

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – the National Arboretum

Image of the day

The National Arboretum

This memorial recalls the lost Royal Navy personnel in the Battle of the River Plate, 13 December 1939.

People and places

Down Cathedral hosts very special evening of music

On 13 June, Down Cathedral played host to a special evening of music from Cathedra (the combined choirs of Down Cathedral and Cadenza, both directed by Michael McCracken), in what was their first public performance since 2019.

The evening was entitled From Crucifixion to Glory and featured Stainer's Crucifixion as well as a variety of pieces chosen to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty, the Queen.

Traditionally Cathedra performs a recital in the Cathedral on the Monday of Holy Week. The intention was to perform the Crucifixion and a range of other pieces reflecting on the passion of Jesus. Unfortunately, the event was postponed due to the indisposition of several of those involved due to COVID19.



The rescheduled event still featured the Crucifixion as its main piece (with soloists Mark Tilley and David Robertson and organist Stephen Hamill). The Holy Week performance was to be centred around the passion of Jesus. This time the passion journey evolved into a celebration of praise in the second half. This included three pieces which were sung at the Queen's Coronation: Handel's Zadok the Priest, Parry's I was glad and Ralph Vaughan Williams' setting of the hymn All people that on earth do dwell.

The first half of the evening also included a sung setting of a prayer for Ukraine, reflecting the close connections of several of the choir with the war-torn nation. Indeed, one family connected with the choir are hosting a Ukrainian family and one of their guests joined Cathedra for this performance. A retiring collection raised funds for relief work in Afghanistan and in Ukraine.

Speaking after the event, Down Cathedral organist and director of Cathedra, Michael McCracken said 'It was a great pleasure for us to perform again together in Down Cathedral for the first time since 2019, as a result of the Pandemic. We were very disappointed to have postponed



our Holy Week recital, but performing just as the season of Easter has come to its climax and in the days following the Jubilee celebrations gave us the opportunity to tweak the programme and give it a different and exciting energy.'

Dean of Down, the Very Revd Henry Hull, said 'The contribution of music to the life of our cathedral is so significant. It was a delight to have Cathedra singing here again for the first time in over three years. The journey we made through music, from the sorrow and pain of the passion to the joy and celebration of praise with which the evening ended, was a powerful witness to the gospel we all seek to proclaim.'

Saying Goodbye service at Belfast Cathedral

Saying Goodbye, part of the Mariposa Trust, returns to Belfast Cathedral with a baby loss remembrance and support service on July 3 at 3.30pm. This is part of a nationwide series of events.

The Mariposa Trust's core objective is to support The Mariposa Trust's core objective is to support people who



have lost babies at any stage of pregnancy, at birth, or in infancy. It was founded in 2012 by Zoe and Andy Clark-Coates, who saw a critical lack of support for people like them, who had gone through baby loss.

With more than 258,000 babies being lost yearly in the UK alone, the charity needed to be able to offer not only a comprehensive package of befriending and support but also national baby loss remembrance services (called Saying Goodbye Services), for people to join together and remember the children they had lost.

Six years on, more than 130 services have taken place at cathedrals and minsters across the UK, US, and France, and 2022 will see 20 services across England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

The service is for anyone who has either personally lost a baby at any stage of pregnancy, at birth, or in early years, or who has been affected by family members or friends' loss.

Whether the loss was recent or 80 years ago, everyone is welcome to attend.

The Mariposa Trust has also extended the services, and gladly welcome anyone who is grieving the fact that they haven't had children. This may be due to circumstance, infertility, or for other reasons – but all are welcome. Babies and children are also invited to come with their families, as the Saying Goodbye service is truly a family event for all.

To read more on the charity, please see the Saying Goodbye website.

Seed funding for local mental health initiatives

A reminder that C of I Dioceses and Parishes are invited to apply for seed funding for local mental health promotion initiatives.

The closing date for applications is Friday, 29th July 2022. This is an exciting opportunity for you to apply for funding, large or small, to organise an event, project or conversation around mental health.

All you need to do is complete the application form and make sure that it is signed by someone who has attended the MindMattersCOI mental health awareness training, run by Action Mental Health.

If you need a hand, the team are happy to help. Forms are available on our website at the following link:

<https://mindmatters.ireland.anglican.org/2022/05/12/seed-funding-application-form>



Defibrillator memorial to former choir member

Cloughfern Parish - Dedication of defibrillator on Sunday morning, donated by the McNiece family, in memory of a much loved parishioner and former choir member Francis McNiece (Francie).

Connor Takes the Castle



Castlewellan Castle – home to Connor Takes the Castle

The annual diocesan residential youth weekend is back after the pandemic, and will run from Friday September 23 – Sunday September 25 2022 in Castlewellan Castle, with sessions, activities, great food and lots of fun.

This is for young people aged 11-18. A form is to be completed for all young people and leaders.

The cost is £60 for the full weekend and £20 for a day pass on the Saturday. No deposit is required. Payment can be brought to the event.

New Bishop's Curate is introduced to parishes in Donagh Group in Clogher

A special Service of Evening Prayer took place in St Salvator's Church, Donagh Parish, Glaslough on Thursday evening, 16 June for the Introduction of Revd Tim Irvine as Bishop's Curate for the Grouped Parishes of Donagh and Tyholland with Errigal Truagh.

It was conducted by the Bishop of Clogher, the Right Revd Dr. Ian Ellis.

The service was filled with readings and music and with special anthems sung by the Donagh Community Choir.

Readings were by Mrs Marina Waller, Parish Reader and Mrs Diane Wright-Kendrick, Honorary Secretary of Donagh Parish.

The hymns were; "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!" "God has spoken by his prophets," "Come down, O Love divine" and "Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided." Psalm 84, the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis were also sung as well as the anthem, "God is love; ' His the care" and the Responses, "Guide my feet, Lord" and "Go now in Peace." The organist and choir leader was Mrs Ethne

The sermon was preached by the Venerable Leslie Stevenson, Rector of Portarlinton and Archdeacon of Meath and Kildare.



Following the service, the congregation made their way to Glaslough Community Centre where Revd Irvine was formally welcomed to the area by Louise Duffy, Glaslough's Tidy Towns Co-ordinator as well as Robert Wilson, speaking on behalf of the three parishes of Donagh, Tyholland and Errigal Truagh who reminded him that Glaslough was voted by the Irish Times as the best place to live although he said it was the people of the area who would impress him most.

Revd Irvine came to Clogher Diocese from the Dioceses of Meath and Kildare where he was Rector of the Mountmellick Group of Parishes in Co. Laois.

He is a native of Newtownards, Co Down and studied English and Drama at Queen's University Belfast before teaching English at Cambridge House Boys' Grammar

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School. He trained for ordination at the Church of Ireland Theological College in Dublin and spent his curacy in the Christ Church Cathedral Group of Parishes in inner city Dublin where he was also chaplain to St James' Hospital. He then moved to South County Dublin to become chaplain at Rathdown School, a day and boarding school for girls in Glenageary.

Later Tim took up a temporary post as Head of Religion in Alexandra College in Milltown, Dublin. While at Rathdown and Alexandra College, he was Priest in Charge of St John's, Sandymount.

Having always felt drawn to the monastic life, Revd Irvine spent a year living alongside the Church of England Benedictine Community of Mucknell Abbey in



Worcestershire, sharing in the daily prayer and work of the community there.

He returned to Ireland in 2012 as Curate and then Rector of the Kilkenny Union of Parishes where he was chaplain to St Luke's and Aut Even Hospitals. After four years in Kilkenny, he was appointed to the incumbency of the Mountmellick Group of Parishes in Co Laois.

He has a rough haired Collie, Crispi and he enjoys music and reading.

Irish delegation departs for 10th World Meeting of Families in Rome

An Irish delegation will travel to Rome over the coming days to attend the 10th World Meeting of Families which begins on Wednesday 22 June, on the theme, 'Family love: a vocation and a path to holiness.'

The delegation from Ireland includes family members as well as the President of the Bishops' Conference, Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh, and the chair of the Council for Marriage & Family, Bishop Denis Nulty of Kildare & Leighlin.

At their Summer General Meeting last week, the Bishops of Ireland offered their prayerful good wishes to the Diocese of Rome as it prepares to host the gathering of families from across the world. Ireland hosted the 9th World Meeting of Families in August 2018 which was attended by Pope

June 21, 2022

Ahead of his departure for Rome, Bishop Nulty said, “We are very much looking forward to being part of the tenth World Meeting of Families in the presence of Pope Francis and pilgrims from around the world. All of us remember with fondness those memorable days in Dublin four years ago.

“We look forward to discussions and reflections from families on themes such as the role of grandparents, the pastoral care of the elderly, accompanying fatherhood and motherhood, vocations, accompanying forgiveness, preparing for marriage, the impact of digital media on family life and much more.



World Meeting of Families

22-26 June 2022

“As we pray and reflect together on the many joys and challenges facing family life today, I am particularly conscious of the enormous difficulties being faced by families here in Ireland as a result of the rapid rise in the cost of living. I commend the work being done in dioceses and parishes across the country to reach out and support families in difficulty on a day to day basis. As we depart for Rome we will take the prayers and intentions of Irish families with us”, Bishop Nulty said.

All families can join in the celebration

Families across Ireland are encouraged to support Pope Francis’ wish that the celebration of the World Meeting of Families may take place in every diocese around the world and, if possible, every parish. A pastoral kit has been prepared and is available on www.catholicbishops.ie.

Parishes can follow the ceremonies that will be live-streamed from Rome, perhaps by way of gathering in a parish centre to watch the ceremonies. ‘The Festival of Families’ will take place on the evening of Wednesday 22 June; the closing Mass on the evening of Saturday 25 June; and the Angelus and ‘Mandate to Families’ from Pope Francis will be shared on the morning of Sunday 26 June.

Families and parishes are also invited to pray the Prayer for the World Meeting of Family 2022 (see below).

Heavenly Father,
We come before You to praise You
and to thank You for the great gift of the family.
We pray to You for all families
consecrated by the Sacrament of Matrimony.

May they rediscover each day
the grace they have received,
and as small domestic Churches,
may they know how to witness to Your presence
and to the love with which Christ loves the Church.
We pray to You for all families faced with difficulty and
suffering
caused by illness or circumstances of which only You know.
Sustain them and make them aware
of the path to holiness upon which You call them,
so that they might experience Your infinite mercy
and find new ways to grow in love.
We pray to You for children and young people:
may they encounter You and respond joyfully
to the vocation You have in mind for them;
We pray for parents and grandparents: may they be aware
that they are signs of the fatherhood and motherhood of
God
in caring for the children who, in body and spirit, You entrust
to them;
and for the experience of fraternity
that the family can give to the world.

Lord, grant that each family
might live their specific vocation to holiness in the Church
as a call to become missionary disciples,
in the service of life and peace,
in communion with our priests, religious,
and all vocations in the Church.

Bless the World Meeting of Families. Amen.

News reports

Christians are being 'strategically driven' from their homes

The Christian presence is at risk of being completely erased from some parts of the world due to persecution, a new report warns.

"The Church on the Run" report by Open Doors describes a "deliberate strategy" to weaken, silence or completely eradicate Christian populations.

"While displacement is sometimes perceived as an unintentional by-product of persecution, in many instances, it is intentional and can be part of a wider strategy to completely eradicate Christianity from the village, region or country. In some instances, the strategy is overt and public, in others it is covert and informal," the report says.

Open Doors' Global Gender Persecution Specialist, Helene Fisher, said, "Part of this deliberate strategy is to fracture religious communities."

The most common driver of displacement for persecuted Christians was their family, followed by local and national government officials, the local community, and violent religious groups.

Converts reported receiving threats of death or violence, and being deprived of food or shelter.

"Converts to Christianity widely reported being ousted by their families, being threatened to the point of death, and put under such extreme pressures that fleeing was deemed their only option," the report said.

Sometimes, different factors "work alongside each other, weaving a tapestry of persecution that drives Christians to flee".

"In some cases, the top two or three agents driving persecution will be influenced by one another," it continues.

"For example, a family might force a Christian convert to leave their home, in order to avoid action by government officials or the community which could negatively impact the family."

The report highlights the example of Iraq where a once thriving community of over a million Christians has dwindled to just 166,000.

"Everyone is slowly leaving ... It happens quietly, but it is happening every day. People pack up their things, lock their doors, and leave behind their entire lives," said one Iraqi refugee.

According to the findings, Christians reported that their religious identity caused or was a contributing factor to their displacement in 58 of the top 76 countries on the World Watch List - Open Doors' annual ranking of countries where Christians suffer most for their faith.

Even if persecuted Christians flee to camps for safety, their suffering can continue as they are "singled out" because of their faith.

This can take the form of being attacked by other displaced communities inside the camp or being denied aid.

"They told me I wasn't forced to become a Christian, so it's my problem, it's my fault," said Hamid, an Afghan Christian who faced multiple attacks from his fellow refugees.

These challenges "can be compounded by a lack of understanding and effective responses from humanitarian actors", including NGOs, international organisations and host nations.

"This can range from unintentional neglect to strategic targeting and disempowerment of individuals and communities," the report said.

In response to the findings, Open Doors is calling for "greater knowledge of, and sensitivity to" the challenges faced by Christian refugees and IDPs in order to better protect them.

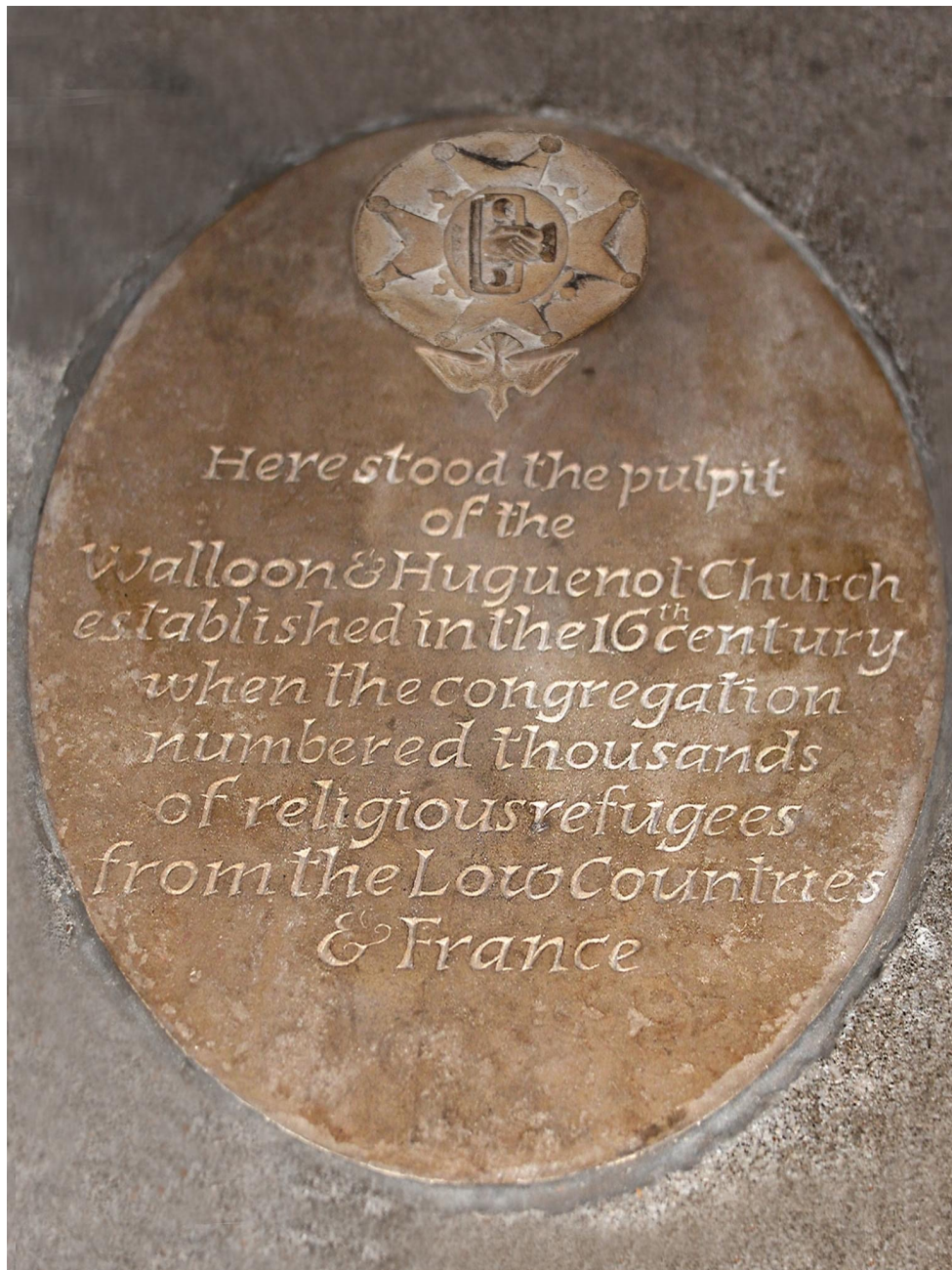
Eva Brown, a Senior Research Analyst for Open Doors, said, "The findings of this report present a vital challenge to everyone trying to offer aid and assistance to displaced communities.

"Unless they truly understand the 'faith factor' at work in these massive diasporas, then they will never be able to

properly protect and help large numbers of those that they are attempting to serve."

Marking Refugee Week at Canterbury

To mark RefugeeWeek, between 20 & 25 June the Huguenot Chapel - located in the Canterbury Cathedral Crypt - will be open to tell the story of the Protestant Refugees who made Canterbury their home from the middle of the 16th century. All are welcome to visit.



In the media

The C of E is now the Labour Party at prayer - Tim Stanley

Anglican bishops were right-on disciples of fashion long before Justin Welby came along, Tim Stanley writes in the Daily Telegraph

The Church of England is the Tory party at prayer. That's the myth. So when bishops attack a Conservative government, such as over the Rwanda plan, we're invited to be surprised, and when Conservatives bite back, we're supposed to be shocked. And yet, in his diary, long ago in 1957, Harold Macmillan wrote that he dreaded his meetings with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher. "I try to talk to him about religion, but he seems to be quite uninterested and reverts all the time to politics."

Fisher, a former headmaster, is rumoured to have talked Princess Margaret out of marrying a divorcee, and opined of the nuclear bomb that "the very worst" it could do "is to sweep a vast number of people from this world into the next, into which they must all go anyway". Yet he was also against Suez and Premium Bonds, the latter a lottery cooked up by Macmillan that Fisher regarded as ungodly. According to Macmillan's biographer, D R Thorpe, when the two men met at a dinner, the politician congratulated the priest on the Church's successful investment in Trinidad oil, and hoped

that he might look more favourably upon Premium Bonds, given his own “little flutter”.

Macmillan was as mischievous when it came to clerical appointments. He suggested to Fisher that the best choice for his successor at Canterbury might be Michael Ramsey, the liberal-minded Archbishop of York. “Dr Ramsey is a theologian, a scholar and a man of prayer,” Fisher is supposed to have said. “Therefore he is entirely unsuitable as Archbishop of Canterbury.” He knew this, he explained, because he had been his headmaster. “Well, you may have been Dr Ramsey’s headmaster,” retorted Macmillan, “but you are not mine” – and, one likes to imagine, picked Ramsey for the job in a fit of obstinacy, ushering in the Swinging Sixties.

One of the new archbishop’s interests was immigration. Ramsey called the Conservatives’ 1962 bill, which for the first time limited arrivals from the Commonwealth, “deplorable”. Labour, keen to co-opt the Church, made him chairman of a committee on race relations, though in 1968 Harold Wilson limited Asian immigration from Kenya, and Ramsey condemned that bill, too. There’s a reason why Enoch Powell, in his “Rivers of Blood” speech, included a dig at “archbishops in palaces” who pull the bedclothes “right up over their heads”.

But, of course, clerics who defend asylum seekers are only responding to the gospels’ call to treat every human being as if they were Jesus himself. Archbishops of Canterbury are part of a global communion: they have visited war zones and dictatorships and seen the horrors that compel people to flee, and when these unfortunates turn up in Britain, it is

often the parish clergy who encounter them first. A vicar friend walked into his church one day to discover an Iranian exile had broken into the children's crèche and was sound asleep in the Wendy house.

So, the primary motivation is charity, but clerics are also trying to explain to a non-believing society exactly what a state Church is for. Under Fisher, the mission was to confirm an ancient Christian identity, but by 1960, it was obvious that England was changing fast. Rather than resist, Ramsey and co sought to negotiate a new role as the nation's conscience, not to block legislation, such as on divorce or abortion, but to shape it (so compassionate and forensic was Ramsey's contribution to parliamentary debate on the legalisation of homosexual acts that one peer accused him of turning Hansard into pornography).

As clerics became dynamic commentators on the state of the nation, it might have seemed as if the gamble were paying off. But they were running on the fumes of the 1950s. It was Fisher-style conservatism that gave them the air of authority that they lent to causes that, in turn, made them sound not like they were trying to transform the world, but allowing the world to transform them, that they had become dedicated disciples of fashion. Once, when asked about a bizarre fad for topless dresses, Ramsey said, "We must just accept the fact that young people express themselves in new methods of dress that may seem queer to the older among us."

Today, politicised Anglicanism at least keeps the CofE in the headlines, but the downside is that the Church might be known better for its politics than its faith. Its hierarchy has

completely become the Labour Party at prayer. The bitter irony is that the one part of the population that has remained steadfastly loyal to the Church is Conservative voters (two-thirds of English Anglicans voted for Brexit), and so, in a bid to find relevance among those who don't believe in God, the CofE frequently finds itself alienating those who do. It has probably irritated a few Rwandans along the way.

Archbishop Laurent Mbanda, head of the Rwandan Anglicans, has said he supports asylum seekers being sent to his country; he is also one of three African Church leaders boycotting the upcoming Lambeth conference over the CofE's tolerance of homosexuality. Here is the final twist. The Church that bent over backwards to ally with the post-colonial world has, in the process, embraced a liberal theology that now puts it at odds with much of the post-colonial world.

Poem for today

Jerusalem by William Blake

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green:
And was the holy Lamb of God,
On England's pleasant pastures seen!

And did the Countenance Divine,
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here,
Among these dark Satanic Mills?

Bring me my Bow of burning gold:
Bring me my arrows of desire:
Bring me my Spear: O clouds unfold!
Bring me my Chariot of fire!

I will not cease from Mental Fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand:
Till we have built Jerusalem,
In Englands green & pleasant Land.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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