

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Gable mural tribute

Image of the day

Gable mural tribute

On a gable in the Rathcoole area.

People and places

Royal Hillsborough Jubilee



The dedication of a new Standard for the Royal Hillsborough Branch of the Royal British Legion was the first of the special events involving Hillsborough Parish for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

The Regimental Band and Pipes & Drums of the RIR 2nd Battalion led the parade through the village. Standard bearers from various other branches of the RBL in Northern Ireland also took part as did a number of Veterans.

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The Standard was dedicated by Canon Sam McVeigh, TD, MBE, Chaplain of the Northern Ireland Area of the Royal British Legion.

As it was the 100th anniversary of the War Memorial outside the front gates of Hillsborough Parish, there was a special Act of Remembrance conducted by Canon Bryan Follis and featuring the RIR Regimental Band. Wreaths were laid by Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant; the Mayor of Lisburn & Castlereagh; and senior army officers.

Magheralin wins grant for pollinator garden

Magheralin Church of Ireland has won a £100,000 Queen's Platinum Jubilee Pollinator Garden Award, Environment Minister Edwin Poots has announced.

The award is a single one-off grant to a rural community organisation to create a pollinator garden to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Magheralin Parish, Craigavon, will create a 'Garden of Reflection' in their parish grounds which will be open to all members of the public.

Speaking at the site where the garden will be created, Minister Poots said: "I am pleased to announce that Magheralin Parish has been awarded the £100,000 Queen's Platinum Jubilee Pollinator Garden Award. The Jubilee Garden of Reflection they will create with this fund will attract bees, butterflies, wasps and moths to help pollinate the local flowers and garden life. The garden also of course,



has the added benefit of being a wonderful space for the local community to enjoy nature and the visiting wildlife.

“The encouragement of pollinators benefits us all and is particularly important for the food chain, so anything that increases the habitat for pollinators is to be welcomed. This along with the Rural Community Pollinator and Schools Pollinator Schemes brought forward by my Department, have seen over £3million invested in encouraging our pollinators across Northern Ireland.

“Magheralin Parish will develop an area of wasteland at the back of the church to include native and ornamental trees, wild flowers and flowerbeds, there will also be seating areas with paths woven through the garden to connect the various areas. There will be mirrored surfaces, sculptures and reflective thoughts included throughout the area.

“The creation of a large scale pollinator garden is a unique way of marking the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee.”

Lynda Surgenor, Live Here Love Here coordinator, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, said: “It has been so exciting to

be involved in facilitating the various pollinator grants which are helping transform communities and their understanding of biodiversity recovery. We're particularly looking forward to seeing this marvellous Platinum Jubilee pollinator garden take shape and congratulate Magheralin Parish on their inspiring application."

The rector of Magheralin Parish, Revd Simon Genoe, commented: "A well-known writer, David Wilkerson, said the essence of Christianity is transformation. It gives us great pleasure as a Christian community to see an area of wilderness in our village transformed into a beautiful place, but also to welcome the whole community into an area where they can reflect and be renewed."

Moderator's Jubilee tribute

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Right Reverend Dr David Bruce, has paid tribute to Her Majesty the Queen at the start of her Platinum Jubilee celebrations, saying that it is made more remarkable as 'the high office she assumed in 1952 was one she did not anticipate holding.'

In his statement Dr Bruce said, "I was born almost six years into Queen Elizabeth's reign, so in common with most people, I cannot remember a time when she was not at the very centre of the UK's national life. Her image has always been on the coins and stamps I have used. For many over this long Jubilee weekend it will be a special celebration that marks a unique moment in history. For Christians who are



called to pray for those in authority, I hope we can pause to remember the Queen at this special moment. She has been a constant presence in a rapidly changing social and political landscape.

“In paying tribute to her, it is poignant to recall that the high office she assumed in 1952 was one she did not anticipate holding. This unprecedented Jubilee is therefore even more remarkable.”

Dr Bruce continued, “The passage of time has not weakened her commitment, or sense of duty. Neither has it diminished her willingness to talk about her deep personal faith in Jesus Christ. This vibrant witness has encouraged many down the years, something that I am sure will be spoken of at tomorrow’s Service of Thanksgiving at St Paul’s Cathedral.

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“It will be an honour for me to represent Irish Presbyterians from across this island at tomorrow’s service in London, as throughout the Presbyterian Church in Ireland she is remembered by many in our prayers,” he said.

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang car at Powerscourt church Classic Car Show



Chitty Chitty Bang Bang took centre stage at the Powerscourt Car Show. In the car are the Revd Cathy Hallissey, Susie Fortune and Barbara Davis with Andrew Bailey and Roger Laird with Fair City actor Maclean Burke at the side of the car.

Huge crowds of people flocked to St Patrick's Church on Sunday May 29 for the Powerscourt Veteran, Vintage and Classic Car Show.

There was a festival atmosphere throughout the day as a steady stream of people converged on the grounds of the parish church to view over 100 vintage cars along with a few modern classics.

The centrepiece of the show was the iconic Chitty Chitty Bang Bang car from the much loved 1968 musical. But there was plenty to attract the attention of car lovers with a unique selection of beautifully maintained vehicles dating from the 1900s to the 1980s on show including a 1918 Stutz Bearcat which competed in the Peking to Paris Rally, a Mercedes Gullwing and a Ferrari 275 GTB.



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Musical entertainment was provided by the much loved Steadfast Band and local organisations and schools were represented among the stall holders. Maclean Burke, who plays Damien in Fair City, joined the fun and even got to choose his favourite car. The event was a fundraiser for Powerscourt Parish.



**Mothers
Union
enjoy away
day**

Carnmoney
Mothers
Union
enjoyed their
outing to
Castlerock
where they
visited the
"Lord of the
Years"
Flower
Festival at
Christ
Church
before
enjoying a

beautiful meal at Castlerock golf club. The sun shone and a great time was had by everybody.

Shrine of Our Lady of Clonfert formally recognised as a Diocesan Marian Shrine

The Bishop of Clonfert and Bishop of Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora, Michael Duignan has travelled to the Shrine of Our Lady of Clonfert to bless the newly renovated church and to consecrate its new altar.

In recognition of the importance of the Shrine as a pilgrimage centre for so many, he also formally approved Canonical Statutes for the Shrine and signed a Decree to raise the Shrine of Our Lady of Clonfert to the status of a recognised Diocesan Marian Shrine. In the same act, Father Declan McInerney, Parish Priest of Eyrecourt, Clonfert and Meelick, was appointed the Shrine's first Rector and the 31st of May was declared a special day of prayer and devotion to Our Lady of Clonfert from this day forward.

Speaking at the Shrine, Bishop Duignan said, "This is a historic day for the Shrine of Our Lady of Clonfert, for the local parish community for the Diocese of Clonfert and indeed for the entire Church community. Although in many places traditional religious practices may seem to be in a phase of decline the practice of pilgrimage remains a meaningful source of spiritual nourishment for so many people. Today, we formally recognise the long history of devotion to Our Lady in this place. We also look forward to the development of the Shrine as a fount of rich spiritual sustenance for future generations and in particular as a spiritual refuge and healing for those who, like the statue

THE PLATINUM JUBILEE OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH

Thursday 2nd June 2022 @ 9.00 p.m.

An event to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth will be held in the grounds of Saint Columb's Cathedral on the evening of Thursday 2nd June.

8.00pm: Tea / coffee dock available.

9.20pm: The four church leaders in the City make their way to the platform at the gate entrance

9.25pm: Vice Lord Lieutenant to welcome assembled audience and read a Proclamation

9.35pm: Piper to play 'Diu Regnare'

9.40pm: Bugle call 'Majesty'



The four Church leaders in the City will be joined by other dignitaries and local people to watch **a Beacon being lit at 9.45 p.m. at London Street Gate.**

The Gentlemen of The Cathedral Choir will sing 'A Song for the Commonwealth',

the winner of a Commonwealth-wide song competition organised over the last few months.

9.50pm: Short address by Church leaders

'Her Majesty's extraordinary service to this country is unparalleled. Accordingly, we encourage everyone to express their appreciation by supporting this amazing Jubilee event.'

(Gordon Wallace, Hon. Pipe Major, Royal Scottish Pipers' Society).

Friday 3rd June 2022 7.30 p.m.

A Service to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth will be held in Saint Columb's Cathedral.

The four Church leaders in the City will be joined by other dignitaries and parishioners. The Preacher will be The Right Reverend Andrew Forster, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe.

itself, have been wounded as they travel the journey of life. Let us turn our hearts and minds to Our Lady of Clonfert invoking her intercession with God himself so that these new initiatives might bear much spiritual fruit.”

The newly appointed Rector of the Shrine, Father Declan McInerney said, “Over the years, I have seen, day in day out, the constant stream of visitors to the Shrine. They come from the local area but also from throughout the country and abroad. Many come with their own worries and fears – illness or difficulties in their relationships, at work or in their spiritual lives. Others come to ask for Our Lady’s intercession for their family or neighbours or simply because someone has asked them to call and pray for them here or to remember sons and daughters taking exams. Over and over again, I meet people returning to the Shrine to give thanks for favours received, nerves calmed and a new perspective they have been given on a difficult situation in their life. The Shrine is a special place for so many people. I am thrilled that today we are officially recognising its importance in so many people’s spiritual lives for so long. I also look forward to leading its development as a pilgrimage centre and as a font of spiritual renewal for all but in particular for those wounded by life in the months and in the years to come.”

History of the Statue of Our Lady of Clonfert

The statue of Our Lady of Clonfert dates from the late 13th/early 14th century. It is thought the statue may have originated from either Clonfert medieval Cathedral (built c 8th/9th century) beside the burial place of Saint Brendan or

from the Abbey of Saint Mary de Portu Puro, located to the southeast of the medieval Cathedral.

Local folklore describes that in the nineteenth century a woodcutter was felling an old oak tree and while cutting the tree it began to bleed. Upon examination, he found the statue hidden in a hollow in the tree. In the process, he had unknowingly severed the left arm of the statue. It is believed that it had been placed there for safekeeping during the intense persecution of Catholics in Ireland during the Cromwellian period. As such, the statue bears witness to one of the most difficult periods for the Catholic faith in Irish history.

The statue is now housed in the Church of Saint Brendan, Clonfert in the Parish of Eyrecourt, Clonfert and Meelick in the Diocese of Clonfert. Carved from wood and brightly painted, the statue portrays a gently smiling Virgin carrying the infant Jesus in her right arm. Displaying a great tenderness, the child is depicted playing with a tress of the Virgin's hair. Sadly the left arm, severed when the statue was discovered, is now missing.

A Place of Pilgrimage

The very existence of the Statue of Our Lady of Clonfert is a sign of considerable devotion to Our Lady in this part of the country for the past 700 – 800 years. In recent years, the statue has become the focus of a renewed Marian devotion. Many come to pray before the statue to invoke Our Lady's intercession for themselves and their families. Many pilgrims come to seek divine assistance with the trials and tribulations of life or intercession for their own good health or

the good health of others. The month of May has established itself as a particular period of devotion and pilgrimage. Each May, tens of thousands of people come to pray before the statue while the local parish organises formal liturgies and the celebration of the Eucharist each day.

News reports

Archbishop to miss Queen's Platinum Jubilee service due to Covid

The Archbishop of Canterbury has been forced to pull out of a service celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee after testing positive for Covid-19.

The positive Covid test follows a bout of mild pneumonia that forced Archbishop Justin Welby to reduce his schedule last week.

Lambeth Palace said the Archbishop had tested positive for Covid-19 on Monday morning and would no longer be able to preach the sermon at the Service of Thanksgiving for the Queen at St Paul's Cathedral this Friday.

Welby said he was "deeply saddened" to be missing the service.

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, will preach the sermon in his place.

Despite missing the service, Welby said he would be praying for the Queen and "giving thanks for her extraordinary seventy years of service to us all".

"I will also be praying for our nation at this time of celebration and thanksgiving. May the Queen's example bring us together in unity and care for one another," he said.

"For those attending Friday's service at St Paul's Cathedral, and the millions watching on television, I hope this joyful occasion will inspire us with the Queen's profound commitment to fostering unity and peace among all people – and to promoting care for the natural world that God has given us.

"Led by the love of Jesus Christ, the Queen has lived her life for the benefit of others: I pray we find inspiration from Her Majesty over the Jubilee weekend and long into the future.

"Meanwhile as we continue to live with coronavirus, I pray too for all those who are still suffering and everyone who continues to mourn loved ones they have lost during the pandemic. May you each know the love and comfort of God."

"As we prepare to celebrate the first Platinum Jubilee in our nation's history, may God save the Queen, and bless her with the knowledge of our profound love and gratitude for her service to us all."

Kidnapped head of Methodist Church Nigeria has been freed

Concerns have been raised about spiralling insecurity in Nigeria after the head of the Methodist Church there was kidnapped on Sunday before being freed the following day.

The Methodist Church in Britain had issued a statement on Monday expressing its "deep shock and concern" at the abduction of the Most Rev Dr Samuel Kanu.

The BBC reported late on Monday night that the prelate had been freed, although it was unclear how he had been released.

Dr Kanu was kidnapped by gunmen on Sunday along with the Bishop of Owerri, the Rt Rev Dennis Mark, and the Prelate's Chaplain, the Very Rev Jeremiah Shittu.

The kidnapping happened in Abia state, south-east Nigeria, after the Church leaders had attended an event.

It is not clear who was responsible for the abductions.

In a joint statement, the President of the Methodist Conference of Great Britain, Rev Sonia Hicks, and Vice President Barbara Easton, had asked for prayers and for Nigeria "where kidnappings, violent extremist attacks and murders by armed groups, are frequent occurrences, and many live in fear".

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Responding to the abduction, Open Doors, a charity supporting persecuted Christians worldwide, said that thousands of people have been kidnapped in Nigeria by extremist Islamic groups like Boko Haram, radicalised Fulani herdsmen and the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP).

The country ranks 7th in the Open Doors World Watch List of countries where Christians suffer the most extreme persecution.

Open Doors' expert on sub-Saharan Africa, Illia Djadi said there was a lot of money to be made from kidnappings.

"This is the latest in a series of kidnappings which have become an epidemic in Nigeria," he said.

"The issue of security is the central issue for Nigerians. People from all walks of life from army officers to young children can be abducted.

"Ahead of elections in February next year, political candidates are putting security at the top of their agendas.

"Because of widespread poverty, extremist groups are making the most of the lucrative business in kidnappings, demanding ransom payments as a shortcut for easy money."

In the media

Blair: Protocol row risks Good Friday deal

Nick Gutteridge, Political Correspondent of the Daily Telegraph writes...

TONY BLAIR has warned the problems “at the heart” of the Northern Ireland Protocol will put the Good Friday Agreement at risk unless the EU makes a “significant” shift from its hardline stance on border checks.

The former prime minister, who negotiated and signed the 1998 peace deal, urged Brussels and No 10 to show “maximum flexibility” and thrash out a compromise that would slash red tape on goods heading from Great Britain to the province. His intervention will heap pressure on the EU to drop its refusal to renegotiate the protocol.

A new report by the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change also warned the row over Northern Ireland risks fracturing the Western Alliance against Vladimir Putin over his invasion of Ukraine. “If left unresolved, the issues at the heart of the protocol have the capability of causing an enlarged trade conflict between the UK and the EU, or undermining the Good Friday Agreement,” Mr Blair said.

“In the interests of broader European harmony and trade – especially at a time when Europe, including the UK, has come together impressively over Ukraine – both the EU and the UK should show maximum flexibility in order to reach an agreement.”

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Mr Blair said the “landing zone” for an agreement to revamp the border agreement is in sight but that it “would require significant movement from the EU on its position around the protocol’s interpretation”.

Unionists and No 10 have argued that the current deal puts the Good Friday Agreement at risk and blame the EU’s interpretation of the rules – which has been denied by Brussels and Dublin.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss is expected to table legislation in the Commons as early as next week that would give the Government powers to override swathes of the protocol and ditch many checks on goods crossing the Irish Sea.

The EU has threatened a robust response including triggering legal action against the UK.

Daily Telegraph 01 June 2022

Child Funeral Fund available to Northern Ireland families as scheme comes into effect

Belfast Telegraph

A new Stormont scheme which will pay families more than £3,000 to help with the cost of a funeral for a child has officially come into effect from Wednesday.

The Child Funeral Fund was agreed as part of the New Decade, New Approach deal that restored Stormont in 2020 and was announced in March.

A similar scheme is already in place in England, with some Northern Ireland councils – including Derry City and Strabane District Council – having already implemented such a move in 2018. The scheme will offer a one-off lump sum payment of £3,056 for families on the death of either a child under the age of 18 or a stillbirth after 24 weeks.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

New book gives tools to build deeper relationship with God

A new book designed to help people deepen their spiritual practices was launched in the Church of Ireland Theological Institute on Monday evening (May 23).

‘Perspectives on Prayer and Spirituality’ is edited by Maurice Elliott and Patrick McGlinchey and features a host of contributors who offer their insights in a range of areas: relating to God, discovering ourselves, worshipping together and serving others.

‘Spirituality’ has become a buzzword in contemporary culture as individuals attempt to find meaning and fulfilment.



Contributors Dr Bridget Nicholson, the Revd Dr Janet Unsworth, the Revd Suzanne Cousins, Fr Kieran O'Mahony OSA, the Revd Dr William Olhausen, the Rt Revd Kenneth Good, the Revd Rob Clements and the Revd Ian Mills.

It's detachment from the church signals an attempt to find wholeness without the old rituals. The impetus for the book is that the intuition behind the search for spirituality is good as it acknowledges that there must be more to life than what secular media or consumerism tells us. The message of the book is that the spiritual quest is worthwhile but also that we must rediscover what has been left behind. 'Perspectives on Prayer and Spirituality' offers the tools to explore Christian spirituality and develop a personal relationship with God.

Contributors to the book include Patrick McGlinchey (The Spiritual Disciplines), Maurice Elliott (The Spirituality of the

Quiet Time), William Olhausen (Spirituality and Paul), Kenneth Good (The Spirituality of Journaling), Adrian Chatfield (Encountering God on Retreat), Kieran O'Mahony (Contemplative Spirituality for the Uninitiated), Bridget Nichols (Prayer Book Spirituality), Janet Unsworth (Nurturing Corporate Prayer), Ian Mills (Spirituality and Hymnody), Rob Clements (Spirituality for All–Age Worship), Christina Baxter (The Art of Praying for Others), Suzanne Cousins (Developing a Compassionate Spirituality) and Rebecca Guildea (Engaging with Prayer Ministry).

Launching 'Perspectives on Prayer and Spirituality', the Revd Dr Craig Bartholomew, director of the Kirby Laing Institute said the book was essential reading as it attended to the top priority for Christian ministry today. Referring to the story of Mary and Martha [Luke 10: 42], he said that the Church must "attend to the one thing necessary" and this was done by attending to spirituality.

"Our journey out in the world has to be funded by attention to God himself through prayer and spirituality. This book puts its finger on the one thing necessary.

Anglicans are famous for doing a thousand things but not the one thing necessary.

We need to recover our focus on the one thing necessary," he stated. However,

he added, talking and writing about Christian spirituality was good but it was most important to practice it. "We need this book but it is a waste of time if it does not translate into practice," he said.

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The Revd Dr Patrick McGlinchey said that the book had been a pleasure to edit and pledged that it would deepen readers' relationship with God, help them to worship better and inspire them in faith. He added that the book challenges the reader to go deeper, there are questions to answer and there are also practical tips.

Drawing proceedings to a close, Archbishop Michael Jackson thanked all who made time to contribute to the book and those who edited it. He said that it enabled people to have a voice that is published and thanked the authors for laying themselves open in this way.

'Perspectives on Prayer and Spirituality' is available directly from CITI for €20/£20 by emailing admin@theologicalinstitute.ie

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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