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CS Lewis parish home in Great Railway Journeys



Michael Portillo (left) and Alistair McGrath in St Mark's Parish Church, Dundela

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St Mark's Dundela featured in a recent episode of "Great British Railway Journeys" on BBC 2. The attraction was, of course, the famous Christian apologist, C.S. Lewis who was baptised in the font there. There was also some lovely footage of the interior of the church.

Presenter, Michael Portillo, was travelling from Belfast to Portrush and interviewed C.S. Lewis biographer and distinguished Oxford theologian, Dr Alister McGrath, in the pews.

Viewers heard how Lewis' parents had met and married in St Mark's; his mother Flora, the daughter of the rector and his father Albert, a parishioner.

Dr McGrath explained how Lewis fell away from his faith during adolescence but returned to Christianity in his thirties. Lewis's faith profoundly affected his work, and his wartime radio broadcasts on the subject of Christianity brought him wide acclaim.

Second C of I church vandalised

The interview with Dr McGrath begins outside Campbell College at 11.31 mins into the programme and moves to St Mark's at 12.50 mins.

St Michan's Church on Church Street, Dublin 7 has been targeted by thieves who have vandalised its crypt and taken the head of an 800 year old mummy known as 'The Crusader'.

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The discovery was made shortly before lunch time yesterday (Monday February 25) when the guide was preparing to open the church for visitors.

The crypt has been badly damaged and several of the mummies, including the 400 year old remains of a nun, have been desecrated in the incident. The Crusader's body was turned over and his head has been removed.

The Archbishop of Dublin has expressed sadness and outrage at the incident. "I am shocked that someone would target this ancient burial place and desecrate the remains of those lying within it. Not only have these individuals desecrated the sacred crypt but they have destroyed these historic mummies which have been preserved in St Michan's for hundreds of years. I would appeal to those responsible to examine their consciences and return the head of The Crusader to its rightful place," he stated.

The Vicar of the Christ Church Cathedral Group of Parishes, of which St Michan's is part, Archdeacon David Pierpoint said he is upset and disappointed that the church has been targeted again by vandals. The crypt of St Michan's was vandalised in 1996.

"The actions of these people are devastating and sacrilegious. We are upset at the amount of damage that has been caused. But also the crypt will have to close so tourists will not be able to visit. It is very frustrating," he said adding: "I would appeal to anyone with information to contact the Gardaí."

The incident is being investigated by An Garda Síochána.

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Break-in at St Finian's in Greencastle

Gardai are also investigating a break-in at St Finian's Church of Ireland in Greencastle, during which a cross was stolen. The incident's believed to have happened sometime on Thursday night or Friday morning when it appears an intruder or intruders forced open the door into the vestry at the rear of the building.

The break-in was discovered on Friday by two members of the congregation. On Sunday morning, the Bishop's Curate-in-Charge of the Grouped Parishes of Moville Union, Donagh, Culdaff and Cloncha (Malin), Rev Suzanne Cousins, led prayers for whoever was responsible at the regular Service of Morning Prayer in St Finian's.

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“The congregation asked God’s blessing on them,” Rev Cousins said afterwards, “and asked that the symbol of the cross would be a reminder to them of God’s deep and wonderful love, shown through Jesus’ coming to us, his death for us, and his resurrection which saves us.

“In the grand scheme of things,” she said, “this is a small incident. No physical damage was done to any person or to the church building or furniture, and for this we are thankful. However, the incident is unsettling and disappointing for the parishioners.”

St Finian’s, which overlooks the fishing port of Greencastle in north Inishowen, is a pre-disestablishment church and the oldest of the five churches in the Moville group of parishes.

“It would be best for everyone if the person or persons responsible quietly came forward and returned the cross,” Rev Cousins said. She thanked gardai for their response to the incident and confirmed that officers had taken materials away from the church to help their investigation.

On a positive note, Rev Cousins said, another parishioner had offered to donate a replacement cross if the original wasn’t found or returned soon. “For this, we are very grateful and quite moved,” she said.

“We’re also grateful to our bishop, Rt Rev Ken Good, to the Archdeacon of Raphoe, Ven. David Huss, and to the Archdeacon of Derry, Ven. Robert Miller, who have kindly conveyed to the parishioners their prayerful support and offered to help in any way they can. Thank you on behalf of the parish for all the prayers and expressions of support.”

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Dinner to celebrate over 55 years of Wycliffe Bible Translators' work in Ghana

You are warmly invited to the Ghana Celebration Dinner to celebrate over 55 years of Wycliffe Bible Translators' work in Ghana. It takes place on Friday 5th April 2019 in 2nd Broughshane Presbyterian Church Hall, Ballymena at 7:30pm (doors open 6:45pm). Tickets are £12 (+ booking fee).

Come along and hear stories of how God has been at work significantly growing his church through the ministry of his word in the language people understand best. Those God has used from Northern Ireland who have gone to serve in Ghana will be honoured, such as Ian and Claire Gray, Mary Steele and Bob and Joan Duff.

Wycliffe's Northern Ireland Team Leader, Ricky Ferguson, is excited about the event. He told us: "We will also recognise the great number of churches and individuals who have faithfully supported the work in Ghana. This is an event where you will be encouraged about how God has been at work and how we can continue to be involved in what he is doing through his frontline mission of Bible translation. Please come along, invite your friends and advertise it in your church."

Tickets are available for the Ghana Celebration Dinner# Friday 5th April 2019 in 2nd Broughshane Presbyterian Church Hall at 7:30pm Tickets for the evening will cost £12

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(+ £1.50 booking fee). You can purchase your tickets online at - <https://www.evangelicalbookshop.co.uk/collections/events-tickets/products/ghana-celebration-dinner>

Fund raiser quiz for Romania work

A Table Quiz supporting The Smiles Foundation will be held in High Kirk Presbyterian Church, Ballymena on Saturday 9th March 2019, starting at 7:30pm. Each team can be made up of 4-6 people – £5 per person and all proceeds will be going to help the work of The Smiles Foundation. So please put the date in your diary and plan to be there for a night of fun and hear something of what The Smiles Foundation is doing to bring God's love to many in Romania.

The Smiles Foundation works among the poorest and most marginalised communities in Bihor County, North West Romania. Many people from all over Northern Ireland have been on one or more of their Mission trips, a trip which really brings home the incredible need in that part of the country and the amazing work the charity is doing.

You can find out more by going to The Smiles Foundation website at - <https://www.thesmilesfoundation.org/>

So why not come and pit your wits against the quizmaster! Should be a good evening's fun and you'll be supporting some very worthwhile projects run by The Smiles

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Foundation. For more information or if you have any queries get in touch with Ally Stewart on 07845 754336.

Prepared to Go course for short term mission abroad

‘Prepared to Go’ is a day of practical interactive training for anyone who will be engaging in short-term mission overseas. The one-day event is being hosted by Mission Action Partnership and held at Belfast Bible College. It takes place on Saturday 6th April 2019 from 9:30am – 4pm.

PREPARED TO GO

Saturday 6th April / £10
Belfast Bible College

A day of training for those preparing
for cross-cultural ministry on short-term
mission trips.

mission

‘Prepared To Go’ is an event for anyone for cross-cultural ministry on short-term mission trips! Just as we read of Jesus preparing his first disciples for cross-cultural mission so too, today, appropriate training can make all the difference to an individual or team’s ability to have a positive experience and make a significant impact on those who they go to serve and work amongst.

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The training will be led by people with experience of sending and supporting short-term mission teams overseas. Throughout the day there will also be time for questions and discussion. The aim of the day is to help prepare individuals, team leaders and members of teams who intend to be involved in short-term mission overseas.”

Areas that will be covered during ‘Prepared To Go’ training day at Belfast Bible College include – *

Sharing Faith Across Cultures

- * Health, Safety and Well-being
- * Team Development & Discipleship
- * also
- * Teaching English Effectively
- * Dealing with Poverty and Injustice
- * Understanding Islam
- * Ministering to Children

The cost is £10 and this includes tea/coffee throughout the day and lunch.

‘Prepared To Go’ is planned and organised by [Mission Action Partnership

<https://www.globalconnections.org.uk/map>

and Belfast Bible College.

<https://www.belfastbiblecollege.com/>

To be Rector of Portstewart

The Rev Canon Malcolm Ferry, rector of St Augustine’s Parish Church, Diocese of Derry and Raphoe, has been appointed rector of the Parish of Agherton, Portstewart, Connor Diocese.

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The Rev Canon Malcolm Ferry, newly appointed rector of Agherton Parish, and his wife Carol.

Malcolm is married to Carol and they have three grown up children, James (23) and Sarah (22) who currently work in England, and Rebekah (19), a second year student at Loughborough University.

Brought up in a large family in the Parish of Donaghmore, Armagh Diocese, Malcolm attended St Michael's Church in the village of Castlecaulfield. He was a member of the Boys' Brigade and taught Sunday School. He graduated from Stranmillis College, Belfast, and taught for two years before taking a position in industry.

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Through the fellowship of vocation in the Diocese of Armagh, Malcolm entered Church of Ireland Theological College and after ordination was appointed as Curate Assistant to Agherton Parish, Portstewart, in 1996.

Following his first incumbency in Kilwaughter and Cairncastle with Craigyhill in the Diocese of Connor (1999-2003), he moved to the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe, where he was rector in Castlerock with Dunboe and Fermoy, (2003-2008); and Clooney with Strathfoyle (2008-2014), before moving to St Augustine's.

“I want to pay tribute to the people of Derry and Raphoe where we have been very happy,” Malcolm said. “Their kindness and love supported us during difficult times and we will be forever grateful for the times we shared together. It was a special honour in the Diocese of Derry to be appointed Canon and join my older brother Canon David Ferry in the Cathedral of St Columb's.”

Malcolm said his appointment as rector of Agherton brings him back to the church where his ordained ministry began. “We have many happy memories and Agherton Parish was formational for me in my ministry,” he said.

New Youth Ministry adviser for Kilmore Diocese

The Diocese of Kilmore has announced the appointment of Leitrim-native, Mr. Francis Keaney, as the new Diocesan Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

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Francis is a native of the parish of Glenfarne, studied in St. Clare's Comprehensive School in Manorhamilton before undertaking third-level studies in Theology and Philosophy at All Hallows College, Dublin from where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 2013. He then attended Trinity College Dublin from where he graduated with a Higher Diploma in Education after which he moved to NUI Galway to complete his Masters in 2015.



Since then, he has taught in a number of schools including St Clare's Comprehensive School in Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim; St. Louis' Community School, Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo; and most recently in Roscommon Community College. He plays an active role in his local parish community of Glenfarne where he is a Minister of the Word in his local church, St. Mary's, and is a player-member of Glenfarne GAA Club. He is also involved with the Irish Pilgrimage Trust.

In addition to the GAA, his hobbies include musical theatre and acting. He loves all kinds of music and takes part in local productions as often as possible.

A spokesperson for the Diocese of Kilmore said that Francis' recent appointment to this very important position in the diocese was to be welcomed. "The priests and

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people of the Diocese of Kilmore wish Francis every blessing as he undertakes his new role. Reaching out to our young people is a major priority for the diocese. His appointment will build on the good work already been undertaken with young people in schools and parishes. His own work will further contribute to the development of a more structured and focused ministry to the young people of Kilmore.”



C of I Reader training completed

Those in training for Diocesan Reader ministry have just had their last day of study at CITI. The end is in sight! Ten of the fifteen are from Down and Dromore and, on satisfactory completion of their final assignments, will be

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commissioned in August. They will join the existing team of 44 Readers in the diocese.

Meanwhile, the new intake has already visited the college for their first weekend as they start their course with the focus on being 'Fit for Purpose'.

Down and Dromore diocese has sent seven people for reader training in 2019–21.

Potency of Gospel theme of parish weekend

All Saints' Church/UniChurch, Belfast, parishioners listen intently during one of the talks over the parish weekend. All Saints' Church/UniChurch, Belfast, held a residential parish weekend from February 15-17 at Castlewellan Castle, Co Down.

Over the course of the weekend, 'the invisible potency of the Gospel' was one of the many truths that unfolded from the parables of Matthew 13.

The weekend was led by the Rev Tony Jones of Christ Church, Durham, a large and vibrant church in the heart of the city.

The rector of All Saints'/ UniChurch, Belfast, the Rev Trevor Johnston, said: "We were challenged and stirred by the faithful teaching of God's Word, through which we were

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shown the unstoppable, almost imperceptible growth and expansion of the Kingdom of God.

“We were called to deeper repentance; to recognise the precious gift that Christ’s Kingdom is, which is stumbled upon by some, sought out by many, as that inestimably great treasure.”

Trevor added: “Special times of prayer for the message of Christ’s Kingdom to go forward in Belfast and beyond were also encouraging each morning, crowned by the wonderful fellowship had as young and old forged new friendships and strengthened existing friendships.

“Coffees, ice-cream and getting lost in the Peace Maze together provided those light-hearted moments to further foster maturity in our church family.”

Journey to the Cross presentations

The Journey to the Cross - is being presented on two successive nights in churches in Pomeroy and Rathfriland.

The Journey to the Cross' is a presentation of Holy Week through song and narration.

The event will run on Friday 29th March in Altedesert Parish Church, Pomeroy at 8pm and again on Saturday 30th March in First Rathfriland Presbyterian Church at 7.30pm. Refreshments will be provided afterwards on both evenings.

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News briefs

###USPG Green schools resources - New assembly for key stages 2 and 3 exploring the Green Schools Initiative with school children in South India now available. Talk, Powerpoint and video all available to download. [<http://www.uspg.org.uk/lent>](<https://t.co/tJcEAApYao>)

###Capella Caecilliani at Clandeboye - A Spring Celebration in Words and Music on Sat 2 March. A performance in this very distinctive venue. Bar service available before the concert and at the interval. Tickets (£16) on sale at caeciliana.org

###Fairtrade fortnight begins - Thousands of individuals, companies and places of worship across the UK will come together to celebrate the people who grow our food and produce products in developing countries. Resources are available here.

ow.ly/fop230nNzd1

###Jewish heritage tour of Belfast - The next Jewish Heritage walking tour in Belfast city centre is on Tuesday 12 March 10.45am meeting at the Jaffe Fountain, Victoria Square. For more info please email Steve Jaffe at belfastjewishheritage@yahoo.com

###Farewell to Rathmichael - There was standing room only in Rathmichael Parish Church on Sunday morning as the parish family gathered to bid farewell to their Rector of almost 27 years, Canon Fred Appelbe. He is pictured with his wife Sonia and their daughters Debbie and Hayley.

churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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###Food for thought - “There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal...

“It is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit...

“Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbour is the holiest object presented to your senses.”

C. S. Lewis in *The Weight of Glory*

February 26 in Christian history

February 26, 398: John Chrysostom, the greatest preacher of the early church, becomes bishop of Constantinople. So well-regarded was his preaching that he earned the name Chrysostom: "golden-mouth." He was exiled in 403 for his outspoken criticism of his congregation, including Empress Eudoxia. After the church recalled him, he again offended Eudoxia, who exiled him again. He died three years later.

February 26, 1536: Swiss Protestants sign the First Helvetic Confession, the first uniform confession of faith for all German-speaking Switzerland and an important Reformation document.

February 26, 1857: American Congregational clergyman Charles Sheldon, author of more than 50 books and editor of the *Christian Herald*, is born in Wellsville, New York. His most famous work, *In His Steps* (1896), sold more than 23 million copies and spawned the recent "What Would Jesus Do?" phenomenon.

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