



**Image of the day  
Baptism at Drumbo  
Captions invited**

## Reports

### **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."

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."

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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."

## **Cork, Cloyne and Ross blog on target for 1 million views**

**In September 2011, nearly ten years ago, Dr Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, on impulse, 'mainly to explore the available technology', he says, set up a blog on WordPress.**

It has since become a place to tell the stories of what goes on in Cork, Cloyne and Ross and it's on target to reach one million 'views' this year. The NewsBlog, as he calls, it was named 'churchofirelandcork'.

Now that NewsBlog, heading for its tenth birthday, and as Bishop Colton hands it over today to the new Diocesan Media and Information Technology Officer, Denise Brueckl, is heading for a significant milestone of one million 'views'. 'Views' are different from 'visitors'. A 'view' is counted by WordPress when a visitor loads or reloads a page. A 'visitor' is counted when WordPress sees a user or browser for the first time in a selected time frame, such as a day or a month or a year.

The banner chosen by Bishop Colton for the NewsBlog was the wise maidens at the west door





Denise Brueckl who is the new Diocesan Media and Information Technology Officer. of St Fin Barre's Cathedral – vigilant, awake, and on the lookout.

The NewsBlog started very tentatively in September 2011 with just 23 'views' that month, and then 30 'views' the following month.

In the third month

it went to 1200 'views' and now, depending on the month it could be anything between 9,000 and 21,000 'views' per month. In all there have been 918,363 'views' and 320,294 different 'visitors' since 2011. 'Actually' said Bishop Paul 'in the first two months there was an average of just one view per day – probably me myself! Now it can be anything between 250 and 700 a day.' On one day in 2019 there were 8,521 'views'.

The most popular day is Friday – 19% of all 'views' are on that day. The most popular time of the day for a 'view' is 11.00 a.m. (8% of 'views'). The NewsBlog connects also

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with LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp and Email, so that people can, themselves, share the news.

Visitors to the NewsBlog, while mainly from Ireland (about two-thirds) come from almost every part of the world, as seen in this map (the areas in pink show where visitors have come from):

People also find their way to the NewsBlog through referrers such as Facebook, search engines and Twitter, along with dozens of others. It is possible to visit the NewsBlog and, at the bottom left, to put in your email address so that each post is emailed to you.

‘I have always been interested in harnessing new technologies for the work of the Church’ says Bishop Colton:

I remember well, in the early 1990s, about two years after I first started using email, a senior clergyman in Dublin Diocese saying to me “I suppose you’ve one of those email things; it won’t really take off, you know, because everyone will have to have one.”

The late Dean Jack Shearer was one of the pioneers in all this and he bought me my first computer in 1987 when I was his curate. In those days you had to insert and remove floppy disks when you wanted to do simple things like change text to italics or bold. He was a man ahead of his time in so many ways.

With a parishioner in the early 1990s – Craig McCauley, now an Archdeacon – we also set up what must have been one of the first, if not the first parish website in Ireland. And

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so, as the journey rapidly unfolded I found myself – self-taught with the support of like-minded people – on a technological journey that, in the early part of this century, led to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, as well as this NewsBlog.

I see it all, ultimately, as one element supporting the first of the ‘Five Marks of Mission’: ‘To proclaim the good news of the Kingdom’.

The NewsBlog supports that by showing what Christians are doing and responding to where they are. It is a modern way of creating a sense of shared purpose, identity and belonging and also serves a purpose when we have to respond to tragedies or sad news in our midst also.

Now I am delighted to be handing it all over to the new and capable hands of Denise Brueckl who is our new Diocesan Media and Information Technology Officer. I wish her well today as she starts this new post and as I pass on all those ‘logins’ and ‘passwords’ to her.

## **I wanted to be a Christian Brother, reveals comedian Tim McGarry**

**Belfast comedian Tim McGarry has told how he once thought about becoming a Christian Brother, Claire Williamson writes in the Belfast Telegraph.**

The star of the Blame Game — who is known also for playing Da in Give My Head Peace — was speaking to

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former Adoration Sisters turned pilgrim guides Martina Purdy and Elaine Kelly on the St Patrick's Podcast.

Ms Purdy asked him about his faith and how it was that he ended up being an atheist, and patron of NI Humanists, having been raised a Catholic.

“I became an atheist when I was about 14, just around the time of confirmation,” he said. “I am a natural sceptic...I think the chances of there being a God are virtually zero...I just don't buy it. I'm sorry. I don't buy any religion.”

He did however admit that as a young person he was once “quite devout.”

“You know at one stage I was going to become a Christian Brother because I was taught by the Christian brothers, Park Lodge. And there was a Christian brother, Brother Holian, who was a lovely, lovely man and my mother was very religious and I genuinely thought about becoming a Christian brother at a very early stage.” During the podcast, Mr McGarry challenged Ms Purdy to prove that God existed and she told him jokingly: “Open your eyes to beauty.”

Ms Purdy said she was too tired for a debate on causality but would ask him just one question on the subject: “Do you believe in love?”

And when he replied, “Yes,” she answered, “Well, God is love! So thank you very much Tim, we have to move on!” Ms Kelly said she found McGarry to be so kind and decent, he was one of the best non-practising Catholics she had ever met. McGarry did share that his mother Betty had great faith and when asked in her old age how she felt about death, she replied: “I can't wait!”

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During the podcast McGarry shared his own experience of the Troubles, his life as a comedian and the benefits of laughter. He has made a career out of poking fun at politicians and paramilitaries and this year celebrated 25 years as a comedian, having spent eight years as a solicitor. McGarry spoke about launching St Patrick's Way by the Coast, a six-mile ancient pilgrimage route from Ballyhornan to Ardglass that takes in St Patrick's Well, Sheepland.

He said he didn't know what to expect from the walk and "had an absolute ball".

"You know I like a wee dander now and again. But the weather was superb the company was great. There was about a dozen of us on it, a very gentle walk with a break in the middle."

The podcast is available on [www.saintpatrickcentre.com](http://www.saintpatrickcentre.com)  
Courtesy the Belfast Telegraph, 30.06.2021

## People and places

### Introducing West Winds Church Plant

**West Winds Community Church is the newest Church Plant in the diocese of Down and Dromore.**

West Winds is supported by the Diocesan Church Plant Fund under the missional vision of St Mark's Newtownards and Glen Community Church. The church in The Glen was the first to be planted in the parish of Newtownards.



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Over the summer months, Revd Stephen Doherty, and the newly appointed Assistant Church Plant Leader, Paul Hawkins, will be bringing the community of West Winds together through Outdoor Church, Kids Lunch Club and Football before launching Sunday Gatherings in the local Primary School in September.

The estate was introduced to the new community church on the last Saturday in June when a large gathering of locals came together to plant wellie boots in memory of loved ones, creating a colourful display outside the local shops.

## **Boot Camp on The Long Strand for Cork Diocesan Youth Council**

**On the 24th June 2021, CDYC were able to hold their first gathering since September 2020.**

With a lot of debating over what might be a suitable activity for Cork Diocesan Youth Council (CDYC) to run, Hilda Connolly (Diocesan Youth Officer) contacted her friend,



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Lorna O'Regan, from FeelGood Health and Fitness to see what she would recommend.

Lorna is a West Cork girl and runs her own health and fitness business in Clonakilty.

She focuses a lot on teenagers and children and has been kept busy over the past few months with schools and clubs.

She will also be running a variety of children camps over the summer.

Lorna arrived on the Long Strand on the morning of the 24th June ahead of everyone else to set up her obstacle course for the day ahead.



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No-one had any idea of what was in store!

As the teens, arrived in the carpark, they were met by Hilda where they were split into two smaller groups, to adhere to the covid guidelines set out.

Everyone was given a briefing on the schedule for the day and were given some more guidelines to follow.



The main two rules being....plenty of sun cream and to drink plenty of water. Because believe it or not, the sun was out in full force!

The first group headed apprehensively to the beach with Lorna, while the second group headed off with Oriel Hosford and Judy Peters mapping the way!

Coming up to lunch time, the first group with Lorna were absolutely soaked to the bone after a much-needed water fight to cool down after the challenges that were set for them that morning.

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Once the tummies were filled with lunch and everyone was rehydrated, it was back to the grindstone again!

After a quick swap over with the groups, the afternoon took off with some more laughter, fun and a little bit of cheeky cheating again!

Lorna set up an amazing set of challenges and games for the teens and kept them well entertained throughout their session. She has an amazing energy and encouraged and helped everyone along way.

## **‘Fair Winds and Following Seas’ wish for naval chaplain**



**The Commanding Officer of HMS Hibernia, the Royal Navy Reserve unit in Northern Ireland yesterday issued the following message on Twitter -**

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“Today we wish “Fair Winds and Following Seas” to @HMS\_Hibernia’s Chaplain Simon Hamilton as he seamlessly transfers from @RNReserve commitment to @RoyalNavy commitment. Thank you Simon for your support and dedication. Good luck in your new appointment.

## **Equipping for Life seek a Co-Director**

**Equipping for Life are currently seeking to recruit a Co-Director who will work alongside the Founding Director,** to enhance the work of Equipping for Life and seek to maximise opportunities to expand into new areas and new services so as to enable more people to be ‘equipped for life’.

For more information on the role and an application form please contact [tommy@christianswholead.com](mailto:tommy@christianswholead.com)

## **Vacancy – Diocesan Finance & Compliance Officer**

**The Church of Ireland Dioceses of Dublin & Glendalough wishes to recruit a person with primary responsibility for finance and legislation, based in the Diocesan Office, Church of Ireland House, Rathmines.**

Key Requirements: Accounting skills essential - Knowledge of accounting software – Data Developments or similar - Knowledge of Charity Compliance, Corporate Governance and G.D.P.R. - Strong communication, written and verbal skills - Excellent presentation and interpersonal skills -



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Competent in Microsoft Office / Excel - Ability to work on own initiative - Must be flexible.

Applicants are invited to email a CV with a covering letter outlining their suitability no later than 22nd July 2021 to Hon. Secretaries of Diocesan Councils at [admin@dublin.anglican.org](mailto:admin@dublin.anglican.org).

## **Books, broadcasts, resources, and Webinars**

### **Give my Feet Peace!**

Tim McGarry reviews the new Saint Patrick's Coastal Camino from Ballyhornan to Ardglass. Book your own walking experience at <https://www.saintpatrickcentre.com/friends/new-experiences-for-2021>

## **World Council of Churches initiative for children @WCC4children**

WCC4Children Blog "From reflection to action: time to embrace the agency of children in Africa" by Masimba Kuchera, Core Group, WCC Commission of Churches on International Affairs.

<https://oikoumene.org/blog/from-reflection-to-action-time-to-embrace-the-agency-of-children-in-africa>

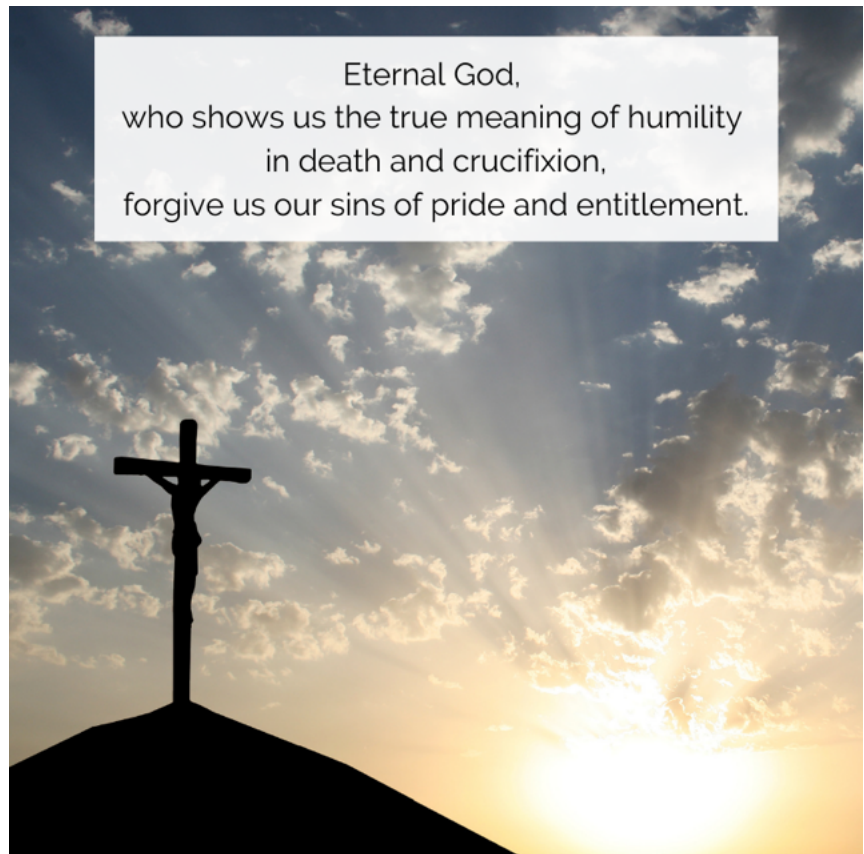
## Pointers for prayer

Grant, O Lord, we beseech thee,  
that the course of this world  
may be so peaceably ordered by thy governance,  
that thy Church may joyfully serve thee  
in all godly quietness;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Guardian of the weak,  
through the teachings of your prophets  
you have claimed our cities, towns, and homes  
as temples of your presence and citadels of your justice.  
Turn the places we live into strongholds of your grace,  
that the most vulnerable  
as well as the most powerful among us  
may find peace in  
the security  
that comes in the  
strong name of  
Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

God of grace and  
powerful  
weakness,  
at times your  
projects were  
ignored, rejected,  
belittled, and  
unwelcome.

Trusting that we,  
[churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)



Eternal God,  
who shows us the true meaning of humility  
in death and crucifixion,  
forgive us our sins of pride and entitlement.

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too, are called to be prophets,  
fill us with your Spirit,  
and support us by your gentle hands,  
that we may persevere in speaking your word  
and living our faith. Amen.

O God,  
sustain us in the complexity of our humanity  
as you sustained David--  
playing the harp of youth,  
throwing stones at giant problems,  
loving our friends beyond wisdom,  
dancing worship,  
mourning children,  
breaking our hearts in psalms, and  
longing for warmth in our old bones. Amen.

Friend in Christ,  
God invites us to hold the needs of our sisters and brothers  
as dear to us as our own needs.  
Loving our neighbours as ourselves,  
we offer our thanksgivings and our petitions  
on behalf of the church and the world.

Hear our prayers, God of power,  
and through the ministry of your Son  
free us from the grip of the tomb,  
that we may desire you as the fullness of life  
and proclaim your saving deeds to all the world. Amen.

As you heard the prayer of Isaac and Rebekah, O God,  
and guided them in the way of your love,  
so listen now to those who call upon you.

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Move us to praise your gracious will,  
for in Christ Jesus you have saved us from the deeds of  
death  
and opened for us the hidden ways of your love.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord God, friend of those in need,  
your Son Jesus has untied our burdens  
and healed our spirits.  
We lift up the prayers of our hearts for those still burdened,  
those seeking healing,  
those in need within the church and the world.  
Hear our prayers  
that we may love you with our whole being  
and willingly share the concerns of our neighbours. Amen.

Creator God,  
you call us to love and serve you  
with body, mind, and spirit  
through loving your creation  
and our sisters and brothers.  
Open our hearts in compassion  
and receive these petitions  
on behalf of the needs of the church and the world.  
Holy One,  
hear our prayers and make us faithful stewards  
of the fragile bounty of this earth  
so that we may be entrusted with the riches of heaven.  
Amen.

We praise your abiding guidance, O God,  
for you sent us Jesus, our Teacher and Messiah,  
to model for us the way of love for the whole universe.

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We offer these prayers of love  
on behalf of ourselves and our neighbours,  
on behalf of your creation and our fellow creatures.  
Loving God,  
open our ears to hear your word  
and draw us closer to you,  
that the whole world may be one with you  
as you are one with us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Speaking to the Soul

**God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.**

Matthew 5:7 NLT

Jesus told many stories that make us sit up. One of the most powerful was the story of the king who was owed millions of pounds by one of his servants. (Matthew 18:21-35) The man couldn't possibly pay his debt. The servant fell on his knees and begged the king to be patient. The king took pity on him and cancelled the debt. If you have ever been deeply in debt you will know what an amazing experience that was for the servant. The relief must have been incredible. The servant then went out and met a friend who owed him a fiver. It was a trivial amount but the servant demanded that he be paid back in full, and threw him into prison until he recovered all his money. When the king heard this, he was incensed and ordered that the servant, who had been let off the most enormous debt, be thrown into prison and tortured until he paid back every last penny. Ouch. Jesus concluded by saying that that was



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exactly how his heavenly Father would treat anyone who failed to show forgiveness to others.

God wants to show us his mercy and forgiveness but we are then under an obligation to pass it on. It isn't a choice and it isn't easy. Forgiveness is a gift and there is no way in which we could ever deserve to be forgiven by God. Justice would demand that our sins be judged severely. The debt is well beyond anything we could ever repay. But God in his mercy and love has chosen to let us go free, and to give us complete forgiveness. We need to constantly remind ourselves of how incredible it is that God should ever have forgiven us. And then we must never forget that we are commissioned to pass on forgiveness to those who deliberately wrong us; to those who are unkind to us; to those who make our lives a misery. They don't deserve forgiveness any more than we did, but we are charged with passing on the forgiveness that God has generously given to us.

## QUESTION

What have you learnt from the times when you have forgiven other people?

## PRAYER

Lord God, thank you for your gift of forgiveness. Help me to be ready to pass on that gift to others. Amen

