

Church News Ireland



Image of the day –Royal exhibition in Randalstown

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The Rector of Drummaul, the Rev Canon Derek Kerr, with some of his Royal memorabilia for the Platinum Jubilee exhibition.

People and places

Royal exhibition in Randalstown to mark Platinum Jubilee

In honour of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Drummaul Parish Church will host a right Royal exhibition from May 13-22.

The church will be full of memorabilia collected over the years by the vicar of Drummaul, Duneane and Ballyscullion, the Rev Canon Derek Kerr.

Plates, jugs, saucers, photographs, cushions, photographs, paintings, framed letters from Buckingham Palace and much more will soon be packed and transported from the vicarage to the church.

Enthusiast Derek has been collecting all things Royal for the past 30 years, and has gathered around 500 items, the

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oldest a jug and some crockery dating back to Queen Victoria's days.

Crockery celebrating Royal marriages past and present.

His passion for Royalty can be traced back to his childhood. "As a small boy I loved historical characters, especially fantasy characters like King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table," Derek explains

"It was with King Arthur that my love of other worldly stuff began – old houses and National Trust properties and a real fascination with the Royal family. Some of my good friends called it delusions of grandeur!"

A native of Dungannon, Co Tyrone, Derek was ordained in 1990. He gave what he refers to as his first 'Royal Talk' during his second year of his curacy in St Donard's Parish, Belfast, when he and his fellow team member, politician Jeffrey Donaldson, spoke at a Summer Madness debate against the argument: 'This house believes there is no future for the monarchy' – a debate which they won.

Since then, he has done an average of 10 talks a year. As well as collecting Royal memorabilia, Derek takes every opportunity he can to attend Royal events.

His first was the Queen Mother's 100th birthday in 2000, when he positioned himself between Clarence House and Buckingham Palace. In 2002, Derek was a guest at a Garden Party in Loughry College in Cookstown to mark the Golden Jubilee. On this occasion he, in his own words,

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‘circumnavigated three bodyguards to walk up to her [the Queen], take her hand, bow and thank her for coming.’

He was in Windsor for the Queen’s 80th birthday in 2006, in 2011, when Prince William married Kate Middleton, Derek spent the previous night on the Mall where he found ‘an excellent spot’ to catch a glimpse of the bride and groom and the other Royals.

To mark the Queen’s 60th anniversary of her reign in 2012, Derek hosted his Royal exhibition at Drummaul Parish Church, with proceeds going to parish funds and to the NSPCC. Three years later, Derek again hosted an exhibition to celebrate Her Majesty becoming the UK’s longest reigning monarch. This raised £1,300 for Tabiro School in Uganda which Drummaul, Duneane and Ballyscullion had built through Fields of Life.

The Rev Canon Derek Kerr with some of the crockery which forms part of his Royal collection.

His extensive collection includes items relevant to the Royal family past and present, and includes china commemorating Queen Victoria’s 60 years on the throne; a miniature photo book of Royals from bygone days; a plate marking the Silver Jubilee of King George V in 1935; and new souvenirs of this year’s platinum jubilee – cushions and gold plated teaspoons.

But pride of place goes to a very unlikely object – a baby’s rattle which once belonged to his late mother, and commemorates the Silver Jubilee of King George V and Queen Mary in 1935.

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The exhibition will be launched on Friday May 13, and will be open on Saturday May 14 and 15 and 21 and 22 from 2pm-5pm and from 7.30pm-10pm. It will be open in the evenings Monday to Friday May 16-20 from 7.30pm until 10pm, although visits outside of these hours can be pre-arranged.

It will raise funds for the parish, with 10 per cent of monies donated going to the Salvation Army in memory of the late Aurelia Kelly.

Then Derek will head to London to enjoy the events of the Platinum Jubilee Weekend which runs in the capital from June 2-5.

You can read more about Derek's passion for all things Royal in the summer issue of the diocesan magazine Connor Connections which will be available in June.

Emma set for return to Magheralin

Magheralin Parish has announced the appointment of Revd Emma Carson as their Associate Minister. She returns to the parish having served her deacon internship there 3 years ago.

The rector, Rev Simon Genoe said:

“When Emma joined us as Intern Deacon she fitted in so well with our people and our worshipping life, that we were extremely sorry to see her go. We are delighted to welcome



her back to Magheralin Parish in a very different capacity as our Associate Minister.

Emma will have a varied role for the next 3 years with particular focus on pastoral care, working with young adults, and reaching out into our community in creative ways.

Please pray for Emma as she finishes well in Ballymena, transitions to living in Dollingstown, and begins a fruitful ministry in her new context. Please also pray for our parish, as we and Emma together seek to be a “deep and wide church”, which engages deeply with God and widely with our community.”

‘A time to plant’- Presbyterians hold church planting conference

Upwards of 100 people from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland interested in church planting gathered in Dundalk, County Louth, over the weekend for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland’s (PCI) conference ‘A time to plant’.



Keynote speaker Scotty Smith is pictured with the co-conveners of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Church Planting Panel, Tom Gilliam (left), an elder in Maynooth Presbyterian Church and Rev Dr Marty McNeely, minister of Ballykeel Presbyterian Church, who organised the conference.

Organised by PCI's Council for Mission in Ireland, which has specific responsibility for developing PCI's strategic priorities in all-age mission across Ireland, and new church development, was seeking to build on the denomination's long and rich history of planting new churches.

Rev Dr Marty McNeely, minister of Ballykeel Presbyterian Church, is co-convener of PCI's Church Planting Panel and was one of the speakers at Saturday's conference. "This



Keynote speaker Scotty Smith addressing the 'A time to plant' conference in Dundalk

one day conference was open to all within PCI who are interested in church planting. For me, and I hope everyone who attended, it was a really inspiring and encouraging day. I am personally really excited about how God might use the event, prayerfully hoping that new expressions of church and Christian witness may take root as a result and those recently established by Presbyterians will flourish.”

During the conference those attending heard from Presbyterians who are currently building new communities of faith. These include Balbriggan in County Dublin, which began its weekly services in 2020, Central in Belfast, which opened its doors in 2016, and another expression of

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Christian witness in West Belfast, Grace and Hope Community Church. Those involved spoke about their experiences, sense of call, the challenges and the joys of being part of something new.

They also heard from keynote speaker Scotty Smith, author and founding pastor of Christ Community Church in Franklin, Tennessee. Mr Smith pastored the church for 26 years, from which grew five 'daughter churches' and 10 subsequent 'granddaughter churches'.

Dr McNeely, whose own church, Ballykeel, was planted in the early 1970s, continued, "It is a fact that over the years, society north and south has changed, becoming more secular with fewer people attending church. Having said that, the biblical mandate to make disciples of all nations, which includes our own, has not gone away. People still need to hear the Good News of the Gospel.

"Across the world Christ's Church is growing and there is a genuine desire within PCI to expand and grow too, reaching those in new ways who have yet to hear the Gospel. I hope that Saturday's conference inspired those who have this call upon their lives to build new expressions of church, and so introduce new people in new places to a new life in Christ," Dr McNeely said.

Keynote speaker Scotty Smith, who has written and spoken extensively about church planting, is part of the leadership team of West End Community Church in Nashville, Tennessee. He is also partnering with Liberty Church in Dublin and its work in the capital's inner city.



Conference attendees listen and take notes.

Reflecting on the conference Mr Smith said, “I loved the title of the conference, ‘A time to plant’, because that phrase covers the entire history of redemption. Many times we are slow to realise here is the joy of our Heavenly Father, who before the formation of the world, determined to shape people in terms of a universal family, focussing them in local communities of the church.”

Mr Smith continued, “Today we were looking at the Apostle Paul who is a consummate church planter. We saw his heart for the Gospel, his heart for the fullness of history that is our Father’s commitment to one day fill the earth with His glory and to use the local church as a primary ‘show and tell’ of that great story. That’s what we were kind of looking at today, blasting our hearts with the Gospel, the story of God and the centrality of the church.”

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Thanking Mr Smith for his inspiring contribution the Convener of the Council for Mission in Ireland, Very Rev Frank Sellar DL, said “A time to plant was one of the most enjoyable and worthwhile events I’ve been at for a very long time. I’m certain its benefits are yet to be seen.”

Having spoken at the Annual Conference of Presbyterian Women in Belfast earlier in the day, Presbyterian Moderator, Right Reverend Dr David Bruce, travelled to Dundalk and gave a closing address to inspire those present about God’s heart for church planting.

Speaking afterwards Dr Bruce said, “I was tremendously encouraged by what I heard and saw today. I came away with a very positive sense that God was leading us to do more of this and confident that He would lead us to new places and new people where we can make new connections.”

New church included in development plans on former landmark site in Finglas

A former landmark church in Finglas is to be replaced with a significantly smaller building due to declining mass attendances, new development plans reveal, Tony McCullagh reports in the Irish Independent.

The site of the Church of the Annunciation forms part of a proposed scheme for lands known as Fergal’s Field, off Cappagh Road in Finglas West.

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In addition to a new church and parish centre, there are plans for a primary health centre, housing and sporting facilities for local schools.

The main stakeholders in the proposal are Dublin City Council, the Dublin Archdiocese, the HSE and the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETb).

The Church of the Annunciation, one of the largest in the country which could seat up to 3,500 parishioners, closed in 2018 after more than 50 years due to a fall-off in regular mass attendances.

Demolition work was completed last November and planning permission has been secured for a parish centre and smaller church on the site of a former car park.

Construction work on the new church, with a capacity of between 150 and 200 people, is expected to commence later this year following a tender process.

According to Dublin City Council, all other elements of the Fergal's Field proposal will be subject to ongoing local consultation before planning applications are submitted.

The council is currently engaging with parish authorities to acquire the former church site and develop up to 100 homes, comprising mainly one and two-bed units.

Courtesy the Irish Independent, May 10,2022

In the media

On the centenary of the Four Courts blaze this year the Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland online will be launched

Irish Times

Centuries-old documents lost in Four Courts fire during civil war to be recreated

Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland follows an international effort to recover destroyed items

The siege of the Four Courts ended on June 30th, 1922, with a catastrophic explosion that destroyed the Public Records Office and with it hundreds of years of documented Irish history.

At approximately 11.30am the Public Records Office went up in a huge explosion that sent a dark plume of smoke hundreds of metres into the air. Ernie O'Malley, the anti-treaty assistant chief of staff and a future chronicler of the conflict, noted that a "thick black cloud floated up about the buildings and drifted away slowly. Fluttering up and down against the black mass were leaves of white paper; they looked like hovering white birds....

...”The census records for the whole of the 19th century, going back to the first in 1821, were incinerated. The records of those who had lived in Ireland before the calamity of the Great Famine were lost forever. Chancery records detailing British rule in Ireland going back to the 14th century and grants of land by the crown were also

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destroyed, along with thousands of wills and title deeds. The records of various chief secretaries for Ireland, centuries of Church of Ireland parish registers, the Christ Church deeds going back to 1174, court records dating to the 13th century, military records of local yeomanry and transportation records to the colonies were also lost.”

On the centenary of the Four Courts blaze this year the Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland online will be launched.

Many millions of words from destroyed documents will be linked and reassembled from copies, transcripts and other records scattered among the collections of our archival partners.

The Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland will be an open-access resource, freely available online to all those interested in Irish history at home and abroad and will be an enduring legacy from the Decade of Centenaries.

[[] <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/centuries-old-documents-lost-in-four-courts-fire-during-civil-war-to-be-recreated-1.4857473>]

Perspective

Bishop Casey's resignation heralded beginning of end for a particular brand of Catholicism in Ireland by Patsy McGarry

It's 30 years ago since that seismic event in the recent history of the Irish Catholic Church took place. On May

7 1992 The Irish Times ran a front page story headed “Dr Casey resigns as Bishop of Galway”.

It referred to “payments amounting to \$115,000 to a woman in Connecticut and a lawyer in New York on July 25th, 1990, and other regular payments to the woman over a period of 15 years since the mid-1970s.”

Within days Annie Murphy was being interviewed by Irish media and told her story and that of her son, Peter.

The Ireland of May 1992 was a foreign country. Albert Reynolds had been taoiseach for three months and was in “a temporary little arrangement” with the Progressive Democrats. Minister for health Dr John O’Connell was preparing a Bill to allow contraceptives be more freely available and there were nervous whispers of another divorce referendum after the dramatic defeat of the one in 1986.

The idea of an Irish Catholic bishop having sex, never mind having a 17-year-old son, was truly shocking where the devout were concerned. It was, quite literally, beyond belief. That such a bishop should also take money from diocesan accounts was a double whammy which stretched credibility to breaking point.

May 7, 1992 was the beginning of the end of the long 19th-century of a particular brand of Catholicism in Ireland. It was, of course, a pale dawn before what was to come. Bishop Eamonn Casey’s offences, in that context, seem minor indeed to the tsunami of clerical child sex abuse

scandals to come and still unknown to the wider public back then.

Bishop Casey, then 65, had operated at a senior level in Irish Catholic church governance for 23 years at the time, from his appointment as Bishop of Kerry in 1969. But he was an embarrassment to the Church after 1992 and treated accordingly. As has been evident in other contexts in Ireland too, great institutions are merciless when it comes to individuals who get in their way, or who are likely to cause them discomfort.

After 1992 the Church was determined to keep him as far away from the spotlight as possible. It was why he ended up in Ecuador for five years with the American Missionary Society of St James the Apostle until 1998 followed then by 'exile' in a south of England parish before eventually being allowed back to Ireland to live in a quiet rural Galway townland where he was never allowed say Mass publicly before his death in 2017. By then he probably no longer cared, having succumbed to Alzheimers disease, with which he was first diagnosed in 2002.

In a 1998 interview I conducted with the then Archbishop of Westminster and President of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales Cardinal Basil Hume made it quite clear to me that Bishop Casey would not be allowed back to the Westminster archdiocese where he had served before becoming Bishop of Kerry.

It was while there in the 1960s that Bishop Casey founded the housing agency Shelter, of which Cardinal Hume was

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his successor as president. It provided housing, initially for Irish emigrants but expanded from there.

Cardinal Hume had by then something of the reputation of a living saint. I had approached him with that in mind and was taken aback by the toughness with which I was met when I asked whether Bishop Casey might be allowed back in Westminster. Basil was not for turning. His opposition was implacable, rock solid. No mercy there.

He was himself not without blemish, as emerged later. In 2018 the UK's Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse reported "appalling" levels of sexual abuse inflicted over a 40-year period on pupils at two leading Catholic schools in England, the Benedictine Ampleforth and Downside schools.

Cardinal Hume, who died in 1999, had been abbot at Ampleforth before becoming Archbishop of Westminster in 1976. In 2005 Leeds Crown Court was told by police during a trial that pupils suffered decades of abuse there involving at least six paedophiles following a decision by then Abbot Basil Hume not to call in police when first alerted to the abuse.

Eventually a post was found for Bishop Casey in the English diocese of Arundel and Brighton where Cormac Murphy O'Connor was bishop, a man with strong Cork connections who later succeeded Basil Hume as Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster. Then in 2000 it was revealed that he too had covered up and moved an abuser priest who continued to sexually abuse children in his new post.

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Bishop Casey was kept out of Ireland until 2006, 14 years after the 1992 revelations. No Irish clerical child sex abuser was ever exiled from Ireland by the church, though some were moved abroad to protect the church. They were members of religious order mainly.

When Bishop Casey was eventually allowed back to Ireland it was to a rural parish in east Co Galway where he was never allowed return to public ministry or say Mass in public again.

It might be said that, but for circumstances, he might himself have meted out similar treatment to an errant colleague.

He treated the then senior dean at Maynooth, Fr Gerard McGinnity, harshly in the early 1980s when McGinnity tried to alert bishops to the alleged abuse activities involving then seminary president Msgr Micheál Ledwith. And, as a bishop, he was said to have been hard on his priests in Kerry and Galway.

On the positive side, he was actively concerned about the emigrant Irish and set up agencies to help them in Britain and the US. He set up Trócaire which remains one of the most successful and best-known development agencies in Ireland. His radical concern for Central America led to his refusal, along with now President Michael D Higgins, to meet Ronald Reagan when the US president visited Galway in 1984.

He was a frequent visitor to Central America and might have been killed there when representing the Irish bishops at the murdered Archbishop Oscar Romero's (canonized by Pope

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Francis in 2018) funeral in 1980. Sixty-five people were shot dead during the funeral Mass, which he attended, when the cathedral was attacked by the Nicaraguan military.

In the west of Ireland, as Bishop of Galway, he and Connacht's other Catholic bishops helped to set up the Western Development Commission.

The other side of that driven personality was a sometimes loud personality with a taste for fast cars, drink, diverting company, including women, and good cheer.

He did not endear himself to all, not least to some brother bishops whose style would have been to step back where he would plunge on and who would have regarded his singing on The Late Late Show as vulgar.

However, the extent of his pastoral work and his experience among ordinary people set him apart from them too.

He spent his later years in a nursing home in Co Clare. One of his last public appearances was at the Dublin launch in May 2010 of 'The Search for Justice: Trócaire – a History' by Brian Maye. Asked then how he was generally, he replied: "I've never been discontent in my life and I never will be, no matter what impositions are put on me or what I'm not allowed to do. I don't care. I am all right with God." He was not perfect. He was a man. The good that he did lives after him. RIP.

Courtesy of Patsy McGarry, Tullamore Tribune and Midland Tribune columnist, and Offaly Live, May 9, 2022

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Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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