

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Herbert and Paula O' Driscoll.  
Vancouver School of Theology's O'Driscoll Forum  
honours Irish cleric and his wife**

## Image of the day

### Vancouver School of Theology's O'Driscoll Forum honours former C of I cleric and his wife

**The Vancouver School of Theology has confirmed that an international campaign to permanently endow a major new initiative in theological education has been gathering momentum behind the scenes, and is about to go public.**

The O'Driscoll Forum is billed as "A Celebration of Preaching, Teaching and the Liturgical Arts." Beginning next year, the multi-day program will be an annual highlight of the summer curriculum at Vancouver School of Theology. The Forum is named in honour of Herbert and Paula O'Driscoll.

"Herb" O'Driscoll is a former parish priest and cathedral dean, internationally renowned conference and pilgrimage leader, hymnodist and storyteller, and author of over fifty books, who continues to write and speak prolifically and eloquently at age 93. Perhaps above all, he is a great preacher and teacher of preaching, who has spent a lifetime showing how the stories and traditions of our faith speak eloquently to contemporary concerns, and mentoring others to do the same.

"There's never been a more important moment than right now to form and nurture the gifts of a new generation to articulate Christian faith, not only in the life of the church but

beyond it in society,” says Herb. “Paula and I can’t think of a project we’d rather have our names associated with, and we are immensely grateful to everyone who is contributing to make it possible.”

At the heart of each summer’s O’Driscoll Forum will be visits by globally distinguished teachers and practitioners of preaching, teaching and the liturgical arts. They will be invited to give public lectures, and to spend a few days on the VST campus sharing their experience with a group of aspiring young practitioners of these skills, in a collegial “master class” format, much like the one Herb pioneered and practiced over many years at the College of Preachers in Washington, DC. Many Forum offerings will also be available online.

The Rev. Dr. Richard Topping, President of Vancouver School of Theology, says: “I’m thrilled that the O’Driscoll Forum will become a centrepiece of the VST Summer School. Herb was one of the first two recipients of honorary degrees from our school, and has been an inspiration and role model for many of us. We are honoured to be able to celebrate and continue his legacy in this way.”

A group of friends, colleagues and admirers of Herb and Paula have come together to raise funds for the O’Driscoll Forum. To date, they have collected over two hundred thousand dollars: about two-thirds of the minimum amount required to underwrite the program in perpetuity. Now, they are reaching out to the many others who have been touched by Herb and Paula over the years, and who would wish to add their support to assist in making the Forum a reality.

A live, public, online launch event will be broadcast at 7:00pm Eastern Daylight Time on Tuesday, May 31st, 4pm Pacific and 5pm Mountain Time. Herb will speak and read from his recent book of memoirs. There will be greetings and tributes from distinguished past and present colleagues, and reminiscences from folk who have gone on pilgrimage with Herb and Paula, or crossed paths with them in other ways. Richard Topping will speak about plans for the O'Driscoll Forum. The program will also be recorded and available for later viewing.

Thomas Herbert O'Driscoll was Dean of New Westminster from 1968 to 1982.

He was born in 1928 in Cork, Ireland , educated at Trinity College, Dublin and ordained in 1953. After curacies at Monkstown from 1952-1954, then Ottawa from 1954-1957, he was a naval chaplain from 1957-1960 stationed in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. He then became rector of Carp, Ontario from 1960 to 1962, following which he returned to Ottawa. He served in Ottawa until his appointment as dean in New Westminster, British Columbia. He is also a hymn writer. Dr. O'Driscoll is a former Cathedral Dean in Vancouver, B.C., and former Warden of the College of Preachers, Washington National Cathedral. He is the celebrated author of 30 books, including *A Doorway in Time*, a reflection of his own Celtic spirituality, and *Emmanuel*, written while in the Holy Land.

For more details about the Forum, to make a tax-deductible donation, and to watch the launch event live on May 31st (or recorded thereafter), please visit:

[ <https://vst.edu/odriscollforum/> ]

To watch the online launch visit -



## People and places

### German visitors seek to learn about Church of Ireland

The Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Michael Jackson, welcomed a delegation from the Church Synod of the Evangelische Kirche in Hessen und Nassau, Germany on Tuesday (May 24). The delegation, led by the Church President, Dr Volker Jung, is visiting Dublin for a number of days to learn about the challenges and strengths facing Churches in Ireland.

The Evangelische Kirche in Hessen und Nassau (EKHN; Protestant Church in Hessen and Nassau) is located around Frankfurt/Main with 1.4 million members in 1,300 parishes. It is a united church with parishes in both the Lutheran and in the Reformed Tradition.

Dr Young was joined by Vice Church President Ulrike Scherf, Provost Sabine Bertram–Schaefer, Provost Matthias Schmidt, Provost Oliver Albrecht, Provost Klaus–Volker Schuetz and Provost Stephan Arras (formerly Pastor of the Lutheran Church in Ireland).

The group met in Church House, Dublin, and engaged in a wide–ranging discussion. They asked about the situation of the Church of Ireland and the impact of growing secularization on the Church and the Archbishop said that people often blamed the decline of the church directly on



Church President Dr Volker Jung, Vice Church President Ulrike Scherf, Provost Sabine Bertram–Schaefer, Provost Matthias Schmidt, Provost Oliver Albrecht, Provost Klaus–Volker Schuetz and Provost Stephan Arras with Archbishop Michael Jackson.

secularization. However, he suggested that it was more complicated than this and argued that we are now in Apologetic times, as was the case in the very early days of the church in the times of Justin, Clement and Origen and we need to make space and specific attempts at understanding to be part of society and engage with society.

They also examined the ecumenical relationships that the Church of Ireland enjoys and the Archbishop said there was an extremely good relationship with the Roman Catholic Church with a number joint events in Dublin & Glendalough which were echoed around the island. They also discussed the role of the Dublin City Interfaith Forum of which the Archbishop is currently chair.

The Archbishop explained the school patronage system in Ireland and outlined the Church of Ireland's 'Follow Me' programme of religious education for primary schools. The delegation explained that in Germany the Pastor must deliver religious education in schools each week.

They also discussed the war in Ukraine and responses to it.

## **Pope Francis' World Communications Day message informs our journey on the Synodal Pathway - Archbishop Martin**

**To mark World Communications Day on Ascension Sunday, which falls on 29 May, Pope Francis' communications message this year addresses the theme of listening with the ear of the heart. The Holy Father is inviting all of us to reflect on how listening – which is both sincere and deep – can have a profound and positive affect on every part of our lives, in our interaction with others, and on how we pray.**

Archbishop Eamon Martin said, "In his message for World Communications Day 2022, Pope Francis is encouraging all people of goodwill to listen attentively to everyone we

engage with. In doing so we are expressing, not just a mark of sincere respect for the dignity of the other, but in doing so we are also laying the foundation stone of genuine relationships, which in turn is foundational to the relationship between God and humanity.

“It is in all our interests to note Pope Francis’ concern that many people ‘are quickly losing the ability to listen to one another, while at the same time listening is undergoing new developments, especially due to new forms of communicating.’

“As the Catholic Church in Ireland, and around the world, continues on our journey of faith and spiritual renewal, it is also timely that Pope Francis highlights the importance of listening in the context of this local and universal synodal process. In his message, Pope Francis says,

‘The most important task in pastoral activity is the ‘apostolate of the ear’ – to listen before speaking, as the Apostle James exhorts, ‘Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak’ (1:19). Freely giving some of our own time to listen to people is the first act of charity.’”

Archbishop Martin concluded, “I wish to take this opportunity to offer my prayerful support and gratitude to all those who have participated in local parish-based listening, discussion and prayer gatherings which have been taking place across the island as part of the Church’s ‘Synodal Pathway’ process. Our National Pre-Synodal Assembly, to take place on 18 June in Clonmacnoise, will be greatly enriched by the fruits of these meetings which represent the initial listening stage of the Irish Synodal Pathway. I invite everyone to



listen with their hearts to the World Communications Day message of Pope Francis as it informs our journey on the Synodal Pathway.”

## **Perspectives on preaching and teaching the Old Testament offered at seminar**

The Church of Ireland Centre at DCU in partnership with colleagues in the School of Theology, Philosophy & Music hosted a seminar on Preaching and Teaching the Old Testament recently.

Addressing the topic were Dr Katie Heffelfinger of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute; Dr Brad Anderson and Dr Peter Admirand of the School of Theology, Philosophy & Music in DCU; and Rabbi David Rosen, former Chief Rabbi of South Africa and Ireland who is currently responsible for the interfaith work of the Chief Rabbinate in Jerusalem.

Dr Heffelfinger told participants that the Church needed its Old Testament and needed a robust lifegiving relationship that put the Old Testament in a truly important place which allowed it to speak for itself into their lives and ministries.

Dr Anderson offered some practical solutions looking at the role of context of the Old Testament, engaging with the critical issues in teaching and preaching and examining the question of Judaism, Christianity and Jewish Scriptures.

Rabbi David Rosen outlined the ways in which Jewish people engaged with Scripture. He also spoke about



The Revd Prof Anne Lodge, Dr Brad Anderson, Dr Katie Heffelfinger, Archbishop Michael Jackson and Dr Peter Admirand.

Jewish–Christian relationships in the context of two traditions coming out of a common Scripture which they each understood through a different prism.

Dr Peter Amirand tied in his roles in Jewish–Christian Dialogue as a Catholic theologian by highlighting the 10 points of Seelisberg presenting an update and challenge for Jewish–Christian dialogue today.

Drawing the seminar together, Archbishop Michael Jackson said that the four presentations were interconnected but distinct which enabled participants to hear different perspectives and be energised by the central topic. He thanked those who had organised the conference and those

who had contributed. The seminar concluded with a time of group discussion and a panel discussion.

Each presentation was recorded and is available on request from the Revd Prof Anne Lodge at [anne.lodge@dcu.ie](mailto:anne.lodge@dcu.ie).

## News reports

### Pastoral support for US family members of school shooting victims

**'It is hard sometimes to see God through all of this,' pastor says as families grieve Uvalde shooting victims**

The Rev. Y.J. Jimenez, who leads the First Baptist Church in Bracketville, was in the waiting room at Uvalde Memorial Hospital on Tuesday offering support to family members of shooting victims.

He told the Times that two of his parishioners lost their grandchild and he had never had to deal with such grief in his 30 years of ministry.

"Sometimes it's about the presence and the prayers. In times like these all you can do is cry," he said.

Jimenez recalled how he first began receiving calls about the shooting before noon and when he arrived at the hospital the grief of the affected families including his parishioners was overwhelming.

"They had to endure the most difficult thing, they could not find their grandson," he said. "And then when they found it, it was devastating."

He said he offered his parishioners and their grandson's four surviving siblings support as best as he could.

"This has impacted us," he said. "We come to let them know how much we care and how much we love them and offer support any way they can. We are at a loss. It is hard sometimes to see God through all of this."

## **Church of Scotland General Assembly backs calls for ban on conversion therapy**

**The governing body of the Church of Scotland has backed calls for a ban on conversion therapy.**

Meeting in Edinburgh on Tuesday, the General Assembly approved a statement endorsing the 'Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK'.

The statement notes "that the Methodist Conference have supported and adopted this definition and the Church of England General Synod have endorsed a similar statement".

The memorandum defines conversion therapy as "an umbrella term for a therapeutic approach, or any model or individual viewpoint that demonstrates an assumption that any sexual orientation or gender identity is inherently



preferable to any other, and which attempts to bring about a change of sexual orientation or gender identity, or seeks to suppress an individual's expression of sexual orientation or gender identity on that basis".

The memorandum describes such practices as "harmful" and is backed by a number of health, counselling and psychotherapy organisations, including the Association of Christian Counsellors.

The Assembly rejected a bid to endorse a ban only covering LGB conversion therapy while leaving the door open for therapy for those confused about their gender identity.

Speaking against the amendment put forward by Rev Graham Thain, the Very Rev Dr Susan Brown, convener of the Faith Impact Forum, said the Assembly should not be sending "mixed messages" about its position.

"What does this Assembly want to say to people who are struggling with their sexual identity?" she said.

"Do we want to say conversion therapy is to be banned for those who are homosexual but if you're struggling with your gender identity then just keep going through these harmful processes?"

"Trans men and trans women do not need to be cured or corrected, but treated with dignity and respect."

The General Assembly agreed to "urge the Scottish Government to ban conversion therapy and instruct the

[Faith Impact] Forum to make representations to the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament”.

## **Archbishop of Canterbury condemns actions of Prime Minister**

**The Archbishop of Canterbury has condemned the actions of the Prime Minister following the release of the Sue Gray report.**

The 60-page investigation into rule-breaking in Downing Street saw images released of the PM raising a beer at a lockdown birthday party in June 2020.

The PM had previously denied the gathering took place, but the evidence showed otherwise.

The report also found other gatherings took place that breached Covid rules in force at the time.

Most Rev Justin Welby released a series of tweets, disapproving of the PM's behaviour. He said: "Sue Gray's report shows that culture, behaviour and standards in public life really matter.

"We need to be able to trust our national institutions, particularly in times of great trouble. Jesus commands us to serve the most vulnerable and those in need.

"To help achieve this we must recover the principles of mutual flourishing and the common good in the way we are

governed. Standards in public life are the glue that holds us together - we need to rediscover them and abide by them."

During this week Mr Johnson faced calls from one of his own MPs to resign following the damning report.

Julian Sturdy, MP for York Outer, said the PM has shown a "disregard for coronavirus regulations." Twenty two Conservative MPs were identified in the Daily Telegraph as having expressed misgivings about the PM's actions.

The PM has apologised to the public yesterday for his actions. In a press conference he said: "I am grateful to Sue Gray for her report today and I want to thank her for the work that she has done.

"I also thank the Metropolitan Police for completing their investigation and I want to again begin by renewing my apology to the house, to the whole country for the short lunchtime gathering on the 19th of June 2020, in the cabinet room, which I stood on my place at the cabinet table, which I received a fixed penalty notice.

"I take full responsibility for everything that took place on my watch."

# Church News Ireland

# Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

## A New Beginning? Recovering Well After the Pandemic

by Adult Learning at St Paul's Cathedral

London was at the UK epicentre of the pandemic in 2020. Amid the suffering it was a time when profound questions were asked about how we might live better: economically and politically, culturally and spiritually, individually and collectively. What does a healthy society look like now?

Leading voices from diverse sectors will consider what the crucial questions for our city are and how London can be a place of flourishing for all people.

This is an in person event but if you are unable to attend it will also be live-streamed. Please select the correct ticket when booking. If you are registering for the live-streaming option, you will receive the link the day before the event.

Panellists for the evening are:

Deborah Bull - Vice President, Communities & National Engagement and the Senior Advisory Fellow for Culture at King's College London; Crossbench Peer.

Stephanie Flanders - Senior Executive Editor for Economics at Bloomberg News and Head of Bloomberg Economics.



Victor Adebowale - Chair of Social Enterprise UK and the NHS Confederation; Crossbench Peer; Co-founder of Visionable and a Governor at the London School of Economics.

The evening will be chaired by Sarah Mullally, Bishop of London, and include plenty of time for questions and answers.

BSL interpretation will be provided at this event: please let us know if you require seats in the area reserved for this.

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 they would be very grateful. Register at -

[[] <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/a-new-beginning-recovering-well-after-the-pandemic-tickets-291271901097> ]

## Perspective

**On this 100th anniversary of policing in Northern Ireland, there is a determined effort to blacken the good name of the RUC by Stephen White**

**This Sunday, close to 500 people will attend a thanksgiving service in Belfast's St Anne's Cathedral to mark the centenary of policing in Northern Ireland.**

They will recall loved ones who were cruelly cut down by terrorists during the 'Troubles'.

They will silently think of others who died during their police service and the individuals who took their own lives.

Thoughts will go back in time to 1922 and the creation of the RUC and An Garda Siochana to take over policing from the Royal Irish Constabulary.

It was a turbulent, torrid time in Ireland.

Some 1,300 RIC officers from all over the island joined the fledgling RUC. The force established itself in every corner of the newly created Northern Ireland. They policed the highways and byways, often doing mundane farm-related tasks, but also remaining alert to terrorist activity.

They served during the Second World War — seven officers were killed in the Belfast blitz — and countered an IRA onslaught in the late fifties and early sixties.

All that paled against what unfolded in 1969. Between then and 1998, 302 officers were murdered.

Literally, hundreds were forced from their homes and 10,000 were injured.

Some 300 were left with permanent and severe disabilities.

Nowadays, there is a determined effort to blacken the good name and reputation of the RUC.

No effort is spared to pillory and condemn those of us who wore the uniform.

What's often overlooked is the fact that if it wasn't for the RUC, the death toll during the 'Troubles' would have been far greater than the 3,500 who were killed.

They interrupted terrorists in the act of transporting bombs or preparing murderous gun attacks.

They frustrated terrorist intentions, and there's little doubt that thousands of people walking the streets today owe their lives to the steadfast, determined and professional men and women of the RUC.

Their success is perhaps one reason why the RUC is the focus of so much opprobrium. But for the vast majority of this community, the RUC, honoured with the George Cross for acts of heroism and conspicuous courage, there is pride and appreciation.

It is no exaggeration to say that the RUC contributed massively to creating the space for peace to take root and flourish.

The price that was paid was high and although our peace today is imperfect, it is far better than the dark days of the past.

The annual service of thanksgiving has added poignancy given that it will also celebrate the 100th anniversary of the RUC.

May 28, 2022

We will remember those who served down the decades and keep front and centre the families of officers who paid the ultimate price.

We owe these families a deep debt of gratitude. They shared the great ordeal of stress and danger whenever their loved ones went out to work. For many, the vivid last image of a murdered family member remains indelible.

Remembrance is an essential part of what we do as we look back on the selfless and brave commitment of officers. Families have endured pain, and this Service is our way of saying 'thank you' for your steadfastness and dignity.

• Stephen White OBE is chair of RUC GC Foundation  
News Letter May 27, 2022

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this sit

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## Church News Ireland

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