



**Image of the day - God in creation**

June 3, 2021

## Reports

# Primate hits out as Dublin postpones sacraments



Confirmations and First Holy Communions in the northern part of this diocese have taken place carefully and safely. Great disappointment being felt south of the border.

**The head of the Catholic Church in Ireland has criticised the Dublin Government for the “grossly disrespectful” treatment of its members over the manner in which the postponement of communions and confirmations was announced, Sarah MacDonald writes in the Belfast Telegraph.**

Archbishop of Armagh Eamon Martin said he was “extremely disappointed” over the “cavalier approach to communication” from the authorities.

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

June 3, 2021

The Primate was speaking as the Covid-19 death toll in the Republic reached 5,000.

Another 448 positive cases were also confirmed yesterday.

He said he learned of the decision from a journalist tweeting Tanaiste Leo Varadkar “dismissively saying 'oh, they're off'” at a press briefing when asked whether the sacraments could go ahead after July 5.

He said the Irish Government's lack of communication with the churches had resulted in “a lot of confusion, a lot of frustration and deep disappointment and indeed anger” among priests and parishioners over the decision to defer communions and confirmations. Speaking to RTÉ Radio's News at One, Dr Martin said: “We've been deluged with calls from parishes.

“I know that priests and others have been extremely disappointed by this reversal of the position that was written to us from the Taoiseach's office at the very beginning of June, which said that in line with the gradual reopening of society, from July 5 these ceremonies could take place.

“The Department of the Taoiseach wrote to us at the beginning of June basically giving us the go-ahead to begin to plan and stressing to us that we should encourage families to make sure that they're going to adhere to the prevailing public health advice.”

The archbishop said a huge amount of preparation had already been done with children in schools and with their families to safely hold these ceremonies. He added they

June 3, 2021

were “very important moments in the journey of faith of our young people and their families”.

He said the Church had been consistently told the reason for the deferral of these sacraments was not because of concerns over people's safety in churches, but as a way to try to deter the kind of social gatherings and celebrations that typically follow the sacraments.

Courtesy The Belfast Telegraph 2.7.2021

## **EU resolution sees abortion as a human right**

**The European parliament has voted in favour of a non-binding parliamentary resolution that refers to abortion as a human right.**

The resolution passed by 378 to 255 votes and came on the same day that a referendum in the British Overseas territory of Gibraltar voted to legalise abortion.

The European Parliament Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee (FEMM) approved the 'report on sexual and reproductive rights' and the draft resolution submitted by Croatian MEP Fred Matic, on 11 May.

The resolution also called on EU member states to recognise access to abortion "in line with international human rights standards". Matic's report also criticises the so-called "conscience clause" of many abortion laws, which permits medics to refuse to facilitate abortions, often "on



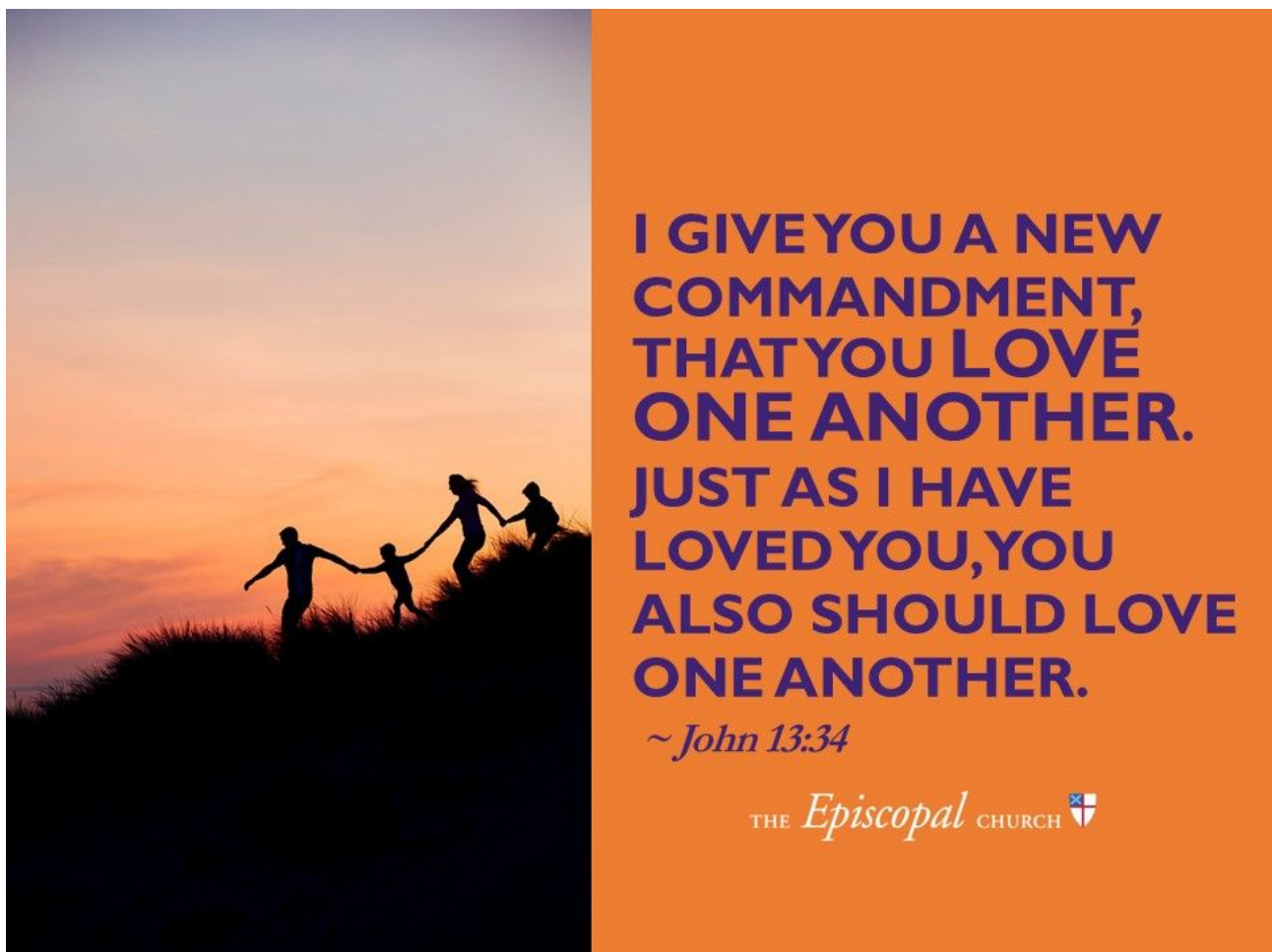
June 3, 2021

grounds of religion or conscience". It also 'urges' member states to 'decriminalise abortion, as well as to remove and combat obstacles to legal abortion', and even described the denial of abortion care as "a form of gender-based violence".

The report was largely an attempt to confront member states such as Poland and Malta where abortion is illegal or tightly restricted, and whose laws are specifically criticised in the report's explanatory statement.

The vote followed an intense debate in the chamber, in which many MEPs criticised the text of the resolution.

The centre-right European People's Party and the European Conservative and Reformists (The ECR Group) offered two



June 3, 2021

alternatives to Matic's text, both of which said rights to abortion and reproductive services are the responsibility of individual countries to decide on, not the EU.

The ECR group explained that abortion "does not have the status of a human right under international law [...] and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union".

Spanish MEP Rosa Estaràs Ferragut said during the debate ahead of the vote. "Abortion is not a human right.

"It could be a legal right, that's accepted in some member states, but it's not a human right."

She added: "You can't ideologise a human right, this is not democracy and this is not what I want to see in Europe."

Grégor Puppink, director of the European Centre For Law and Justice said, "It is a frightening text because it presents abortion as something that is good, something we wish for, something desirable like a type of freedom."

On 17 June, Slovakian MPs passed a resolution affirming to MEPs and MPs in EU countries their stance that "issues concerning health policies and education are in the competence of nation states".

Maltese group Doctors for Life also criticised the report for failing to safeguard conscientious objection, and for interfering with "Member States over the definition and management of their domestic health systems or their

June 3, 2021

national health policy choices", and represented a "totalitarianism of values".

They also argued that the report "[...] attempts to introduce the recognition of a right to abortion", although no such right exists, nor can it be derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. On the contrary, since the 1994 Cairo Conference, states have committed themselves to "reduce the recourse to abortion" and to "take appropriate steps to help women avoid abortion".

They explained how the report intentionally misleads politicians and the public by "repeatedly conflating gender equality and basic human rights with abortion", adding that, "This rationale makes the rejection of abortion equivalent to an unwillingness to grant equality or essential human rights and is a strategy employed repeatedly to compel others to accept such proposals."

A spokesperson for Right To Life UK, Catherine Robinson said: "The attitude of the MEPs who supported this resolution is abysmal, and mirrors precisely Westminster's aim in imposing radical abortion laws on Northern Ireland.

"It is clear that many EU politicians wish to impose abortion on countries such as Poland and Malta, despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of their voters are against such a change. Moreover, it is a blatant attempt to designate abortion as beyond debate, by enshrining it as a fundamental human right that cannot be violated. This is outrageous. Abortion is not a human right, but is in fact the violation of the unborn child's right to life."

June 3, 2021



## **Pope asks for local events coinciding with World Meeting of Families 2022**

**Pope Francis has asked dioceses around the world to make it possible for every family to participate in the World Meeting of Families by holding local celebrations during the gathering in Rome June 22-26, 2022.**

“After being postponed for a year due to the pandemic, the desire to meet again is great,” the pope said in a video message July 2.

In the past, he said, the World Meeting of Families “was perceived as being something remote, at most followed on television,” but “unknown to the majority of families.”



June 3, 2021

With questions still present about how the coronavirus pandemic will impact global travel and large international meetings next year, Pope Francis said there is “an opportunity provided by providence to create a worldwide event that can involve all the families that would like to feel part of the ecclesial community.”

The theme of the 2022 gathering is: “Family love: A vocation and a path to holiness.”

Rome will be the main venue, the pope said, and bishops’ conferences and international Catholic organizations will be invited to send delegates involved in family ministry to Rome for “the Festival of Families, the pastoral congress” and the concluding Mass.

At the same time, the pope said, “each diocese can be the focal point for a local meeting for its families and communities. In this way, everyone will be able to participate, even those who cannot come to Rome.”

Pope Francis asked dioceses to be “dynamic, active and creative in organizing this with the families in harmony with what will be taking place in Rome. This is a wonderful opportunity to devote ourselves with enthusiasm to family ministry with spouses, families and pastors together.”

Cardinal Kevin J. Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life, said the World Meeting of Families continues to grow and attract more families from around the world, “bringing enrichment with their languages, cultures and experiences.”

June 3, 2021

The gatherings, he said, “have been an eloquent sign of the beauty of the family for the church and for all humanity. We need to continue on this path, seeking to involve more and more families in this beautiful initiative.”

## **Former Evangelical Alliance General Director, Joel Edwards**

**Tributes have been paid to the former head of the Evangelical Alliance, Joel Edwards, who passed away from cancer on Wednesday morning.**

Edwards was a British immigrant from Jamaica and started out as a probation officer, a role he held for 14 years.

In a rich and varied career, he served as senior pastor of Mile End New Testament Church of God and was an honorary Canon of St Paul's Cathedral.

But he spent the best part of his career as a figurehead for evangelicals, joining the African and Caribbean Evangelical Alliance in 1988, and then going on to lead the UK Evangelical Alliance as General Director from 1997 until 2009.

At the time of his departure, he published his book, *An Agenda for Change*, which sounded the call for evangelicals to be good news people.

"Evangelicals must re-imagine themselves as good news people and ask what that should look and feel like in the world today," he said.

June 3, 2021

"And people should recognise us as good news citizens who are integral to our communities and the public square."

Following his time with the EA, he became director of Micah Challenge, a coalition of Christian development agencies, and he was involved in academia as a Visiting Fellow of St John's College, Durham.

In 2019, he was awarded a CBE for services to tackling poverty and injustice, and in April this year, he was appointed by the Church of England to establish a racial justice commission that would hold the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to account tackling racism.

In addition to his formal roles, Edwards was a regular contributor to BBC Radio 4's Thought for the Day and a popular broadcaster, speaker, writer and commentator on race, the Church and current affairs.

In a letter to friends shared by his family after his death, Edwards bade a "final goodbye" and thanked people for their prayers for him.

"Words cannot express the depth, breadth and height of my gratitude, but I have gone home," he said.

"My earnest prayer is that your faith and tenacity on my behalf will not be considered a pointless religious exercise, but that it will have strengthened your faith in a God who is marvellous, mysterious and majestic in all he does: The Faithful One."

June 3, 2021

Current CEO of the UK Evangelical Alliance, Gavin Calver, called Edwards "a hero, friend, predecessor, mentor and encourager".

"Joel Edwards was an incredible leader, speaker and pioneer. He was an outstanding leader of EAUK," he said on Twitter.

R David Muir, who served under Edwards as the EA's former Executive Director for Public Policy, was among those paying tribute.

"Dr Joel Edwards was not one of our great leaders, for me he was the greatest," he said.

"His empowering leadership style and graceful interactions with Christians and non-Christians will be sorely missed.

"I have known him for four decades as a friend, pastor, mentor, and boss at the Evangelical Alliance.

"He is the leader who cleared the debris from the runway so that others could fly; he is the leader who could make lame ducks believe they could fly.

"He was a humble servant of the Kingdom of God and the purposes of his Christ. Joel Edwards was a disciple of Christ with a passion for justice, Christian unity, and truth."





## People and places



### Family Sundaes in Dundrum

**Last Sunday was a special day for St Donard's Community Church in Dundrum, County Down, with the first of its 'Family Sundaes' taking place after the morning service.**

Since its launch in September 2020 people have been able to meet for an evening service in the church building but unable to spend time getting to know one another that bit better.

Some of those attending also said they would love to bring their young families along to church but things such as the time made it a little difficult. So, wanting to connect people together, especially young families in the village, the community church has planned its Family Sundaes over the summer months.

June 3, 2021

The last Sunday in June was the first of three that have been planned. People gathered for all age worship at 10.30 am and then just as people left the building they were greeted by the Ice Cream Van from Brennan's coming up the drive. The sun was shining, the ice cream was welcome and so too was the chat between regulars and newcomers.

One newcomer to the village shared "It was just great to come along to church and to spend time getting to meet new people". Another young family who have found the recent lockdowns difficult said, "it was a great way to get out and about again".

In the community, for the community

Two more "Sundaes" are planned for 25 July and 18 August. Colin Morris, Community Pastor said:

"There's more space for more people and families of all ages to join us later in the summer and also at our evening gatherings at 6.30 pm.

"We want to be a church in the community, for the community, a place where people can connect with one another, but most importantly help people to come to know something more about Jesus.

"We said in church how we couldn't wait to taste the ice cream afterwards but most importantly of all how the Bible tells us to "taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34), even better than ice cream!"

June 3, 2021

These events have followed on from a Christmas Trail through the village last December and Family Night In packs which were delivered to families in the village, both organised by the community church. As the year goes on and as restrictions lift they hope to be doing more to serve both the gospel and the people of Dundrum.

For more information visit [ [www.stdonardsdundrum.com](http://www.stdonardsdundrum.com) ]

## The Methodist Church in Ireland Job opportunity! Youth & Children's Worker



The graphic features a red background with white text. On the right side, there is a circular inset photograph of two young girls with glasses, smiling and sticking their tongues out. To the left of the photo, the text reads: 'Job Opportunity' in a large serif font, followed by 'YOUTH & CHILDREN'S WORKER' in a smaller sans-serif font. Below this, there is a location pin icon, the text 'The Church on the Hill Maghaberry', and two small icons: a white cross and a blue cross.

The Church on the Hill' in Maghaberry are looking for someone with a heart for young people, who will draw alongside to love them as Jesus does and journey with them.

Could this be for you? Apply here → <https://buff.ly/3fLGg1b>

June 3, 2021

## Cobh Community Hospital Covid 19 Memorial Service



**Christ Church Rushbrooke in County Cork hosted a Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving for the lives of the five residents of Cobh Community Hospital who died of Covid–19 during the pandemic.**

This service was an opportunity for the staff of Cobh Community Hospital and the bereaved families to come together to mourn and commend the souls of those who died to the gracious keeping of Almighty God.

The officiant at the service was the Rector of Cobh and Glanmire Union of Parishes, the Revd Paul Arbuthnot. He



June 3, 2021

was joined by the Administrator of Cobh Cathedral, Fr Tom McDermott, who gave an Address.

The lessons and prayers were read by staff and board members of Cobh Community Hospital. The music was provided by Dom Finn and John Daly of Cobh Cathedral. The Director of Nursing at Cobh Community Hospital, Erica Mulvihill, also spoke at the service.

During the service the bereaved families were invited to place candles on the altar as part of an act of remembrance. At the end of the service each family was presented with a carved representation of a tree by Toddy Stafford of the Friends of Cobh Hospital.

## **Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars**

### **Parishes encouraged to support Climate Sunday in new video**

**Local parishes across the Church of Ireland are being encouraged to support Climate Sunday – an initiative of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland – in a new short video filmed around our island.**

The initiative is calling on all local churches across Britain and Ireland to hold a climate–focused service on any Sunday before the 26th United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP 26), which is taking place in Glasgow from 31st October to 12th November this year, and to commit to long–term action on climate change. The collective action

June 3, 2021



# Climate Sunday



5th

and commitments from local churches across Britain and Ireland will be presented to the UK Government at a Nations Climate Sunday Service in Glasgow on Sunday, September 2021.

The video, produced on behalf of the Church and Society Commission, is introduced by Canon Andrew Orr, a member of the Commission and also Chair of Eco–Congregation Ireland, an inter–church organisation seeking to help churches to celebrate the gift of God’s creation, recognise the inter–dependence of all creation, and care for it in their life and mission and through members’ personal lifestyles.

June 3, 2021

Archbishop John McDowell remarks: “There has probably never been a time when an emphasis by the Churches on the care of the created order is needed. Climate Sunday gives parishes the opportunity to celebrate God’s work in creation as well as his work in redemption, at a time when the need to do so is most pressing.”

Canon Andrew Orr adds: “Climate Sunday is a fantastic initiative which is already proving very popular, with over 5,000 churches already signed up. It’s a very straightforward way for churches to highlight the issue of climate justice in their congregations and get involved in caring for God’s creation. We hope this video will encourage everyone in all parts of Ireland to take part.”

Parishes are encouraged to share the video widely in their services and through their websites and social media accounts over the summer months, and to register their interest before Sunday, 5th September.

More information on Climate Sunday is available at [ [www.climatesunday.org](http://www.climatesunday.org) ]

## 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.

June 3, 2021

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,  
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.



June 3, 2021

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 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 are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.**

Matthew 5:5 NLT

Mother Teresa taught the world a great deal about humility. She gave us a wonderful example of what it looks like through her costly service to the most rejected and unloved members of her society. But she also offered us many wise words on the subject. She wrote, "Learn to be humble by doing all the humble work and doing it for Jesus.

You cannot learn humility from books; you learn it by accepting humiliations. Humiliations are not meant to torture us; they are gifts from God. These little humiliations—if we accept them with joy—will help us to be holy, to have a meek and humble heart like Jesus."

Humility lies at the heart of the Kingdom of God. Jesus once told his disciples that the only way to enter the Kingdom was to become as humble as a child (Matthew 18.4). They were still looking for power and influence, but Jesus wanted to turn their thinking upside down. We only serve God effectively by giving up all thoughts of our own advancement and seek to strengthen and bless others. Mother Teresa has left us a humility list and it offers us an excellent way of checking whether we are really growing in humility. Here are five of them. 1. Speak as little as possible about yourself. 2. Accept small irritations with good humour. 3. Do not dwell on the faults of others. 4. Accept contempt, being forgotten and

June 3, 2021

disregarded. 5. Do not seek to be admired and loved. I love these simple, practical challenges because they illustrate the fact that humility is no easy option. Humility is the path for those who long to see the Kingdom of God become a reality here and now and who are happy to accept a huge challenge.

When writing to the Colossian church, the apostle Paul wrote, “Clothe yourself in humility.” (Colossians 3.12) Living humbly needs to be so natural to us that wherever we go and whatever we do it is always an integral part of our daily life.

## QUESTION

Which of Mother Teresa’s five challenges do you find most relevant to you?

## PRAYER

Lord Jesus thank you for the humility that you showed in your earthly life. Help me day by day to learn more about the joy of living humbly. Amen

