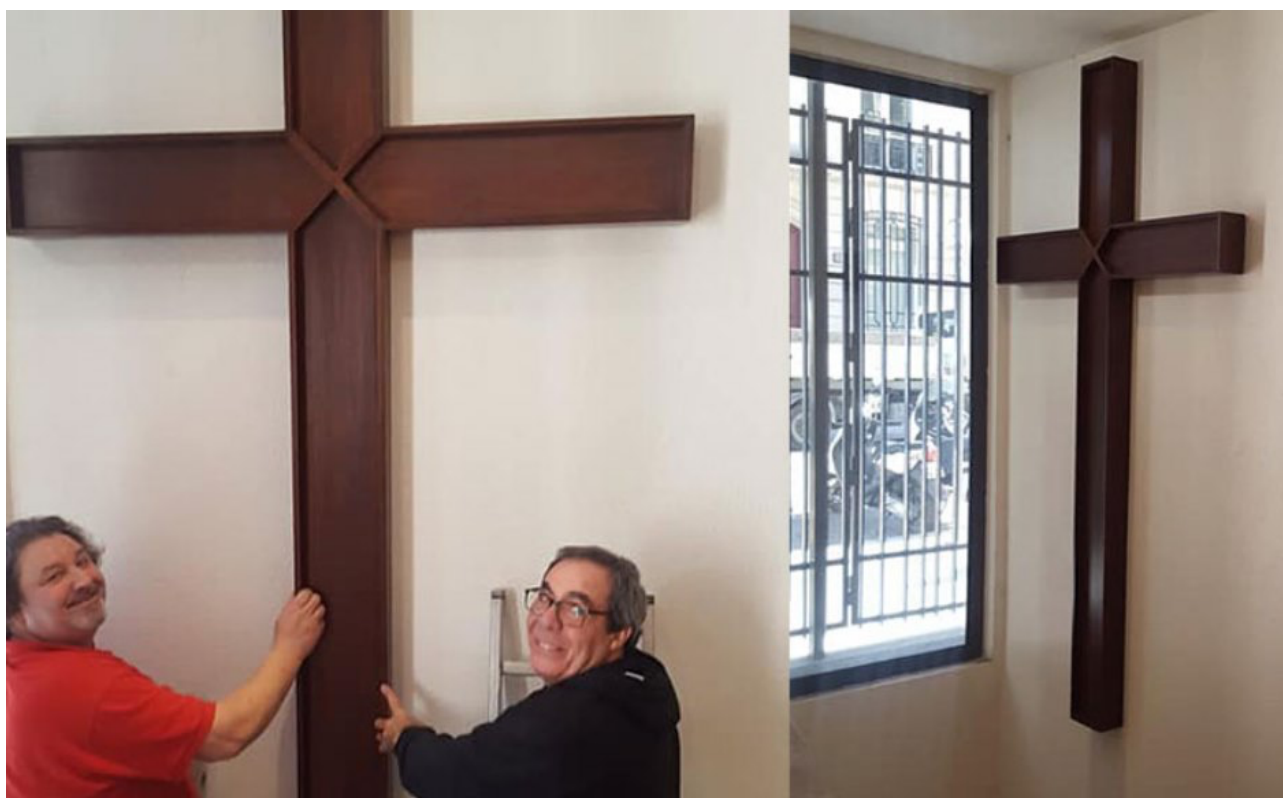


## Cross gifted to war hero on display at Paris Kirk



A large wooden cross gifted to a war hero minister has been rehung in his former church after languishing in a cellar for nearly 20 years.

**April 1, 2019**

It was presented to Rev Dr Donald Caskie, who helped save more than 2,000 allied service personnel during the Second World War, by George Watson's College in Edinburgh.

Known as the Tartan Pimpernel, he played a key role in looking after the welfare of pupils taking part in an exchange programme at Lycee Henri IV in Paris in the 1950s.

The school was so impressed with the kindness of the "charismatic" minister who led the Scots Kirk in the French capital that it decided to give him a gift as a token of their appreciation.

He chose the 8ft by 5ft Christian symbol.

Pupils raised money to buy what was known as the "Watson's Cross" in 1959 through a collection whereby each boy donated "thrupence" (three pennies).

It hung behind the chancel in the Scots Kirk for around 40 years until the building was torn down and it was put into storage.

The church was rebuilt in 2002 but the cross remained tucked away in a cellar and largely forgotten about until a former pupil questioned its whereabouts.

Edinburgh born Andrew Brown, who was a Watson's pupil from 1952-63 and raised money for its purchase, felt it should be on prominent public display.

He led discussions with the school, St Andrew's Church in Brussels and the Scots Kirk - both congregations are international in flavour with members from across the world - which led to a decision to keep the cross in Paris.

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**Rev Jan Steyn, minister at the Scots Kirk, holding Dr Caskie's Gaelic Bible with Elder Alisdair Gould. Etienne Des Haynes**

It now has pride of place above a stairwell which leads to the sanctuary and a re-dedication service is being held on Sunday, April 7 at 11am.

## **Anchor**

Rev Jan Steyn, who has been the minister at the Scots Kirk on Rue Bayard since 2017, said he was “delighted” that the handsome icon is now back on public display.

“The cross was donated to the Scots Kirk during the time of Donald Caskie and it is part of the congregation’s beautiful story,” he added.

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**Former Mothers' Union Worldwide President, Lynne Tembey, last week received her OBE in recognition of her services to Mothers' Union, women and families.**

“For 20 years it was stacked away in the church's cellar after the existing church was built.

“Our friend Andrew Brown, a member of the St Andrew's Church in Brussels, made us aware of the cross again and we were inspired to put it up.

“It tells the story of ‘paying it forward’ - giving something small which unknowingly influences the future.

“It reminds us of our Christian roots and belief and is something of an anchor and a compass.”

**April 1, 2019**

## **Relationships**

Dr Caskie, who grew up on Islay in the Inner Hebrides, was the minister at the Scots Kirk between 1938-40 and 1945-1961.

The annual exchange programme that George Watson's College had with Lycée Henri IV – the alma mater of French President Emmanuel Macron – started in 1947.

It was aimed at rebuilding relationships between European countries, particularly among young people, in the aftermath of the Second World War and lasted for more than 50 years.

A permanent exhibition dedicated to Dr Caskie will also be officially opened on April 7.

## **Religious freedom is about human dignity, pope says in Morocco**

During his first meeting in Rabat on Saturday, Pope Francis underlined the importance of religious liberty and its connection to the dignity and rights owed to every person, regardless of their religion.

“We believe that God created human beings equal in rights, duties and dignity, and he calls them to live as brothers and sisters and to spread the values of goodness, love and peace,” the pope said March 30 in the Moroccan capital.

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**Judge Catherine McGuinness (centre) with former President, Dr Mary McAleese (right) were presented with Hibernian Law Medals last week**

“That is why freedom of conscience and religious freedom – which is not limited to freedom of worship alone, but allows all to live in accordance with their religious convictions – are inseparably linked to human dignity.”

Authentic dialogue brings awareness of the importance of religion “for building bridges between people”, he continued, adding that it is faith in God which leads people “to acknowledge the eminent dignity of each human being, as well as his or her inalienable rights.”

This requires moving beyond tolerance “to respect and esteem for others,” he said. “Understood in this way, creating bridges between people – from the point of view of interreligious dialogue – calls for a spirit of mutual regard, friendship and indeed fraternity.”

**April 1, 2019**

**The Moderator joined with Rev David Clarke at a special evening service in Sligo last Sunday. The Moderator commented. “A wonderful choir. I invited different nationalities in the congregation to introduce themselves - about 20 altogether. A foretaste of heaven with every nation, tribe, people and language standing before the throne.”**



Pope Francis spoke during the first stop of a March 30-31 visit to Morocco. He is visiting the country to promote peace, dialogue between Christians and Muslims, and care for migrants.

“This visit is for me an occasion of joy and gratitude,” he said to Moroccans, including members of the country’s civil society, diplomatic corps, and authorities. “It allows me to see at first hand the richness of your land, your people and your traditions.”

**April 1, 2019**

The pope's visits to two Muslim-majority countries, the United Arab Emirates and Morocco, fall exactly 800 years after the historic meeting of St. Francis of Assisi and Al-Kamil, Sultan of Egypt.

Commemorating this meeting, Pope Francis said he is grateful his visit "offers a significant opportunity for advancing interreligious dialogue and mutual understanding among the followers of our two religions."

"That prophetic event shows that the courage to encounter one another and extend a hand of friendship is a pathway of peace and harmony for humanity, whereas extremism and hatred cause division and destruction," he said.

In his speech, the pope praised the 2016 International Conference on the rights of religious minorities in Muslim countries, held in Marrakesh, which condemned exploitation of religion for discrimination and encouraged the participation of minorities in society through full citizenship.

He also commended the Al Mowafaqa Ecumenical Institute in Rabat, an initiative of Catholics and other Christians which also promotes dialogue with culture and Islam.

## **Variety at C of I history event**

The Spring meeting of the Church of Ireland Historical Society will be held in the Armagh Robinson Library on Saturday 6 April beginning at 11am.

In the morning session Professor Rachel Moss, from the History of Art Department in TCD, will discuss 'The impact of

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the Reformation on Irish medieval parish churches' followed by a research paper by David O'Shea, a PhD student in Trinity, on 'The choral foundation of the Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle'.

After lunch Dr Andrew Sneddon, from the University of Ulster, will consider 'The inner life of Bishop Francis Hutchinson: politics, conversion and career, 1721–39', and the day will conclude with a presentation from the Church of Ireland's Librarian & Archivist, Dr Susan Hood, on 'Keeping the Records safe: next steps on the journey at the Representative Church Body Library'

Participants can register online at <http://churchofirelandhist.org/membership> Non-members are most welcome. They are asked to subscribe £7/€10 to assist with conference expenses (lunch not included).

Queries may be addressed to the honorary secretary, Dr Adrian Empey, by email at: [secretary.coihs@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.coihs@gmail.com) or to the society's website: <http://churchofirelandhist.org>

## **Obit - Mrs Helen Rodgers**

The funeral has taken place of the wife of the former Moderator of First Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Rev Dr Andrew Rodgers.

Mrs Helen Rodgers died peacefully at Craigavon Area Hospital on Friday, 22nd March before a Service of Celebration was held on Sunday afternoon in Brigh Presbyterian Church.

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Mrs Rodgers, who trained telephonists at the time, married Dr Rodgers following his move to Clones as a young Minister in 1957.

Late of Stewartstown and Dungannon, she was widely regarded in the community following her move to the area in 1965 after her husband succeeded Rev Dr Stanley Thompson as Minister at Dungannon Presbyterian Church.

The pair became hugely popular members of the community during their 32 years at the Scotch Street church, raising their three children Alison, John and David in the area.

Dr Rodgers was elected Moderator of the First Presbyterian Church in Ireland in 1993 whilst at his Dungannon post.

They remained in Mid-Ulster after his retirement in 1996 as he took up the role of Pastoral Assistant at First Cookstown.

## **Religion degree courses enroll '6,500 fewer first-year students'**

There are approximately 6,500 fewer first-year students taking religious studies or theology at university than there were eight years ago, figures suggest.

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According to the British Academy, the number of undergraduates on those types of courses slumped by around a third between 2011 and 2017.

President Sir David Cannadine described the situation as a worrying trend.

He was quoted by the Sunday Times as saying: "Never has an understanding of our spirituality and the role of religion been more important to navigating the challenges we face."

Figures published by the exams regulator Ofqual last year revealed a 13 per cent drop between 2018 and 2017 in the number of youngsters studying GCSE Religious Studies.

The figure fell by 37,500 - from 297,800 in 2017 to 260,300 in 2018.

Religious studies was ranked among the secondary school subjects people in the UK considered least important, according to a YouGov poll published last year. Only twelve per cent thought the subject was "very important".

Commenting on a report by the British Academy, professor of church history Sir Diarmaid MacCulloch expressed concern at the dwindling number of students embarking on religion programmes.

He told the Sunday Times: "We have a multi-faith country which needs a first-class understanding of its religious profile to make it work properly."

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## News briefs



**+++Clerical appointment** - The Revd Captain Colin Taylor has been appointed Incumbent of the Parish of Dromara and Garvaghy in the Diocese of Dromore. Colin has been serving

in the parish since 2014, initially as Evangelist in Charge and then as Diocesan Curate following his ordination as Presbyter in 2016. The date of the Service of Institution will be confirmed in due course.

**+++A cappella choral music at TCD** - Last Saturday evening in Trinity College Chapel, Cuore Chamber Choir, Laetare Vocal Ensemble and the Mornington Singers presented 'Constellations', an evening of a cappella choral music, featuring works by, among others, Lassus, Byrd, Purcell, Stanford, Kate Rusby, Michael Ostrzyga and Seán Doherty.

**+++Pipeworks in Sandford** - Yesterday afternoon Pipeworks presented a concert in Sandford parish church,

**April 1, 2019**

Ranelagh, with Rachel Talbot (soprano) and David O Shea (organ and piano).

**+++King's Singers at Belfast Cathedral** - The King's Singers will be performing their only concert on the island of Ireland in 2019 at Belfast Cathedral - the Cathedral Church of St Anne, on Saturday 22nd June 2019. The King's Singers are consistently welcomed on the world's great stages and have been throughout their 50 year history. They are ambassadors for musical excellence around the globe, and have an ongoing commitment to new music that has resulted in an extraordinary wealth of original works as well as leading to some fantastic collaborations.

**+++Theological Lecture at Queen's University** - This year's Church of Ireland Theological Lecture at Queen's University, Belfast, will be delivered by the Revd Professor David Wilkinson, Principal of St John's College, Durham, on Tuesday evening at 6.30pm. The lecture, entitled 'Science, Religion and the Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence', will be preceded by a tea and coffee reception from 5pm at The Hub Cafe, adjacent to the chaplaincy buildings on Elmwood Avenue. Due to popular demand, it is highly recommended that attendees register for free tickets through Eventbrite.

**+++Bishops' Appeal Cyclone Idai donation** - The Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal has released €10,000 in emergency funds to support relief efforts in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe in the wake of Cyclone Idai. Further funds will be added in the coming weeks and Bishops' Appeal welcomes support from parishes and individuals who wish to contribute. Bishops' Appeal partners Christian

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Aid and Tearfund Ireland are on the ground providing life-saving aid. Donations can be made online at <http://store.ireland.anglican.org/donations>

**+++ Blackrock Church and School Spring Fair** - All Saints Church and School Spring Fair will be held in the church grounds on Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, on Saturday 6 April from 10.00am–1.00pm.

**+++Educational grants for 2019–2020** - Educational grants for the academic year 2019–2020 are available for the daughters of the Church of Ireland Clergy, who are in Secondary Schools (1st–6th Year) or in Universities or other Third Level Colleges. Application forms are available at [clergydaughters@gmail.com](mailto:clergydaughters@gmail.com) or from the CDS Secretary, Mrs Caroline Cummins, 7 The Avenue, Rathdale, Enfield, Co. Meath, and should be returned, when completed, to arrive by 30th April.

**+++Food for thought** - “To have Faith in Christ means, of course, trying to do all that He says. There would be no sense in saying you trusted a person if you would not take his advice. Thus if you have really handed yourself over to Him, it must follow that you are trying to obey Him.” CS Lewis

## **Today in Christian history**

**April 1, 1548:** Parliament orders the publication of the Book of Common Prayer (BCP). Though Thomas Cranmer is rightly credited with the final form of the BCP, he worked with a committee of scholars, including Reformer Martin Bucer, to shape his famous liturgy.

**April 1, 2019**

**April 1, 1745:** David Brainerd begins his missionary work among the Native Americans of New Jersey, having previously worked in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. The New Jersey natives showed more interest than most, but Brainerd died of tuberculosis only two years into his work there. Still, his diary, published by Jonathan Edwards, became a major force in promoting missions work, inspiring missionaries like William Carey, Henry Martyn, and Thomas Coke.

## News Links

[Alf McCreary: 'Now that my wife Pat is a bishop, our lives don't feel any different from when she was ...](#)

Belfast Telegraph

He was ordained as a **Church of Ireland** cleric and served as a parish minister for some 20 years in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. He was ...

[Duke of Kent gives Royal approval at service to dedicate new church organ](#)

Belfast Newsletter

The Co Down parish of Kilmoody, near Ballygowan welcomed a special ... to the duke about ongoing peace and reconciliation work in Northern Ireland, ...

[Row over heritage as Banbridge church dating to 1904 demolished](#)

Belfast Telegraph

But the Presbyterian Church in Ireland said it was necessary to take action. "For many different reasons, and after prayerful consideration, our ...

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## **The Culture War Dividing Europe**

Wall Street Journal

Ireland's Catholic Church, weakened by revelations of widespread sexual abuse, has lost much of its appeal. Only a fraction of the crowds that greeted ...

## **David Fitzpatrick obituary: 'The most influential Irish historian of his generation'**

Irish Times

... of War of Independence hero Harry Boland (2003), the Irish-speaking Church of Ireland Bishop of Connor, Frederick MacNeice (father of the poet, ...

## **Conservation funding announced for 24 historic structures**

Galway Daily (press release)

Galway City Council, Bohermore Cemetery Catholic Máortuary Chapel; Catholic Chapel, Church of Ireland Chapel; Caretakers lodges. €15,000.

## **Rathgar's a joy — just don't mention the bus corridor**

The Times

Zion parish primary school is Church of Ireland. Rathgar national school is in Rathgar Avenue. St Louis senior primary school is a mainstream, ...

## **Lecture, book signing on Irish Presbyterians held**

Lewistown Sentinel

The talk is a historical study based on the book by the same name examining the **religious** culture of Irish immigrants in the early years of the American ...

**April 1, 2019**

**[Bishop accused of covering up child sex abuse scandal gives up safeguarding powers](#)**  
**[Telegraph.co.uk](#)**

The Bishop of Chester, Rt Rev Peter Forster, the longest-serving bishop within the Church of England (CoE), discovered that the Rev Gordon ...

**[The Church of England opens its doors to bring Leave and Remain voters together](#)**  
**[inews.co.uk](#)**

**Churches** and cathedrals across England are opening their doors to worshippers from both Leave and Remain camps on what was supposed to be ...

**[UK to reconsider Iranian Christian's asylum claim following global condemnation](#)**

Christian Post

In response to the news, the Church of England denounced the reasoning of the Home Office, with Bishop Paul Butler, the lead Church of England ...

**[Thou shalt cheat! Born again Christian running controversial essay-writing firm insists it is a 'godly ...](#)**

Daily Mail

But the Church of England has announced its support for a Government drive to 'stamp out the growing problem of essay writing services'. A Church ...

**[I've Never Seen So Many White People' – Jon Snow of Channel 4 Under Fire for Brexit Protest ...](#)**

Breitbart

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Jon Snow, star anchor for publicly-owned Channel 4 News, has drawn ... Snow, himself a white, upper-middle-class son of a Church of England ...

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