

Church News Ireland



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Image of the day

Generosity in Galway

Good news from Saint Nicholas' Collegiate Church, Galway, expresses - An enormous thank you to the Galway City Council for their very generous grant of €120,000 which will help fund essential repairs and capital works for conservation and repairs to our

historic building.

Galway City Council has welcomed a grant of €250K for two Galway City projects, as part of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage 'Community Monuments Fund' announced earlier this month.



“Funds to the value of €130,000 will be invested in Menlough Castle, with €120,000 to be invested in St Nicholas Collegiate Church.

“The funding will be used for essential repairs and capital works for the conservation and repairs at both structures”.

Speaking about the award of funding, Cllr Níall McNelis, Deputy Mayor of the City of Galway, commented, “I’m delighted to see this very significant award of €250K to Galway City Council to safeguard two very important monuments/ protected structures into the future. The award under the Community Monuments Fund means that these two iconic monuments will be conserved, protected, and

their presentation improved, for future generations to appreciate and enjoy.”

The Very Rev. Lynda Peilow, the rector, emphasised the importance of grant funding in preserving the fabric and historical significance of St. Nicholas’ Collegiate Church. She said that, “This funding is vital for safeguarding the building's rich heritage, allowing for ongoing restoration efforts that reveal previously unknown aspects of its history.” Provost Lynda also highlighted that, “While St. Nicholas functions as a living church, it also serves as a heritage site of immense historical importance to Galway.” She expressed gratitude for the support that enables the urgent work needed to address immediate issues. Over the past two years, the grant funding has facilitated a transformation of the South transept of the church, restoring it to a semblance of its former glory.

Read more - www.GalwayCity.ie

News

St Peter’s afternoon tea choir fundraiser

One of St Peter’s multi-talented choristers, Judith Cowan, hosted Afternoon Tea in the parish halls this week to raise funds for the parish choir.

It was a wonderful dining experience on Belfast’s Antrim Road, with soup, sandwiches, scones, and pastries, served with tea, coffee, or hot chocolate. In addition to a great

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feed, £735 was raised! The parish is very grateful to Judith, and to her team of helpers: Glenn, Jean, Sheila, Clodagh, and Julie.

St Columba's Knock host pilgrimage group from Diocese of Chester



It was a great joy for our parish to welcome a pilgrimage group from St Philip and St James' Alderley Edge over the first weekend of May," writes the rector of St Columba's Knock, Canon John Auchmuty.

"St Philip and St James' has an annual pilgrimage led by the Vicar, Revd Robin Pye together with his wife Marion. The group had a busy schedule which included church services and exploring local historical sites with a particular focus on St Patrick.

"Their pilgrimage began with a Service of Holy Communion on the Friday evening which was followed by refreshments. This gave us all a lovely opportunity to meet with one another informally. There was plenty of laughter and conversation as we all quickly made new friends. It was lovely that a number of parishioners were able to attend. Dr Joe McKee played some inspirational organ voluntaries and there was such powerful singing of the hymns!

"The group had a busy day on the Saturday which began with an informative tour of Down Cathedral followed by a service which I conducted. They then explored Saul, Strangford and Portaferry in glorious sunshine before returning back to St Columba's late that evening.

"Robin preached a most engaging sermon at our All-Age Worship service on Sunday 4 May, and all the pilgrims were complimentary about the participation of our young people throughout the service.

"Some of the group climbed Slemish in the afternoon while others visited Nendrum Monastic site, returning to the church hall for a delicious meal kindly provided by our Catering Committee.

"The Revd Professor Loveday Alexander, on behalf of the pilgrims, presented a beautiful piece of crafted artwork of Alderley Edge Parish Church as a gift to St Columba's, which was made by their Art and Craft Group.

"Along with all of the pilgrims, she thanked St Columba's most sincerely for a very enjoyable visit, and we wished them safe travels on their return to England.

'What a wonderful experience enjoyed by all involved!'

Cork and Ross Friends and Family in the Faith

Close to 150 Hope Filled Young Adults gather to celebrate their faith in Cork's North Cathedral

Last Saturday a large crowd of young adults gathered in Cork for CONNECT 6 at the Cathedral of St Mary and St Anne.

The theme of the event was "hope does not disappoint." This is the sixth CONNECT event that the Diocese of Cork and Ross has organised to support and bring together young adults from across the Diocese.

Sr Mary Grace SV, originally from Australia, travelled from the USA with three other Sisters of Life to speak about how Christian Hope does not disappoint. Sr Mary Grace encouraged the young adults to trust that God is so much more invested in our own happiness than we are. "Jesus is the fulfilment of every human heart... and what he is about is you becoming you," she continued. She shared her own experience of choosing to respond to a vocation to religious life over her dream of being an Australian Olympian, and how her religious vocation and prayer life has helped her to remain hopeful.

The event coincided with Vocations Sunday and Bishop Fintan Gavin in his homily encouraged young people to

think about the call to priesthood and religious life particularly here in our own diocese.

In a dynamic Q and A the young people spoke of the struggles of being a young person of faith today, and of the hope and support that such events give them in encouraging them in their faith.

The day also involved Mass, discussion, adoration, confessions, an informal singsong, and pizza. The energy was palpable with young people asking for more such events and gatherings.

Letterkenny service for families who had lost babies

Conwal Parish Church, in Letterkenny, was the venue for this year's annual inter-denominational Remembrance Service for families who had lost babies as a result of miscarriage, still birth or neo natal death.

The service was organised by the Chaplaincy Department at Letterkenny University Hospital and led by Rev Sean McClafferty, the Church of Ireland Chaplain at LUH, who led the opening prayer, received the emblems of remembrance, read the Gospel and Preached from Psalm 139.

He was assisted by the Roman Catholic Chaplains, Fr Shane Gallagher, Fr Francis Ferry and Kathleen Doherty, with support from staff from the Gynae, Maternity, Neo Natal and Children's Wards.

A time of fellowship followed over refreshments in Conwal Church Hall.

Pope prays for global peace in first Sunday mass

New pontiff makes appeal from Kyiv to Kashmir as 100,000 worshippers gather at St Peter's Square

Pope Leo XIV said he was praying to God to grant the world the “miracle of peace” and end wars in Ukraine and Gaza.

In his first Sunday mass to a huge crowd in St Peter's Square, he appealed to the world's major powers for “no more war”.

‘I seek a true and lasting peace to be possible including the release of hostages and return of children to their families’
The pope, elected last Thursday, called for an “authentic and lasting peace” in Ukraine. He pleaded for “a true and lasting peace to be possible including the release of hostages and return of children to their families”.

He also called for a ceasefire in Gaza, the release of all Israeli hostages and access for humanitarian aid. The Pope also called for a ceasefire between India and Pakistan.

Pray for the “miracle of peace”

The 69-year-old pontiff urged young people to join in praying for the “miracle of peace,” and added that he would also pray for all the mothers of the world, as well as those

Robert Prevost becomes the first American pope

POPE Leo XIV

- **Sept. 14, 1955**

Born in Chicago, Illinois, US

- **June 19, 1982**

Ordained a priest in the Order of Saint Augustine

- **1987–1998**

Served in Peru as formation director, community prior, professor, and judicial vicar

- **1999**

Elected Provincial Prior of the Augustinian Province of "Mother of Good Counsel" (Chicago)

- **2001 & 2007**

Elected Prior General of the Order of Saint Augustine

- **Dec. 12, 2014**

Ordained bishop after being appointed Apostolic Administrator of Chiclayo, Peru

- **April 15, 2020**

Appointed Apostolic Administrator of Callao, Peru

- **Jan. 30, 2023**

Appointed Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops and President of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America

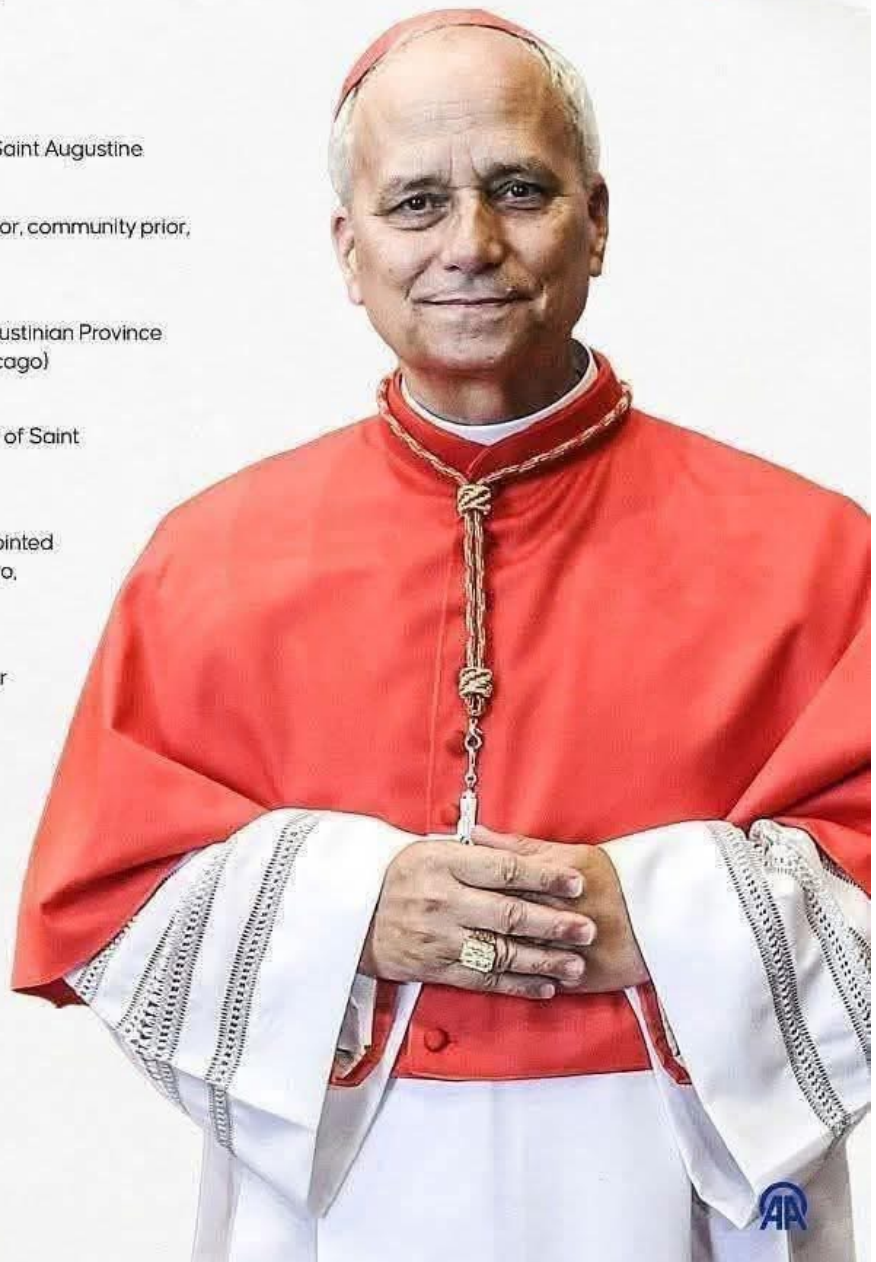
- **Sept. 30, 2023**

Created Cardinal by Pope Francis, assigned the Deaconry of Santa Monica

- **May 8, 2025**

Elected the 267th Pope, taking the name Leo XIV – the first American pope in history

May 8, 2025



already in heaven, as many countries across the globe celebrate Mother's Day.

A roar of approval welled up from the crowd as he stepped on to the balcony, the sparkle of bright sun glinting off thousands of cell phones held high as he waved, smiling.

Pope Leo's first Sunday address to tens of thousands of people in the square coincided with a previously planned pilgrimage to Rome by marching bands from around the world.

Minutes before the Pope addressed the crowd, bands marched up the broad boulevard leading to the Vatican playing songs such as YMCA by the Village People, the theme from the film Rocky, and music by John Philip Sousa, who composed the marching classic Stars and Stripes Forever.

The crowd, estimated at more than 100,000 by Italian authorities, was also entertained by bands from Italy, Mexico and other parts of Latin America who came to Rome for the ongoing Catholic Holy Year.

Pope Leo, born in Chicago as Robert Prevost and a missionary for decades in Peru, last week became the first US-born pope to the surprise and delight of Catholics across the Americas.

After a surprise visit on Saturday to the Our Lady of Good Counsel shrine in a 13th century church in the town of Genazzano outside Rome, Pope Leo prayed at sunset at the tomb of his late predecessor Pope Francis, leaving a single white flower before departing the basilica at Santa Maria Maggiore.

As his dark van drove through the narrow streets of Rome, the Pope, seated in front next to his driver, leant out of the open window to shake hands and pump a thumbs up sign to an exuberant crowd.

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On Saturday, he was met with a standing ovation by the College of Cardinals, to whom he indicated that he will follow closely the path carved out by Pope Francis.

He explained that he chose his papal name after Leo XIII because it reflected a commitment to the Church's social teaching and defending "human dignity, justice and labour" amid a new industrial revolution driven by artificial intelligence.

Leo XIII was an Italian elected in 1879 and who in 1891 wrote the historic encyclical *Rerum Novarum* [of revolutionary change] to address the conditions of the working classes wrought by the industrial revolution.

Education

ASPIRE Educator Professional Learning event, focusing on Peace and Reconciliation

School leaders and teachers from across the region convened on Monday at the Lough Neagh Discovery Centre for the ASPIRE Educator Professional Learning event, focusing on Peace and Reconciliation and the 2025–2026 Application Workshop.

The day began with a hands-on session designed to equip educators with practical strategies for teaching sensitive and controversial issues in the classroom. The workshop



emphasised the importance of fostering peace and reconciliation through education, a cornerstone of the ASPIRE programme's mission.

In the afternoon, participants were guided through the application process for the upcoming academic year. ASPIRE aims to expand its reach beyond the 24,096 pupils currently engaged in Shared Education initiatives.

The event is part of a broader series of workshops scheduled to take place in Newry, Letterkenny, Belfast, Antrim, Sligo, and Omagh in the coming weeks, reflecting a growing commitment to cross-community collaboration and professional development in education.

For more information on upcoming workshops and how to get involved, educators are encouraged to visit the ASPIRE website: <https://ow.ly/YNue50VR2To>

ASPIRE Ambassadors visit Stormont Parliament Buildings

The ASPIRE Ambassadors in Year 8 and 9 from St Joseph's College (Enniskillen), Devenish College and Erne Integrated College visited Stormont Parliament Buildings last week, as part of their PEACEPLUS Shared Education partnership programme.

Pupils met with MLA's Jemma Dolan and Deborah Erskine, who explained about the historical significance of the building and the young people were able to ask questions about pressing local issues. Pupils also got an opportunity to perform in an assembly debate.

Cathedral Calls

Chicago High School choir's Irish tour

The soaring stone walls of Ennis Cathedral echoed with young voices this Easter as 44 high school students from Chicago's South Side blended song with sacred history in the heart of Ireland.

From April 16 to 25, students from **Mother McAuley Liberal Arts High School** — joined by a small group from Brother Rice — traveled across southern Ireland, performing in centuries-old churches, collaborating with Irish musicians and visiting the roots of their school's namesake, Catherine McAuley.

Cornerstone
UNIVERSITY



THE UNIVERSITY CHORALE

Sat 24 MAY 7:00 PM
Down Cathedral
English Street Downpatrick BT30 6AB



Scan to learn more
about Cornerstone
music programs.

This concert is offered free of charge. An offering will be received.

“To have the students travel to Ireland means so much more than simply visiting a new country,” said Carrie Alifantis, choir director at Mother McAuley. “It’s an extraordinary opportunity for them to grow both personally and artistically.”

Stops on the nine-day tour included the Rock of Cashel and the Brú Ború Cultural Centre in Tipperary, the Cliffs of Moher, Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin and the Mercy International Centre, which was once Catherine McAuley’s home, on Baggot Street.

Clergy and ministry



Rector of Holy Trinity Church Killiney

The Revd Jane Burns has been appointed as the new Rector of Holy Trinity Church Killiney. Jane is currently Curate Assistant in Taney Parish.

Jane hails from a farming background in Athy in County Kildare. Growing up, her faith was established and nurtured by her parents and in Athy Church of Ireland Union of Parishes and Athy Model School. It was further developed during secondary school in Kilkenny College.

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You can read more on the Dublin website here:

<https://dublin.anglican.org/news/2025/05/11/the-revd-jane-burns-appointed>

Events



Connor youth GATHER night

The youth council says it was amazing to see so many young people and youth leaders come along to our first Gather night back in April in Ballymena. Who is looking forward to our next one?

May 14, 2025

Make sure to come along on Sunday 22nd June at 7pm to Christ Church Parish, Lisburn as we Gather again for another great night. What a way to finish of the year.

#ConnorGather

Songs from the Shows is nearly here



The Abbey Singers Present

Songs from the shows!

Get ready for an evening of cinematic magic with the Abbey Singers! Featuring much-loved songs from your favourite musicals, with the chance to sing along!

16 MAY 2025 AT 7.30PM
ST PATRICK'S CHURCH
JORDANSTOWN

TICKETS: £10

- Jack Wilson *Conductor*
- Daire Downey *Accompanist*
- Mark Tilley *Guest Soloist*

THE ABBEY SINGERS

May 14, 2025

Join The Abbey Singers for an evening packed with musical favourites, a touch of cinema magic, and a whole lot of singalong fun.

St Patrick's Church, Jordanstown
Friday 16 May 2025. 7.30pm
Tickets: £10 CASH ONLY

Whether you're a Broadway fan or just love a great tune, this is a night not to be missed.

Tag your friends, grab your tickets at the door, and come sing with us.

In the media

Jewish leader in Belfast 'scared' of rise in anti-Semitism after Kneecap support - Belfast Telegraph

Teen cautioned recently for damage to local synagogue, Brett Campbell writes in the Belfast Telegraph

A Jewish leader in Belfast has expressed fears about rising anti-Semitism following an outpouring of support for Kneecap after footage emerged allegedly showing a band member expressing support for Hamas and Hezbollah.

Michael Black (76) branded the Irish rap group's alleged comments at two separate gigs in November 2023 and 2024 as “abhorrent”.

Speaking as commemorative events marking Victory in Europe (VE) Day took place around the UK, the deputy chairman of the Belfast Jewish Community said the level of support the band has received gives him cause for concern.

It comes almost two weeks after a brick was thrown through a window of the synagogue in north Belfast.

A teenage girl has been cautioned for criminal damage over the incident.

While Mr Black stressed that the motive can never be known, he is concerned about the hostile nature of the public discussion about Israel.

“Hatred is out there and it scares me,” Mr Black said.

“My immediate family members had to flee pogroms in eastern Europe. Some of my relatives escaped Tsarist Russia and others fled Nazi Germany.

“All of this makes one start to think it's going to happen all over again.”

Controversy erupted after a member of Kneecap appeared to shout “The only good Tory is a dead Tory. Kill your local MP” in one of two videos now being investigated by counter-terrorism officers.

Footage also emerged of a bandmember allegedly chanting “Up Hamas” and “Up Hezbollah” from a stage.

The band has denied supporting both groups.

They have also criticised those who have made “false accusations of antisemitism to distract, confuse, and provide cover for genocide”.

The band previously issued a statement on social media claiming “an extract of footage, deliberately taken out of all context, is now being exploited and weaponised” as they apologised to the families of murdered MPs Jo Cox and Sir David Amess.

However, many people, including Prime Minister Keir Starmer, dismissed the apology as “half-hearted”.

Mr Black branded it “pathetic” and accused the band of “playing the victim”.

“If they really believe what they said they should stand over it,” he said.

“It's strange that Kneecap shouts 'Up Hamas, Up Hezbollah' but when questioned they say, 'No, we didn't mean it'.

“It's just bravado and ignorance.”

In a statement, Kneecap previously condemned “all attacks on civilians” and stated that the band “do not, and have never, supported Hamas or Hezbollah”.

Mr Black said he was disturbed by the number of people who have spoken out to justify the group's comments as free expression.

Mr Black said Hamas — and supporters of the terror group — can hinder prospects of forging a lasting peace based on a two-state solution.

“Many people don't like Israel, in fact, they hate Israel — and their hatred of Israel is greater than their love for Palestinian people,” he said. “But Hamas hurt Palestinians, innocent Palestinians have suffered terribly under Hamas.”

Last November, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu and the country's former defence minister Yoav Gallant for alleged war crimes which Israel denies. According to the Hamas-run health ministry in the territory, more than 52,000 Palestinians have been killed since the start of the war. Mr Black, speaking in a personal capacity, said he believes many members of the oldest minority group in Northern Ireland are “very worried” by the tone of public debate around the conflict.

He expressed concerns about the failure of many opponents of the conflict to draw a distinction between the Israeli government and Jewish people, as he branded Kneecap's “F** Israel” projection during their Coachella sets as “vulgar”.

He said there was “an element of society who are never going to be our friends”.

“But to publicly say 'up Hamas' and support an organisation who are quite open about their aim to destroy Israel and kill all Jews is abhorrent.

“And of course, there's an irony in that those who do are supporting a group that openly calls for genocide.”

Mr Black said he feels an obligation to speak out due to the “obsession” with Israel.

“There are many conflicts in the world, Ukraine and Sudan...but I don't hear these things being said about Russia, for example,” he added. “Some people just refuse to recognise that Israel was attacked by Hamas.

“I always try and see both sides of the story, but I also have skin in the game because I'm Jewish and I have family in Israel.”

Heritage

William Forbes Marshall, Ulster poet and Presbyterian minister

William Forbes Marshall was born in 1888.

Marshall's father was principal teacher at Sixmilecross National School, where he was first educated. He was further educated at Royal School Dungannon (for which Marshall wrote the school song) and then Queens College Galway.

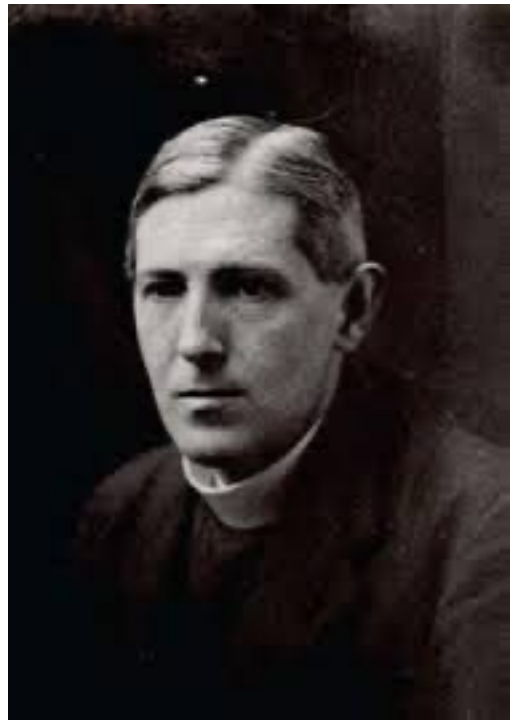
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He served as a Presbyterian minister at Castlerock, County Londonderry for over thirty years.

Known as "The Bard of Tyrone", Marshall composed poems such as Hi Uncle Sam, Me an' me Da (subtitled Livin' in Drumlister), Sarah Ann and Our Son.

Ulster-Scots agency produced a publication about Marshall and his poetry, which you can read for free online here:

<https://ulster-scots.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/USCN-Marshall.pdf>



Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at houstonmckelvey@mac.com

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Church News Ireland

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**Link in Monday through Saturday from
early morning**

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