



St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork



West Belfast priest thanks those who came to his aid when he collapsed during bike ride

A popular west Belfast priest has thanked all those who came to his aid when he collapsed during a bike ride at the weekend.

Fr Martin Magill, who is parish priest of St John's on the Falls Road, had taken advantage of the good weather on Saturday by going out for a bike ride, the Irish News reports

However, as the 59-year-old was making his way up through the Falls Park, he began to feel "woozy" and got off his bike, walked for a time and later sat down.

He then made his way out on to the top of the Whiterock Road.

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The last thing the cleric remembers is pressing the button to cross the road.

Having passed out, when he came round, a number of people, including a nurse who works at the Mater Hospital, had come to his aid and called an ambulance.

Someone had also used his phone to contact his parish to inform them about what had happened.

Fr Magill was taken to the Royal Victoria where he was assessed.

Medics believe he may have passed out because he was dehydrated, coupled with exertion, as he had not been out on his bike for a time due to the bad weather, and was also wearing multiple layers.

Fr Magill was placed on a drip for a time before he was discharged on Saturday evening.

Spending the day resting yesterday he said he was indebted to all those who had helped him.

"It has been a really, really lovely experience," he told The Irish News.

"From private messages to messages on Twitter and Facebook. It has been an affirming experience".

Fr Magill said he was particularly pleased that his bike and bag, which contained his camera, headphones and journal, were left untouched at the scene until they were picked up.

"I am feeling better," he said.

"I wouldn't say I am completely there yet. There is still a bit of fuzziness in my head.

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"I had the experience of the good samaritan. People didn't pass by me. My bike and bag were undisturbed for a number of hours.

"The two ambulance guys were really, really good."

Earlier he posted a picture of himself on Twitter from the hospital in response to another tweet about positive experiences in the health service saying: "Yesterday I tweeted this, today I'm able to speak from direct experience."

Council call to preserve Irish hymn writer's home

A council is aiming to safeguard the former Co Tyrone residence of the poet behind one of our most-loved hymns.

A motion calling for the preservation of Milltown House, where hymn writer Cecil Frances Alexander lived, has received the support of Derry City and Strabane councillors. Mrs Alexander is best known for the hymn 'All Things Bright and Beautiful', Gillian Anderson writes in the Belfast Telegraph, 01.03.2021.

The Notice of Motion also called for the other buildings on the old Strabane Grammar School site at Liskey Road, Strabane, to be preserved as well as looking into the possibility of pursuing a Community Asset Transfer. SDLP councillor Jason Barr brought the notice and explained to councillors: "This has become very popular

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among the people of Strabane and the surrounding areas to preserve this site to keep it for tourism and community use.

“The Strabane Historical Society are very hopeful about the conversion of this house and part of the site into a heritage visitors' centre, showcasing the long history our town has to offer.

“The new centre will accommodate heritage, historical information of the area and its people, a visitors centre and a community service which will benefit so many in the area.

“We want Derry City and Strabane District Council to protect Milltown House and ensure its availability to Strabane Historical Society who will look after it, publicise and enhance the history it represents.”

All members agreed and the motion passed unanimously. Sometimes described as a Derry woman, Mrs Alexander was born in Dublin, at Eccles Street, and grew up in Co Wicklow.

When she was aged 15, her family moved to Milltown House, where her father worked for the Earl of Abercorn. Later she married the Londonderry clergyman William Alexander, who would eventually become the Anglican Primate of All Ireland, and they lived first at Termonamongan, Killeter, near Castlederg, then at Upper Fahan in Co Donegal and then at Strabane again.

She wrote the hymn All Things Bright and Beautiful in 1848. It was intended to teach the meaning of the Apostles' Creed, in this case 'Maker of heaven and earth'.



WCC invites youth to Stewards Programme for 11th Assembly in 2022

The World Council of Churches (WCC) invites ecumenical youth to be stewards at the 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany, in 2022. The Stewards Programme aims to bring together a dynamic and diverse group of 160 young people from all over the world, from 21 August to 10 September 2022. The invitation is open to young people from a variety of backgrounds, churches and regions.

The deadline for applications is 10 April 2021.

The Stewards Programme includes: an on-site ecumenical formation, participation in the Ecumenical Global Gathering of Young People, and work at the 11th Assembly. Stewards will arrive in Karlsruhe a week prior to the assembly to learn

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about the ecumenical movement and to participate in the pre-assembly gathering.

Stewards are young people between the ages 18 and 30 years old. As a diverse community, stewards bring their faith, experiences and visions to an ecumenical experience of togetherness and friendship, with English as the working language of the programme.

Joy Eva Bohol, WCC programme executive for Youth Engagement and a former steward, notes that “being a steward will push you to be in uncomfortable spaces; will foster your involvement and participation in the wider ecumenical movement, and may redefine your life.” Key attributes of stewards are patience and the ability to work with people from other countries and cultures as a team.

Former steward Thomas Kang recalled that he has fond memories of those days as a steward in a WCC assembly. “It opened my eyes to the several ways we can serve as young Christians in a changing world. I met hundreds of people from different contexts trying to work together and discern as the body of Christ. That definitely strengthened my faith and identity. The stewards programme was a life-changing experience,” said Kang.

WCC looks for young people capable of integrating their experience back in their local contexts, motivated to multiply the ecumenical enthusiasm, ready to “do ecumenism” locally.

For further information and application pdfs -

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<https://www.oikoumene.org/news/wcc-invites-youth-to-stewards-programme-for-11th-assembly-in-2022>

News briefs



Christ Church, Dublin, Labyrinth During Lent - The Cathedral Community invites those who live or work in Dublin city centre to make walking the labyrinth part of your day during Lent. If you haven't tried it yet, or if you live further afield, you can share some of the labyrinth prayers virtually through this video. Information about the labyrinth in the grounds and suggestions for how to pray are available at:

[<https://www.christchurchlabyrinth.org>]

Charles Wood Festival - Just two weeks left to enter the Virtual Charles Wood Song Competition. Delight that Paul

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Farrington will return as Chair of the Jury. Entries close Monday 15th March at 2pm.

Youth Stewards wanted for WCC Assembly 2022 - The World Council of Churches (WCC) invites ecumenical youth to be stewards at the 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany, in 2022. The Stewards Programme aims to bring together a dynamic and diverse group of 160 young people from all over the world, from 21 August to 10 September 2022. The invitation is open to young people from a variety of backgrounds, churches and regions.

[(<https://www.oikoumene.org/news/wcc-invites-youth-to-stewards-programme-for-11th-assembly-in-2022>)]

Christ Church, Dublin is looking for an Organ Scholar - to join its music team starting September 2021, The position offers generous remuneration and rent-free accommodation in the city centre. It is an ideal role for a gap year or post-graduate student, though can also be undertaken alongside full-time study.

More information can be found on the cathedral website:

[<https://christchurchcathedral.ie/music/music-vacancies/>]

Spring Fling Online Knit-and-Natter - Wednesday, 10 March, 8.00 pm, online via Zoom. Comment from Christ Church, Dublin - We had good fun gathering online on St Brigid's Day with our Knit for Mendicity, so we decided we needed one more gathering to get us well and truly launched into spring! We have a couple of project options,

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including small Easter-themed gifts which we want to prepare for our neighbours in the nearby direct provision centre, and for this session we'll be raising awareness around the work of the Irish Refugee Council. Contact the Dean's Vicar on [abigail@christchurch.ie] or 01 677 8099 if you want more information or to register to receive the Zoom link.

Tribute - Pipe Major who topped the charts with Amazing Grace



Pipe Major Tony Crease, who has died aged 74, led the Pipes & Drums of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards as

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Pipe Major to the top of the hit parade with the band's rendition of *Amazing Grace*.

In 1971, the Royal Scots Greys amalgamated with the 3rd Carabiniers and their bands came together to prepare for the Amalgamation Parade. In a project inspired by Crease, a recording took place for new regimental music. It included an arrangement by the Greys' bandmaster, Stuart Fairbairn, of the hymn *Amazing Grace*.

Crease played the solo part, and the following year it was played on BBC Radio. It caught the national mood, and spent six weeks at No 1. International sales topped 11 million copies and the Pipes & Drums were awarded a gold disc.

Anthony James Crease was born at Peebles in Scotland, on June 22 1946. His father served in the TA during the Second World War while his mother was in the WRNS. His father's work took the family to Beccles in Suffolk, where young Tony was educated at Sir John Leman School.

Aged 16 he caught the train to Bovington, Dorset, to join the Royal Armoured Corps Junior Leaders Regiment. He wanted to become a piper and was assigned to the Drums Squadron and subsequently seconded to Fort George, near Inverness, where he learnt to play the bagpipes.

After completing his tank training at Bovington, he joined the Royal Scots Greys and was posted to Fallingbommel in West Germany. He transferred to the Pipe Band and, aged 22, was sent to the Army's Piping School (then in Edinburgh Castle) and qualified as a Pipe Major with a double A grade awarded by the Piobaireachd Society.

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Under Pipe Major Crease's leadership, the chart-topping hymn brought bagpipe music to a wide audience. The Pipes and Drums became famous. They toured Europe, America, Australia and New Zealand, played in front of celebrities, made more recordings and were awarded several more gold discs.

Crease also ensured that his soldiers were operational tank crewmen, and during two tours in Northern Ireland they gave invaluable service in an infantry role. In 1977 he took the Pipes and Drums to the coveted Grade 1 Status at the World Pipe Band Championships, and he was awarded the British Empire Medal.

After returning to regimental duties he was responsible for the motor transport troop before taking over as a squadron sergeant major and subsequently regimental sergeant major. In 1984 he was commissioned, and progressed from assistant adjutant to quartermaster. He was appointed MBE in 1999.

Crease retired from the regular Army to live near Bedale, North Yorkshire, and manage the rugged military training area that serves Catterick Garrison and the wider Army. A passionate ornithologist and conservationist, in 1992 he created the Foxglove Covert Nature Reserve on the boundaries of Catterick Garrison. It extends to about 100 acres and has hosted more than 500,000 visitors.

He had considerable presence, and was sometimes held in awe, but his professionalism was widely admired. His advice was often sought, his praise and friendship were cherished

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and for many he will be remembered as a regimental legend.

Opinion - Courageous decision-making is needed to tackle climate change - Graham Usher

Christians should not sit back and leave it to others to solve the problem

The past decade has brought a welcome rise in international efforts to abate the climate crisis; but how many of us can look in the mirror and truly say that enough is being done?

The Church has been given a wake-up call by a recent survey by the charity Tearfund, in which only one in ten young adult Christians said that they felt that their church was doing enough to combat climate change (News, 12 February). We have a responsibility to children and young people, and to their children and generations to come, to hear their warnings and give this issue the priority that it urgently needs.

As lead bishop for the environment, I want to amplify the prophetic voice of the young, and those in the world's most vulnerable communities who are already being affected most severely by climate change.

So, what can the Church of England do about climate change? And why should Christians see this as a part of their witness?

The great hymn of praise to God in Colossians 1.15-20 uses prepositions — “in”, “through”, “for”, “before”, “together”, “to” — to give emphasis to everything being connected in Christ and through Christ to all dimensions of creation. Everything is in view, as far as the eye can see and beyond; flora, fauna, geology, wind and ocean currents, distant stars and furthest galaxies are wrapped in Christ. God’s purpose in Christ is to bring to wholeness not only humanity but the entire created order.

The Gospels are full of stories of the growth of seeds, the choking of thistles, the beauty of lilies and the fruitfulness of trees. Jesus noticed and so must we. We have the privilege and responsibility to care for the earth and to tread gently on it. At the heart of our response must be to prevent the opposite from happening. This will take courageous decisions.

Those decisions could be big or small, from a church switching to a green electricity provider to improved government subsidies for green technology, both nationally and locally; it’s about encouraging everyone to engage with their portion of the challenge and to step up.

Anybody watching Sir David Attenborough’s recent series A Perfect Planet, cannot have escaped the burning feeling of injustice evoked by the stories told of the effects of climate change on nature.

THE job of those in power is to lead by example, and to help put decisions within reach of anybody who is changing their car, or boiler, or who wants to change their shopping habits.

The Church of England can convene conversations at a national level, which help to keep the pressure on; but we must also ensure that our own house is in order, and take decisions at every level to meet the ambitious target that the General Synod has set, of net zero emissions by 2030 (News, 14 February 2020).

The coming year presents an opportunity to increase momentum, and for the UK to use its hosting of the G7 and COP26 to make a global statement that we intend to lead by example.

Christians, alongside people of other faiths, intend to play their part by encouraging practical changes at local and national levels, but also as local and global advocates for better care and justice for God's gift of creation.

There will be difficult decisions for churches and governments alike, but, in many cases, these are already win-win — for example, green electricity tariffs are now often the cheapest available — and, by investing now in green-energy infrastructure, we can avoid much greater clean-up costs in years to come.

THE challenge will be to keep up the momentum when there are a whole host of other significant priorities; but, despite a very difficult past year, we can learn from the global response to the coronavirus pandemic.

We have now all experienced a significant global event that has dramatically altered our way of life, and we have learnt

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of the emotional, financial, and human cost that has gone with that.

As individuals, we have learnt that practices such as travelling long distances for business and frequent flights, which we previously considered unavoidable, can be reduced as we rediscover what “normal” looks like.

And, globally, the speed with which safe vaccines have been brought to market is a testament to what can be done when human endeavour aligns behind a common goal; and it is important that the benefits now being measured in the UK be widened to the global community as soon as possible.

Courtesy The Church Times, 25.02.2021

The Rt Revd Graham Usher is the Bishop of Norwich. He will become the C of E's lead bishop on the environment in June, succeeding the Bishop of Salisbury, the Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam, who retires in July.

Pointers for prayer

Heavenly Father,
your Son battled with the powers of darkness,
and grew closer to you in the desert:
help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer
that we may witness to your saving love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.



Almighty Father,
whose Son was revealed in majesty
before he suffered death upon the cross:
give us grace to perceive his glory,
that we may be strengthened to suffer with him
and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Today we pray for countries unable to access vaccines. The UN secretary general has criticised the unfair distribution of

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Covid vaccines, identifying that 130 countries have yet to receive a single dose.

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

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

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

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

We pray today for the church across the world, especially in places where they are experiencing hardship and persecution. We stand together with our sisters and brothers and pray for God to bring relief from their circumstances.

Holy God,
you know the disorder of our sinful lives:
set straight our crooked hearts,
and bend our wills to love your goodness
and your glory

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in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Speaking to the Soul

Bishop Donal McKeown of Derry speaking on Sunday past, the Second Sunday of Lent

There are six Sundays in Lent. While the Gospel each Sunday is different, together they form a complete story. If we can follow these episodes, it becomes a sort of [liturgical 'box set'](#) culminating in Easter Sunday. Last Sunday in 'episode one' we heard about temptations. Jesus was tempted to sell himself short and take the easy way to face evil. Today, with the Transfiguration of Jesus, we go a stage further and dare to dream of sharing in divine glory and not just of survival. What might we learn about our own journey as we glimpse something of who Jesus is?

Firstly, we all need a dream to keep us going. If we haven't got a dream, we perish. People can die for want of a reason for living. In this Gospel passage, Jesus has just told the disciples that he will be crucified and die. As in the first reading about Abraham sacrificing Isaac, the possibility of Calvary seems preposterous. So, to give the apostles courage to face the impossible events of Holy Week, three of them have a glimpse of Jesus' glory. But even after the event, Peter, James and John still do not understand what this crazy story is all about. The experience was real – but the incredible meaning would only gradually become clear. To many of our contemporaries, the Gospel message is hard to take seriously. That is not just a modern problem. Even St Paul found that the message of the Cross was



incomprehensible to both Jews and Greeks. But like falling in love, faith in Jesus is not merely an intellectual conviction. Our human relationships need memories to build them up. Unless our hearts are nourished by prayerful encounters and experiences, faith in Jesus' incredible message will wither. As with human relationships, faith in Jesus involves our hearts and not just our heads or an occasional few minutes on our knees. Otherwise, it will be drowned out by the noise on all sides. The Transfiguration is Jesus' call to make space for the divine dream.

Secondly, as Jesus does throughout his life, this strange event breaks into the limited world of the apostles' expectations. Their assumptions and limited hopes are burst open and they struggle to cope with this new way of looking at everything. Faith in Jesus does that in every generation – and that is why faith is often resisted.

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Pope Francis talks about the '*virus of indifference*'. He calls Christians today to be '*a sign of contradiction to the individualism and self-obsession and lack of solidarity that so dominate our wealthier societies.*' [1] A good example of this is that, in a world of war and starvation, the fact that the theft of some singer's dogs 10,000 miles away seemed to be worth reporting for days on end. Deep down, our insecure culture wants to distract us from facing real issues and with daring to dream. This 'globalisation of superficiality' [2] arises when we are swamped with information and are unable to digest it or make sense of it. So, we are seduced to seek refuge and distraction in the titillating. Jesus wants to break this obsession of ours with seeking security in the irrelevant and the controllable. The real challenge for people of faith is to live authentic lives so that we can free ourselves from this prison of an escapist imagination and help our contemporaries dare to believe in the divine imagination about a transfigured world. When we allow ourselves to be concerned about a pampered singer's dogs in California, it is we who have become muzzled and led by a leash. Jesus has come to burst into that deadly oppressive obsession.

Thirdly, Jesus' body is transfigured. That points to the glory of the Resurrection. But he took on our flesh so that we might share his heavenly glory. That is the divine dream that Jesus wants to share with us. Our bodies are not just toys to be played with or lumps of meat to be displayed and played with for all-comers. Our bodies are holy and destined for glory. Intimacy is sacred. Whatever cheapens our dignity damages our self-respect. A culture that measures value by the external promotes superficial and temporary relationships. Healing love needs long-term trust, not one-

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night stands. Children need stability in the adults around them. A culture that encourages 'self-pitying me' damages adults and their dependents. And it crushes the idealism out of children. Lust without love poisons our hunger for meaning. Christ's values are meant to liberate us from that prison of our own making – and from those who benefit by exploiting our temptation to be satisfied with the banal.

Thus, the entire Lenten journey is an invitation to tackle the habits that smother our ability to hope for love and mercy. In this second Lent in lockdowns, Jesus encourages us to believe in him and to believe that we will experience resurrection with him. Making time for prayer is dangerous – because, by praying, you are daring to make space for glimpses of transfiguration in your own life. Fasting is dangerous because you dare to say that you are more than what you are told you should be consuming. Fasting is also a protest against the injustice of the market that wastes so much while millions starve. Solidarity moves us beyond self-obsessed concern with specific personal freedoms – whether in secular life or in church. It works against the fundamentalism which insist that God's truth is limited to suit my Pharisaic hunger for certainty. Certainty was not what the apostles felt after the Transfiguration. Almsgiving pushes me to believe that I should fight for the rights of others before growing indignant and angry about my own little hang-ups. Faith broadens our horizons. It does not limit them. God did not spare his own Son but gave him up to benefit us all. He invites followers to be prepared to be self-giving and generous. Without that transfiguration dream, there is no hunger for resurrection.

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During this coming week, can I invite you to stay with those words from today's Gospel, '*This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him.*' There and there alone will we find healing. There and there alone are we guaranteed wholeness. In that mercy and love alone there is transfiguration. And there we find the strength to journey on in hope.

[1] *Let us Dream*, 2020, Simon and Schuster, p.13

[2] Cf Radcliffe, T, *Alive in God*, 2019, Bloomsbury, p.6

