

## The essential daily brief on the Irish churches

### Art exhibition hails peacemakers

Largely unsung heroes of [Northern Ireland](#)'s peace process are to be recognised in a special art exhibition which opens at Stormont today.

**Belfast Telegraph** - Behind-the-scenes negotiators and religious and community leaders who took risks to help end the conflict are among 35 people captured in oil on wood by South [Belfast](#) artist Susan Hughes.



*Father Gerry Reynolds was the first peacemaker to be painted*

She began by painting Redemptorist priest Fr Gerry Reynolds and the project has grown into an alternative who's who of the emergence from violence.

Ms Hughes said: "These people did not get the Nobel Peace Prize, that was the politicians, and yet without all these people in [Northern Ireland](#) working away our society would look very different.

"It does not diminish what politicians did, it is just what these people are doing is quieter."

Fr Reynolds, from Clonard Monastery in West Belfast, worked closely with his fellow Redemptorist Fr Alex Reid, who is also among those featuring in the exhibition.

Clonard has been described as the cradle of the peace process because it hosted a groundbreaking 1988 meeting between SDLP leader [John Hume](#) and [Sinn Fein](#) president [Gerry Adams](#).

It was instigated by Fr Reynolds' friend and colleague in Clonard, Fr Alex Reid, who died in November.

The dialogue ended without agreement but secret talks between Mr Hume and Mr Adams resumed in Clonard in 1993 after a request from Fr Reid to the SDLP leader.

This ultimately led to the December 1993 Joint Declaration by [Albert Reynolds](#) and [John Major](#), the 1994 ceasefires and the Good Friday Agreement.

Fr Reid also oversaw paramilitary arms decommissioning.

Ms Hughes, 30, said her subjects were very humble.

She said: "They don't want to be in the limelight, that is not their agenda. They want to facilitate peace for others and not be really public about it.

"Part of their work is that they cannot be public about it. The communities that they work in really trust them and trust that they are going to be with them through thick and thin."

She completed the work, 32 pieces featuring 35 people, in three months since Christmas. Among those painted are former Presbyterian moderator the Rev Dr Ken Newell and Rev Dr Ruth Patterson from the same church.

[Basil McCrea](#), leader of NI21, is sponsoring the exhibition after being impressed by some of Ms Hughes' work previously.

## Removal of Bible from Trinity college crest 'correctness gone mad'

Senior church graduates of Trinity College, Dublin have reacted with disappointment and anger at the college's decision to remove the Bible from its official insignia, in a new branding initiative.



News Letter - The eminent institution, founded in 1592 by Queen Elizabeth I as the College of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, is taking religious symbolism out of its official crest.

The Bible is being replaced with “an open book” in what is described as “a deliberate and symbolic change”.

Trinity graduate, the Rev Dr William Morton, Dean of Londonderry’s [St Columb’s Church of Ireland cathedral](#), said it was “political correctness gone totally mad”.

“I am justifiably proud to have been a Trinity graduate, but this decision to remove the Bible from the insignia is extremely regrettable,” he said.

“It flies in the face of the whole history and tradition of TCD as an ancient seat of learning. It is like not being able to put up a Christmas tree in case of offending ethnic groups. It is absolutely ridiculous.”

Former Church of Ireland Dean of Belfast, the Rev Dr Houston McKelvey, who spent two years at Trinity, said: “The irony of a college dedicated to the Holy and Undivided Trinity being reluctant to have a Bible on its crest is beyond even the celebrated Dean Jonathan Swift’s satirical capability.” More at -

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/regional/removal-of-bible-from-trinity-college-crest-correctness-gone-mad-1-5969830>

## **Howard Goodall Requiem, ‘Eternal Light’ in Down Cathedral**

**Martin O’Hagan, one of the internationally–renowned singing group The Priests, is a guest soloist when Cathedra present the Howard Goodall Requiem, ‘Eternal Light’ in Down Cathedral on Monday 14 April at 8.00 pm.**

Goodall is probably most famous for his version of Psalm 23, *The Lord is my shepherd*, which is the theme tune for the Dibley TV comedy starring Dawn French.

Cathedra are the combined members of the Down Cathedral choir and Cadenza, under the baton of their joint musical director Michael McCracken. Cadenza singers are drawn from all over Northern Ireland.

Howard Goodall wrote of Eternal Light: “For me, a modern Requiem is one that acknowledges the unbearable loss and emptiness that accompanies the

death of loved ones, a loss that is not easily ameliorated with platitudes about the joy awaiting us in the afterlife.

“This is a Requiem for the living, addressing their suffering and endurance, a Requiem focusing on the consequences of interrupted lives.”

Fr Martin O’Hagan is Priest of the Parish of Newtownards and Comber, with two churches: The Church of St. Patrick (Newtownards) and the Church of Our Lady of the Visitation (Comber).

The Priests – Fr Martin, his brother Eugene and Fr David Delargy – have been singing together since they boarded in the 1970s as students at St MacNissi’s College in County Antrim.

After signing a deal with SonyBMG in April 2008 they recorded their debut album, simply called *The Priests*, in Northern Ireland and Rome, with the unusual honour of having been allowed to record in St. Peter’s Basilica, The Vatican. The album has been a hit throughout the world, and has sold more than a million copies in Ireland alone.

Fr Martin and Cadenza have performed together before, having joined forces for a special concert in his home parish church in Newtownards last October

Other *Eternal Light* soloists include Aine Darnbrook (soprano) and Peter Lyness (baritone).

**Tickets are £10.00 and available from Matchetts Music, Belfast; Down Cathedral (tel (028)44 614922); Choir Members (tel 07773 846028) or at the door on the night.**

## **Idol and Grace**

‘**Idol and Grace: On Traditioning and Subversive Hope**’ is the title of a lecture to be given by Prof Orlando Espín (University of San Diego) in TCD on Tuesday April 8 at 6.00 pm

**Venue: Neil Hoey Lecture Theatre, Trinity Long Room Hub, Trinity College Dublin.**

## **The end of Memory and Mourning?**

**Geraldine Smyth will be the speaker at Contemporary Christianity’s EnteringHoly Week meeting, which will afford an opportunity to reflect together on the significance of remembering and mourning in times of transition.**

Geraldine Smyth is a native of Belfast, a Dominican sister and Associate Professor at the Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin. She is a trained psychotherapist. Her research interest is in Ecumenics especially in relation to the intersections of theology, psychology, faith and politics, particularly in addressing divisions, and the challenge of reconciling memories and of forgiveness in building a peaceful future.

Date - Monday 14 April. Time - 7:30pm. Venue - Contemporary Christianity office  
3rd Floor, 21 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast. [Click here for map](#)

## Exhibition can 'breathe new life' into places of worship in Limerick

**THE relationship between faith and the architecture of city churches is being explored in a new exhibition that aims to start a conversation about what to do with these places of worship in a changing society.**

Limerick Leader - City of Churches, an exhibition looking at the architectural legacy and social history of the city's many places of faith, was launched last week.

The exhibition is part of the City of Culture programme and was spearheaded by Limerick Museum and Archives and archivist Jacqui Hayes, who hopes it will help to "reimagine and breathe new life" into some of the city's most historic buildings.



*Sign here please: Anne Guiry, Newcastle West, Mayor Cllr Kathleen Leddin, Peter Carroll, course director in the school of architecture, UL, at the launch of the Limerick: City of Churches exhibition in Central Buildings on O'Connell Street last week, where it will be based until the end of April. The exhibition is part of the Limerick City of Culture programme. Pictures: Gareth Williams*

“Limerick has so many churches and we just take them for granted,” she explained at the launch in Christ Church on O’Connell Street.

“Why do we have so many? I don’t think it is that we are particularly holy or anything, I just think it is to do with our history. This exhibition covers all faiths. It asks the question - do we need buildings? A lot of churches start out life without any buildings. And also the question of what we are going to do with these buildings? Society is changing.

“It is about architecture really, as much as the faiths,” she added.

The secular exhibition documents many of Limerick’s churches and is scheduled to visit a number of venues - representing different faiths.

“It focuses on the records, buildings and impact of the various churches, while a fascinating document, produced by Emma Gilleece, collects information about more than 70 churches based around Limerick. More at -

<http://www.limerickleader.ie/what-s-on/arts-entertainment/visual-arts/exhibition-can-breathe-new-life-into-places-of-worship-in-limerick-1-5966877>

## Olympian speaker at Service for the Gift of Sport

The 65th annual Ecumenical Service of Thanksgiving for the Gift of Sport took place in St Ann’s Church, Dawson Street, Dublin on Sunday March 30. The address was given by former Olympian and middle distance track runner, Senator Eamonn Coghlan.



*The Vicar of St Ann’s, Canon David Gillespie; the Revd Andrew Dougherty, Methodist Centenary Church; the Revd Alan Boal, Abbey Presbyterian Church; Senator Eamonn Coghlan, who gave the address; Robert Prole, who organises the service; and Fr Michael Foley, St Mac Dara’s College, Templeogue*

The service was

attended by presidents of schools associations from all over the country as well as many students and representatives of the sporting world.

Introducing the service the Vicar of St Ann's, Canon David Gillespie, welcomed Cllr Gerry Ashe who was representing the Lord Mayor of Dublin, and Jonathan Bell, President of the Association of Schools' Unions.

Senator Eamonn Coghlan spoke of what sport meant to him and stated that he had "enjoyed the thrills of victory and endured the agony of defeat". He wondered if sport meant a person had to be the best or whether they had to give their best.

He described sport as being a microcosm of life. He said it was a short journey with 5, 10 or 15 years of competing at the highest level. "Sport is not the end result. It's that journey and everything you learn on that journey," the Senator contended.

He said that to be successful in sport required motivation and hard work but added that "the gift of sport is a gift received from the people who come into your life – the community you grow up in from your parents, coaches, volunteers and the mentors. These are the people who guide us on the path of life".

Senator Coghlan also spoke about the important work done by the Children's Medical and Research Foundation at Our Lady's Hospital, Crumlin. A collection was taken up during the service for the charity.

The annual Ecumenical Service of Thanksgiving for the Gift of Sport began 65 years ago following discussions between the Revd George Crummy and Bob Graves, Irish rugby international. The service focuses on thanksgiving for all men women and young people whose lives have been enriched and blessed by the gift of sport, whether through active participation, patronage or through the medium of radio, television or attendance at events.

## **The papers of the Rt Revd William Shaw Kerr (1897–1960)**

**The papers of the Rt Revd William Shaw Kerr (1897–1960) who was bishop of Down and Dromore from 1945 to 1955, feature as April's online Archive of the Month presented by the Church of Ireland RCB Library. This important collection of materials provides a relatively rare detailed insight to clerical life in the northern part of the island, during**

**the first half of the 20th century, particularly the period between the two World Wars.**

Episcopal correspondence and other papers created during the course of the careers of bishops and archbishops are relatively rare survivals for documenting Church of Ireland history. In many respects, Kerr's materials are no exception, for whilst they comprise correspondence, writings, sermon registers, select daily diaries, research notes and press cuttings on a wide range of topical,



historical and theological issues together with Kerr's additional literary and poetry interests, most of them pre- or post-date his time as bishop. What the collection does provide, however, is a very detailed insight into his clerical career up to 1945, and his political outlook which was strongly Unionist.

Most significantly it contains the evidence that Kerr was the hitherto anonymous writer who penned a column for the *Church of Ireland Gazette* under the *nom de plume* 'Shebna the Scribe', writing from the 'Cave Hill' Belfast on virtually a weekly basis between 1910 and 1916. This role terminated quite suddenly after a particularly hard-hitting piece on the Irish Rebellion in 1916. In this regard, Kerr's related papers, and the insight they reveal from the perspective of a northern cleric about the rapidly-evolving Ireland at this period, are likely to become important sources for researchers.

Although Kerr served his entire clerical career in the north east of the island through the Partition era, he was actually born in the south. The son of a Wicklow gentleman, James Heron Kerr, and his wife Rose Smith Shaw (who originated in county Sligo) he was born in 1873, and grew up at the family seat Broomfield House near Ashford, in County Wicklow. Following divinity training at Trinity College in Dublin, he was ordained deacon in 1897 and served two curacies in Shankill, Lurgan (Dromore) 1897–99; and St James Belfast (Connor) 1899–1901. His first incumbency was the parish of Ballywalter (Down) where he stayed ten years (1901–10), followed by a further five-year incumbency in the parish of St Paul's Belfast (Connor)

between 1910 and 1915; and then a longer 17–year stint in the parish of Seapatrick (Dromore) from 1915 to 1932. During his time at Banbridge (the town where Seapatrick parish church is located) he rose through the senior clerical ranks serving as chancellor of Dromore 1920–29; and also archdeacon of Dromore for a further two years 1930–32. Following his appointment as dean and vicar of Belfast (Connor) in 1932, where he served a further 13 years, he became the first Church of Ireland bishop of Down and Dromore (when that diocese was separated from Connor) in 1945.

Most of the papers in Kerr’s collection originate from his parochial ministry, particularly during his time in Banbridge between 1915 and 1932. They provide a detailed insight to the intellect and mindset of one of the Church’s most prolific and outspoken commentators of this period. Following their transfer to the RCB Library Kerr’s papers were organised into 11 record groups, where they are accessioned as RCB Library MS 813/.

Of the more unusual items to be found in the collection is Kerr’s collarette as Grand Chaplain of the County Down Orange Order, and of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland. It is the only item in the collection pertaining to his active and probably influential role within the Order, and was kept safe alongside his his certificates for deacon and priest orders, and his consecration certificate as bishop of Down and Dromore. Images of the item including its detailed inscription are included along with a selection of other materials from the collection on the online presentation.

To view the online presentation, see: [www.ireland.anglican.org/library/archive](http://www.ireland.anglican.org/library/archive)

## **Stolen shrine to be returned to parish after security upgrade**

**After two years and €50,000, parishioners in rural Co Offaly finally have a date for the return of their patron saint’s shrine.**

Irish Examiner - St Manchan’s Shrine, a 12th century reliquary built to house the bones of St Manchan, was stolen from a glass security case at St Manchan’s Church in Boher, Co Offaly on June 1, 2012.

Though gardaí from Tullamore were quick to recover the shrine, the parish has had to raise funds for a costly security revamp in order to have it reinstated.

Central to that effort was Boher curate Fr James MacKiernan, who now hopes the shrine will be returned to the church on Sunday, May 25. The security upgrade was completed with the delivery and installation of a

specially designed case on Thursday. However, some minor cosmetic work will be carried out at the church before the shrine is returned.

Describing the shrine as a “very precious national treasure,” Fr MacKiernan said: “We are certainly quite excited. It has been a long road.”

He estimated the full cost of the works at over €50,000.

“The people have been very generous and they were determined to do it,” he remarked.

Local councillor Connie Hanniffy said parishioners have been giving donations through a “special weekly subscription” since the 2012 theft. She said the shrine was “synonymous with the parish and it’s been in Boher Church for many years and there is a great affinity towards it.”

The shrine has remained in the care of the gardaí since June 2012. A celebration is being organised for its reinstatement on May 25.

Saint Manchan is said to have founded a monastery at Leamonaghan in the 7th century.