

Church News Ireland



Image
of the
day –

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for Day of Remembrance**

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Members of the Diocesan Youth Group and of St Fin Barre's Cathedral Choir lighting the candles. Photo: Eoin Murphy @artfotoglobal

As part of this public Day of Remembrance and Recognition, young people from all across the diocese lit 736 candles in St Fin Barre's Cathedral last Friday morning, one for each day of the pandemic to date in Ireland, in remembrance of those who died during Covid-19 and in recognition of all those who have cared for us during that time.

A U tube clip of the lighting of 736 candles can be found here: youtu.be/HEuXeQQfdD0

People and places

St Patrick's Day Celebrations resume at Saul and Downpatrick

The Diocese of Down and Dromore's St Patrick's Day celebrations were truly celebratory as they returned to near normality after two years.



A diocesan spokesperson commented - We were delighted to welcome a large band of pilgrims to Holy Communion at Saul Church and the prayer pilgrimage to Downpatrick, many of whom attended the Festival Service in Down Cathedral.

The services and pilgrimage have always been both cross-community and international, and this year that tradition resumed with pilgrims arriving from across the world.

It was a special privilege to welcome a group from the Diocese of Jerusalem, some of whom are involved with the Tearfund project in Jordan which we're supporting through our Lent Appeal. Thank you to Matthew Gault who leads our newest church plant in Tullycarnet for guiding the Prayer Pilgrimage.

The theme for St Patrick's Day 2022 was 'Radical Discipleship, Radical Mission: Following in the Footsteps of Patrick'. Capt George Newell preached on 'Radical Evangelism' at Saul and in Down Cathedral the preacher was Simon Guillebaud. Simon, who is the founder and International Director of the Great Lakes Outreach, was

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unapologetic in his challenge to us to live radical and committed lives for Christ. It's a challenge that he has himself taken up throughout his ministry in Burundi and the UK.

At the end of the service many people stayed on for a complimentary 'Picnic in the Pews' which for this year replaced our traditional Irish Stew lunch in the marquee.

Links to photos of the events are at -
[<https://www.downanddromore.org/news/2022/03/st-patricks-day-celebrations-resume>]



Presbyterian Historical Society lecture

The next Presbyterian Historical Society lecture will be given by Rev Dr Bert Tosh on "The Events Leading up

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to the Establishment of Northern Ireland - Exploring the role and attitudes of Presbyterians in these events”

It is on Thursday 24 March 2022 at 8.00pm in Newtownbreda Presbyterian Church, 374-378 Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 3HX

Everyone is welcome. Car Park available, Mitigating measures in place. Refreshments provided. Preceded at 7.00pm by the Annual General Meeting of the Society

[<https://www.presbyterianhistoryireland.com/>]

Middle East Anglican clergy visit Londonderry

A group of Anglican clergy from the Middle East visited the diocesan office in Londonderry on Friday as part a week-long trip to Northern Ireland. They included ministers from Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

The group - who had spent most of the week in Belfast - said they were here to share and to listen. On the Derry leg of their visit, the clergy met Bishop Andrew Forster, Archdeacon Robert Miller and diocesan reader Linda Hughes.

Bishop Andrew showed them his pectoral cross, which is made out of ancient bog oak from south-west Donegal. "It reminds me of something really old," Bishop Andrew said. "Where you're from, in the Diocese of Jerusalem, is the

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cradle of our faith, something really old and ancient. But yet this cross was only made about 18 months ago, so it's really new.

"For me, that gives us a picture of what our faith is: we are grounded in something really ancient, and wonderful, and historic; that gives us foundations, that gives us roots, that gives us stability, but yet the spirit has always been something new."

Bishop Andrew talked to the visitors about the peace process here, likening it to a pilgrimage. There had been a lot of talk about building a robust peace in Northern Ireland, he said. "I don't think there is such a thing, to be honest. I think peace is always a really, really delicate thing that we have to handle with care and with real sensitivity.

New rector for Castleknock

The Revd Colin McConaghie has been appointed the new Rector of the grouped parish of Castleknock and Mulhuddart with Clonsilla.

Colin is currently Rector of Carrickmacross Group of Parishes in the Diocese of Clogher and his appointment was announced in both parishes yesterday morning (Sunday March 20).

Colin was ordained a Deacon in 2011 and a Priest in 2012. He served as Deacon Intern in Seagoe Parish (Down and Dromore), and as Curate Assistant in Derryglass Parish, Dungannon (Armagh) and Dunboyne and Rathmolyon



Group of Parishes (Meath and Kildare) before being appointed Rector of Carrickmacross Group in April 2017.

He is from

Lurgan in County Armagh, his home parish is Shankill, Lurgan. Prior to ordination he worked in events and environmental education with Craigavon Borough Council. He is married to Janice and he has three daughters, twins Madison and Siena and Ava.

His interests in ministry include working with children and young people, community outreach and mission, worship and liturgy (both traditional and contemporary) and pastoral care. His hobbies including walking their dogs, Alfie and Cooney, rugby (supporting Ulster and Ireland), playing tennis and travel (usually involving rugby).

Commenting on his appointment Colin said: “It has truly been a privilege to serve as Rector in the Carrickmacross Group of Parishes. The parishioners of the three parishes, St Finbarr’s, Magheracloone and Ardragh and the wider community of Carrickmacross have been so supportive of Janice and I and we will always remember our time here fondly. While moving was not an easy decision I am excited by what lies ahead in Castleknock and Mulhuddart with Clonsilla and look forward to getting to know the people

there and serving both the parishes and the wider community.”

“

North coast calls for Presbyterian Moderator

On Sunday (March 20) the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), Right Reverend Dr David Bruce, started a weeklong pastoral tour of PCI's Presbytery of Coleraine & Limavady.

It is his final tour of one of the Church's 19 regional presbyteries before he hands over to Portrush minister and Moderator-Designate, Rev John Kirkpatrick, who will be formally elected Moderator at the General Assembly in June.

Moderators normally undertake four presbytery tours during their year in office, but unlike his predecessors, Dr Bruce is the first Moderator in nearly 130 years to serve two terms and has already undertaken six tours.

With upwards of 30 separate engagements, Dr Bruce's current tour will be very different from the first, which took place in the Presbytery of Down in October 2020. Due to Covid, and the mitigations in place at the time, it was scaled back to avoid unnecessary social interaction and focussed on preaching in congregations and virtual meetings.

As Rev Dr Trevor McCormick, Clerk of the Presbytery of Coleraine & Limavady, explained, with the rhythm of church life returning to normal, he was looking forward to

welcoming the Moderator to the Presbytery. “We are looking forward, with great anticipation, to welcoming Dr Bruce and his wife Zoë, to the Presbytery next week. With 36 congregations stretching along the North Coast from Limavady to Portrush and into the rural hinterland from Banagher and Dungiven through the lower Bann Valley and across to Ballyrashane and Ballywatt, we are diverse in our settings and size of congregations.”

The minister of Kilrea and Boveedy continued, “Following the challenges of the past two years we believe that the Moderator's visit will be an encouragement to many within our church families and in the wider community. Dr Bruce will conduct worship in Derramore and Drumchose congregations in Limavady this coming Sunday, and Ballysally, Coleraine the following Sunday.

“He will also lead worship via livestream for the whole Presbytery and close his visit with an in-person rally, the first for two years. This will take place in one of the largest churches in the Presbytery, Aghadowey Presbyterian Church the same evening. Everyone is welcome,” Dr McCormick said.

Aside from preaching, during a packed week of engagements Dr Bruce will pay a courtesy call on the Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens and visit various community projects which involve Ballysally, Terrace Row and Hazelbank Presbyterian Churches. He will take the assembly in the Irish Society Primary School, meet residents and staff at PCI's care home, Trinity House in Garvagh, while encouraging prison and hospital chaplains at HMP Magilligan and Causeway Hospital. He will also meet

senior staff. Meetings with farmers, Coleraine's Street Pastors, PSNI, and Limavady Chamber of Trade are also on the agenda - along with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's lifeboat in Portrush.

Looking forward to the tour, Dr Bruce said, "Each Presbytery Tour is similar. They are very much pastoral visits with opportunities to encourage the local Church, especially our ministers, who have certainly been on the frontline over the last two years. They are also opportunities to acknowledge the work that they and their congregations are in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"At the same time, they are also individual and different, providing important opportunities for a Moderator to get 'out and about', getting to know the church in a particular area, seeing first-hand the work that congregations are doing in the community. As a church, we also seek to be active in meeting with a range of public representatives and sectoral groups to listen, discuss their concerns, hear and understand the issues that they face. These opportunities also take place on presbytery tours and are incredibly useful," he said.

During the week he will also meet the Presbytery's active ministers in four 'Refresh Groups', part of the Moderator's 'Refresh' initiative. "The initiative seeks to encourage and equip, inspire and invigorate those on the frontline of PCI's ministry during the pandemic," Dr Bruce explained.

"It began in April 2021 when we encouraged ministers to join 'Refresh Groups', organised by each of our 19 presbyteries as part of their pastoral care responsibility for their ministers.

Since then we have followed up with a number of in-person and virtual events involving our ministers, deaconesses, youth workers, community outreach workers, and others, and I am looking forward to meeting our ministers in each of the four groups for a chat, fellowship and a time of prayer together,” Dr Bruce said.

This visit to the Presbytery of Coleraine & Limavady will be the first to be undertaken by a Moderator since 2016. “From the Brexit referendum and Brexit itself, to the impact of the pandemic, much has changed in the last six years since of my predecessors, Dr Frank Sellar, toured the presbytery. It will be important for me to hear how our Presbyterian family has fared and indeed supported their local communities, particularly in the early days of the pandemic and the lockdowns.

“I will be thanking our ministers, elders and volunteers for their supportive work during the pandemic and indeed those also on the frontline, like our chaplains and care home staff who I will be meeting. Coupled with all that happens on a presbytery tour, first and foremost I will be bringing a message of hope, the hope that is found in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,” Dr Bruce said.

In conclusion, Dr McCormick said, “This is a key time in the life of our congregations and community, when we must seize the opportunities of revitalisation, reconnection and re-engagement. We know that Dr Bruce will play a significant part in this through his visit and time of ministry with us.”

News reports

John Rutter pens new work after Ukraine invasion - and holds surprise parish premiere

John Rutter, the composer, has written a new choral work in response to the invasion of Ukraine, which was first performed in a parish church in south London.

St Mary Magdalene, Wandsworth Common, played host to the premiere of 'A Prayer for Ukraine' this week, with funds raised going to the Disasters Emergency Committee's Ukraine appeal.

He explained: "How can a composer respond to a global tragedy?"

"I suppose by writing music: like everybody I have been shocked and dismayed by the events of recent days.

"The first thing I wanted to do was write music that would respond in my own way.

"I went to a late-night service in my old college chapel where they sang a setting of a lovely Ukrainian prayer so having encountered the Ukrainian text, on Thursday I wrote my own music.

"I hope the meaning of the text will resonate in people's hearts."



The words of the piece, which are originally in Ukrainian, translate into English as: “Good Lord protect the Ukraine. Give her strength, courage, faith, and hope. Amen.”

He added: “I hope it speaks in terms which reach out to the Ukrainian people in their hour of need.”

The piece was performed by a group of 300 singers at a Singing Day event in South London. The singers raised £2,600 for the Disasters Emergency Committee’s Ukraine appeal.

The Vicar of St Mary's, the Revd Philippa Boardman, said: “We all feel helpless in the face of the terrible suffering of the people of Ukraine. But we can all offer our prayers.

“We thank John Rutter for the profound privilege of choosing 300 ordinary people like us, gathered in south London for a 'Singing Day', to sing his 'out-of-the-ordinary' anthem for the extraordinary people of Ukraine.

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“May it, in some small way, inspire others to pray, and to remember Ukraine at this devastating time.”

The church’s music director, Barry Holden, added: “We sing John Rutter’s carols and anthems year in year out, but this new work is strikingly different – a mosaic of sound reminiscent of the orthodox tradition.”

He added: “I hope we’ve done it justice and that churches, cathedrals and musicians around the world also embrace his new work.”

Choirs wishing to perform the piece can request the music from John Rutter's website.

Pope lets women head Vatican offices

Women can head departments in the Vatican for the first time, after Pope Francis on Saturday introduced a constitution that has been in the works for nearly a decade.

For centuries, Vatican departments have been headed by male clerics, usually cardinals or bishops, but the new reforms mean any baptised lay Catholic can now be appointed.

The new 54-page constitution, called Praedicate Evangelium (Preach the Gospel), took more than nine years to complete. It was released on the ninth anniversary of Francis’s installation as Pope in 2013 and will take effect on June 5, replacing one issued in 1988 by Pope John Paul II.

Its preamble states: “The Pope, bishops and other ordained ministers are not the only evangelisers in the Church,” adding that lay men and women “should have roles of government and responsibility” in the Curia.

The principles section of the constitution says “any member of the faithful can head a dicastery (Curia department) or organism” if the Pope decides they are qualified and appoints them.

At least two departments will continue to be headed by men because only men can be priests in the Catholic Church, experts said.

Ukrainian spiritual and diplomatic leaders urge aid, weapons

“What good is it if you feed the stomachs of these children, these women, these people in cities, if their brains are going to be blown out, if their apartment buildings are going to be rendered into rubble?” said the Most Rev. Borys Gudziak.

The top leader of Ukrainian Catholics in the United States and Ukraine’s ambassador to the nation made an urgent appeal to the world Tuesday for more weapons to fight against Russia’s invasion and aid to address the worsening humanitarian crisis.

The Most Rev. Borys Gudziak, metropolitan archbishop of Philadelphia for the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the United



States, said at a news conference in Washington that there is a dire need for armored ambulances, medical supplies and food — but also arms.

“What good is it if you feed the stomachs of these children, these women, these people in cities, if their brains are going to be blown out, if their apartment buildings are going to be rendered into rubble?” Gudziak said. “There needs to be massive defensive and massive humanitarian aid.”

Ambassador Oksana Markarova also called for more sanctions against Moscow and increased aid and diplomatic efforts to keep humanitarian corridors open. She accused Russian forces of committing genocide.

“They’re targeting civilians. They’re killing children, pregnant women. They’re killing the elderly,” Markarova said.

More than 3 million people have fled Ukraine since the start of the war, now in its third week, and thousands of soldiers and civilians have died.

On Tuesday, Russia stepped up its bombardment of Kyiv, the capital, and civilians fled Mariupol along a humanitarian corridor in what was believed to be the biggest evacuation yet from the besieged port city.

Gudziak said it was “sad” to see the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church supporting President Vladimir Putin and the war, and he criticized Patriarch Kirill for giving a large icon of the Virgin Mary to a leader of the Russian national guard.

“This is happening in the biggest church in the capital of Russia. The patriarch is giving the mother of God to these war criminals,” the archbishop said.

Gudziak, who also heads the department of external church relations for the Kyiv-based Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, added that he met with Pope Francis five weeks ago, before the war, and asked the pontiff to call Putin.

The Vatican has called for peace, humanitarian corridors, a cease-fire and a return to negotiations, and has also offered to mediate between the sides. Francis went to the Russian Embassy in Rome last month to personally “express his concern about the war,” in an extraordinary papal gesture without recent precedent. But Francis has not publicly condemned Russia by name or publicly appealed to Kirill.

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“I think he’s been doing everything he can behind the scenes,” Gudziak said.

“I’m convinced that he has made every effort to speak to Putin, and I have some information that he has not gotten responses to his gestures toward Patriarch Kirill. But I think that will change,” Gudziak said. “I’m hoping the Russian church leadership will open up.”

Gudziak said one heartening response to the invasion has been a coming together of people from across a range of faith traditions.

“Orthodox, Catholics, east and west, Protestants, Muslims, Jews are united in a stance against this war and are working each and together for humanitarian aid to help people stand strong,” he said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has called on Putin to meet with him directly, a request that has not been met by the Kremlin. Markarova said any good-faith negotiations toward ending the war will require a cease-fire.

“We have a saying in Ukraine: ‘If Russia stops shooting, the war will stop. If Ukraine stops shooting today, our country will disappear,’” Markarova said. “So it’s totally up to Russia.”

In the media

Retired judge says sex education should be mandatory in primary schools

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BBC News

Sex education should be mandatory in Northern Ireland's primary schools, the retired judge who led reforms of rape trials has said.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-60796057>

Spreading the climate gospel: 'Churches need to rise to the challenge'

Belfast Telegraph

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/environment/spreading-the-climate-gospel-churches-need-to-rise-to-the-challenge-41432384.html>

Bring benefits in line with rate of inflation, Trussell Trust urges Government

Church Times

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2022/18-march/news/uk/bring-benefits-in-line-with-rate-of-inflation-trussell-trust-urges-government>

France 'exported bombs and aircraft to Russia' after 2014 EU arms embargo

Daily Telegraph

Investigations found that several European countries continued exporting weapons to Russia - with France being the worst offender

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2022/03/17/france-exported-bombs-aircraft-russia-2014-eu-arms-embargo/>

Perspective

In the face of such carnage, this generation's thirst for democracy took my breath away', by Johnny Mercer MP

War is not about bullets and bombs – it is about people, says Tory MP reporting on the front line

'They didn't even ask any questions. They just started shooting into my van. So I drove straight at them. Three of them went under the wheels.

“Definitely dead. I ran over three Russians in my Renault Berlingo and made it back to our soldiers who got me here.” This was just one of the mind-blowing testimonies I was privileged to hear over the last week in Kyiv. I had made a friend some years ago, who at the time was an MP for Donetsk, who had invited me to see for myself the horrors caused by Russia's invasion.

So a week ago, I boarded a plane to Krakow in Poland, and then took the train across the border – against the tide of refugees heading west – to Lviv in Ukraine. “Good luck,” said the border guard as we crossed into the war zone.

Lviv was oddly normal despite the conflict. We didn't stay long, spending a day touring the local aid depot that used to be the National Art Gallery, before taking a ten-hour overnight train to Kyiv.

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Once in Kyiv, we used local fixers to get around, meeting civic leaders and parliamentarians doing humanitarian work, and visiting wounded veterans in various hospitals. We travelled, too, to the front lines where regular automatic fire and shelling rumbled on for most of the day.

People are, of course, interested in the fighting and the bombing. There is plenty. It is totally indiscriminate; the children's injuries are horrific and the dead lie waiting for their family to collect them from the side of the road coming out of Irpin.

But what I was particularly interested in was the people. What do MPs do when their country is at war? How does a modern European state transform itself from peacetime to total warfare on its territory? War – if nothing else – is about people. And this generation of Ukrainians are extraordinary. Their thirst to be part of the European family for western values and democracy, in the face of such carnage, took my breath away.

Determined to treat their prisoners well; convinced in the utter rightness of their mission. They are young, many are not soldiers, but they possess a spirit I have seldom seen in a fighting force. And, yes, they reinforce my pre-held conceptions that if you have a strong moral component – that will to fight, garnered through good leadership – you can achieve the unexpected in battle.

The killing is indiscriminate. The checkpoint guards who open fire without question – irrespective of reporters or civilians, as was seen twice to devastating effect while I was there with the sad deaths of three brave journalists.

I was once a “targeteer”; it was my trade. The cruise missiles coming into Kyiv are not clipping high-rise apartment blocks as they zero in on some Ukrainian secret military facility. They are landing right on target – often right through the front door – bottom centre of the block. These are no mistakes. It is deliberate targeting of civilians in their homes with the intent of breaking their will and accelerating the collapse of the Ukrainian state. We cannot let that happen.

In Kyiv, I met Igor, a commander in the territorial defence force, who showed me a crate with dozens of brand new PKM machine guns. Asked who had supplied them, he replied: “Santa Claus.”

We visited a children’s hospital where I met Vlodymyr, a 12-year-old boy shot in his parents’ car as they approached a Russian checkpoint near Irpin. His father died at the scene, while a bullet remains in the little boy’s spine.

We drove north from Kyiv to the last Ukrainian checkpoint. Russians had fired in mortars only half an hour earlier.

On Wednesday, we made the trip back to the West, a 30-hour journey to safety.

Britain, I thought, can be proud of our military role in this conflict.

Everyone I met mentioned Boris. They knew who Ben Wallace was. They knew we were first to provide lethal aid, and said how tough it must have been to be first. I have had

spectacular run-ins with both of these individuals on military matters; be under no illusions: they were brave, got this right, and we should be proud of them.

For this is our generation's righteous war. It was extraordinary to see a modern nation like Ukraine turn itself into a war-fighting machine. MPs running humanitarian centres, IT managers becoming adept at information operations, and shopkeepers manning 12.7mm dushka machine guns. But this war is all of ours – it just happens to be the Ukrainians on the front at the moment.

Putin has lost his mind. The only de-Nazification he keeps referring to needs to take place in the Kremlin. The nature of modern war – for this is truly modern – means this outcome will be anything other than the predicted roll-over. Information operations are in a different league; weapons technology in the hands of determined defenders means this is definitely not the Cold War reheated as some of our more seasoned commentators would insist.

The Russian army might just collapse – I think they will. An army that doesn't bother to collect her dead, rarely wins. And that could just herald the end of Putin and a new era of peace and prosperity for a Russian people that we must be prepared to embrace should they turn on him.

So we must strain every sinew to achieve that outcome. Aid – lethal aid, must be redoubled; they do not need legions of young men to go and fight, and I would urge veterans and others to think hard before they do – it was one of the most dangerous places I've been. If we can "close the sky" as the Ukrainians so wish – not through jets like days gone by, but

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technology and air-defence systems to achieve the same outcome, the Ukrainians will beat them on the ground. And then we are looking at a completely different global scene – where Russia is forced to change.

I plead guilty to the charge of overplaced optimism, perhaps. But we must win this war. And the UK state must do everything in her power to ensure that outcome.

Courtesy the Daily Telegraph, March 19,2022

Poem for today

Dublin by Louis MacNeice

Grey brick upon brick,
Declamatory bronze
On sombre pedestals –
O’Connell, Grattan, Moore –
And the brewery tugs and the swans
On the balustraded stream
And the bare bones of a fanlight
Over a hungry door
And the air soft on the cheek
And porter running from the taps
With a head of yellow cream
And Nelson on his pillar
Watching his world collapse.

This never was my town,
I was not born or bred
Nor schooled here and she will not

Have me alive or dead
But yet she holds my mind
With her seedy elegance,
With her gentle veils of rain
And all her ghosts that walk
And all that hide behind
Her Georgian facades –
The catcalls and the pain,
The glamour of her squalor,
The bravado of her talk.

The lights jig in the river
With a concertina movement
And the sun comes up in the morning
Like barley-sugar on the water
And the mist on the Wicklow hills
Is close, as close
As the peasantry were to the landlord,
As the Irish to the Anglo-Irish,
As the killer is close one moment
To the man he kills,
Or as the moment itself
Is close to the next moment.

She is not an Irish town
And she is not English,
Historic with guns and vermin
And the cold renown
Of a fragment of Church latin,
Of an oratorical phrase.
But oh the days are soft,
Soft enough to forget
The lesson better learnt,

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The bullet on the wet
Streets, the crooked deal,
The steel behind the laugh,
The Four Courts burnt.

Fort of the Dane,
Garrison of the Saxon,
Augustan capital
Of a Gaelic nation,
Appropriating all
The alien brought,
You give me time for thought
And by a juggler's trick
You poise the toppling hour –
O greyness run to flower,
Grey stone, grey water,
And brick upon grey brick.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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