



## **Athy Rector presents icons to Christ Church Cathedral**

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Seven icons of the seven archangels written by the Revd Olive Donohoe were dedicated by Archbishop Michael Jackson in Christ Church Cathedral recently.

The Revd Olive Donohoe is Rector of the Athy, Kilberry and Kilkea group of parishes in the Diocese of Glendalough.

Olive wrote the icons as part of her annual retreats over seven years. Each icon represents a year's retreat. The icons are beautifully written in the Romanian tradition.

Olive was trained in icon writing by the renowned Romanian icon writer Michael Cucu. Michael is no stranger to Christ Church Cathedral. Some years ago the cathedral was presented with five icons written by Michael.

Dean Dermot Dunne paid tribute to Olive for donating her work. "I am truly grateful to Olive for her decision to donate the icons to the cathedral. May I encourage people to come and be with these icons written by one gifted Rector from Athy," he said.

The icons will be mounted on the South Ambulatory at the East End of the cathedral.

## **RTE celebration of Country Gospel Music**

Portadown singer and producer Colin Elliott is to join a unique RTE programme with leading Irish singers, preacher and choir for A Celebration of Country Gospel Music.

In a television first in Ireland on Sunday, February 10 at 11.10am, the broadcaster are featuring Country Gospel in Ireland on a special programme.

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**Colin Elliott, Louise Morrissey and James Kilbane.**

Colin Elliott will be featured alongside well known Country singer Louise Morrissey from Tipperary and Country Gospel singer James Kilbane from Mayo.

The programme will be a rich musical 'coming-together' of north, south, east and West; of Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and other Christian traditions.

The programme has been in planning for several months. Colin, Louise and James are joining with the Rev Alan Mitchell from Sligo and Portstewart, RTE and the Sligo Gospel Choir for an Irish country music celebration titled A Celebration of Country Gospel Music.



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Presented by the Rev Alan Mitchell, A Celebration of Country Gospel Music will feature Country Gospel songs and hymns. Expect to hear many Country Gospel favourites like One Day at a Time, I Saw the Light, Amazing Grace, The Old Rugged Cross along with You Can't Buy Heaven and many others. Report courtesy The Portadown Times.

## **Belfast Black Santa focus on homelessness and mental health**

Two hundred and twenty local charities, including those working with the homeless and with people with mental health issues, will receive grants from Belfast Cathedral's Black Santa Appeal at a special service on Sunday February 3.

The Sit-out by Dean Stephen Forde, the Bishop of Down and Dromore and Canons of the Cathedral in the week before Christmas 2018 raised £168,000. Special guest Lynda Bryans, journalism lecturer and former broadcaster, will hand over the cheques at Sunday's Good Samaritans Service.

The Sit-out was founded in 1976 by Dean Sammy Crooks, dubbed Black Santa by the local media because of his black Anglican cloak, and the tradition is continued every year by the Dean of the Cathedral.

Charities to benefit from the money donated all do vital work in the community, supporting children, people with disabilities, the elderly, and families who are socially disadvantaged. A portion goes to Christian Aid to help people in need overseas.

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The Dean has this year focused on organisations which support the homeless and also charities helping people with mental health issues. All grants range from £550 to £1,000.

Some of the larger charities to benefit include *Shelter*, the *Simon Community* and the *Welcome Organisation*, and smaller charities include *The Wave Project*, which offers surf therapy and beach schools to help young people feel less anxious and more engaged in education, and east Belfast-based *Fighting Words*.

*Fighting Words* runs creative writing workshops for children and young people. Volunteer mentors inspire the young writers to develop their self-expression and self-esteem. The project prioritises children from disadvantaged communities, and the Black Santa grant will fund travel costs for volunteer mentors to assist in more workshops and provide them with personal development training in areas such as working with autism.

*The Over the Hill Music Collective* receives a grant of £550. This unique project gives older musicians a space for freedom of expression and a place to build confidence and community. The charity is now working with people in late stage dementia in north and west Belfast. The Black Santa grant will help the organisation train more musicians to work with these older groups.

*Rosie's Trust*, which also receives a £550 grant, strives to help people dealing with terminal illness, disability, or receiving cancer treatment to stay together with their pets. Pain, tiredness, and costs mean the person can feel the

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only option is to give their pet up, and this causes stress, guilt and even grief.

*Rosie's Trust* volunteers walk dogs, empty cat litter trays, arrange vet appointments and even offer short term fostering, so the owner knows their pet will always be there for them.

Reflecting on the Good Samaritans Service, Dean Forde said: "It is an amazing privilege to be able to distribute £168,000 in one afternoon to 220 charities. This recognises the trust the public places in the Cathedral by giving so generously to us so we can pass that generosity on to the people and organisations that need it the most.

"The range of charities and the work that is done is very humbling because so many people give of their time and talents to support others."

Dean Forde said he hopes to focus on particular areas each year. "This year I have chosen once again to support those charities working with homeless people and rough sleepers, as this continues to be a very serious, visible and complex issue in the city of Belfast. It is why we are working with charities and organisations who have knowledge and expertise.

"We are also focusing on organisations supporting people who are facing mental ill health. I am aware this is an issue which touches the lives of many people and those that know them best. It is an area still in need of significant resourcing."

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## **US and Irish school choirs in concert for Enable Ireland in Galway**

St Nicholas Collegiate Church in Galway city is set to host two talented choirs of young singers in February, all for a very worthy cause.

The award-winning Oxford High School Choir from Michigan and Coláiste Bhaile Chláir School Choir from Claregalway will perform at 5pm, Monday 11 February, to raise money for Enable Ireland.

The Michigan Youth Choir will sing all genres of chorale music including popular hits such as 'You Raise Me Up', 'Bridge over Troubled Water' and 'Amazing Grace', while Coláiste Bhaile Chláir School Choir will sing as Gaeilge and in English, accompanied by musicians.

Enable Ireland provides services to 600 children both in the city and county with physical and sensory disabilities.

The charity uses the Social Model of Disability where the focus is on the child, and not the disability.

There are no tickets as the concert is free and there will be a collection at the end in aid of Enable Ireland Galway.

## **New figures on religious breakdown in Northern Ireland - Working age Protestants drop by 14%**

There has been a sharp drop in the number of working age people in Northern Ireland designating themselves as Protestants, according to the latest figures.

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According to the latest Labour Force Survey Religion Report, between 1990 and 2017 the proportion of the population aged 16 and over reporting as Protestant has fallen from 56% to 42%, while the proportion reporting as Catholic increased from 38% to 41%.

The number of people reporting as "other/non-determined" has more than doubled over this period - from 6% to 17%.

The Labour Force Survey Religion Report examines the labour market differences of the two religions in Northern Ireland, including unemployment rates and levels of economic activity.

Fair employment legislation requires public bodies in Northern Ireland to promote "equality of opportunity" between people on a number of grounds, including religion.

The Equality Commission also monitors all private sector firms with more than 10 employees.

Historically the Catholic community in the province has experienced a higher unemployment rate than the Protestant community, however over the years this gap has gradually narrowed. In 2017 the rate was equal for both groups at 4%.

These rates first levelled off in 2015, with the latest report showing this has remained the case into 2017.

The difference in the level of economic inactivity between the two communities has also changed over the years. Economic inactivity refers to those who are not in education, employment, training, or actively seeking work.



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In 1992, the rate of economic inactivity rate was 24% for Protestants and 34% for Catholics, in 2017 the rates were 27% and 30%, respectively.

"Some similar patterns emerge when examining the changes in the reasons for working age economic inactivity among Catholics between 1992 and 2017 – those looking after family/home has decreased, and the proportion who are sick or disabled has increased over this time period," the report notes.

"However, the proportion of working age economically inactive Catholics who are students has increased, whilst the Protestant figure has decreased."

In terms of how the two communities were split across different job sectors, the greatest difference is in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector, which employed 65% Protestants and 35% Catholics in 2017.

## **Irish-language choir stages protest after being cut out of Masses**

A lay Irish-language Mass group sang hymns outside a Catholic diocesan event in Dublin on Thursday evening in protest at what they claim is their exclusion from their local parish for the past 18 months, according to a report in the Irish Times.

Pobal Aifreann Dhún Laoghaire staged the protest at Holy Cross College, Clonliffe in Drumcondra, Dublin, before the launch of a booklet of music for Irish-language Masses, *Canaimis – Ceol don Aifreann*, edited by Fr Paul Kenny, parish priest in Dun Laoghaire, south Dublin.

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“The very same Fr Paul Kenny who abolished the Irish-language Mass in his own parish,” as Pauline Uí Argáin, director of the Irish-language choir at Dún Laoghaire, put it.

“We are not natural protesters. We are a church choir. We have spent a year and a half writing letters and seeking meetings. The parish priest has refused to meet us. We feel let down and hurt by the way we have been treated by the parish priest and by the archdiocese,” she said.

### **‘No thanks’**

For 50 years, Pobal Aifreann Dhún Laoghaire organised an Irish-language Mass in St Michael’s parish church there. They also organised Mass readings and Prayers of the Faithful, as well as supporting priests who needed help with Irish.

However, in the summer of 2017, Fr Kenny “suddenly ended the Irish-language Mass. And after 50 years that was that. No consultation, no words of regret, no thanks or acknowledgment for all the years of loyal service to the parish,” the group said in a statement.

It said it had also written many letters to Archbishop Diarmuid Martin “to no avail”.

Ms Uí Argáin said “the publication of *Canaimis – Ceol don Aifreann* was the final straw”. It was just “window dressing to show that the official church is supportive of the Mass in Irish, when the reality on the ground in our experience is the opposite”, she said.

Fr Kenny has made no comment on the matter but a spokeswoman for Dublin’s archdiocese said its Coiste Tréadach, which advises on pastoral ministry to Irish

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speakers, had met members of Pobal Aifrin Dhún Laoghaire “on a number of occasions and remains hopeful a resolution can be found in due course”.

## **News briefs**



### **+++An amazing exhibition of the hidden crosses -**

Barbara Dass discovered them in months of walk-prayer in the parks of South, North, East and West Belfast. Each cross has its own beauty and testify that God is beside us always. At Duncairn Arts Centre - 4Corners Belfast event

### **+++Three appointments in the Diocese of Down -**

Revd Mervyn Jamison is to be incumbent of the Parish of Drumbo. In September 2017 Mervyn was introduced as Minister-in-Charge of the parish which has become a vibrant and growing worshipping community. We

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congratulate him on his appointment as rector. (The date of the institution will be announced shortly.) Congratulations also to Revd Adrian Dorrian and Revd Scott McDonald, both to become Vicars in the Lecale Area Mission Partnership (LAMP). They will be instituted at a service in Down Cathedral on Sunday 3 March at 11.00 am.

**+++Clontarf Choral Competition reminder** - the closing date for entries for the Clontarf Choral Competition is this Sunday, February 3. Full details here:  
<https://dublin.anglican.org/.../second-clontarf-choral-compet...>

**+++The King's Singers are coming to Belfast Cathedral**  
- For their only concert in Ireland in 2019. It will take place on Saturday 22nd June. See Belfast Cathedral web site for more info and tickets.

**+++Candlemas Procession at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin -**

Candle-lit service of readings and music celebrating the Presentation of Christ in the Temple and marking the conclusion of the season of Christmas in the church year. All are welcome. Free of charge.

Sunday, February 3, 2019. Time: 17:00h

**+++Iona Community ColumbaFest** - Put the dates in your diary now! ColumbaFest returns to Glasgow for a third time on 7th-9th June 2019. This year's theme, 'WANDERING + WONDERING', invites us to consider the physical, spiritual and emotional.

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**+++Anglican priest extradited from Australia** - the Revd Meirion Griffiths, has been extradited on charges of historic sexual abuse. He is believed to be the first Anglican priest to be extradited on historic sexual charges. The former West Sussex vicar has appeared in court to answer sex assault charges after being flown to the UK under police guard. He pleaded not guilty at Crawley Magistrates Court on Thursday, the same day his plane from Australia arrived at Heathrow Airport. The 80-year-old of Coachwood Way in the Maddington area of Perth, Western Australia is accused of several indecent assaults against a girl then in her late teens during the mid-1970s.

**+++A thought from Seamus Heaney** -

So hope for a great sea-change  
On the far side of revenge.  
Believe that further shore  
Is reachable from here.  
Believe in miracles  
And cures and healing wells.

## **February 1 in Christian history**

**February 2, 767:** Alcuin, the academic who would later play a large role in establishing schools under Charlemagne, becomes headmaster of York Cathedral School, where he once studied. Alcuin's curriculum was built on the seven liberal arts: the elementary Trivium (grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic) and the more advanced Quadrivium (music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy).



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**February 2, 1594:** Giovanni F. da Palestrina, the most gifted composer of Renaissance church music, dies.

**February 2, 1745:** Popular British poet and dramatist Hannah More is born. She renounced the social life and concentrated on religious efforts, such as setting up Sunday schools. For her work with the Clapham Sect of British social reformers, she was once derisively called "a bishop in petticoats" .

## **News links**

CENTURY-LONG TIES SEVERED

### **Putin assails Ukraine Orthodox church reform**

Putin said the push for the new church was rooted in “the struggle for power” and provoked “animosity and intolerance.” [More from Religion News Service](#)

SOCIAL CAPITAL

### **Fat and happy: the comforts of practicing a religion**

In 35 countries, people who are active in religious congregations tend to be happier than those who attend infrequently or not at all. But active participation in religion is also associated with being fat. [More from Religion News Service](#)

SHADOW CABINET

### **How the religious right gained unprecedented access to Trump**

As the president offers a sympathetic ear – and policies to match – critics see a de facto advisory committee, violating federal law. [More from The Guardian](#)

**AN INVITATION  
to become a**

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