

Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – Whiteabbey Presbyterian
Italianate Church**



Image of the day

Whiteabbey Presbyterian Italianate Church

A community without anywhere to worship pulled together to build this stunning Italianate church. Built in 1834, the National Churches Trust Church Of The Week is Whiteabbey Presbyterian Church in County Antrim.



In the 1830s, industrialisation was transforming the quiet fishing village of Whiteabbey into a hub of hand-loom weaving, as a new mill brought crowds of newcomers into the area. With the nearest churches miles away in Carnmoney and Carrickfergus, most of the new residents had nowhere to attend services, and no connection to other churches nearby.

In 1831, for lack of anywhere else to hold them, services began in the local schoolhouse. A well connected local, William Cairns, invited prominent ministers from Belfast to preach there, including Revd Dr Henry Cooke, a famous Presbyterian minister. When Dr Cooke saw the situation in Whiteabbey, he knew immediately that something had to change, and advocated strongly for a real church for the growing community.

In 1833, a vote revealed that most people in the district were in favour of a Presbyterian church, and William Campbell was ordained as its new minister – but they still needed money to build it.

That's when the community stepped in, raising £905 – around £140,000 today – in a single year. People from all walks of life contributed, from mill workers and local families to gentry and visitors who came to enjoy the seaside. Members of the Building Committee, who worked to plan the new church, acted as guarantors for money borrowed from Belfast Bank to help speed up the process.

By August 1834, the new church was already open for worship, thanks to the combined efforts of William Cairns, Dr Cooke, William Campbell, and the many others who contributed their time, resources and enthusiasm to the project. Today, a dedicated and enthusiastic community continues to take care of Whiteabbey Presbyterian Church, including by commissioning a conservation architectural survey – supported by a grant from the National Churches Trust – to help ensure the future of the building.

Visit our website to find out more about this beautiful church, and how you can visit:

<https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/church/whiteabbey-presbyterian-church>

News



Catholic and Protestant churches jointly condemn murder - after Michelle Gildernew and Jamie Bryson agree it was justified

The Pride of Northern Ireland
News Letter Since 1737 

No justification for murder states Church Leaders Group

The Church Leaders Group has issued the following statement:

As people of faith, as Christian leaders, and as individuals made in the image of God, we believe that human life is a divine and sacred gift to be cherished, nurtured and protected. Murder, which is the intentional and unlawful killing of another human, can therefore never be justified or legitimized.

We unequivocally condemn any attempt by individuals, or sections of the community, to justify or legitimize the murder of others. Such comments underline, and make it very clear, that the work of reconciliation is more important than ever and that we still have a long way to travel.

As we, and our predecessors, have said before, when we reflect on our past in Northern Ireland, ‘we all have a moral responsibility to acknowledge the corrosive impact of violence’ and alongside that also ‘a duty of care to those still living with the trauma of its aftermath’.

We offer our continued support to all victims of violence and pray for healing and peace, for individuals, for this community where we live, and for all in the world today living under the shadow of conflict. May there be a renewed emphasis on the complex but essential work of reconciliation, so that we re-commit ourselves to working for a future of common understanding, respect and peace in this land, and for all peoples everywhere.

The Most Revd John McDowell

Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland

The Most Revd Eamon Martin

Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland

The Rt Revd Dr Trevor Gribben

Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

The Revd Alan Wardlow

President of the Methodist Church in Ireland

The Rt Revd Sarah Groves

President of the Irish Council of Churches

BEREAVEMENT GROUP

St Peter's Church

Fortwilliam Drive, Belfast

**Second Wednesday of each month
12pm until 12:45pm**

If you are mourning the loss of a loved one, you will be very welcome to join us at midday on Wednesday for our monthly Bereavement Group. We meet in the church, and - if you like - it would be lovely to have join us beforehand at our 10:30am celebration of Holy Communion too.

Morning Service with Bishop Harold and Mrs Liz Miller

On BBC Radio Ulster & Radio Foyle – 9.03am this Sunday

Morning Service this Sunday (12th October), on BBC Radio Ulster and Radio Foyle at 9.03am, will be led by Bishop Harold Miller and Mrs Liz Miller, and will focus on the healing of 10 men with leprosy (Luke 17:11-19).

Bishop Miller, who served as Bishop of Down and Dromore from 1997 to 2019, remarked: “What a privilege it is to speak to so many people on a Sunday morning about the healing and transformation offered to all by Jesus in this beautiful miracle.” The programme can be played back after broadcast at www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b007cphq

Home Grown Hope event for Christian Aid

East Africa came to east Belfast on Friday evening when we held another of our Home Grown Hope events, this time at Gilnahirk Presbyterian Church when Mollie Cunningham prepared dishes inspired by her recent visit to a project tackling poverty and malnutrition in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi.

Around 40 supporters came along to watch as Mollie, the chef and grower at Ballytrim Pantry near Killyleagh, County Down, prepared first a beef stew and later a creamy spinach dish before inviting the audience to sample her creations.

Mollie described how, in a crowded suburb of Nairobi, where land is scarce and incomes are low, she met families who were getting by on just one meal per day. That was until our partner Beacon of Hope began helping communities to create rooftop gardens where they are now growing vegetables to feed their families more nutritious meals - and surplus to sell for an additional income.

We are grateful to Mollie and to everyone who gave up their time to come along, and to Gilnahirk Presbyterian Church for providing the venue.

Our next Home Grown Hope event will be held at First Hollywood Presbyterian Church at 7.30pm on Monday 20 October and all are welcome to attend. To book your ticket, please visit <https://bit.ly/HollywoodPC>

Pope slams wealthy elite 'living in a bubble' while poor suffer

Pope Leo XIV has criticised how the wealthy elite live in a “bubble of comfort and luxury” while poor people suffer on the margins, confirming in his first teaching document that he is in perfect lockstep with his predecessor Pope Francis on matters of social and economic injustice.

The Vatican on Thursday released the document, entitled I Have Loved You, which Francis had begun to write in his final months but never finished.

Leo, who was elected in May, credited Francis with the text, cited him repeatedly, but said he had made the document his own and signed it.

The 100-page document traces the history of Christianity's constant concern for poor people, from Biblical citations and the teaching of church fathers to the preaching of recent popes about caring for migrants, prisoners and victims of human trafficking.

Aleteia.org

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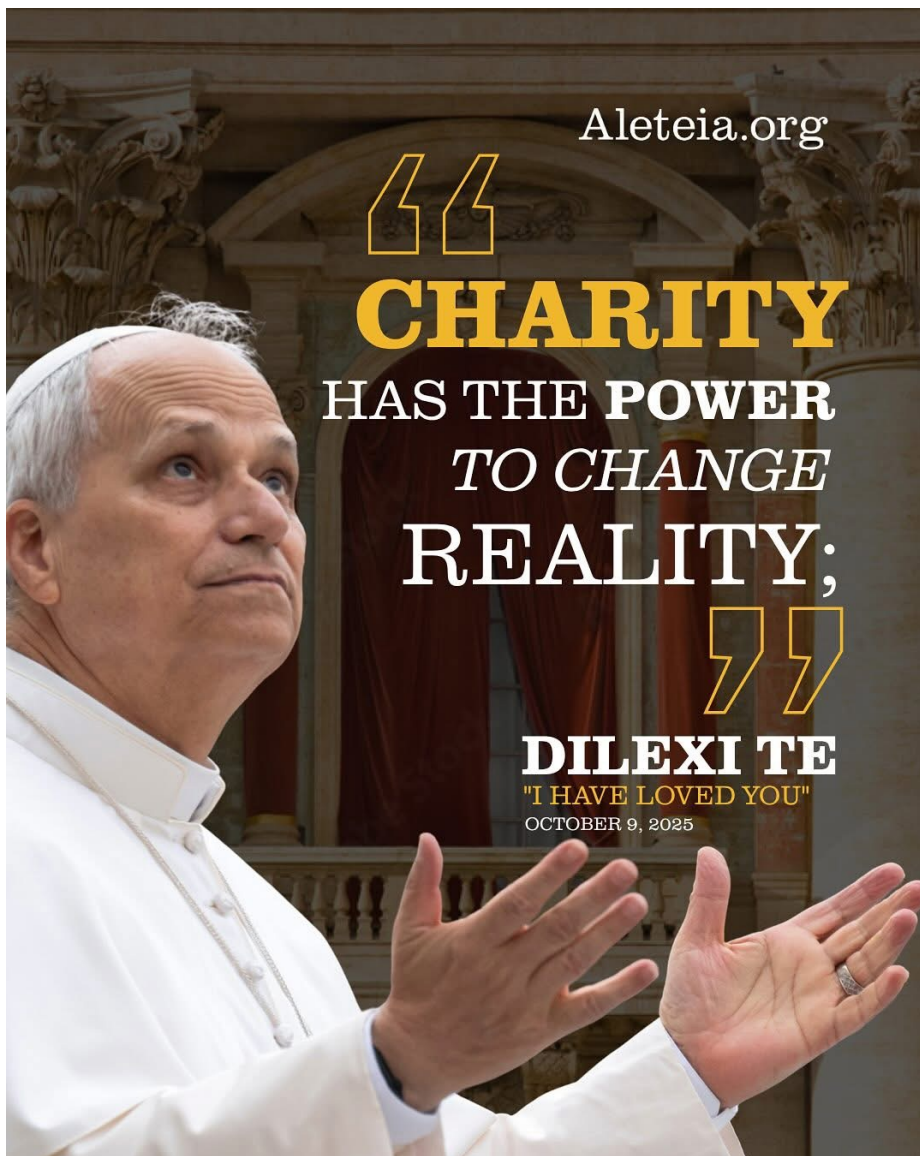
DILEXI TE
"I HAVE LOVED YOU"
OCTOBER 9, 2025

Leo credits especially women's religious orders with carrying out God's mandate to care for the sick, feed the poor and welcome the stranger, and also praised lay-led popular

movements with advocating for land, housing and work for society's most disadvantaged.

The conclusion Leo draws is that the Catholic Church's "preferential option for the poor" has existed from the start, is non-negotiable and is in fact the very essence of what it means to be Christian.

He calls for a renewed commitment to fixing the structural causes of poverty, while providing unquestioning charity to those who need it.



“When the Church kneels beside a leper, a malnourished child or an anonymous dying person, she fulfils her deepest vocation: to love the Lord where he is most disfigured,” Leo writes.

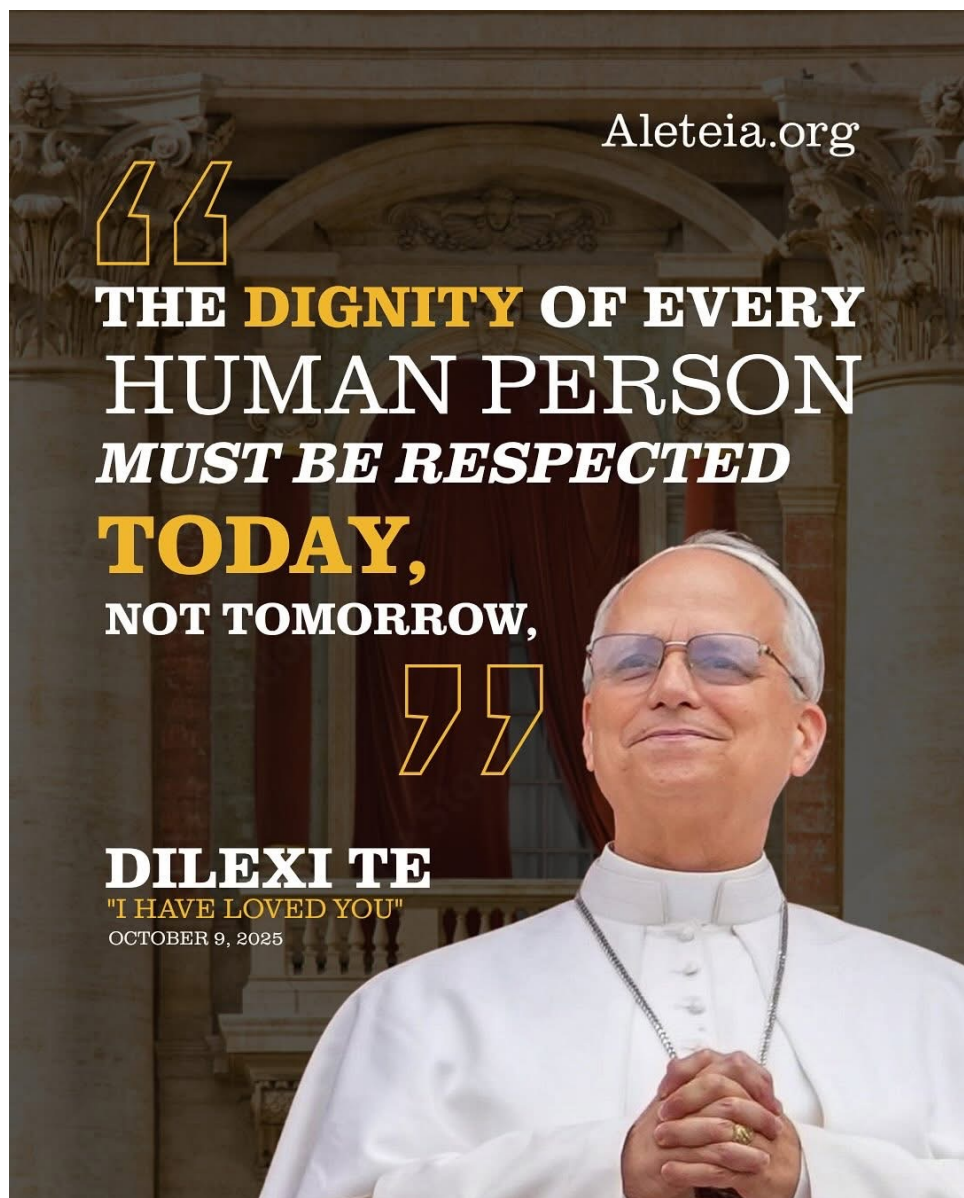
Leo cites Francis frequently, including in some of the

Argentine pope's most-quoted talking points about the global “economy that kills” and criticism of trickle down economics. Francis made those points from the very start of his pontificate in 2013, saying he wanted a “Church that is poor and for the poor”.

“God has a special place in his heart for those who are discriminated against and oppressed, and he asks us, his Church, to make a decisive and radical choice in favour of the weakest,” Leo writes.

Echoing Francis, Leo rails against the “illusion of happiness” derived from accumulating wealth.

“Thus, in a world where the poor are increasingly numerous, we paradoxically see the growth of a wealthy elite, living in a bubble of comfort and



luxury, almost in another world compared to ordinary people.”

Francis's frequent criticism of capitalism angered many conservative and wealthy Catholics, especially in the United States, who accused the Argentine Jesuit of being a Marxist. In a recent interview, Leo said such misdirected criticism cannot be levelled against him.

“The fact that I am American means, among other things, people can't say, like they did about Francis, 'he doesn't understand the United States, he just doesn't see what's going on,’” Leo told Crux, a Catholic site.



Connor Diocese exploring missional partnership in North Argentina

The Bishop of Connor and members of Connor Council of Mission met Alec Deane from North Argentina along with SAMS Ireland Mission Director, the Rev Geoff Hamilton, on Wednesday October 8.

Revie of recent news headlines

Monday 6

Sarah Mullaly smashed through 'stained glass ceiling' as new Archbishop - safeguarding, global rift, church challenges, leadership

British Jews mourn 7 October massacre and Manchester synagogue attack

Muslim and Jewish leaders: 'Hatred will not divide us'

Pope concerned over rise of antisemitism and Manchester attack

Home Secretary: attack on mosque in Sussex 'deeply concerning'

Tuesday 7

Peace talks for Gaza open on eve of Hamas attack anniversary

Vatican Secretary of State says what is happening in Gaza is inhuman

Students demonstrate against Israel in London today

Funeral takes place of second victim of synagogue attack

Festival of Sukkot observed this week

US Supreme Court to rule on overturning conversion therapy ban

Wednesday 8

Bishop says Robert Jenrick is stoking division in comments about Handsworth

Heaton Park synagogue hero condemns pro-Palestine demonstration

Pope's first visit abroad will be to Turkey and Lebanon

Sikhs threaten legal challenge to new Islamophobia definition

Bishops urge priests to offer 'Mass of the Angels' for pregnancy losses

‘Men outnumber women in US church attendance’,
reversing decades of stats
Faith Invest launches guide to environmentally friendly
investments
Italy re-instates Feast of St Francis as national holiday on 4
October

Thursday 9

Israel and Hamas sign off first phase of peace plan
Synagogue attacker pledged allegiance to Islamic State
Trial starts of men accused of plotting mass shooting of
Jews
Health Secretary wants antisemitic doctors stripped of
licence before tribunal

Education

Strabane Academy Kinship Care Week

This week we celebrated Kinship Care Week, a time to recognise and honour the incredible families who step up to care for loved ones.

We’re especially proud to share the superb and heartwarming story of Adam, our Head Boy 2023–24, whose journey reminds us what strength, love, and family truly mean. Adam’s story is a shining example of resilience and the power of kinship care, proof that with the right support, young people can achieve amazing things.



Pearse and Margaret Quinn became kinship carers for their grandson Adam, a decision they describe as one of the most rewarding experiences of their lives.

As part of Kinship Care Week (6-10 October) we want to shine a spotlight on the extraordinary role of kinship foster carers and celebrate their success in keeping families and communities together.

Make sure to read their story -

<https://southerntrust.hscni.net/a-kinship-care-journey/>

Queens University rep with Indian Prime Minister and UK Prime Minister

It's not every day you travel with Prime Minister Keir Starmer to meet India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi.

We're the first Russell Group university to establish a campus in GIFT City, India's leading financial and technology hub. So, we were invited on this historic trade mission to help strengthen the economic and educational ties between the two countries.

"It was a momentous occasion today to meet the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

"It was a privilege to be involved and to share our vision to enhance global opportunities for academic and research partnerships with members of the trade delegation.

"This visit is about building on already well-established collaborations with Indian businesses, industry and academic partnerships that will help deliver a more connected world." (Prof. Margaret Topping, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Global Engagement at Queen's University Belfast)

Read the full story here: ow.ly/1SGR50X9n4a

Interested in studying at our campus in GIFT City? Follow us:

www.linkedin.com/showcase/qubgiftcity

www.instagram.com/qubgiftcity



Derrygonnelly digs Archaeology

Children from Derrygonnelly Controlled School were the first to join archaeologists from Queen's University Belfast for a community dig exploring the site of 17th-century Derrygonnelly Castle.

The project, run by the Community Archaeology Programme Northern Ireland, unearthed pottery, glass, and other artefacts, helping locals connect with their town's early history. Full report in the Impartial Reporter!

2nd Ards take on a nine-day Swiss adventure



Scouting from Ards to the Alps

2nd Ards spent nine days at Kandersteg International Scout Centre in Switzerland - tackling mountain climbs, white water rapids and celebrating Swiss National Day.

They made new friends from around the world and brought home memories they'll never forget.

Read more: <https://shorturl.at/B0IB4>

Cathedral Calls

Icon for Catholic military Cathedral

A special blessing ceremony has taken place at the Catholic military Cathedral

An icon (a religious work of art) arrived in the UK after an extraordinary journey from Ukraine, the symbol of faith demonstrates the solidarity between the Ukrainians and ourselves. Read more <https://ow.ly/otjM50X8C2T>



Clergy and ministry



Rector of St Patrick's Parish Church, Broughshane

The Rev Marcus Hart was instituted as rector of St Patrick's Parish Church, Broughshane at a service in St Patrick's, Broughshane, on Thursday evening.

Marcus comes to Broughshane from Christ Church Ware where he has been curate since 2022. More at <https://bit.ly/4nDf7Os>.

Events

Lunchtime recitals in Monkstown Parish Church

On the following Wednesdays in October there will be a lunchtime recital in Monkstown Parish Church, Monkstown, Co. Dublin at 1.10pm.

18th October - David O'Shea (Organ)

15th October - Rev. Hilary Dungan and Liezl-Maret Jacobs (Piano)

22nd October - The Amos Trio (Oboe, Flute and Clarinet)

29th October - Shira Brady (Contralto), Daire O'Shea (Piano)

William Desmond (Violin) and Edel O'Donnell (Cello)

There will be a basket for donations at the door and the proceeds will be divided between the performers and church funds. All welcome.

In the media

Church leaders protest over conversion therapy ban

A conversion therapy ban would “criminalise” Christian teachings, conservative church leaders have claimed Gabriella Swerling writes in the Daily Telegraph

In July 2024, the Government announced its intention to bring forward draft legislation to ban conversion practices in England and Wales.

The practice aims to change people's sexual orientation or gender identity, which, effectively, means trying to stop someone from being gay or from identifying as a gender which is different to their sex recorded at birth.

Conversion therapy can include prayer as well as talking therapies. However, more extreme versions can include exorcism, food deprivation and physical violence.

The British Psychological Society, NHS England and the Royal College of Psychiatrists have warned that all types of conversion therapy are “unethical and potentially harmful” and “not supported by evidence”. The Church of England's General Synod also called for a ban on conversion therapy in 2017.

The Christian Institute, a charity which is lobbying for the Government not to impose a ban on the practice, has backed an open letter organised by the Let Us Pray campaign and signed by a number of senior church leaders, expressing “grave concern” at draft proposals to ban conversion therapy.

The letter, which is addressed to the UK Equalities Minister, Olivia Bailey, and is signed by 24 church leaders from a range of denominations, warns that this could “criminalise mainstream, historic Christian teaching on marriage and

sexual ethics, and make sharing the Gospel with some people illegal.

“We are also concerned it could prevent parents from guiding their children on matters of sexuality and gender, and from urging caution if their child says they want to undergo gender treatment,” it says.

A spokesman for the Church of England said: “The Church of England has opposed coercive conversion therapies and supports the Government’s intention to ban such practices.”

A government spokesman said: “Conversion practices are abuse – such acts have no place in society and must be stopped.”

Gabriella Swerling is the Social and Religious Affairs Editor of the Daily Telegraph

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

Church News Ireland

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**Link in Monday through Saturday from
early morning**

Please recommend to your friends