

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Capital cities choirs at TCD chapel

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Capital cities choirs at TCD chapel

The Chapel of Trinity College, Dublin provided a magnificent setting for a very well attended joint concert by Capella Caecilliana and New Dublin Voices. The choirs

presented a similar concert in St Malachy's Church, Belfast. The choirs commented - Big thanks to the 500+ people who attended the two concerts. It was great to have large and appreciative audiences in both cities.



People and places

St Jude's Ballynafeigh hits 150

St Jude's Parish Church on the Ormeau Road is celebrating its sesquicentenary this year, Andy Boal writes.

A church plant from our neighbouring parish Knockbreda, St Jude's Church was the first parish church to be built after disestablishment. It had its first service on Sunday 30 March



Rector Rev Peter Bourke and Youth worker Jason Nicholl in the sanctuary of St Jude's Church, Belfast. Photo - Andy Boal.

1873, but was not consecrated for another four months, on Thursday 7 August 1873.

Rector Rev Peter Bourke notes "We are excited to be celebrating 150 years of witness in the heart of Ballynafeigh this year. We are developing an exciting programme of events, and we invite everyone with a connection to St Jude's to celebrate with us.

"Planned events include a parish dinner at Harvest, a concert and a Lego exhibition.

“However, we are most looking forward to the centrepiece of our celebrations - a service of thanksgiving and rededication on Saturday 20 May 2023 at 7pm with the Right Reverend David McClay, Bishop of Down and Dromore, and guest preacher Rev Canon William Press, our friend and neighbour as Rector of Knockbreda Parish.”

Peter adds “We are organising an exhibition of photographs and artefacts for a sesquicentennial exhibition. If anybody has any interesting photographs or items from the parish’s history, we would love to hear from them.”

For more information, see www.stjudesbelfast.com or www.facebook.com/stjudesbelfast

JOY (Just Older Youth) - New seniors ministry gets under way in Derry

Derg and Killeter parishes' exciting new seniors ministry, JOY (Just Older Youth), got under way this week.

There was a superb turnout in Killeter Hall, although the Rector, Rev Peter Ferguson said afterwards there was room for more next month. "We had tea, coffee, scones and biscuits on arrival," the Rector said, "and the craic and chat was mighty."

The seniors enjoyed a few stories from Rev Peter, while Parish Group organist and "legend" Gordon Speer treated them to a few jokes and community hymn singing.



The gathering finished with delicious stew, wheaten bread and trifle dessert.

"Sincere thanks to Rev Claire for leading this initiative, and doing all the cooking and baking," the Rector said.

"Thanks to all who helped serve the food and assisted in the kitchen. Thanks, too, to the Church of Ireland MindMatters Fund who have sponsored this ministry of our church. We're looking forward to next month's JOY get together on Tuesday 28th March 2023."

Farewell and thanks to Lagan Area Dean

On Tuesday Bishop David McClay of Down and Dromore, and all the clergy in the Lagan Area Deanery met in St Columba's Parish Church, Knock to mark the rector Canon John Auchtmuty's retirement as Area Dean of Lagan.



Clergy of the area deanery with Canon Auchtmuty, Bishop McClay and the Revd Clive Atkinson.

Canon John said, “It has been a great privilege to have served in this role for almost 15 years and to have presided over Vacancies in each of the parishes.

“As there are currently no Vacancies I indicated to Bishop David some time ago that this would be a timely opportunity for him to appoint my successor.

“I am delighted that the Rector of Willowfield, the Revd Clive Atkinson had been appointed as the new Area Dean. I assure him of my prayerful good wishes and support in the years ahead”.

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Swingles in St Patrick's Cathedral

**Tomorrow
Saturday, March
4, at 8.00 pm in
Saint Patrick's
Cathedral,
Dublin the
world–
renowned vocal
ensemble, The
Swingles,
present a
programme of
unaccompanied
top notch
singing, Bach
and Beyond,
featuring
classical, folk and jazz, with classy and natural flair.**

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THE SWINGLES

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The concert, which celebrates the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, is being organised by Saint Columb's School of Music in Derry, which has almost 400 pupils, and provides theory and instrument tuition to the pupils who are drawn from Counties Derry, Donegal and Tyrone, in a cross-border, cross-community and cross-cultural manner.

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The proceeds of this concert will help towards providing bursaries to children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds who normally would not have the opportunity to avail of the luxury of music.

Tickets available on Saint Patrick's Cathedral website:
www.stpatrickscathedral.ie

Connor Mothers' Union annual Festival Service

Connor Mothers' Union will hold its annual Festival Service in Belfast Cathedral on Sunday March 12 at 3.30pm.

The service will include the commissioning of members of the Trustee Board and Executive Committee. The preacher will be the Ven Dr Stephen McBride, Connor Mothers' Union Diocesan Chaplain and All Ireland Mothers' Union Chaplain.

"There is no uncreated being except God. ... God has no opposite. *Devil* is the opposite of *angel* only as Bad Man is the opposite of Good Man. Satan, the leader or dictator of devils, is the opposite, not of God, but of Michael."

*Preface to The Screwtape Letters and
Screwtape Proposes a Toast*

(Published on February 27, 1961)

EssentialCSLewis.com



Evening of Praise in Ballintoy

Ballintoy Parish Church had a wonderful Evening of Praise with the Ballymoney & District Male Voice Choir in the Parish Church, with Conductor, Amanda Doak-Herron and Accompanist, Heather Loughridge.

Watch out for their season finale concert in Ballimoney Town Hall, 7.30pm on 24th March.

Warm welcome for Rector to group of parishes in Co. Monaghan

The Service of Institution of Revd Ian Cruickshank as Rector of Carrickmacross Union, Magheracloone and Ardragh parishes in Co. Monaghan by the Bishop of Clogher, the Right Revd Dr. Ian Ellis, took place on Thursday, 23 February in St. Finbarr's Parish Church, Carrickmacross.

The service was attended by parishioners from all churches in the group along with a number of community representatives including the President of Carrickmacross Chamber of Commerce and a civic leader from the local authority.

The service began with the processional hymn, "To God be the glory! great things He has done," with other hymns sung including "Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul," "Alleluia, sing to Jesus!" and "Now thank we all our God." The choir sang "How Great Thou Art, Majesty." The organist was Pamela Ward.


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The Act of Institution took place involving Bishop Ellis as well as Archdeacon Brian Harper who presented the incumbent-elect to the Bishop.



South American Mission links

SAMS Ireland mission director Stephen McElhinney had the privilege of meeting with bishop Jorge of Peru, the diocesan leadership teams and the theological training team. Prayer request - Ask for the Lord's wisdom and guidance as they enrol new candidates for the latest diocesan trading course. (Pictured : Penny , Pastor Luis, Stephen , Bishop Jorge and Pastor Victor - missing is Pastor Juan Carlos taking the picture).

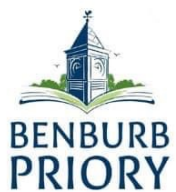



Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh and
Primate of All Ireland, John McDowell


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ARMAGH JOHN MCDOWELL FOR*

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In Benburb Priory and online, on
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Royal Irish Academy

In the media

Lord Bew: The point of Belfast Agreement was and still is bringing peace and stability to Northern Ireland, not good governance

Lord Bew has said that now is not the time to be talking about changing the Good Friday Agreement, adding that the point of the 1998 deal was always to bring peace, not good governance, Graeme Cousins reports in the News Letter.

His comments came when being questioned by Northern Ireland Affairs Committee over the effectiveness of the institutions of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.

Discussing whether the agreement should have evolved, Lord Bew, a Queen's professor and former advisor to the late UUP leader Lord Trimble, said: "I remember prior to the agreement itself, there was a framework document we were talking to Sir John Chilwell about. Everybody would say this is far too complex a document, it can't bring good governance. He would say that's not the point, the point is to bring peace.

"I would still give the same answer as regards these structures – the point is peace

"There is no possibility, by the way, of changing the thing that causes the most gridlock which is cross community veto

because it's not just a question of what the DUP thinks, Sinn Fein will never agree.

“Lots of people that I respect enormously write and have written in favour of, because of the frustrations of the last few years, we need to be looking at this, we need to be changing this. There is actually no possibility. That's important – a tedious, but real fact.

“At this moment it's unfortunate to go on about it because people didn't go on about it when Sinn Fein brought down the Assembly to the same degree as they now do when the DUP have.

“The other reason why it's not helpful is that we're now at a moment where there is at least a reasonable and certainly a renewed chance of the return of the Assembly and of getting it to work again.”

Low Bew commented: “I don't want to be too brutal about it but I've never really believed that devolution anywhere was about better governance. There are political, psychological, communal reasons why you have to do it.

“Throughout the rest of the United Kingdom, it's very hard to point to results in education, health which are superior to which had previously existed an old style Westminster government.

“I do regard it as a political necessity which exists for political reasons, in the case of Northern Ireland the need for equality of esteem between the two communities. The sight of the two leaders of the two communities working

together is a top down exercise in helping to reduce sectarianism. It hasn't cured it but it definitely reduces it.

"I've just never expected that suddenly creatures of the stature of Churchill and Attlee are going to appear in Stormont. But you can have a decent, agreed form of government in which people meet together and discuss their differences.

"We've done it for many years in Northern Ireland and we can do it again. It can be stable and Northern Ireland needs stability. The watchwords are peace and stability. I do not believe in significant changes to the structure of the Good Friday Agreement."

Of the evolution of Northern Ireland's two main parties he said: "One of the reasons I was so committed to what David Trimble was trying to do was I didn't think the DUP would pick it up and work it because I believed they were so set in their ways. It was a nonsensical assumption on my part, I was totally wrong.

"In general, people do not realise from outside how far things have actually changed within the two major parties in Northern Ireland – the DUP and Sinn Féin. The tendencies of thought within them are much more complex than they once were."

He said if Northern Ireland gets stability he would not rule out the parties being flexible enough to generate support from the 10% of people who live in Belfast who were not born there.

Courtesy The News Letter 02/03/2023.

Why the devil will be in the detail as PM tries to sell his new agreement to DUP

The problem with dishonesty is that when you're telling the truth people might not believe you, Sam McBride writes in the Belfast Telegraph

Under Boris Johnson, outright obvious lies became so common as to be barely newsworthy. Rishi Sunak is far more in the mould of David Cameron than Johnson. He is well presented, but does not have Johnson's reputation for dishonesty.

But a reputation which has grown up around this government for years is not suddenly expunged. Even if Mr Sunak is being wholly truthful in relation to his deal with the EU, the memory of past betrayal and deception means that politicians and the public will be ultra-sceptical of what they are now being told and test its veracity. Like the boy who cried wolf, past government lies have consequences which linger.

As was immediately clear from this deal, and as this newspaper reported yesterday, what has been secured here involves elements of enormous common sense, sweeps away many of the most ludicrous aspects of the NI Protocol and makes it easier for more unionists to accept this as a fair compromise.

But the British side's handling of the deal has been mediocre. Whereas EU officials hosted an hour-long

technical briefing on the detail of the deal and the Belfast Telegraph was invited to ask a question at that event, this newspaper — along with most other Northern Irish outlets — was offered no briefing by the British side to explain what the deal did and didn't mean. We sent a reporter to the press conference in Windsor on Monday but he was not allowed to ask a question.

Instead, 40 documents — many of them complicated legal texts — were dumped out in late afternoon. It would have been impossible for many of those who immediately welcomed the deal to have read even a fraction of this material and so they were instead taking a politician at his word and accepting that the deal did what Mr Sunak claimed.

Yesterday, I said that from even an initial look at the documents it did not sweep away customs bureaucracy as the Prime Minister had claimed but instead simplified that border dramatically.

Having read that, Mr Sunak was unhappy, claiming it was wrong. In some ways, this is a dull semantic distinction: There is no dispute that firms who register to use the 'green lane' will have to fill in 21 data fields which a firm selling from Liverpool to Manchester will not; the PM's argument is that this should not be called a customs declaration — even though that's exactly what it's called by the EU.

But there is beneath this a more substantial reality, which is why the Prime Minister raised this in the way that he did yesterday. The deal simplifies and camouflages much of the Irish Sea border, but does not remove it.

A senior British official briefed me last year that the NI Protocol Bill would mean that moving goods from London to Birmingham would be no different to moving goods from London to Belfast. That is clearly not the case now; a business cannot put some of its products in the back of a van and board the ferry at Cairnryan without a customs declaration.

Mr Sunak says this only involves commercial data. Much of it is fairly basic data about the item's exporter, importer, means of transport, weight, goods description, item value and so on. But the EU says that this is “mostly based on commercial and transport data” — implying that not all of it is in that category, something which an industry source said is correct.

Again, this might seem an area of niche interest. But the PM knows it matters because on it hinges key claims which he hopes will persuade the DUP that this meets their seven tests — the most basic of which was that it must “not constitute a border in the Irish Sea”.

It is made more complicated by unresolved questions around the 'Stormont brake' — which looks weaker the more it is examined — and issues not resolved in this deal, such as veterinary aspects.

The DUP are sometimes very unreasonable. But taking their time here is wholly reasonable.

They were lied to about the protocol the last time and it's already clear that elements of this deal have been heavily

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spun while the detail has been kept secret — even if some in the DUP leadership have been given some of it.

Any responsible politician would want to read this carefully, get experts to read it carefully and understand the implications of what it involves.

Courtesy The Belfast Telegraph, 01/03/2023

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books



Celebrating faith, service and community

The C of E is launching a range of new resources, as we pray with and for King Charles III leading up to the Coronation.

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Discover their printed booklets, service and event promotional materials, and more in the coming weeks, at cofe.io/Coronation.

Poem for today

In memoriam Francis Ledwidge

Killed in France 31 July 1917

By Seamus Heaney

The bronze soldier hitches a bronze cape
That crumples stiffly in imagined wind
No matter how the real winds buff and sweep
His sudden hunkering run, forever craned

Over Flanders. Helmet and haversack,
The gun's firm slope from butt to bayonet,
The loyal, fallen names on the embossed plaque —
It all meant little to the worried pet

I was in nineteen forty-six or seven,
Gripping my Aunt Mary by the hand
Along the Portstewart prom, then round the crescent
To thread the Castle Walk out to the strand.

The pilot from Coleraine sailed to the coal-boat.
Courting couples rose out of the scooped dunes.
A farmer stripped to his studs and shiny waistcoat
Rolled the trousers down on his timid shins.

At night when coloured bulbs strung out the sea-front
Country voices rose from a cliff-top shelter
With news of a great litter – “We’ll pet the runt!” –
And barbed wire that had torn a friesian’s elder.

Francis Ledwidge, you courted at the seaside
Beyond Drogheda one Sunday afternoon.
Literary, sweet-talking, countrified,
You pedalled out the leafy road from Slane.

Where you belonged, among the dolorous
And lovely: the May altar of wild flowers,
Easter water sprinkled in outhouses,
Mass-rocks and hill-top raths and raftered byres.

I think of you in your Tommy’s uniform,
A haunted Catholic face, pallid and brave,
Ghosting the trenches with a bloom of hawthorn
Or silence cored from a Boyne passage-grave.

It’s summer, nineteen-fifteen. I see the girl
My aunt was then, herding on the long acre.
Behind a low bush in the Dardanelles
You suck stones to make your dry mouth water.

It’s nineteen-seventeen. She still herds cows,
But a big strafe puts the candles out in Ypres:
‘My soul is by the Boyne, cutting new meadows...
My country wears her confirmation dress.’

‘To be called a British soldier while my country
Has no place among nations...’ You were rent
By shrapnel six weeks later. ‘I am sorry

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That party politics should divide our tents.'

In you, our dead enigma, all the strains
Criss-cross in useless equilibrium
And as the wind tunes through this vigilant bronze
I hear again the sure confusing drum

You followed from Boyne water to the Balkans
But miss the twilit note your flute should sound.
You were not keyed or pitched like these true-blue ones
Though all of you consort now underground.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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