

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Four foot evangelists

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Four foot evangelists

“Popped into church to surprise my mum with daffodils. So many people came over to talk to me because of the dog. If I ever do a theology degree, my dissertation will be about the power of animals in evangelism!

“I started going to my old church solely because they had a donkey on Palm Sunday. Sucked me right in and I ended up in the choir, helping with Sunday School, volunteering for the night shelter and all sorts of other things... All because of that donkey!” - Louise Watts

People and places

Enniskillen Coffee Morning for local Scripture Union E3 project

There will be a Coffee Morning for the local Scripture Union E3 project on Sat 25th March 10:30 - 12:30 in the Bridge Centre, Enniskillen Presbyterian Church. SU carries a very valuable ministry across the schools of Fermanagh/Fivemiletown.

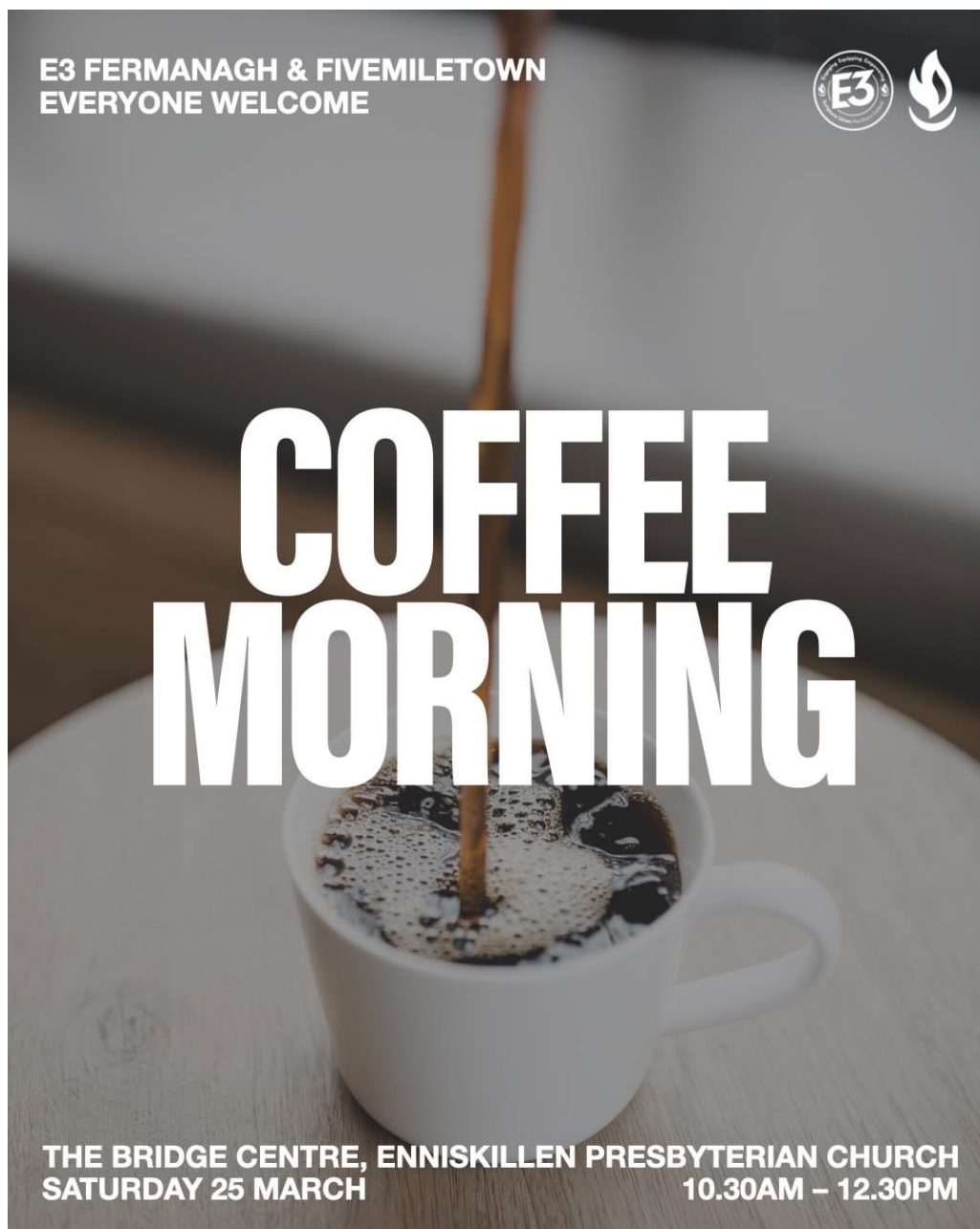
SU's E3 Schools' Project is a localised form of Schools' Ministry, where a local 'E3 Worker', backed up by local

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volunteers and churches, works over a set District. E3 describes our three main aims:

ENGAGING schools pupils with the opportunities and resources that may lead them to encountering Jesus through His word, praying that they can make an informed decision about Jesus and His truth.

EQUIPPING Christian teachers and pupils by giving them support and encouragement to facilitate growth in Christian



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maturity and to encourage them to be salt and light in their schools.

EMPOWERING churches to actively pray, support and get involved in Schools' Ministry.

<https://www.sunico.uk/what-we-do/schools/e3>
<https://m.facebook.com/121012967919784/>

All E3 Projects should be completely financed by donations from local churches, groups and individuals. In order to ensure long term financial security for the project we aim to raise £30,000 in each district each year.



Dean welcomes visitors to Christ Church Waterford

On Thursday 16th March we were delighted to welcome Metropolitan H G Abraham Mar Stephanos to Christ Church



Cathedral Waterford. His Grace is the Metropolitan of UK-Europe-Africa Diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church. He was accompanied by Fr. Mathew K. Mathew, priest of the local parish, and Deacon Calvin. The Metropolitan was received by Very Rev Bruce Hayes and Rev Richard Greene. Rev Greene explained something of the history of the Cathedral, after which the Dean led prayers in St. Nicholas' Chapel, a hymn was sung by the visitors, and a blessing was given by the Metropolitan. The visit concluded with a viewing of the Medieval Vestments in the adjacent museum.

Confirmation apple trees in Tralee and Dingle

An Apple Tree was presented to each of those who were confirmed in Tralee and Dingle in 2022 at the All Age service in St John's on Mothering Sunday. The Rector compared the care and attention that is required for an apple tree to bear fruit to the care and prayer that the young people are encouraged to practice so that they too can bear forth the



fruit of the spirit such as love, joy, patience and kindness in their lives. He also encouraged the parents of those confirmed to purchase a second tree which would represent their support, encouragement and cross pollination of ideas and faith.



Gone Home

Long-standing and much-loved member of St Brigid's Parish Church, Glengormley, and scouts, Prue Sutton, went to be with her Lord on 10th March. The funeral to thank God for her life took place at St Brigid's church.

News reports

New choir for girls at St Margaret's

St Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey, is launching a new choir for girls aged 11 - 17.

Applications to join the choir, which begins meeting in September, are open now. No previous experience of choral singing is necessary and we'd love to hear from girls from any school or background.

Find out more about how to get involved:

<https://www.westminster-abbey.org/abbey-news/a-new-girls-choir-for-st-margarets-church>

School pulls out all the stops to bring on young organists

The organ is usually an instrument learnt once the musician is tall enough to reach the pedals.

But teachers at Salisbury Cathedral School may have to consider adjusting the bench to allow their new 11-year-old scholars to play.

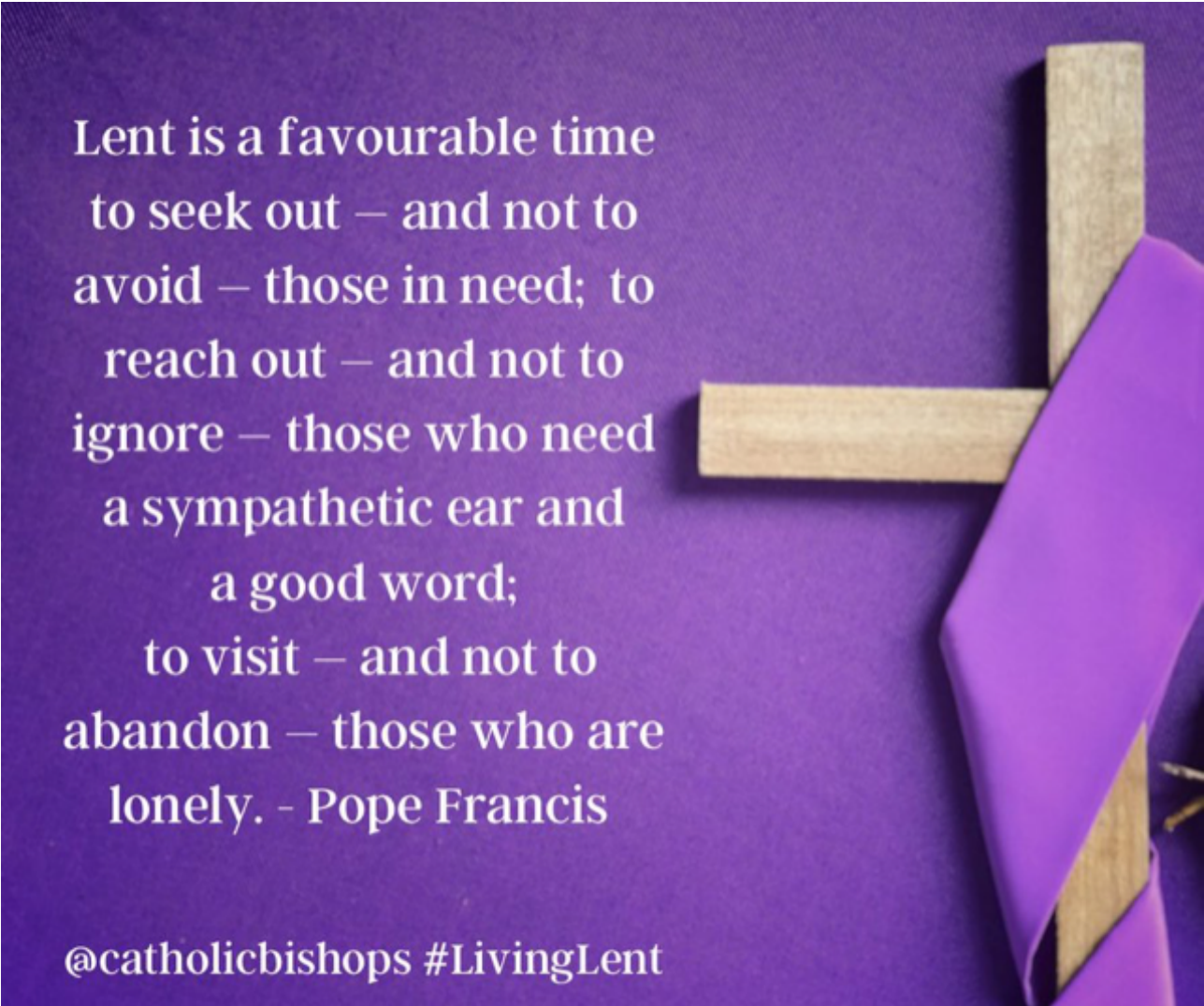
The preparatory school is set to be the first in the UK to offer organ scholarships in a drive to boost the number of young people playing the instrument.

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For centuries, organists were almost always male, but the music department is searching for one boy and one girl to ensure the number of female players continues to grow.

Scholars receive 20 per cent off school fees and organ lessons, and will have the chance to play the famous Father Willis organ in Salisbury Cathedral.

Clive Marriott, head teacher of Salisbury Cathedral School, said: “As a leading musical prep school, we have a duty to improve and increase our organ teaching to help ensure the future of this ‘King of Instruments’ and its central role in cultural and spiritual life. We are ideally placed to introduce scholarships for young organists and then help those pupils

A purple background with a wooden cross and a purple ribbon. The text is in white and reads: "Lent is a favourable time to seek out – and not to avoid – those in need; to reach out – and not to ignore – those who need a sympathetic ear and a good word; to visit – and not to abandon – those who are lonely. - Pope Francis".

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@catholicbishops #LivingLent

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find senior schools which will continue to provide advanced pipe organ practice and performance opportunities.”

The college has been educating Salisbury’s choristers since its inception in 1091, but it was only 32 years ago that 17 girls joined the school to become the first girls’ cathedral choir in the UK.

Applicants should be in school years five and six and currently play the piano to grade five standard, or already be learning the organ.

The instrument sometimes requires alterations for children or shorter adults to play. Adjustable benches can be fitted and a box can be used to bring the pedals up towards the player’s feet.

Anna Lapwood, organist and director of music at Pembroke College, Cambridge, said: “The choral world has been male dominated for a long time. So I love the fact they have specified the scholarships are one for a girl and one for a boy.”

They said

Reflecting this morning on the personal efforts we can make to extend an olive branch and how we can recognise when another person or other people extend an olive branch.

Fr Martin J Magill

Great time this morning - 400 native trees planted on our church land by about 40 volunteers aged 4 - 80 years old!

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Imagine if every local church became known as a place where creation flourished as part of our witness and worship.

David Smyth

We remember British Army corporals Derek Wood and David Howes murdered by the IRA on 19th March 1988 in Belfast, they mistakenly drove into an IRA funeral and were attacked, beaten then shot, that day the world seen the barbaric nature of the Republican movement.

Brian Higginson

Corporals Wood and Howes lynched by a savage mob only a few miles from my home on this day 1988. The convicted murderers were released under Belfast Agreement. They walk among us today but Wood and Howes cannot.

Anne Graham

The greatest gift my mother shared with me was her faith.
Thanks mom!

Martina Purdy

I am currently sat in Edinburgh airport waiting to board my flight home. So for all of you asking I am very sorry I have not seen the RC for Freddie Steward. But I will have watched it in time for this weeks Whistle Watch don't worry

Nigel Owens MBE

At the Ireland/ England Rugby Game 99.99 per cent correctly wave the green/shamrock flag..only one spectator tries to politicise the game by flying the Tricolour. Why does the ITV producer always show the idiot flying the tricolour?

Lord John Kilclooney

Mothering Sunday used to be a day when people returned to their Mother Church where they were baptised.

Unfortunately, it's origins have been lost in commercialism! So, have a blessed Mothering Sunday, NOT Mother's Day!

Maureen Bennett

Never forget this - at the heart of Scottish Nationalism is a hypocritical mockery of democracy: "A few days after the 2014 vote, Mr Salmond and his then deputy Ms Sturgeon declined to attend a service of reconciliation at St Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh aimed at healing the divisions opened up during the campaign, thereby setting the tone for the next eight and a half years of SNP rule."

Steve Sayers

If it is wrong to have a physical border between Northern Ireland and the Republic why is it OK to have one between GB and Northern Ireland?

John Redwood

It's not a question of 'right' or wrong, but of political consequences. Your support of Brexit created a problem for the GFA that I and others had negotiated. Now we must try to repair the damage that you Brexiteers denied would happen.

Lord John Alderdice

We don't do much well from Northern Ireland but when you see the big dopey smiles on the faces in Washington this week we definitely do self-serving, self-satisfied freeloaders to an Oscar-winning level.

Ian Clarke

"Sinn Féin have failed to deal with issues of the past and “over glorified” the violence of The Troubles...

... the party had to “deal with issues of the past”.

“I genuinely believe they are... recreating and rewriting the past, very wrongly... as someone who has an interest in history, with a view to justifying what were terrible atrocities and terrible acts of violence.”

Tánaiste Micheál Martin

Speaking at a St Patrick’s Day event at the JFK Library in Boston on Saturday.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

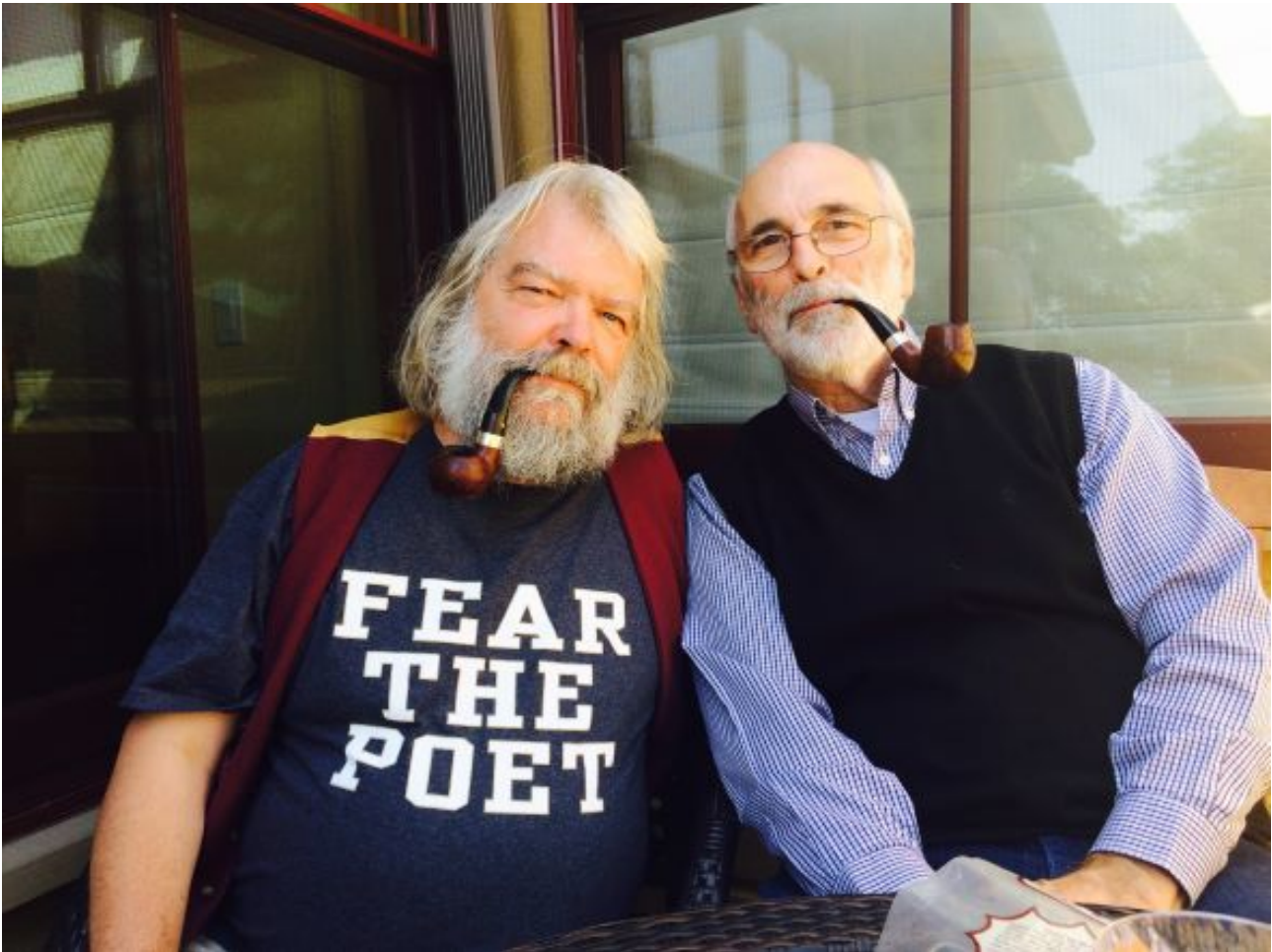
Sons and Daughters of Narnia: Tracing CS Lewis’s Literary Influence into the 21st Century

The C.S. Lewis Group at Ulster University, Coleraine, invite you to join them at the Riverside Theatre on the 13th – 14th of November 2023, as they celebrate the astonishing literary legacy of C.S. Lewis.

This two-day international academic symposium—is an exciting programme of talks, presentations, and lively discussions focused on the central theme of C.S. Lewis’s impact and influence upon a wide variety of 20th and 21st century literature, from sci-fi and children’s fiction to popular

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apologetics, literary and cultural criticism, poetry, and everything in between.



The keynote dialogue will be delivered by internationally renowned and widely celebrated C.S. Lewis scholars, Dr Malcolm Guite (Cambridge University) and Professor Jerry Root (Wheaton College).

The second day of the event will showcase an original three-act play on C.S. Lewis, written by Dr David Clare.

Further details and booking at -

[\[https://riversidetheatre.ticketsolve.com/ticketbooth/shows/1173640825\]](https://riversidetheatre.ticketsolve.com/ticketbooth/shows/1173640825)

Perspective

Stoking division by exploiting grievances is a denial of the generosity of Christ - Archbishop Dermot Farrell

“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”

“Do we not, as people of faith, have a responsibility to encourage our politicians and civic leaders to go further and do better, to deliver the infrastructure of services which all in our communities so urgently require?”

Homily for Saint Patrick's Day

We gather to give thanks to God for the gift of Patrick, whose preaching and ministry planted a seed that grew in the hearts of successive generations of Irish people, down to our own day. Patrick offered himself as a willing instrument of the Lord, proclaiming God's love and mercy, and devoting his life to proclaiming the freedom that the gospel brings, and nurturing the faith of the communities that welcomed it.

With Saint Paul, Patrick could rightly proclaim that he had fought the good fight to the end, had run the race to the finish and above all, had kept the faith (see 2 Tim 4:7–8). Patrick, very clear that the success of his mission was not

due to his own merits or effort, tells us that it was the gift of Christ that he should spend his life serving the people in truth and with humility to the end. His Confession, written before he died, affirmed that whatever little he did, or made known, to please God was itself a gift of God. He saw himself as “a letter of Christ” (Confession 11). Again, like Paul, he calls himself an ambassador for Christ (Confession, 56; Letter to Coroticus, 5).

The witness of Patrick and his followers to Christ, and their rootedness in what could be termed Saint Paul’s missionary spirituality, gave the Church in Ireland its particularly distinctive missionary character through the centuries. It was this passion for Christ and for those who did not yet know him, that led Irish monks in early centuries to bring their faith, and its light and hope to communities across Europe. In other ways in the last two centuries, this same inspiration found further expression in the lives and dedication of countless of Irish women and men who left this island to make a new home among communities across the globe. Their lives too were poured out as a libation and many endured much hardship and suffering, even martyrdom, in the service of the gospel.

There is one aspect of Patrick that merits particular attention today. Patrick’s arrival as aspal Éireann as the hymn calls him – was not his first encounter with our land. His first visit was not of his own volition: he was taken prisoner as a youth, and was trafficked to a strange land and a strange people who exploited him for his labour. While he managed to escape, he surprisingly felt called to return to preach to those among whom he had been held captive. This is the measure of the man, and of his faith. Regrettably, human

trafficking and the exploitation of the vulnerable are still markers of our own time.

From ancient times, we in Ireland have experienced the effects of migration and displacement. Our very DNA witnesses to a story of waves of people who settled here and shaped our culture, traditions and history. Sometimes, new arrivals evoked fear and conflict through the displacement imposed by those who would colonise this island. That fear wove its own survival narrative, a narrative all too often written at the cost of the outsider and the stranger, and resistant to the enriching effect of the different strands of human experience, and indeed different ways of expressing the human experience of God and of the gospel. The passing of time permits us to look back and appreciate that Ireland today is a rich tapestry of many traditions and peoples. The Ireland that is given to us is an Ireland that continues to be woven. Our land is not – and indeed our faith – have never been some idealised monocultural fortress. But that is a truth that takes us all a long time to learn.

It is only in recent decades that we have returned to perceiving migration as welcoming of the stranger. Here, we owe much to historians – national, international, and local – who have permitted us to hear anew voices silenced in times which afforded little space to difference or otherness. For over 150 years, post-Famine Ireland haemorrhaged people, driven from home by hunger and the absence of opportunity. Most emigrated to seek a better future as economic migrants, seeking opportunity among strangers. They brought with them a hope, and an eagerness to work and build a future that their home place

could not provide. They depended on the kindness of strangers to receive and welcome them, and give them an opportunity to contribute to the building up of their new homes. Across the English-speaking world, and indeed elsewhere, they travelled with a dream of returning, but no realistic expectation that they would. Their going was a silent grief borne by their families. While their lives abroad often did fulfil their hopes, for many emigration brought hardship and disappointment.

Often – but not always – they carried their faith, handing it on to new generations. That faith was nurtured by generous waves of Irish priests and religious who ministered among their own in the places to which the Irish had travelled. Their work built up local churches, in places as different as Boston and Buenos Aires, often honouring Saint Patrick as the patron of the gift of the faith they had received. We remember this morning the late Bishop David O’Connell, a native of Cork, tragically killed in Los Angeles. David’s prophetic ministry struck a chord, not only with those of Irish descent, but also the many thousands of Hispanic heritage whose immigrant experience paralleled that of the Irish.

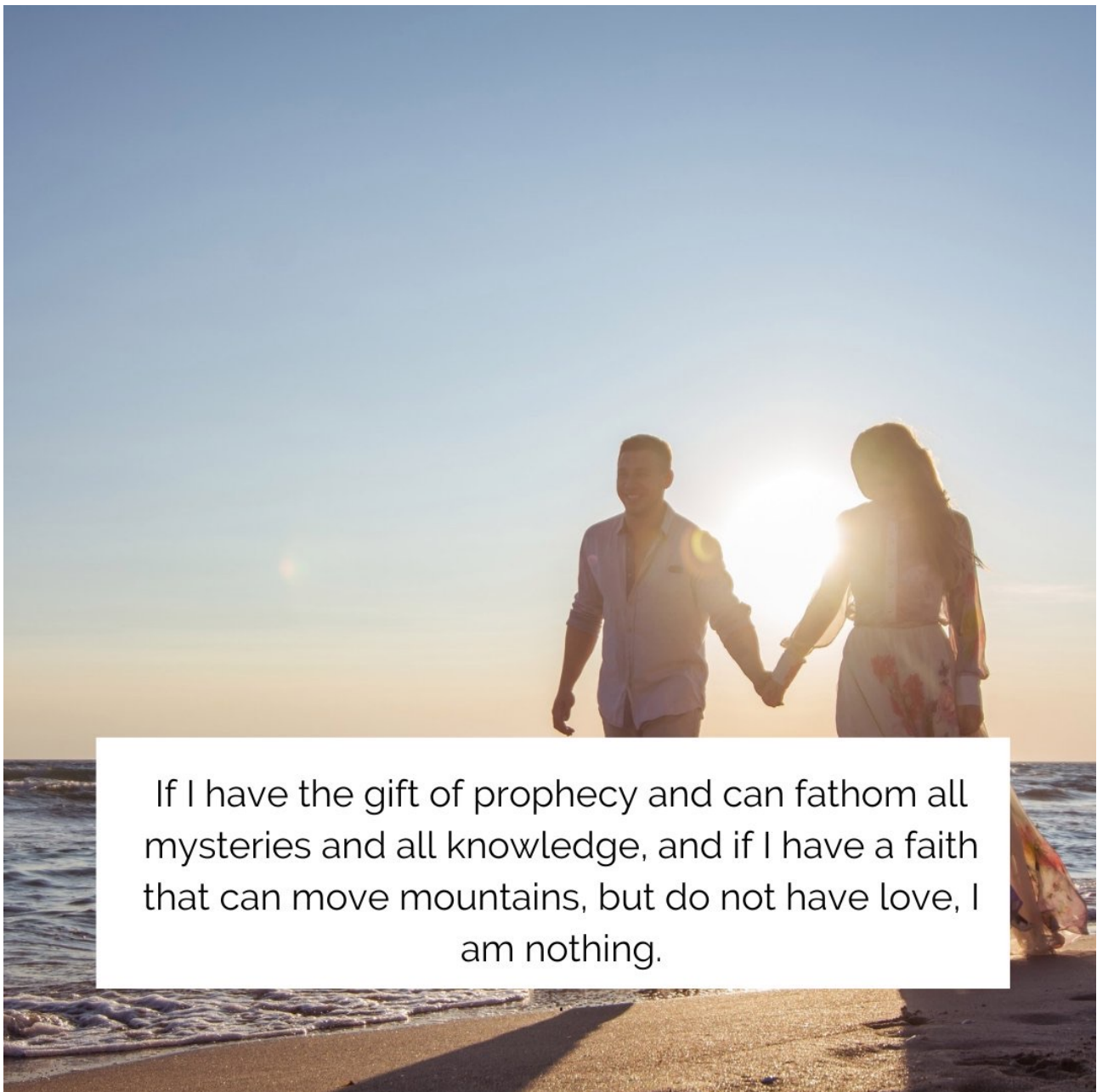
It behoves us then not to forget the Irish emigration story when we consider how to welcome the many thousands who have recently come to seek opportunity and refuge in our midst. More than one in six of those living in the diocese of Dublin were born outside Ireland. That is an astounding statistic. In a relatively short period they have brought their gifts and talents as they make their homes here, working in our health services, in our new technology sector, our service industries, as well as in the professions and trades. Just like the Irish abroad, they have brought

their expertise and hard work, and many are key members of our communities. Their presence in our parishes brings new life. We are blessed to have the ministry of the many women and men who minister among their countrymen and women, just as the Irish did in the past, and many more whose ministry in the churches of this island echoes that of Patrick himself.

The immigrant path is not an easy one. Sadly, there are those who seek to stir up hostility and more against those who have come to our shores. It is nothing more than a lie that some have claimed that they are motivated by a desire to defend our Christian heritage. Apart from the fact that many of those who have made their homes among us profess and practice a deep Christian faith, exclusion of the stranger is a denial of a central value of Jewish and Christian faith. Not only does God reveal Himself as being especially close to those to the stranger, but God reveals His very nature in the life of those who wander, and in the welcome shown to the unexpected stranger. God called Abraham, our father in faith, to wander, and he was constantly challenged by God to welcome those who found themselves where he had been (see Genesis 12:1–4; 18:2). Exile and return are key markers of the story of our salvation. Jesus entered the world as a part of a family forced, by an imperial imperative, to go Bethlehem. Like his forebears, he and his family had to flee to Egypt (see Matt 2:13-15): today we would call them migrants and refugees. In his teaching Jesus developed the biblical tradition of welcome for the stranger. He tells His followers that we face judgement on whether we welcomed Him, or failed to make Him welcome, when we encountered Him as a stranger (Matt 25:31ff). The stranger is not to be feared or shunned:

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Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman (John 4:5–42), that we read this past Sunday, shows the inclusiveness of the Lord's care and concern. The incomparable story of the Good Samaritan brings out how the compassion of God's kingdom are to be found in the heart that sees first of all the need of the stranger no matter who they are (see Luke 10:25-37). Of course, it was the stranger – an outsider – who put flesh on that Divine compassion: what the surprise that Jesus sprung on His hearers!



If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

In the struggle to build a just and sustainable society – here in Dublin as much as around the world – there are, in the words of Pope Francis, only two kinds of people: those who care for someone who is suffering and those who pass by (see Fratelli Tutti, 63ff). Passing by in this case includes turning a blind eye to discrimination and letting go unchallenged those determined to spread fear and hatred through lies and distortion. We may never allow the language of hate to become normalised or acceptable – the labelling of individuals and communities with stereotypes that dehumanise and alienate is the very opposite of the good news we carry; the lies that seek to stoke division by exploiting grievances are a denial of the generosity of Christ, and the goodness of God.

This is not to deny that there are challenges to be faced. Rapid population growth and past policy choices have put extreme pressure on housing and other vital services. Our way of organising things can make it difficult to move quickly to avert a crisis. There are those who have long waited for their needs to be met and they have real concerns that they may lose out further as others come to live in this society. But we are a generous country. We are a people who can rise to the challenge of welcome. It comes at a cost; we know this. Our welcome is generous and genuine: is fíor an fáilte a cuirimid roimh an comharsa – true welcome is much more than an advertising slogan, it is putting flesh on the welcome of Christ. The response to the plight of those driven from their homes by the vicious violence visited upon Ukraine has been a demonstration of heartfelt solidarity. Parishes and communities have also organised themselves over recent years to offer a real welcome to those who have

fled persecution, war and natural disasters in their home countries to seek refuge here.

The Christian community is called to encourage those better reflexes that reflect the Irish tradition of welcome to the stranger, just as the children of this land for generations hoped for a similar welcome in their day. Do we not, as people of faith, have a responsibility to encourage our politicians and civic leaders to go further and do better, to deliver the infrastructure of services which all in our communities so urgently require? It is incumbent upon us to encourage policies that address the root causes of much of the global migration that unfolds before our eyes. Unfair economic strategies and the unsustainable exploitation of our planet are producing pressures that have driven and continue to drive millions from their homes. Here, I wish to acknowledge the message of President Higgins for Saint Patrick's Day. Its welcome analysis merits careful listening and considered reception. Just like the Great Famine, the roots of the crisis are economic and ethical, not biological. In the same way, the response – our response – must be ethically rooted, rooted in relationships, not just technology. Of course, science is vital, as was driven home during the pandemic, but what drives the science? Must it not be our care not just for ourselves, but for our neighbour?

Ireland has been a major beneficiary of the globalised economy; we must ensure that we are not contributing to what Pope Francis has called the globalisation of indifference, by which he means the callousness with which individuals and communities treat persons on the peripheries (Homily in Lampedusa, 8 July 2013).

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Patrick preached the love of God and neighbour expressed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. We cannot profess love of God and love of neighbour without acting to give it concrete expression. When God knocks at the door in the form of the migrant dependent on our kindness, there can be no ambiguity about how we need to respond: welcoming the stranger is not only our solemn duty and noble tradition, it is God's call to discover our true selves.

Pádraig, Aspal Éireann: guí orainn. Amen.

Archbishop Dermot Farrell is Archbishop of Dublin. This homily was delivered during Saint Patrick's Day's Mass, at 10.30am, in Saint Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Archdiocese of Dublin

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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