


Church News Ireland



FAITH IN EUROPE

Featuring :
Rev Dr Stephen Skuce
Bishop Donal McKeown

IRELAND POST-BREXIT: A FAITH PERSPECTIVE
THURSDAY 16TH MARCH, 2:15PM ON ZOOM

Image of the day – Faith in Europe

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Image of the day

Ireland Post-Brexit: A Faith Perspective on Zoom today

In Ireland Post-Brexit: A Faith Perspective, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Derry Rt Rev Donal McKeown and the District Superintendent for the Methodist Church's North Western District, Rev Dr Stephen Skuce, share their reflections on a post- Brexit Ireland.

TODAY (Thursday), 2:15pm

→ Register at: ticketsource.co.uk/faithineurope

People and places

First Dublin Winter Madness draws great crowd

The first ever Winter Madness event to take place in Dublin saw young people from across the dioceses and beyond join together for a night of worship and hearing God's word on Saturday evening (March 11).

Organised by DGYC (Dublin and Glendalough Youth Council) in association with Summer Madness, the event took place in Holy Trinity Rathmines.



Worship was led by the brilliant Holly McCullough and her band from Immanuel Church in Lurgan and prayers were led by Emma Thompson of 24/7 prayer.

The speaker on the night was the Revd Scott Evans, Deacon Intern in Kiltiernan Parish and UCD Chaplain. He focused on the huge pressures faced by teenagers today who, he said, have to be “constantly nailing it” as they are bombarded by images on their phones which project a certain way of life and how they “need to be”. “The pressures we face push us towards the biggest temptation, that is the temptation towards control. We are our own brand manager, our own publicist,” he observed.

Using the parable of the Prodigal Son, Scott looked at the idea of control and seeking acceptance.



He said that the messages young people are bombarded with suggest that if they make the right changes in their lives, they can be loved. However, he said that the parable illustrated that we are already loved by God, no matter what we do.

“You are already loved, you can’t earn it or lose it because God is love,” he said.

The Winter Madness event took place in advance of Summer Madness which takes place from June 30 to July 4 in Portglenone.

Tickets are on sale now at
<https://www.summermadness.co.uk/>



Busy week of witness for Archbishop of Rwanda

The Most Revd Laurent Mbanda, Archbishop of Rwanda, who encouraged parishioners to stand firm for the Gospel, as he preached at services in Seapattrick Parish Church, Banbridge on Sunday last.

A joyful welcome to Holy Trinity was given to the Archbishop, his wife Chantal, and the Revd Emmanuel Murangira

The Archbishop of Rwanda, Most Revd Laurent Mbanda, will be the Preacher at Down Cathedral on St Patrick's Day.



Archbishop of Rwanda. Most Revd Laurent Mbanda.
Preacher at Down Cathedral on St Patrick's Day.

will be the preacher at the Diocese of Down & Dromore St
Patrick's Day event at Down Cathedral:

<https://www.downanddromore.org/news/events/2022/12/st-patricks-day-2023>

Visit to CMSI offices

Archbishop Mbanda and his wife Madame Chantal visited the CMSI offices for an afternoon this week. They shared about the vibrant ministry of the church in Rwanda - wholistic ministry that tends to people's bodies and souls as they grow in knowledge and love of God. With a profound



testimony of the effect of forgiveness, the Rwandan people are working hard at peace and reconciliation - lessons and stories from which we can all learn. Immanuel and Chris from Tearfund shared about their work with and alongside churches in Rwanda. It was heartening to hear others share their commitment to supporting the church and clergy training - something Archbishop Mbanda specifically asked for in prayer. Watch this space for a video of the event.

Moderator combines faith and fishing

Last week the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Right Reverend Dr John Kirkpatrick, toured the Presbytery of Newry and spent time in Kilkeel Harbour

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visiting the Fishermen's Mission and local co-operative, Sea Source.



Faith & Fishing – Fishermen's Mission

At the Fishermen's Mission Kilkeel (left to right) Gary Young, Senior Coastal Operation Manager, His Majesty's Coast Guard, Ingrid Perry, Mission Port Officer for the Fishermen's Mission, Joan Kirkpatrick and her husband Dr Kirkpatrick, Presbyterian Moderator, Lesley Hammond, Area Officer Fishermen's Mission and Rev Stuart Finlay, Moderator of the Presbytery of Newry.

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Faith & Fishing – Sea Source

With some of the 400 ton of langoustines that are processed at Sea Source each year are (right) Sea Source chair, Brian Chambers and Presbyterian Moderator, Dr John Kirkpatrick, who visited the Harbour Estate at Kilkeel last week.

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News reports

Budget fails to deliver for the poorest and most vulnerable communities, Christian Aid says

Responding to the UK Government's Spring Budget, Chief of UK Advocacy at Christian Aid Sophie Powell said:

“From conflict to climate change, the poorest and most vulnerable communities are facing challenges like never before.

"Yet this budget fails once again to deliver the finance needed. Not only has the aid pot been stunted and raided by other government departments, but it has also lost its focus on tackling poverty and its causes.

"That's why it's even more urgent for the government to release new resources, starting by getting private creditors such as the big banks to cancel the debt of countries on the frontline of these crises.”

English church leaders encourage daily prayers for the King and the nation

Presidents of Churches Together in England have today issued a statement encouraging Christians to join in daily prayers for the King and the nation.

They said:



“The forthcoming Coronation of King Charles III is a moment of great importance and joy for this nation.

“As Presidents of CTE, we invite Christians from all traditions to join together in a period of daily prayer, for both the King and the nation, from Easter Day through to 6 May.

“We welcome the publication by the Church of England of the book of Daily Prayers for the Coronation of King Charles III which can be used as a guide to reflection. The Coronation will be a time to celebrate community, faith and service – values that are reflected in these prayers.”

The Presidents of Churches Together in England are:

Archbishop Justin Welby, The Archbishop of Canterbury
Cardinal Vincent Nichols, The Cardinal Archbishop of
Westminster

Rev Canon Helen Cameron, The Free Churches Moderator
His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas, Archbishop of the
Oecumenical Patriarchate (Diocese of Thyateira and Great
Britain) and CTE President for the Orthodox Churches
Bishop Tedroy Powell, National Overseer of the Church of
God of Prophecy UK and CTE Pentecostal and Charismatic
President

Coronation Weekend celebrations

Coronation Weekend will offer several opportunities for people to come together in celebration of the historic occasion.

On Saturday 6 May the coronation will take place at Westminster Abbey. A solemn Christian service rooted in tradition and surrounded by pageantry, it will be conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Moderator will represent the Church of Scotland along with the Dean of the Chapel Royal, Very Rev Prof David Fergusson.

The festivities will continue on Sunday 7 May with the Coronation Big Lunch, at which neighbours and communities across the country are invited to share food and fun together. Also on 7 May a special Coronation Concert will be staged and broadcast live at Windsor Castle

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by the BBC and BBC Studios. Several thousand of pairs of tickets have been made available via public ballot.

Monday 8 May has been declared a bank holiday and members of the public will be invited to take part in The Big Help Out, which will encourage people to try volunteering for themselves and join in work being undertaken to support their local areas.

Pope suggests he is open to reviewing priestly celibacy

Priests could be allowed to have sex in future, Pope Francis has suggested, as he said he was open to “reviewing” the practice of celibacy.

In an interview with an Argentinian media outlet, Francis said: “There is no contradiction for a priest to marry. Celibacy in the Western Church is a temporary prescription. It is not eternal like priestly ordination, which is forever.”

Celibacy was made a requirement by the Roman Catholic Church in the 11th century. The move was introduced partly for financial reasons: clergy without spouses were more likely to leave their wealth to the church.

The Vatican enforces celibacy among priests, citing the example set by Jesus, but there are growing calls to drop the rule. The German Synod recently voted on a resolution requesting the Pope to end the obligation.

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When asked if he would be open to reviewing the requirement, Francis told online newspaper Infobae: “Yes. In fact, everyone in the Eastern Church is married. Or those who want to. There they make a choice. Before ordination there is the choice to marry or to be celibate.”

The Eastern Church is a branch of Catholicism that recognises the authority of the Pope but allows leeway for national traditions and liturgies.

Francis also addressed the subject of rising divorce rates, saying: “Sometimes [one] goes to a wedding and it seems more like it’s a social reception and not a sacrament.”

His openness to reviewing celibacy marks a shift from his position in 2019, when he said: “I think that celibacy is a gift to the Church.”

In the media

President Joe Biden must be the world’s worst Catholic - Ruth Dudley Edwards

President Joe Biden’s self-delusion seems to be boundless. When he looks in the mirror, he apparently sees an upright Irish Catholic true to the historic values of his deeply rooted religious identity. He is, in fact, an appalling Catholic who publicly flouts the church’s most cherished teachings and is about as authentically Irish as a leprechaun hat in a St Patrick’s Day parade.

Let's be clear: Biden is perfectly entitled to believe whatever he wants. Many Americans – including many Catholics – will agree with his views, for example, on the issue of abortion, which once saw him denied Holy Communion on the campaign trail in South Carolina. What sticks in the craw is his willingness to use his Irish Catholic identity to burnish his image while seemingly knowing nothing about either.

Not for Joe Biden the moral wrestling of serious Catholics. His schtick is “compassion”. And now he is a warrior for the rights of parents to approve “gender-affirming transitional medical care” for their children.

It's been several years since Pope Francis first denounced radical gender ideology. He has rejected the idea of teaching children that “everyone can choose their own sex”, while the American bishop Thomas Paprocki has reminded his flock that the church “teaches that the removal or destruction of healthy sexual and reproductive organs is a type of mutilation and intrinsically evil”.

Yet Biden has shown no interest in addressing Catholic teaching. He's focused on placating Democratic progressives by confronting Republican politicians like Texas governor Greg Abbott, whose administration says medical treatment aimed at transitioning children can be a form of child abuse.

Also in the President's sights is Florida's governor, Ron DeSantis, who is set to compete for the Republican presidential nomination. DeSantis banned lessons on gender identity in kindergarten to howls of outrage from

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progressives, and since then has acted to restrict puberty blockers, hormones and surgical interventions for minors.

Biden has denounced such measures as “dangerous”, “un-American” even “sinful” acts that “corrode our nation’s values”. The President believes his job is to stand up “against all these hateful bills”. You won’t hear him listening to women who’ve seen their sports destroyed by the introduction of physically male competitors, or to the young adults whose lives were ruined through surgical procedures they later regretted.

Instead, his administration is “committed to advancing transgender equality in the classroom, on the playing field, at work, in our military, in our housing and healthcare care systems – everywhere”. He has introduced policies allowing people to mark their gender as X on their passport applications, and released online resources for transgender children and their parents. At least on this topic Biden is in touch with his distant Irish roots. In 2015, Ireland passed a Gender Recognition Act almost as extreme as the one that just brought down Nicola Sturgeon.

When the President visits the Republic and Northern Ireland for the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, he will celebrate a peace deal he did much to undermine with his enthusiasm for the Northern Ireland Protocol. It’s part of a pattern: he is all talk, and no walk.

Courtesy The Daily Telegraph 15/03/2023

Perspective

Church is hard

Church is hard for the person walking through the doors, afraid of judgement.

Church is hard for the pastor's family, under the microscope of an entire body.

Church is hard for the prodigal soul returning home, broken and battered by the world.

Church is hard for the girl who looks like she has it all together, but doesn't.

Church is hard for the couple who fought the entire ride to service.

Church is hard for the single mom, surrounded by couples holding hands, and seemingly perfect families.

Church is hard for the widow and widower with no invitation to lunch after service.

Church is hard for the deacon with an estranged child.

Church is hard for the person singing worship songs, overwhelmed by the weight of the lyrics.

Church is hard for the man insecure in his role as a leader.

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Church is hard for the wife who longs to be led by a righteous man.

Church is hard for the nursery volunteer who desperately longs for a baby to love.

Church is hard for the single woman and single man, praying God brings them a mate.

Church is hard for the teenage girl, wearing a scarlet letter, ashamed of her mistakes.

Church is hard for the sinners.

Church is hard for me.

It's hard because on the outside it all looks shiny and perfect. Sunday best in behavior and dress.

However, underneath those layers, you find a body of imperfect people, carnal souls, selfish motives.

But, here is the beauty of church—

Church isn't a building, mentality, or expectation.

Church is a body.

Church is a group of sinners, saved by grace, living in fellowship as saints.

Church is a body of believers bound as brothers and sisters by an eternal love.

Church is a holy ground where sinners stand as equals before the Throne of Grace.

Church is a refuge for broken hearts and a training ground for mighty warriors.

Church is a converging of confrontation and invitation. Where sin is confronted and hearts are invited to seek restoration.

Church is a lesson in faith and trust.

Church is a bearer of burdens and a giver of hope.

Church is a family. A family coming together, setting aside differences, forgetting past mistakes, rejoicing in the smallest of victories.

Church, the body, and the circle of sinners-turned-saints, is where He resides, and if we ask, He is faithful to come.

So even on the hard days at church—

The days when I am at odds with a friend, when I've fought with my husband because we're late once again. When I've walked in bearing burdens heavier than my heart can handle, yet masking the pain with a smile on my face. When I've worn a scarlet letter, under the microscope. When I've longed for a baby to hold, or fought tears as the lyrics were sung. When I've walked back in, afraid and broken, after walking away.

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I'll remember, He has never failed to meet me there.'

There's some reflection to be done on those whom certain Churches exclude. That makes Church harder, even impossible for some. But while the space is solitary, an individual with faith can celebrate 'church' within themselves. At least, no one can deprive you of your own spirituality, try as hard as they may. Worship is relational, God with human.

Thanks to Mairisine Stanfield for sharing this text.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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