

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Have a Mothers' Union Badge

July 5, 2025

Image for today - Have a Mothers' Union Badge

News -

30 years service to Organ Scholarship Board recognised
Down and Connor Hearts on Fire Conference
Officers of the Order of St John at St Patrick's
Church in Wales demands reform at Bangor Cathedra
Artwork - of WJ McBride a lion who roared
Catholic MP denied communion after backing Assisted
Dying Bill

Education -

NI schools hailed as digital trailblazers
Stranmillis attainments in three flagship programmes
Celebrating Staff success at St Dominic's

Cathedral Calls -

Unique Carillion link between Cobh and Armagh

Clergy and ministry -

From Christian Aid to parish ministry

Events -

St John Ambulance NI : Support your staff with Life-Saving
Skills
Recitals at St Ann's Church, Dawson Street
Belfast - Lots of brilliant events coming up in July for you to
enjoy

Speaking to the soul -

Short reading and a prayer daily on this site

July 5, 2025

Image of the day



Have a Mothers' Union Badge - MU badge for Secretary-General of the Anglican Communion

Front page - Mothers' Union Worldwide President presents membership badge to Secretary-General of the Anglican Communion

Above Front from left: Dr Elizabeth Perry (Anglican Alliance), Sarah Newnham (Director of Global Programmes at Mothers' Union), The Rt Revd Anthony Poggo (Secretary-General of the Anglican Communion) and Kathleen Snow (Worldwide President of Mothers' Union).

July 5, 2025

Back row: Rob Dawes (Executive Director of Anglican Alliance) and The Rt Revd Jo Wells (Deputy Secretary General of the Anglican Communion).

Kathleen Snow, the Worldwide President of Mothers' Union, and Sarah Newnham (Director of Global Programmes) met recently with staff at the Anglican Communion Office and Anglican Alliance today.

As Secretary-General of the Anglican Communion, Bishop Anthony has long been a friend and advocate for the work of Mothers' Union around the world, but on the day he received his badge of membership from Kathleen in a short service affirming new and existing members of the charity.

Mothers' Union is a global charity working to end poverty, inequality and injustice. They support millions of people through parenting, literacy and community development programmes.

We give thanks for Kathleen and Sarah and pray for the amazing work of Mothers' Union members around the world.

News

30 years service to Organ Scholarship Board recognised

The Rev Canon David Humphries, former rector of Kilbride Parish, has retired from the Down & Dromore



and Connor Organ Scholarship Board of Management having been a member for some 30 years.

David is a former Chairperson and Secretary of the Board. At a presentation held recently in St John's, Malone, Board Chairperson, the Rev Canon Stephen Fielding, said how much the Board had benefited from David's expertise, guidance and enthusiasm for the organ and organ playing over the years.

David is originally from Belfast. He attended Stranmillis College, and taught Music, RE and Remedial English at the Boys' Model School, Belfast, for five years.

He trained for ministry in Dublin and was ordained in 1986. His first curacy was in Ballyholme, where he remained for

July 5, 2025

four years until his appointment as Vicar Choral at St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast.

After three years at St Anne's, David moved to St Molua's, Stormont, where he was rector for 23 years. He was appointed as a Canon of St Anne's Cathedral in 2012 and moved to Kilbride as rector in 2016.

Pics at <http://bit.ly/46mCaHy>

Down and Connor Hearts on Fire Conference

Hearts on Fire – A Joyful Gathering of Mission and Renewal, Joy. Hope. Renewal. Connection.

These were just some of the words echoed by the 400 delegates who gathered for the Down and Connor Hearts on Fire Conference last week – a truly grace-filled moment for our diocese.

Fr James Mallon, founder of Divine Renovation Ministries the Keynote Speaker for the Hearts on Fire Conference spent some time in conversation with the priests of Down and Connor on the afternoon of Tuesday 24th June.

This was followed by an opening Mass at St Peter's Cathedral, Belfast a time of prayer for renewal in Diocese and across the island.

July 5, 2025

Two full days of the conference followed at the Hilton Hotel – days filled with prayer, conversation, challenge and deep encouragement.



Officers of the Order of St John after their annual service in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin

Bishop Alan's opening address was a powerful reminder that this conference was taking place during the Novena to the Sacred Heart – a time of grace for our parishes and schools. He reminded us:

"It is in the Sacred Heart of Jesus that we will find strength and renewal. New strategies, better techniques, powerful programs – are only effective when we are close to the heart of Jesus."

After months of prayerful preparation, local and international speakers from Divine Renovation, Sycamore for Parishes,

July 5, 2025

FOCUS, Called and Gifted, Alpha, Sion Catholic Community for Evangelism and Catholic Christian Outreach shared their insights and experience. Their voices spoke clearly into the needs and hopes of the Church today – calling us to respond with courage, creativity and faith.

Under the gifted co-hosting of Fr Eugene O'Hagan and Angelina Fusco, we were guided through moments of inspiration and honest conversation – always rooted in the joy of the Gospel and the call to evangelise and renew parish life.

Musicians from Arco String Quartet, Mary Lavery, Nuala Murray, Jim Deed, Cara McCann, Louis McVeigh and singers from the Down and Connor Lourdes Choir, Koinonia singers and Davey Music helped to weave beauty and prayer throughout the conference, reminding us of God's presence through music and silence. Delegates gathered for morning and evening prayer, with daily Mass and Eucharistic Adoration throughout the two days offering space for reflection and peace.

Our prayer is that the fruits of this conference will take root across our diocese and beyond. In a world that is spiritually hungry, we carry the message of the joy of the Gospel – an invitation to each person, called by name, to a purpose in God's plan.

To the Pathways Team & steering committee, our volunteers, speakers, musicians, delegates and clergy – thank you! From packing tote bags to planning liturgies, your unseen work built something deeply meaningful.

Together, may we walk forward in faith, hope and love, trusting that new Pathways are emerging and to always be reminded that God is walking with us every step of the way!

Church in Wales demands reform at Bangor Cathedral

The Representative Body (RB) of the Church in Wales says it is “deeply concerned” about leadership and safeguarding failings at Bangor Cathedral and the wider diocese, following reports of inappropriate conduct, poor management and blurred boundaries.

After a recent meeting, the RB has now published its full statement, warning that future funding for the diocese and cathedral will depend on “appropriate management structures” being put in place to ensure public trust.

The trustees said: “The revelations of safeguarding failures, blurred boundaries, inappropriate conduct, weak control environment and lack of transparency in management at Bangor Cathedral are deeply troubling. Stewardship of charitable assets demands that funding is used to further the Church’s mission and benefit the public in a manner consistent with our values and legal obligations.”

Among its directives, the RB has demanded that the diocese and cathedral commit to implementing all recommendations from two recent reports, undergo an independent financial audit and commission an external investigation into the Cathedral Choir’s culture. A leadership



Belfast artist recalls past glories. WJMcB - of Randalstown, Ballymena, Ireland, and Lions that roared.

taskforce will also be set up to help drive “structural change”.

The RB has also announced it will launch a Province-wide safeguarding audit of all cathedrals in Wales, alongside a cultural review of the Church.

July 5, 2025

The statement added: “We urge the Diocese and Cathedral to act swiftly and transparently to restore trust and ensure a safe, accountable environment for all.”

The RB says it remains committed to supporting the Church’s mission in Bangor, but warned it reserves the right to adjust funding if improvements are not made.

Catholic MP denied communion after backing Assisted Dying Bill

A Liberal Democrat MP has accused his local priest of trying to “coerce” him over his vote on assisted dying, after being publicly denied communion during Mass.

Chris Coghlan, MP for Dorking and Horley, described the priest’s actions as “outrageous” and has submitted a formal complaint to the Bishop of Arundel and Brighton, Rt Rev Richard Moth.

The dispute stems from Coghlan’s support for the assisted dying bill, which passed its second reading in the House of Commons on 20th June with a majority of 23.

According to the MP, he was contacted ahead of the vote by Father Ian Vane, priest at St Joseph’s Catholic Church in Dorking, who warned that voting in favour would constitute “obstinately persevering” in sin and result in exclusion from communion.

“As priests, we are custodians of the sacraments,” Fr Vane reportedly wrote.

July 5, 2025

Two days after the vote, Fr Vane is said to have announced at both the 8 am and 10 am Sunday Masses that Mr Coghlan would be refused communion. The MP did not attend either service.

Speaking to The Observer, Mr Coghlan said: “It is completely inappropriate. It undermines the legitimacy of religious institutions in this country if representatives think it is acceptable to try to coerce members of parliament.”

The incident has sparked heated debate on social media, with users divided. While many have defended the MP, others sided with the priest. One user wrote: “I applaud your priest. Perhaps your politics and your faith are incompatible. You’ll have to decide which you’ll follow.” Another added: “You cannot receive Holy Communion when in a state of mortal sin... If you wish to receive it, go to confession and follow the penance of the priest.”

The Diocese of Arundel and Brighton declined to comment on the specific case, but confirmed that Bishop Moth had spoken with Mr Coghlan and offered to meet him in person.

In a statement, the diocese said: “The recent vote on the assisted dying bill was a complex one for all involved, and while many in our society are deeply saddened by the result, we recognise the difficult task faced by MPs in seeking to represent their constituents.

"The Catholic Church believes in the sanctity of life and the dignity of every person. Prior to the vote, Bishop Richard Moth encouraged clergy and lay faithful to write to their MPs

July 5, 2025

in a private capacity to express their concerns about the bill and to ask them to vote against the proposed legislation.

"Our prayers remain with all those impacted by the passing of this bill, and the peers in the House of Lords who are engaged in the next stage of the debate."

There is no suggestion that Bishop Moth or the wider Church instructed priests to withhold communion from MPs who supported the bill.



Education

NI schools hailed as digital trailblazers



This year's NI Schools ICT Excellence Awards celebrated more than a decade of recognising digital innovation in Northern Ireland classrooms.

The event showcased the innovative transformative use of technology in education, transforming teaching and learning while improving educational outcomes.

The theme for 2025 was Making a Difference for Learners: evidence of the successful integration of the use of digital technology in learning and teaching. Nursery schools were included in the awards for the very first time this year.

The four schools revealed as the worthy winners in their respective categories are:

- St Teresa's Nursery, Belfast



- Holy Trinity Primary School, Cookstown
- Clifton School, Bangor
- St Colman's College Newry

For more information visit <https://www.eani.org.uk/news/ni-schools-hailed-as-digital-trailblazers>

Stranmillis attainments in three flagship programmes

Stranmillis University College was delighted to welcome over 250 guests on Thursday night to celebrate the achievements of our CPD students.

We were honoured to hear inspiring words from our College Director of Teaching and Learning, Professor Patricia Eaton, and Head of CPD, Ms Celia O'Hagan, alongside

July 5, 2025



distinguished guests
Right Honourable Lord
Mayor Councillor Tracy
Kelly and Ms Barbara
Spence from the
Education Authority.

The celebrations marked
the certification of three
flagship programmes:
Classroom Assistant
Certificate Award, a 30-
week programme of
learning for in-service
practitioners;
Introduction to SEN
programme, a 10-week
programme for
practitioners, and Post-
Qualifying Leadership
Award, an 18-month
programme for aspiring
and new leaders in NI

schools/colleges.

Special thanks to Mr Graeme Cousins from the Student Council, who shared how valued his classmates felt as Teaching Assistants on completing their studies. He offered heartfelt thanks to Belfast City Council for their support and extended appreciation to all staff and Stranmillis leadership for championing professional learning in such an inclusive way.

July 5, 2025

Staff, students, families, and friends came together to mark the occasion with beautiful photographs, celebration, and warm recognition of everyone's hard work.

Congratulations to all our graduates!

Celebrating Staff success at St Dominic's

We are absolutely delighted to celebrate the graduation achievements of several dedicated members of our staff. At St Dominic's, we believe in leading by example, and our team's commitment to lifelong learning is a testament to this ethos.

Congratulations to:

✨ Ms Clíodhna McNeill and Ms Maeve Kennedy (not pictured), who both achieved Distinction in the Postgraduate Certificate in Enabling Educational Skills Development (Skill Up) through St Mary's University College, in partnership with Queen's University Belfast.

✨ Mrs Joanna Fitzsimons, Mrs Catherine Cauley, and Ms Aine Braniff (not pictured), who successfully completed the Post-Qualifying Leadership (PQL) programme at Stranmillis University College.

Their hard work and success highlight the exceptional standard of professional development within St Dominic's. We are so proud of their achievements and the inspiration they provide to both colleagues and pupils alike!

July 5, 2025

Cathedral Calls



Unique Carillon link between Cobh and Armagh

Cobh and Armagh, at two extremes of our island home, are joined by being the locations of Ireland's only carillons.

July 5, 2025

Well done Matthew Nugent from Armagh who recently undertook a masterclass in Carillon bells at Cobh Cathedral - the two Cathedrals are linked in many ways but especially musically. Matthew is a music student who occasionally plays the carillon at St Patrick's R. C. Cathedral in Armagh.

The Cobh Cathedral Carillon said they were Delighted to welcome Matthew and his mother Orla.

Clergy and ministry

From Christian Aid to parish ministry

Recently Christian Aid bade a fond farewell to their wonderful Dave Thomas, their Church and Community Manager and longest-serving member of staff.

After more than 19 years, Dave leaves Christian Aid to answer God's call to enter the priesthood, becoming a curate at St Donards Church of Ireland in east Belfast.

Dave was ordained by the Bishop of the Diocese of Down & Dromore, The Rt Rev David McClay during a special service at Down Cathedral on Sunday 15 June.

Dave worked four days a week at Christian Aid while completing three years of theological training, followed by almost two years as deacon intern at Mount Merrion Church in the Cregagh area of east Belfast. Naturally, his ordination was a big moment of celebration.

July 5, 2025

Dave's warmth, wisdom and wit made him an exceptionally popular colleague. In churches and schools all over Northern Ireland, his gifts as a public speaker and his passion for our cause inspired many thousands of churchgoers and schoolchildren to join us in bringing hope to people living in desperate situations. We are thankful for the difference he has made and the commitment he has shown to the cause of ending the scandal of poverty.

Dave, we wish you God's richest blessing as you begin this exciting new chapter in your life and ministry. We will all miss you but we know that this is what you were born to do.

Events

St John
Ambulance
Northern Ireland



Support your staff with Life-Saving Skills

St John Ambulance NI has added an extra Blended Paediatric First Aid Course on 9th August at Knockbracken Health Park due to overwhelming demand.

July 5, 2025

If your team works with children—whether in nurseries, schools, or care settings—this course is a must. It's a flexible 12-hour programme (part online, part in-person) that equips staff with the confidence to respond to emergencies involving infants and young children.

- ✓ Certified by St John Ambulance NI
- ✓ Meets Health & Social Care Trust Minimum Standards
- ✓ Valid for 3 years

 Call us on (028) 90799393

 Email: corporate.Bookings@sjani.org

 Learn more: www.sjani.org

Recitals at St Ann's Church, Dawson Street

Thursday 10 July, 1:20pm Aoise O'Dwyer, viola Women Composers and the Viola

A programme of contemporary music for solo viola by women composers from Hawai'i, Argentina, England and the US, including works by Lelilehua Lanzilotti, Valeria Romero, Joan Tower, Libby Croad and Jessie Montgomery. Aoise, from Co. Offaly, is a versatile performer, and you can enjoy the fruits of her research and deep interest in music by women composers.

Sunday 13 July, 12:45pm Dr Didzis Kalniņš, piano

Jānis Mediņš – Exodus-Written Compositions Latvian-born and now Ireland-based, pianist Didzis Kalniņš presents a solo recital featuring works by Mediņš.

Belfast City - Lots of brilliant events coming up in July for you to enjoy



Late Night Art Belfast - a free and welcoming celebration of art in various galleries and venues on Thursday 3 July.



Rose Fair - free family fun and thousands of beautiful roses! Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park, Friday, Saturday and Sunday (4-6 July) from 12pm to 5pm.



Sundays on the Maritime Mile - free pop-up music and entertainment for all ages. Every Sunday until 31 August.



Summer Fun Days - free kids' entertainment in our parks from 2pm to 4.30pm at Falls Park on 10 July and Woodvale Park on 17 July.



Belfast Orangefest - inclusive and free family-friendly activities on Tuesday 12 July at Belfast City Hall and Royal Avenue from 10am to 3.30pm.



Belfast Pride - ten days of events across the city from 18 to 27 July, including the Pride parade on Saturday 26 July.

July 5, 2025

 **Music in the Parks** - relaxing and free brass, accordion and flute music on Sunday 20 July in Ormeau Park from 2pm to 5pm.

 **EastSide Arts Festival** - a packed programme of music, theatre, visual art, talks and tours from Thursday 24 July to Saturday 2 August.

 **Féile an Phobail** - 600+ events and activities from 26 July to 10 August.

 **Belfast TradFest** - world-class concerts, pub sessions and a trad music summer school. Sunday 27 July to Sunday 3 August.

 **Belfast Summer Cinema** - movies on the lawns at City Hall, with Belfast ONE and Belfast Film Festival, 27 July to 3 August.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

July 5, 2025

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