

Church News Ireland

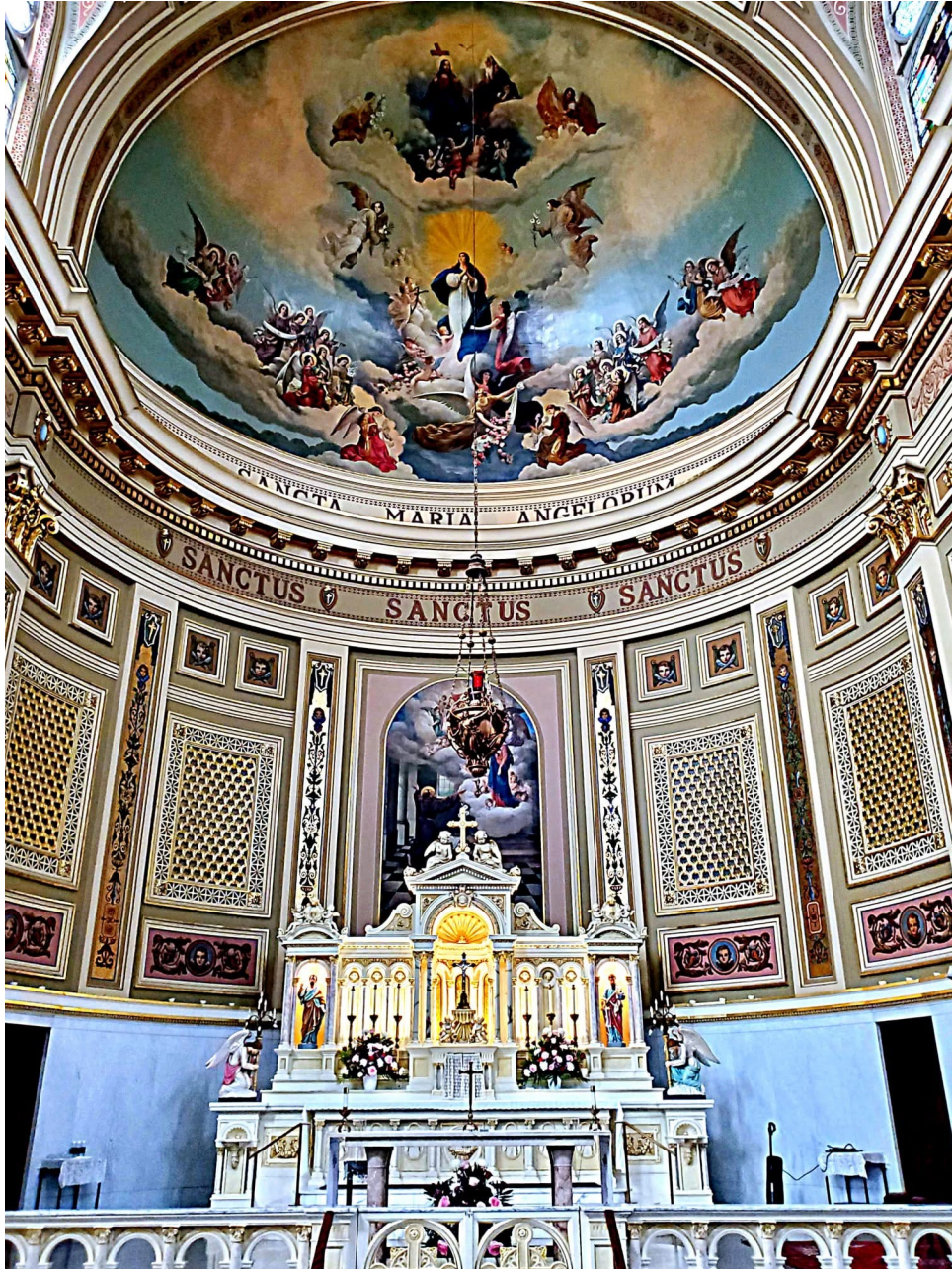


Image of the day – St. Mary of the Angels Chicago

October 10, 2025

Image of the day

St. Mary of the Angels Church in Chicago

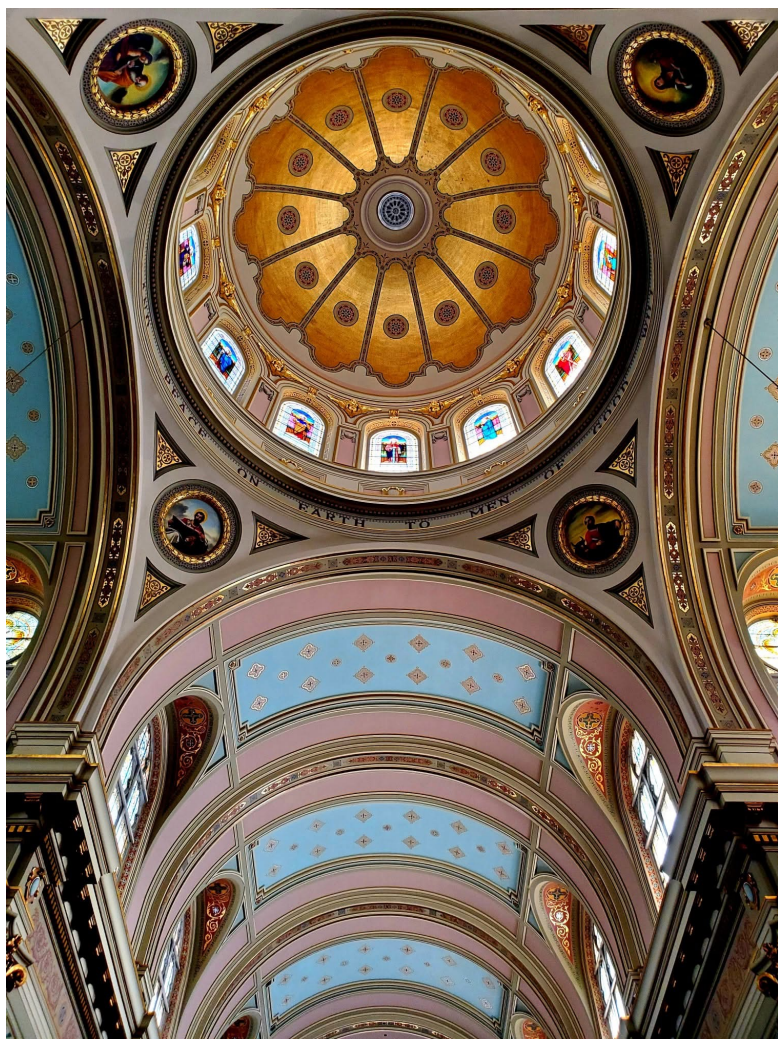
St. Mary of the Angels Church in Chicago is a stunning example of Roman Renaissance architecture and a proud symbol of the city's Polish heritage.

Located in the Bucktown neighbourhood, the church was founded in 1899 by Polish immigrants and completed in 1920 after delays caused by World War I.

Designed by the architectural firm

[Church News Ireland](#)





Worthmann & Steinbach, its grand structure—with a massive dome, twin bell towers, and angelic statues—was inspired by St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

Originally envisioned with distinctively Polish Baroque elements, the final design reflected a more unified Catholic identity, aligning with the archdiocese's push for

Americanization. The interior is richly adorned with murals, gold accents, and a rare W.W. Kimball pipe organ.



Once serving thousands of parishioners, the church faced decline after the construction of the Kennedy Expressway but was saved from demolition in the 1990s and revitalized under the administration of Opus Dei. Today the

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renovations continue and it remains an active parish and a breathtaking architectural landmark visible from the expressway, often celebrated as one of Chicago's most beautiful churches. Thanks to Todd Arnhold.

News



An East Belfast Topper

Order of Malta Awards Day

Recently the Order had its annual Awards day where volunteers from all over the country come together in their head quarters in Dublin to receive service medals,



cadet achievement programme awards and citations and medals of merit to reflect going above and beyond in their role as a volunteer.



Well done to all the recipients on their services and achievement.

60 year service medal - lower photo page above.

If you thought fifty years was impressive, Capt. James Hanly who began in the Limerick Unit and then on to Carlow unit received his 60 year service medal - joining in the 1965! A massive achievement - well done Jim.

Promoting dialogue between cultures and religions key for a Christian politician, Pope Leo

Pope Leo speaks to a European Parliament Working Group on Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue.

"Promoting dialogue between cultures and religions is a key objective for a Christian politician, and thanks be to God there is no shortage of people who have given good witness in this regard.

Being men and women of dialogue means remaining deeply rooted in the Gospel and in the values that flow from it and, at the same time, cultivating openness, listening and dialogue with those who come from other backgrounds, always placing the human person, human dignity, and our relational and communal nature at the center."

Education

Championship performance

Edmund Rice College is bursting with pride after Fiadh's amazing performance at the British



Championships. She placed 4th in the 13–14 age group, missing out on bronze by just 0.3—an incredible result.

Even more impressively, Fiadh qualified for the Junior British Championship final, competing against the top 8 gymnasts aged 13–16. She finished 8th overall, despite not even being 13 yet! This was a huge and unexpected achievement, and she rose to the occasion with a personal best in both her overall score and Time of Flight. She clearly thrives under pressure.

Next up: Fiadh will be representing Ireland at the

Loule Cup in Portugal at the end of October.
Let's all wish her the very best—go Fiadh.

Belfast City Airport support for ROC School Uniform Project

Belfast City Airport - we're proud to be a good neighbour and invest in initiatives that help families thrive.

Through our Community Fund, we have been able to support Redeeming Our Communities' School Uniform Project, which relieves financial pressure by addressing the rising cost of uniforms and stationery, giving children the tools required to grow and reach their full potential.

Read the full story here: https://bit.ly/ROC_BCA

Five schools clean up with city council awards

Pupils from five Belfast schools have had their artwork, highlighting local community issues, displayed on billboards across the city.

The pupils were crowned the winners of Belfast City Council's 2025 Billboard Challenge, an initiative launched earlier this year, Gabrielle Swann writes in the Belfast Telegraph.

Primary and post-primary schools across the city were invited to take part in the Belfast City Council competition and design community issue-centred billboards.

The pupils focused on themes such as dog fouling, littering and graffiti.

From the many entries received, five winning designs were chosen and displayed on billboards around the winner's local areas.

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The winning schools were Cranmore Integrated Primary, Dunmurry Primary, Holy Family Primary, Holy Evangelist Primary and St Oliver Plunkett Primary.

Centring their focus on dog fouling, St Oliver Plunkett's creative poster with partying dogs said: "Don't be a party pooper. Scoop your poop".



DofE Success at RBAI

Congratulations to Robbie Ingram, Harry Boyce and Harry Grain who received their Silver Awards as well as to Charlie Keys and Joey Bradford O’Kane who received their Bronze Awards this week in assembly. Well done lads.

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Cathedral Calls



Do you have a child in 1st to 3rd
class who enjoys singing?
They should come and sing
with us for the afternoon!

Fridays 7 Nov, 6 Feb & 8 May | 3.30 – 6.00pm

Visit our website to register

www.stpatrickscathedral.ie/singalong

Places are limited, prebooking required



**SAINT
PATRICK'S
CATHEDRAL**
DUBLIN

Sing along with St Patrick's Choristers

If you have a child currently in 1st - 3rd Class, and they enjoy singing, then sign them up for one of our Singalong sessions.

Fridays 7 November, 6 February & 8 May.

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They'll spend an afternoon with the Cathedral Choristers for some fun music making led by our fantastic music team. Make new friends, learn new songs and help raise the Cathedral roof ever so slightly with a short concert before heading home!

It's free to take part, places are limited. Pre-booking essential.

www.stpatrickscathedral.ie/singalong

Clergy and ministry



Canon of Lisburn Cathedral

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The Rev James Boyd, rector of Derryvolgie Parish, has been appointed a Canon of Christ Church Cathedral Lisburn by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison.

<https://lisburncathedral.org/>



Encouraging stories from Down & Dromore church plants

At the Diocesan Church Planting Evening on Tuesday 7 October, we heard encouraging stories from the new ministries and church plants that God is raising up in Down and Dromore.

As Archdeacon Jim Cheshire reminded us in his welcome, we prioritise church planting in the diocese because the evidence is that new churches best reach new generations and new residents as well as people and groups not currently connected to existing churches.

The Church of Ireland has been planting for generations and since the launch of the Down and Dromore Church Planting Fund 12 years ago we have established 11 new worshipping

communities and outreaches led by courageous pioneer leaders.

The gathering heard from three of these leaders, each of whom have stepped out in faith in response to God's call.

Ross Munro heads up **The Gathering** at the lower end of the Newtownards Road where they are intentional in keeping their community at the heart of the church. He emphasised the need for partnership and the blessing that comes with it. The Gathering is currently partnering with several agencies so that they can practically support 200 local families in the coming weeks.

Natalie Trainor's emphasis was on the importance of discipleship in the life of **The Grove, Newry**. "Evangelism is the spark and discipleship is the flame," she said, with "true evangelism flowing from transformed lives." That's why The Grove is intentional about offering both Alpha and their 'Rooted' course to those who come along. The church is growing, especially as they now have a permanent base in the city at John Mitchel Place.

Last, but not least, **Trevor Brimage** updated us on **The Well, Castlewellan** which he leads with his wife Lorraine. The team recently took possession of new premises in the village and have seen God's provision as they prepare to open. Much of the ministry at The Well will continue to be with young people as that is where the need is greatest.

Revd Mark Lennox is the diocese's Warden for **Pioneer Ministries** and chaired a short panel discussion with Lorraine Anderson (Warrenpoint), Tim Burns (The Suitcase

Project), Luke Callum (Moneyreagh Community Church) and Colin Morris (St Donard's Community Church, Dundrum). Each had an encouraging story to tell of God at work bringing growth in their situations.

Keith Gardiner, Fundraising Officer for Church Growth, took the opportunity to thank and indeed pray for, everyone who has supported our church plants in the past year through prayer, encouragement, visiting, volunteering and giving.

Bishop David McClay concluded the evening with an update on a **new Resource Church** to be based in St Patrick's Ballymacarrett. It is being launched in partnership with Holy Trinity Brompton and will be the first Resource Church in Ireland.

The vision is that the church at Ballymacarrett will not only serve the local community but routinely plant new churches which could be anywhere on the island. From the start it will have a large team led by Revd Mike Darbandi (Gas Street Church, Birmingham) and one of the team will be a church planter to be sent out every 3 or 4 years. It's a big vision with many associated costs for staffing and refurbishment of the building.

Please pray for the work of our church planters and outreach leaders and for the necessary resources to allow evangelism, discipleship and Christian community to flourish. You can find out more and/or donate at the pages on our website.

Events



extern

**Community in Transition
Larne and Carrick**

Opening of the Therapeutic Walled Garden

**Drumalis Retreat & Conference Centre
Friday 7th November**

Join us in the beautiful, peaceful setting of Drumalis as we celebrate the opening of our new Therapeutic Walled Garden — a space for wellbeing, connection, and growth.

Drop-In (12-2pm)

Enjoy delicious food, take a walk around the stunning grounds, and visit the Walled Garden to hear about our vision and see the renovations so far.

Evening Gathering (6-8pm)

Join us in the garden for soup, crafts, and conversation in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere.

Please complete the form to register
<https://forms.office.com/e/aNSkCVXqX1>

Therapeutic Walled Garden at Drumalis Retreat & Conference Centre

Extern Carrickfergus - We're delighted to share that we've been working hard to regenerate a beautiful new space for our therapeutic wellbeing sessions — it's still

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very much a work in progress but we would love you to see it!

Join us at Drumalis Retreat & Conference Centre on Friday 7th November as we officially open our Therapeutic Walled Garden, a peaceful place for wellbeing, connection, and growth.

There are two opportunities to visit:

Drop-In (12–2pm): Enjoy delicious food, explore the grounds, and hear about our vision.

Evening Gathering (6–8pm): Join us for soup, crafts, and conversation in a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere.

We'd love you to come along and see this special new space.

Please register here: <https://forms.office.com/e/aNSkCVXqX1>

Perspective

More Joy, Fun, Cuddles and Chocolate for Everyone - Jono Pierce writes

Regular readers of the blog will know how much I appreciate the education our children receive in their respective schools. There are many opportunities for the children to flourish and try new things and make friends as they undertake all their activities together.

Our daughter has complex needs and goes to a special school called Torbank, and there was great excitement when we received communication from her classroom to tell us she had been nominated to serve for the coming year as Deputy Head Girl.

There would be a week of campaigning and then the pupils and the teachers could all cast their votes.

We wondered to ourselves how this might work as our daughter is non-verbal, but we needn't have worried. Her teachers and classroom assistants had designed a poster to celebrate the things that were important to her, and to use those things to convince the undecided who they might vote for.

At a time in history when the world seems more polarised and divided than almost any time in my memory, I loved the creative way in which Torbank wanted to affirm our children in their diversity and to enable them to stand for the things they enjoyed most in life.

We laughed when we saw Lucy's slogan and poster. It urged her colleagues to vote for her and as her campaign slogan she sought more joy, fun, cuddles and chocolate for everyone.

It may have been a special school having a little bit of fun and encouraging the children to appreciate the gifts in each other, but it seemed like a prophetic and countercultural slogan for our time.

As we hear of so many controversies about fake news and highjacking the truth, and the world seems to flap helplessly as the rhetoric is dialled up about whether there is or there isn't genocide in Gaza; as influential countries declare their support for recognising that Palestine is a sovereign state in its own right and people are deeply divided about these things; as civilian casualties mount up in Ukraine and Russia and civil war seems to bubble below the surface in countries like South Sudan, and Democratic Republic of Congo and bitter election campaigns seem to be the prevailing wind in international politics, perhaps these children and their inspiring teachers and classroom assistants have something very powerful to say to the world.

We felt extremely honoured that Lucy should be chosen as a candidate for this role in such a special and inspiring school. When it was announced at assembly a week later that she had secured the election by just a few votes, we were sent some beautiful photos of her being led onto the stage while everyone cheered and clapped and, true to her election slogan, she hugged the vice principal, we found a tear in our eye.

We weren't sure because of her learning disability whether she would be too bothered one way or the other about whether she would get the necessary votes. What was more important in her way of thinking seemed to be more joy, more fun, more cuddles and chocolate for everyone.

Is this actually what is needed in the corridors of power throughout the world? Is it what is needed in the public square around debate and discourse and the way people treat each other?

There was no demand for a recount, no accusations of corruption or cheating when the results were announced. All Lucy's teachers and classroom assistants rushed to congratulate Vicky when she collected Lucy from school that day. Her recorded message which comes home every day was full of joy and cheering as her friends rejoiced in this special honour that had come her way.

Knowing her love for balloons, the principal brought some in for her as the new pupils' leadership team were photographed for the school website. She was given a red badge to wear everyday as part of her new role for the coming year.

When we felt a bit weary after a busy week, we gave thanks for Lucy's incredible teachers, friends and classroom assistants, and decided that there is a lot of truth and value in this wonderful slogan. "More joy, more fun, more cuddles and chocolate for everyone."

In the media

Spiritans plan to sell land 'for €20m' to fund abuse redress

One of Ireland's most prominent Catholic teaching orders is planning to sell huge parcels of agricultural land in Co Tipperary to help fund an abuse redress scheme, Sean Pollock writes in the Belfast Telegraph 09/10/2025.

The scheme follows evidence of historical sexual assault and abuse of children at schools operated by the order. The sales could raise €20m (£17m).

The Spiritan Order, often known as the Holy Ghost Fathers, owns multiple schools around Ireland, including Blackrock College in Dublin and Rockwell College in Co Tipperary.

It is now seeking to sell Rockwell Farm, one of the biggest in Tipperary.

It is also considering selling lands around Carrigeen, near Cahir, with the lots totalling more than 830 acres of agricultural land combined.

Land in south Tipperary, the heart of the Golden Vale, is some of the most valuable in the country.

It is understood that the Spiritan Order is seeking around €20m for the land.

The order issued a statement yesterday confirming that progress is being made on selling properties to fund abuse redress payments through the Restorative Justice Framework, which it committed to three years ago.

It stated that Rockwell Farm, which surrounds Rockwell College, would be the first of the properties to be sold. The neighbouring school is not affected.

“We fully accept that progress has not been as fast as anyone would wish,” the order said.

“Victims and survivors have carried this burden for decades, and we understand that every delay feels like a renewed injury. We share the determination to ensure that no one is left behind.

“However, we must respond clearly to the suggestion that the Spiritans are deliberately delaying or obstructing progress. That is not the case.

“We have been fully transparent about our financial position. The reality is we do not yet have the liquid resources required to begin issuing redress payments.

“Our plan, as part of the overall financial restructuring of the Province [administrative unit of the order] is to create the required liquidity by selling Spiritan assets.”

The order added that selling Rockwell Farm involved “multiple legal, valuation and regulatory steps that simply take time to complete”.

Last week, Restore Together, an advocacy group representing several victims and survivors of abuse, accused the Spiritans of a lack of urgency in completing the programme, including making redress.

“We recognise the immense urgency that victims and survivors feel,” the Spiritans said. “We feel it too.”

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Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at houstonmckelvey@mac.com

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early morning

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