

November 3, 2021

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Image of the day - Heritage awards

**Belfast Lord Mayor Kate Nicholl with
Irish News director Anne Sykes**

News Reports

Churches commit to 'leading by example' on climate change

Thousands of churches have re-committed to getting their own house in order while holding the government to account on climate change.

At least 2,200 churches held a Climate Sunday over the weekend as the COP26 summit got underway in Glasgow, Scotland, Christian environmental charity A Rocha UK said.

As part of Climate Sunday, churches from many different backgrounds and traditions pledged to continue their own action on climate change in the future.

In the run-up to COP26, over 700 church leaders signed the Time is Now Declaration calling for "a green energy revolution", even deeper global emissions cuts, and climate adaptation finance for poorer countries.

A Rocha CEO Andy Atkins said churches had an important role to play in holding the government to account on its commitments.

He said he was encouraged by the level of involvement in climate action by churches.

"This surge in churches' action - across the UK, across the traditions, from small chapels to cathedrals - demonstrates

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that local Christian communities are increasingly prepared to take bold action to address their own contribution to climate change," he said.

Bishop Graham Usher

"They now expect the UK government to lead boldly at COP26, and to get the UK's house in order soon after, whatever other nations will or won't commit to.

"In the critical decade ahead, UK churches will be a major national community holding government to account on its climate responsibilities."

A Rocha UK was one of the Christian groups to be involved in a Climate Sunday event at COP26 that was also joined by the Church of England's lead bishop for the environment, Graham Usher, and Baptist Union of Wales General Secretary, the Rev Judith Morris.

Rev Morris said she wanted to see world leaders commit to "uncompromising targets" on climate change.



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"We give thanks for the commitments made by churches to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and we pray that they will be honoured and multiplied extensively throughout the UK as we play our part in caring for creation," she said.

"We ask God's rich blessing on these critical COP26 meetings and pray that government leaders will be fearless in setting brave, bold and uncompromising targets to slow down climate change thereby ensuring a future for our planet and for our brothers and sisters of tomorrow."

The chair of Eco-Congregation in Scotland, Richard Murray, and in Ireland, the Rev Andrew Orr, were also involved in the event.

Murray said the challenge of the day was "tackling the climate emergency with urgency" while also "leading by example in our churches".

"Christians across the nations are increasingly motivated and supported to care and act for God's creation," he said.

"We all share this unique opportunity for transformational change, taking practical steps to change our own behaviour and calling on leaders at COP26 to agree global measures with lasting impact."

Rev Orr echoed this commitment.

"Many congregations in [Northern Ireland] are working and praying for a successful outcome to the COP26 talks and calling on the government to take real and meaningful actions for our planet," he said.

Co Tyrone parish church and 18th century cottage on shortlist for heritage awards

A parish church in Augher, a cottage in the Mournes and a graveyard in Lurgan are among projects shortlisted for prestigious heritage awards, Claire Simpson reports in the Irish News.

A total of 18 projects have been nominated across six categories in the Heritage Angel Awards.

Ulster Architectural Heritage, which is behind the awards, said the annual prizes aim to celebrate individuals or groups who have rescued a historic building or site, worked as craftspeople or apprentices, or recorded and interpreted a historic place.

The 2021 shortlist includes entries from the Grand Opera House, the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland, community group Friends of Shankill Graveyard and St Macartan's Church, Augher, Co Tyrone.

One of the nominees, Billy McNeilly, was nominated posthumously by his grandson, Wills McNeilly, in recognition of his work in restoring 18th century Greenwood Cottage in the Mournes.

Billy McNeilly, was the Clerk of Works for the National Trust in Northern Ireland and worked on re-roofing Mount Stewart, Castle Ward and Patterson's Spade Mill.



St Macartan's Church, Augher, Co Tyrone

Unfortunately, Billy was diagnosed with cancer in spring 2020 and passed away in November, before the work on Greenwood Cottage was completed.

David Johnston, chair of Ulster Architectural Heritage, said the awards had received more than 80 applications.

"Ulster Architectural Heritage has been truly overwhelmed with the quantity and quality of entries received in this the fourth year of the Heritage Angel Awards in Northern Ireland," he said.

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The awards are funded by the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, with support from the Department for Communities, the Construction Industry Training Board NI, and Belfast City Council.

Lord Andrew Lloyd Webber said he was delighted that his foundation could support the awards.

"By raising awareness of the impact individuals can have, our aim is to inspire others to get involved and work together to save and protect Northern Ireland's heritage for our future generations," he said.

The Irish News is a media partner of the awards.

Irish News director Anne Sykes said the awards aimed to honour those who keep the north's heritage alive.

"I would encourage everyone to learn about the great work happening in communities all around us and don't forget to vote," she said.

Members of the public can vote for their favourite projects via www.heritageangelawards-ni.org.uk

Votes will close at midnight on Wednesday, November 10.

The winners will be announced at a ceremony at Belfast City Hall on Tuesday, November 23. Due to Covid restrictions, the ceremony will only be open to a limited number of guests.

However, it will be streamed online.

churchnewsireland@gmail.org

This year, the awards also include the Heritage Arts Challenge, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, which aims to develop the skills of artists working in poetry, prose, song-writing, drawing and photography.

The winning entries will be showcased on the night.
Report and photographs courtesy The Irish News

Communion wine could be hit by new tax on alcohol level

Communion wine could be weakened to avoid punitive new taxes on strong drinks in last week's Budget, industry bosses have suggested.

Under changes introduced by Rishi Sunak last Wednesday, stronger drinks will be taxed more heavily.

But churches have said that the change will affect their altar wine, which is usually fortified and around 15 per cent ABV.

Fortified wines will become around 32p per litre more expensive under the plans. That change may force wholesalers to weaken their products to make them more affordable to churches, many of which are struggling financially after the pandemic.

Mark Lansley, CEO of Broadland Drinks, one of the Britain's largest communion wine wholesalers, told the Mail on Sunday: "Unless there is a religious reason forbidding it, we

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should be able to make our alcoholic communion wine at 8 per cent ABV, which will reduce the duty rate.

But Marcus Walker, of St Bartholomew the Great Church in London, told The Daily Telegraph: "Communion wine needs to be fortified because it needs to keep.

"You rarely use more than about a fifth of a bottle and it would be a waste to use a new bottle each week."

People and places

Moderator launches 'Hope at Christmas' photography competition

The Moderator sends a special Christmas card each year - but this festive season, he needs some help.

Dr David Bruce is inviting people of all ages to photograph what Hope at Christmas looks like for them. A panel will choose the winning image that will be used in the Moderator's Christmas Card.

Submissions must be submitted by 12 noon on Monday 22 November 2021. For all the details and how to enter, visit: www.presbyterianireland.org/photocompetition

Christmas Twilight Fair

St Mark's Church in Ballymacash, Lisburn, are holding an Outdoor Christmas Fair at on Friday 3rd December from



4.30 till 7pm. Stallholders will be selling a range of Christmas goods and crafts. All welcome.

Retirement Service for Bishop Kenneth Kearon

On Sunday 31st October, there was an historic service at St Mary's Cathedral in Limerick to mark the retirement of Bishop Kenneth as



our diocesan bishop; it was also the last Diocesan service for the Diocese of Limerick and Killaloe, that is because at

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midnight on 31st October, our diocese amalgamated with the Diocese of Tuam, Killala and Achonry to form the United Diocese of Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe. The service was introduced by the Dean of Limerick, the Very Reverend Niall Sloane.

Commissioning of Clogher Diocesan Reader and Pastoral Assistants



Attending the service were (front, from left): Canon Paul Thompson, Warden of Readers; Joan Nelson, Diocesan Reader and Bishop Ian Ellis. Back row (from left): Wendy Kerr, Keith Browne, Viola Bryson and Pamela Hutchinson, Diocesan Pastoral Assistants.

A service to mark the Admission and Licensing of a new Diocesan Reader and Commissioning of four new Diocesan Pastoral Assistants, conducted by Bishop Ian Ellis, has taken place in Clogher Diocese.



Remembering Miss Mac of QUB Chaplaincy

QUB Catholic Chaplaincy - On this All Souls' Day, when we pray for the happy repose of our deceased loved ones, we share with you an appreciation of the late Miss Lily McCormick, affectionately known by generations of students as 'Miss Mac'. She served Chaplaincy over many decades and last year, after a well-earned retirement, she returned to God. Former Chaplain, Fr Joseph Gunn, reminisces:

"There was once a student whose attitude seemed excessively pious to Miss Mac and she said to me one day in frustration "Why can't he be like an ordinary Catholic – go to Mass and kick a football?"

Fr Gunn's full tribute is available on our blog:

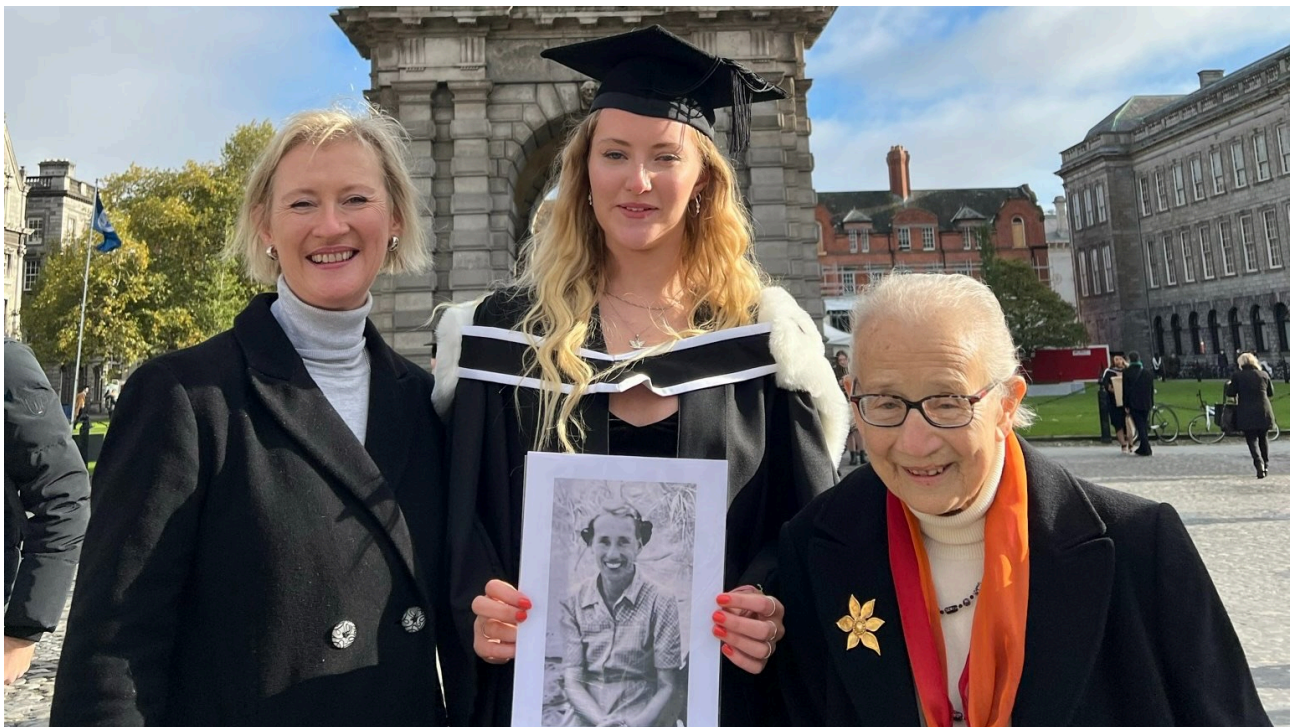
churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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qubcatholic.org/posts/miss-mac-an-appreciation

('Miss Mac' is pictured with former Assistant Chaplain at QUB, Bishop Anthony Farquar)

Four generations of TCD women graduates



Justice Catherine McGuinness (right) with her daughter Cairtíona (left) and granddaughter Maeve who is the fourth generation of women in her family to graduate from Trinity. Her great grandmother was the late Sylvia Ellis whose father was the rector of Tullamore, and whose husband Canon RC Ellis was rector of Dunmurry.

Two brothers of Mrs Ellis served in Connor diocese. They were Canon Graham Craig of St James' Belfast and Rev Cecil Craig, rector of Skerry and Rathcavan.

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Service of Thanksgiving for the Faithful Departed in Eglantine



The Rev Jason Kernohan, rector of All Saints' Eglantine, and churchwardens Heather Barclay and Dr Robert Cuthbert at the Service of Thanksgiving for the Faithful Departed on October 31.

On Sunday October 31, All Saints' Eglantine celebrated the Feast of All Saints' with a Festival Eucharist in the morning, followed that evening by a Service of Thanksgiving for the Faithful Departed.

A large congregation gathered to remember those saints known only to God and to give thanks for their memory. Ninety names of the departed were read out and a candle was lit in remembrance of each person.

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The first large candle was lit as a reminder of Christ the Light of the world, and each of the smaller candles lit up to form a cross.

The hymns included For all thy Saints, The Church's one foundation, Lead kindly Light, and Saviour again to thy dear name we raise. The readings were from the Book of Wisdom and John's Gospel

The rector, the Rev Jason Kernohan, said "This annual service gives great comfort and consolation to all who have lost loved ones."

The Festival Eucharist can be viewed online.

[[] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4tHicL2208&t=11s>]

Perspective

My single transferable blog: the people of the South are not ready for reunification by Andy Pollak

In his long and distinguished political career, John Hume many times gave what came to be known as his 'single transferable speech'.

He used to say that as a former teacher he realised that for even the smartest pupils, the repetition of key themes over and over again was the only way to get his young charges to take in and remember what he was teaching them. I

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believe there were actually two or three ‘single transferable’ Hume speeches, but the one I internalised was that any solution to the Northern Ireland imbroglio would have to have three ‘strands’: an internal Northern Irish strand, a North-South strand and a British-Irish strand. These three elements were to become the foundations of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.

The message of my single transferable blog is much simpler: it is that the people of the present Republic haven’t even begun to think about what reunification means for them and therefore are about as far from ready for it as one can get. In nearly 50 years of living mainly in Dublin, I cannot remember a single well-informed conversation with the ‘intelligentsia’ of journalists, broadcasters, civil servants, academics, teachers, voluntary sector workers and theatre people who constitute my friendship group about what unity might entail for the politics, economics and culture of this jurisdiction. How would bringing in 900,000 largely alienated and contrarian unionists affect our concepts of Irish identity (including our dislike of their passionate Britishness), our nationalist historical myths, our 100-year-old political institutions, our public spending bills (and reluctance to have our taxes increased to cover them), our church-controlled education system, our creaking two-tier health service, and so on?

The Oireachtas rarely essays into this difficult territory (its Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, under Fianna Fail and Sinn Fein chairmen, have used it largely as a cheerleader for rather than hard-nosed examiner of unity); the media even less so.

Academics – with the occasional exception of the excellent

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Institute for British-Irish Studies at UCD – have largely ignored how this jurisdiction, comfortable in the relative social and economic success of the past 30 years, might be forced to change if the unionists are going to be accommodated in any significant way.

Because if we are sincere about the revised Constitution's pledge to unite the nation "in harmony and friendship" (as approved by over 94% of the electorate in the 1998 post-Good Friday Agreement referendum), there are going to have to be some very uncomfortable changes. I have been giving a talk over the past two years (sometimes courtesy of Zoom) in very different places – from a local history society in Belfast's loyalist Shankill Road through a group of Irish-American lawyers in New York to a dinner of retired senior civil servants, diplomats and bankers in Dublin – about the kind of changes we may have to contemplate. The rest of this blog is taken largely from that single transferable speech.

Many nationalists and republicans probably imagine – if they think about it at all – that when demographics and the consequent rise in the nationalist vote in Northern Ireland eventually bring about a narrow majority for unity in a Border Poll, unionism as a philosophy on this island will just disappear. I have to disabuse them of this foolish and self-serving notion. Large numbers of unionists, if they are voted against their will into a united Ireland which they have struggled fanatically against for the past 140 years, will continue to withhold their allegiance from that Irish state and will continue to feel, behave and declare themselves as British. They will wave the Union flag; pledge their allegiance to the British monarchy; and reject Irish language

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and culture as nothing to do with them. They will be a sullen, alienated and potentially violent minority, just as the nationalists were in Northern Ireland. This is not a recipe for social peace and harmony.

I know this because I come from a half-unionist background; my mother came from a strongly Presbyterian and unionist family in County Antrim. The late Seamus Mallon knew it too. He lived his whole life in Markethill in south Armagh, a 90% Protestant village. As he wrote in his 2019 book, *A Shared Home Place* (which I co-authored), a 50% plus one vote for unity “will not give us the kind of agreed Ireland we seek...We need both communities in any future constitutional settlement to feel they belong to their common home place in an equal and mutually respectful way.” His preference was for “some kind of confederal arrangement because I believe unionists will find it very difficult to feel any sense of loyalty to a unitary Irish state.”

This is the huge challenge we face as Brexit, demography and electoral arithmetic in the North probably move us towards some form of unity. And with the DUP now in disarray after their disastrous hard-line Brexit stand, the advent of the difficult Protocol compromise, the chaos caused by the leadership upheavals earlier this year and the complete untrustworthiness of the present British government, a Border Poll on unity – urged on by Sinn Féin – may arrive sooner than we expect.

Which brings me to ‘Irish unionism’, a relatively widespread phenomenon a hundred years ago but very thin on the ground today. Could any significant element of unionism be prepared to countenance an all-Ireland accommodation if

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important elements of their British ethos and culture were to survive and flourish in that new state?

Guaranteeing unionists their British ties and identity in a post-unity scenario will be extremely challenging to the complacent nationalism of the present-day Republic (where in many circles ‘unionist’ is a dirty word). But it may be the only way of bringing a significant element of unionism on board. And it is very far from the unitary state Sinn Féin and Fianna Fáil have traditionally been wedded to. It seems to me to involve a constitutional system somewhere along the spectrum between federalism and confederalism, with a key continuing role for the British government. In any case these are the kind of ultra-complex arrangements – as nuanced as anything in the Good Friday Agreement – which we need to begin to discuss in this republic.

In fact, there appears to be zero discussion here about the crucial issue of what happens to the unionists at the end of the Union as we have known it. Instead, we in the Republic sail blithely into an unexamined future with a brainless consensus that in the end the good guys of Irish nationalism will win out over the Northern bigots and stooges of British imperialism, and then we will live together happily ever after in harmonious unity.

Here are a few ‘against the consensus’ ideas to start this discussion. Firstly, we have to find some way of redefining Irish unionism as a positive good with a future role on this island, rather than an unloved relic of hated British rule in Ireland. We have to start embracing what is symbolically important to unionists – as we were starting to do during

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recent commemorations of Irish soldiers who had fought and died in the First World War.

Shared institutions and symbols will be important here. The Republic's political parties, and that includes Sinn Féin, have rarely, if ever, spelled out what they are prepared to offer the unionists for the sake of unity in terms of inclusive institutions and symbols in a 'new Ireland'. Here, I suggest, is an indicative list (meant to be thought-provoking): a power-sharing regional government and parliament to continue in Belfast with all the safeguards enshrined in the Good Friday Agreement (with only a few major powers such as foreign affairs, defence and some taxation now held by London being transferred to Dublin); Irish membership of the Commonwealth; the reactivation of the British Irish Council (set up under the Good Friday Agreement but largely unused) to bring together the British, Irish, Northern Irish, Scottish and Welsh governments with real cooperative powers and responsibilities in a number of key policy areas (for example, climate change); an agreement with London that a number of Northern politicians will continue to sit as British legislators in the House of Lords; an overhaul of the Irish Constitution to remove or tone down any remaining elements influenced by 1930s-style Catholicism and nationalism, and to include elements recognising the British identity of Northern unionists (for example, their loyalty to the British monarchy); a new flag (I suggest the symbols of the four Irish provinces, or more provocatively, the present tricolour with a small Union Jack inserted in the orange band, in the way Australia does with its flag); a new, non-militaristic national anthem (perhaps the all-Ireland rugby anthem Ireland's Call); a new system of state education (including an end to compulsory Irish) and a new free,

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single-tier health service without Catholic Church involvement.

Will the people of the Republic of Ireland be able to stomach such radical changes? After a hundred years of independence I don't believe so. But these are ways in which we can begin to persuade unionists that they are really wanted in the 'new' Ireland – and at the very least we need to start discussing their merits and demerits. At the moment the great majority of unionists don't feel any identification with or fellow-feeling for the 26 county Irish state: for many – perhaps most – of them it remains a threatening foreign country. As that most liberal of men, former Ulster Unionist Party leader Mike Nesbitt, after defining himself as a 'Brit', puts it: "What I haven't heard from nationalists is that 'We want you in this new dispensation and here's why... Somebody has to explain to me why we've gone from 'Brits Out' to 'Brits In.'"

We have to find some ways in which Irishness and unionism can comfortably co-exist. A good example of this is the sterling work of Linda Ervine (former UVF leader David Ervine's sister-in-law) in the teaching and learning of Irish in loyalist East Belfast. She argues that the Irish language – linked as it is to Scots Gaelic and Welsh – can be a healing element in the British Isles.

We have to start carefully examining the kind of multi-cultural federations and confederations which seriously commit to co-existence (however difficult and inadequate) between people with clashing concepts of self-determination within the same constitutional polity. We could start by

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looking at the French and Flemish in Belgium, and English and French speakers in Canada.

Then there is the enormous financial cost of unity. In a 2019 paper, the distinguished economists John Fitzgerald and Edgar Morgenroth (among the few Southern economists, along with my friend John Bradley, to have seriously studied the Northern economy) concluded that because of the poor state of that economy and its heavy dependence on financial transfers from London, unification would be “exceptionally expensive” for the Republic.

“Irish unity, if it involved ending transfers to Northern Ireland, would produce a dramatic fall in the standard of living there. Alternatively, unification where Ireland took over responsibility for the transfers to Northern Ireland, would necessitate a major cut in the standard of living in Ireland of 5% to 10% in order to allow Northern Ireland to maintain a standard of living between 10% and 20% above the Irish standard of living. Whatever form Irish unity took there would be a heavy economic cost for both Northern Ireland and Ireland.”² When did you last hear a serious public or media discussion about these alarming projections? The answer is never.

The lengthy discussion we need to have in the Republic about all these issues will be an extremely difficult one. To those who say that all the concessions are being made in the one direction, I would respond – echoing the respected Derry nationalist Denis Bradley – that we in the South have

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to be generous because it is we who are doing the wooing, and wooing a very reluctant swain.

Perhaps the most difficult discussion of all will be about the requirement – in a republic that cast off British rule after a war of independence a century ago – to talk about what kind of continuing British involvement in Ireland we can live with for the sake of the peace and harmony of the whole island. That, for many unionists, will be a sine qua non. For many republicans and nationalists it will be a huge step too far. And of course, this vital dimension will not work if the British, as they move out of the EU into their own strange post-imperial, post-European orbit, want nothing more to do with us.

1 Seamus Mallon, A Shared Home Place, p.159

2 The Northern Ireland Economy: Problems and Prospects.

<https://www.tcd.ie/Economics/TEP/2019/tep0619.pdf>

Posted on Monday, 1 November, 2021 by Andy Pollak

Poem for today

Symphony in Yellow by Oscar Wilde

An omnibus across the bridge
Crawls like a yellow butterfly,
And, here and there, a passer-by
Shows like a little restless midge.

Big barges full of yellow hay
Are moored against the shadowy wharf,

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And, like a yellow silken scarf,
The thick fog hangs along the quay.

The yellow leaves begin to fade
And flutter from the Temple elms,
And at my feet the pale green Thames
Lies like a rod of rippled jade.

Prayer for COP26

Gracious God, enable us to remain proactive in environmental justice; and that each of us shall never tire as we seek to reverse the chaos of environmental pollution wherever we are.

Merciful God, enable us to remain steadfast in our witness for a safe environment and that those in our neighborhood shall be conscious for a just world as a haven for a healthy environment for future generations.

Bishop Julius N. Wanyoike, from the Diocese of Thika in Kenya



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