

# Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – Marathon walk – they did it**

## Image of the day

### Marathon walk - they did it

The Rev Elizabeth Hanna and the Rev Mellissa Jeffers completed the Belfast Marathon eight-mile walk on May 1, raising £1,265 for the Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal.

## People and places

### 'Darkness into Light' in Christ Church, Rushbrooke, Cobh

**In the early hours of Saturday 7th May, the doors of Christ Church, Rushbrooke were opened as a landmark on the route of the annual 'Darkness into Light' walk through Cobh.**

The church was lit during the night as a reminder that those who suffer from mental health problems and bereavement from suicide are not alone.

The church was open for those on the walk who wished to pause, reflect, and to remember before God those who have died as a result of suicide. This event, organised by mental health charity Pieta, is held to raise funds to provide help for those in suicidal crisis or self harming.



The Rector of Cobh and Glanmire Union of Parishes, the Revd Canon Paul Arbuthnot, commented:

We were pleased to participate in this important event which is so well supported in Cobh. Many thanks are due to those parishioners who opened and prepared the church so that others might find space for quiet reflection before God.

We stand in prayerful solidarity with those who are affected by suicide and self

harm. Events like this remind us of and reaffirm us in our

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commitment to live the commission of our Lord to be the light of the world.



## **C of I Young Leaders in Ministry Fund is once again open for applications.**

**As our teenagers and young adults look forward to increasing youth ministry opportunities post-pandemic, the Church of Ireland Youth Department's Young Leaders in Ministry Fund is once again open for applications.**

The fund is open to young people aged between 15 and 25 years who can demonstrate a current involvement in the Church of Ireland. It seeks to support training and development courses, mission teams, leadership opportunities and placements that can be shown to:

significantly develop the faith of the young adult applicant;

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grow the skills of the applicant especially, but not confined to, leadership skills; and

be of significant use to the ministry of the Church of Ireland in the 12 months following the completion of the opportunity.

The next closing date is Tuesday, 31st May 2022, and an application form (in PDF format) can be downloaded at this link.

Please send all completed applications by post to: Young Leaders in Ministry Fund, CIYD, Church of Ireland House, 61–67 Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1 2QH, or by email to [admin@ciyd.org](mailto:admin@ciyd.org)

For any further information or questions please email [simon@ciyd.org](mailto:simon@ciyd.org)

## **Bishop visits Cork's new Together4Ukraine hub**

On Tuesday of this week the Bishop of Cork, Rt Rev Paul Colton spent some hours, as a guest of Together-Razem Centre in Cork, with the Ukrainian community in Cork at the official opening of their new hub - Together4Ukraine - officially opened by the Deputy Lord Mayor, Cllr John Sheehan together with the Ambassador of Ukraine, H.E. Garasko Larysa and the Ambassador of Poland, H.E. Anna Sochańska at the Blackpool Community Centre, which has been gifted to them. Bishop Colton said, "It was an inspiring time - but also very moving and even heart-breaking



listening to the personal testimonies of some of those who have arrived”.

## **Marathon Walk raises £1,265 for Bishops’ Appeal**

The Rev Elizabeth Hanna and the Rev Mellissa Jeffers completed the Belfast Marathon eight-mile walk on May 1, raising £1,265 for the Church of Ireland Bishops’ Appeal.

Their particular project of choice is supporting Christian Aid in their work with communities in Honduras. Funds raised will help families who live in the dry corridor become more resilient to climate change through new agricultural

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practices, rainwater harvesting and drip irrigation and improved nutrition.

Elizabeth and Mellissa thanked everyone who supported them, particularly Lydia Monds, Bishops' Appeal Education Advisor, for her encouragement.



## **Appointment of Dean of Ross and Incumbent of Ross Union**

The Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, the Right Reverend Dr Paul Colton, has announced that, on foot of a nomination from the Diocesan Board of Patronage, he has appointed the Reverend Cliff Jeffers, currently Incumbent of Fanlobbus Union of Parishes in the Diocese, as Incumbent of Ross Union of Parishes.

## News reports

### Church of England pours in £3m to help clergy struggling with cost of living crisis

**The Church of England will make extra funding available to help clergy and lay workers struggling with the cost of living crisis, particularly rising energy bills.**

The Church has announced that it will distribute up to £3m for hardship grants to help clergy and lay employees such as children and youth workers.

Decisions about the distribution of grants will be made at diocesan level.

The Church of England published a report last year that revealed 13 per cent of clergy said they found it "very difficult" to manage and 25 per cent described themselves as just getting by financially.

The report backed targeted support for clergy facing financial challenges such as those with larger families or with no additional household income other than the stipend.

John Spence, Chair of the Archbishops' Council finance committee, said "Our clergy and lay workers are in the frontline of mission and ministry in the Church of England.

"Every day they make a massive difference for their communities. We know that a significant number face a



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challenge over the coming months in the face of the rising cost of living.

"Dioceses will be given additional resources to ensure that not only clergy but those lay workers such as youth and children's workers most in need of financial support will receive the help they need."

## **GB Government confirms conversion therapy ban plans in Queen's Speech**

**The government has committed to bring forward legislation to ban conversion therapy for a second consecutive year.**

During the Queen's Speech, Prince Charles read the government's intention to stop "abhorrent practices which do not work and cause extensive harm" and protect people's freedom to love whom they want.

Although Theresa May first outlined plans to ban conversion therapy in 2018, it was only last year that the government committed to bring forward legislation to ban the practice.

However, the bill has been postponed several times due to a series of U-turns by the government. The latest being a leaked document reported by ITV revealing the government's intention to drop the legislation altogether.

But after intense backlash from MPs and LGBT leaders, the government backtracked and said the Bill was going to be

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included in this year's Queen's speech but it will only ban "gay conversion therapy, not trans".

The government has now confirmed the exclusion of transgender people from the conversion therapy ban but said it "will carry out separate work to consider the issue of Transgender Conversion Therapy further."

It means the legislation will outlaw practices which seek to change someone's sexuality but not those which seek to change people's sexual identity.

"Whilst I'm naturally relieved to see that the government are still committed to banning "conversion therapy", it is of great concern that they are creating so many loopholes and leaving so many people unprotected," Jayne Ozanne, chair of the Ban Conversion Therapy Coalition said on Twitter.

"The government's own research shows that trans people are twice as likely to be offered "conversion therapy" and it is an utter disgrace that they have purposefully omitted them from the ban," she added.

But for those Christian leaders who have been campaigning against the conversion therapy ban, worried because of potential criminalisation of prayer or traditional Christian views, the legislation could turn into an "LGBT blasphemy law, criminalising the mere expression of opinions."

Simon Calvert, spokesperson for the Let Us Pray campaign, said: "The Government says it wants to protect religious freedoms in the legislation but many of those calling for the ban simply do not agree with them. They want the ban to be

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a new speech crime - a kind of LGBT blasphemy law - to criminalise those who express the 'wrong' opinions."

"By pushing forward with a ban the Government risks handing these activists a veto on the ordinary, innocent, everyday practices of churches," he concluded.

A government spokesperson said: "The government has a proud record on LGBT rights, and the government is committed to bringing forward legislation to ban conversion therapy.

"Recognising the complexity of issues and need for further careful thought, we will carry out separate work to consider the issue of transgender conversion therapy further.

"This is a legally complex area and we have a responsibility to ensure unintended consequences are not written into legislation, particularly in the case of under 18s."

## **New Church of England National Ecumenical Adviser appointed**

**The Rev Canon Dr Jeremy Morris has been appointed National Ecumenical Adviser for the Church of England.**

In his new role Dr Morris will manage the Church of England's ecumenical relationships at home and abroad and will work through the Office of the Archbishops to support the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in their ecumenical engagements.

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The Rev Canon Dr Jeremy Morris is a former Master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge. He was previously Dean of Chapel of King's College, Cambridge. He is a specialist in modern religious history, including the Anglican tradition, the ecumenical movement, and arguments about secularization, and has taught theology and church history in Cambridge for over 25 years.

Dr Morris was formerly Director of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Examination in Theology ('Lambeth awards'), and deputy chair of the Faith and Order Commission of the Church of England. He has been actively involved in ecumenical affairs for many years, including as a member of the Malines Conversations Group (Anglican-Roman Catholic), of the Porvoo Research Network, and of the Anglican-Old Catholic International Co-ordinating Council.

The Rev Dr Malcolm Brown, the Church of England's Director of Faith and Public Life, said: "It is a great pleasure to welcome the Rev Canon Dr Jeremy Morris to lead the development of the Church of England's ecumenical engagement into the future.

"On both the 'life and works' and the 'faith and order' aspects of ecumenism, Jeremy brings immense levels of experience and theological insight.

"To relate well to other traditions, it is important to understand one's own tradition profoundly and, as the author of the most recent history of the Church of England, Jeremy could not be better placed to take this work forward.

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“I look forward enormously to working with him, and to enjoying his contribution to the wider Faith and Public Life team.”

Dr Morris said: “I am really delighted to be joining the Faith and Public Life Division as National Adviser for Ecumenical Relations. This for me is a dream job, bringing the opportunity to unite my intellectual interests, ecumenical experience and theological commitments for the benefit of the Church of England nationally.

“These are challenging times for all Christian churches and for their mutual relationships, both internationally and in Britain, and it is vital that the Church of England continues to play a full part on the ecumenical scene and to work constructively alongside its ecumenical partners for the good of all Christ’s people.”

Dr Morris started his new role on 3 May.

## In the media

### **Former seminary in Drumcondra sells contents in aid of Ukrainian refugees**

Irish Times

The three-quarters full bottle of altar wine, alongside an unopened six pack of traditional beeswax altar candles, in the oratory sacristy gave an impression of a seminary hastily abandoned.

Priest's vestments hanging on a rail, lent to that view. But Holy Cross Clonliffe in Dublin's Drumcondra ceased to operate as a seminary in 1999 when its last four students left.

Founded in 1854, it trained almost 3,000 priests primarily for Dublin's Catholic archdiocese, with 1,250 seminarians coming from the city or county and the majority 1,469 from outside.

Former president Éamonn de Valera taught maths there in 1905 and in 1917 Countess Markievicz was baptised Catholic at Clonliffe College. Her husband, Casimir Dunin Markievicz, was from Ukraine. He attended school in Kherson and studied law at the university in Kyiv.

Holy Cross Clonliffe was founded by Ireland's first Cardinal and then Archbishop of Dublin Paul Cullen. His statue, installed in 1881, stands opposite an even more imposing one of Pope Pius IX – believed to be the only statue of that pope in Ireland – at the College entrance, both formidable sentries as they had been in the Church universal of their day.

The statues were also for auction on Tuesday to help raise funds to help accommodate up to 620 Ukrainian refugees at the former seminary.

[[] <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/former-dublin-seminary-hosts-clear-out-auction-in-aid-of-ukrainian-refugees-1.4874914> ]

# Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

## **The Love of Wisdom: Science and Faith in conversation Tom McLeish and Paula Gooder**

Tuesday 17 May, 7.00 - 7.45pm from St Paul's Cathedral  
Premiered on YouTube and available afterwards on catch-up

Physicist Tom McLeish and Biblical scholar Paula Gooder talk about the relationship between science and faith, and how much each has to learn from each other. They explore the nature of truth, the role science plays in the Kingdom of God, how the art of asking good questions is at the heart of both science and faith, and draw insights from the Creation stories in the Old Testament, the Book of Job and St Paul's life and letters.

Professor Tom McLeish FRS is Professor of Natural Philosophy in the Department of Physics at the University of York, and a Licenced Lay Minister in the Church of England.

Paula Gooder is Canon Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral, and a leading Biblical scholar and writer.

“The event is free, but if you are able to make a donation to the continuing learning programme at St Paul's Cathedral when you register for the event we would be very grateful”.

[[] <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-love-of-wisdom-science-and-faith-in-conversation-tickets-321266375377> ]

## Perspective

### **A non-sectarian future needs middle grounds to assemble by Malachi O'Doherty**

#### **It's time parties extended beyond mere ethnic representation**

Throughout the Troubles there was a prevailing theory about how peace and reconciliation might be brought about. That theory was that all government effort, aside from security, should go towards building up a political middle ground. This involved encouraging those who were opposed to the violence and who might be amenable to working across the sectarian divide.

That there was a sectarian divide was never in doubt. The entire voter base for nationalists was Catholic. The entire voter base for unionists was Protestant. The best you could hope for in a middle ground was that the SDLP and the Ulster Unionists would be less sectarian than Sinn Fein and the DUP and that they might ultimately govern together.

All four main parties might have been judged to be 'institutionally sectarian' according to the reasoning that had branded the Metropolitan Police as 'institutionally racist'.



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Early experiments in bringing together the SDLP and the Ulster Unionists had been fruitful. The power-sharing Assembly of 1974 might not have lasted long, but it had been built on a willingness of the two lesser-sectarian parties to get along, combined with the Alliance Party.

Sinn Fein had little political presence at the time and the DUP stayed outside, joining a campaign with the loyalist paramilitaries to bring the whole thing down.

Still, the basic strategy was maintained, to cultivate a middle ground that might govern to the exclusion of the difficult extremes.

Funding was provided to community groups for employment projects, with vetting to favour groups which excluded IRA members and sympathisers.

James Prior's 'rolling devolution' plan assumed that the more reasonable parties might pull together and acquire greater power as their cooperation with each other deepened.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 was an attempt to shore up the SDLP at a time when the Sinn Fein vote was eating into its base.

But the SDLP was never going to go into power-sharing during an IRA campaign, because it could not afford to be answerable for the actions of the police and army in Catholic communities.

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It would only take one incident of a soldier shooting a joyrider or a policeman killing a child holding a paintbrush mistaken for a gun and total outrage would fall on the head of any Catholic politician providing political cover for that.

So there had to be an IRA ceasefire before the SDLP would attempt to reach a power-sharing agreement again, and there had to be a loyalist ceasefire if any IRA ceasefire was to endure.

John Hume worked through a peace process to that end.

At the start of that process the likely outcome appeared to be that we would have an Assembly with the SDLP and the UUP taking power together and Sinn Fein and the DUP having relatively junior positions in an Executive.

But what happened in time was that this notional middle ground withered and the two parties long regarded as the difficult extremists took power together and even modified the Good Friday Agreement to favour larger parties and sideline their neighbour parties.

Essentially the problem had always been that we had two middle grounds, not one: a Catholic middle ground and a Protestant middle ground and Catholic and Protestant voters had more credible ethnic representatives to turn to if that was what they wanted.

There was an interesting insight into the relationships between parties within these pairings in the polling before the election.

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It showed that Sinn Fein voters were far more likely to transfer to the SDLP than the SDLP was to return the favour, and that a similar dynamic operated on the other side.

The big parties regarded the smaller ones as junior partners, while the smaller ones regarded the big ones as embarrassing big brothers.

At the weekend the media went giddy over Sinn Fein qualifying for the first minister post. Regardless of the fact that there had been negligible growth in Sinn Fein's vote, Michelle O'Neill declared that a new era had begun.

She was right — but not in the way she meant.

The growth spurt in this election has been in the Alliance Party, more than doubling its seat count and becoming the most credible expression of a non-sectarian middle ground that we have ever had.

Sinn Fein thinks we are moving apace towards a border poll, but there is another trend — and that is towards a non-sectarian future Executive in a Northern Ireland content to defer the question of unity again, as all parties were presumed to have deferred it in the Good Friday Agreement.

The challenge now is for the previous, lesser-qualified holders of the middle ground — the SDLP and the Ulster Unionists — to be part of that trend.

If they reinforce it they will have the same strength in the Assembly as unionism and republicanism have.

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In an era in which the institutionalised sectarianism of most of our political parties is exposed in contrast to the non-sectarianism of Alliance, the religious homogeneity of the other parties becomes an embarrassment.

None of the four sectarian parties has made a credible effort to extend itself beyond mere ethnic representation and it's long past time that they did.

They are already bleeding support to the Alliance Party.

Instead of competing with each other in future, these three parties should be cooperating, building a solid and large middle ground and reinforcing Naomi Long's demand that the Good Friday Agreement drop its favouritism towards ethnically coherent parties.

Courtesy Belfast Telegraph 10 May 2022.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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# Church News Ireland

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