

Clogher ecumenical prayer service for Pentecost



The large crowd who attended the outdoor service at St. Molua's on Pentecost Sunday.

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Bishop Lawrence Duffy and Bishop John McDowell who led the service.

St.Molua's Church of Ireland in the Parish of Magheracloone, near Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan in Clogher Diocese hosted this year's Ecumenical Prayer

Service for Pentecost on Sunday, 9th June which was well attended by around 150 people.

The church in the townland of Camaghy is named after the ancient patron of the parish whose feast day is still marked with a service on the Sunday close to the Feast Day of 4th August.

Both Bishops of Clogher, the Right Revd John McDowell and Most Revd Lawrence Duffy took part in the outdoor service which also featured singing from Cantemus Chamber Choir and a reflection on Pentecost by Lauren McCullins, a teenage member of St. Finbarr's Church of Ireland in Carrickmacross.



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The service which took place in warm sunshine was introduced by Bishop John McDowell who welcomed everyone to the church which was built in 1824 and is now one of a number of churches in the group known as Carrickmacross Union, Magheracloone and Ardragh where the Rector is Revd Colin McConaghie.

Readings for Pentecost were by Eileen Gallagher and Caroline Merrin.

The address was given by Bishop Lawrence Duffy who said he was delighted to return to his roots in Magheracloone, noting the great history of St. Molua's Church.

He said: "Our Churches have so much in common - our belief and faith in one God, in Jesus Christ our Saviour, in his death and resurrection; we baptise in the name of the Trinity and we all try our best to live by the command to love one another.

"The challenge in all our churches





is to be a disciple of Jesus Christ today - to be a person of faith, hope and love.

“On the first Pentecost, despite the variation of languages, we are told that the disciples all understood each other. Our common language is love - it is a language that is understood by all. The Holy Spirit is our guide and our teacher. May the Holy Spirit lead us all to the fullness of truth and faith.”

Other participants were local clergy, Revd Colin McConaghie, Rector of Carrickmacross Union, Magheracloone and Ardragh and Monsignor Joseph McGuinness, Parish Priest in Carrickmacross.

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Twenty-first diocesan synod for Bishop of Cork

Bishop Paul Colton reflected on changes and opportunities as he spoke to the diocesan synod.

He said -

Somehow this year, with this, my 21st presidential address to you in Diocesan Synod, I feel, like young adults in former times, and that I am beginning to earn 'the keys'. Truth be told, time has flown. A lot has been done. Much remains to be done, and great are the opportunities we have together for the kingdom of God.

The last 12 months have been especially busy with the roll out of all sorts of new legislative and compliance developments:

- new legislation governing admissions to schools has meant that all schools have had to review and rewrite, with my approval as patron, their policies policies in schools;
- GDPR has involved significant changes in practices for all of us, and, in the case of the Diocese, reconfiguring our databases;
- A new Adult Safeguarding policy has been introduced and the training that involves has been completed;
- A new and much revised edition of Safeguarding Trust has involved update training for all our workers, ordained and lay, in the Diocese;
- The commencement of certain sections of the Children First Act 2015 has introduced 'mandatory reporting'; and

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- the processing of re-vetting of all workers has begun in order to comply with legislation too.

All this is part and parcel of the discipline and routine of being an organisation – in our case, a church – in the world of today.

Recurring themes:

In these presidential addresses of the last 20 years there have been recurring themes:

- Our communion with each other and with me as your bishop
- Encouraging everyone to have a big picture, an overview, of what we are as the Church in this place;
- Holding up a vision of being the best that we can be as a Church together in response to God's love for us and his call to us: in worship, ministry and mission;
- Engaging with the rapid changes around us in this part of Ireland,; and
- Not living out our Christianity behind secure barricades, remote from the issues of the wider world; rather. going out there, instead of expecting everyone to come in.

Times have changed

As I was sitting down to write this address last Wednesday evening, a good friend from Belfast, sent me this photograph. It was taken 30 years ago. Bishop Poyntz had moved the year before from Cork to Connor. His predecessor Bishop William McCappin had appointed me as Chairperson of the Connor Youth Council.

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In those days, effectively, as well as being a curate in the Diocese, I was also the Diocesan Youth Officer, and I took on that role following in the footsteps of someone who I've known since those days: Christopher Peters.

The photo shows Bishop Poyntz presenting the trophy at a Diocesan Football Competition to the winning team – from my own youth club made up mainly of choir members at Saint Anne's Cathedral, Belfast.

Think of how much the world has changed in those 30 years, not least for young people, and indeed for all of us.

In the years since, the economy here has bounced between extremes; the social values and mores of Irish society have shifted; the population has risen and is rising; the younger generation are now largely a highly educated, mobile, flexible and adaptable workforce; politics has shifted from the exclusive dominance of either of two political groupings; Irish culture has gained global popularity; following the brain drain of the 1980s employment standards have improved; from the 1990s onwards we have been enriched by inward migration to our country, with pluralism and diversity that brings; house prices have soared; and infrastructure has changed beyond recognition. Much more could be added, including about continuing shortcomings, but all of that is before we take account of technological and social developments that have turned our lives on their head.

Much as we know that there has been population decline in some parts of rural Ireland, there has, in fact been growth too. In West Cork, overall, for example, has increased by 3.5%.

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Exhilarating:

I find all of this exhilarating. Yes, it is demanding, and at times worrying and perplexing. We know that institutional religion faces existential questions about its future, but lots of the questions which arise, have emerged more widely also for other institutions and communities in society. We need, therefore, to explore them, not in isolation, but in partnership with other churches, other faiths, and by engaging with other agencies and disciplines. We do not live and believe in isolation or insulated from all this around us.

How are we to respond?

How are we to respond? One of the greatest risks (among many) is that we assume that our calling is to keep things as they always have been without change. Of course, many things are at the core of the Gospel tradition that we cherish and pass on: the love of God, the message of salvation, the presence of the Holy Spirit with us, the community of faith, the proclamation of the Word, the celebration of the sacraments, faithful ministry, and the response we each make to God's call. All of these, at the heart of our vocation as Christians, ought not to be displaced by other concerns such as the structure and organisation of our church locally; our love of our buildings; the present model and pattern of ministry, for example, all of which risk leading us down the road of being more preoccupied with 'keeping the show on the road' than responding to God's call and the exhilarating world of opportunities around us. *To be continued.*

St Columba commemorated at Gartan

This year's Annual Service of Thanksgiving for the Life and Service of St Columba, took place as usual, on Sunday, at churchnewsireland@gmail.org



Gartan Abbey, despite fears that threatened rain might force worshippers instead to the shelter of St Columba's Church in nearby Church Hill. Thankfully, but for a light and brief downfall, the abbey site remained largely dry and sun shone.

The annual service was led by the Rector of Conwal Union with Gartan, Rev David Houlton. He was assisted by the preacher for the afternoon, the Archdeacon of Raphoe, Ven David Huss, who was attending his first St Columba's Day Service in Gartan; the Rev Canon David Crooks who was present at the first such celebration of the modern era, back in 1962; and Rev Katie McAteer, a regular participant nowadays in the annual service.

St Columba's Day coincided this year with Pentecost Sunday and, in his sermon, Archdeacon Huss likened the saint to the apostles who had gathered and prayed in the upper room on the original Pentecost Day, before the Holy

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Spirit fell upon them and they went out to spread the good news.

Archdeacon Huss said Columba was “one of the greatest evangelists the Christian world had ever known and certainly by far the most famous to have come from Donegal”.

“We believe,” the preacher said, “it was at the age of about 42 that Columba – or Colmcille – felt that driving force of the Holy Spirit pushing him out from his home and his family connections here in Ireland to go to Britain and to spread the gospel there. The reasons are mixed; they’re hard to discern; they’re lost to some extent in the mists of time. But we interpret his action as a response to the call of God to go.

“Columba turned his back on his native land in order to go and spread the good news. Those people of Scotland, those warlike Picts in that area, were not likely to turn up at Derry or Donegal and come knocking on the door asking to hear about Jesus. Someone had to go to them. That was Columba’s legacy: he went.”

Archdeacon Huss said Columba took a bold step when he embarked on ministry nearly 1,500 years ago. And on Pentecost Day, we, too, were being called to go. We were being called to repentance and faith. Like Columba, the preacher said, our mission needed to begin not in pride but in tears. “We need those brothers and sisters in Africa, in Asia, in South America. We need them to come here and help us. We need to learn from them. We need to repent of our pride and our absorption with the things of this world so that we can be set free to live and work for God.”

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There was a call, too, to churches here to consider new forms of outreach, church planting, fresh expressions, gatherings of people in informal settings to look at the Scriptures and hear the good news of Jesus, places where people are able to question and discuss and discover as well as simply having the Word preached.

The music for the service was provided once again by the Britannia Concert Band, and afterward refreshments were served by the parishioners of Gartan. There was also the presentation of a birthday cake to Gartan parishioner Mrs Fanny Russell, whose family are stalwart supporters of the annual service.

Service to Scouting in North Belfast recognised

Congratulations to 81-year-old Billy Sholdis, a parishioner of St Matthew's Parish, Belfast, who has been awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours.

His award is for his dedication to Scouts in the North West Belfast District. Billy, who has lived all his life in the Shankill area, joined the Scouts as a Cub when he was eight, and, in his own words, 'never really left.'

Even when he had to officially retire at 65, he continued to help out, and when rules changed he renewed his commitment and is now assistant scout leader of 20th North and West Belfast Scouts.

"I went through the ranks, starting as a Cub when I was eight, and when I finished I began to lead the Cubs," Billy said. The Scouts meet in a hall in Bray Street – they moved into the original hall – which had been used by the ARP –



after the war. That hall was replaced, and then replaced again.

“We worked right through the Troubles, we never closed,” Billy said. “We had a good set of leaders, you cannot do anything without a good set of leaders. The only thing we had to change was to tell the boys not to wear their uniform when going to the hall.”

Nowadays, Billy walks the short distance from his home off the Woodvale Road to the hall every morning. “I am what they used to call the unofficial caretaker,” he said. He returns on Monday nights for Scouts, on Tuesday nights for Cubs and on Wednesday nights for Beavers and Squirrels.

Billy, who never married, worked as a cobbler with Rogan Bros in Shankill Road, before moving to the Belfast

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Corporation of Libraries. He was later a gardener in Woodvale Park before retirement.

When he first learned he was to receive an MBE he could tell no one. "I was sworn to secrecy," he said. "When it was announced at the weekend I was at Scout Camp in Crawfordsburn, and one of leaders came running up with his phone telling me it was on Facebook that I was getting an MBE.

"The Scouts were over the moon. People keep stopping me on my morning walk to the hall, and the phone hasn't stopped ringing.

"I have been doing this for such a long time I never thought about anything like awards. My reward was organising activities for the kids in the district."

But Billy said he was very honoured to receive the MBE and is looking forward to the presentation.

June 12 - Today in Christian history

June 12, 1744: David Brainerd, missionary to the New England Indians, is ordained by the Presbyterian Church. Within the next three years, he enjoyed success in his missionary efforts, but he died of tuberculosis at age 29.

June 12 - News briefs

+++ Organ scholar at Belfast Cathedral - William Forrest is to be the Organ Scholar.

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William was Head Chorister at Portsmouth Cathedral and whilst studying at Portsmouth Grammar School he sang as a bass in the Cathedral's Youth Choir.

Now completing his BMus degree at Cardiff University with a dissertation on the organ symphonies of Charles-Marie Widor, William has recently performed the big Saint-Saëns "Organ Symphony" with Cardiff University Orchestra and is also a trumpet player and Secretary of the University Brass Band.

The church and choir of St Martin in Roath, Cardiff, has close links with the University. William is currently their Organ Scholar and has sung with their choir at services in Magdalen College Oxford and St Paul's Cathedral London as well as playing the organ in broadcasts on BBC Radio Wales.

William also has experience of stage direction for university and amateur dramatic productions as well as serving as a volunteer and Intern at the Three Choirs Festival.

William Forrest told a Cathedral parishioner "I am delighted to have been offered the Organ Scholarship at Belfast Cathedral. It is clearly a very friendly community and one which I look forward to joining. There's rarely a dull day at a cathedral – that's one of the things I'm most excited about, getting back to being in that environment".

William will arrive in September when he succeeds Jack Wilson who will be commencing postgraduate studies in choral conducting at Cambridge University and taking up his Organ Scholarship at Sidney Sussex College.

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+++Newly restored organ of St Philip's Church, Milltown

- the instrument was rededicated by Archbishop Michael Jackson on Pentecost, Sunday June 9.

The rededication took place amid a celebration of the gifts of music with Choral Evensong sung beautifully by the boys of St Patrick's Cathedral with St Patrick's Master of Music, Stuart Nicholson, playing the organ. The service was followed by an opening recital by David Leigh, Organist of St Patrick's Cathedral.



Dean William Morton, the Revd Anne Marie O'Farrell, Canon Sonia Gyles (Rector), David O'Shea (organist) and Archbishop Michael Jackson with the boys of St Patrick's Cathedral outside St Philip's Church, Milltown.

The Rector, Canon Sonia Gyles, observed that they had gathered to give thanks to God for the gift of music in the church.

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In September 2011, Canon Gyles recalled, the vestry was advised that work would be needed on the organ and an organ fund was established. This work became more urgent when it was discovered that the organ was not only unreliable but potentially dangerous due to the condition of its electrical components.

She said that the Select Vestry was aware of the substantial cost of restoration and that not everyone would approve of money being diverted to the organ. However, a benefactor approached the parish and thanks to that person's generosity, along with the money built up in the organ fund and some fundraising, the project came to fruition, she stated.

The Rector thanked everyone who had helped with the project in anyway, and in particular organ builder Trevor Crowe, and parish organist, David O'Shea.

The renovation of the organ centred around the conservation of original pipes and bellows. The old windchests and action, which featured complex electrical and pneumatic mechanisms, were found to be beyond economic repair. It now sits in a new case and console.

+++ Dean gets on his bike for water projects - Cheered on by well-wishers, the Dean of Dromore, the Very Revd Geoff Wilson, has set off on a marathon fundraising cycle around Ulster.

At 9 o'clock this morning, Geoff pedalled away from Dromore Cathedral with 275-miles, six counties and eight cathedrals in front of him. He will arrive back in Dromore on Friday 14 June.

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The Dean will take in the Church of Ireland cathedrals in Armagh, Clogher, Enniskillen, Londonderry, Belfast, Lisburn and Downpatrick.

In doing so, he will raise funds to install a disabled toilet in Dromore Cathedral and a 20,000 litre water tank at Maridi Cathedral in South Sudan.

Geoff hopes to raise around £4,000 from the cycle and says each pound raised will be divided equally between his two chosen projects, while any surplus will be given to Maridi diocese for emergency needs.

Both Down and Dromore and the Cathedral have a long-standing [link with Maridi diocese](#) which has suffered a great deal in the recent conflict.

Geoff has been in training for the event for four months but, understandably, still admitted to some nerves as he set off.

Stay safe and keep 'er lit Geoff!

Anyone wishing to donate should make cheques payable to Dromore Cathedral and send them to: The Very Revd Geoff Wilson, 30 Church Street, Dromore, BT25 1AA.

+++Please pray for - Luwero Diocese in Uganda. Give thanks for George, William and Zeridah, whose studies at Uganda Martyrs Seminary Namugongo are being supported by link parishes in Ireland. Pray they will continue to be people of integrity as they prepare for ordination later this year.

+++Food for thought - “If we insist on keeping Hell (or even earth) we shall not see Heaven: if we accept Heaven

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we shall not be able to retain even the smallest and most intimate souvenirs of Hell.” CSLewis - The Great Divorce

June 12 News Links

[way to navigate the overwhelming grief of losing a baby](#)

Irish Times

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Waterford Live

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[Louth councillor condemns damage to **church** in Castlebellingham](#)

Dundalk Democrat

Sinn Féin councillor Pearse McGeough has condemned those responsible for damage caused at the local **Church of Ireland** in Castlebellingham.

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ABC News

Hari Guliani, the chief operating officer of the **British** medicinal cannabis Grow Biotech, told ABC **News** the announcement is “indicative that ...

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[**Church of England** on board with medical cannabis investments](#) - Seeking Alpha

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[Papal encouragement for British, Irish bishops' initiative against domestic abuse](#)

Catholic Culture

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