



**Image of the day  
Salisbury Cathedral**

May 26, 2021

## **Pro-life group launches legal action against Government over Northern Ireland abortion laws**

**The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) is taking legal action against Westminster over a "devolution power grab" over Northern Ireland's abortion laws.**

The pro-life group is raising £100,000 to fund the case, which is expected to be heard at the High Court later in the year.

It is challenging new regulations handing Northern Ireland Secretary Brandon Lewis the power to direct Stormont ministers on implementing a "fully-funded abortion service" over the heads of MLAs.



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SPUC questions the "validity and lawfulness" of the regulations, and wants the High Court to declare them "of no force or effect".

It also wants the court to rule that NI ministers are under "no obligation to comply with any direction issued by the Secretary of State under the 2021 regulations".

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"It is a basic principle of democracy that politicians are accountable to the electorate."

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He added, "We are calling for all pro-life voices to unite in backing this case. The politicians making the decisions about our abortion laws must be accountable to the people of Northern Ireland.

"This is essential if full legal protection for unborn children is ever to be restored."

John Deighan, SPUC's deputy CEO said: "These are the most challenging times the pro-life movement has ever faced in Northern Ireland.

"We also need the prayers of pro-life supporters and their financial assistance too as we seek to raise the funds required to finance the court case."

## **Belfast synagogue threatened with picket**

**Attack on business is treated as a hate crime - Police are investigating a hate crime in Londonderry connected with the recent escalation of violence in Israel and Palestine, Olivia Fletcher writes in the Belfast Telegraph**

The business premises of a Jewish person were painted with graffiti.

Enquiries into the incident, which was reported last Saturday, May 15, are ongoing, the PSNI said.

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In a separate incident, the synagogue in north Belfast was threatened to be picketed if the Jewish community did not condemn Israel for recent air strikes in Gaza.

The threat disrupted the Shavuot service, a Jewish holiday. The service managed to go ahead with 10 congregants — the minimum number of people required for Jewish communal worship.

More congregants were expected to attend but had been discouraged by the threat, which was received via a phone call.

The PSNI are “monitoring the situation” and are “treating this as a hate incident at this stage”.

In the working definition of antisemitism adopted by the Assembly in April, holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel is considered an example of antisemitism.

The incidents come as reports of antisemitism have sharply risen across the UK, linked with recent violence in the Middle Eastern region.

The Community Security Trust (CST), a charity that helps victims of antisemitic hate crimes and promotes good relations between British Jews and wider British society, said that incidents have included “verbal abuse, threats, and a very large amount of hatred in social media and online”.

Police ask that if anyone with any information about the incident last Saturday or who may be able to help with the

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investigation, is asked to call officers at Strand Road on the non-emergency number 101 quoting reference number 1780 15/05/21, or submit a report online using the non-emergency reporting form via <http://www.psni.police.uk/makeareport/>. People can also contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or online at <http://crimestoppers-uk.org/>

In the Middle East yesterday, Israeli police escorted more than 120 Jewish visitors to a flashpoint holy site in Jerusalem where police actions in recent weeks had ignited protests and violence that triggered war in Gaza, according to the Islamic authority overseeing the site.

The Waqf said police cleared young Palestinians out of the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and barred entry to Muslims under the age of 45.

Courtesy Belfast Telegraph 24.05.2021

## **Scientists and theologians join forces for new Anglican Communion Science Commission**

**The Secretary General of the Anglican Communion has announced the formation of a new Anglican Communion Science Commission (ACSC) to “resource the whole Anglican Communion for courageous and confident spiritual leadership in issues involving science.”**



The Primate of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, the Most Revd Thabo Makgoba, Archbishop of Cape Town, will co-chair the Commission, alongside the Church of England's Bishop of Oxford, the Right Revd Stephen Croft.

The Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, the Most Revd Dr Josiah Idowu-Fearon, is inviting scientists, theologians, and bishops from around the globe to serve as Commissioners; and the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby, has asked his fellow Anglican Communion Primates to nominate a Bishop from their Church to serve as their provincial representative at conferences of the Commission.

The Anglican Communion Science Commission will formally launch at the Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops, which will take place at the University of Kent in Canterbury

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in July and August 2022. It will hold its first conference shortly afterwards.

Science will be a significant feature at the 2022 Lambeth Conference. Today, a series of videos exploring the relationship between science and faith were published on the Lambeth Conference website: [lambethconference.org/resources/talking-about-faith-and-science](https://lambethconference.org/resources/talking-about-faith-and-science).

“It is scientific advance that has lifted so many people out of poverty. It is scientific advance that has enabled the world to feed itself”, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said in the introductory video.

“It is widespread science that has enabled us to produce vaccines at a speed that even five years ago – a year ago – would have been thought unimaginable. It is science that has begun to give us a big picture of our place in the world. It is science that has driven our consciousness of the danger to the world from climate change – and what we can do about it in the future.

“In all these things, it is science which has been a gift to human beings.”

He continued: “But the reaction of the Church has, for many years – and many centuries one might say, been very cautious about science and remains so today. Or there is fear.

“We talk about human beings playing at being God, we talk about loss of control; of changes to DNA. We talk about all kinds of things that lead to people being frightened. And



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particularly as we move and look forward over the next 10 or 20 years, if we think it has been quick so far, as President Reagan used to say: ‘you ain’t seen nothing yet.’

“That is a reason why Christians need to be both knowledgeable and able to ask questions and think about science.”

Among the scientists who have signed up so far as Commission members are Dr Derrick Aarons, the Chief Executive Officer at the Health Professions Authority in the Turks and Caicos Islands; Professor Kwamena Sagoe, Head of Virology at the University of Ghana’s Department of Medical Microbiology and a member of the editorial board of the Journal of Clinical Virology; and Dr Heather Payne, a consultant paediatrician and Senior Medical Officer for the Welsh Government.

Theologians who have agreed to serve on the Commission include the Revd Professor Joseph Galgalo, former Vice Chancellor and Associate Professor of Theology at Saint Paul’s University in Limuru, Kenya; the Revd Canon Professor Jennifer Strawbridge, Associate Professor in New Testament Studies at the University of Oxford in the UK; and Professor Andrew Briggs, Professor of Nanomaterials at the University of Oxford, an expert in acoustic microscopy and materials for quantum technologies.

Professor Briggs is also acting as convenor of the ACSC as it begins its work ahead of its formal launch at next year’s Lambeth Conference.

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Information about the work of the Anglican Communion Science Commission will be published on the Anglican Communion website: [anglicancommunion.org/acsc](http://anglicancommunion.org/acsc).

## People and places

### Tony Murphy's 100km Walk for Burundi



**The Revd Tony Murphy's 100km walk in aid of the Cork, Cloyne and Ross Burundi Maize Project is continuing.**

“I am walking 100km during the month of May for Christian Aid Ireland because I want to raise funds for their work in Burundi.”

Tony remarks: ‘At the end of week three and with four walks remaining, we have collected €8,338 which is a huge credit to a small diocese in Ireland reaching out to our sisters and brothers in Burundi.’

You too can donate online to support the walk and the project [at this link](#).

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## Canterbury Cathedral Lodge



Canterbury Cathedral Lodge has won a 2021 Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice Award - placing it amongst the top 10% of hotels worldwide!

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The award celebrates hotels that consistently deliver fantastic experiences and demonstrates the positive traveller reviews and ratings the Lodge has received during the past year.

Book your stay now [www.canterburycathedrallodge.org](http://www.canterburycathedrallodge.org)

## **Opinion - David Frost on Brexit, Barnier and the backstop - James Forsythe**

**In an eyrie at the top of the Cabinet Office sits David Frost, Boris Johnson's former Brexit negotiator who is now the cabinet minister responsible for handling the European Union, James Forsyth, Political Editor writes in The Spectator.**

His office has the genial feel of a don's study — there's a book of Anglo-Saxon verse on his table alongside one of Greek poetry — yet mention Frost's name to even the most mild-mannered EU diplomats and they begin to fume.

In an effort to understand the apparent mismatch, I ask Frost if he feels the need to be aggressive in negotiations. 'I hope not,' he replies. But he does admit that he did feel that way when he first took on the job. 'Unfortunately, under the previous negotiators, the EU had learned that we said things and didn't necessarily stick by them. We had to go through a process of getting them to take our word seriously. And I think that some people interpreted that as sort of aggression or being difficult, but it was just us underlining that when we said something, that had to be taken into account. I think that process is now over, basically.'

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The issue that now dominates Frost's time is a legacy of those negotiations: the Northern Ireland Protocol. When Frost was chosen by Johnson to lead the Brexit talks, one of his main tasks was to drop the plans for the Irish backstop, which had been negotiated under Theresa May's premiership. He has on his wall a framed and signed cartoon by the Telegraph's Matt that shows a dismayed dog at Crufts being given an instruction: 'Now remove the Irish backstop from the Withdrawal Agreement.' Frost succeeded. But the protocol that replaced the backstop is creating its own difficulties. It is causing greater friction in trade between Northern Ireland and Great Britain, and Arlene Foster, the First Minister, has been forced out by unionist unease over it.

The problem is that the UK signed the document in the first place. Frost insists this was only done under parliamentary duress during the Commons' Brexit deadlock in the autumn of 2019. 'We signed it in conditions, obviously, as you remember, where we had the Benn-Burt Act and the requirement to get a deal before we could deliver on the referendum result... At the time we expected to be able to get some facilitations that we didn't get. We expected there would be a trusted trader scheme, for example. We expected, like every other free trade agreement, there'd be an equivalence mechanism in there. None of that we've got.'

But the thing Frost blames most for the current difficulties, including the ousting of Foster, is the EU's threat to invoke Article 16, which allows one side to unilaterally override the protocol, as part of the dispute over vaccine supplies in January. He complains that the EU's action 'changed the politics and changed the way one community looks at the

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situation. And we've been dealing with the consequences ever since.'

Frost is now contemplating the UK's own use of Article 16. 'The problem we've got is that the boundary for trade purposes is proving more of a deterrent to trade and more of a generation of trade diversion than many people expected.' Frost's deliberate use of the phrase 'diversion' is significant: trade diversion is one of the things that allows for the use of Article 16.

The EU argues that the bulk of these checks would disappear if this country just aligned with the bloc's rules on food, even temporarily. But Frost is adamant that the UK should not do that. 'I don't understand why a third country would do a deal with a country that didn't control its own agrifood rules, since that is so central to what's important in trade deals nowadays.'

To Frost's mind, the answer is equivalence — if the EU and the UK both have high standards, what's the problem? The EU is very resistant to this idea. I ask Frost whether this is because the EU fears that if it agrees to this for Northern Ireland then the UK will ask for it for goods crossing the Channel too. 'It's hard to tell, because they've been so reluctant to have the discussion in the first place,' he says. This is clearly not a negotiation that is going well.

No one could describe UK-EU relations as good at the moment. This month Royal Navy ships were dispatched to Jersey as part of a fishing dispute with the French. Yet Frost is confident that these rows won't ruin foreign policy cooperation. 'I don't think it's incompatible with friendly

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relations between sovereign equals to have arguments about trade and resolve them in a grown-up way... There definitely are US-Canada trade disputes and life goes on. And I don't see why it shouldn't be like that.'

He worries, though, that too many on the EU side have a zero-sum attitude to the relationship. 'For at least some Europeans, they have a very strong view that Brexit simply cannot succeed. It's a sort of historical error that goes against everything they know about the progress of history and the way things work... that is at the root of some of the problems.' He stresses that 'we don't have any [problem] at all about the EU and the member states succeeding. We think that's a good thing. And we think they should think it's a good thing if we succeed'.

Given all this, isn't it time for a reset in UK-EU relations? Frost doesn't think so. 'I'm kind of doubtful about "reset" as such. I don't think moments like that have a particularly good history in diplomacy.' But he does say that he hopes relations can improve and that he doesn't regard the current scratchiness 'as a decade-long problem'.

As the interview comes to an end, I ask him what he thinks of the Brexit negotiation diaries Michel Barnier published this month. 'You have to have been in the negotiations to find them truly compelling,' he says, damning with faint praise. He adds that they generally are a 'fair depiction' of events. But not quite. 'The last couple of weeks, I don't recognise his account. He wasn't at most of the key moments in the last couple of weeks, so that's possibly not surprising.' It is one final flick at his old sparring partner, and

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the sting in the tail perhaps explains why he enrages so many in the bloc.

Written by James Forsyth, political editor of The Spectator.  
Courtesy magazine issue: 22 May 2021

## Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars



**Sharing the Good News**  
Issue 65 - May 2021  
NEWSLETTER OF THE IRISH CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

**Accord's new online counselling service launched**

Bishop Denis Nulty has launched Accord Catholic Marriage Service CLG's first online counselling service to support individuals and couples experiencing difficulties in their relationships. Welcoming the new service, Bishop Nulty, President of Accord CLG, said: "For the first time in our near sixty years service, Accord Catholic Marriage Care Service CLG is now operating its specialist counselling services online to those who, for whatever reason, are unable to travel to an Accord centre to access in person counselling."

"All Accord counsellors are professionally trained in the specialism of couples and relationships counselling. Our counsellors providing the new online service have completed additional, comprehensive training accredited by the Association for Counselling and Therapy Online (ACTO) to ensure that the standards of client care and quality of professional service in online counselling match those of Accord CLG's in-person service."

"In launching the new online counselling service we hope to maximise accessibility to individuals and couples experiencing challenges in their relationships, even if they are unable to physically travel to see us," Bishop Nulty said.

Couples or individuals seeking online counselling with Accord CLG are advised to have in place an uninterrupted, confidential space that has stable broadband, as well as a PC, laptop or iPad/tablet. Couples living in the same household may join their online counselling sessions on a shared device. The new service will also meet the needs of couples who may be living apart and need to join the counselling sessions from their separate locations. Online counselling appointments can be accommodated every day from 9.30am through to 9.30pm. Those interested in availing of the service should access [accord.ie](http://accord.ie) or make contact with Accord CLG's administration team on [onlinecounselling@accord.ie](mailto:onlinecounselling@accord.ie). For more see [www.accord.ie](http://www.accord.ie).

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- Prayer for #WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY
- World Submarine Challenge
- The Digital Hub

Published by the Catholic Communications Office which can be contacted on [info@catholicbishops.ie](mailto:info@catholicbishops.ie)

**MAY ISSUE OF 'SHARING THE GOOD NEWS' NOW AVAILABLE**

[WWW.CATHOLICBISHOPS.IE](http://WWW.CATHOLICBISHOPS.IE)

### Sharing the Good News - May issue

The May issue of Sharing the Good News, the Catholic Church's monthly magazine for dioceses and parishes, has just been published.

The May 2021 issue features articles on the launch of Accord Catholic Marriage Care Service CLG's new online  
[churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)



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counselling service, Archbishop Eamon Martin's presentation of the Holy Father's message for World Communications Day 2021, Comments by Brian Hanley of the ICPO on the transfer of prisoners, Archbishop Dermot Farrell's acknowledgement of the role of Catholic Schools during the Covid-19 pandemic, the official prayer and hashtag for the World Meeting of Families 2022, Bishop Noel Treanor's response to the findings of the Ballymurphy inquest, a final call for submissions to the first phase of the Synodal Pathway and the Digital Hub resource.

Click here to view/download the May issue -

[[] <https://www.catholicbishops.ie/2021/05/20/may-issue-of-sharing-the-good-news-now-available/> ]

## **Church of Ireland General Synod 2021**

The 2021 meeting of the General Synod will be held by electronic communication technology from 30th September to 2nd October 2021, as approved by the Standing Committee in January 2021.

For more information, visit the General Synod website here.

[[] <http://synod.ireland.anglican.org/2021/welcome> ]

## **Media review**

**Poots: Relations between NI and the Republic have never been worse**

Belfast Telegraph

The new DUP leader blamed the Northern Ireland Protocol for the poor diplomatic situation.

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<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/poots-relations-between-ni-and-the-republic-have-never-been-worse-40467743.html>

## **PSNI investigating dozens of unlawful parades over NI Protocol**

BBC News

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-57238229>

## **NI Protocol: Brussels 'must use common sense', says UK**

BBC News

Brussels must show common sense and take a pragmatic approach to the NI Protocol, the UK government has said.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-57238226>

## **Von der Leyen says Northern Ireland trade problems are caused by Brexit, not the Protocol**

The Journal

A new raft of checks at the ports of Belfast and Larne under the terms of the Protocol have sparked anger among unionists.

<https://www.thejournal.ie/protocol-not-to-blame-brexit-tensions-northern-ireland-5447197-May2021/>

## **Fishermen to march on Taoiseach's Cork office over Brexit deal and fish quota**

Irish Times

Brexit deal on fisheries will cost Irish fishing 4,000 jobs , fishermen warn

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/fishermen-to-march-on-taoiseach-s-cork-office-over-brexit-deal-and-fish-quota-1.4574877>

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## **Biden reveals Irish PM's rebuke on Covid has him worried about waning US influence**

The Independent

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/us-covid-china-joe-biden-b1852092.html>



## **Pointers for prayer**

Holy God,  
you spoke the world into being.  
Pour your Spirit to the ends of the earth,  
that your children may return from exile  
as citizens of your commonwealth,  
and our divisions may be healed  
by your word of love and righteousness. Amen.

Empowering God,  
you gave the church  
the abiding presence of your Holy Spirit.

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Look upon your church today and hear our petitions.

... *Petitions*...

Grant that, gathered and directed by your Spirit,  
we may confess Christ as Lord and combine our diverse  
gifts with a singular passion to continue his mission in this  
world  
until we join in your eternal praise. Amen.

Creator Spirit and Giver of life,  
make the dry, bleached bones of our lives  
live and breathe and grow again  
as you did of old.  
Pour out your Spirit upon the whole creation.  
Come in rushing wind and flashing fire  
to turn the sin and sorrow within us  
into faith, power, and delight. Amen.

Holy Spirit,  
you poured yourself out on the people of the early church,  
pour yourself out on us now.

Holy Spirit you set their tongues on fire with languages so  
as to speak to one another in ways that could be  
understood.

Set our tongues on fire to speak in different languages and  
ways so others may hear the good news about Jesus.

Jesus, you said you had to go away so that the Holy Spirit,  
the advocate, the counsellor would come and it was so.

Come once again Holy Spirit as the advocate that we all  
need, as the counsellor we all need, and as the helper we  
all need.

Come Holy Spirit, fan your flames of love and  
empowerment, set us on fire for you once again. Bring life to  
each of our dry bones. Amen

## Speaking to the Soul

**Wealth from get-rich-quick schemes quickly disappears; wealth from hard work grows over time.**

Proverbs 13:11 NLT

Oscar Wilde wrote, "The best way to appreciate your job is to imagine yourself without one." That seems to summarise a lot of people's thinking about work. Work is seen as something bad which needs to be avoided if at all possible, and if it can't be avoided immediately then one should aim to retire as early as possible. This thinking is in complete contrast with Proverbs where work is seen as something inherently good. It is worklessness and laziness which are to be avoided at all costs.

It is interesting that the writer of Proverbs refers to get-rich-quick schemes. This all sounds very modern, but the fact is that throughout the whole of history people have wanted to find short cuts to wealth. There's nothing new about laziness! God wants us to work hard because it not only provides for our needs and those around us, but also enables us to bless other people with the gifts that God has given us. We have all been given the ability to enhance the lives of people around us, and God looks to us to work hard at doing so. The apostle Paul wrote, "So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up."

Over the years I have been particularly blessed by the way I have seen retired people working hard for God. At a time when they had no pressure upon them to earn money, they

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wanted to make sure that they were still being productive for God. I have been inspired by their example. Working hard is good at any time of life, but it needs to be added working too hard is never what God intends. Overwork causes tension and pressure that is never God's desire. Whatever our age we need to find a balance between the work that God calls us to do and times of leisure and refreshment which allow us to continue to serve him with confidence and enthusiasm. I'm sure Oscar Wilde was wrong! The best way to appreciate your job is in fact to do it with all your heart and to thank God for it.

## QUESTION

How well are you balancing your work and leisure?

## PRAYER

Loving God, thank you for the blessing of work. I pray your blessing on those who struggle to find work, or who find their work difficult. Amen

