



**Image of the day - St Magnus Cathedral, Orkney**

**The most northerly cathedral in Britain which is known as the "Light in the North" has been named as one of the finest in Europe.**

## News Reports

### Dr Nicola Brady recognised by the Irish Council of Churches and by the Irish Inter-Church Meeting

**This week at the SMA Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre in Newry, an Irish Inter-Church Meeting was held on the theme, ‘Identity and Belonging – Past, Present, Future’. During the meeting Dr Nicola Brady was recognised for her services as general secretary of the Irish Council of Churches and as general secretary of Irish Inter-Church Meeting.**

Dr Brady is soon to take up the post of general secretary of the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

The gathering involved sixty participants representing the Irish Council of Churches and the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference.

At the meeting the very Rev Dr Ivan Patterson, President of the Irish Council of Churches said, “Nicola is someone motivated by her rich faith in Christ and His call to ‘love our neighbour’. She has brought her talents of heart and head to help the Church find relevant ways of responding to various societal needs and not least the ongoing work of peace building. While we will miss her insightful and skilled leadership, she leaves a significant legacy on which we can build for the future”.

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Bishop Brendan Leahy, Co-Chair of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting said, “As an intelligent and astute observer of socio-cultural developments, Nicola has enabled the Irish Inter-Church Meeting to engage meaningfully with significant initiatives and projects that furthered our mission of promoting good relations among churches as we looked together outwards towards the wider society. We will certainly miss her gentle but clear sense of purpose and direction”.

Members warmly congratulated Dr Brady on her new appointment that will provide her with many opportunities to share her considerable talents for the benefit of many in four nations. In congratulating Dr Brady, heartfelt gratitude was expressed by the member churches of the Irish Council of Churches, and the Irish-Inter Church Meeting, for her outstanding contribution as general secretary since 2016. Members offered their appreciation to Dr Brady for her competency and efficiency, strategic thinking and clear-sightedness, and for leading significant developments in connecting Churches and initiatives of peace and reconciliation across the island of Ireland.

### **Irish Council of Churches**

The Irish Council of Churches was founded in 1923 in the aftermath of the civil war and is the formal national body through which member churches formally engage, dialogue and act on a wide variety of issues.

The ICC Executive meets four times a year and is made up of church general secretaries and other nominated representatives from across the range of Protestant, Orthodox, Reformed and Independent church traditions. The

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President is the public representative of the Council. The current President is Very Rev Dr Ivan Patterson (PCI). Presidents are elected on a rotation basis and serve for two years.

### **Irish Inter Church Meeting**

In 1973 in the midst of the Troubles the Council began historic talks in Ballymascanlon with the Catholic Church which over the course of time became formalised as the Irish Inter Church Meeting. The meeting is coordinated by a committee which also meets four times a year. This Inter Church Committee is formed from the leadership of the churches made up of 50/50 representation from the Irish Bishops Conference and the Council. It is co-chaired by Most Rev Dr Brendan Leahy, Roman Catholic Bishop of Limerick, and the President of the Council.

### **St Magnus Cathedral named one of the finest in Europe**

**The most northerly cathedral in Britain which is known as the "Light in the North" has been named as one of the finest in Europe.**

St Magnus Cathedral in Orkney is the only building in Scotland to feature in a new book called "Europe's 100 Best Cathedrals" alongside architectural marvels in Cologne, Florence, Moscow, Stockholm and Seville.

Dating back to 1137, the magnificent medieval building in Kirkwall is one of 15 UK cathedrals selected by author/

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historian Simon Jenkins which include Canterbury, St Paul's, Westminster Abbey and York Minster.

Made out of red sandstone, it was founded by Viking Earl Rognvald as a final resting place to house the relics of his uncle, St Magnus, who was otherwise known as Magnus Erlendsson, Earl of Orkney. 1080-1117.

It is the home church of Lord Wallace, Moderator of the General Assembly, and the book accolade has been marked in a motion lodged at the Scottish Parliament by Orkney MSP, Liam McArthur.

## Extraordinary

In choosing his top 100, Mr Jenkins pays tribute to the magnificent buildings that he sees as manifestations of Europe's collective past.

"Europe's cathedrals are its finest works of art," he wrote.

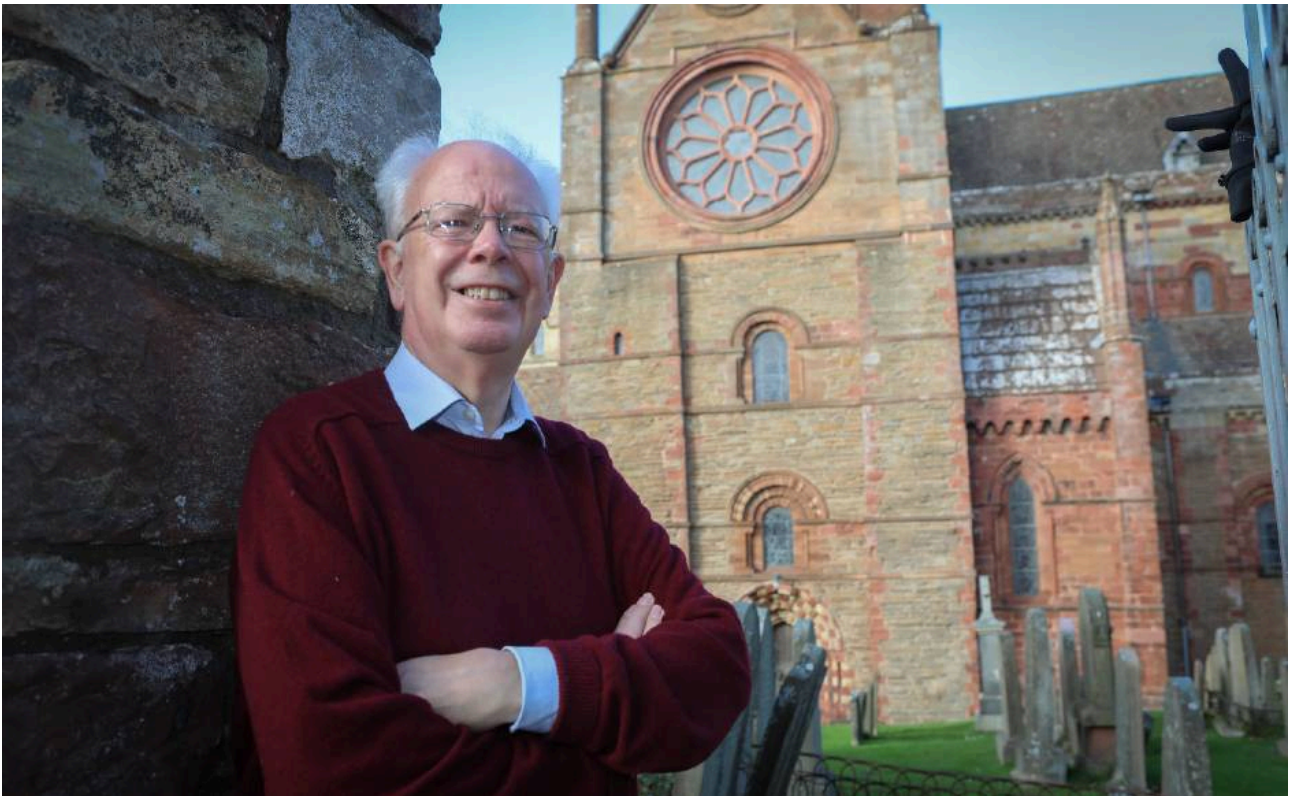
"They are testaments to its Christian faith but also to its architecture, engineering and craftsmanship.

"Most cathedrals are grand, no other places of Christian worship remotely equal them in scale.

"They are history and geography, art and science, mind and body in one."

St Magnus Cathedral custodian, Fran Hollinrake, said she is delighted with the recognition but not surprised.





Lord Wallace outside St Magnus Cathedral where he is an elder.

"St Magnus Cathedral is extraordinary in so many ways," she added.

"It's the only surviving wholly medieval cathedral in Scotland – all the others were either ruined, rebuilt, or extended in later years.

"We are the only church in Scotland which still contains the relics of its original saint, and as if that weren't enough we have two saints.

### **Powerful atmosphere**

"Although it took nearly three hundred years before it was complete, it has stood the test of time very well."

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Ms Hollinrake said she has been looking after the cathedral for 11 years and still learns something new about it every week.

"Nearly nine centuries of Orkney people have experienced the deepest of emotions within these walls – joy, grief, hope – and I believe that all those feelings have soaked into the walls and become part of the very fabric of the building," she added.

"No wonder it has such a powerful atmosphere."

Rev Fraser Macnaughton, minister of St Magnus Cathedral, said he is pleased that the building has been recognised as standing "shoulder to shoulder" with some of Europe's most iconic buildings.

"Across the continent, cathedrals have withstood the ravages of time and history," he added.

"I am so delighted that 'our' cathedral, as Orcadians are wont to say, has been included in this new book and that the Scottish Parliament has recognised this accolade in passing the motion of acknowledgment and gratitude."

Lord Wallace described St Magnus Cathedral as a very special and welcoming place.

"And whilst we are proud of its history, its spiritual atmosphere today continues to inspire worship, prayer and reflection," he said.

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"It is fitting that it has gained the accolade of one of Europe's best cathedrals, and I am pleased that this has been recognised in the Scottish Parliament."

## **Down & Dromore link with US diocese to end**

**Prior to the Diocesan Convention in Albany, both dioceses had been agreed for several months that the time had arrived to bring the formal link between our two dioceses to an end. The following statement has been released by both dioceses:**

Joint Statement from the Diocese of Down and Dromore in the Church of Ireland and the Diocese of Albany, New York

“Our Dioceses have enjoyed a joint link for over twenty years. This is quite remarkable as most other similar links do not continue for such a long period of time. Our link has brought many benefits and blessings to both dioceses over the years. Life-long friendships have been forged. These life-long friendships will continue into the future, but the time has come in both dioceses to bring the formal aspect of this diocesan link to an end. This will enable both dioceses to pursue new partnerships that will enable them to meet their respective missional and ministry challenges for the next season.

“We give thanks for all that has been achieved through our diocesan link in years past and pray God’s richest blessing upon each other as we move forward.”



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The statement was signed by Bishop David McClay on behalf of the Diocese of Down & Dromore and Mtr. Kathy Alonge–Coons on behalf of the Diocese of Albany.

## People and places



## Bangor Parish Church shares hope with their neighbours

Bangor Parish Church members have spent six months knocking doors and hand-delivering 4000 'boxes of hope' across the town.

The Church conceived the project We Are With You – Hope for the Road to Recovery as a means of bringing hope and encouragement to their neighbours. The boxes of hope contained chocolate, coffee, tea, and a leaflet produced by the church and were distributed by a team of 50 volunteers.

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Some of the parish Community Groups took on the project and met in groups of 6–8 initially to pack boxes, then in pairs or triplets to deliver them.

For those who didn't feel confident knocking doors they could still participate and joined the team for the purpose of praying.

The project drew an overwhelmingly positive response which you will see from the video at the link below.

[[] <https://www.downanddromore.org/news/2021/11/bangor-parish-church-share-hope-with-their-neighbours> ]



## University chaplaincy representative at Irish Inter-Church Meeting



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Pastoral Manager Shannon Campbell, represented Queens University Catholic Chaplaincy this week at the Annual Irish Inter-Church Meeting. The theme was 'Identity and Belonging - Past, Present, Future' and provoked some really interesting discussions. Shannon is pictured with Bishop Brendan Leahy of Limerick, Rev Dr Sahr Yambasu, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, and Karen Jardine, Public Affairs Officer for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Shannon particularly enjoyed meeting Bishop Andrew Forster of Derry and Raphoe. Bishop Andrew is a QUB alumnus and served as Church of Ireland Chaplain to Queen's some years ago. He shared with Shannon fond memories of his time on Elmwood and his many visits to the Catholic Chaplaincy.



## Confirmation in Portstewart

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The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison, and the Rev Malcolm Ferry, rector of Agherton Parish, with young people who were confirmed in the Church

## Join the Bishops of Ireland on Sunday 14 November

As they undertake a pilgrimage to the International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine in Knock to concelebrate Mass for all those who have died in our country during the pandemic, and for their families.

Mass will be live-streamed from 3.00pm on [www.knockshrine.ie](http://www.knockshrine.ie) and broadcast on the RTÉ News Now digital television channel

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## Perspective

### What is Good? by Amanda Mukwashi

The last few months have been very hard for many people around the world. The Covid pandemic has affected all of us in different ways. For some, it has been a double, if not triple tragedy. The people of South Sudan have had to cope with intense floods, that have devastated the lives of women, men and children, destroyed homes, livestock and crops, and at the same time they have had to deal with the lack of Covid-19 vaccines. In Afghanistan, the takeover of government by the Taliban has instilled fear in women, cost many lives and caused millions to be on the move in search for safe havens. All of this happened at the same time as the Covid pandemic has been disproportionately impacting people who were already struggling with extreme poverty.

In all this, while we have seen the selfishness that humanity is capable of, we have also seen the good that we are capable of. A light that shines brighter than the darkness. When Marcus Rashford's mural was defaced following the infamous England game where the team lost on penalties, it was a dark moment. The vandalism together with the social media racial abuse targeted at Marcus, Sancho and Saka, showed the ugly face of racism. But within a few days, we saw the light that came shining through. The mural was covered in hearts, flowers and notes of support. The good in humanity came through on that mural.

When the UK government decided to cut the aid budget, we raised the alarm on the impact this would have on the



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people of South Sudan to no avail. There was a sense of darkness descending on the development and humanitarian sector. Knowing how dependent some of the communities were on UK AID, the manner and amount of the cuts would cause undue suffering and potentially the loss of much needed access to basic services. I thank God for the resources that we get from the British and Irish public. It provided a bridge over a gap that the aid cuts created. It provided a little light while many international charities grappled together to find other resources or gently closed projects and programmes. We reached out to supporters. Their response was incredible. I was glad that they were not tired of doing good.

As we look at the seemingly hopeless situation in Afghanistan, we continue to pray that light will come through and good will overcome. I think of the life of Jesus when He lived on Earth and I am encouraged to see the examples of what good looks like. He bridged the gap to the excluded Samaritan woman, He reached out to the woman accused of adultery, He condemned the robbing of the poor and He challenged the behaviour and understanding of the Pharisees. He showed us what was good. We know what is good. So, in whatever space we are in, let us continue to do good.

Amanda Mukwashi is CEO of Christian Aid.



## Poem for today

### The Song of Wandering Aengus by William Butler Yeats

I went out to the hazel wood,  
Because a fire was in my head,  
And cut and peeled a hazel wand,  
And hooked a berry to a thread;  
And when white moths were on the wing,  
And moth-like stars were flickering out,  
I dropped the berry in a stream  
And caught a little silver trout.

When I had laid it on the floor  
I went to blow the fire a-flame,  
But something rustled on the floor,  
And someone called me by my name:  
It had become a glimmering girl  
With apple blossom in her hair  
Who called me by my name and ran  
And faded through the brightening air.

Though I am old with wandering  
Through hollow lands and hilly lands,  
I will find out where she has gone,  
And kiss her lips and take her hands;  
And walk among long dappled grass,  
And pluck till time and times are done,  
The silver apples of the moon,  
The golden apples of the sun.

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