



Image of the day - Cashel

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‘1000K to Pray’ in Galway as churches reopen



This week, as churches throughout the Republic prepare to reopen their doors for public worship, two Galway parishes will celebrate the completion of a one thousand kilometre journey in prayer, with the launch of a new YouTube video called *1000K to Pray*.

Featuring inspirational photographs of the East Galway landscape and the music of renowned guitarist John Feeley, *1000K to Pray* chronicles the daily prayers of two clergy who ran 1000 kilometres together over the last seven months of lockdown. It includes a series of 225 prayer–postcards, which invite a daily meditation on the Bible readings of the

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Church Lectionary through the lens of the natural world, in all its changing lights and seasons.

The initiative is the culmination of an appeal called *3K a Day to Pray*, which was launched in October 2020 when churches were closed under Level 3 Coronavirus restrictions. At that time, the Reverend John Godfrey (Church of Ireland rector of the Aughrim and Creagh Parish Unions) and Father Gerard Geraghty (Roman Catholic Parish Priest of Aughrim and Kilconnell Parish) promised to run three kilometres each day to pray for their parishes; stepping up to five kilometres a day during Level 5 restrictions.

“Realising how hard lockdown could be, we wanted to encourage our parishioners to join us in taking active steps to look after their mental, physical and spiritual health,” explains Father Gerard Geraghty.

“Every day we sent out a prayer postcard, as a way of focussing our prayers and staying connected,” reflects John.



In October 2020, when churches were closed under Level 3 Covid 19 restrictions, Reverend John Godfrey & Father Gerard Geraghty promised to run **3K a Day to Pray** for their churches

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“When lockdown seemed to be going on forever, the postcards reminded us that we were still moving forwards.”

The *3K a Day to Pray* appeal also proved an important way of fundraising, at a time when normal church giving had dried up. To date, it has raised over €15,000 towards the running costs of the local churches.

1000K to Pray is available to view on the Aughrim and Creagh Parish YouTube channel. Click above

Dublin faith leaders unite in prayerful solidarity in a wounded world

As Covid–19 infections continue to cause immense suffering in India and other parts of the globe, Archbishop Michael Jackson joined faith leaders in Dublin as they united in prayer for a wounded world on Wednesday May 12.

Organised by Dublin City Interfaith Forum and the TU Dublin Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy Service, the interfaith prayer gathering took place in St Laurence’s Chapel on the university’s Grangegorman Campus. The university welcomes people from many countries and the faith leaders offered prayerful solidarity with those who have come to Ireland and now look on as their families and friends at home suffer.

TU Dublin Chaplain, Andrew Sommerville, introduced the service saying: “Today we pray for our world and particularly for those countries facing increased hardships and

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Faith Leaders gathered in St Laurence's Chapel on TU Dublin's Grangegorman Campus.

challenges. We also pray that the global community will respond in a heartfelt way to the needs of all.”

Members of the Bahá'í, Zen Buddhism, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Sikh communities took part in the service while members of the Muslim community were represented but not present as it was Day 30 of Ramadan.

Patrick Dawson drew on writings of the Bahá'í faith when he spoke of the need for unity in the face of Covid-19 and other epidemics which threaten the world and its people. While the Revd Myozan Kodo of the Zen Buddhist community read a traditional reflection and Buddhist blessing.

Archbishop Jackson expressed solidarity with international students studying in Ireland who are separated from loved ones in countries experiencing further devastating waves of

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infection. “We want you to know, here and now, whatever your culture, whatever your faith may be, that we stand with you in the solidarity of a shared humanity. You have our concern. You have our care. Irish people are known to be welcoming. Please take us up on this. We are ready to listen, in this university and in other universities, and to do whatever we can,” he said.

Representing Archbishop Dermot Farrell, Sr Susan Jones reflected on the idea of ‘sharing’ and what it might mean to people at this time of global pandemic. “We in Ireland have been gifted with access to resources to stay safe. These resources are not ours to hoard. We are stewards of what has been created with God’s gifts... They are for the growth, dignity and life of all people,” she stated.

Fr Anish John of the Indian Orthodox Church spoke of the deep pain being experienced in India at the moment. He said he awoke daily to messages about people who have died or who are battling for their lives. He said that during Covid people had learned to be more human. “These days we are not segregated by religion or creed or caste or colour. We are all human. We all have to come together to pray and work. In this pandemic there is no difference in the lives lost – we are all human beings,” he commented.

Hilary Abrahamson of the Jewish community reflected on the need for healing in the world. She said we all share the one world and people must use resources wisely for the good of all the world.

Representing the Hindu community, Swami Purnananda Puri, observed that the reality of the upsurge of the Covid–19 virus in India hit home as daily he heard reports of those

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who had lost their lives. “It is not that we are afraid of death ... it is the suffering around it. Our thoughts go out to those who are suffering, those who lack oxygen and those who have nowhere to cremate their dead, for those who struggle everywhere,” he said.

Dr Jasbir Singh Puri of the Sikh community said we are all children of the same Lord with the same light infused in us. He said that humans were destroying the earth. “Everyone is equal. This pandemic has happened and we have to look after people in every country. We have to live in harmony,” he said adding that in India people were working together to fight the pandemic.

Greetings to the New Archbishop of Jerusalem from the Archbishop of Dublin

Archbishop Michael Jackson has sent greetings to Archbishop Hosam Naoum on the day of his installation as the new Archbishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.

“We in Dublin and Glendalough are delighted that Archbishop Hosam Naoum is being installed on The feast of The Ascension.

“Christians worldwide celebrate the Feast of The Ascension today; Christians in Jerusalem live the life of The Ascended Christ today and all days.

“At His Ascension, Our Lord handed directly to the disciples the responsibilities of service and leadership of the people

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of God; He promised that they would be equipped by The Holy Spirit as individuals and as a community.



[Archbishop Hosam Naoum.](#)

“Archbishop Hosam enters into this rich tradition of God and the world on this day of installation.

“We rejoice for him, for his priests and for his people on this day. He brings to this high office strengths of humanity and of compassion, wisdom and purpose.

“We ask that God will be kind to him and all of his family who are woven into the life of The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.

“Our hope is that can redevelop our companionship link and meet as children of God inspired by the words of St Luke 24.48: *You are to be witnesses to it all.*

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“I add my personal blessing and joy on this day to my friend Hosam.”

The United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough has an ongoing partnership with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.

Concern over lack of reviews of sex education in NI post-primaries

Concerns have been raised over a lack of inspections of relationship and sexual education (RSE) in schools after it was revealed the last post primary inspections were held in 2013, Mark Bain, Education correspondent writes in the Belfast Telegraph.

Stormont's Education Committee was told it has been eight years since thematic inspections on the teaching of RSE were held in post primaries and 2015 in primary schools.

The committee also heard how statistics from Belfast Youth Forum revealed that 60% of young people felt that information received on RSE was either 'not very useful' or 'of no use at all'.

Some 52% of young people also felt their right to RSE was not being met by the curriculum and some 34% had never received any RSE lessons at all during their time at school..

Of those who had received RSE information, only 10% said they had found it useful.

Sinn Fein MLA Nicola Brogan said that fact that the last review of post primary RSE had been in 2013 was “extremely concerning” while party colleague Pat Sheehan

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MLA added: “The picture is anything but clear in a very important aspect of our children's education. Weaknesses overall have been exposed.”

Despite MLAs calling for a greater level of mandatory and standardised approach to RSE in schools, the Department of Education argued that the flexibility built in to the curriculum, which allows schools to set their own approach to the subject means there can be a quicker response to the changing nature of the subject.

The Department's Head of School Improvement, Dr Suzanne Kingon told the committee that despite calls for a mandatory and standardised curriculum for all schools in Northern Ireland, that would be counter productive. She said: “All the evidence shows that providing mandatory content lists doesn't guarantee that the subject is taught well, that it improved delivery. Quite the opposite.”

“The Department will continue to allow schools to be flexible in the teaching of relationship and sexual education.”

Nicola Brogan added that it had been the recommendation of the Commissioner for Children and Young People that RSE should be mandatory and standardised.

And after being informed that at the time of the last inspections one in four schools still did not have an RSE policy, Dr Kingon said that the teaching of RSE is actually mandatory by law.

She did admit that, due to action short of strike by teachers and the onset of Covid-19, “we don't have the rich body of evidence we would like to have”.

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“If you go ahead and introduce prescriptive topics and issues that school communities are not ready for you can actually get some very unfortunate situations,” she continued.

“We have seen schools in conflict with parents and governors.

“Our approach is around improving teaching and learning, supporting teachers to feel competent and improve delivery in the classroom.”

When the Department was asked by UUP MLA Robbie Butler if the speed and development of the internet meant there needed to be a more proactive approach to the review process, the Department's Head of Curriculum Sam Dempster responded: “The landscape has changed hugely, but the flexibility built in means we can respond quite quickly.”

Courtesy the Belfast Telegraph 13.05.2021

See also - BBC News: Sex education 'could bring conflict with parents and governors', Robbie Meredith, Education correspondent writes

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-57094099>

Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars

Reflections from Dublin

On Ascension Day (Thursday May 13) Archbishop Michael Jackson offered this short reflection, which you can watch

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below, based on Daniel 7: 13 “As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him.”

Over the coming days between Ascension and Pentecost there will be a series of reflections from Christ Church and St Patrick’s cathedrals complemented by musical recordings from the cathedrals’ choirs.

Dean of Christ Church Cathedral, the Very Revd Dermot Dunne, brings tomorrow’s reflection ‘Come Holy Spirit’ which concludes with the Choir of Christ Church Cathedral singing ‘Veni Creator’.

This, and all the reflections and music during the week, will be available on the D & G YouTube Channel -

[https://www.youtube.com/c/
TheUnitedDiocesesofDublinandGlendalough](https://www.youtube.com/c/TheUnitedDiocesesofDublinandGlendalough)

Voices on climate change

The Irish Council of Churches and Christian Aid invite you to hear from those on the sharp end of the climate crisis. “You’ll be both inspired and equipped with resources for you and your church.”

The organisers write - We know you care about the changing climate and how that is impacting people everywhere. We also know taking action can feel overwhelming – particularly when you are trying to lead your church in the midst of a pandemic.

Which is why we want to help!

churchnewsireland@gmail.org

We're more and more aware of the need to respond to climate change, and as Christians we lament the injustice of the fact that those who are least responsible for it are most impacted. But what can we do? How can we, as followers of Jesus in Ireland, be a part of the momentum to transform our ways of living to bring about a more just and safe future for all?

One of the paradoxes of Coronavirus is that it has shown us how deeply interdependent we are whilst simultaneously disconnecting us from one another. Similarly climate change shows us that we are interconnected because actions in one part of the world have effects far away. Yet many of us do not see those consequences because we are insulated from them.

This event aims to be a point of (re)connection by giving people in local church leadership roles in Ireland the opportunity to hear directly from people who are directly impacted by climate change in the Global South. We will also share resources from Christian Aid which will enable your church to take action for climate justice.

Speaking at the event will be:

Bob Kikuyu:

Bob is the Global Theology Advisor at Christian Aid. He has previously worked as the Executive Director of EduKenya, an NGO that provides transformational education in the slums of Nairobi. He has also served for 11 years as the Senior Pastor of Lifespring Chapel. He continues to live in Nairobi, Kenya with his wife and three children.

Julius Mbatia:

A young Kenyan climate activist who has worked for Christian Aid, Julius is passionate about climate justice, conservation and youth engagement. He has been heavily involved in environmental youth networks from a young age, and has represented the Kenyan youth in various national, regional and international climate change fora. He is currently the Coordinator of Youth for Sustainable Development Goals Kenya as well as undertaking a Masters degree in Environmental Planning and Management at the University of Nairobi.

There will also be opportunity to discuss with others how our churches can effectively participate in sharing the voices of those most impacted, and to take action for climate justice.

Join us on May 25th from 10:30 – 12:00 by registering at <https://www.irishchurches.org/voices>

Media review

Justin Welby: "We are still a long way from parity between physical and mental health"

New Statesman

The Archbishop of Canterbury on the mental health crisis, inequality, and faith in a pandemic.

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On World Mental Health Day in 2019, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby went public about his struggles with depression. "One of my children, who has been very public about it, understands these things and had taught me that there's no stigma to this – it's just life," he said in a video released that day on Twitter. "I went and got help."

[[] <https://www.newstatesman.com/spotlight/coronavirus/2021/05/justin-welby-we-are-still-long-way-parity-between-physical-and-mental>]

Ireland urged to use UN Security Council role to intervene in Palestine-Israel conflict

Irish Examiner

However, she said it was not a religious issue, but a human one. Taoiseach Micheál Martin said the Government is "extremely concerned" by the ...

[[] <https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/politics/arid-40286774.html>]

School chaplain reported as terror threat for opposing LGBT curriculum challenges firing

Christian Post

"Yet I ended up being told that I had to support everybody else's beliefs, no matter what, while my Christian beliefs, the Church of England's beliefs, ...

[[] <https://www.christianpost.com/news/school-chaplain-challenges-dismissal-over-lgbt-views.html>]

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What is conversion therapy and when will it be banned?

BBC News

In Northern Ireland, politicians have passed a non-binding motion calling for ... The Church of England said the practices have "no place in the modern ...

[[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/explainers-56496423>]



Pointers for prayer

Mighty God,
in whom we know the power of redemption,
you stand among us in the shadows of our time.
As we move through every sorrow and trial of this life,
uphold us with knowledge of the final morning
when, in the glorious presence of your risen Son,
we will share in his resurrection,
redeemed and restored to the fullness of life
and forever freed to be your people. Amen.

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Living God,
long ago, faithful women
proclaimed the good news
of Jesus' resurrection,
and the world was changed forever.
Teach us to keep faith with them,
that our witness may be as bold,
our love as deep,
and our faith as true. Amen.

Creator of the universe,
you made the world in beauty,
and restore all things in glory
through the victory of Jesus Christ.
We pray that, wherever your image is still disfigured
by poverty, sickness, selfishness, war and greed,
the new creation in Jesus Christ may appear in justice, love,
and peace,
to the glory of your name. Amen.

O God, your Son remained with his disciples after his
resurrection,
teaching them to love all people as neighbors.
As his disciples in this age,
we offer our prayers on behalf of the universe
in which we are privileged to live
and our neighbours with whom we share it.
Open our hearts to your power moving
around us and between us and within us,
until your glory is revealed in our love of both friend and
enemy,
in communities transformed by justice and compassion,
and in the healing of all that is broken. Amen.

Speaking to the Soul - Wired Differently, Loved Well

A Reading from Romans 14:1-12

1 Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. 2 Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. 3 Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. 4 Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand. 5 Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. 6 Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God. 7 We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. 8 If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. 10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. 11 For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." 12 So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

Meditation

A generation back, my family discovered the Myers-Briggs personality types. There was a book about it lying around the house, which I eventually discovered and devoured. Who doesn't love a quiz that will tell you about yourself, right? But the biggest value, I think, of the whole concept of personality types is not learning about yourself so much as learning that other people are different — different in surprisingly basic ways. I happen to be an introvert from a family of introverts who intentionally married someone else with my same personality type. My very extroverted daughter is a mystery to me — I can't imagine the loss I would be at if I didn't know about the difference between the temperaments.

I imagine that if I could go back in time with that book and give it to St. Paul when he wrote today's lesson, he'd be really excited. Because the problem with trying to talk about not judging others is that it's hard to separate the things about which he tells us not to judge from the clear moral guidelines he and others in the New Testament give us. But if you can turn on the light that other people are basically different in certain ways, then you can understand that other people will express themselves differently and assign different degrees of importance to things. It's much easier not to judge others if you can understand they're wired differently.

The rule here comes courtesy of Vincent van Gogh: "What is done in love is done well," and we can appreciate it, even if it's not what we would do ourselves.

