

Church News Ireland



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Image of the day

TCD Chapel Choir tour Istanbul

Image - The TCD Chapel Choir singing at a concert in Christ Church, Istanbul.

The Choir of Trinity College, Dublin, has just concluded a week on tour in Istanbul.

On Friday May 16 they performed at a concert in Christ Church, which is the Church of England church in Istanbul. They gave a concert of music which ranged from Palestrina to Stanford to a large and appreciative audience.

On Saturday May 17 they sang at Mass in the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St Esprit. Finally, on Sunday May 18 they sang at the Eucharist in Christ Church, where the Dean of Residence, the Revd Canon Paul Arbuthnot preached.

The choir were delighted to be joined by Trinity College alumnus and renowned actor Dominic West who came to the service and spent time in conversation with the members. TCD Chapel Choir with the clergy, servers and TCD alumnus and actor Dominic West.

The tour to Istanbul was made possible by the organisational skills of the conductor of the Chapel Choir Callum Byrne, the Director of Chapel music Dr Kerry Houston, and the Chaplain of Christ Church, Istanbul the Revd Canon Ian Sherwood. The trip was also kindly



supported by the Chapel Committee of Trinity College, Dublin.

Canon Arbuthnot commented: "All of us associated with the chaplaincy at Trinity College Dublin are very grateful for the kindnesses shown to us on our recent tour of Istanbul. The

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choir sang beautifully and are a credit in all ways to the college, the dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough, and the wider Church of Ireland. The choir's busy programme in Istanbul reflected the commitment of the chaplaincy of Trinity College Dublin to ecumenism by singing in the Roman Catholic cathedral on the Saturday night. Once again we reiterate our sincere thanks to everyone who made this worthwhile trip possible and supported it – this was a most worthwhile trip on which all who attended will look back on with very happy memories”.

The TCD Chapel Choir singing at a concert in Christ Church, Istanbul.

News

'The Church cannot remain silent': WCC condemns Israeli aggression in Gaza

The World Council of Churches denounced the “extremist policies” of the current Israeli government, while recognising these are “not supported by many Israelis”.

The Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) has issued a strong condemnation of what it calls “atrocities being perpetrated in Gaza by the State of Israel”.

The WCC denounced the “extremist policies” of the current Israeli government, while recognising these are “not supported by many Israelis”.

Since the war’s outbreak in October 2023, following attacks by Hamas in southern Israel, the level of destruction in Gaza has reached what the WCC described as “unspeakable levels”.

The Committee highlighted the “deliberate targeting of civilians, widespread destruction of hospitals and other essential infrastructure, and the total blockade of humanitarian aid since 2 March 2025” as violations of international law.

“These actions sabotage all efforts to come to a solution for ending the occupation and bringing back Israeli hostages,” WWC's statement read.

Such acts, the WCC said, “undoubtedly constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity”.

The WCC claimed that the present catastrophe is not isolated to recent events but rooted in “decades of occupation, dispossession, and impunity”.

It denounced “the now openly-stated intention to re-occupy Gaza and permanently displace the Palestinian population”, warning that such a policy amounts to “ethnic cleansing” and must be rejected by any state committed to international law.



Connor navigating the online database

The first in a series of training roadshows organised by Connor Diocese to offer help and support in navigating the online database took place in Holy Trinity Parish Church, Woodburn, on May 15.

The group also criticised the “complicity, whether active or passive, of other states that they believe have enabled Israel’s actions through their silence or support”.

Reaffirming its commitment to justice, the WCC called on all governments to respect the International Court of Justice's rulings and support the International Criminal Court’s pursuit of accountability.

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They called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, an end to the blockade of Gaza, and for coordinated international action to halt the destruction and hold perpetrators to account.

“The churches of the world cannot remain silent in the face of such appalling inhumanity,” the statement concluded.

Girls Friendly Society Annual Service and Prize-Giving at St Canice's Cathedral

Under glorious sunshine on Sunday, 18th May 2025, a large crowd gathered at St Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny, for the Annual Service and Prize-Giving of the Girls Friendly Society (GFS).

The service, which began at 3pm, was a joyful and colourful celebration of friendship, faith, and service.



Procession of Banners

The afternoon opened with a vibrant presentation of banners, as each GFS branch proudly processed into the cathedral to the hymn Will You Come and Follow Me? The spirit of unity and shared purpose was palpable as girls, leaders, families, and clergy came together in worship and thanksgiving.



Music Ministry

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The music for the day was led by The 4 Hims, whose uplifting accompaniment added a special energy to the hymns and worship throughout the service.

✚ Commissioning of the New GFS Chaplain



A special highlight of the service was the appointment of the new GFS Chaplain. The Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory officially commissioned the Revd Edna Wakely, Rector of Castlecomer Union, to this important role, marking a new chapter in the spiritual leadership of GFS in the diocese.

Revd Edna Wakely reflected:

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"It was a pleasure to lead today's Diocesan Girls' Friendly Society's Annual Prize-giving service in Saint Canice's Cathedral, where I was formally commissioned as Diocesan Chaplain — a commissioning that had to be postponed by a year, when I became ill with covid in May, 2024.

Well done to all the prize winners — you did yourselves, your parents and your GFS leaders proud. Clearly a lot of hard work and dedication went into your results. I feel honoured to be your Chaplain.

Thanks must also go to your parents and dedicated leaders.

Thank you also to Kathleen Anangwe, Lucy Irungu and Revd. Roger Thompson for their interesting and challenging address, and for teaching everyone a worship song in Swahili.

The glorious sunshine contributed to a most enjoyable afternoon. Thank you one and all."

Supporting Global Mission

During the moving hymn When I Needed a Neighbour, Were You There?, girls from each branch came forward to present donations.





These generous gifts will support GFS mission partners in Kenya, as well as the GFS World Project in the Democratic Republic of Congo, demonstrating the society's ongoing commitment to global compassion and solidarity.



Learning a New Song of Faith

One of the most memorable moments of the service was the teaching of a joyful new song known as “the Kenyan song” Asante Sana Yesu / Thank You, Thank You Jesus. The

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congregation enthusiastically joined in, learning the words and rhythm with delight, and celebrating the global connection of faith communities.



Message of Inspiration

The address was delivered by Kathleen Anangwe, accompanied by Lucy Irungu and Revd Roger Thompson from the Church Mission Society (CMS). With the theme Jesus and the Life-Giving Water: How God is at Work in Kenya, the speakers shared inspiring stories of transformation, service, and hope, reminding all present of the power of faith in action.



Prizes and Blessings

The bishop concluded the service with the blessing, after which he presented prizes to the girls of the GFS in recognition of their achievements and commitment over the past year.



Picnic in the Orchard

The celebrations then moved outside, where the congregation gathered in the orchard and at the back of the cathedral for a relaxed and cheerful picnic. Games, laughter, and sunshine brought the day to a fitting close a true celebration of community, growth, and joy in Christ.



To learn more about the Girls Friendly Society and upcoming events, visit www.girlsfriendlysociety.ie/about/our-history

Education

New Sixth Form facilities at Integrated College Glengormley

On Friday we were thrilled to host the official launch of our brand-new Sixth Form facilities and upgraded sports facilities and pitches.

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A massive thank you to the Leonard Family for their unwavering support of our school and integrated education.



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Their generosity in funding this project will benefit our students for years to come.

We were also honoured to welcome Tim McGarry, a passionate advocate for integrated education to help celebrate the opening of the facilities, and to celebrate with us with the unveiling of the Leonard Award.

Special thanks to Ian Lowry for unveiling a fantastic mural of past pupil, Carl Frampton, on the walls of our new sports pitches. This is a significant milestone for our school community, and we couldn't be more excited for what the future holds. 🌟

Cathedral Calls

Queen Camilla unveils new stone in Westminster Abbey

Queen Camilla has unveiled the foundation stone for a new development at Westminster Abbey, describing the historic site as “very special”.

The event marked a key milestone in the £13 million King Charles III Sacristy project, which will allow new means of access to the Abbey for millions of visitors each year.

Located near the Abbey’s north transept, the development will enable visitors to enter via the Great West Door, the ceremonial entrance used for royal weddings, funerals and coronations.

The sacristy will house welcome, security and ticketing facilities, allowing the Abbey itself to be preserved as a sacred space, with chairs and other objects stored in the new building.

Camilla reflected on her previous visit, noting a new concrete floor covering.

“I just want to say how delighted I am to unveil this foundation stone,” she said. “There’s now a floor – the last time I came here there were quite a lot of skeletons.

“I just hope that in 2026, when it’s due to finish, God willing my husband and I will be back here again to open the King Charles III Sacristy.”

The ceremony was attended by project donors and members of the Abbey’s chapter, including Thomas van Straubenzee, godfather to Princess Charlotte, Paul Ramsbottom, and project ambassador and TV gardener Alan Titchmarsh.

Camilla and Titchmarsh joked that the skeletons she saw on her first visit to the site were “quite spooky”.

Titchmarsh said he looked forward to the Abbey’s use being expanded as a place of worship.

The new building is being constructed on the footprint of Henry III’s medieval Great Sacristy, originally built in the 1250s.

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Speaking with the Dean of Westminster, the Very Rev Dr David Hoyle, the Queen said: “I love this place, it’s just very special.”

The project is expected to be completed in 2026.

Clergy and ministry

New community of the Celtic Cross

A Diocesan Pioneer Project is being launched in the dioceses of Meath and Kildare.

The project will be based in two localities – in Kildare cathedral and Athlone, including Clonmacnoise. It will be led by Rev Philip McKinley, our Diocesan Pioneer Minister. It will commence on 1st September 2025.

A significant proportion of the funding for this new project was announced by the Church of Ireland Pioneer Ministry Team, at the Church of Ireland General Synod meeting in Naas during this past week. This project has the approval of the cathedral Dean, the Rector of Athlone, as well as the Diocesan Council, and the bishop. It has also been made possible by support from The Pioneer Fund of the Church of Ireland,

In Kildare the project will be grounded in St Brigid’s cathedral and its surroundings. It will also be established in Athlone town, where the church is located at the centre point of the town, and in Clonmacnoise, particularly in the



Rev Philip McKinley will be the Pioneer Minister in this new project, working closely with Dean Isobel Jackson (St Brigid's Cathedral) and Canon William Steacy (Athlone).

summer tourist season where there is already immense outreach potential. In both localities the rich spiritual history of St Brigid and Clonmacnoise will be drawn on and developed.

The focus is on outreach and building new communities of faith alongside the two local parishes, with particular regard to those who do not yet engage with faith or church life.

Pioneer Ministry is an initiative of the Church of Ireland to reach those with little or no connection to the good news of Jesus Christ. Pioneer Ministries will emerge from within and

serve alongside parishes and dioceses that seek to introduce new and additional ways of doing church.

To find out more, visit: <https://meathandkildare.org/news/launch-of-church-of-ireland-pioneer-ministry-initiative/>

Diocesan Pioneer

Rev Philip McKinley will be the Pioneer Minister in this new project, working closely with Dean Isobel Jackson (St Brigid's Cathedral) and Canon William Steacy (Athlone).

Since 2023 Philip has combined two part-time roles – as Lead Pioneer Evangelist in St Brigid's Cathedral as well as being part-time curate in Dunboyne and Rathmolyon Groups of parishes. He also brings a rich experience as one of the cofounders of the Discovery Gospel Choir, as well as having served as a University Chaplain and a Project Office for the Church of Ireland Hard Gospel Project, in the past.

Speaking of his new post Rev Philip McKinley said, "I will be very sorry to leave behind the Grouped Parishes of Dunboyne and Rathmolyon, who have been extremely generous and supportive to me as Curate Assistant over the past three years. I am grateful however to the Parishes of Kildare and Athlone, who will host this Pioneer Ministry, for their openness and willingness to venture into something new within the life of Christ's Church".

Speaking of the project, Bishop Pat Storey said, "I am excited by this new initiative for many reasons. Firstly,

because it is rooted in hope and a belief in the power of the message of Christ to reach a new generation. Also, because it draws on a rich legacy of faith in both locations. Lastly, because it draws on a vision of Pioneer Ministry endorsed by the House of Bishops, General Synod, and Representative Body where they said “the hope and heart will be to encourage, support and release a movement that has the capacity to reach people in new places and in different ways.”

Derry & Raphoe link with Kindoa diocese

Please pray for Bishop Andrew Foster as he prepares to visit Bishop Given Gaula in August, to confirm the diocesan partnership between Derry and Raphoe and Kindoa.

Pray for the confirmation services that the bishops will be leading, and the candidates.

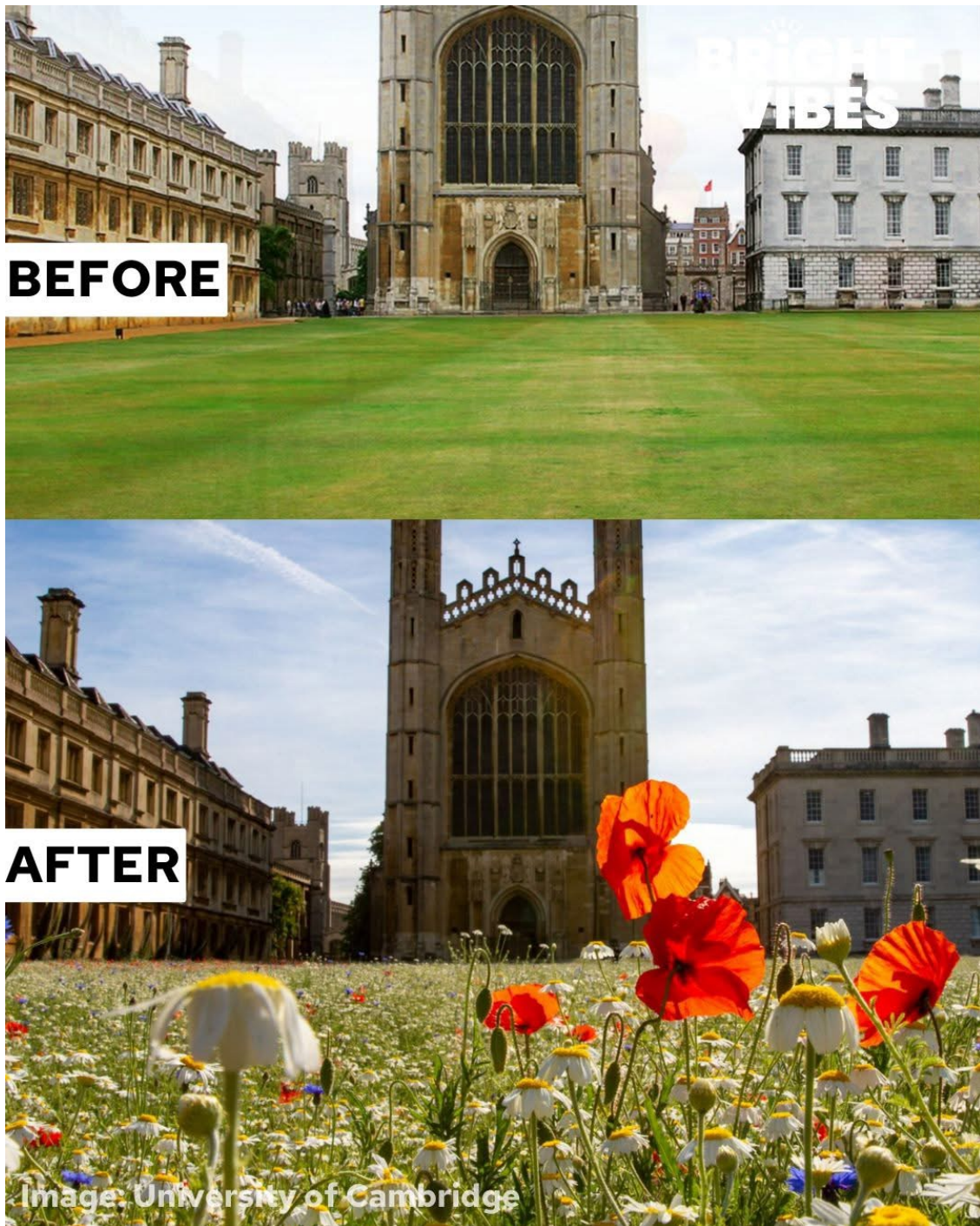
Perspective

A tutorial from King's Cambridge

For the first time in 300 years, a lawn at King's College was left unmown — and nature took the spotlight.

What happened next?

A burst of biodiversity, cooler air, and a mental health boost for all who passed by.



- 🌿 84 plant species
- 🕷️ Countless bugs and spiders
- ☀️ 25% more sunlight reflected
- 🌍 1.36 tonnes CO₂ saved per hectare, per year

A powerful reminder: sometimes, doing less is the most impactful thing we can do.

Poem for today

In May

by William Henry Davies

Yes, I will spend the livelong day
With Nature in this month of May;
And sit beneath the trees, and share
My bread with birds whose homes are there;
While cows lie down to eat, and sheep
Stand to their necks in grass so deep;
While birds do sing with all their might,
As though they felt the earth in flight.
This is the hour I dreamed of, when
I sat surrounded by poor men;
And thought of how the Arab sat
Alone at evening, gazing at
The stars that bubbled in clear skies;

And of young dreamers, when their eyes
Enjoyed methought a precious boon
In the adventures of the Moon
Whose light, behind the Clouds' dark bars,
Searched for her stolen flocks of stars.
When I, hemmed in by wrecks of men,
Thought of some lonely cottage then
Full of sweet books; and miles of sea,
With passing ships, in front of me;
And having, on the other hand,
A flowery, green, bird-singing land.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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early morning

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