

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Sunday flowers, Belvoir parish

Image of the day

In appreciation of church flower arrangers

People
and
places

“Speak to us of God!”

SAINT PATRICK OF IRELAND

SAINT PATRICK

IN HIS OWN WORDS

An Ecumenical Celebration
in word, song and traditional Irish music

St. Patrick's Day 17 March 2022, 6pm
St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin
Collection in aid of Barnardos Ireland

DUBLIN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

DUBLIN IRELAND
SAINT PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL DUBLIN

Ecumenical service on Saint Patrick's Day in Saint Patrick's Cathedral

“Speak to us of God!” this quote from a legendary dialogue between Celtic princess Eithne Alba and St. Patrick is the theme for this year's ecumenical service on Saint Patrick's Day at 18.00 in Saint Patrick's Cathedral. For the first time

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since 2019 the Cathedral is able to welcome back this gathering of the 14 churches from the Orthodox, the Roman Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter tradition who are in membership of the Dublin Council of Churches. The service remembers and honours Ireland's ancestor in faith, Patrick, Patron Saint and exemplary figure of courage and steadfastness in the face of adversity. All are welcome to join this celebration in word, song and traditional Irish music. Rev. Andrew Kingston of Methodist Centenary Church, Leeson Park will address the gathering.



THE NI INTER-FAITH FORUM
AND
THE CORRYMEELA COMMUNITY



invite you to join with them in
an inter-faith prayer gathering to pray for

PEACE IN UKRAINE

and an end to war
on

Wednesday 16th March at 1pm
eve of St Patrick's Day

At
Forthspring
373-375 springfield road
Belfast BT12 7DG



**Pray for peace and an end to war in
Ukraine**

March 14, 2022

Join Corrymeela and the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum this coming Wednesday at 1 pm to pray for peace and an end to war in Ukraine.

At Forthspring, 373-375 Springfield Road, Belfast

New Bishop's Curate appointed in Clogher Diocese

The Bishop of Clogher, the Right Revd Dr. Ian Ellis has appointed Revd Timothy Irvine as the Bishop's Curate of the Donagh Group of Parishes, based at Glaslough, Co. Monaghan. Revd Irvine will be in charge of the parishes of Donagh and Tyholland with Errigal Truagh.

Bishop Ellis, welcoming Revd Irvine to Clogher Diocese said; "I am very pleased that Revd Timothy Irvine has accepted my invitation to be Bishop's Curate in the parishes of Donagh, Tyholland with Errigal Truagh. Revd Timothy joins us from the dioceses of Meath and Kildare and brings much experience of rural life along with wider experience from his earlier career. I am sure that his very warm personality and many talents will be quickly recognised and appreciated by his new parishioners and the wider community. We wish him God's blessing on this new chapter in his ministry among us."

Revd Irvine, who has been Rector of the Mountmellick Group of Parishes in Co Laois in the Dioceses of Meath and Kildare, said he is looking forward to getting to know the parishioners of the Donagh Group of Parishes.



A native of Newtownards, Co Down, he studied English and Drama at Queen's University Belfast before teaching English at Cambridge House Boys' Grammar 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.

Following the economic downturn 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 joint community of monks and nuns.

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.

Tim is a lover of music, enjoying classical, opera, jazz, pop, metal, hip hop, soul, electronica, world music and classic rock. He also enjoys reading especially the novels of Anita Brookner, Barbara Pym, P.G. Wodehouse and the short stories of Alice Munro and William Trevor.

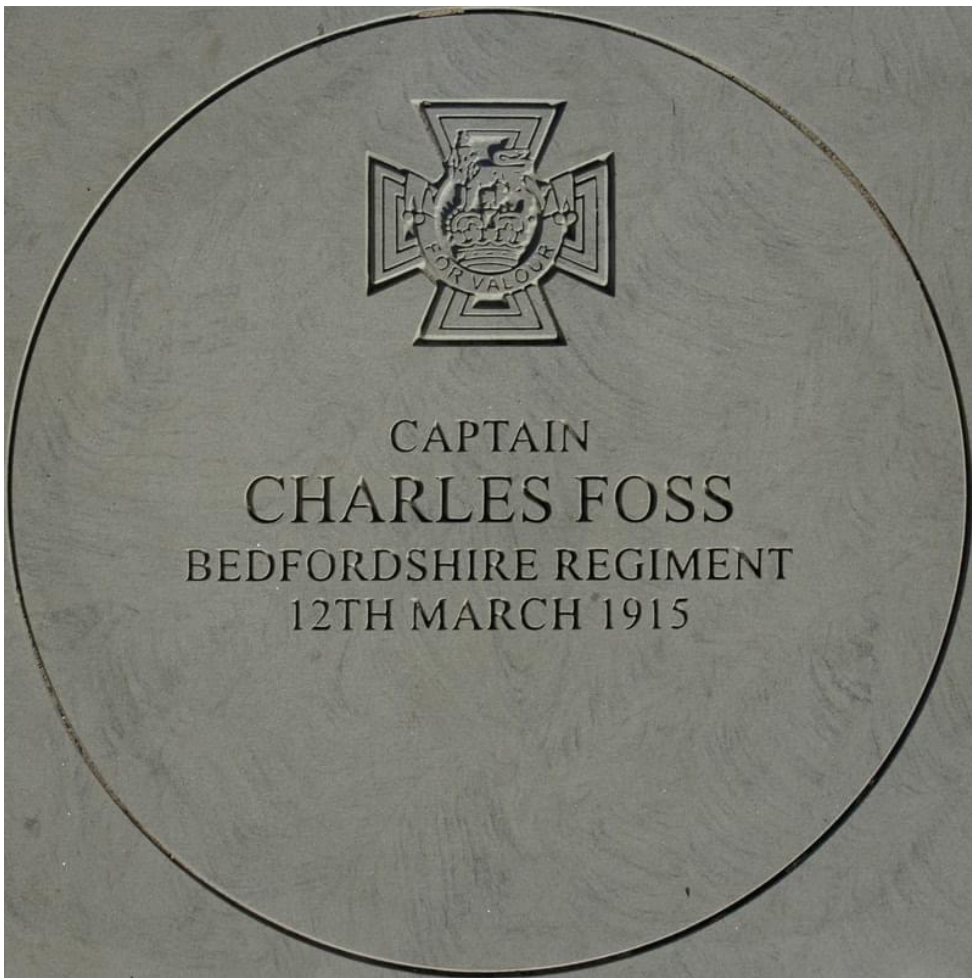
Bishop's son won Victoria Cross

Captain Charles Foss of 2nd Battalion, the Bedfordshire Regiment, was awarded the Victoria Cross for most conspicuous bravery on March 12, 1915 at Neuve Chapelle, France.

The Battle of Neuve Chapelle was the first offensive campaign fought by the British Expeditionary Force during the First World War. Plans were developed for an attack on the German lines in the 'flat lands' of northern France, close to the Belgian border.

The British attackers broke through German defences at the village of Neuve-Chapelle, but this initial success could not be exploited.

Captain Foss' citation reads: "Foss, on his own initiative, dashed forward with eight men, and under heavy fire



attacked the enemy with bombs, and captured the position, including the fifty-two Germans occupying it. The capture of this position from the enemy was of greatest importance, and the utmost

bravery was displayed in essaying the task with so very few men.”

Foss was the son of the Bishop of Osaka and was born in Kobe, Japan, before joining the British Army in 1904 aged 19. He later achieved the rank of Brigadier and died in London aged 68.

At the National Arboretum, you will find 145 commemorative paving stones that form a permanent memorial to overseas-born First World War recipients of the Victoria Cross.

It's free to visit the Arboretum, but we recommend booking on their website in advance to guarantee entry.

News reports

Presbyterian Church concern at cost of living crisis

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), through its Council for Public Affairs, has expressed its concern regarding the significant and rapid increase in the cost of living across Ireland, particularly in relation to electricity and energy supply, and has called on the Oireachtas, Northern Ireland Assembly and ministers in both jurisdictions to urgently find ways to mitigate the worst effects of this cost of living crisis.

Speaking after the Council meeting, held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast, Dr Bruce said, “While the cost of living has been rising since the end of last year, the record breaking fuel and energy prices represents for many people a very real personal crisis for them and their families, faced with the choice of either ‘eating or heating’. For others the cost of living crisis, which is having an impact across the island of Ireland, also comes with the additional potential risk of homelessness.

“Last week in Northern Ireland, for example, one leading energy supplier announced a 39 per cent increase in gas prices from next month. Northern Ireland’s Consumer Council estimates the move will impact just under 190,000 customers at a cost of around £240 (€289) a year. With increasing numbers of families struggling to afford basic essentials, especially families and individuals on Universal

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Credit and Social Welfare, without additional support more people will find the increase in energy costs, combined with rising food prices, difficult to cope with,” Dr Bruce said.

The Moderator also said that he was aware from statistics available from the UK’s Trussell Trust, that in 2020/2021 foodbanks in its Northern Ireland network, distributed nearly 80,000 food parcels, compared to just over 37,000 in 2018/2019. With the Department of Social Protections in Dublin estimating that one in ten people in the Republic of Ireland are living in food poverty, Dr Bruce understands that the Feed Cork Food Bank in Cork City, for example, provided nearly 6,000 food parcels last year. This month alone they have already distributed over 1,000.

“There has been a steady increase in those falling into fuel and food poverty in recent years, a situation that is being exacerbated by the global outworking of Russia’s unprovoked and unlawful invasion of Ukraine last month. Foodbanks, many of which are supported by PCI congregations across Ireland, are reporting an increase in requests for support, with one foodbank in the Greater Belfast area reporting a 25 percent increase in demand since Christmas,” Dr Bruce continued.

“I echo the concern of colleagues who have stated that governments can’t expect faith, charity and third sector organisations alone to meet the needs of those living in poverty today. Elected representatives must also do all they can to alleviate the growing financial pressure, due to the current cost of living crisis, that increasing numbers people in society are under, especially those who are on its margins,” he said.

The Moderator also highlighted the regrettable consequences of the current political hiatus in Northern Ireland saying, “In February, at the time of the collapsing of the Executive, I expressed concern on behalf of PCI that the most vulnerable in our society would suffer most during a period of uncertainty and lack of clear decision-making.

“I do, however, welcome recent decisions that have been made by Executive ministers including the freeze in public sector rent and public transport fares, the one-off energy support payment of £200 (€238) that is going out today, along with the passing of legislation to extend welfare mitigations in Northern Ireland. At the same time, I also welcome the Irish Government’s initiative to significantly cut the excise duty on fuel. These decisions should provide some help to those struggling to afford basic essentials, but much more needs to be done. I would urge the UK government to do the same.”

Dr Bruce concluded by saying, “Our Lord Jesus’ brother, the Apostle James said, ‘faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead [...] faith without deeds is useless.’ I give thanks and commend the work of our congregations on the ground across Ireland, and everyone involved in providing support through foodbanks, debt counselling, discretionary payments and by other means, especially to those families and individuals on the brink.

“However this is merely a sticking plaster trying to alleviate symptoms rather than cause. Northern Ireland still does not have an anti-poverty strategy nearly 25 years after The Northern Ireland Act 1998 obliged the Executive to develop one. MLAs need to find ways to support those most affected

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by the cost of living crisis now, and prioritise the development of an anti-poverty strategy in line with the Act and commitments given in New Decade, New Approach, following May's Assembly election.

“At the same time, we call on all members of the Oireachtas to work together to develop a cross party anti-poverty strategy that will include the issue of sharply rising private sector rental prices. For those living on the brink, on fixed incomes and the ‘working poor’ across this island, much still needs to be done” Dr Bruce said.

Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving in Saint Columb's Cathedral, Londonderry

Relatives who lost loved ones during the worst year of the Troubles – 1972 – took part in a Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving in Saint Columb's Cathedral, Londonderry on Friday evening, organised in conjunction with South East Fermanagh Foundation (SEFF) to mark the European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Terrorism.

The Dean of Derry, Very Rev Raymond Stewart, who led the Service, welcomed those who were "parents, husbands and wives, sons and daughters" of those who were being remembered. “Many of you have carried emotional scars over many decades,” the Dean said. “In the words of the theme of this Service, I hope that the hurt you have felt and



continue to feel is acknowledged, so your pain will be healed by our loving and merciful God.”

SEFF spokesman Kenny Donaldson addressed the congregation, saying the Service had come about because they were staring into 30 years of 50th anniversaries. “1972, as you painfully know, was the worst year of the Troubles in the context of the loss of human life. Almost 500 people perished as a result of those Troubles and 4,000 were injured, and I also want to say that there is a family who are contributing, tonight, and they still await even closure around that issue,” – a reference to the family of one of the ‘Disappeared’, Columba McVeigh.

Mr Donaldson said they had gathered as one in the Cathedral to send out a message of solidarity and of unity. “We come from across the religious, and no-practising, and



across the political spectrum, in whatever shade you come. But as we always say within SEFF, we need to start realising, what is the ‘them and us’ within our society in Northern Ireland? Is it Protestant and Catholic? Is it Unionist and Nationalist? Or is it actually where we stand on the issue of the sanctity of human life? That surely, folks, is the real ‘them and us’.”

In his sermon, the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Andrew Forster, pointed out that the sanctuary of the cathedral had been decorated with flowers in the colours of the Ukrainian flag for Friday evening’s Service. “Of all people,” Bishop Andrew said, “you understand the anxiety, the fear, the heartache that all the people of Ukraine are going through tonight. It’s very appropriate, this evening, that we pray for them and also [that] we give to their relief

later on this evening.” As they left the church, the congregation were invited to contribute to a collection which will be used to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

The Bishop said he was honoured and humbled to share with people who had borne pain and heartache and grief with dignity and grace. “You have lived through years of lost experiences, of opportunities that never came, of children that were never born, of grandchildren that were never to be because of a bullet or a bomb.”

Bishop Andrew described grief as a journey without a terminal or destination. It was a journey people had to travel throughout their lives. “To be frank, as a pastor, I have stood in awe of the resilience of many people just like you who have gone on to live their lives, to bless their families and help their communities, yet I know that the years of trauma and the tears of trauma are still incredibly raw, and they are tears that never truly go away.”

The Bishop recalled some of the worst incidents from 1972’s “dastardly roll call”, names that he said were carved into the granite of our memory and etched into our collective psyche: Bloody Sunday, Aldershot, Claudy, The Abercorn, Bloody Friday. “And let me say something that all of you know only too well, that tears transcend division: there is no difference in a broken Protestant heart and a broken Catholic heart; there is no difference in the heartache and grief and tears of loss. And what we do tonight, all these years later – and what you do, I’m sure, most nights – is grieve. Tonight, we grieve together. Grief is that terrible emotion of having to say goodbye, compounded when we’re not ready to say goodbye, and multiplied when the grief is caused by the

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wicked and evil intent of another human being.”

The Dean of Derry

The God whom they worshipped

tonight was finely tuned to our hurts and fears, heartache and pain, Bishop Andrew said. “Our God is the God who comes alongside those who grieve, but – more than that – who carries us in our hurt. We grieve today and grief is that emotion that in some strange way helps us – it breaks us, but it helps us understand the depth of love that we have for that person whom we have lost. Grief writes in capital letters the word ‘Love’, because it shows us again and again the love that was given to us by the one we’ve lost, and the love that in a strange way we still give to them after all these years.”



Friday’s service was a ‘Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving’. “Today, what we are thankful for,” the Bishop said, “are the gifts of God that every life lost in 1972 and all those other years of our Troubles, the gifts of God that all those lives were to families, and friends and community. I know it’s a very different context but St Paul in one of his letters wrote this: ‘I thank my God every time I remember you.’ And thankfulness, turned to prayer to God, gives us a renewed strength; thankfulness, turned to prayer to God,

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gives us grace and resilience for the good days and the hard days.”

During Friday’s Service, Eugene McVeigh – whose brother Columba was shot dead and buried secretly by the IRA almost 50 years ago – shared a reflection. The Old and New Testament readings were given by the brother of a murdered police officer and the daughter of a Claudy bomb victim. Other readings were delivered by people who lost loved ones in 1972 and by a former police officer who was grievously injured in an IRA booby-trap bombing in 1988.

SEFF appreciation -

SEFF held a very special Service in St Columb’s Church of Ireland Cathedral, Londonderry/Derry tonight under the theme - 1972: The worst year of ‘The Troubles’ (from the perspective of lives lost) Acknowledging the Hurt, Healing the Pain.

We are blessed with how positively the Cathedral under the leadership of Bishop Andrew Forster worked with us.

Tonight individual families who had their own horrific atrocity visited upon them were afforded the acknowledgement often denied them.

Tonight innocents came together from across Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain and from throughout the community. Innocent Victims Uniting and giving strength to one another.

Muscovites feel crushed by war, says city's Anglican priest

A Church of England priest in Moscow has spoken of his sense of “powerlessness” over the war in Ukraine and claims that some Russians are “crushed by what has been done in their name”.

His comments come after Russia passed a new law meaning that citizens who spread what it describes as “fake” information about the military can be jailed for up to 15 years.

Last week, a Russian priest was arrested over a sermon that condemned the Kremlin's war against Ukraine, amid the threat of charges and a court hearing with claims of “discrediting” the Russian army.

The Rev Canon Malcolm Rogers, the priest in charge of St Andrew's Anglican church in central Moscow, said that reading the news makes him feel “powerless”, adding that “most of us are in no position to solve world problems or to bring peace”.

‘We pray for the time when there will be no more “fake news”, lies, betrayals, violence, no fear and death’

However, he said that while “there are some things that we cannot say in Moscow”, we “can still speak truth”.

The Rev Rogers said that some Russians do not condone the war in Ukraine.

He described them as: “The young Russian crushed by what has been done in his name; the mother sick with anxiety for her son who has been sent to Ukraine; the foreign student unsure whether to leave or how to leave; the person who has been named on the wrong sort of list; the older person who fears a return to the isolation and economic depression of the 1980s.”

He added: “In our hubris we think that we are somebodies who can save the world – and we end up paralysed.

“But it is when we realise our powerlessness, that in the world’s eyes we are ‘nobodies’, that we can begin to see the neighbour who God has given us and learn to serve them.

“Pray for us, for courage and wisdom and perseverance in faith and love. And we will pray for you.”

Russian priest Father Ioann Burdin, of the Resurrection Church in the country’s western Kostroma region, was detained shortly after his sermon last weekend.

Father Ioann “committed a public offence aimed at discrediting the Russian armed forces which are conducting a special military operation” in Ukraine, according to a police report quoted by Mediazona.

He told the parishioners about “Russian troops in Ukraine shelling the Ukrainian cities of Kyiv, Odesa, Kharkiv and killing citizens of Ukraine – brothers and sisters in Christ,” the report said.

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The priest was fined an equivalent of £230.

A message from the Chaplain of St Andrew's Moscow

St Andrew's Anglican Church in Moscow is situated only 10 minutes walk from the Kremlin, the physical and geographical centre of power.

The Ministries of Education, Culture and Defence are near neighbours. We are in the centre of power and yet we are powerless.

Today, as many of our dear friends have left Russia, and as we nervously wonder whether or when we should leave, we are even more conscious of our powerlessness.

Conflict was predicted and we were helpless, unable to do anything to prevent it. Now that 'special military operations', as they are called here, have begun, there is nothing that we can do to stop them.

But it is precisely our powerlessness which means that there are things that we can do. We are gospel people, who serve a crucified but risen Lord. We are the 'nobodies' of 1 Corinthians 1, and it is our very powerlessness and insignificance and foolishness that can also be our strength, if it is handed to God.

First of all, we are simply here. We are a community of very messed up people, but as we gather together to hear the Word of God and to receive bread and wine, a community of

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Russians and foreigners gathered together, centred on and receiving from Jesus Christ, our simple presence can be a witness of what the world can be like, of the future kingdom.

Secondly, in our powerlessness, we can worship and pray. We pray for peace. That is far more than just praying for the absence of war. We praise God for the coming Kingdom, for the hope he has given us. I am struck that in both Mary's song and Zechariah's song we praise God for what we hope will happen, as if it already has happened; and we cry out for God, as we pray and long for the coming of God's Kingdom. We pray for the time when there will be no more 'fake news', lies, betrayals or violence, and no more fear and death. And it is our very powerlessness which opens to us our dependence on God and on him doing wonderful works.

Thirdly, we can still speak truth. There are some things that we cannot say in Moscow, but we can still preach Jesus Christ crucified and risen and reigning. We can call people to repentance and offer people hope. In my 30 plus years of ministry, I have never known a time and a place when people are more hungering for God.

And fourthly we can love and serve our neighbour. We read the news and feel powerless. Most of us are in no position to solve world problems or to bring peace. The job advert when I applied to come to Moscow said that the person appointed could make a difference for world peace. On those grounds I have been a spectacular failure! But we can make a difference where we are, and love the actual physical neighbours who God has given us. For some, the neighbours are Ukrainian refugees.

Yesterday, I heard from the woman who I ran our college Christian Union with. Since leaving university, she has been working with Polish Christians, witnessing, and serving mainly among addicts and street women. She wrote of how her team met a family of homeless Ukrainian refugees and they are now living in her flat. There are many stories like that. Our neighbours at St Andrew's in Moscow are different. They are the young Russian crushed by what has been done in his name; the mother sick with anxiety for her son who has been sent to Ukraine, the foreign student unsure whether to leave or how to leave, the person who has been named on the wrong sort of list, the older person who fears a return to the isolation and economic depression of the 80s.

In our hubris we think that we are somebodies who can save the world - and we end up paralysed. But it is when we realise our powerlessness, that in the worlds eyes we are 'nobodies', that we can begin to see the neighbour who God has given us and learn to serve them

Pray for us, for courage and wisdom and perseverance in faith and love. And we will pray for you.

Revd Canon Malcolm Rogers, Chaplain of St Andrews,
Moscow, The Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to
the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia
Area Dean of Russia and Ukraine

Ukrainian Priests allowed into UK on religion visas

Ukrainian priests will be granted British visas to allow them to provide pastoral care for those fleeing the country for the UK, Edward Malnick writes in the Daily Telegraph

The Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy in London has been granted permission to sponsor “minister of religion” visas for entry to the country, ending a four-month wait for a decision.

Kemi Badenoch, the faith minister, intervened last week after the Right Rev Kenneth Nowakowski, the Church’s bishop, expressed concerns about delays in processing its application, which was submitted in November.

The visas will allow priests to move to the UK to work in parishes as well as in a crisis centre expected to be set up at the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral in central London.

A source said priests will be able to help with “advice and support” for Ukrainians fleeing the conflict.

‘This will help us to provide pastoral care for those who are fleeing Ukraine and will come to the UK for shelter’

In a letter to Ms Badenoch on Friday, Bishop Nowakowski said: “It was a pleasure to meet with you at our cathedral in central London on Mar 9, 2022. Your presence at the meeting and your words of solidarity with the people of Ukraine was very welcome.

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“I want to thank you and your team for raising my concern regarding the Eparchy’s Sponsor Licence application that we had submitted in November of last year and had been patiently waiting for so that we could sponsor clergy under the Minister of Religion T2 visa.”

He added: “I want to share that thanks to you and your intervention we have now received this long awaited for document.

“This will help us to provide pastoral care not only for our current parishioners in the United Kingdom but also for those who are fleeing Ukraine and will come to the UK for shelter and safety.”

According to government criteria, priests can apply for a minister of religion visa if they have been offered a job and have a certificate of sponsorship – which the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy in London will now be able to provide.

Those applying for such a visa must also prove their knowledge of English and have at least £1,270 in their bank account to demonstrate that they can support themselves in the UK.

Poem for today

Spring

by Gerard Manley Hopkins

Nothing is so beautiful as Spring –

When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;

Thrush’s eggs look little low heavens, and thrush

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Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring
The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;
The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush
The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush
With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.

What is all this juice and all this joy?

A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning
In Eden garden. – Have, get, before it cloy,
Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning,
Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,
Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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

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