



**Image of the day**  
**Rochester Cathedral**



## Belfast parish stays connected through photography

**At St Mark's Dundela in Belfast, they are using photography in a novel way to help the church family stay connected as lockdown continues.**

Parishioners have been invited to share their lockdown lives by having their photograph taken through the ground floor window of their home. The images taken as a result of 'Project Window' will be shared with the church, hopefully raising a smile and giving everyone a boost.

Gail, who will be taking the photos says, "Project Window is an opportunity for us in St Mark's to stay connected while remaining safe. It's a chance for folk to share a little insight into their lockdown life – to share the things that are keeping them going, to inspire, support and encourage one another until we can come back together physically in the church and Heyn Hall.

"People can share a project they've been working on – a favourite coffee cup, a book they've loved reading or a hobby that's brought them enjoyment. They can be

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photographed with an object, their pet, someone in their household or simply as they are. It will all be very relaxed.”

If someone lives in a flat, Gail will find a way for them to get involved and, as the church is open for private prayer, there’s also the option for parishioners to have their photo taken at the church through the glass doors.

Needless to say, Gail will be observing all the restrictions and guidelines around COVID so that she and her subjects stay safe. We’re looking forward to seeing the results!

## **Don't repeal Easter licensing laws, clerics tell Stormont**

**The Christian festival of Easter will be gone under Stormont reforms of the licencing laws, church leaders have warned, Noel McAdam reports in Sunday Life.**

Presbyterian and Methodist leaders also warned of a 'tsunami' of addiction issues in the aftermath of the Covid-19 crisis.

And they have urged MLAs to include legal protections for staff who do not want to have to work at Easter.

Methodist minister David Clements warned of a “tsunami of harm” coming from alcohol abuse.

“We do not know what the outcome will be in a year's time, post-Covid. Although much less alcohol has been consumed in restaurants, pubs and so on, my gut feeling is that the amount of alcohol consumed in homes has increased

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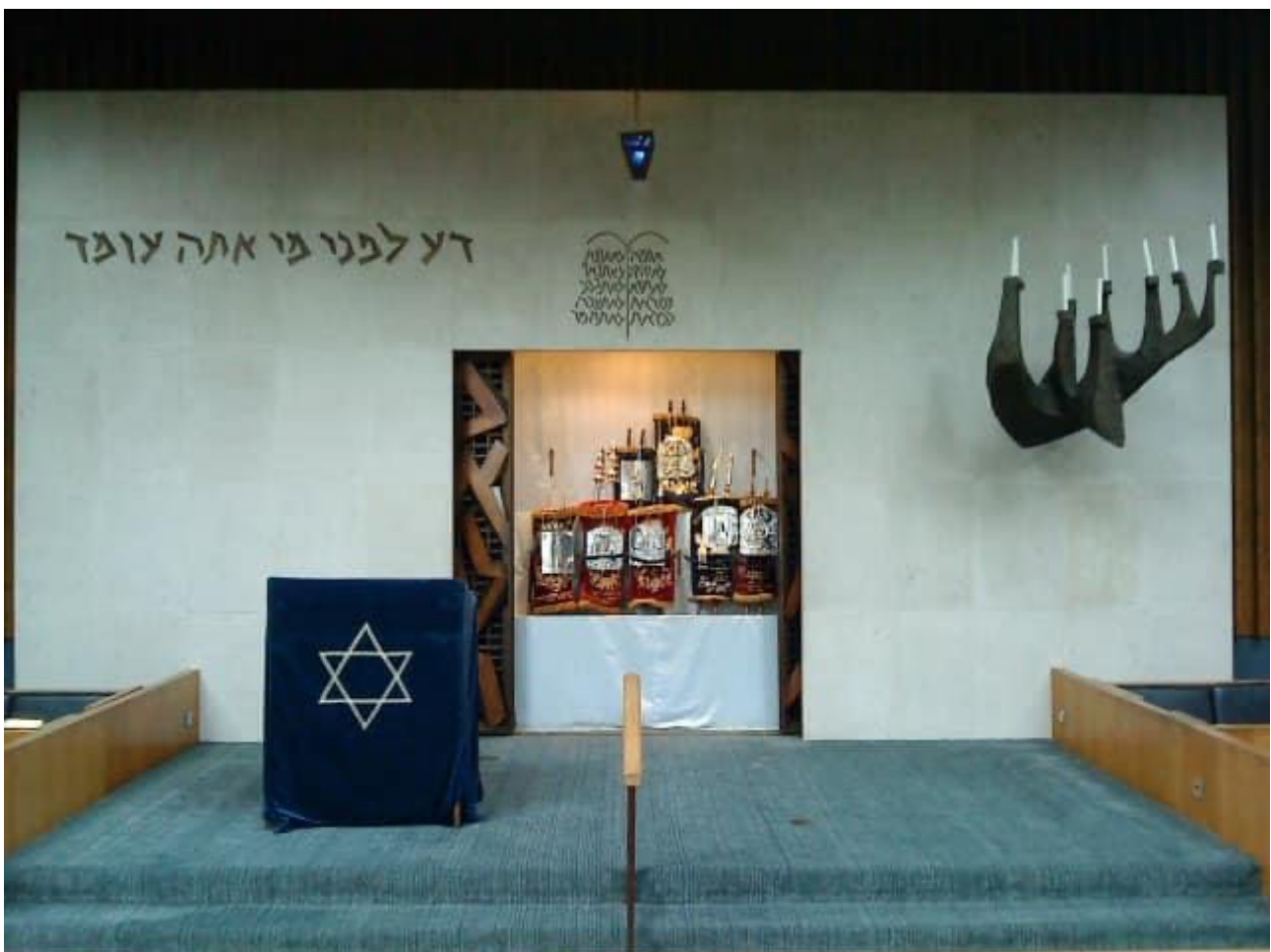
significantly. Who is to tell what health impact that will have in a year's time or five years' time?" he asked.

And Presbyterian Lindsay Conway added: "In some ways, society now has a different view on alcohol. We were very much a culture in which alcohol was seen as the demon drink, and, at times, we did not teach our young people that safe drinking may be achievable.

"Research has pointed to binge drinking having come from that culture."

They were among those addressing the Assembly's Communities committee which is examining new legislation on liquor licensing including pub opening times and restrictions.

[Belfast Synagogue](#)





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Their work fell into abeyance when Stormont collapsed in 2017 but the new law will provide flexibility on opening times on Good Fridays.

Rev Clements, who chaired the Methodist Council on Social Responsibility, said: “For Christians, you might say that Christmas and Easter are the two most significant festivals. We know that Christmas has been overrun with alcohol misuse, and it would be a shame if Easter followed suit.”

The committee accepted a suggestion from Alliance member Kellie Armstrong to write to Economy Minister Diane Dodds who oversees workplace legislation to ensure that Christians are protected “and that there is a way for them to refuse to work over Christian holidays”.

Sunday Life 28.02.2021

## **St Patrick's Cathedral community saddened by death of Canon Enda McDonagh**

**“The Cathedral community was saddened to learn of the death of Canon Enda McDonagh, D.D., D.C.L., Prebendary of Clondalkin 2007-12.**

“The Chapter elected Fr McDonagh and the Very Reverend Kenneth Newell as ecumenical canons to the reinstated Prebendal stalls of Clondalkin and Finglas respectively, following a General Synod Bill in 2007 to establish two ecumenical canonries at the National Cathedral.

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“Canon McDonagh immersed himself quickly in his preaching and pastoral duties; his learning and his knowledge of ecumenical matters made him a first-rate choice. His gentle good humour won him many friends at the Cathedral and we remember him with affection. He rests in peace”. Issued by Canon Charles Mullen, Chapter Clerk.

## **New Priest in Charge in Glendalough**

**The Revd Suzanne Harris has been appointed Priest in Charge of the Parishes of Castlemacadam, Ballinaclesh and Aughrim in the Diocese of Glendalough.**

Suzanne, who is currently Chaplain in Newpark Comprehensive School in Blackrock will work with the Archdeacon of Glendalough and the Rural Dean.

Suzanne lives in Stillorgan with her husband Richard Meates. They have two adult children, Andrew and Jessica. Originally from Clondalkin she attended St John's National School and the King's Hospital School. After studying Geography and Sociology in Trinity College Dublin, Suzanne completed the H. Dip while teaching part time in the King's Hospital. Before becoming Chaplain in Newpark in 1992 she taught Religious Education and Geography in Kilkenny College.

In 1996 she was commissioned a Lay Reader and helped in Kilternan, Tullow and Stillorgan parishes. She was selected for training for ordination in 2006 and assisted Canon Katherine Poulton in St George and St Thomas's on Cathal Brugha Street. She was ordained a Deacon in 2009 and a Priest in 2010 and from then helped Canon Gillian Wharton in Booterstown and Mount Merrion Parishes as a non

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stipendiary  
Curate.

In 2020 Suzanne  
undertook the  
transition course  
in the Church of  
Ireland  
Theological  
Institute to  
transfer to full  
time ministry with  
placements in  
Holmpatrick,  
Kenure and Balbriggan, Kill O' the Grange and St  
Bartholomew's Church.



“After 34 extremely happy years in teaching and chaplaincy, I feel God has now called me to fulltime parish ministry and so it is now time for a new area of ministry. I was delighted when the Archbishop asked me to help the Revd Jack Kinkead in the parishes of Castlemacadam, Ballinaclesh and Aughrim and am really looking forward to getting to know the parishioners and colleagues in the Diocese of Glendalough,” Suzanne commented.

“Due to current restrictions, I am making contact with parishioners by phone or email and have started to record services online in the three gorgeous churches with the help of the Lay Readers and parishioners. I would like to thank all those who have sent wonderful messages of welcome and very kind offers of support and help and thank the Revd Jack Kinkead for all his helpful advice and guidance as he includes me in the ministry team. May the Lord guide us and

lead us as together we learn more about him and share his love with others. 'For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God has prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2:10)'," she concluded.

## **Petition calls for removal of Cadbury's Crème Egg advert featuring gay couple claiming gratuitous offence to Christians**

**A petition on campaigning website CitizenGO is calling for the removal of a Cadbury advert featuring a gay couple sharing a Crème Egg while kissing.**

Some say the advert should not feature a gay couple in an Easter advert because it is offensive to Christians, others say the advert is too explicit, regardless of the sexual orientation of the couple.

On the other hand, some people have pointed out that kissing is frequently used between straight couples with far less complaints.

The petition to remove the advert, which has now been signed by 21,000 people, says: "By choosing to feature a same-sex couple, Cadbury's are clearly hoping to cause controversy and escape criticism, by claiming that any objections must be rooted in 'homophobia', but members of the LGBT community have also expressed their dislike of this campaign.

"Cadbury's should not be seeking to hide under cover of LGBT rights to conduct a campaign which sexually objectifies individuals. If the couple in question were





heterosexual, the advertisement would likely be prohibited, given the sexually explicit and graphic nature of the kiss."

Catholic campaigner Caroline Farrow, who is running the petition, told Premier: "A kiss can take many forms; this is not a mere peck on the cheek or familial show of affection but rather two adults snogging, using their lips and tongues to exchange the contents of a creme egg in an extremely sexually suggestive fashion.

"It is gross and offputting, regardless of the sex of the participants and given the overtly sexual nature of the kiss, would likely to be banned or censured if the couple were straight. The advert goes further than many soap operas.

She continues: "Many evangelical and Catholic Christians, as well as those of other faiths are likely to be offended by the advert, which deliberately seeks to undermine biblical and traditional Christian teaching about sex and sexuality. It's important that Christians are not rail-roaded into accepting the prevailing liberal orthodoxy and even more important that brands which seek to have broad appeal. from elderly pensioners to vulnerable children, and

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capitalise on their trusted status, don't let down their customers."

The advert is celebrating 50 years of the Crème Egg and features various people eating Crème Eggs in different ways, such as putting them in a cake, eating them discretely and eating them like egg and soldiers.

A gay couple are seen dancing in a garden and then kissing, sharing a Crème Egg as they kiss, with the voiceover saying: "Sharers? Yeah, we are down with that."

One of the men in the advert, who is with his co-star in real life, replied to the criticism on Instagram: "So it's OK when an advert sexualises a woman to benefit the male gaze and make other women feel inadequate if they do not live up to this beauty standard.

"But it's not OK, in 2021, to have an advert of a multi-racial (strike one) gay couple (strike two) on your screens for 10 seconds (strike three) eating/kissing/sexualised (strike four). Does anyone see how ridiculous this is? Like actual LOL."

Cadbury gave *Premier* this statement: "Cadbury has always been a progressive brand that spreads a message of inclusion, whether it is through its products or brand campaigns. We are proud of our Golden Goobilee advert which celebrates the many ways that everyone can enjoy a Cadbury Creme Egg. To illustrate this and showcase the joy our products bring, a clip of a real life couple sharing a Cadbury Creme Egg was included in the advert."

Luke Dowding, executive director of One Body One Faith, an LGBT+ inclusive Christian group, told *Premier* he was delighted there were more LGBT+ people being represented

in the media and added: "I think for Christians, perhaps what should be of more concern is the commercialisation of Easter" and that "issues of how chocolate is grown, how farmers are supported, whether chocolate is fairly traded are perhaps bigger issues that Christians might want to focus on."

Speaking about the claim that the product is often bought by children but has an advert which is 'sexually explicit', Dowding said: "I'm not sure the sharing of chocolate or the expression of a kiss could be expressed as 'sexually explicit', regardless of the orientation of the couple but I agree that there is media out there that perhaps is inappropriate for the consumption of children, but it really is down to the parents to decide what they want their children to watch or not watch."

Mike Davidson from the Core Issues Trust, which supports Christians who wish to change their sexual feelings, told *Premier* this advert was not the biggest problem: "I think there's a great deal that would have to be removed if we want to protect children. I can well understand the need to defend and protect Judeo-Christian values in society, I'm just not sure that easter eggs is the place to do it. Is that really the place where we want to have an argument about what we want to project in terms of the values that are important to us?"

American family group One Million Moms, who advocate for traditional Christian values and say their aim is to "stop the exploitation of our children, especially by the entertainment media" is encouraging its members to boycott Cadbury's Crème Egg to avoid the advert reaching American TV.

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The group wrote: "You might not like how the company celebrates the risen Saviour.

"Cadbury makes a huge push to sell its Crème Eggs in America during the Easter season each year. A portion of each sale goes to help finance Cadbury's social agenda that has nothing to do with chocolates and candies.

"If U.S. sales are strong, Cadbury just might bring this ad to American televisions for your children to see."

The CitizenGO [petition](#) claims: "Cadbury's are well aware of the religious significance of Easter. Therefore, they are trying to cause gratuitous offence to members of the Christian community during the most important feast in their calendar."

The petition will be sent to Guy Parker, chief executive of the Advertising Standards Agency and Louise Stigant, managing director of Cadbury UK.

## **Black majority churches join forces to show support for Covid-19 vaccine amid hesitation from congregations to take the jab**

**Leaders from 60 of the UK's black majority churches joined forces on Sunday to show their support for the Covid-19 vaccine to their congregations.**

They said they support the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccine programme, and urged their congregations to seek out the facts about the vaccine from trusted sources.



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The alliance of Christian leaders, which includes Bishop of Dover the Rt Rev Rose Hudson-Wilkin, said they felt compelled to act after data suggested black people are among those most likely to be hesitant about receiving the Covid-19 vaccine.

They also added that they have either already been vaccinated or that they will get the vaccine when it is their turn.

Bishop Hudson-Wilkin said: "When you are offered the Covid vaccine, please take it. This is our chance to show we care for ourselves and our neighbours. Don't let misinformation rob you of your opportunity to protect yourself and others."

### Washington Cathedral

The initiative has been organised by Christian umbrella organisations Churches Together in England, Evangelical Alliance and



Your Neighbour. A total of 17,254,844 Covid-19 vaccinations took place in England between December 8 and February 26, according to provisional NHS England data, including 16,679,881 first doses.

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More than three in four people aged 65 to 70 took up the offer of a vaccination, according to NHS England.

NHS England said the latest batch of invites arriving this week will mean everyone in the first seven priority groups will have been offered a jab, with people aged between 50 and 60 set to be invited shortly.

Sir Simon Stevens, chief executive of NHS England, said: "Since around four fifths of 65-69 year olds have now been vaccinated, we're rapidly working our way down the generations, with people ages 60 plus now able to come forward.

"As expected vaccine supply increases in March, we're planning for further acceleration as we head towards Easter."

## **Opinion - Ireland's Future sounds a shade too much like Ireland's past - Eoghan Harris**

**Éamon de Valera, with excruciating precision, as far back as 1933 set out the position of the Irish government for ending partition: first make the Republic a warm house for Northern Protestants.**

In 1970, Jack Lynch, taking the Haugheyites in his party to task, spoke with the same trenchancy as Micheál Martin does today.

"The plain truth — the naked reality — is that we do not possess the capacity to impose a solution by force. Even if

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we had that capacity what would be the result if we decided to apply it? Do we want to adopt the role of an occupying conqueror over the one million or so Six County citizens who at present support partition? Would we compel them to flee the country altogether or live under our domination, in constant opposition, feverishly nursing hatred and secretly plotting revenge?

"Thus we would have worked ourselves into the role of overlords, a role that would necessitate the imposition by us on the subjugated new minority of the Six Counties, and the whole country, of some of the hateful and tyrannical practices that we and the world so recently called an abomination. Is this the Ireland we want? Is this the kind of Irishmen we wish to be? Is this the kind of unity we want to achieve?"

Most of us in the Republic know De Valera, Lynch and Martin have laid down a political line from which it would be foolish to depart for three reasons: financial, political and moral.

Financially, the next generation is in hock to pay off the crash of 2008 to the tune of €150bn. Covid will cost €50bn but the effects of the lockdowns and ongoing vaccination will double that to another €100bn. So why on earth should anyone want to saddle them with the black hole of Northern Ireland?

Second, most people in the Republic know that we could not cope with nearly one million unionists forced into a united Ireland — so why cause trouble by talking about unity until Northern Protestants want to talk about it without pressure?

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Finally, most of us in the Republic funk saying this publicly — many of us privately also baulk at importing the tribal politics of those Northern nationalists who follow a Sinn Féin agenda.

In recent years, a group I call Nagging Nationalists have started a campaign to browbeat the Republic into browbeating the Prods into a united Ireland.

Fifty years ago, nationalists could legitimately claim to be second-class citizens.

But Northern nationalists have had civil rights since 1974. Most of the Nagging Nationalists, especially those who parade as victims in southern media, were born long after British soldiers "clumped through their homes".

Indeed, far from being an oppressed class, northern nationalists are streaking ahead of Protestants in higher education. Some of the wealthiest people in Northern Ireland are Roman Catholics. We need not mention the NHS.

Meantime, the loyalist working class, badly led by the major unionist parties, has been slipping back, socially and politically.

Here I need hardly nail my colours to the mast. As a Wolfe Tone Republican I regard a vote for Sinn Féin as a delinquent act.



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Furthermore, as long as nationalists vote for a fascist party like Sinn Féin, unionists will hold a higher moral ground in my mind.

Unionists may have been stupid about Brexit. But political stupidity is not political murder.

How can anyone believe that discrimination in housing and in voting justified the Provisional IRA's Nazi-style pogroms against innocent Protestant small farmers along the Fermanagh border?

Northern Protestants didn't fire the fatal shots on Bloody Sunday. And Northern Protestant victims were not confined to their 790 civilian dead from Le Mon to Enniskillen.

The IRA also killed 319 RUC officers and maimed and crippled another 9,000. Most were attacked long after civil rights had been won, most were Protestants, blown up with bombs like Drew Harris's father, sometimes shot in front of their children.

The IRA campaign was murder most foul, and it's time we said so as plainly as we did 25 years ago when tens of thousands of us marched in Dublin in protest at the Provo bombing of Canary Wharf.

Time we also paid tribute to the decent majority of Northern Protestants who bore the brunt of the Provos' savage sectarian campaign yet never lowered themselves to vote for loyalist paramilitaries.

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In contrast, most Northern nationalists vote for Sinn Féin, a party whose IRA wing, having butchered Protestants for nearly 25 years, is now trying to browbeat them into premature border polls as a prelude to pushing them into a united Ireland.

But not content with browbeating Northern Protestants, the Nationalist Naggers are now trying to browbeat the Irish Republic to go where it does not want to go and should not go.

Sinn Féin is the biggest of the browbeaters but it is not alone. In recent years, it has been reinforced by an academic, posher version of Nationalist Naggers called Ireland's Future.

Professor Colin Harvey is a leading light of Ireland's Future. Another big gun in the debate is Professor Brendan O'Leary, who works from the University of Pennsylvania.

Prof Harvey, who professed to be all for dialogue, recently blocked a Twitter attempt to talk to him by Ian Acheson, a tolerant unionist supporter of a Shared Island.

Prof O'Leary has written a turgid three-volume academic tome, *A Treatise on Northern Ireland* (2019), which few, except me, seem to have read.

My lack of confidence in his grasp of what is going on in Ireland is summed up by a remark in volume three. Here he makes the claim that "the PIRA is gone, even if a veteran's army council persists".

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Thus Prof O'Leary knows better than Irish government ministers, and security officials, in both Ireland and the UK, who seem to think, unlike him, that the IRA army council is more than an old boys' club.

Last Tuesday, Prof Colin Harvey and lawyer Mark Bassett presented their 2019 paper on planning for Constitutional Change in Ireland to the Oireachtas Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.

Senator Niall Blaney, whose base in Donegal means he is well briefed on the sensitivity of the situation, was critical of the failure of Ireland's Future to bring unionists on board.

He asked: "What dialogue have they had with unionist communities and politicians and what are their impressions of the report?"

Cutting even deeper, he added: "We have not had the necessary dialogue to bring unionists with us and create trust. The idea of the shared island unit is to create that trust and start working with them."

He went on to point out the elephant not in the room. "We are here having a discussion and there are no unionists at our meeting."

He finished with this simple, timeless truth:

"The more that we talk up a united Ireland, the less chance that we have of getting unionists to the table. I do not like to think of what the future will hold in that scenario. Peace has been hard-won on this island and I would not want to take steps back before we go forward."

**Note** - CNI in presenting "Opinion" is not endorsing views expressed. Rather, the reader is being invited to consider the opinion reported and to make their own evaluation.

## 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.

Today we pray for countries unable to access vaccines. The UN secretary general has criticised the unfair distribution of Covid vaccines, identifying that 130 countries have yet to receive a single dose.

Pray for all teachers and parents involved with students or their children. We ask for stamina and creativity as they seek to educate in less than ideal circumstances.





It has been announced that on Ascension Day - 13 May 2021, Bishop Hosam Naoum will be installed as Bishop of the Diocese of Jerusalem, bearing the title Archbishop. Please pray for Bishop Naoum, his family and the Diocese.

We think today of families who are struggling to cope with the ongoing restrictions to normal life, especially those who live in small homes with no outside space. We pray for an abundance of tolerance to help ease their less than ideal circumstances.

Today we give thanks for young climate activists. A UN survey shows that demand for green business and jobs is particularly high among young people, who have been a driving force behind getting the issue onto the political agenda.

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.

## Speaking to the Soul

As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God. I thirst for God, the living God. When can I go and stand before him?

Psalm 42:1-2 NLT

Having spent a couple of years in India I am very familiar with the challenges of living with intense heat. One lesson I learnt very swiftly is that you need to carry a drink with you at all times. But, inevitably, you sometimes forget – or at least I did! I can remember occasions when I was craving a drink and I was happy to drink anything to slake my thirst. Deer are just the same. They can only bound around the countryside for so long before they need to search for a stream of cool, refreshing water. King David uses thirsty deer as an illustration of his longing for the living God. He was desperate to meet God.

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This psalm suggests that David was feeling depressed. Nothing seemed to be going right. It was a time of struggle and confusion but he knew that God could satisfy him in a way that nothing else could. Many things give us satisfaction for a short while - possessions, success, relationships, sex, status. But ultimately none of those things, important and precious as they may be, can give us the lasting satisfaction that our eternal God and loving heavenly father can give us.

Getting dehydrated isn't merely unpleasant but medically dangerous. It needs to be avoided at all costs. But becoming spiritually dehydrated is even more perilous. Without the spiritual strength to face life's challenges there is every possibility of us making foolish and destructive choices which are likely to be damaging for those around us as well as ourselves. This means that it is vital to ensure that we are drinking regularly from the streams that God provides.

We will all find spiritual strength in different ways but prayer, reading the bible and enjoying Christian fellowship will all be crucial elements. We need to reflect carefully on our daily pattern of life to ensure that we are getting the nourishment that we need. Our spiritual life and vitality depends upon it.

## QUESTION

What are the streams that refresh your Christian life?

## PRAYER

Dear Lord, thank you that you are always ready to satisfy my spiritual thirst. Amen.

