

Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – St George's Memorial Church
Ypres**

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St George's Memorial Church Ypres

Saint George's Memorial Church is an Anglican church in the centre of Ypres, built after the First World War to commemorate the British and Commonwealth soldiers who died in the battles around the Ypres Salient.

The idea for the church had been circulating since 1919, but it was Field Marshal Sir John French, 1st Earl of Ypres, who gave the initiative real momentum in 1924. The project was supported by the Ypres League, a British veterans' association, and the design was entrusted to Sir Reginald Blomfield, the architect of the Menin Gate. The foundation stone was laid in 1927 by Field Marshal Lord Plumer, and the church was consecrated two years later.

October 2, 2025

The building has a modest design in yellow brick and natural stone, intended to blend with the surrounding city. Inside, almost every object has a commemorative origin. Families, military units, and associations contributed memorial gifts ranging from plaques and flags to the organ and the altar. The Bible was presented by King George V.



The stained glass windows, produced by Clayton & Bell of London, are a defining feature. Each window commemorates a specific



regiment or individual officer, linking the architecture directly to the people and stories behind the war. The side chapel, baptismal chapel, and main nave each contain windows dedicated to different units, creating a mosaic of remembrance across the armed forces.

During the Second World War, much of the church's interior was hidden by local residents

October 2, 2025

to protect it from looting, and was carefully restored once Ypres was liberated. Today, Saint George's Memorial Church remains in use as an Anglican place of worship, with its memorials and stained glass continuing to reflect the history of the First World War.

News



Christian Aid rugby bucket collection attracts supporters

Christian Aid has expressed “Huge thanks to all the supporters who came along on Friday evening to ‘try’ their hand at fundraising with our bucket collection outside Ulster Rugby’s Belfast stadium”.

October 2, 2025

Photo previous page -

Pictured with one of the tap-to-give machines is Suzanne Simpson, our Church Projects Fundraising Officer, with her husband Stephen and their son Tom.



Pictured with their buckets are Karen Gallagher and Lara Macfarlane. We are so grateful to them and to all the wonderful supporters who gave up their Friday evening to make this success possible. Guys, you are 'scrum' team.

By the time the game began, Christian Aid had made one important 'conversion' off the pitch – turning the kindness of the rugby fans into more than £700, which will be used by CAI to bring hope to people living in poverty and crisis around the world.

CAI added, “We even managed to ‘tackle’ the issue of our increasingly cashless society with our new tap-to-give machines which allowed match-goers to make a payment using their bank cards or phones.

C of I Theological Lecture at Queen’s to consider autonomy, suffering and human dignity

Professor John Wyatt – a respected Christian voice in medical ethic - will give the Church of Ireland Board of Education (Northern Ireland) Annual Theological Lecture in The Great Hall of The Queen’s University Belfast on Monday 13th October 2025

How should we respond to questions of suffering, dignity, autonomy and the end of life?

In the 67th Annual Theological Lecture at Queen’s Professor Wyatt – a respected Christian voice in medical ethics – will draw on his clinical experience, medical expertise, and theological insight to examine these issues. He will explore the meaning of human life, autonomy, the ethical and spiritual weight of suffering, and the complex moral challenges faced by patients, families, and healthcare professionals navigating end-of-life decisions.

John Wyatt is Emeritus Professor of Neonatal Paediatrics, Ethics and Perinatology at University College London. He was Co-Principal Investigator for a research project based at The Faraday Institute investigating the implications for human self-understanding of recent advances in artificial

intelligence and robotic technology. Having spent his working life both caring for babies and researching the mechanisms, treatment and prevention of brain damage in newborn infants, in his retirement he is focusing on the ethical, philosophical and theological issues raised by rapidly advancing technology.

This public lecture will be followed by a Q&A, encouraging academics, students, clinicians, clergy and interested members of the public to engage with these pressing ethical and theological questions.

Places can be booked at
www.thehubbelfast.org/annuallecture

Pray the Rosary for peace in Gaza, Ukraine and other war zones

Aid to the Church in Need Ireland is appealing to young Irish people to pray the Rosary for peace in Gaza, Ukraine and other war zones.

A global charity that works in some of the most difficult parts of the planet with vulnerable communities is appealing to young Irish people to pray the Rosary for peace in Gaza, Ukraine and other war zones.

Aid to the Church in Need Ireland is hoping many Irish schools and parishes will join with children all over the world praying for peace on Tuesday 7 October next, the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary.

The initiative – One Million Children Praying the Rosary – aims to focus attention on parts of the world where young people experience difficulties due to war and conflict.

28-year-old Brandon Scott (pictured), who is co-ordinating the campaign in Ireland, said he is “delighted” that so many schools around Ireland have already come on board pledging to pray the Rosary on 7 October. I Brandon said, “Our prayer initiative highlights the fact that even when the situation feels helpless, each of us can always pray for those in need – and people appreciate those prayers.”

Brandon continued, “We are calling on children in every continent to join together – in the first week of October, and especially on 7 October – to pray the simple but powerful prayer of the Rosary, and to offer their prayer intention for peace in the world.

“In Ireland, in particular, the Rosary has, and always will be, a trusted way of prayer and hope for peace – a path we are currently walking with great trust.

“What started off in 2005 as a modest campaign, the annual Rosary for peace initiative has blossomed into something beautiful, with records being broken each year – the latest showing 1,218,372 children prayed the Rosary for peace last year! I like to reflect on the inspiring words of Saint Padre Pio – whose feast day falls on 23 September – when he said, ‘When one million children pray the Rosary, then the world will change.’ Visualise this, over a million children from around the world, coming together to pray the Rosary for peace at a time when it feels like the world is so devoid of it. How powerful is that!”

Education



Over 500 young people attend Cork Schools' Service

The Cork, Cloyne and Ross Annual Diocesan Schools' Service was held again this year in St Peter's Church, Bandon on Thursday, 25th September 2025.

Every year, the Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, the Right Rev. Dr Paul Colton, invites all primary schools to Bandon to mark the beginning of the school year with this special service. This year marked the last Diocesan Schools'

October 2, 2025

Service with Bishop Paul Colton and over 500 young people attended this special service.

Bishop Colton led the service and he invited the Rev. Abigail Sines, Convenor of the Diocesan Children and Family Ministry Group, to preach and she chose St Matthew and following Jesus as her theme.

As part of the Diocesan Church Music scheme, three schools performed pieces at the service. Under the direction of Peter Stobart, the choir of St Fin Barre's National School performed "I am the light of the world", a new piece based on several texts about following Jesus, composed by Peter Stobart especially for the service.

They were later joined by St Luke's NS, Montenotte, and Templebreedy NS to sing "A Gaelic Blessing" by John Rutter.

Before the Final Blessing, representatives of each primary school presented the Bishop with a gift and flowers for Mrs Colton to thank him for his many years of service. The service ended with the traditional ringing of all the school bells which the students brought with them.

Be Really Ambitious... Be BRA

At BRA, we set high expectations for every pupil's learning journey from Day 1.

In Form 1, all pupils study Latin and explore the sciences as three distinct disciplines – Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

October 2, 2025

We value the importance of languages: with Latin, French, German and Spanish offered to A level, and every pupil expected to study at least one language at GCSE.

With a broad and balanced curriculum at GCSE and A level, pupils have the freedom to choose subjects that reflect their interests, skills and future aspirations.

Discover more about our extensive curriculum at our Open Nights on Wednesday 7th and Thursday 8th January 2026, 6.15pm - 8.45pm. Register here to attend: <https://tinyurl.com/BRAOpenNights2026>



Dalriada's ITV newscaster

We would like to congratulate one of our past pupils, Anna Kane, on her first news report for ITV.

What a fantastic achievement, and the start of a wonderful future as a Production Journalist.



New extension at Whiteabbey Primary School

Pupils and staff at Whiteabbey Primary School Primary School are celebrating the opening of its new extension, marking a significant investment in education for the local community.

Founded in 1839, rebuilt in 1939 (for approximately 200 children) and now with over 420 children, this extension marks the first major building work to be completed since the canteen was built with the formation of school dinners in the 1950s.



The new extension comprises of three standard classrooms worth £870k. There has also been external works required in relation to resurfacing, installation of steps and ramps and installation of handrails.

Read more here <https://ow.ly/vHGr50X2KPe>

Cathedral Calls

A New Chapter for Pioneer Ministry in Meath and Kildare

The Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, Bishop Anthony Poggo took part in a special service in



St Brigid's Cathedral, Kildare, at which Bishop Pat Storey commissioned Rev Philip McKinley as Diocesan Pioneer Minister.

Dean Isobel Jackson assisted at the service, and Canon William Steacy was also in attendance.

“Rooted in Heritage, Reaching to the Future: Pioneer Ministry Begins” - the Commissioning Service for our Diocesan Pioneer Minister, Rev Philip McKinley. The service took place this evening in St Brigid's Cathedral, Kildare.

From St Brigid's Cathedral to Clonmacnoise, new seeds of faith are being planted. Find out more about the Pioneer Ministry starting this September in Meath and Kildare. See - <https://meathandkildare.org/news/a-new-chapter-for-pioneer-ministry-in-meath-and-kildare/n>

Clergy and ministry

The Korean Martyrs

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the deaths of seven Columbans in the Korean War. Historian Mairéad O'Brien writes about three of the seven who were killed in the Taejon Massacre.

The 24th of September 2025 was the 75th anniversary of the Massacre at Taejon, which took place during the early months of the Korean War (1950-1953).

Among the 1,000 people killed by Communist forces were three Columban missionaries based in Mokpo, South Korea. They were Mgr Patrick Brennan, Fr Tommie Cusack and Fr Jack O'Brien.

On 25th June 1950 the North Korean People's Army launched an attack on the Republic of South Korea. The Columbans in Mokpo were not unduly worried as the war zone was 320 kilometres away, across mountainous terrain. However, three weeks later, the US Command sent an envoy to Mokpo, offering the missionaries safe passage to the port of Pusan, from where they could travel safely to Japan. Aware of the risks, all three men refused the lifeline, choosing to remain with their parishioners.

The North Koreans arrived in Mokpo on 25th July. A week later, the three Columbans were arrested and transferred to

Kwangju, where they were interrogated and placed in a police cell. One night, three American soldiers, one of whom was Lieutenant Alexander G. Makarounis, were thrown into the cell with them. They all chatted for a while in the dark.

The Columbans shared their blankets with the soldiers and Mgr Brennan encouraged the newcomers to get a good night's sleep.

From the "brogues" of Fr O'Brien and Fr Cusack, it was clear to the Americans that two of the men were Irish. When morning came, they were surprised to learn that their companions were three Roman Catholic priests.

Their cell was small, and they had little to entertain themselves. Fr Jack sang songs to help pass the time. On one occasion, he even danced an Irish jig. Food rations were skimpy, leaving them constantly hungry. American planes often flew overhead, strafing and bombing their detention centre, which also served as a military stronghold. The American prisoners believed that the prayers of the priests kept them safe during this period.

The six priests and soldiers were loaded onto a crowded truck one night. As they sped along the rough mountain roads, the guards tried to intimidate them by pointing their guns in the air and firing, laughing maniacally, and singing loudly. Whenever the prisoners moved, the guards would jab them with a gun and click the chamber as if preparing to shoot, relishing the fear in the prisoners' eyes before erupting into hysterical laughter.

They travelled for three nights, under the cover of darkness to avoid detection by Western forces. Each morning, they were thrown into a cell and given a rice ball. Despite huddling together for warmth, they always seemed to be cold.

Just before dawn on the third night, the truck broke down about 12 kilometres outside the city of Taejon. The group had to walk the rest of the way. Fr Tommie and Fr Jack supported Mgr Brennan and Lieutenant Makarounis, who struggled to keep up. It was crucial to keep everyone moving, as the guards threatened to shoot anyone who fell behind.

As they approached a river, light bombers appeared overhead, prompting everyone to run under a nearby bridge. Mgr Brennan, exhausted, slipped on the rocks leading down to the water. Fr Jack reached out, grabbed his hand, and pulled him back to safety before he could be swept away.

They resumed their journey, with the Monsignor and Lieutenant Makarounis still struggling to keep up. When a guard signalled to the two men to step back, they were expecting to be executed. To their surprise, the guard indicated they could slow down.

Eventually, all six men arrived at Taejon, weakened by hunger, thirst and fatigue. That night, the American soldiers were moved elsewhere. After the war, they spoke fondly of the stoicism, positivity and deep faith of the three Columbans.

In Taejon, the priests were imprisoned at a Franciscan monastery along with the wife of a Korean judge who recalled that whenever someone was taken out for torture or interrogation regarding Catholics in Taejon, "the three foreign priests went down on their knees and prayed throughout the night for that prisoner."

The monastery served as the temporary headquarters for the North Korean Forces, and whenever there was an air attack by American forces, the Western prisoners were ordered onto the roof to act as human shields.

By September, United Nations forces, led by American General Douglas MacArthur, had recaptured Seoul and sent a task force southward towards Taejon to prevent Communist troops from rushing north to retake the South Korean capital.

On the night of 24th September, the North Korean army were forced to retreat from Taejon. Before they withdrew, they massacred about 1,000 prisoners. Among those executed were the three Columban priests. The blood-splattered and bullet-riddled walls of the monastery bore witness to the brutality of their deaths.

Bodies - both dead and alive - were dumped in caves and into deep wells. In 1952, these remains were recovered, cremated, and buried on a nearby hill. In 1996, a Catholic historian took some of the bones and placed them in three urns, which were transferred in 2008 to a memorial erected by the Daejeon (Taejon) diocese in their honour.

The Seven Columbans who died in Korea in 1950

Taejon:

Mgr Patrick Brennan (49) from Chicago, of Irish parents, who was killed on the 24th of September 1950 at Taejon. Fr Tommie Cusack (39) from Ballycotton, Liscannor, Co Clare, killed on 24th September 1950 at the massacre at Taejon.

Fr Jack O'Brien (31) from Donamon, Co Roscommon, killed on 24th September 1950 at the massacre at Taejon.

Elsewhere in Korea:

Fr Tony Collier (37) from Clogherhead, Co Louth, who was killed on the 27th June 1950. Tony was the first foreigner to die in the Korean conflict.

Fr Jim Maginn (38) of Newcastle, Co Down (born in Butte, Montana to Irish parents), who had been missing in Korea since June 1950, was killed on 4th July that year.

Fr Patrick Reilly (34) from Drumraney, Co Westmeath, who was killed on 29th August 1950.

Fr Frank Canavan (35) from Headford, Co Galway, who died in a prison camp in North Korea on 6th December 1950. On 4th December he told Mgr Tom Quinlan, who was in the prison camp with him, "I will be having Christmas dinner in Heaven."

In the media

Church of Ireland historical society 'must be honest' about paedophile founder

Campaigners have urged the Church of Ireland Historical Society (COIHS) to come clean about removing online traces of its paedophile founder, John Toner writes in Sunday Life.

The late Rev Bill Neely was exposed as a child molester by Sunday Life in 2022 when Belfast man Eddie Gorman spoke out about his abuse.

Following the revelations COIHS quietly removed all mention of Neely from its website despite his central role and an annual postgraduate prize that was once named after him.

No explanation for this has been forthcoming from and the society has never addressed the abuse inflicted by Neely.

Yesterday (Saturday last) campaigners stood outside a COIHS meeting at Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin to plead with the organisation for honesty about the affair.

A leaflet handed to delegates read: "After Neely's abuse was publicised, COIHS made no statement about its founder. "Instead... it silently erased all references, replacing some with falsifications.

"Silently hiding and falsifying Neely's role as COIHS founder is unacceptable.

"Please demand an inquiry into the treatment of sexual abuse by the Church of Ireland and why Neely was proposed and elected a Canon of St Patrick's Cathedral

October 2, 2025

Dublin 1997, as well as why Neely was buried in St Patrick's Cathedral Armagh.”

COIHS is a separate entity from the Church of Ireland.

Sunday Life had previously asked it about the Neely case and received no reply.

In December 2023 the Church of Ireland settled with Mr Gorman shortly before he passed away over the abuse he suffered.

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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www.churchnewsireland.org

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

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