

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – The Armagh Cope

March 20, 2023

Image of the day

The Armagh Cope

The Armagh cope made an appearance on St Patrick's Day to mark the patronal festival.

People and places



CONGRATULATIONS

Jacob Edwards

Ulster Rugby Schools' Cup
Champion 2023

St Mary's Church family are
so proud of you!!



Churchman in cup winning team on St Patrick's Day

St Mary's Ballybeen, Dundonald posted - Congratulations to our very own Jacob Edwards on winning the Ulster Rugby Schools' Cup with his RBAI 1st XV team.



Enjoyable St Patrick's Week at QUB Catholic Chaplaincy

What an incredible St Patrick's Week was enjoyed at Chaplaincy. The undoubted highlight was the Céilí, with Irish Stew, music, dance and great craic. The

Charity raffle raised almost £1000 for the humanitarian relief effort in Turkey and Syria. Well done to QUB Trocaire and the Chaplaincy Choir, Canticle, for organising.

Overnight prayer and worship at Church of Ireland Methodist Chaplaincy Belfast

Some students stayed up all night to pray in St Patrick's Day at the Church of Ireland Methodist Chaplaincy Belfast. No better way to begin St. Patrick's Day than by worshipping

March 20, 2023



the true High King of Ireland, Jesus Christ. Thanks to Rev. Danielle and the Hub (Col/ Methodist Chaplaincy) for organising this 12 hour worship time (10pm-10am). It's so encouraging to see PCI/ DV students being a part of this. "High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou art."

Celebrating St Patrick at Saul and Down

On a surprisingly dry 17 March, pilgrims gathered for Holy Communion at Saul Church as the annual St

March 20, 2023

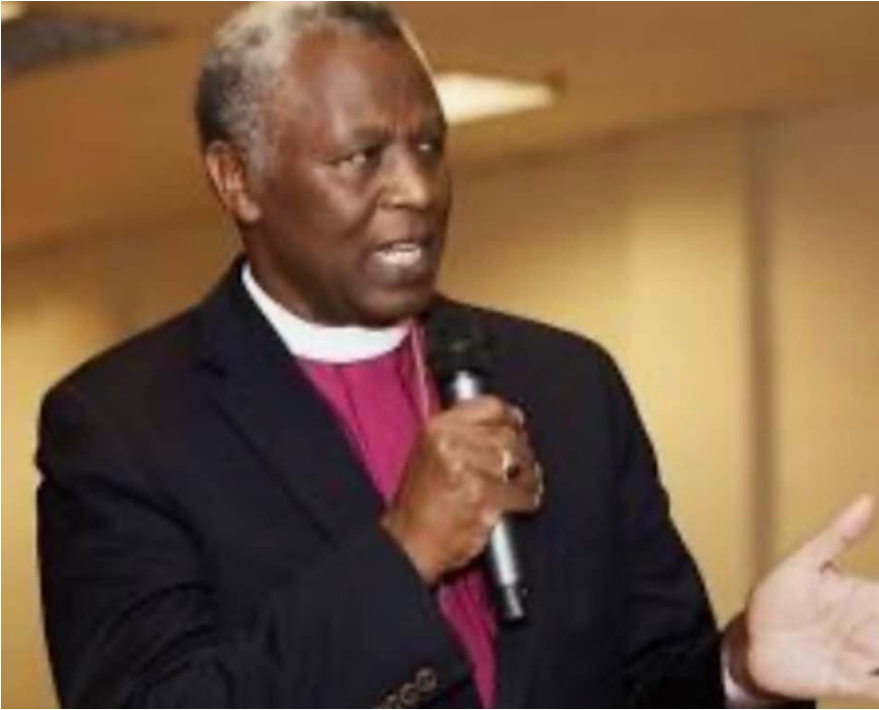
Patrick's Day celebrations organised by the Diocese of Down & Dromore got underway.

The Very Revd Henry Hull, Dean of Down, gave the address at the service and Bishop David McClay was the celebrant.

The diocesan celebrations have always been both cross-community and international. 'Reconciliation' was the particular focus for 2023. The theme ran through the Prayer Pilgrimage to Down Cathedral which was led by representatives of the three major denominations and the independent churches.



Revd David Turtle, President Designate of the Methodist Church in Ireland, led prayers on the topic of memories and experiences; Dominic Breen, a retired senior teacher and leading Catholic layman, guided the prayers on politics; Priscilla Reid, Pastor Emeritus of Christian Fellowship Church, Belfast and a leader of ARC (Associated Churches Ireland), led with prayer around reconciliation in the Church; and Revd John Dickinson, who recently retired as the minister of the biggest of Presbyterian Church in Ireland (Carnmoney), offered prayer for education.



In keeping with the Celtic flavour of the occasion, pilgrims arriving in the Cathedral Narthex for the Festival Service were greeted with traditional music played by the Maginn Family and Irish dancers from the

McCartney School of Dance took part in the service.

The guest speaker was the Archbishop of Rwanda, The Rt Revd Dr Lauren Mbanda. Archbishop Laurent is an experienced practitioner in the area of reconciliation. He has written and spoken widely about his experience during decades of violence in Rwanda and worked extensively in peacebuilding and trauma support in the aftermath of the genocide.

“Rwanda is a country that has risen out of the ashes of the genocide,” he said. “We still have a good way to go, but we are in a good place today.”

Getting to that place required finding a new identity and over the years doing the work of understanding, confession and forgiveness. Archbishop Laurent reminded us that our fundamental identity is as new creations in Christ who have put off the old and are now transformed (2 Corinthians 5:17).



He said: “New means new creatures, new people, new hearts, new mindset, new thinking. I have been reconciled with God and that puts me in a new environment.

Reconciliation means to exchange hostility, not only with God but with your fellow men.”

Archbishop Laurent urged those present to be Christ’s ambassadors. “God’s

people, his Church, need to seek him, and in seeking him, you and I will bring a blessing to the people around us – to our family, to our village, to our society and to our nation.”

Mrs Myrtle Kerr led the intercessions, some of which were written by her husband, the late Revd Cecil Kerr. Against the backdrop of the ‘Troubles’, Cecil and Myrtle founded the Christian Renewal Centre at Rostrevor and left a profound legacy of renewal and reconciliation. Myrtle also led the congregation in singing, ‘Lead me Lord’ in both English and Irish.

The music was directed by Down Cathedral’s organist, Mr Michael McCracken. Soloist Ruth Thompson sang What grace is mine and Make me a channel of your peace.

Following the service, Archbishop Laurent laid a wreath on Patrick's grave and many people stayed on in the cathedral for a complimentary 'Picnic in the Pews.'

News reports

Archbishop of Canterbury concludes visit to Eastern Europe

The Archbishop of Canterbury has concluded a visit to Eastern Europe where he met with religious leaders and communities in the region.

Archbishop Welby has been in Istanbul, Bucharest and Chisinau in Moldova. He flew out on Friday (10th March) and returned last Thursday (16 March).

The focus of his trip was strengthening ecumenical friendships and understanding the contexts, concerns and hopes of Christians in the region – particularly against the backdrop of the Russian invasion of Ukraine – as well as deepening friendships across faiths. The Archbishop also spent time in worship, prayer and conversation with Anglican clergy and congregations.

Starting off in Istanbul, the Archbishop met His All Holiness Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch, and also attended a Celebration Mass for the 10th anniversary of Pope Francis' election. He preached at Christ Church Anglican Church on Sunday morning.



On Monday he travelled to Romania to acknowledge the long history of friendship between the Church of England and the Romanian Orthodox Church. He joined the Anglican Church of the Resurrection to preach at evening prayer.

During his visit, Archbishop Justin met Patriarch Daniel, who thanked him for the Church of England's support of Romanian Orthodox parishes in the UK, as well as Metropolitan Nifon of Targoviste, a member of the executive committee of the World Council of Churches.

On Tuesday the Archbishop paid a visit to Archbishop Calinic in the city of Curtea de Arges, where he was shown the historic monastery and the royal tombs. Archbishop Justin also spent time with the Papal Nuncio, with members

March 20, 2023

of the historic Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania, and the Romanian Royal Family.

When he was in Romania, Archbishop Justin met with Ukrainian refugees who are currently being supported by the UNHCR in Bucharest. He spent time alone with some of them, who told him what it was like to flee their home because of conflict and then try to settle in a new country.

Commenting on the visit, the Archbishop said: “This is a trip where I am listening and learning from the Eastern Orthodox Church leaders and others about their concerns for the region and the instability on their borders. I am joining them in praying for peace in Ukraine and our hope for a better future.

“Yesterday’s visit to Ukrainian families displaced by war, allowed me to see for myself the work the UNHCR is doing to support them. Two things struck me: the dignity with which people are treated here and the generosity of Romanian people. It was heart-warming. It was a privilege to meet Ukrainian refugees, to hear their stories and to meet the people who are working with them to create a safe-harbour.

“It was also a real pleasure, as always, to spend time with the chaplaincies and their congregations in the Diocese of Europe.”

On Tuesday and Wednesday the Archbishop travelled to meet people from the Roma community who experience discrimination, stigmatisation and poverty. First the Archbishop visited a Roma village called Sintesta and met

March 20, 2023

the Roma priest there called Father Daniel Ganga, who is working to improve literacy and get more children into education. Archbishop Justin was shown run-down houses with no electricity or running water. The following day he travelled to a second Roma village called Vizuresti to visit the afterschool club there.

The Archbishop rounded off his trip to Eastern Europe by visiting Moldova for the first time. In a brief visit lasting less than 24 hours, Archbishop Justin went to the Jewish Cultural Centre in Chisinaumet and met the Rabbi there, as well as the Metropolitan Petru of Bessarabia and Exarch of the Plains.

Email conmen pretend to be Archbishop to scam clergy

Scammers posing as church officials including the Archbishop of York have targeted clergy asking them to buy online vouchers and gift cards.

There have been recent close calls, the Diocese of York said, including one church office holder who spent “quite a lot” of their own money, before the scam was discovered just in time.

In a warning posted online, the Diocese of York said it was monitoring the scams and had reported them to the police. Some fake messages have been identified by the use of incorrect titles, The Times reported. In one example, missives signed “Rev Stephen Cottrell” were outed as not

March 20, 2023

being genuine because his true title is “Most Rev Stephen Cottrell”, according to the paper.

@ @

One phishing email purporting to be from the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, gave itself away by using his incorrect title

The first message of the scams often uses a phrase such as “Are you free at the moment?” or “Do you have a moment? I have a request I need you to handle discreetly. I am currently busy in a prayer session. No calls so just reply my email.”

Once the intended victim replies, scammers often ask them to buy vouchers or gift cards online, which they promise will be reimbursed. “The sender has taken some trouble both with identifying their chosen pseudo-sender and the intended victim (we guess someone is trawling church websites),” the Diocese of York warns.

“In many cases the sender has used an un-traceable gmail address, or texted from an equally un-traceable pay-as-you-go (or ‘burner’) mobile phone. It seems this is a national trend at present with similar reports from other Dioceses, and we have reported one specimen case to North Yorkshire Police who have passed it over to Action Fraud.”

A similar series of scams was reported in 2020, with victims asked to buy online gift cards as thank you presents for members of the church community.

In 2019 GCHQ said it had seen a sharp rise in phishing emails using the details of real law firms and churches.

March 20, 2023

They said

It is very difficult for the thousands of victims of IRA violence to hear US politicians regularly heap praise upon those who state that the killing, maiming and intimidation was justified.

Reconciliation requires, as an absolute minimum, recognition of what was wrong.

Philip McGarry OBE

Couldn't agree more. Victims and survivors are still the bottom of the pile. 25 years on, we still have politicians saying the murder of our loved ones and the lifetime injuries left with the survivors was unavoidable and justifiable, which only deepens the pain felt.

Anne Travers

Chicago can put green dye in its river.
Sydney can light up its opera house.
But nothing compares to Brussels putting a flat cap and Aran jumper on MannekenPis

Michael Bruton

So POTUS says of Windsor Framework "it's going to help to ensure that all the people in Northern Ireland have an opportunity to realise their full potential," - unless you're a unionist who wants to be a full part of the U.K. rather than in an EU colony ruled by foreign law and court.

Jim Allister

Church News Ireland

March 20, 2023

Lost count of how many programmes I've made from Northern Ireland now but every single time I've felt welcomed and inspired by meeting people of humour and grace.

David Waters in Derry with Claire McCollum recording yesterday's Mothering Sunday episode

“Our land – and indeed our faith – have never been some idealised monocultural fortress ... lies that seek to stoke division by exploiting grievances are a denial of the generosity of Christ”

Archbishop Dermot Farrell

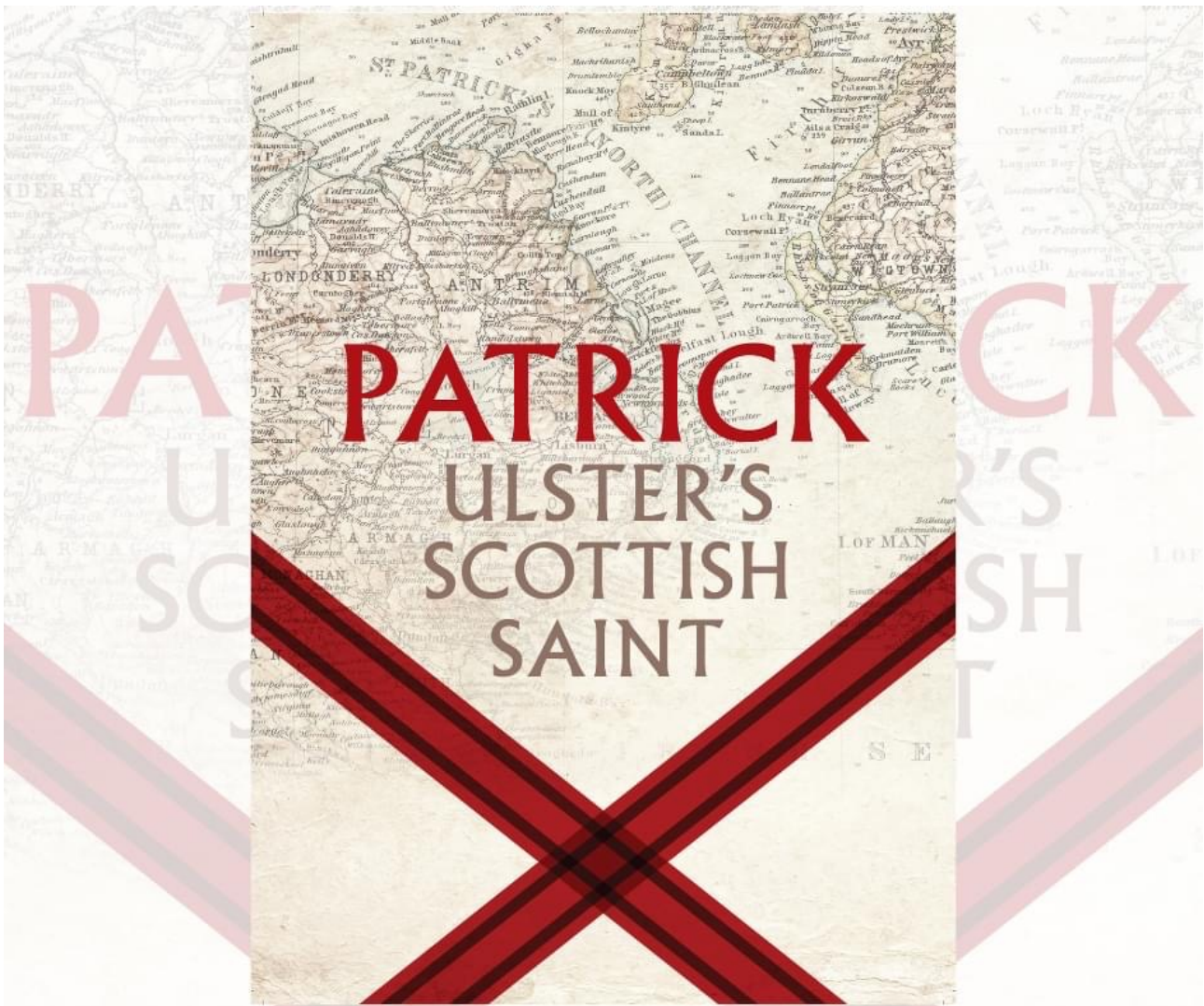
Beware of “good Catholics who feel upright because they go to the parish, go to Mass on Sunday and boast of being righteous...they have replaced God with their own ego.”

Pope Francis

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Patrick, Ulster's Scottish Saint

Last year the Ulster-Scots Agency launched a new publication “Patrick, Ulster's Scottish Saint” charting centuries of shared traditions of Saint Patrick in Ulster and Scotland.



Agency CEO Ian Crozier said, “For centuries, it was well known and accepted by all communities here that Ireland’s Patron Saint was born and raised on the banks of the Clyde, kidnapped as a youth and brought to Ulster as a slave. Six years later, he escaped and found his way home, only to return and bring the good news of Christianity to his former captors, changing this place forever. Sadly, over the past hundred years, this once-familiar knowledge has declined, to the extent that even some of the most acclaimed recent writing about Patrick has missed or dismissed it.”

'Patrick, Ulster's Scottish Saint' aims to recover these traditions so that people can reclaim a part of our heritage

March 20, 2023

that was in danger of being lost. The publication looks at the extensive Roman presence in Scotland, highlights the long-standing stories and placenames in Scotland and east Ulster relating to Patrick, and also sets out a range of examples of learned folk from all communities here writing about Patrick's Scottish story. Most importantly, it compares these local traditions to the only two surviving documents written by Patrick himself.

Patrick, Ulster's Scottish Saint is available free of charge from the Discover Ulster-Scots Centre in Belfast.

Corrymeela at Coventry on Facebook

Alexander Wimberley, leader of the Corrymeela Community was the preacher at Coventry Cathedral yesterday.

Alexander spoke on "the passage from John about the man born blind -- now of age and able to speak for himself about his miracle.

"The context this year for Corrymeela Sunday is the 25th anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

"We are a generation on, and it is time to listen to those who have come of age since 1998".

You can see the 10.30am service on the cathedral's FB page. <https://www.facebook.com/cathlivestream/>

March 20, 2023

St. Patrick's Day Concert with Keith & Kristyn Getty

Video from Keith and Kristyn Getty's TV night of Irish music and family fun.

<https://watch.tbn.org/m/vsz4894V/st-patricks-day-with-keith-kristyn-getty>

Perspective

A Reflection for Mothering Sunday by Archbishop Michael Jackson

Gospel: St Luke 2.33–35

When last we heard this reading, we were probably in a more joyous mood. It was on the Feast of The Presentation of Jesus in The Temple in Jerusalem. Mary and Joseph and Jesus go from their village home to the capital city to fulfil what was required of them under the law of religious ritual. What happens next is that Jesus is recognized by two faithful, attentive and patient servants of God, Simeon and Anna, as The Messiah. This may seem to us to be a Selfie-moment. We may even be thinking that St Luke is spoiling the party – our party – in what we hear today. What we are told here is properly disturbing. Old Simeon has waited long to bless and to prophesy. The two words are important for us at this half-way point of The Season of Lent. We need to hold them together and to grapple with the fact that his prophecy is a blessing and not a curse even though the

words carry layer upon layer of sadness that nobody would wish on any child.

As St Luke tells the story, he draws us into that story because it is our story. We are told that Luke was both a doctor and a painter. It gives him new and nuanced perspectives. Even though the future was then far off, we are told that Mary kept these words close to her heart and pondered them. She was told the truth as it was going to unfold. God does not patronize:

This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed – and a sword will pierce your own soul too. (St Luke 2.34–35)

Today is The Fourth Sunday in Lent and also Mothering Sunday. The church focus and the secular focus have long ago been uneasy bedfellows for the purists, but we now have no option other than to get on with it and to make a go of it. Cards have been on sale for weeks; prompts have been appearing on 'phones and on computers for weeks also. Breakfasts have been prepared by conscientious children and carried precariously along hallways and up a flight of stairs to lightly sleeping mothers the world over. Even within the Scriptures selected for today, the focus has changed from where it used to be, that is on the church as Jerusalem that is above, free and the mother of us all, to more obvious pictures of motherhood and the church's maternal role. But survival necessitates change. Everybody wants mothers and children to enjoy today and all it has to offer. That's good.



The Gospel rightly centres on the life and the person of Jesus Christ the Messiah. We, who have been following the pathway of Jesus through The Season of Lent need to enjoy today as a time of refreshment. We need to dig deep and see something of the motherhood of the church in what is happening. It is to be found in the gift of service to God and in the loyalty to her son through thick and thin that we see in the young mother who all too quickly becomes the bereaved mother losing her adult child out of time and ahead of time. So, perhaps on Mothering Sunday, we can ask what today's Gospel tells us about ourselves and the church through the examples of Mary and of Jesus at this mid-point of Lent where we need the encouragement of spiritual reality and of human realism.

Mary shows us, as do many women and mothers, that she can assimilate the reality of what is happening with a deep sense of care, pragmatism and adaptation – and without

sentimentality. Mary shows us that, having opened herself to the will of God, she will undertake and undergo whatever God gives her. And so, from her we learn that reality is what happens and how we respond to it; it is not a fixed or even a negotiable thing; rather it is an interactive experience of gift and response. Our understanding of 'a gift' is not a great help to us here. A gift is not what in fact we want or even what we like. A gift is what we get. What Mary gets is the assurance of the purpose of God unfolding in and through the person of her son. A young woman is called upon by God to face loss and suffering, death and degradation as the stuff of life. In such a way as this, we can travel with Mary just as Mary has already travelled our way in life: from Bethlehem to Calvary.

From Jesus we learn that we do not, nor can we, as human beings, know what lies ahead of us. We do not want to deny to Jesus the Messiah a regular human childhood. We want him to be happy with his parents and with his siblings. But, like all children born and yet to be born, he has no option but to grow up into adulthood if God spares him. Unlike other children, he always carries the old rugged cross when he is learning Joseph's woodcraft in the workshop and playing in the back yard with the wooden toys he makes – and his mother looking out the kitchen window, worrying for him in his pellucid innocence. And: worrying about what? Worrying that he might not live to fulfil the task God had given him, the task into the heart of which God had called her – worrying that he might not live long enough to die on the cross for the purpose of salvation. She remembered that she had been given a blessing and not a curse and she wanted to see that blessing shared with all. She was, after all, a mother. In Jesus's case, God does spare him because

March 20, 2023

God needs him – for the redemption of the world, for the re-creation of humanity and for the gift of grace. His mother carries the pain, often in her specific maternal observation of a happy child, as he learns to deal with being both human and divine all in one. In God's time, the human has to bow to the divine. This is the will of God. This is the gift of God prophesied and blessed by Simeon. For this we celebrate Mothering Sunday at the heart of the Season of Lent.

Before we leave the pages of Scripture and the security of church, and turn to face the world, let us be real in another way. The world is densely populated with mothers and children who carry pain and suffering, who juggle as best they can what they cannot possibly control. They may be misused and abused; they may be sold and trafficked for obscene amusement; they may be refugees and displaced persons fleeing for what remains of their lives and negotiating terrain entirely unknown to them; they may silently be distressed and defeated by life itself and its cloud of unknowing; they may, shockingly, already be the dead living.

Mary is their patron. Jesus is their sibling. The Christian Church – whatever their faith and culture – needs to be their mother. Galatians 4.26: But the heavenly Jerusalem is a free woman; she is our mother.

Poem for today

Wild Geese

by Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.

You do not have to walk on your knees

March 20, 2023

for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.

Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.

Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting -
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at houstonmckelvey@mac.com

March 20, 2023