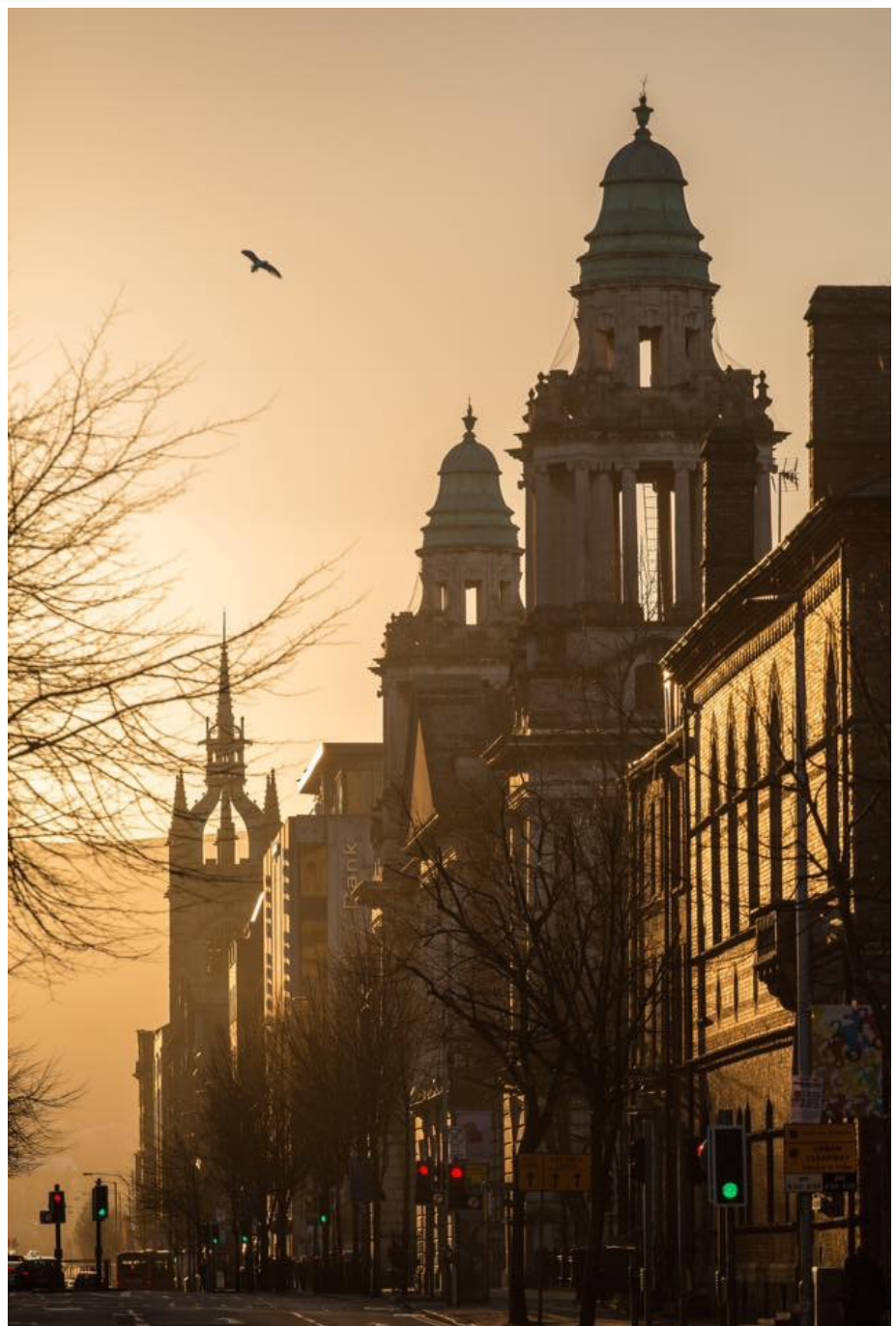
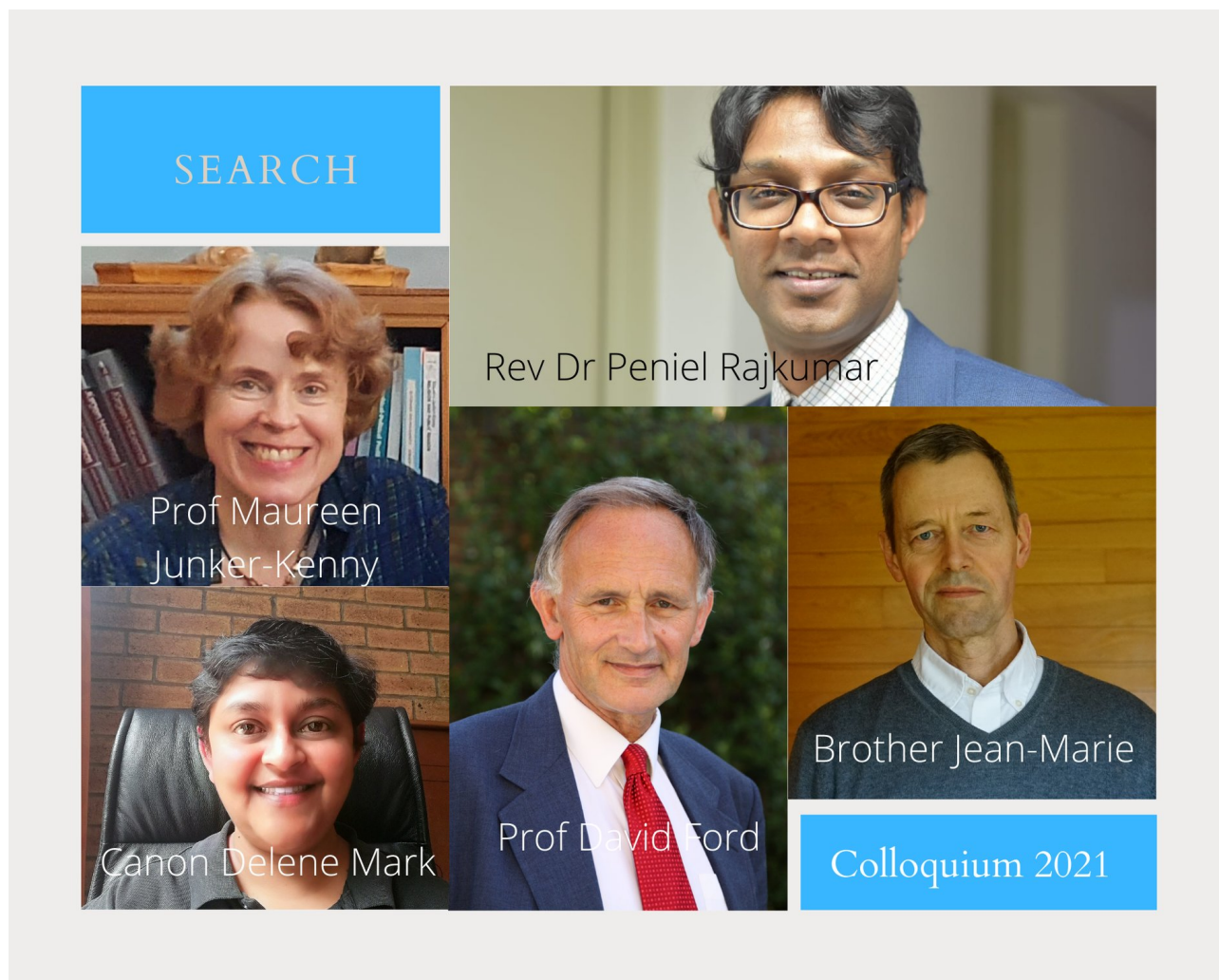




Image of the day

Spires of Belfast City Hall and the Assembly Buildings of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland





SEARCH online event to ask “Who is my Neighbour?”

Speakers from around the world will congregate online for *SEARCH* Journal’s next colloquium which takes place on Saturday April 17.

“Who is my Neighbour?” is the title of an unusually wide-ranging event organised by *SEARCH* in response to the recent challenge issued last year by the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue: “Serving Wounded World in Interreligious Solidarity”.

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The fact that the Colloquium can only take place on Zoom has made it possible to secure speakers from all over the world as well as the Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin, who will introduce and close the proceedings. All are warmly invite to attend. The colloquium begins at 10am on April 17 and the Zoom link can be obtained by emailing searchjournalsocialmedia@gmail.com. The programme for the day is available [here](#).

The chief architect of the WCC report ([which you can read here](#)), Dr Peniel Rajkumar, will offer inspiration from Geneva, while Professor David Ford from Cambridge will share his experience of the Scriptural Reasoning method which for many years he has used and encouraged to bring adherents of different faiths together.

Brother Jean–Marie of Taizé will share that community’s practical experience of serving poor communities across religious divides around the world. He will be backed up by Canon Delene Mark of Hope Africa in Capetown, Professor Esther Mombo of Limuru University in Kenya, and Brother John Martin Sahajananda, formerly of Shantivanam in India. Speakers from nearer home will include Professor Maureen Junker–Kenny of TCD, Shayk Dr Umar Al–Qadri of Dublin and Dr Rupert Sheldrake from the UK. Speakers from other religious communities and mission agencies in Dublin will also be invited to speak.

Looking around the world more than a year since the pandemic began, it is clear that, while some rich countries have been slow in protecting their citizens from infection, it is the poorer countries who have been suffering worst. The WCC document uses the parable of the Good Samaritan to

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appeal for inter–faith and international cooperation in responding to the desperate needs of those most severely affected by the pandemic, as well as by conflict, climate change, famine and displacement.

The document aims “to offer a Christian basis for interreligious solidarity that can inspire and confirm, in Christians of all churches, the impulse to serve a world wounded not only by the COVID19 pandemic but also by many other wounds. While primarily intended to address Christians, we hope that it will be useful also to those of other religions, who have already responded to this crisis with similar thoughts based on their own traditions. The global challenge of responding to this pandemic calls us to increased ecumenical and interreligious awareness and cooperation.” Attendance at the Colloquium is free, but limited to 300 people, so to secure a place it’s advisable to access the link ten minutes before the starting time of 10am on April 17. For the zoom link, please email searchjournalssocialmedia@gmail.com or check the spring issue of SEARCH.



Call for submissions on a new edition of the Lectionary for Mass for Ireland

The Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference considered a revision of the Lectionary for Mass during their Spring General meeting last week.

The Lectionary for Mass is the liturgical volume from which God's Word is proclaimed during the celebration of the Eucharist. It is usually taken from an existing translation of the Bible and is edited for ease of proclamation during the liturgy.

The current Lectionary is based on the 1966 edition of the *Jerusalem Bible* and has served the Church in Ireland well for over fifty years. However, in line with new understandings in relation to fidelity to the texts in their original languages and developments in the English language over the last fifty years, the bishops recognise a need for a new edition.

Other English-speaking Bishops' Conferences are making various decisions. The Bishops' Conference of England & Wales, along with that of Scotland, have opted to use the *English Standard Version Catholic* edition. Some other countries are seeking to use the 2019 edition of the *Revised New Jerusalem Bible*.

The Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference is considering using the *Revised New Jerusalem Bible* as the basis for a new edition of the Lectionary for Mass. The Bishops' Conference

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is now seeking submissions from interested parties to its secretariat for liturgy, and these can be sent to liturgy@iecon.ie.

Celebrating St Patrick's Day



Next Wednesday is St Patrick's Day but in the light of the current restrictions of movement and assembly the celebrations will, of necessity, be more low key than usual with much of the religious dimension being on-line.

In St Patrick's cathedral, Dublin, at 9.15am the Eucharist will be said in Irish by Canon David Oxley and at 11.15am the Patronal Eucharist, sung by the Cathedral Choir, will be celebrated when the Dean, Dr William Morton, will preside. Choral Evensong will be sung by the Cathedral Choir at 5.30pm when the St Patrick's anthem will be *Blessed City, heavenly Sale*. The cathedral's on-line services are [available here](#).

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In addition there will be a Service of Choral Evensong for St Patrick's Day on RTÉ Radio 1 Extra / LW252 at 7pm. The Dean of St Patrick's will lead the service with music, which has all been recorded due to Covid restrictions, performed by the Cathedral Choir, directed by Stuart Nicholson.

Cumann Gaelach na hEaglaise will be promoting services in Irish and full details of them will be available nearer the time at www.gaeleaglais.com. The Cathaoirleach of the Cumann, the Rev Trevor Sargent, will lead a service in Irish with English subtitles, available on YouTube.

The Annual Diocesan Service in the Diocese of Cork, Cloyne & Ross for St Patrick's Day will be live streamed from St Mary's church, Carrigaline, at 10.30am at carrigalineunion.org with a recording on You Tube from 2.00pm. This year, the service will be bilingual together with an additional reading from the Welsh-speaking Rector of the Mallow Union of Parishes, the Revd Meurig Williams. Copies of the order of service may be obtained from tmurph@tmahr.com

Connor McCabe will read Urnaí na Nóna from Trinity College Chapel at 6.00. This will be in the form of a Zoom meeting so it will be necessary to pre-register at <http://bit.ly/36loMUj>. Connor, a PhD student, began weekly Evening Prayer as Gaeilge on Wednesdays at 6pm in early February. This has been well received, with members of Trinity Choir signing at the service on occasion.

Courtesy the C of I Correspondent to The Irish Times



Finaghy choir member finalist in prestigious composing competition

Aidan MacLean, a chorister at St Polycarp's Parish Church, Finaghy, has reached the final of the prestigious **ORA Singers' composing competition.**

The competition is open to aspiring composers in the state school sector right across the UK, and Aidan is one of 10 finalists who, along with 20 other ORA apprentices, will participate in a mentoring programme with some top names in the world of composing.

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Aidan, 17, is studying at AS Level at Friends' School, Lisburn, and has been a chorister in St Polycarp's since the age of seven. But his musical interests are wide-reaching, and include being lead singer and playing bass guitar in his own rock band *Neon Apathy*, which you can check out on **Spotify** and **YouTube!**

As well as singing with his parish choir as lockdown restrictions allow, Aidan is a member of the Belfast Philharmonic Chamber Choir, the Cross Border Youth Choir and the National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland and is also in the Cross Border Youth Choir Composers' Club. This is the second time Aidan has entered the ORA Singers' competition and he says he is 'over the moon' to have reached the final.

His successful entry is a piece he composed for his Music AS – a classical choral setting to the WB Yeats' poem, *When You Are Old*.

Judging will take place at a final concert to be held in London later this year – hopefully in person. In the meantime, Aidan will receive mentoring from film composer Harry Escott.

Aidan lives in Lisburn with his parents Gillian and Bruce and younger sister Hannah who is also a member of St Polycarp's Choir. His grandparents, the Revs Robert and Elizabeth Henderson, are retired clergy who both served in Connor Diocese. He is studying Music, Biology, Maths and Chemistry at AS Level.

Report by Kate Bushby, Connor Diocese.

churchnewsireland@gmail.org

Books, Broadcasts, resources and webinars



RTÉ Service: Mothering Sunday

The service for Mothering Sunday on RTÉ will feature the Dublin & Glendalough Mothers' Union. It will be co-ordinated by Avril Gillatt and led by the Revd Leonard Ruddock with Valerie Twomey on the piano.

The service will be broadcast on RTÉ One television (and RTÉ Radio 1 Extra/LW 252) at 11.00am and will be available afterwards on the RTE Player.

Gaelic Ulster in the Middle Ages by Katharine Simms

Four Courts Press, €65

Medieval Gaelic Ulster has left little physical evidence but was once a flourishing area and society. It supported

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schools of poets, physicians, historians and lawyers which have left behind many literary texts and historical records in the Irish language.

Katharine Simms's monumental work of scholarship delves into the neglected history of Gaelic Ulster from the Anglo-Norman invasion to the Plantation. Her first section is a chronological narrative of the political history, tracing the influence of internal and external political change and how Ulster related to the rest of Ireland.

The second section, covering culture and society, tells of its chieftains, churchmen, warriors, scholars, the role of women and the pastimes and everyday life of the people. Simms uses her specialist knowledge of Gaelic annals, genealogies and verse eulogies to great effect. – Brian Maye

Review in The Irish Times

From the Outside: Rethinking Church Doctrine by Tony Flannery

Red Stripe Press, 120pp

Redemptorist priest Tony Flannery was suspended from public ministry in 2012 for expressing controversial views on issues like the ordination of women, same-sex marriage and the evolution of priesthood. His latest book describes life on the “outside” of the Catholic Church, which has afforded him the time to reflect on church doctrine and practice.

Flannery remains critical of many areas of Catholic teaching, including the Immaculate Conception. He also cannot understand the church's refusal to even discuss the

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ordination of women. His reflections on life after death are uplifting. However, the analysis of what Jesus would think of the church as it is now, with its rules and exclusions, is less so.

This is a book which will raise the hackles of conservatives and meet with approval from progressive elements within the Catholic Church. – Eamon Maher

Review in The Irish Times

Evangelical Alliance releases spoken word film addressing UK Covid-19 grief

The Evangelical Alliance has released a spoken word film addressing the grief caused by COVID-19. 'Lament' is written and performed by author and evangelist Phil Knox.

The film was produced to support the UK church in addressing the grief and challenges caused by the pandemic, and in sharing the message of hope Christianity brings.

Knox, who's the Evangelical Alliance's head of mission to young adults told Premier about the inspiration behind the piece:

"Well, I guess like all of us, I've just really struggled during the season, you know, very early on my my brother in law died of cancer. Then in the summer in June, my mum also died of cancer and alongside that wrestling with social distancing, uncertainty, bereavement, homeschooling, pain, loss, anxiety, and and I guess, you know, coming towards

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hopefully what is the end of this Coronavirus period, willing to really reflect and, and just lament what's what we've lost.

"Within that, you know, the versus at the end of the lament piece from Lamentations three, just meant so much to me over the years and represent a real hope to cling to, and a foundation to stand on. And so a lot of that was the kind of inspiration behind it and, and throughout it all, throughout all the pain, all the challenge. You know, I've been absolutely convinced that our deepest hope isn't in herd immunity, or a vaccine or even the NHS or, or some kind of roadmap out of this, our deepest hope has been in Jesus. And so that that's what that's been the kind of inspiration behind the piece."

The Evangelical Alliance said in a statement: "Lament' is a cry of protest and loss, expressing the anxiety and grief brought about by the past year, as well as expressing the hope found in the Christian faith. In the film, Knox references a biblical refrain used to express grief, "How long, O Lord?", to acknowledge the frustration, pain and unrest experienced by many in the church and wider society."

The film is available so that churches can use it during online services.

Media review

[Here are Taoiseach Micheál Martin's three-day virtual St Patrick's Day plans with the US](#)

Journal Ireland

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Taoiseach Micheál Martin is to participate in a programme of virtual events with the United States over three days to celebrate St Patrick's Day.

<https://www.thejournal.ie/taoiseach-st-patricks-day-biden-5380561-Mar2021/>

Irish Independent

<https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/taoiseach-outlines-schedule-for-virtual-st-patricks-day-celebrations-with-joe-biden-and-other-leading-american-figures-40191865.html>

Sex education in NI schools is insufficient, says expert panel

BBC News NI

A Stormont appointed panel recommends Relationships and Sex Education be compulsory in all schools.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-56378106>

Five EU states seek summit on 'unfair' vaccine handouts

Journal Ireland

Austria, The Czech Republic, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Latvia have called for an EU summit to discuss “huge disparities” in the distribution of vaccines, according to a letter published today.

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<https://www.thejournal.ie/five-eu-countries-summit-vaccine-distribution-5380541-Mar2021/>

UK's move in extending grace period 'damaging' - Coveney

RTÉ News

The Minister for Foreign Affairs has said Britain's move in unilaterally extending the grace period for post-Brexit checks on goods into Northern Ireland is "damaging relationships" between the EU and UK.

<https://www.rte.ie/news/brexit/2021/0313/1203762-coveney-brexit/>

The lasting impact of austerity in Ireland, 10 years on

RTÉ News

If it doesn't seem like ten years since we played the national guessing game "Is the Troika here?", and then bounced Fianna Fáil out of government, that might be because our lives have got shorter since then.

<http://www.rte.ie/news/2021/0314/1203708-impact-of-austerity/>



Opinion - The Republic of Ireland is not, as is often claimed, one of the world's richest economies - by Graham Gudgin

The Irish government likes to claim that there is such a thing as an all-island economy, but this is almost the opposite of the truth.

There are two radically different economic models on the island and surprisingly little trade between them.

The south's economy is the world's largest tax haven, a model increasingly opposed by the EU and OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development).

The north is a region fully integrated into the UK economic union. Currency, tax rates, social security systems and business law all differ across the border. As little as 1% of the Republic's output of goods and services goes north.

Only 6% of Northern Ireland's output is recorded as exports to the south and a third of this is goods like cars and oil passing through from Great Britain.

The view of the Northern Ireland economy from southern economists has always been jaundiced, lacking a real understanding of how the UK economy works.

John Fitzgerald and Edgar Morgenroth of Trinity College and ESRI in Dublin, for instance, describe the NI economy as lacklustre, lacking dynamism and low productivity.

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Living standards, they say, depend on payments from central government and thus vulnerable to shocks. In their view Brexit leaves Northern Ireland facing a serious negative impact.

The celebrity Dublin economist David McWilliams dines out on his view that 100 years ago most of the island's manufacturing was in the north-east while now the great majority is in the south.

This is true but reflects the UK's transition towards a service-based economy. Most large British cities shed all of their manufacturing before the beginning of this century.

London shed a million jobs in manufacturing while converting itself into the world's leading financial powerhouse.

The necessary context is that the UK has become the world's leading exporter of services. Even if Northern Ireland has not fully shared in this transition most of its inward investment is in services, including legal services, fintech, software and cyber-security.

The UK economy is quite strong enough to pay for a uniformly high level of public services in those areas where financial and business services are not as well developed as in London and South-East England.

The whole question of subsidies for public services is not well understood in Ireland.

Public expenditure per head is high in Northern Ireland as it also is in Scotland and Wales. The reasons include higher needs (more children, poorer health, policing etc), UK



Dr Graham Gudgin is honorary research associate at the Centre for Business Research, Judge Business School, University of Cambridge and senior economic advisor at the Policy Exchange think tank, London. He was previously director of the Northern Ireland Economic Research Centre 1985-98 and was special advisor to First Minister David Trimble 1998-2002

generosity to devolved regions for political reasons, plus a degree of playing the system in sickness benefits.

In Northern Ireland, a further factor is that higher public spending has created jobs which lead to more of those born in the Province to remain rather than migrate as happened in previous years.

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The population is thus larger than it otherwise would have been. This larger population then creates a need for public spending greater than the taxes generated from Northern Ireland's private sector. This is a state of affairs with which British public opinion is content.

There is no real pressure to change it. It is not a vulnerable situation as Fitzgerald and Morgenroth imagine.

Nor does Northern Ireland lack dynamism. Over the last decade its economy has grown at close to the UK average growth rate.

It is true that the UK, including Northern Ireland, has had a problem of slow growth in productivity since the banking crisis, but this is problem shared with the USA and much of the western world.

What of the Republic of Ireland?

Its official national accounts statistics paint a picture of rapid growth and the claim is regularly made, even on the BBC, that Ireland is now one of the world's richest economies.

Would that his were true, but it is not.

Ireland's economic statistics are close to meaningless. In the words on one US economist, they tell us more about the tax affairs of American corporations than they do about the Irish economy.

To Nobel prize-winning economist Paul Krugman, it is leprechaun economics.

No version of Irish GDP statistics give a meaningful account of Irish living standards as former Irish central Bank chairman, Patrick Honahan, has recently written.

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All of this statistical nonsense is caused the tax haven status in which huge proportions of the profits of global corporations slosh through Irish national accounts.

However little of this ends up in the pockets of either Irish households or government and living standards are below those in Northern Ireland.

Irish statistics on GDP are useless as indicators of living standards.

Instead, we need to use another measure, spending by households and by government on behalf of households, for which data in the Republic is much more accurate.

Fitzgerald and Morgenroth used this measure to calculate that living standards were 20% higher in Northern Ireland in 2012 than in the Republic.

When they updated this using data for 2016 their figure was 4%.

They did not however allow for lower prices in Northern Ireland, especially house prices, which mean that households in Northern Ireland get more goods and services for any given amount of spending.

When this correction is made, living standards again emerge as closer to 20% higher in Northern Ireland.

This result is staggering.

It means that after 60 years as a tax haven and 48 years inside the EU, the Republic Ireland has not managed to raise the living standards of its people to that in Northern Ireland.

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If the Republic of Ireland were to rejoin the UK, it would be as the UK's poorest region just as it was a century ago.

While tax haven status and EU membership have worked for the Irish elite, the majority of Irish citizens have gained little. Hence the rise of Sinn Fein in the south.

Other authors attempt to contest Northern Ireland's advantage in living standards.

Adele Bergin and Seamus McGuinness try this using the discredited Irish National Accounts, ignoring Honahan's warnings about the data.

They also use household incomes but again fail to adjust properly for price differences.

All in all, there is little reason to doubt that, even after all that has happened over recent decades, living standards are higher in the North than in the South.

This may help to explain why the rigorous polls show a large margin in favour of maintaining the Union.

Courtesy The News Letter

Pointers for prayer

Heavenly Father,
your Son battled with the powers of darkness,
and grew closer to you in the desert:
help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer
that we may witness to your saving love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.



Almighty Father,
whose Son was revealed in majesty
before he suffered death upon the cross:
give us grace to perceive his glory,
that we may be strengthened to suffer with him
and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Hold in your hands, Lord
our families & friends
our neighbours
those whom we worry about
and those who worry for us.
And in these same hands
hold every family,
especially those for whom today
has brought new burdens and fresh sorrows

We remember with thanks the numerous Mothers' Union
members who, over the years, have used their God-given

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gifts to change the world. We pray that, in our day, we'll also be willing to use our gifts to help transform lives and communities

We pray today for the church across the world, especially in places where they are experiencing hardship and persecution. We stand together with our sisters and brothers and pray for God to bring relief from their circumstances.

Holy God,
you know the disorder of our sinful lives:
set straight our crooked hearts,
and bend our wills to love your goodness
and your glory
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty God,
you have created the heavens and the earth
and made us in your own image:
teach us to discern your hand in all your works
and your likeness in all your children;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all
things,
now and for ever.

Speaking to the Soul

“To whom will you compare me? Who is my equal?” asks the Holy One. “Look up into the heavens. Who created all the stars? He brings them out like an army, one after another, calling each by its name. Because of

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his great power and incomparable strength, not a single one is missing.”
Isaiah 40:25-26 NLT



I have never studied astronomy but I find the scale of the universe totally mind boggling. Light travels at 186,282 miles per second. That's fast! But to go on any significant journey into space we will need to travel at that speed. So let's get going. In one minute we will have travelled over 11 million miles and by the end of the day we will have covered 16,000 million miles. You would probably be ready for a cup of tea by that point but we must keep going. After a year we will have travelled nearly 6 million, million miles. That's good going but we mustn't take a break because we have more than three more years to go before we reach the nearest stars. No doubt we would feel a great sense of achievement to have got that far, but don't get too cocky because we

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would need to keep going for another 20,000 years at the same speed to reach the edge of our galaxy. But even when we get there we need to realize that the journey has only just begun because there are more than 2 million, million other galaxies. Wow!

I love the fact that we talk of the God of the Universe as being our friend and I believe he wants us to do so. But when we gaze at the universe we need to be clear that we are talking about a very special friend and one who we can only approach with total humility, worship and adoration. As we worship God let's lift our eyes. Let's look to the sun, the moon and the stars and gasp in absolute amazement that this great God is willing to enter into a relationship with you and me.

QUESTION

When you think of the vastness of the universe what is your response?

PRAYER

Loving God we praise you for your amazing creation. Forgive us that we so easily take it for granted and please help us to use it increasingly as the springboard for our worship. Amen.



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