



**Image of the day -  
Sir David Amess MP**

## Reports

### Archbishops tributes to Sir David Amess MP

**The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have paid tribute to the MP for Southend West, Sir David Amess, who died on Friday after being stabbed in Belfairs Methodist Church in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, during a constituency surgery.**

The police have arrested a 25-year-old man, and say that they are not looking for anyone else in connection with the attack.

Archbishop Cottrell said: “I had the great honour of calling David Amess a friend when I was Bishop of Chelmsford. He was the MP for the constituency where I grew up, and not only did he always faithfully serve those people and that place, but had a particular concern for the Christian community born of his own deeply held Christian faith as a member of the Roman Catholic community.

“It is shocking that someone so dedicated to his community and public service was the victim of such violence as he went about his elected duty.

“It is hard to make sense of the horror of what has happened this afternoon but he and his family and those he loved are in my prayers.”

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Sir David, a father of five, entered Parliament in 1983 as Conservative MP for Basildon, switching to his present constituency in 1997. He was an active member of the Catholic Legislators' Network. Its organiser, Chris Whitehouse, on Friday described Sir David as a gentle man "exuding charm and genuine compassion in equal measure. Parliament, his party, and his family are all poorer for his passing."

Archbishop Welby said that he was "truly devastated" by the news of Sir David's death.

"The death of a father, husband, and friend is agonisingly painful for those who loved him," he said. "The murder of an MP, in the course of caring for his constituents, is a deep blow to this country, its citizens, and everyone who desires a peaceful and flourishing democracy.

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"Sir David Amess dedicated his life to championing causes he believed in, serving constituents and his country for almost 40 years as a Member of Parliament. He was a devout Roman Catholic whose deep faith fuelled his sense of justice. We are richer for his life, and we are all poorer for his untimely death. We hold his family and loved ones in our prayers, that they might feel the comfort and peace of the Christ who suffers with us.

"The only antidote to violence and hatred is love and unity. In this horrific and tragic moment, we must come together, across political difference, and be the light that refuses to be cowed by darkness."

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The RC Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, wrote: “I pray for the repose of his soul, and for his family and constituents who grieve for him. May he rest in peace.”

Stephen Timms MP, who was stabbed during a surgery in 2010 (interview, 30 July), wrote on Twitter that he was appalled at the news.

Dr Brendan Cox, widower of Jo Cox MP, who was murdered in 2016, wrote: “Attacking our elected representatives is an attack on democracy itself. There is no excuse, no justification. It is as cowardly as it gets.”

The Bishop of Chelmsford, Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani, said: “This is devastating news. Sir David was a loyal servant to the people of Southend for many years. The tributes we have already seen are testament to the high esteem in which he was held by many of his constituents. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and his staff.”

The Bishop of Bradwell, the Rt Revd Dr John Perumbalath, added that “Sir David was a great friend of the church and it was a privilege to work alongside him in service to the people of Southend whom he cared about deeply.”

A joint statement by the President and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Sonia Hicks and Barbara Easton, described Sir David as “well known to the Methodist family locally and widely respected. We offer our deep condolences to his family, colleagues, friends, and constituents. This senseless act of violence is appalling, and we extend our prayers to all who have been affected by it.”

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A statement from St Clement's, the main Anglican church in Leigh-on-Sea, said: "This is such bad news. Sir David was such a nice man, good, kind, accessible, incredibly hard working."

## Anglican Bishop resigns to join Catholic Church

**An Anglican Bishop who has previously criticised the direction of the Church of England has converted to Catholicism.**

Bishop Dr Michael Nazir-Ali, 72, who was Bishop of Rochester from 1994 until 2009, told The Daily Telegraph that he felt "sad" about leaving Anglicanism behind, and that he had been considering the move "for some years".

He is now set to become a Catholic priest, saying the new role will "best maintain" his religious desires. He added that the switch was "about belonging to a church where there is clear teaching for the faithful".

He said that there was a "lack of teaching authority in Anglicanism, a lack of a sense of belonging to a worldwide church where everyone has to do things in step, rather than everyone doing whatever they want to do".

This is not the first time that the bishop has spoken out about the Church of England. He has previously accused it of "jumping on faddish bandwagons" amid ongoing debate around cancel culture and "wokeism".

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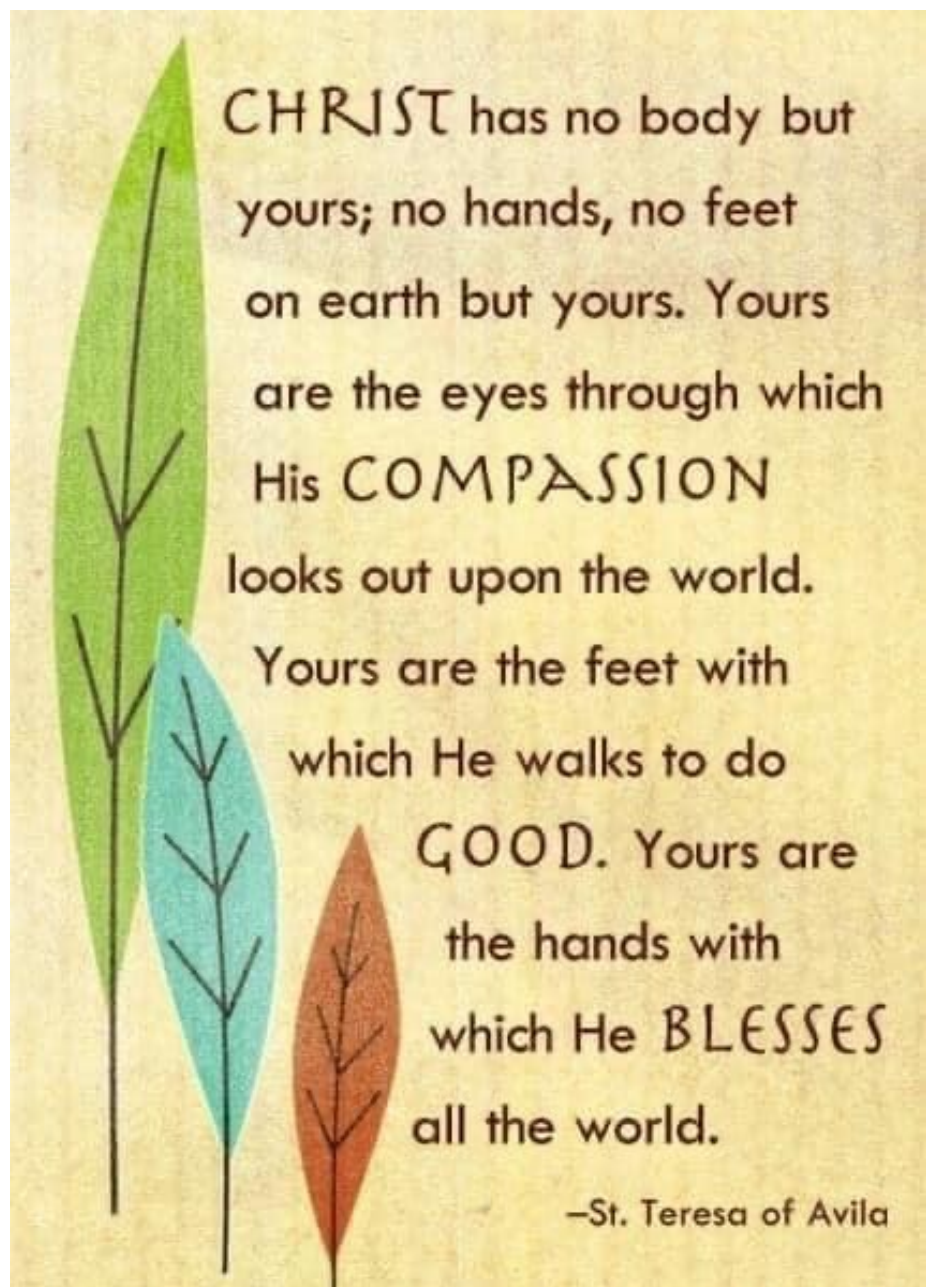
‘The switch was about belonging to a church where there is clear teaching for the faithful ’

He criticised the plans to remove statues linked to slave owners from churches, saying “where do we start and where do we stop?”

He has also accused the archbishops of failure to care for parish churches after a document leaked earlier this year suggested that the Church of England would cut clergy numbers.

Dr Nazir-Ali’s conversion to Catholicism comes just weeks after Bishop Jonathan Goodall, the Bishop of Ebbsfleet, who opposed women priests, defected to the Roman Catholic church.

It is rare for a bishop to leave the Church of England. In 2010, five



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bishops quit the Church because of their dissatisfaction over the introduction of women bishops.

Dr Gavin Ashenden, a former royal chaplain to the Queen and traditionalist Anglican bishop, said that Dr Nazir-Ali's conversion was "shocking", adding: "He's been part of a worldwide attempt to defend conservative Anglicanism and he's clearly discovered that's not possible".

The Catholic Bishops Conference in England and Wales confirmed that Dr Nazir-Ali was received into the full communion of the Catholic Church by Monsignor Keith Newton on the Feast of St Michael and All Angels.

With the permission of the Holy See, he will be ordained to the Catholic priesthood for the Ordinariate in due course.

Dr Nazir-Ali added: "I am looking forward to receiving from the riches of other parts of the Church, while perhaps making a modest contribution to the maintenance and enhancement of Anglican patrimony within the wider fellowship."

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev Justin Welby, said he was "grateful" for Dr Nazir-Ali's "decades of devoted service to the Church of England and the Anglican Communion".



## **Number of priests in Tuam archdiocese has more than halved in 25 years – Archbishop**

**Archbishop of Tuam highlights dwindling priest numbers ahead of retirement. Patsy McGarry writes in the Irish Times.**

Archbishop Michael Neary of Tuam: '[We] are living in a very different era. What the future will be like; who knows?'

The number of active priests in Tuam's Catholic archdiocese has more than halved over the past 25 years, while it has just two men training for the priesthood, Archbishop Michael Neary has noted.

Speaking in Westport on Thursday at an in-service gathering of priests of the archdiocese, he recalled how "when we gathered here in Hotel Westport in the autumn of 1996 for our first annual in-service, we had 115 diocesan priests in full-time ministry within, and 5 in ministries outside the archdiocese. We were assisted by 15 non-diocesans at that time, and 10 priests were fully retired. There were also 14 seminarians for the diocese in seminaries in Ireland and in Rome."

He continued: "Today, we have 47 diocesan priests in full-time ministry; we are assisted by 11 others; 1 diocesan priest working outside the diocese, and 34 priests are fully retired. There are two seminarians." In the context he



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referred to “our indebtedness to many of our retired priests for their availability and for so generously giving of themselves to assist with their ministry.”

They were “living in a very different era. What the future will be like; who knows? It seems there are two alternatives in our approach to life right now: either the faith-filled approach or a negative one,” he said. “For us as priests, ours must be a faith-filled response,” he said.

## Respite

“Perhaps the respite that we have had with Covid has been providential. It has provided us with what you might call a ‘sos’, a rest, a time when we could take stock, reflect on what has been taking place, and reassess the way in which we live our priestly vocation,” he said.

They had discovered a new approach to sacraments, Confirmation without the Mass “smaller numbers, more dignified celebrations, and perhaps more dignified First Holy Communion and marriage ceremonies, too,” he said.

“Perhaps we are better equipped and more open now where the Holy Spirit is leading us through this synodal pathway” brought out by the Irish Episcopal Conference, he said.

The Archbishop, who was 75 earlier this year and has submitted his letter of resignation to Rome, thanked the priests for their support over the years. “I ask forgiveness from you if I have offended or hurt you in any way. I also forgive those who have done wrong to me. I never took that as personal, however,” he said.

Courtesy the Irish Times. October 14, 2021

## People and places

### French Boy Soprano returns

Five years ago, Eric Gentet the young French Boy Soprano wooed the hearts of the folk of Northern Ireland by his pure



soprano voice when he toured the Province singing at the prestigious Charles Wood Festival under David Hill in Armagh, St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast and several private events.

His voice was compared favourably to that of the famous Belfast Boy Soprano Billy Neely who inspired Eric. Now Eric returns to Northern Ireland to give a lunchtime recital - free entry - at Queen's University

on Wednesday 3rd November at 1 pm. He will then sing at



the Portico of Ards Portaferry at 7.30 pm on Thursday 4th November. The concerts have been arranged by Mr Orly Watson, Organist and and Director of Music at Dromore Cathedral and also official Accompanist at Queen's University,

Eric Gentet, now 15, nicknamed 'The Nightingale' will sing well known English and Irish songs of the early 20th Century, with his exquisite and very emotional voice. Eric sings in the same way as our British boy sopranos of the past, who retained their angelic, controlled vibrato singing voices long after the speaking voice had broken. This unique voice-technique has totally disappeared since the 1950's : the last boys known were Derek Barsham, Michael Morely and Frank Bird.

## Freedom Youth evenings in the North West

“Freedom is a great feeling and, as Christians, we are free because of what Jesus did for us.” That’s the message coming out loud and clear from the North West’s newest youth event, 'Freedom'.

Almost 60 young people, from different denominations, came to Richill Park Baptist Church on Saturday evening for their first meeting of 'Freedom'. They were there to have some fun, eat some doughnuts, renew old acquaintances, forge new friendships and hear a great Bible message. It was encouraging to see everyone joining in so wholeheartedly as they learned to dance, tried to keep

control of helium balloons – not easy! – and learned why freedom is so important for Christians.

The leaders, Andy Lamberton of Exodus NW, Derry & Raphoe Diocesan Youth Officer, Claire Hinchliff, and SU E3 Schools Worker, Rachel Miller, aim to create and maintain a welcoming environment which everyone will want to come back to, maybe even bringing a friend next time.

The next 'Freedom' event will be back in Richill Park Baptist, at 7.30pm on Saturday 13th. November, and the organisers would love to see anyone of secondary school age coming along. If you'd like more information, please email [claire@derryandraphoe.org](mailto:claire@derryandraphoe.org)

## New rector welcomed in Newcastle



The Parish of Newcastle has welcomed the Revd Myrtle Morrison as rector following her institution in St John's on Wednesday 13 October. The Revd Jan Stevenson, Community Pastor in St Columbanus, Ballyholme, gave the address.

## Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars

### Service for Anti-Slavery Day

This week's C of E national online service is a Service of the Word for Anti-Slavery Day.

Join the The Clewer Initiative this Sunday, October 17, at 9am as we explore the steps we can take and prayers we can pray to end slavery.

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The service is led by Rev Canon Dr Chigor Chike, and the Bishop of Tonbridge, from CofE Diocese of Rochester, is preaching.

[[] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEFwE9d0Tgw> ]

## **Lord Carey speaks of deep regret over Peter Ball case at memoir launch**

George Carey launched the second instalment of his memoirs, *The Truth Will Set You Free*, at the Christian Resources Exhibition on Thursday.

Speaking at the launch of the book, published by Barnabas Fund, the former Archbishop of Canterbury said it contained two "very, very painful" chapters on abuse looking at the Peter Ball case and accusations against his son Mark Carey.

He said the claims against Mark were "total nonsense" and that although the police later cleared him, the experience had been one of "humiliation".

Concerning Peter Ball, who was jailed for abuse in 2015 before dying in 2019, Lord Carey said he had made "profound mistakes".

"I regret those very deeply. That was 25 years ago and we have learnt so much since," he said.



Lord Carey speaking at the launch of his book "The Truth Will Set You Free" at the Christian Resources Exhibition..

His comments at the launch touched on a wide range of subjects, among them his "change of heart" on assisted suicide.

He said a "key moment" in his thinking on the subject came with the case of Tony Nicklinson, a man with locked-in syndrome who lost his right to die case at the High Court in 2012. He died a week later after refusing food.

Lord Carey said, "I came to the conclusion I had to give my support on compassionate grounds: what would Jesus do if he was alive today? I'm pretty sure he would support any effort to allow people to die without pain."

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But he admitted his views were in "total opposition" to the Church of England on the subject.

He also commented on George Bell, who he said had been "vilified" by the Church of England despite being "one of the great heroes of the War years".

"The accusations against him, the cloud that still hangs over him, is completely wrong. His record is straight, he did nothing wrong," he said.

## **John Rutter - coming release of "I Sing of a Maiden"**

"Hello, John here to let you know that 'I Sing of a Maiden' will be released in November. It brings together four of my latest composed carols, together with a recent arrangement of the lovely old German carol 'Es ist ein' Ros' entsprungen'. For this new recording it was a pleasure to reunite with my own Cambridge Singers, joined by our good friends the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

'I Sing of a Maiden' will be available on Apple Music from 5th November and on all digital streaming platforms from 12th November. JR

[ <https://johnrutter.com/news-features/i-sing-of-a-maiden-christmas-release> ]





## **Perspective - Reconciliation is choosing relationships over being 'right'**

### **by the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland**

**The President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Revd Dr Sahr Yambasu, looks ahead to the Service of Reflection and Hope in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, next Thursday (21st October), in which he will preach the sermon.**

By now everyone will be aware that we in the Church Leaders Group are hosting a service of Reflection and Hope next week.

When I joined the group in June of this year, on becoming President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Church leaders' collective engagement on the 1921 centenaries was already underway.

As someone who grew up in Sierra Leone, I was very conscious of the pain of partition. Although the two contexts are very different, there are some significant themes that resonate across continents, as identity-based conflicts and power struggles blind us to the ties of our common humanity.

In the Church Leaders Group we have been reflecting on the human impact of borders. I belong to the Kissi tribe

which, before the continent of Africa was partitioned by European powers, inhabited land that was later separated into three nation states: Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia.

The borders that were imposed divided families and communities and disrupted people's everyday lives. This was done without thought or care for the dignity, rights or consent of the people affected, in what historians would later call 'the scramble for Africa'.

The wounds from that injustice have left deep scars. When we allow political structures, and social and economic power, to undermine the ties that bind people together we increase the risk of violence.

In Sierra Leone this took the form of a decade-long civil war that is widely held to be one of the most brutal in human history. As we reflect today on the legacy of that conflict we see clearly that the perpetrators of violence not only destroyed the lives of those they held to be 'the other', but their actions were also a horrific act of self-harm and self-destruction against their own community.

Entering into this process of dialogue with my fellow Church leaders about the consequences of 100 years of partition in an Irish context has prompted me to reflect on what might be relevant from the experience of Sierra Leone.

A fundamental challenge is to acknowledge how our identity has been shaped by our history, while recognising that it does not have to be defined by it.

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A source of great sadness for me has been the impact of colonisation on the rich cultural diversity of African communities. Political and economic conquest was underpinned by a colonisation of the mind that devalued local languages and traditions and dismantled local community structures.

The result was a greatly diminished sense of self-worth for those whose language and customs had been denigrated in this way.

We have to address the painful legacy of our history in a way that respects the dignity and rights of those who have been marginalised, but no one community can do this in isolation.

It takes courage to reach out and seek to engage in dialogue with those who have hurt us, but this is the only way we can bridge the gap between divided people.

This outreach does not require us to forget the past, but it does help prevent us becoming stuck there.

In Sierra Leone, as in Northern Ireland, communities have shown great courage in giving perpetrators of violence an opportunity to join the work of reconciliation.

The victims and survivors are often those who have shown the greatest leadership and chosen forgiveness at great personal cost in order to bring the gift of peace to themselves and others.

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If we are to build on this courage in a way that offers real hope for the future we have to be willing to ask the difficult questions around power and exclusion and address the structural injustices that push people to the margins of our society today.

Borders take many forms. It is important to recognise the human impact of political borders, particularly at a time when we are becoming increasingly aware of our interconnectedness in the face of global challenges affecting the whole of humanity.

At the same time, we need to be aware of the multiple ways in which we can create borders that limit our interactions with those we consider to be different from us.

In our service of Reflection and Hope we seek to offer a space in which we can all hear different perspectives, acknowledge what has been harmful in our history and commit ourselves to the work of reconciliation and building a society in which the worth and dignity of every person is respected and valued.

Beyond the service, we will continue our efforts to help heal the wounds of the past and lay the foundations for a better future.

Embracing those who are different is not about promoting oneself; it is about creating space for each other to flourish. It is not about assimilating them into ourselves; it is about recognising that there is something of us in the ones we embrace.

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It is not about ignoring justice; it is about creating space within ourselves for the wrongdoer in hope of reconciliation. That is what grace is. It is choosing relationship over being 'right': "Accept one another ... just as Christ accepted you ... to bring praise to God" (Romans 15:7).

Courtesy, the Irish News

## Poem for today

### Follower

by Seamus Heaney

My father worked with a horse-plough,  
His shoulders globed like a full sail strung  
Between the shafts and the furrow.  
The horses strained at his clicking tongue.

An expert. He would set the wing  
And fit the bright steel-pointed sock.  
The sod rolled over without breaking.  
At the headrig, with a single pluck

Of reins, the sweating team turned round  
And back into the land. His eye  
Narrowed and angled at the ground,  
Mapping the furrow exactly.

I stumbled in his hobnailed wake,  
Fell sometimes on the polished sod;  
Sometimes he rode me on his back

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Dipping and rising to his plod.

I wanted to grow up and plough,  
To close one eye, stiffen my arm.  
All I ever did was follow  
In his broad shadow round the farm.

I was a nuisance, tripping, falling,  
Yapping always. But today  
It is my father who keeps stumbling  
Behind me, and will not go away



## Speaking to the Soul

Bible verse, thought for the day and prayers - on site daily

