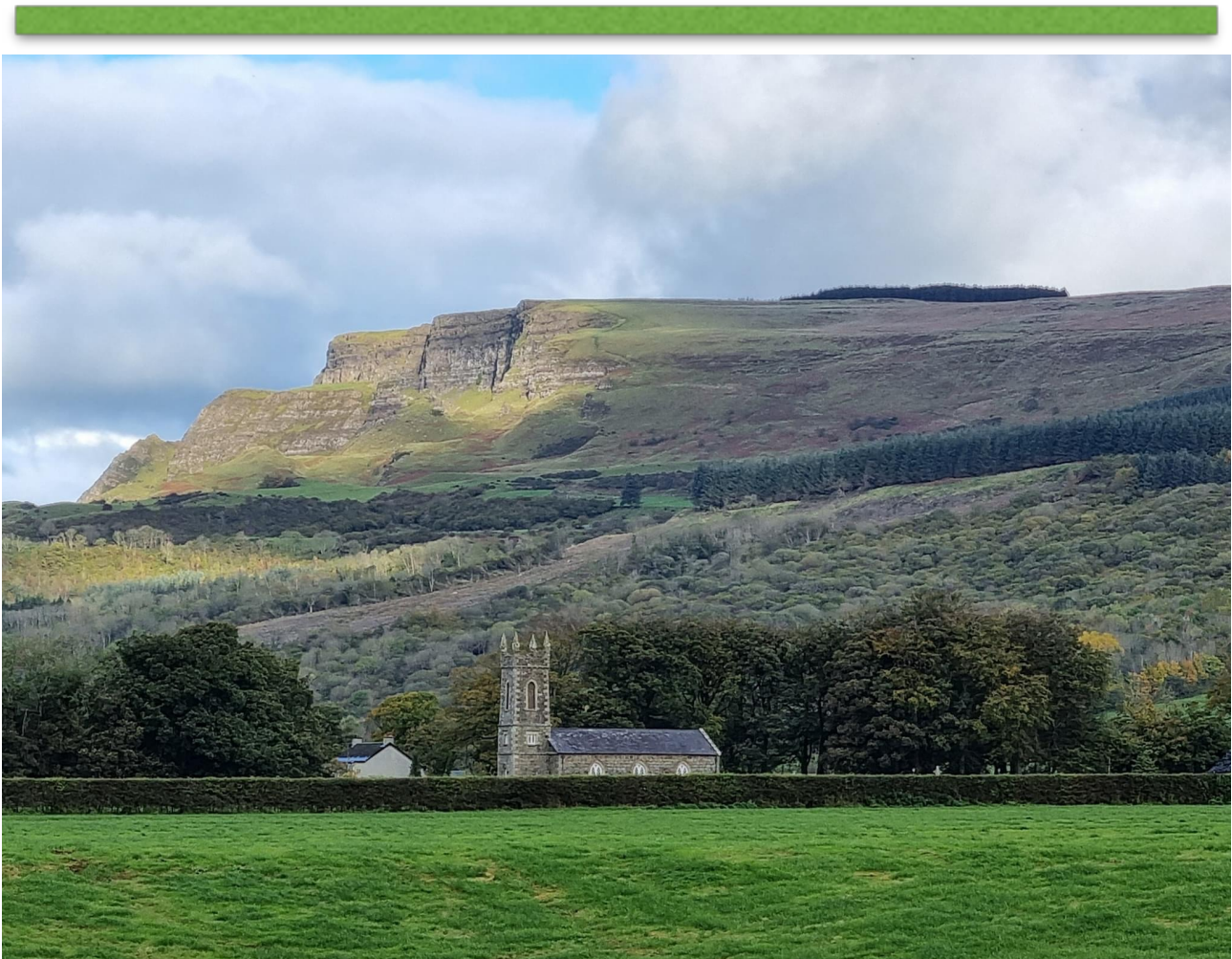


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**Image of the day - beyond is Binevenagh
Diocese of Derry**

News Reports

Moderator 'Out And About' in weeklong North Belfast Presbytery Tour

Of all the Presbyterian Moderator's official duties, one of the most rewarding (and often tiring) responsibilities is the week-long tours of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's (PCI) regional presbyteries, Joe Boyd of The Church Page writes.

Each Moderator makes four such tours and the recent tour of the Presbytery of North Belfast, by Rt Rev Dr David Bruce, began in Rosemary Presbyterian Church. It is the first tour of his second term in office and will conclude when Dr Bruce preaches in Carnmoney Central, an outreach of Carnmoney Presbyterian Church in the south of the city. By convention, Presbytery Tours take place in February and March, October and November. Unlike his predecessors, Dr Bruce is the first Moderator in nearly 130 years to serve two terms and has already undertaken four presbytery tours. Due to the Covid restrictions in place at that time, each tour was heavily scaled back, involving livestream preaching, virtual coffee mornings and prayer meetings with ministers, and pre-recorded sermons.

Speaking before he preached in Rosemary Presbyterian, Dr Bruce said, "I am very pleased to say that my tour of our North Belfast Presbytery this week will be very much in keeping with pre-pandemic presbytery tours. The organisers have been very careful to keep in mind the various Covid

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mitigations that we must still adhere to, but I am pleased to say there isn't a virtual meeting in sight!

“Presbytery tours are primarily about encouraging the local church and for the Moderator to get ‘out and about’, seeing first-hand the work that congregations are doing in the community on the ground. They are very much pastoral visits and after such difficult times I very much want to encourage the Church in all that they do and acknowledge the work that they are doing in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. In my previous tours, I was not able to do that in person, but I am looking forward to doing just that face-to-face throughout the week.”

Dr Bruce continued, “There is a very strong history of PCI’s community engagement in the north of the city, often in areas where people are neglected or marginalised, those who suffer with addictions, ex-offenders and refugees, for example. Along with my wife Zoë, I am looking forward to seeing the work that the Church does in these important areas, and preaching on one of the most devastating of Psalms, Psalm 13, and the message of hope that it ultimately brings.”

The Presbytery of North Belfast is one of the three presbyteries in the city of Belfast. Its 20 congregations range in size from 58 to 885 families, making up a local Presbyterian community of just under 10,000 people. Stretching from the Shankill Road across Ballysillan to New Mossley and Glengormley to Rathcoole, the Presbytery heads back down the Shore Road to Whiteabbey and Sinclair Seamen’s Presbyterian Church in the docks. The

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Presbytery forms part of the Belfast City Council and the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council areas.

Throughout the week, there is strong focus on education and young people, with the Moderator taking three assemblies at Mossgrove Primary School on Tuesday and a morning spent with the principal and teachers of Glengormley High School on Friday. He will also take part in a Q&A with Sixth Formers. Yesterday evening, at Whiteabbey Presbyterian, he attended a youth event where young people from local Presbyterian churches got a flavour of the man and the office over pizzas together at a 'Meet the Mod' event.

On Monday, Dr Bruce visited the 'Blue Houses' in Ballysillan, the headquarters of Youth for Christ to find out about their work. He will also take a tour of the new Ulster University campus with the university's Presbyterian Chaplain, Rev Cheryl Meban on Thursday. Weather dependent, he will visit a local skateboard park under the M3 flyover with the minister of Sinclair Seaman's Presbyterian Church.

Speaking about this week's tour, Clerk of the North Belfast Presbytery, Trevor Long OBE, said, "We are encouraged to have the Moderator with us at this time and I know that all our ministers, and those looking after our congregations who don't currently have a minister, are looking forward to meeting Dr Bruce. This will take place during three separate meetings for coffee, fellowship and prayer. He will also attend a mid-week prayer meeting at the historic Sinclair Seaman's."

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Presbyterian Moderator, Rt Rev Dr David Bruce, who is ‘out-and-about’ on his week-long tour of the North Belfast Presbytery

Mr Long continued, “North Belfast like everywhere else has found the last 19 months very difficult. Add to this the challenges of falling attendances at church, amalgamations of congregations and the need to reach out to younger people who know little or nothing of the Gospel. There is also the growing number of those now making Northern Ireland their new home and we want to love and welcome them. David and Zoë’s time with us will be a big help in focusing on these issues, drawing attention to some of the great work that is being done in the Presbytery.

“We are also looking forward to him leading devotions at our Presbytery Meeting on Tuesday. He will also carry on a

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tradition of presenting, on behalf of the Presbytery, small tokens of appreciation to three students who are currently studying to become PCI ministers and under the care of the Presbytery,” he said.

The tour will also include a visit to the North Belfast Food Bank that is managed by members of Rosemary Presbyterian Church and run out of its church halls on the North Circular Road. Dr Bruce will also visit Thompson House, which provides supported housing to ex-offenders and Carlisle House, PCI’s residential substance misuse treatment centre, all of which are run by the church centrally. He will also spend time at the International Meeting Point off Carlisle circus. The drop in exists to meet the practical and spiritual needs of migrants and asylum seekers in the north of the city providing Parent’s and Tot’s Group, and English classes.

Part of the project is the Op Shop, which opened in 2019 in response to the number of young migrant and local families looking for quality nearly new children and baby clothes, and other essential items. A joint initiative of the Presbytery and PCI’s Council for Mission in Ireland, the Moderator will visit staff and volunteers, which includes his wife Zoë, who is a volunteer there.

“We have come through difficult times, and in many respects we are not quite there yet, but many people in our Church have gone that extra mile, and then some, over these last 19 months. This Presbytery tour will be a time to listen to their experiences and an opportunity to thank those who have carried on pastoring their people in such unprecedented times. I want to thank our ministers

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personally and everyone who has contributed to the wellbeing of others over this last while. It will be a busy week, which I am very much looking forward to,” Dr Bruce said.



Archbishop Welby at Global Peace Forum in Coventry on Armistice Day

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby is coming to Coventry this Armistice Day to deliver a global message alongside international leaders at a major event in Coventry.

The Archbishop will be a keynote speaker on the second day of the seventh annual RISING Global Peace Forum which takes place from 10-12 November in Coventry.

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RISING brings together leading politicians, policymakers, academics and community organisers from around the world to discuss and promote new ways to make and sustain peace, both in locally and internationally.

The three-day event is led by the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University in partnership with Coventry Cathedral and Coventry City Council.

Welby – a former co-director of the international ministry at the Coventry Cathedral-based International Centre for Reconciliation – started his ecclesiastical career as a curate in nearby Nuneaton.

Acts 435 charity has helped 30,000 people in need

Acts 435 was founded over a decade ago by the then Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu. Since then more than 30,000 people in need have been helped by the charity with demand rising by more than 50% since the start of the pandemic.

The requests for small grants are detailed, varied and at times heart breaking.

A fast food worker needs to buy a pair of shoes as part of his uniform before he starts his job.

Another man has been helped to buy new tools so he could return to work. He sold his tools earlier to fund his mother's funeral.

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'We have so many people in need..we always pray that God will provide people who will come along and help'

Some are refugees, with one listed as needing help with travel costs to therapy sessions for PTSD after fleeing his country.

Many are from people living with mental and physical ill health. There are families and individuals who were just getting by before an item such as a cooker or fridge broke. Others have been unemployed and need help in the weeks before they receive their first wages.

The Acts 435 charity was founded just over a decade ago by the then Archbishop of York Dr John Sentamu and launched at the General Synod of the Church of England.

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It relies on a network of trained advocates based in more than 500 churches and local charities throughout the UK to act as intermediaries for people in need.

Donors are able to give directly in response to requests posted on the charity website.

The number of people it has helped has risen by more than 50% since the start of the pandemic.

In February last year there were 334 people who were helped but this figure rose to 513 two months later, after the first lockdown. Demand has remained at the same level since.

Acts 435 Executive Director Jenny Herrera (pictured) said she believed that the charity was now facing the ‘calm before the storm’ this winter.

“We have so many people in need, and we always pray that God will provide people who will come along and help. We are a small team and we would love to partner with more churches and reach more people.”

Acts 435 takes its name from Acts 4:32 to Acts 4:35 when the early Christians shared their possessions and passed money to the apostles to give to anyone in need. A total of 32,455 people have benefited from small grants since Acts 435 was founded.

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People and places

Belfast teen Rebekah aiming for final in BBC Young Chorister of the Year competition

An east Belfast schoolgirl has made it through to the national semi-finals of a prestigious singing competition.

Rebekah Devlin (16) is representing Northern Ireland in the BBC Songs of Praise and Radio 2 Young Chorister of the Year contest.

The Strathearn pupil saw off hundreds of other entrants from across the United Kingdom to secure her place.

The singer, a member of the Belfast Philharmonic Youth Chamber Choir, the National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland and the Belfast School of Performing Arts, will compete against four other girls for a place in the final.

Rebekah sings regularly with her church, All Saints in south Belfast.

The BBC competition celebrates the contribution young people aged 10 to 16 make to choirs and musical groups.

As well as being awarded the young chorister of the year title, the winner will appear on Songs of Praise and take part in BBC Radio recordings.

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The runner-up will receive a trophy and will appear on BBC radio.

The semi-final is scheduled to take place at Salisbury Cathedral in England.

The competition will be hosted by Aled Jones and broadcast on BBC1 and Radio 2 on Sunday, November 21. Courtesy Christopher Lee, Belfast Telegraph

Installation of Canon Denis McCarthy



Members of the Cathedral Chapter with Canon Denis McCarthy (fourth from the left).

On Sunday, 17th October 2021, the Rev. Denis McCarthy, Rector of Bandon Union of Parishes, was installed to the

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Prebend of Donoughmore on the Chapter of St Colman's Cathedral, Cloyne.

Canon Denis McCarthy said: "It was an honour to be installed by the Very Rev. Susan Green, Dean of Cloyne, as Prebendary of Donoughmore on the Chapter of St Colman's Cathedral. I would like to thank the Cathedral Chapter for their support, as well as my fellow clergy, the parishioners of Cloyne who attended the service, the organist Dr Ian Sexton and the choir who sang beautifully throughout the service. I am particularly pleased to occupy the Prebendary of Donoughmore, as my Church of Ireland ancestors hailed from there and now it feels as if the circle is complete."

C of I Gazette's Christmas Cover Competition

The Church of Ireland Gazette's Christmas Cover Competition returns this year, and this time, it is open to all age groups. The only requirement is to take a photograph that would be appropriate for our December cover, along the theme of "All is Calm".

The winner's photography will appear on the Christmas cover of the Church of Ireland Gazette and they will also receive a prize of €100/£90 as well as €100/£90 for their parish. The runner-up will receive €50/£45.

We hope to publish a selection of our favourite photographs in the December issue. All entries must be received by 12 noon on Friday, 19th November.

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How to enter:

Send your photograph (portrait orientation) to christmascovergazette@gmail.com with

1. Your name
2. Your age (if under 18)
3. Name of your parish
4. Contact email (for parent/guardian if under 18)

Technical information:

Format: Entries should be high quality jpeg files.

File size: Each image should ideally be 1MB or larger. If you are sending from a smartphone, please be sure to select “large size” or “original size” if prompted.

Rules:

1. Only one entry per person.

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2. Entries for children must be submitted by a parent or guardian, or adult over the age of 18, on the child's behalf.
3. All entries must include a valid email address
4. All entries must be sent via the electronic form provided, before 12 noon on 19th November 2021.
5. The judge's decision is final and binding in all matters, and no correspondence will be entered into.
6. By entering the competition and submitting a photograph, you hereby grant the Church of Ireland Gazette a licence to freely use that photograph for the purpose of promoting the competition within the magazine and online, in print and electronic formats.

The Christmas Cover Competition is kindly sponsored by Ulster Carpets.

Archdeacon Kenneth Wilkinson

The death has occurred of Kenneth Wilkinson, former Archdeacon of Ferns. Bishop Michael Burrows, extending his sympathy to the Wilkinson family, pays this tribute to the former Archdeacon:

“His death marks the end of an era in the diocese of Ferns. Although retired for nearly twenty years his colleagues continued to regard him as epitomising all that is best in parochial and pastoral ministry in the Church of Ireland. His

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long incumbency in Enniscorthy touched the lives of many who were enriched by his care, wisdom and dignified conduct of the liturgy. As archdeacon he was a superb chair, going to the heart of matters, avoiding any time wasting and contributing hugely to the efficiency of Diocesan administration. His was a ministry characterized by diligence, courtesy, good humour and a genuine holiness.”

The following family notice stated - Kenneth Samuel Wilkinson Hazelwood, Gorey, Co. Wexford (former Archdeacon of Ferns) who passed away peacefully at Valentia Nursing Home Camolin on Sunday 17th October 2021. Beloved husband of Bettie and loving father of Adrian, Linda, Karen and Sandra, father-in-law of Jacqui, Kosta and David, grandfather of Gary, Darren, Emma, Joanna, Callan, Mae and Ruben, brother of Edith (Rafter) and the late George, brother-in-law of Marion. Kenneth will be missed by all his family and friends. The funeral service took place under Covid guidelines in Christ Church, Gorey, on Wednesday, 20th October, followed by burial in the adjoining churchyard.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts and books

King's College Choir new album for this Christmas

'In the bleak midwinter'.includes some of the carols that brought comfort and joy to millions around the world during a particularly challenging Christmas.

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It is the choir's first full album with Daniel Hyde at the podium, and it's available now to pre-order:

<https://smarturl.it/KingsMidwinter>

Online Advent retreat: 'One Step Too Far Away – One Breath Too Near'

The Church of Ireland Commission on Ministry's online retreat for lay people and for clergy will be led by the Revd

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Ruth Patterson and will take place on Saturday November 20 2021 from 9.30am to 1.00pm.

This event will be held online by Zoom – and will be free of charge although places may be limited, depending on capacity on the platform and the number of bookings received.

To request a place or seek further information, please contact Catherine Smith: catherine.smith@rcbdub.org

The speaker - The Revd Ruth Patterson is a Presbyterian minister, and for the last 29 years has been Director of Restoration Ministries, a non–denominational, Christian organisation committed to peace and reconciliation.

In 1976 she was the first woman to be ordained in Ireland. She was the recipient of the Alumna of the Year 2000 award (Edinburgh University/Royal Bank of Scotland), in 2001 an honorary doctorate from the Presbyterian Theology Faculty of Ireland, and in 2003 was awarded an OBE for her efforts in reconciliation.

She has authored five books and numerous articles stemming from her commitment to unity and peace. She is one of four church representatives to L'Arche International and holds the post of Ecumenical Canon in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast. She is on the Board of Oneings, a bi–annual publication of the Centre for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Perspective

Timely climate change debate by Bishop Michael Burrows

The General Synod has just met online, and in all the circumstances congratulations are due to those who ensured its efficient running and positive spirit. Among the many matters debated, there was of course emphasis on climate change and the duties of Christian disciples when it comes to safeguarding the planet. This was a timely debate in the run up to COP 26 (the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow), when so many of us locally are attending harvest thanksgivings and reflecting on the wise stewardship of creation. The central authorities of the church and the Representative Body are to be commended on the accelerated manner in which they have worked to ensure the church's divestment from fossil fuels. A particularly significant contributor to the synod debate was the Reverend Trevor Sargent who reminded us how it is relatively easy for the synod to instruct the 'central church' to make radical changes to its investment policy, but the real challenge is to ensure that people practice what they preach, in all sorts of small ways, at local level and in everyday parochial life. Sometimes we can be timidly conservative in addressing matters like how we heat churches or require and act upon BER ratings for church properties or ensure that we use fully compostable materials as far as possible in our catering arrangements.

Oasis sidelined

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As I reflected on what Mr Sargent had said and observed in my travels a number of churches sumptuously decorated for harvest with great commitment and skill, I came across an article in the English paper, the Church Times, that really struck home. It was a kind of parable of how small actions matter, how emphasis on outward beauty must be accompanied by behind-the-scenes responsibility, how easy it is for us not even to think about the environmental consequences of apparently trivial habits. Yet at every Harvest Thanksgiving we need to ask ourselves whether, ironically, in our very giving of thanks for the wonders of creation we are simultaneously eroding its sustainability.

To return to the newspaper article. The bishop of Dudley is a keen gardener and flower-grower. Yet he is concerned that in our floral displays we often still use a form of foam, often known as Oasis, which keeps the flowers in position. However, this innocuous looking foam, used for many years to assist the displaying of created beauty and colour, is apparently made of harmful microplastics which are themselves a threat to sustainability. The bishop suggests that floral foam needs to be treated with the same attitude as we have been bringing to bear on other single use or non-recyclable plastics. Floral foam is a by-product of the petro-chemical industry. It crumbles over time into tiny fragments that are not compostable. When put innocently into compost heaps in churchyards, it will take up to 500 years to break down and is still not biodegradable. In addition, the foam is generally soaked before use and wastewater containing microplastics, once discarded into the drains, can contaminate water sources and ultimately can enter the human food chain.

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Small things matter greatly

It is in truth all quite scary, a timely parable of why small things matter greatly, especially when taking the long view concerning environmental responsibility. How extraordinary it is that such eventual harm could result from skilled displays of beauty. So it is that floral foam is now banned from displays such as the Chelsea flower show, and the bishop of Dudley is seeking to end its use in the diocese in which he works, suggesting that money hitherto spent on it be used for more suitable receptacles.

All this was news to me when I read the article . . . I really thought this was information worth sharing, and every day one learns something new about how we manage to threaten the environment through apparently trivial small actions. I don't think I have ever written about flower arranging in this magazine before, and in the Church of Ireland it is almost part of our DNA to be grateful to those who with such skill 'do the flowers' and decorate churches not only at Festivals, but Sunday by Sunday. Flowerless worship is frankly almost impossible to envisage. Yet it is so important, in this and so many areas of life, to make sure that we do not unintentionally distort the beauty we celebrate by threatening the very environment on which that beauty depends. And, by the way, I am sure that many of the flower experts in the diocese already knew what I have said here long ago and are perhaps amused that it has taken so long for me to catch up!!

Every little helps

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But at the end of the day environmental responsibility is about mission and about that flourishing of humanity which God desires. Thus the Anglican 'five marks of mission', having dealt with issues like the proclamation of Good News, the baptising of new believers and the loving service of human need, conclude with the fifth mark which declares that a hallmark of the church will be 'safeguarding the integrity of creation, and sustaining and renewing the life of the earth'.

And in keeping true to that fifth mark, to use the slogan, 'every little helps!'. So let's not lose heart...

Part of Bishop Burrowes letter for November on the diocesan web site

Poem for today

November

by William Cullen Bryant, 1794 - 1878

Yet one smile more, departing, distant sun!
One mellow smile through the soft vapory air,
Ere, o'er the frozen earth, the loud winds run,
Or snows are sifted o'er the meadows bare.
One smile on the brown hills and naked trees,
And the dark rocks whose summer wreaths are cast,
And the blue gentian flower, that, in the breeze,
Nods lonely, of her beauteous race the last.
Yet a few sunny days, in which the bee
Shall murmur by the hedge that skirts the way,
The cricket chirp upon the russet lea,

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And man delight to linger in thy ray.
Yet one rich smile, and we will try to bear
The piercing winter frost, and winds, and darkened air.

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