

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Elmer's Big Belfast Trail**

## Image of the day

### Elmer's Big Belfast Trail

Look out for 30 jumbo elephant sculptures popping up around Belfast from today Monday 20 June, as Elmer's Big Belfast Trail comes to town!

The initiative - the biggest public art trail of its kind in the city - is based on the classic children's book and will help support of the work of Northern Ireland Hospice

The project is also on the lookout for volunteers who'd like to get involved in highlighting the colourful sculptures.

They will be in place until 31 August, and have been designed by local schools and artists.

To sign up, visit [elmerbelfast.co.uk/volunteers](http://elmerbelfast.co.uk/volunteers)

## People and places

### Keith and Kristyn Getty bring hope with new recording of 'Christ Our Hope in Life and Death'

Highly acclaimed Ulster gospel singing couple Keith and Krystyn Getty have released a new version of a

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**hymn they say gave hope to millions of Christians during the covid pandemic of the past two years.**

When the pandemic started in 2020, Keith and Kristyn, now based in Nashville, Tennessee, with their family had just released a new hymn, titled -, ‘Christ Our Hope in Life and Death’, with lyrics offering comfort that “faith in Jesus Christ will help us through every challenge we face”.

The new modern hymn very quickly became one of the fastest-growing songs in Christian music, according to CCLI,



**There was hard work at Bethlehem Abbey, Portglenone at the weekend in preparation for Summer Madness**





## **Preparation work at Bethlehem Abbey, Portglenone at the weekend for Summer Madness.**

the organisation that licenses music to religious institutions on an international level.

Written by Keith, with associate hymn writers Matt Boswell, Jordan Kauflin, Matt Merker, and Matt Papa from Getty Music Recordings, the hymn is based on a text dating back to 1563 from the German Lutheran Heidelberg Catechism of the Christian Reformed Church, which states that we can find comfort in life by trusting in the resurrection of Jesus.

Now, Keith and Kristyn Getty have just released the recording, featuring the vocals of multiple Grammy award-winning Christian music artiste Michael W. Smith. The

recording marks the first studio collaboration between the Gettys and Smith.

Keith Getty said: "We are so honoured Michael W. Smith has lent his voice to this hymn, and we hope that it will provide continued inspiration to anyone struggling through challenges. The hope of the resurrection, where Jesus conquered death forever, spurs us to sing. Like the Heidelberg Catechism that inspired by it. The song is honest about death and that Christians can rejoice because Christ assures us of our glorious future."

Michael W. Smith said: "After Keith and Kristyn first released 'Christ Our Hope in Life and Death' when the covid pandemic started, the song gave hope to millions because it provided comfort and assurance that flow from trusting Christ. I was excited when they invited me to re-record it as a duet with Kristy."

## **Homeless advocate Fr Peter McVerry attacked**

**Veteran homeless advocate Fr Peter McVerry has suffered minor injuries following an alleged attack at his home by a man who came to him to ask for help.**

CEO of the Peter McVerry Trust Pat Doyle said that in the early hours of the morning June 8, the Jesuit priest "opened his door to an individual knocking for help.

"It soon became clear that the person was affected by drugs and alcohol."

## **Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) bill: Presbyterian Troubles victims ‘aggrieved by writing off of justice’**

**The Presbyterian Church in Ireland says that the Troubles victims among its membership “overwhelmingly...feel aggrieved by the writing off of the opportunity to seek justice” from Government legacy proposals, Philip Bradfield reports in the News Letter.**

Rev Trevor Gribben, clerk of the General Assembly, was speaking to a press conference ahead of the church’s General Assembly next week, where the issue is to be discussed.

The Government’s NI Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill offers immunity from prosecution to people who cooperate with the proposed information retrieval body. However the bill has been opposed by the majority of victims’ groups and political parties in NI.

Rev Gribben said: “We have responded to the Secretary of State, both to his command paper and now in a face to face meeting with senior officials, about the fact that that bill does not have support in Northern Ireland and does not have support from the overwhelming majority of those who are victims of our Troubles.

“We have over the last number of years spent a significant amount of time at congregational level across NI meeting with and discussing with victims their views.

“The one thing I would often say, and I think it is true, is that a significant number if not indeed the majority of victims of our troubles who are Presbyterians, are not aligned with any particular victims group... [although] groups have their place.

“Now, overwhelmingly those people feel aggrieved by the writing off of the opportunity to seek justice. So we have said that to the Secretary of State.”

Expert witnesses recently gave similar evidence to MPs on the NI Affairs Committee about the bill. Peter Murtagh, advocacy support manager at victims’ group South East Fermanagh Foundation (SEFF), told them: “One of the biggest issues that isn’t covered [in the bill] is accountability – and that has never been addressed.” He said that victims “ultimately want justice” or at least “some form of accountability” for what happened to them. “And there is nothing within this that provides that for them.”

Sandra Peake, of the Wave Trauma Centre, told the MPs: “This [bill] is perpetrator-friendly, it is perpetrator-focused and ultimately the perpetrator will win from this – it won’t be the family.” Victims Commissioner Ian Jeffers said many in the sector felt their engagement with the Northern Ireland Office on the Bill was a “transfer of information” rather than a consultation.

The Presbyterian Church has 204,000 members in 530 congregations on the island of Ireland.





## Glendalough Institution

**The Revd Suzanne Harris was instituted Rector of Castlemacadam and Ballinaclesh with Aughrim in the Diocese of Glendalough by the Archbishop**

Both parishioners and Suzanne expressed their delight at being able to continue their journey together as Suzanne has been Priest in Charge of the parish for the last year.

The preacher, Canon Leonard Ruddock, encouraged the parish to "be strong and courageous, bear fruit that will last and do it all in a spirit of love", based on the readings from Joshua 1: 1-9 and John 15: 12-17.



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Glendalough Institution

# Church News Ireland

## **Irish Catholics meet for ‘once in 2,000-year’ chance to reform Church**

**Delegates ‘heartened and encouraged’ by synodal meeting in Athlone which forms part of global feedback to Vatican, Patsy McGarry reports in the Irish Times**

A national assembly of the Catholic Church met in Athlone, Co Westmeath on Saturday, June 18, in what was described by participants as “challenging”, “heartening” and a “a once in 2,000 year” opportunity to influence Vatican teaching.

Attended by 160 delegates representing the Church’s 26 dioceses in Ireland as well as religious congregations and various lay groupings, it is part of a worldwide process in the Church in preparation for a synod at the Vatican in October of next year.

The delegates discussed and reflected on reports from every diocese in Ireland as well as submissions from the religious congregations and others, following widespread consultation over recent months. Each diocese published its own report earlier this month and, in general, these called for radical change in the Church’s attitude to women, and to LGBTI+ people and other marginalised people. They also called for a greater role for laity and for priests to be given the option to marry.

These reports are to be collated by a “synodal pathway steering group” into a final synthesis which is to be sent to



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Rome by August 15th, as representative of the views of the Irish Catholic Church for consideration at the Synod there in October 2023.

Delegate Ursula Halligan of the We Are Church Ireland group, said she was “heartened by what I heard today. To be honest, I was dreading coming here because I felt so excluded from my Church but I was really heartened by the presentation of the feedback. It was so raw and so honest



 St Philip and St James  
**Hollywood Parish Church**

# Youth Work Vacancy

Job Title	Parish Youth Worker
Part Time	25 hrs per week
Salary	£15,500-17,000 depending on experience/qualifications

**Closing Date for Applications**  
**Friday 8th July 2022**

 For more information visit  
[www.hollywoodparishchurch.co.uk](http://www.hollywoodparishchurch.co.uk)



and I am just sorry all of Ireland didn't get to see it because there was a lot of hard work put into it too".

She said "at the table discussion afterwards I could hear that people were challenged by it". She realised "a lot of us are out of our comfort zone. It will be our shared faith that will get us through this because it's not going to be easy. But I think today was a good start. I am heartened and encouraged by what I experienced this morning".

As to whether Church thinking could revert back to what it was before Pope Francis, she was "quite aware that there are a lot of people who are comfortable with the Church as it is and have very set views, very rigid views, and I could easily see it reverting and going back.

"It will require leadership and courage, at the moment from those who are in those positions, which are the male hierarchy, and that's how the Holy Spirit works through us. I would have concerns about it reverting but I have been heartened by what I've heard today, in a way I hadn't expected. So, I see today as a good starting point."

Anthony Neville, who represented the Association of Catholics of Ireland at the meeting, said it was "important to realise it's the first time in 2,000 years that the people of God have an opportunity of discussing what's happening in the Church, what has happened and indeed what will happen in the future. It gives us great hope that for the first time we have an opportunity to have our say".

Tony Brennan, a delegate from Derry diocese, emphasised that the meeting "isn't an event, a one-off event. The

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message from Pope Francis is that synodality, the concept of walking together, is continuous. And we are at the very start of this". While people were engaging in a form of conversation "that hasn't ever been done before", he said, "it's not that we're going to finish it now. We're going to continue with these conversations."

Bishop of Limerick Brendan Leahy said "I think we're in a major moment. Pope Francis often says it's not just an era



  
SAINT  
PATRICK'S  
CATHEDRAL  
DUBLIN

# WE ARE HIRING

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## Community & Safeguarding Officer

Applications closing date: Wednesday 29th June 2022

 [stpatrikscathedral.ie/careers](https://stpatrikscathedral.ie/careers)

of transformation it's the transformation of the era and I think we recognise that."

The second Vatican council, which ran from 1962 to 1965, "was much more significant than perhaps we realised, about opening up a spiritual revolution really," the bishop said. "That is something we're gradually entering into. The actual reform called for by the council was something deep and it's something we can only enter into together."



## News reports

### Archbishop of York's pilgrimage

**Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell arrived at Holy Island off the coast of Northumbria on Saturday having walked St Cuthbert's Way, setting off from Melrose last Monday.**

As he journeyed along the route he was praying for the renewal of God's Church in the North. The week long pilgrimage ended with a celebration of the Eucharist in the parish church of St Mary's, which stands on the site of the original monastery founded by Aidan.

He said, "We all know that life is a journey. Faith can teach us that this journey can be a holy pilgrimage where we can encounter God and which leads ultimately to eternal life with him.





This week I have been privileged to take some time out of my busy life to slow down, think and look at what is around me in this incredibly beautiful world that God has made and to enjoy journeying at a different pace. I think one of the reasons we go on pilgrimage is to learn how to be slow, to give space and time for thought and reflection, and walking the 62 miles of St Cuthbert's Way has once again enabled me to do this. The scenery has been stunning, the weather kind, and the welcome and hospitality I've encountered has been warm and encouraging. I have been praying for the Church in the North that we may be holy, that people may see Jesus Christ within us as we reach out in love and service to our neighbours, sharing the good news that life with Jesus brings wholeness and peace."

Archbishop Stephen is a keen advocate of pilgrimages and has walked the Camino to Santiago de Compostela in Spain

twice, as well as walking to places in England including Walsingham, Canterbury, Durham and York.

## **Source of shame': Justin Welby apologises for Church of England's investment's link to slavery**

**The Archbishop of Canterbury has publically apologised for the Church of England investment fund's connection to slavery.**

It comes after a three-year investigation by the Church Commissioners found it contributed "significant amounts" in the slave trade.

The investigation revealed that the Church Commissioner's predecessor fund, Queen Anne's Bounty, had links with transatlantic chattel slavery.

The Church said in a statement: "In the 18th century, Queen Anne's Bounty invested significant amounts of its funds in the South Sea Company, a company that traded in enslaved people. It also received numerous benefactions, many of which are likely to have come from individuals linked to, or who profited from, transatlantic chattel slavery or the plantation economy."

Most Rev Justin Welby, Chair of the Church Commissioners described it as a "source of shame".

He said in a statement: "I am deeply sorry for the links with transatlantic chattel slavery that the Church Commissioners

has identified. This abominable trade took men, women and children created in God's image and stripped them of their dignity and freedom.

“The fact that some within the Church actively supported and profited from it is a source of shame. It is only by facing this painful reality that we can take steps towards genuine healing and reconciliation – the path that Jesus Christ calls us to walk.

“This is a moment for lament, repentance and restorative action. I pray for those affected by this news and hope that we may work together to discern a new way forward.”

In 2019, the Church Commissioners started research into its £10.1 billion endowment fund to get a better understanding of its history. The investigation included reviewing early ledgers and original documents from the Queen's Bounty.

Rt Rev David Urquhart, Bishop of Birmingham, a member of the Church Commissioners Board and also chair of the group that had oversight of the research, said they will use what they've learned for good.

“The Church Commissioners is deeply sorry for its predecessor fund's links with transatlantic chattel slavery,” he said.

“The Church Commissioners aims to be transparent about its history and we will use this knowledge to ensure we are at the forefront of responsible investment globally. Alongside this work to consider our past, we continue to lobby for



change in the companies in which we invest today and call for those companies to champion human rights within their supply chains.

“Through our policy of advocating ‘respect for people’, we aim to create a fairer world today in which all of God’s children can flourish.”

That Church Commissioner’s research has concluded, and a final report of the findings will be published later this year. It also will form a group to consider the research and how to respond to these findings.

## Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

On Friday, at 1.10pm **Summer Music in Sandford** continues on Sandford parish church, Ranelagh, where Aine Mulvey (mezzo–soprano) and Elizabeth Hilliard (piano) will perform ‘Songs from Connacht’ – art songs by Herbert Hughes set to poetry by Padraic Colum.

The second concert of the 2022 **Music in Calary** series will be at 8pm on Friday in Calary Church when the performers will be Maria Ryan and Jane Hackett (violins), Beth McNinch (viola), Katie Tertell and Annette Cleary (cellos) from Musici Ireland together with Eamonn Sweeney (guitar). Their programme will include works by Boccherini, Vivaldi and Rodrigo. Tickets will be €18 and €15 for concessions. To book places for this concert, please email Derek Neilson at

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[derekneilson@eircom.net](mailto:derekneilson@eircom.net) or [derekneilson11@gmail.com](mailto:derekneilson11@gmail.com) or  
ring John on (01) 281 8146.



**Freedom of the Borough**  
**Irish Guards Parade**  
**and Drumhead Service**  
**Conway Square, Newtownards**  
**Saturday 25 June | 11am**

More info: [ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/IrishGuards](https://ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/IrishGuards)

Ards and North Down  
Borough Council

## Poem for today

### Month of June by Hilaire Belloc

Rise up, and do begin the day's adorning;  
The Summer dark is but the dawn of day.  
The last of sunset fades into the morning,  
The morning calls you from the dark away.  
The holy mist, the white mist of the morning,  
Was wreathing upward on my lonely way.  
The way was waiting for your own adorning  
That should complete the broad adorned day.

Rise up, and do begin the day's adorning;

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The little eastern clouds are dapple grey:  
There will be wind among the leaves to-day;  
It is the very promise of the morning.  
Lux Tua Via Mea: your light's my way -  
Then do rise up and make it perfect day.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## 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](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)