

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Scrabo from Strangford**

## People and places



### Moderator addresses Jubilee service

**To mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen, the Belfast Lieutenancy held a Service of Thanksgiving on Sunday at which the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Right Reverend Dr David Bruce, gave the address.**

Lord-Lieutenants are the Queen's representatives in each UK county and some cities. The Lord Lieutenant for the County Borough of Belfast is currently Dame Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle CBE, and is the sixth since the Lieutenancy was created in 1900.



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Having represented Irish Presbyterians at the Jubilee Service of Thanksgiving in St Paul's Cathedral in London on Friday, where Dr Bruce processed with other church leaders ahead of senior members of the Royal Family at the start of the service, the Moderator took

Luke 22:24-30, as the text for his Belfast Cathedral address.



Here Luke describes a dispute among Jesus' disciples as to which of them was greatest. Jesus goes on to show them what the greatest looks like in His Kingdom, saying "the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves..."

In this context Dr Bruce talked about Queen's Elizabeth's faith and as a servant of the King, saying, "For it must be evident to all, that it is this which has marked out and defined the reign of Her Majesty the Queen. As a leader,

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she has above all else been a servant to her King who is Christ, and so calls us all to the same pathway, to craft a similarly powerful testimony before the world.”

The text of the Moderator’s address -

[[] <https://www.presbyterianireland.org/News/June-2022/Moderator-addresses-Jubilee-service.aspx> ]

## **Pentecostal prayers for Synodal Pathway process**

**Prayers of thanksgiving were said across Ireland for the largest ever consultation to take place in the Catholic Church.**

The consultation is part of the Synodal Pathway process of renewal which the Catholic Church is currently undertaking at the invitation of Pope Francis. The Pope launched the two-year process last year and it’s seen by some as the most ambitious attempt at Catholic reform for 60 years.

Some Catholics hope it will lead to change on issues such as women's ordination, and same-sex relationships, while others fear it will undermine the principles of the Church.

The Diocesan phase of the Universal Synod in Ireland has involved individuals and groups coming together to listen, discern and engage in meaningful sharing, and a renewed commitment to being a missionary Church. All dioceses have now compiled feedback reports based on their local listening sessions.



Dr Nicola Brady, the Chair of the Steering Committee of the Irish Synodal Pathway said :

“It has been very encouraging to see the depth of engagement from dioceses and other groups with the local listening phase of the Universal Synod. There is much to reflect on as we offer these experiences and perspectives from Ireland to the wider global synodal process. The learning from this experience, and the very honest and wide-ranging sharing that has been offered, provides a strong foundation to build upon in the years ahead as we develop our own national Synodal Pathway.”

Primate of All Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin said :

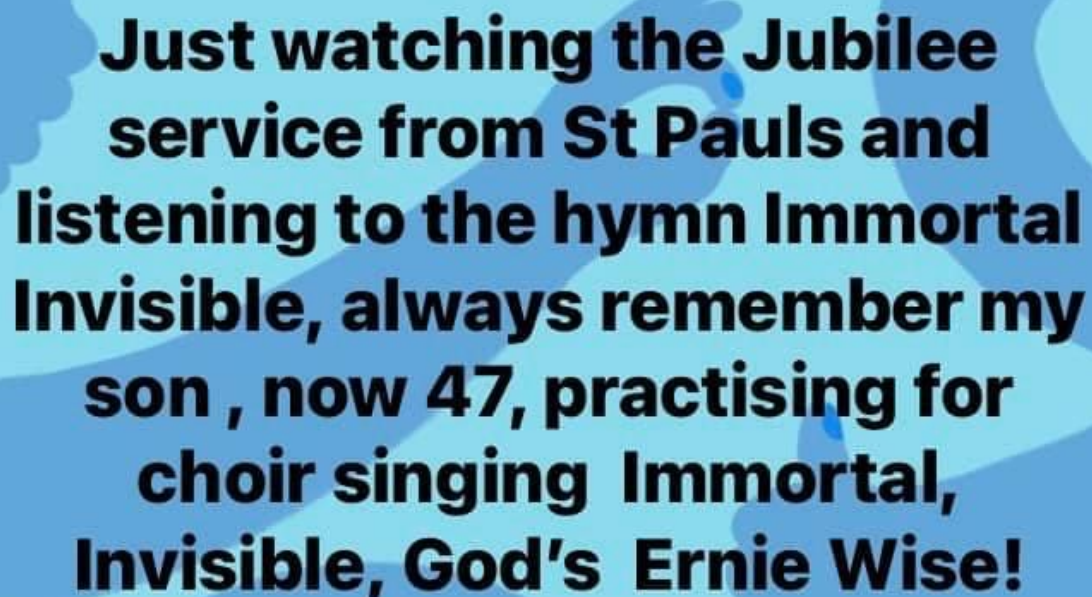
“This Pentecost Sunday we thanked God for the prayerful and Synodal engagement and listening that has taken place

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across Ireland over the past eight months. I am grateful to all who participated for their constructive engagement in the many local listening sessions, and for their timely submissions.”

The “listening phase” of the process will now be followed by a "continental phase" which will see bishops gather to discuss and formalise their findings.

A “Universal phase” will then see a month-long gathering of bishops at the Vatican in October 2023, after which the Pope will give his views and decisions on the issues discussed.



**Just watching the Jubilee  
service from St Pauls and  
listening to the hymn Immortal  
Invisible, always remember my  
son , now 47, practising for  
choir singing Immortal,  
Invisible, God's Ernie Wise!**



## Return of Retired Clergy Association (NI) annual lunch



Enjoying the food and chatter at the Retired Clergy Association (NI) annual buffet lunch at Tullyglass House, Ballymena.

**After an absence of three years due to pandemic restrictions, the Retired Clergy Association (Northern Ireland) resumed its annual lunch on Wednesday May 25.**

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A total of 47 people including retired clergy, a number of spouses, and clergy widows, came together in Tullyglass House, Ballymena.

Clergy widows are traditionally invited to the lunch as guests of the Association and in his opening remarks, the chairman,

Canon Ken Smyth, particularly welcomed the clergy widows, referring to the valued contribution which they and their late husbands had made to the parishes in which they had served and to the wider Church.

Committee members were pleased to welcome some new members and spouses who had not been present at previous lunches.

The buzz echoing through the restaurant bore testimony to the much-anticipated return of the lunch, as those present not only enjoyed a lovely buffet meal but also took the opportunity to reconnect with three years' personal, family and church news.

## **General Assembly to meet this month**

**As annual events retake their place in the calendar, and the rhythm of daily life returns, this month sees the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's General Assembly meet in Belfast, when it sits from Wednesday, 22 to Saturday, 26 June in Assembly Buildings – but with a number of significant changes to encourage greater participation.**



Having had to conduct business through a small online Commission in 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and hold a scaled back in-person meeting last October, this will be the first time since 2019 that the Church's principal decision-making and governing body has been able meet in its usual month and manner.

But as the Clerk of the General Assembly, Rev Trevor Gribben explained, while a return to June restores a welcome sense of normality, in seeking to make the General Assembly more accessible, those attending will notice a difference, hopefully for the good.

"This will be the first 'normal' post-pandemic Assembly, even though we all recognise that Covid-19 it still around and many lives are still feeling its effects and grieving personal loss. As the familiar events do return to their more accustomed slots in the year, I genuinely give thanks that our Presbyterian family can come together again in full General Assembly this month, to worship, pray, and take decisions, just as we have done for generations.

"If you attend, or watch the livestream, you really do get feel for the work and ministry of our Church, and we have endeavoured to make it more accessible for Members of Assembly. The 2021 Assembly agreed that from this year we would move to a slightly later start in June, with the Opening Night on a Wednesday and not a Monday, with business conducted into Thursday and the Friday evenings. It also agreed that business sessions would be held on Saturday morning and afternoon, hopefully giving people a greater opportunity to take part in discussions and our decision-making process," he said.

While the timings of the General Assembly may have changed, Mr Gribben said, that it still remains a special coming together of Presbyterians from across Ireland - upwards of 1000 ministers, elders and others from the denomination's 500-plus congregations - together with guests from home and overseas who are also expected.

“On our Opening Night I am looking forward to hearing from our Portrush minister, Rev John Kirkpatrick, who will be elected as our new Moderator and who will lead PCI during the forthcoming year. I am also looking forward to listening to the address of our outgoing Moderator, Dr David Bruce, as he shares his reflections on a unique second year in office.”

Mr Gribben, who served for over 18 years in parish ministry continued, “It will be a busy time with 26 items of allotted business from the General Assembly's 12 Councils and Commissions, numerous panels and task groups, spread across 25 hours, that will ultimately involve over 70 resolutions being decided upon. I very much hope that those from within our own church, and those who are not, will take the opportunity to tune in to the Assembly livestream, or join us in the public gallery, where they will be made very welcome.”

As in previous years, the 2022 General Assembly will also have two more informal presentations; the now regular ‘Listening to the Global Church’ session, by PCI's Council for Global Mission involving some of our overseas guests, as well as a special presentation led by the Council for

Congregational Life & Witness. As always, worship will be central to the week's business.

“The General Assembly isn't a meeting, which may seem a strange thing to say, as it is primarily an assembly of people meeting in 'general assembly', a coming together, first and foremost, to pray and worship, seeking God's will as we take decisions together. Worship is at the heart of that.

“Worship will take place on the Opening Night and also on Thursday morning, along with an Evening Celebration that night. Our Assembly Communion Service is on Friday morning, and is perhaps one of the most important moments of our time together, ,” Mr Gribben said.

“The Evening Celebration on Thursday is always packed and one of the highlights of the week. It starts at 7.45pm and I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all who can join us, especially for that evening. The Moderator will host it and will bring together his thoughts around 'Grace Works', his theme for the year. As we worship together, our guest speaker will be the Evangelical Alliance UK's director, Peter Lynas, with worship led by the New Irish Orchestra and Choir. Again, if you can't make it, you can join us via the livestream.”

Speaking to the PCI family as a whole, Mr Gribben concluded by saying, “We will be announcing the key elements of the business nearer the General Assembly, but as the Opening Night approaches we will continue to seek God's guidance in preparing for this year's Assembly, committing all to Him, who can do more than we can possibly imagine.”



You will be able to follow proceedings live via Twitter [@pciassembly](https://twitter.com/pciassembly) using the hashtag [#PCIGA22](https://twitter.com/PCIGA22) for all public sessions, which will also be live streamed on [www.presbyterianireland.org](http://www.presbyterianireland.org)

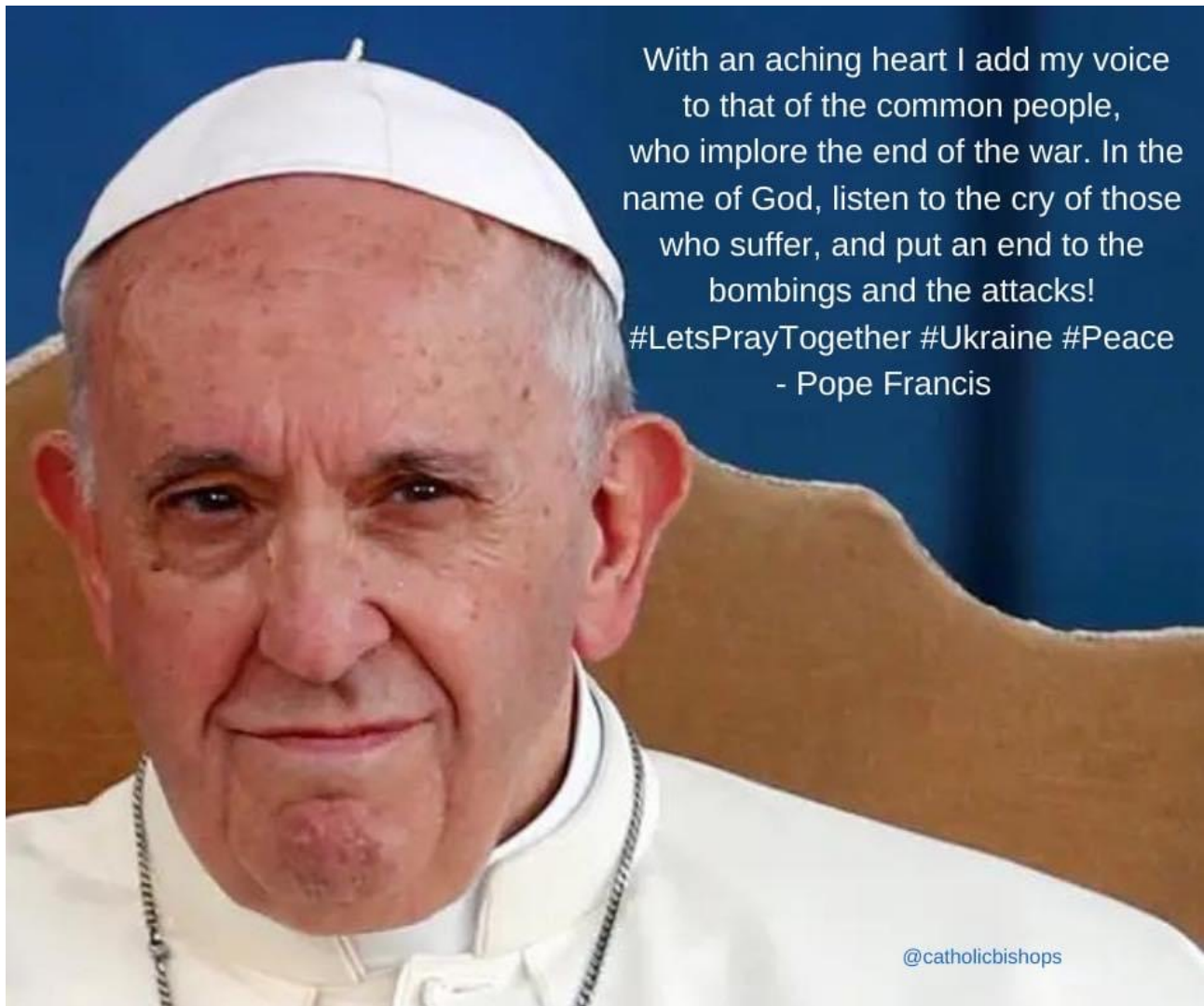
## News reports

### Historic church in 16th century Ukrainian monastery burns to ground after shelling by Russian forces

A church within a 16th century Orthodox monastery complex has been burned to the ground after shelling by Russian artillery in eastern Ukraine, says Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, but Russian media and supporters claim Ukrainian nationalists set it ablaze, as Moscow's ongoing invasion carries on for more than 100 days.

The wooden structure of All Saints Monastery of the Svyatogorsk Lavra, which is located in Gorlovka city in Donetsk region and belongs to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, was set ablaze Saturday after a series of targeted shelling by Russian forces, Fox News reported.

# CNI



With an aching heart I add my voice  
to that of the common people,  
who implore the end of the war. In the  
name of God, listen to the cry of those  
who suffer, and put an end to the  
bombings and the attacks!  
#LetsPrayTogether #Ukraine #Peace  
- Pope Francis

## Wheat can't be 'weapon of war', Pope says, urging lifting of Ukraine block

**Pope Francis appealed to authorities to lift a block on exports of wheat from Ukraine, saying the grain could not be used as a "weapon of war".**

Many millions of people, particularly in the world's poorest countries, depend on wheat from Ukraine, the pope told a general audience of thousands of people gathered in St. Peter's Square, calling for the block to be lifted.

The United Nations, which says a global food crisis is worsening, is trying to broker a deal to unblock Ukraine's grain exports, though Western leaders have blamed Russia for holding the world to ransom by blockading Ukrainian ports.

"The blocking of exports of wheat from Ukraine is very worrying because the lives of millions of people depend on it, especially in poorer countries," the pope said.

"I make a heartfelt appeal so that every effort is made to resolve this problem, to guarantee the universal right to nutrition. Please! Do not use wheat, a basic foodstuff, as a weapon of war," he added, to applause from the crowd.

Besides the death and devastation sown by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the war and the West's attempt to isolate Russia as punishment have sent the price of grain, cooking oil, fertiliser and energy soaring, hurting global growth.

The pope has often condemned the invasion and the bloodshed caused by what Moscow calls a "special military operation".

But Wednesday was the first time that he spoke in detail of the global food crisis it has brought.

Ukraine is desperately trying to export its vast stores of grain by road, river and rail to help avert the crisis, but has no chance of hitting its targets unless Russia lifts a blockade of its Black Sea ports, an agriculture official said last week.



## Queer Holiness evening at Southwark

**The Dean of Southwark Cathedral, The Very Revd Andrew Nunn, will host “Queer Holiness—An Evening with Charlie Bell on Thursday 9 June at 19:00 in the Southwark Cathedral Library.**

Bell is a Church of England Deacon and Academic Clinical Fellow in Psychiatry at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust & King’s College, London. His book, *Queer Holiness: The Gift of LGBTQI People to the Church* was published on 30 May. Signed copies are available through the Southwark Cathedral Book Shop. The author is currently serving his curacy in the Diocese of Southwark.

The Rt Revd Dr John Inge, Bishop of Worcester wrote to commend the work. “A comprehensive survey of the role of scripture, tradition and reason in understanding what it means to be human and Christian, focussing consistently on Christ, human and divine, and on “being human.”  
Trócaire given a ‘reminder’ about political activity

## In the media

### Ian Paisley: charismatic, chameleon or charlatan?

William Brown, a former ally of the DUP and Free Presbyterian church founder, on the man he knew.

Irish Times

This book tells the story of my early acquaintance with the man whose influence on Northern Ireland's religion and politics contributed to stimulating my personal 'pilgrim's progress' from fundamentalist religion and ultra-conservative politics.

I came from a similar evangelical-fundamentalist background. My father was a street preacher of Plymouth Brethren stock and knew the up-and-coming young Paisley well. I therefore was aware of him from my boyhood when he was embarking on his public career. I especially remember my first encounter with the big and gangly young clergyman, when my mother took me to hear him speak at a rally of the National Union of Protestants (NUP) in downtown Belfast's Wellington Hall.

As the leading speaker on that occasion, he delivered a thunderous oration to enthusiastic Ulster Protestants – a rally that might have ended in serious uproar when his angry audience mistook an interruption from the gallery for hostile heckling rather than the approving endorsement it was intended to be. Happily, the sagacious intervention of the chairman, Norman Porter, rescued the situation, not least the seriously discomfited Paisley.

Reflecting on Paisley's oratorical power going back more than 70 years, I saw this as the shape of things to come and a major factor in his rise to political influence. I describe what I regard as some of his more impactful early speeches. One such was his sensational Maura Lyons oration at his 'Monster Rally' in the Ulster Hall in 1956, which purported to include the personal statement and 'revelation' of the under-

age and still missing Catholic girl in whose illegal abduction Paisley became involved.

Another was his eye-opening sectarian rant to a Belfast shipyard lunchtime rally in 1959, in which he suggested that the only good Catholics were in Milltown (a Belfast cemetery). This was probably the first time a huge crowd of working-class loyalist men had encountered him, but it was that kind of inflammatory and terrifying oratory that would later inspire young militants like Gusty Spence, Billy Mitchell and David Ervine, to name but a few, to take up arms and fight ‘for God and Ulster,’ only to find themselves consequently serving long years in jail – all the while being denied and disowned by Paisley, whom they had once proudly regarded as their leader.

He could not deny Tommy McDowell, fatally electrocuted when attempting to bomb the Ballyshannon power station, and who is buried in the Free Presbyterian Churchyard in Kilkeel, Co Down.

More at -

<https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/2022/06/06/ian-paisley-charismatic-chameleon-or-charlatan/>

Ian Paisley as I Knew Him is available from bookshops or directly from Beyond the Pale Books at [beyondthepalebooks.com](http://beyondthepalebooks.com)

**CNI**



## Perspective

### A fashionable wish to rest in peace and rise in glory by Christopher Howse

**There is a way of talking about the recently dead that clergy use now that I can't remember they did a generation ago: "May he (or she) rest in peace and rise in glory."**

I can't object to the wish or prayer, but "May he rest in peace", requiescat in pace, RIP, covered the ground traditionally. Certainly if you rest in peace you will rise in glory, since the Creed specifies "the resurrection of the body" as a doctrine.

Quite what happens in the meantime is not clear. In the course of nature, you'd have a thin time of it, since a soul without a body can't see, hear or do much else. All the difference, though, would be made by seeing God in the so-called beatific vision, blissful in itself and also a way of knowing some of the things God knows.

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The dead rise, a window in the Musée de Cluny, from 1200  
The Church of England has trodden a narrow path of hope in the resurrection accompanied by rejection of prayers for the dead. So the Book of Common Prayer burial service prays for the living beside the body of the dead person "that, when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him [Jesus], as our hope is this our brother doth; and that, at the general

Resurrection in the last day, we may be found acceptable in thy sight”.

It is a small step from telling God that you hope the departed rests in Jesus and asking him to grant that the departed does. People are not so shy of telling God what they want from him for a sick child or to rescue them from danger. Anyway, the CofE service book called Common Worship includes a prayer “that all who with Christ have entered the shadow of death may rest in peace and rise in glory”.

Some suggest that the combined phrase was popularised by Robert Runcie when he was principal of Cuddesdon Anglican theological college (1960-70). Others have attributed it to Joe Fison as Bishop of Salisbury (1963-73). Since the Vatican Council, one option in the Roman Catholic liturgy in England and Wales among prayers after death, asks that the departed “may enjoy eternal light and peace and be raised up in glory with all your saints”.

The parallel between rest or sleep and death is obvious. A Jewish prayer before sleep asks: “May it be your will, Lord my God and God of my ancestors, that I lie down in peace and that I arise in peace.”

For once, archaeology is helpful in the history of prayers for the dead. Inscriptions in Roman catacombs give short acclamatory prayers for the dead such as Pax tibi (“Peace be with you”), Spiritus tuus in bono quiescat (“May your spirit rest in peace”), Deus tibi refrigeret (“May God refresh you”). This last prayer is echoed in the Canon of the Roman Mass, still in use today, asking for the granting “to all who rest in Christ, a place of refreshment, of light, and of peace”

(omnibus in Christo quiescentibus, locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis).

This refrigerium originated before Christian times as a meal consumed by the grave to commemorate the dead. But it came to signify a state of resting in Christ, awaiting his second coming, the resurrection of the dead and the general judgment. There was said to be a sect in Arabia in the third century called the Thnetopsychitæ who taught that the soul died with the body. I'm not sure what that could mean, if the whole individual is to rise again; nothing would be left to provide continuity.

Luther is accused of believing in “soul sleep” – that souls remain unaware between death and the general resurrection – but I don't know that he did. It has not “entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love him”, St Paul declared. So it seems rash to insist on speculative details of how we rest in peace.

Courtesy The Telegraph

## Poem for today

### The Voyage by Karl Shapiro

The ship of my body has danced in the dance of the storm  
And pierced to the centre the heavy embrace of the tide;  
It has plunged to the bottomless trough with the knife of its  
form  
And leapt with the prow of its motion elate from the bride.

And now in the dawn I am salt with the taste of the wave,  
Which lies with itself and suspires, her beauty asleep,  
And I peer at the fishes with jaws that devour and rave  
And hunt in her dream for the wrack of our hands in the  
deep.

But the wind is the odour of love that awakes in the sun  
The stream of our voyage that lies on the belt of the seas,  
And I gather and breathe in the rays of the darkness  
undone,  
And drift in her silence of morning and sail at my ease,

Where sponges and rubbery seaweeds and flowers of hair  
Uprooted abound in the water and choke in the air.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## Church News Ireland

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