

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Historic Royal visit to Enniskillen**

## Image of the day

On the 26th June 2012 The Belfast Telegraph reported - The Queen's trip to Enniskillen in Fermanagh has seen her make a groundbreaking first visit to a Catholic church in either Northern Ireland or the Republic.

“She made the short walk across the street from the Anglican Cathedral's deanery, where she privately met seven survivors of the Enniskillen bombing, to St Michael's, filled with local community groups that had gathered to meet her.

“The Queen is making her 20th visit to Northern Ireland since first arriving on its shores in 1953, but has never entered a Roman Catholic place of worship, Buckingham Palace confirmed...”

The painting of the event will play a part in the thanks giving and celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee later this year

## News reports

### **Two former Anglican bishops to be ordained as Catholic priests**

**Two former Anglican bishops are due to be ordained as Catholic priests within the next few weeks.**

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Jonathan Goodall, the former Bishop of Ebbsfleet, will be consecrated in Westminster Cathedral on Saturday March 12 and John Goddard, the former Bishop of Burnley, will be ordained a Catholic priest in the Lutyens Chapel of the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, Liverpool, on Saturday April 2.

Both men were formerly Anglo-Catholics and they were two of four Anglican bishops who were received in the Catholic Church last year.

The former Anglican Bishop of Rochester, Michael Nazir-Ali, and the former Bishop of Chester, Peter Forster, were also received into the Catholic faith last autumn, while Dr Gavin Ashenden, a former chaplain to the Queen and a traditionalist Anglican bishop, became a Catholic in Shrewsbury Cathedral at Christmas 2019.

Fr Nazir-Ali and Dr Forster are both from the Evangelical wing of the Church of England. The former was ordained as a Catholic priest of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham soon after his reception into the Catholic Church.

Rev. Goodall, a married father of two whose wife, Sarah, has also become a Catholic, will serve as the parish priest of St William of York in Stanmore in the Archdiocese of Westminster and in the north London borough of Harrow.

Rev. Goddard, also a married father of two, is also hoping to serve as a diocesan priest and is hoping to be appointed to a parish in the Archdiocese of Liverpool after he is ordained by Auxiliary Bishop Tom Williams of Liverpool.

“I cannot think of a greater joy in life than serving as a parish priest,” he told the Catholic Herald. “It is perhaps the greatest gift for an ordained person.”

Rev. Goodall first announced his decision to become a Catholic via a statement posted on the website of the Diocese of Ebbsfleet, set up in 1994 to serve Anglo-Catholic parishes which would not accept women as priests, following a long period of prayer he described as being “among the most testing periods of my life”.

He was the second Bishop of Ebbsfleet to cross the Tiber, following in the footsteps of Mgr Andrew Burnham who resigned in 2010 to join other former Anglicans in the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham.

Fr Nazir-Ali, however, was the first former diocesan – as opposed to suffragan, area or “flying – Anglican bishop to be received into the Catholic Church since Bishop Graham Leonard of London and Bishop Richard Rutt of Leicester in 1994.

## **Just one in three Scots now identify as being a Christian – a million fewer than 11 years ago**

**A survey carried out by YouGov for the Humanist Society Scotland says that those who identify as Christian don't share in key Christian beliefs with around a third of Christians (36%) saying they “believe**

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## **the teachings of Christianity’ , Martin Williams writes in the Glasgow Herald**

Only 28% of those who said they were Christian said they “believe that Jesus was a real person who died and came back to life and was the son of God” and only 18% attend church services.

The study found that in 2011 53% of people in Scotland identified as Christian – by 2022 that has dropped to 33%.

Some 70% of young people aged 18-34 stated they had no religion, compared to 50% surveyed in 2011.

The poll findings state how 56% of Scottish adults could tick the “none” box when asked what religion they “belong to” this month. some 33% are expected to identify with a Christian denomination with around 6% aligning with other faith traditions

## **Catholic Church cancels gay author’s visit to London school**

**The Catholic Church in England has come under fire after cancelling a planned visit by a gay author to a Catholic school in south London.**

Author of Noah Can’t Even, Simon James Green was due to speak and sign books for World Book Day this week at The John Fisher School, a Catholic boys’ secondary school in Croydon.

But Southwark Archdiocese, which oversees the school, decided to cancel a few days before the event.

In a statement, the education director Simon Hughes said that the author's visit fell "outside the scope of what is permissible in a Catholic school".

"In such circumstances, we have no alternative but to affirm our unequivocal and well-known theological and moral precepts and to act in accordance with them.

"The book-signing event scheduled for the 7th of March 2022 at The John Fisher School, Purley is one such event and we have recommended that the school's leaders cancel it."

The decision followed a petition by website Catholic Truth to scrap the event arguing that going ahead with it would be "a major problem" as it would "mislead [young boys] into accepting, as normal and good, sexual behaviour which is condemned by Christ's Church."

The Archdiocese also made redundant several governors, who had backed the event from the school's leadership.

The National Education Union has called for them to be reinstated and the visit to be rescheduled.

## **Church needs women Saints, Pope Francis tells conference**

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**The Catholic Church needs women, especially women saints, who have shown throughout history an unwavering dedication to God and to caring for their brothers and sisters, Pope Francis said.**

The women honored as doctors of the church and as co-patrons of Europe, he said, are examples of “the courage to face difficulties; the capacity for being practical; a natural desire to promote what is most beautiful and human according to God’s plan; and a far-sighted, prophetic vision of the world and of history, that made them sowers of hope and builders of the future.”

Pope Francis made his comments in a message March 8 to a conference at Rome’s Pontifical Urbanian University on “Women Doctors of the Church and Co-Patronesses of Europe.”

The academic conference, held on International Women’s Day, focused on Sts. Teresa of Ávila, Catherine of Siena, Thérèse of Lisieux and Hildegard of Bingen, who are doctors of the church, and on Sts. Bridget of Sweden, Edith Stein and Catherine of Siena, who are co-patrons of Europe.

The teaching and example of the seven women, he said, “can offer light and hope to our fragmented and fractious world.”

While they lived at different times, in different countries and had “very different missions,” the pope said, they each offered an example of a holy life.

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“Through the grace of baptism, they were docile to the Spirit and pursued their own journey of faith, moved not by shifting ideologies but an unwavering adherence to the ‘humanity of Christ’ that permeated their lives,” the pope wrote.

Sometimes they “felt incapable and limited, ‘little women,’ as Teresa of Ávila would say, faced with an undertaking that surpassed them,” he said, but they drew strength from the love of God and followed their vocations on “a path accessible to all: that of holiness in daily life.”

While the world today demands that “the dignity and intrinsic worth with which the Creator endowed them be restored to all women,” the church also recognizes that it needs their gifts and full involvement, he said.

## In the media

### Integrated Education Bill explained

#### **Belfast Telegraph**

Just 7% of pupils attend an integrated school and there are not enough places for the number of pupils who wish to attend.

What does the Bill seek to achieve?

- Set minimum targets for children being educated in integrated schools within the next 10 years.
- Place a duty on the Department of Education and other bodies to encourage, not merely to promote and facilitate, the development of integrated education.



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- Audit demand for integrated education and require the Department and Education Authority to report back on this and take account of it in budget and planning decisions.

[[] <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/education/integrated-education-bill-explained-41427556.html> ]

## **Abuse survivors hear Stormont public apology**

### **BBC NI News**

Survivors of historical institutional abuse in Northern Ireland have been told that the state believes them - and is sorry. Ministers from the five main Stormont parties made statements of apology in the Northern Ireland Assembly. It follows a 2017 inquiry which examined the abuse of hundreds of children at Church and state-run institutions over seven decades.

The move was welcomed by some; others said it was too little, too late.

[[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-60676276>]

## **Historical abuse victims told they were failed by state during public apology**

### **Belfast Telegraph**

The public apology was recommended in the final report of the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry (HIAI), which was published five years ago.

Victims of historical institutional abuse in Northern Ireland have been told they were failed by the state during a long-awaited public apology at Stormont.

Survivors watched on in the Assembly chamber as a minute's silence was held before five ministers, representing

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each of the main Stormont parties, offered their apology on behalf of the Government.

[[] <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/historical-abuse-victims-told-they-were-failed-by-state-during-public-apology-at-stormont-41436019.html> ]

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

### Broadcast from Down Cathedral

**On Sunday 13 March, a Service of the Word anticipating St Patrick's Day will be broadcast from Down Cathedral on BBC Radio 4 and BBC Radio Ulster. The preacher will be the Very Revd Henry Hull, Dean of Down.**

As well as looking forward to St Patrick's Day on Thursday 17 March, the service will focus on the BBC's Sunday Worship theme of hospitality and will feature the story of Madlug, a 'buy one, give one' social enterprise supporting young people in care, started by Dave Linton who is a former Youth Worker in the diocese.

Some of the prayer resources for Ukraine recently published by the Church of Ireland will be used.

Speaking about the service, Dean Hull said: 'It is always a privilege to welcome people to worship with us through these broadcast services when we have the opportunity. I am particularly looking forward to welcoming worshippers from across the UK and beyond as we consider and celebrate the legacy of Patrick.'

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*You can listen to the service on Sunday 13 March at 8.10 am on BBC Radio 4 and at 10.15 am on BBC Radio Ulster.*

## **Perspective special**

### **Ukraine and Russia, Church and State, and Hope, Prayer and Action**

**by Bishop Dagmar Winter**

Dagmar Winter is Bishop of Huntingdon in the diocese of Ely. This is an edited version of her Presidential Address at the Ely Diocesan Synod on 5 March 2022.

#### **The Invasion of Ukraine and the Religio-Nationalist Background<sup>1</sup>**

The images on our screen are awful, reminding us of World War II.

There is a religious dimension to the Russian invasion of Ukraine which may in some quarters give rise to that old chestnut that religion is the cause of all wars. (John Lennon: “Imagine ... and no religion, too.”) Religion is closely tied up with expressions of identity and what we hold most precious. Given human nature with its hunger for power, taking institutional religion away will not cause the end to all war.

The central question in the current war is whether the church and people of Ukraine are or are not part of the church and people of Russia. Some history will help.

## **The Baptism of Rus'**

In the tenth century a pagan Slavic people known as the Kievan Rus' lived in present day Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. In c 988 St Vladimir, the ruler of the Rus', converted to Christianity, was baptised and brought the rest of the people to baptism also. This event is known as the 'Baptism of Rus' and occurred in or near Kyiv. This is seen to the present day as a watershed moment in Russian history and one which, in the minds of some, unites the people of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine as the successors of the Kievan Rus' and as a single, Orthodox Christian Russian people. Such is the importance of Vladimir that he is given the epithet 'Equal to the Apostles'. (Note Putin's Christian name!) Also, as Kyiv was the centre of the lands of the Rus', it has a special status in Russian self-identity.

Over the next few hundred years empires came and went, peoples moved around and borders changed. In the sixteenth century a part of the church in modern-day western Ukraine came into communion with Rome.

## **The Rise of Moscow and of the Ottomans**

The next important date is 1686 and there are two different understandings and interpretations of what happened. (Disputes over what happened at this time formed the basis of the arguments in 2018 about the independence of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.)

One side of the story is that, with the expansion of the Ottoman Empire the Ecumenical Patriarch was not able to get to Kyiv for the consecration of a new Metropolitan and

so asked the Patriarch of Moscow (the Moscow Patriarchate had been granted autocephaly — that is self-government — in 1589) to do so, but without the assumption that the church in Ukraine would become dependent on Moscow. The other side of the story is that, for whatever reason, the Ecumenical Patriarch in 1689 transferred authority over the Ukrainian Church to Moscow. Practically speaking, Kyiv did begin to look ecclesiastically to Russia and the difficulty of communication with Constantinople in Ottoman times to some extent forced this.

## **Modern day Ukraine and the Decree of Autocephaly**

In more recent history the territory currently covered by Ukraine has, like much of central and eastern Europe, been controlled by different powers, not least the Soviet Union under which the church was oppressed. There were moves in the early 1990s to set up an independent Orthodox Church in Ukraine (the Kyiv Patriarchate), which led to one split with Moscow.

After the annexation of Crimea in 2014 President Poroshenko of Ukraine was instrumental in pushing for a decisive break with Moscow and the establishment of a self-governing (autocephalous) Orthodox Church of Ukraine. This happened in 2018 when the Holy Synod of Constantinople decided that the Ecumenical Patriarch should grant a ‘tomos’ (decree) of autocephaly and erect the new church under the leadership of Metropolitan Epiphany of Kyiv. This move caused a new schism between Moscow and Constantinople.

## Ukraine and Russia – Church and State

We see in Ukraine and Russia a clash of two world views in which statehood, nation and church are united.

In the Russian view as expressed (pretty much directly) by President Putin and Patriarch Kirill, Russia is seen to include Ukraine as one people in one church and, as essentially one nation, the descendants of Rus', who naturally look to Moscow for civil and religious leadership.

Ukraine of course sees itself as a sovereign state with territory, borders and a distinct national identity and view of history. For example, Moscow was not even founded until nearly two centuries after the Baptism of Rus'. The independence of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine from Moscow is part of the evidence for this wider independence and natural, given that most (if not all) sovereign nations in the traditional orthodox territories have their autocephalous churches.

Meanwhile the Moscow Patriarchate is heightening further conflict with the Ecumenical Patriarchate. By ignoring the rule that you should not trespass on another's jurisdiction, Moscow is setting up in Africa and offering material rewards to churches of the Patriarchate of Alexandria (which comes under the Constantinople Patriarchate) if they join Moscow. This is a significant flexing and expanding of Russian muscle, an ecclesiological echo of the invasion of Ukraine.

The Russian Church does not have a tradition of speaking truth to power. A particularly unpalatable aspect is the way that the Moscow Patriarch Kirill appears to be literally in

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Putin's pay. He, Kirill, has been quoted urging Russian soldiers to fight, to use more high-tech equipment to protect the Fatherland while he himself has been shown to display and then attempt to hide the wearing of very high-end luxury items.

This is what happens when a church loses its critical distance from statehood and nationhood and conflates them with church and faith. There is here a literally hopeless tangle: of faith and historic ethno-nationalist identity, of theological/ecclesiological issues and acquisitive desire for influence, land, resources and people.

We should applaud those courageous Russian Orthodox priests who have voiced their protest against the war and their Church's support of it.

## **The Church's Social and Political Mission – The German Christians**

Historical comparisons are always problematic and bound to be wrong at some level, nonetheless, the example of German Christians springs to mind, who under Hitler totally bought into the idea of a new dawn under German Christianity, a vile religious version of fascism.

Various important theological statements have been made, including the famous Barmen Declaration of 1934, but today I would like to quote from the Darmstädter Wort issued in 1947 in the post-war ruins. Despite some of its shortcomings, I believe it still has a poignant message for us about the church's social and political mission, not least for

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our day where society is plagued both by political apathy and significant polarization.

Through Jesus Christ joyous liberation befalls us, liberation from the godless ties of this world in order to liberate us for free and grateful service to his creatures.

Do not let despair overwhelm you for Christ is Lord.

Say goodbye to all faithless indifference, do not allow yourselves to be seduced by dreams of a better past ..., but in your freedom and in great sobriety be aware of your responsibility which all of us have for the building up of a better polity which serves the rule of law, welfare, peace and reconciliation of the peoples.

## **Seek first the Kingdom of God.2**

### **Our Anxieties and our Focus this Lent**

The situation in Ukraine makes us feel so helpless. What can we do?

There is so much anxiety around: the pandemic, climate change, migration, the economy, and now the nightmare in Ukraine.

While applauding and appreciating the flow of information and the work of brave journalists who bring us the news, I don't think it's helpful for us or indeed for our children to expose ourselves to the endless torturous images of the wall-to-wall coverage. It will only either desensitize us or suck us into some black mental hole or both. I am concerned what this is doing to the mental health of our community, including especially children, where many have



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already suffered with lockdown isolation and pandemic fears.

## Seek first the kingdom of God

Following the tenets of the Christian faith, we hold to the truth of the ultimate weakness of the display of aggression.

I think it is not a distraction but essential that we should focus and refocus on the teaching of the Christian faith (Mt 28:16-20), on the values that have eternal quality: truth, freedom, justice, compassion, human dignity, respect, faith, hope and love.

This Lent, I would suggest to you, is a time in which to discover or rediscover how the church can be a school for discipleship, or a school of virtue.

And this Lent might just challenge us how serious we are about the fruits of our faith, indeed, its virtues.

Although Ukraine is a fair distance away, the conflict will undoubtedly affect us over the next few years, even if warfare is contained within the current region. We are interconnected through the international markets for goods from energy to arables, and the UNHCR estimates there could be 4 million refugees, maybe more. We cannot allow Ukraine's neighbours to shoulder that alone.

Will we share supplies, accept restrictions and losses, offer hospitality directly or indirectly, will we encourage our politicians that we're up for it — without the burdens only

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being born by those who are weakest in our midst, already battered by the current economic crisis?

## Nurturing Hope

We feel powerless but powerlessness is where the Christian story begins. Remember the story of the passion, the cruel torture?

And because we have a Lord who was caught up in simmering and often violent conflict between his people and an occupying force, we know that hope is mostly not a victory march but a small, whispered Hallelujah. Sustained by the love divine we encounter in Christ, a love that does not waiver. The journey is from Lent to Easter.

Hope means believing in spite of the evidence and then waiting and working for the evidence to change. This includes listening for the voices of hope in our midst and encouraging them, the faithful committed work of people happening in parishes and projects, networks and communities.

When we pray to be generous and visible people of Jesus Christ, can we pray this Lent to learn to be a non-anxious and hopeful presence in this troubled world, because we know that what we hold dear, truth, freedom, justice, compassion, human dignity, respect, faith, hope and love, have an eternal quality that evil acts like brutal invasions and indiscriminate bombings will never have?

Of course we must keep ourselves informed of what is happening. But our focus should be:

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“Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” (Phil 4:8)

It is our job to promote this in everything we do and say, often implicitly and sometimes explicitly.

### **So what can we do?**

**Pray — keep an eye on the website of the Diocese in Europe.**

As I understand, the most effective way at the moment of supporting refugees and displaced people from Ukraine is by donating money to one of the experienced relief agencies.

Local capacity for effective logistics has well reached its limit in the difficult circumstances, and loads of generous uncoordinated trucks arriving is not as helpful as it may seem to us.

We all want to help personally and tangibly, but for the time being, the best and most effective help we can provide is by donating to the Disasters Emergency Committee (note this is how the Red Cross asks for donations), or the Joint Emergency Appeal by the Church of England Diocese in Europe and USPG.

Note that the UK Government have said they will match public donations (pound for pound up to £20 million) to the Disasters Emergency Committee.

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You can also support Christ Church Kyiv through Just Giving (name Christ Church Kyiv). And you can send supportive messages to them on social media.

## **Write to your MP about visa flexibility for refugees.**

Finally, we do well to remember the unspeakable suffering of so many peoples, in Yemen or Sudan, the Uigur in China, Syrians — the list, sadly, is very long.

Let us pray for ourselves as with and for all those caught up in horrific violence and warfare around the world:

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed: Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that both our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by thee we being defended from the fear of our enemies may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

I acknowledge and am grateful for a Briefing by the Archbishop's Ecumenical Adviser, Will Adam, on the historical developments

## **Speaking to the soul**

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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# Church News Ireland

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