are incredibly detailed, mentioning specific houses and buildings where the boundary line moves in an unexpected direction. In a general sense, the River Liffey formed the border of the parish to the south, while the south-side of Great Britain Street (now Parnell Street) formed its northern boundary. The new parish had its western boundary as the west-side of Sackville Street (now

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O'Connell Street), thereby meeting the parish of St Mary's. There is little said about the eastern-boundary of the parish is understandable: The map of Dublin found in Watson's Almanac in 1783 shows little actual development east of what is now Amiens Street (called on the map the 'road to Ballybough Bridge').

The building of the new church - was a somewhat complicated process, delayed as it was until the summer of 1928 with discussions between the parish, the Diocesan Council, and the Representative Church Body with regards to compensation claims. A further complication was the decision by Dublin City Council to extend Gloucester Street (now Sean MacDermott Street) to meet O'Connell Street to form one wide thoroughfare. The opening of this thoroughfare – linking O'Connell Street to the North Strand – meant re-interring the remains from the old graveyard of St Thomas's church to Mount Jerome Ceremony, although some were claimed by relatives and moved elsewhere. This left a small parcel of land where the old parochial hall (1855–6) of St Thomas's church had once stood. Although substantially reduced in size from the previous church, the new building would more than adequately meet the needs of the current parish of St Thomas.

See - <https://www.ireland.anglican.org/news/10756/st-thomass-church-dublin-online>

All editions of the Church of Ireland Gazette from 1856–2010 are freely available online through the following link: <https://esearch.informa.ie/rcb>

Access to the RCB Library's Architectural Drawings database can be found through the following link:

churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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<https://archdrawing.ireland.anglican.org/>

For access to the Gloine website, which contains information and photographs of stained-glass windows throughout the Church Ireland, please see the following link:

<https://www.gloine.ie/>



Pointers for prayer

O Lord,
we beseech thee mercifully to hear us;
and grant that we, to whom thou hast given
an hearty desire to pray,
may by thy mighty aid be defended and comforted
in all dangers and adversities;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty God,
you have broken the tyranny of sin
and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts
whereby we call you Father:
Give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service,

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that we and all creation may be brought
to the glorious liberty of the children of God;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus' homecoming was attended by enthusiastic crowds
but also by dissenters, who attributed his good works to
Satan. That we might be faithful to the One who calls us his
"family", blessing his goodness and striving to follow his
example, we pray "True Son of God and Son of Man," and
respond, "Keep us faithful, keep us true."

That the Christ's church would remain faithful in its witness
to the truth of the gospel, we pray: True Son of God and Son
of Man.

Keep us faithful, keep us true.

That where the church of Jesus Christ finds itself a minority
in the midst unfaith, it may not succumb and accept defeat.
True Son of God and Son of Man.

Keep us faithful, keep us true.

That homes of the church that are afflicted with violence,
anger, or abuse, may find refuge and counsel in God's
Word. True Son of God and Son of Man.

Keep us faithful, keep us true.

That our congregation may be enabled to embrace the lost,
the fallen, and the wayward of our community. True Son of
God and Son of Man.

Keep us faithful, keep us true.

That those who participated in baptismal and confirmation
preparation , may be blessed with increasing faith and

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strengthened in continued, regular worship we pray: True Son of God and Son of Man. Keep us faithful, keep us true.

Pardon us, O God, when we are so concerned with ourselves and those near to us that we fail to pray for others. Instill within us your compassion. True Son of God and Son of Man. Keep us faithful, keep us true.

Let your loving Spirit, O God, announce again the "Abba" word of our divine parentage and our sure inclusion as members of your family. Amen.

Speaking to the Soul

God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Matthew 5:4 NLT

The word that is used for mourn here is also used in the Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, to describe Jacob's grief when he was led to believe that Joseph, his treasured son, was dead. (Genesis 37.34) He was grief stricken. God's promise is that those who are overwhelmed with sorrow now will find his comfort and strength. So that leaves us with the question as to who these people are. Who are the people that are mourning so profoundly today?

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Jesus probably had in mind, amongst others, those who knew the agony of losing a loved one. We all know the pain of friends and family members dying, and many of us have had the awful experience of people dying suddenly or even violently. None of us would want to make light of these terrible experiences, but Jesus reminds us that death doesn't have the last word. Even in the midst of our loss, God is there with us offering his peace, strength and love. When someone has died, most people feel numb at first and it can be hard to hear any good news at all. But as time passes it becomes possible to see the bigger picture and to meet the God who offers his healing, companionship and strength.

Jesus was almost certainly speaking about others who mourn as well, for example people who are overwhelmed by the brokenness and suffering in the world. And then there are those who feel crushed by their failures and sinfulness. Jesus comes to all those who are overwhelmed with sadness and grief and announces his good news. Miraculously, he is able to bring comfort to anyone who is willing to bring their heavy burden to him and leave it in his hands.

QUESTION

When have you had the experience of mourning, and how did God comfort you?

PRAYER

Dear Lord, thank you that you meet us in our times of distress and give us the strength to carry on. Please come

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today to those in our world who feel their burdens are too heavy to bear, and give them your comfort. Amen

