

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Installation of Bishop of Connor at Belfast Cathedral

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Bishop of Connor, HE Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle, HM Lord-Lieutenant for Belfast, her cadet; and the Dean of Belfast

People and places

Bishop of Connor installed in Belfast Cathedral

The Rt Rev George Davison, Bishop of Connor, was installed in Belfast Cathedral at a Service of Choral Evensong on Sunday March 13.

Clergy, lay readers and members of Diocesan Council attended the service, along with the Chapters of Belfast and Lisburn Cathedrals, ecumenical guests and members of the Bishop's wider family. The Lord-Lieutenant of Co Antrim, David McCorkell, and the Lord-Lieutenant of Belfast, Fionnuala Jay-O'Boyle, were among the honoured guests.

Due to the pandemic, Bishop Davison's Consecration in Armagh Cathedral in September 2020 took place in the presence of a very small congregation, and Sunday's Installation Service was the first opportunity for the whole



The Bishop of Connor knocks on the West Door of Belfast Cathedral as part of the Service of Installation.

diocesan family in Connor to give formal welcome to Bishop Davison.

Following the procession of clergy and the first hymn, Bishop Davison knocked on the closed West Door of the Cathedral with his Crozier, seeking admission. He was welcomed by the Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev Stephen Forde, and by the congregation.

Moving to the top of the Nave, the Bishop was met by the Diocesan Registrar, the Rev Canon William Taggart, who read the mandate for installation, before the Dean guided the Bishop to his episcopal seat ('cathedra').



The Bishop of Connor and the Dean of Belfast with cathedral chapter members

During the service, the Bishop was presented with symbols of his ministry in the diocese – the Rev Canon Kevin Graham, Diocesan Director of Ordinands, presented a Bible; Alan Mills, Carrickfergus Parish, and the Ven Dr Stephen McBride, Archdeacon of Connor, presented the Bishop with his pectoral cross and ring; and Cynthia Cherry, Diocesan Council, presented the Bishop with a towel.

The first lesson was read by Bishop Sarah Groves of the Moravian Church and the second lesson by the Most Rev Noel Treanor, Bishop of Down and Connor. Bishop Davison preached the sermon.

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Prayers were led by the Rev Nathan Ervine, curate in Carrickfergus Parish; Gillian McCaughey, Diocesan Lay Reader from Belfast Cathedral; and Ken Gibson, General Synod Honorary Lay Secretary from Lisburn Cathedral.

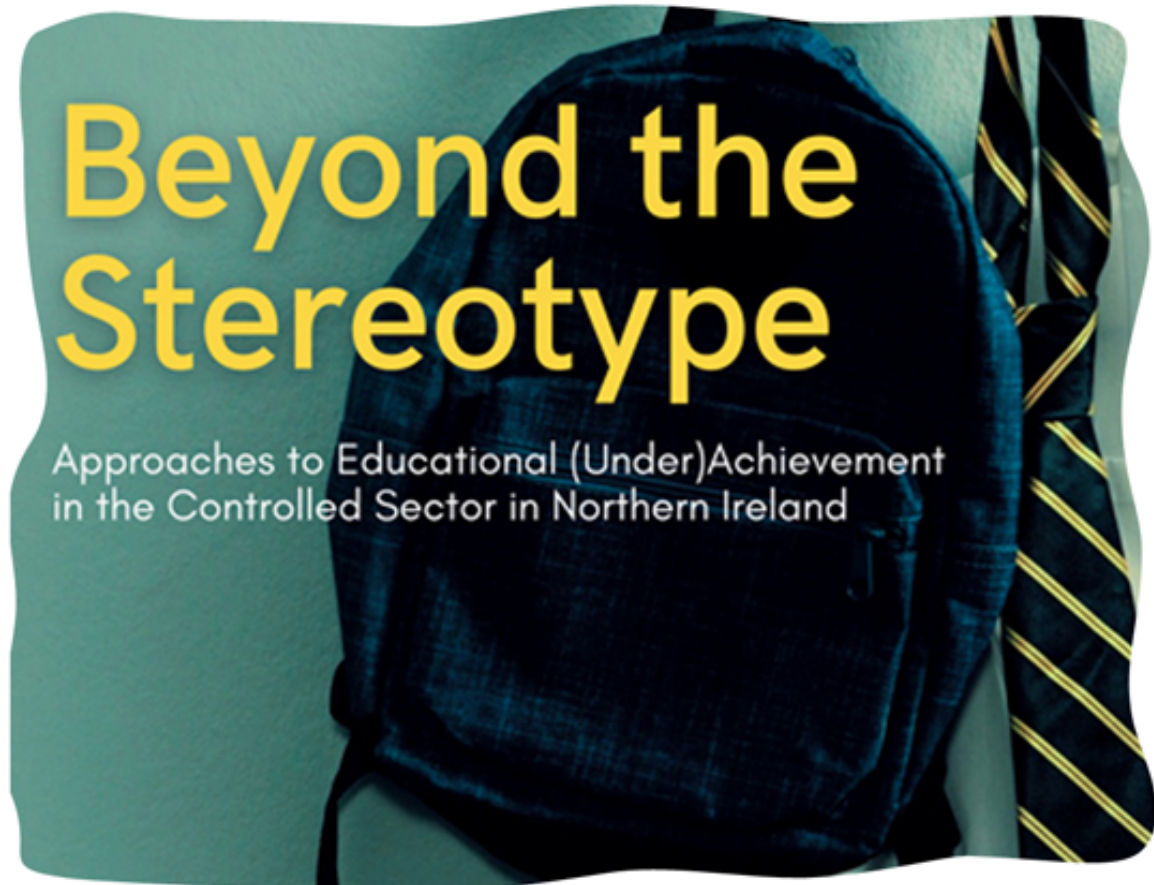
Music was led by the Cathedral Choir, and included Evensong by Howard Skempton, with the Collegium Regale setting for the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis by Charles Wood, and the Anthem Lead me Lord by SS Wesley. Hymns included God is Here, I heard the voice of Jesus say, and By Faith and Facing a Task Unfinished by Keith Getty et al.

Invite to open seminar on new research into educational underachievement

The Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC) invites you to the Beyond the Stereotype seminar on Friday March 25 between 12 noon and 3pm at Seagoe Parish Centre, Portadown.

The TRC represents the interests of the Church of Ireland, Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and Methodist Church in Ireland at all levels of education in Northern Ireland. This is an opportunity to hear more about the recently published research on educational underachievement in Controlled Schools carried out by the Centre for Research in Educational Underachievement at Stranmillis University College.

There will be an opportunity to hear from the research team, discuss the issues raised by the research, and ask any questions you may have.



Discussing Stranmillis University College's new research into underachievement commissioned by the TRC.

The full report is available to read and download at www.trc-churcheducation.org/news.

Admission is free and lunch will be provided. To book, please go to this link in Eventbrite.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/beyond-the-stereotype-tickets-275535583347>

For any further information, please contact Dr Peter Hamill, Secretary to the Transferor Representatives' Council, at edunorth@ireland.anglican.org.

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This is an event for school principals and all those in church life who are involved with or have an interest in education.

The parish centre is attached to Seagoe Parish Church and beside Seagoe Primary School.

Creation Care Conference in April almost sold out

The Church of Ireland is hosting a key conference on Creation Care featuring leading theologians and practitioners on April 8 this year.

The Irish Churches Creation Care Conference features the leading theologian Revd Dr Chris Wright, and distinguished climate scientist Prof Katharine Hayhoe. They will explore the Biblical and Christian understanding of Creation Care and our response to the climate and nature emergency.

Leading mission practitioners from the Church of Ireland, Church of England, Christian Aid, Trócaire, and Tearfund will help delegates think about mission, cultural change, connecting with youth, and how to link the global challenge to the local church.

A panel of senior church leaders made up of Dr David Bruce, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland; Dr Sehr Yambasu, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland; Bishop Martin Hayes, Laudato Si' coordinating bishop for the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference and Archbishop John McDowell, Primate of All Ireland, will discuss 'What's next?', as churches develop action plans for

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sustainability. Workshops and Q&A sessions will allow interaction and delegates to input to the debate.

The conference coordinator, Stephen Trew said, “This conference is an excellent opportunity for leaders from all the churches in Ireland to gather and learn from experts on Creation Care. More than ever we need to take action, and this conference will help us develop action plans and mission opportunities in response to the climate and nature crisis.”

The conference runs from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm on Friday April 8 in the Dromantine Conference Centre in Newry. Lunch is included with the £20 conference fee and places are limited so please book early.

Bed and Breakfast is available the night before for those who need to travel to Newry. Relevant COVID–19 protocols will be followed.

To book please visit:

<http://creationcareconference.eventbrite.co.uk>

Institution to Birr Group of Parishes

The Service of Institution of the Reverend Arthur Minion as Incumbent of the Birr Group of Parishes (Birr, Lorrha, Dorrha and Lockeen) took place in Saint Brendan's Church of Ireland, Birr recently

The Institution ceremony was overseen by the Archbishop of Dublin, Bishop of Glendalough, Primate of Ireland and Metropolitan, the Most Reverend Dr Michael Jackson.

Speaking to the congregation at the beginning of the service, Archbishop Jackson said it was a great pleasure to be present this evening at a full church with no need for masks (if people didn't want to wear masks), something which most people had been looking forward to for two years.

In his sermon the Very Reverend Tom W. Gordon, Dean of Leighlin, thanked his Grace for the invite to speak. Rev Gordon knew Arthur a long time, as student, as colleague, “and above all as a friend.”

He said the Churches are living through a time of vast challenge and change. Churches, he pointed out, no longer have a monopoly on meaning. Their authority has greatly diminished. Far less people look to them to see how they should lead their lives.

Rev Gordon pointed out that there's a complex culture in the Church of Ireland which revolves around many different events and organisations, around events like synods and many different types of committees. He sometimes felt if, amidst all this organising things and getting things right, a more imaginative and creative attitude was sometimes overlooked.

He suggested that more imagination and creativity might be needed in tackling the challenges facing the Church of Ireland, and the other churches in the country, in the contemporary world.

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Today, he pointed out, was all about warmly welcoming Arthur and his wife Susan to their new parish, their new ministry.

He complimented everyone who spoke, and joked, “The speeches were exemplary in their brevity!”

Rev Minion thanked Rev. Gordon for his kind words. He joked that he was glad that Rev. Tom didn't push the prodigal son analogy too far! He reminded everybody that some years ago he had served a ministry for a number of years in Shinrone.

“I have great love and affection for the people of Offaly.” One of the first events he attended when he first moved to Shinrone many years ago was Cllr Ormond's wedding. He said when he's living in a place he likes to submerge himself in its life as much as he is able. He promised to gently and humbly lead the sheep.

He thanked the evening's musicmakers, including Seán Ryan (tin whistle) and Ciara Ryan (harp), organist Enda O'Connor, and the Birr Choral Society under the direction of Michael Hanna.

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News reports

Anglican chaplain celebrates Eucharist on ship hit by Russian missile

The Rev. James Buxton, Mission to Seafarers chaplain in Turkey and Church of England chaplain in Izmir, writes about his experience celebrating the Eucharist on a ship hit by a Russian missile the week before.

“It was a rare honour to celebrate the Eucharist with the captain and crew of the Namura Queen at the port of Yalova, Istanbul, on March 4.

“A week before, whilst at anchor at Odessa, the ship was struck by a Russian missile, ripping a huge hole in the accommodation block. One member of the crew was hit by shrapnel whilst preparing food in the galley. All were deeply shocked by the blast and fear of further bombardment.

“Fortunately, the ship was able to sail unhindered to Istanbul, where it remains as repairs are made. After the celebration of the Eucharist in the mess we proceeded to the bridge where I blessed the ship, sprinkling everyone and everything with holy water.”

Churches Together in England urge immediate end to war in Ukraine

Churches in England have come together to appeal for an "immediate cessation" to the war in Ukraine.

In a statement, the ecumenical body Churches Together in England (CTE) also calls for the withdrawal of Russian forces and the observance of the Geneva Convention, which sets out the standard for the humane treatment of both civilians and soldiers in times of war.

CTE is urging churches everywhere to campaign for an immediate end to the war and "to proclaim the dignity of every human life, whatever its nationality".

The CTE is formed of 52 national member churches, including the Church of England, Catholic Church, Methodist Church, Baptist Union of Great Britain, Church of God of Prophecy, Redeemed Christian Church of God, and the Free Churches Group.

It is led by presidents the Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop Tedroy Powell, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop Nikitas and Dr Hugh Osgood.

Ukraine was an "urgent priority" on the agenda of a meeting this week of CTE members in Swanwick.

The statement goes on to call for refugees to be welcomed across Europe and promises the prayers of churches.

"In this holy season of Lent, we call upon churches everywhere to campaign for an immediate end to the war in Ukraine, and to proclaim the dignity of every human life, whatever its nationality," it reads.

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"We welcome and commend the extraordinary efforts of countries neighbouring Ukraine in receiving refugees from the war and call on the UK and the whole of Europe to follow their example.

"We support every measure to protect the most vulnerable.

"We commit ourselves to pray for the nations of Russia and Ukraine, our own Government and people, and for all who find themselves refugees, or bereaved, wounded or destitute.

"May Christ have mercy upon our world."

Monarch's life of service offers hope to the world, says former archbishop

The Queen's life of service and devotion to others has been praised by the former Archbishop of York who suggested she had modelled her reign on self-sacrifice.

Lord Sentamu paid tribute to the Queen during the annual Commonwealth Day service, given added poignancy as the head of state was missing from the major event in the royal calendar.

In his address to the Westminster Abbey congregation, which included senior royals, the peer said: "And so for 70 years the Queen has modelled her reign on the one who said 'whoever shall be great among you shall be your servant and whoever desires to be first shall be a slave of all'."

The former Archbishop, who now sits in the Lords, went on to say: “The Christian ideals of the love of neighbour and compassion have given shape to the Queen's leadership.”

Lord Sentamu made the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge laugh when at the end of his speech he urged the congregation to cheer the monarch after he said the words “hip, hip, hip”.

The first time he got a lacklustre response but he repeated it again and the third time Westminster Abbey rang out with a “hoorah” with William and Kate chuckling.

In her message to mark Commonwealth Day, the Queen said she hoped the family of nations “can draw strength and inspiration from what we share” during these “testing times”.

Now in the 70th year of her reign, the 95-year-old monarch said it had made her happy, during her Platinum Jubilee year, to reaffirm the pledge she made in 1947 as a 21-year-old to devote her life in service to the nation and Commonwealth.

She sounded a positive note, extolling the virtues of the Commonwealth which “continues to be a point of connection, co-operation and friendship”.

Her written message to the family of nations' 2.5bn citizens was released just ahead of the Westminster Abbey service marking Commonwealth Day, attended by the Prince of Wales, Duchess of Cornwall, Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, Prime Minister Boris Johnson and hundreds of dignitaries and young people.

The Queen told the Commonwealth: “Our family of nations continues to be a point of connection, co-operation and friendship.

“It is a place to come together to pursue common goals and the common good, providing everyone with the opportunity to serve and benefit.

“In these testing times, it is my hope that you can draw strength and inspiration from what we share, as we work together towards a healthy, sustainable and prosperous future for all.”

The Queen had hoped to attend the event but it is thought ensuring the comfort of the monarch, who now regularly uses a stick and has spoken openly about her mobility issues, was an overriding consideration in her decision not to take part.

The monarch's announcement came after the order of service was printed as she was named in the document, with the congregation required to stand when she arrived and made her way to her seat.

Lord Sentamu drew parallels between the Queen's service and the example set by Jesus Christ: “Even the son of man did not come to be served but to serve and gave his life, a ransom for many. Jesus of Nazareth defined his leadership — service, self-denial, sacrifice, dying to effect salvation for all humankind.”

He told the congregation who included Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and Home Secretary Priti Patel, that this view was

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“counter-cultural in a world which cannot distinguish service from civility and measures out power in mega tons”.

“At this very moment Ukraine risks being pulverised. It is not the first time that might has demanded to be right,” he added.

The Prime Minister gave the Bible reading from Psalm 72 telling the congregation: “Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. Then shall he judge thy people according unto right, and defend the poor.”

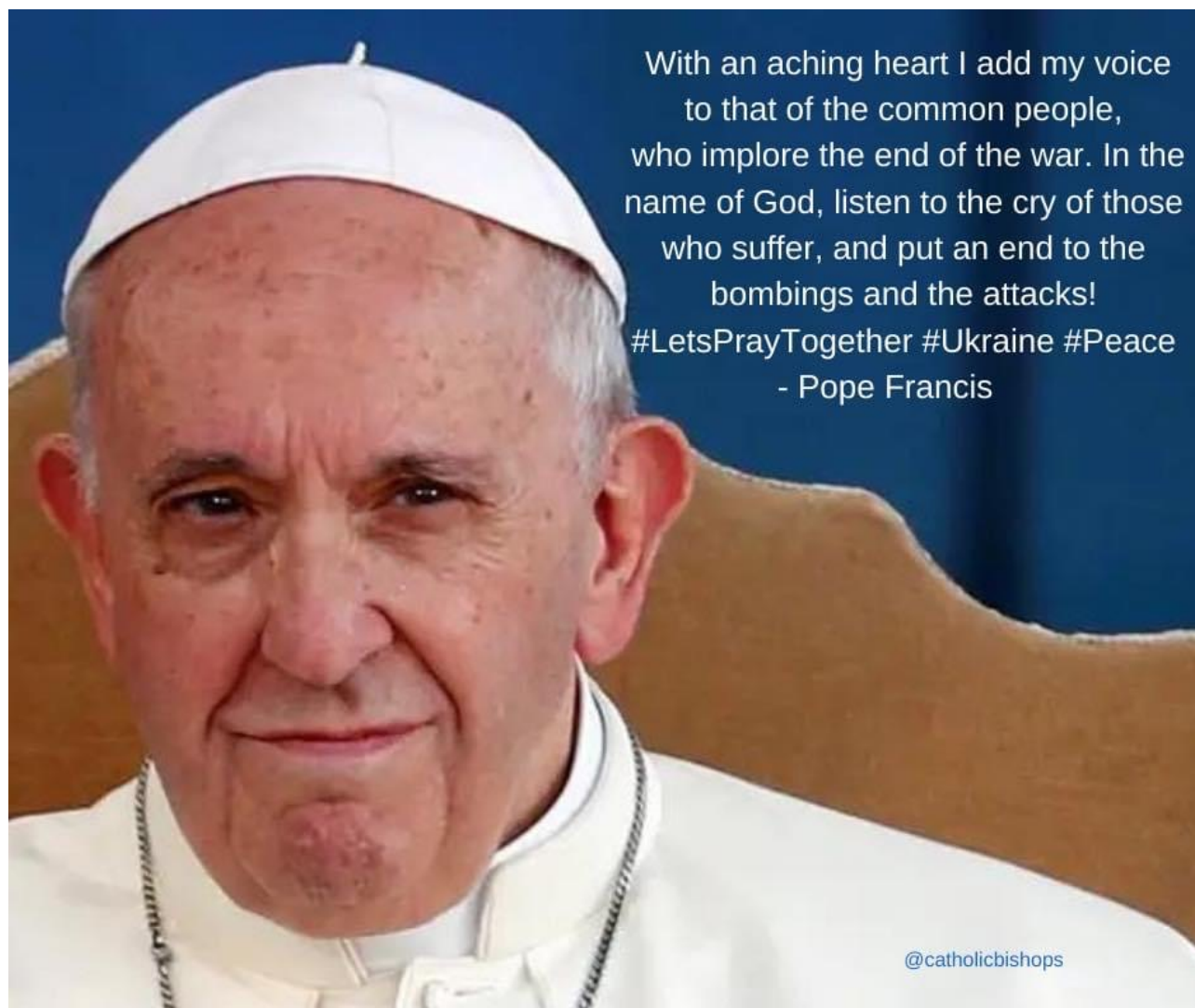
Singers Mica Paris and Emeli Sande gave inspiring renditions of songs among a host of performances.

Perspective on Ukraine

Pope Francis: ‘I ask you – stop this massacre’

Pope Francis has called for an end to the “harrowing war” in Ukraine, condemning in particular the “barbarism” of Russia’s reported attacks last week on civilians— including pregnant women and children— in the eastern city of Mariupol.

“With an aching heart I add my voice to that of the common people, who implore the end of the war,” the Pope said, addressing the crowd gathered in St. Peter’s Square in Rome following the Angelus.



“In the name of God, listen to the cry of those who suffer, and put an end to the bombings and the attacks.

“Let there be real and decisive focus on the negotiations, and let the humanitarian corridors be effective and safe. In the name of God, I ask you: stop this massacre.”

The Pope’s words followed numerous reports last week of civilian casualties in Mariupol, amid Russia’s attempt to seize the strategically-located city as part of its ongoing invasion of Ukraine, which began on February 24.

On Wednesday, March 9, a Russian strike on a maternity hospital in Mariupol killed at least three people and injured

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at least 17, according to local officials. Amid heavy loss of life in the city, there have been reports of civilians being buried in mass graves.

Pope Francis said that Mariupol, a city of 400,000 which was founded and named for the Virgin Mary, “has become a city martyred” amid the assault.

“Faced with the barbarism of the killing of children, and of innocent and defenseless citizens, there are no strategic reasons that hold up: the only thing to be done is to cease the unacceptable armed aggression before the city is reduced to a cemetery,” the Pope said.

The Pope’s words echoed those of a prominent Catholic leader in Ukraine, Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, who lamented March 10 what he described as the “mass murder” of Ukrainians following Russia’s full-scale invasion. The following day, March 11, Shevchuk said the assault is “becoming a war primarily against the civilian, peaceful population.”

As of Sunday, the United Nations Refugee Agency had estimated that 2.5 million people have fled Ukraine since the war began, many seeking refuge in Poland. Pope Francis urged the welcoming of refugees, “in whom Christ is present.”

He also asked all diocesan and religious communities to “increase their moments of prayer for peace”.

“God is only the God of peace, he is not the God of war, and those who support violence profane his name. Now let us

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pray in silence for those who suffer, and that God may convert hearts to a steadfast will for peace,” the pope concluded.

According to recent reports, a Russian rocket attack early Sunday on a military base near Lviv, a city near the Polish border, killed at least 35 people and injured 134.

Since the start of the invasion, Pope Francis has called for peace. He recently urged Catholics worldwide to pray and fast for Ukraine on Ash Wednesday, which marked the beginning of Lent on March 2. He also dispatched two Vatican Cardinals to Ukraine, where among other things they have met with refugees.

March 13, 2022 marked the ninth anniversary of Francis’ election as Pope.

Poem for today

Ireland With Emily by John Betjeman

Bells are booming down the bohreens,
White the mist along the grass,
Now the Julias, Maeves and Maureens
Move between the fields to Mass.
Twisted trees of small green apple
Guard the decent whitewashed chapel,
Gilded gates and doorway grained,
Pointed windows richly stained
With many-coloured Munich glass.

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See the black-shawled congregations
On the broidered vestment gaze
Murmer past the painted stations
As Thy Sacred Heart displays
Lush Kildare of scented meadows,
Roscommon, thin in ash-tree shadows,
And Westmeath the lake-reflected,
Spreading Leix the hill-protected,
Kneeling all in silver haze?

In yews and woodbine, walls and guelder,
Nettle-deep the faithful rest,
Winding leagues of flowering elder,
Sycamore with ivy dressed,
Ruins in demesnes deserted,
Bog-surrounded bramble-skirted -
Townlands rich or townlands mean as
These, oh, counties of them screen us
In the Kingdom of the West.

Stony seaboard, far and foreign,
Stony hills poured over space,
Stony outcrop of the Burren,
Stones in every fertile place,
Little fields with boulders dotted,
Grey-stone shoulders saffron-spotted,
Stone-walled cabins thatched with reeds,
Where a Stone Age people breeds
The last of Europe's stone age race.

Has it held, the warm June weather?
Draining shallow sea-pools dry,
When we bicycled together

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Down the bohreens fuchsia-high.
Till there rose, abrupt and lonely,
A ruined abbey, chancel only,
Lichen-crusteD, time-befriended,
Soared the arches, splayed and splendid,
Romanesque against the sky.

There in pinnacled protection,
One extinguished family waits
A Church of Ireland resurrection
By the broken, rusty gates.
Sheepswool, straw and droppings cover,
Graves of spinster, rake and lover,
Whose fantastic mausoleum,
Sings its own seablown Te Deum,
In and out the slipping slates.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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