



Image of the day - Anglican Church in Cairo

Image of the day

The Archbishop of Canterbury - “Looking forward to being with Anglican brothers and sisters in Cairo this weekend as we give thanks to God for the new Province of Alexandria, which was inaugurated last year. It'll also be good to meet with ecumenical and other faith leaders. We pray for Egypt and its Church”.

Reports

Presbyterian concern over legacy plans

Alf McCtreary writing in the Belfast Telegraph states that “The Presbyterian Church's General Assembly in Belfast has expressed its “grave concern” at Secretary of State Brandon Lewis for “undermining” devolution, claiming his legacy proposals deny Troubles survivors and victims any chance of justice”.

The Government has plans to end all prosecutions for Troubles-related offences.

Rev Daniel Kane, Convenor of the Council for Public Affairs, told the General Assembly that “navigating the fragile political landscape following Brexit and the NI Protocol has been tricky, to say the least.”

The Council expressed “deep disquiet at the current proposals' and said while the Stormont House Agreement” (SHA) was not perfect, “we are on public record stating our support for all four key principles in the SHA, especially the

right of victims and survivors to seek due process and justice in the courts”

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"What has been proposed by the Secretary of State denies them that possibility."

However a number of speakers said it was time to draw a line under the past. They included former Moderator the Dr John Dunlop who said: "In most cases the truth is inaccessible and therefore justice is unavailable."

SEFF, the leading victims group said "We respect Rev Davidson's right as an innocent victim/survivor of terrorism to express his view, that is without question.

"But we cannot agree with his perspective nor that of his colleagues who have been conditioned by the process to accept what is served up, rather than what legitimate rights people have to accountability.

"We are not naïve, we are well aware that because the criminal justice system has been subverted that the cards are stacked heavily against innocent victims/survivors of terrorism - but that does not mean that capitulation should then follow.

"If justice is abandoned in favour of political expediency, then this is counter to basic Christian and biblical teachings; our Lord desires justice to be served on earth; He does not suggest that it be abandoned and that He solely be left to pick up the tab.

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“God's perfect justice does reign but it is not desired to be delivered in absence of earthly justice”.

Down, Dromore and Connor Organ scholars programme prospering despite pandemic



Pictured following the Organ Scholarship Service in Belfast Cathedral are, from left: Gerald Hill (Board member), Michael McCracken (tutor), Lady Brenda Sheil (Board member), Victoria Irwin, Canon John Auchmuty (Chairman of the Board), Callum Whiteside, the Rt Rev George Davison, Bishop of Connor (preacher), Rebekah Wilson, Canon David Humphries (Hon Sec of the Board), Caroline McCartney, Dean Stephen Forde and Dr Joe McKee (tutor).

The Down, Dromore & Connor Organ Scholarship Choral Evensong was held in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, on Sunday September 19, Angela Kerr writes.

The service was conducted by the Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev Stephen Forde, who has recently been appointed to the Board of Management of the Organ Scholarship Scheme. Lessons were read by the Rev Canon David Humphreys, Honorary Secretary to the Board, and Dr Judith Harper, also a Board member.

The Rt Rev George Davison, Bishop of Connor, was the preacher. He began his sermon saying: "Where there is devotional music, God is always there with his gracious presence. Music has always been at the heart of worship."

The bishop said that it was a time to give thanks and to celebrate, adding that it was important to acknowledge the talents God has given the scholars to make music and also to thank the tutors for putting so much effort into teaching them.

Dean Forde and Chancellor John Auchmuty, Chairman of the Board and rector of St Columba's, Knock, presented the certificates to those scholars who have completed the three-year course, Chancellor Auchmuty congratulating them for demonstrating great commitment and resilience during the past 18 months of the pandemic.

He said this was the successful conclusion of their journey on the Organ Scholarship Scheme, but more importantly, it marked the beginning of a new exciting opportunity for each of them. Chancellor Auchmuty thanked the tutors Dr Joe

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McKee, St Columba's, Knock; Michael McCracken, Down Cathedral; and the Rev Dr Ian Mills, who is now residing in England, for their tremendous teaching and ongoing support to each of the scholars.

Organ Scholars who received certificates are:

Caroline McCartney, St Columba's Knock, (now in Durham Cathedral)

Callum Whiteside, St Mark's, Ballysillan

Rebekah Wilson, BMus, Knockbreda Parish

Victoria Irwin, St John's, Whitehouse

Jack McCabe, Killinchy and Kilmoody, (awarded Junior Organ Scholarship, Queen's College Cambridge)

Glenn English, Magheragally Parish, Banbridge

Chancellor Auchmuty thanked Matthew Owens, Director of Music at St Anne's, and the Cathedral Choir for the beautiful music at Choral Evensong, and the Bishop of Connor for his helpful and supportive sermon, recognising the gifts of others in enhancing worship through music.

Due to the pandemic, no year one scholars were selected, but the work for those already on the scheme will continue. They are David Dunlop, All Saints', Belfast; Clare Kelly, ALCM, St Patrick's, Jordanstown; Sean Turner, St Patrick's, Ballymoney; Tanya Zachara, St Mark's, Dundela; Larissa Fleck, St Patrick's, Armoy; Dr Mark McKinty, St Cedma's, Larne; Hannah Shaw, St Cedma's, Larne; and Grace Steed, St Mark's, Dundela.

Canon Humphreys commented: "The Anglican Church music tradition is arguably the finest in the world, with choirs

and organists providing music of an exceptionally high standard to enhance the liturgy, but there is always a need to train more young organists who can ensure its future.

“The benefits of music study are well known. The study of music fosters concentration, discipline and confidence. Music-making in itself promotes good mental health, feelings of self-esteem and the knowledge that something of beauty and value is being contributed to our cathedrals and parishes.”

He continued: “The primary benefit of using the pipe organ in worship is the dynamic range and colour that one can get from the instrument. From the softest whispers to the grandest fortes, the organ is the only instrument that is capable of producing the sheer scale of volume that is needed to not only lead a congregation in singing but also to provide accompaniment for choir or soloist and then to stand alone and perform its own solo repertoire.

“The organ is an instrument that when played correctly can invoke not only a range of emotions, such as joy at a wedding and sombreness at a funeral, but can help weave the portions of Church of Ireland Liturgy together seamlessly.”

News briefs

Tenebrae live in St Columb's Cathedral

See Tenebrae live! Tenebrae will be performing at this year's International Choir Festival with a performance in St

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Columb's Cathedral. The programme, 'Humanity & liberty,' showcases two brand new Tenebrae commissions for the first time in Northern Ireland.

Tenebrae Choir will be joining forces with the iconic actor, Juliet Stevenson, for this atmospheric programme interspersed with poetry by Emily Dickinson.

Limited availability, so get your ticket soon to avoid disappointment. Tickets on sale now from Millenium Forum, priced £26. Concessions available.

New priest for the Glens

The Rev Dr Bob Cotter has been appointed part-time Non Stipendiary Priest-in-Charge of the Parishes of Ardclinis, Tickmacrean, Layde and Cushendun, Diocese of Connor.



Bob has previously served as curate-assistant in the Parish of Skerry, Rathcavan and Newtowncrommelin and as Non Stipendiary Priest-in-Charge of St Mary Magdalene, Belfast.

His wife Sally is Diocesan President of Connor Mothers' Union. Bob took up his new role on October 3.

12th Canon appointed to Chapter of Christ Church Cathedral



The Revd Lesley Robinson has been appointed to the Chapter of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin. She has been appointed 12th Canon by the Archbishop of Dublin in succession to Canon Kevin Brew who retired recently.

Canon Robinson has been Rector of Clontarf since 2013 having previously served as Priest in Charge of the Roscrea Group of Parishes and a Non–Stipendiary Minister in the Clonfert and

Birr Groups of Parishes all in the Diocese of Limerick and Killaloe.

MU President's last of three walks in Connor

All Ireland President of the Mothers' Union, June Butler, returns to do the last of three fundraising walks in Connor Diocese on Wednesday October 13.

Among those accompanying June on her 7km walk from St Jude's, Muckamore, to All Saints', Antrim, will be the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison, and the Archdeacon of Connor, the Ven Dr Stephen McBride.

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Because MU fundraising at branch level was suspended due to the pandemic, June set herself the challenge to walk 21 kilometres, made up of three legs of 7km, in each of the 12 Church of Ireland dioceses in Ireland, and sought sponsorship from MU members and members of the public.

Her first walk in Connor was in Belfast on April 13, when June walked from Stranmillis to St Anne's Cathedral, and her second walk, from Holy Trinity Parish Church, Portrush, to Agherton Parish Church, Portstewart, took place on April 26.

All monies raised by '21 in 21' walks will go to the 'Mums in May' fund to provide support for MU projects in Ireland and overseas.

Donations can be made on this LINK -

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/MumsinMay21>

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Cork parish fund walks for Rwanda diocese

On Saturday 25th September, the Rev. David Bowles and members of Moviddy Union of Parishes undertook a 'Walk around the Parish'. This was a sponsored walk in aid of CMS Ireland and in particular, Kibungo Diocese in Rwanda. Bishop Emmanuel Ntazinda of Kibungo Diocese and the Rev. Roger Thompson of CMS Ireland both sent videos of thanks and prayers for the walk.

Many parishioners joined the Rev'd David Bowles for different sections of the walk, commencing with a stretch between St Mark's Church, Kilbonane, Aherla, and Old Kilbonane Church. They then walked to St Martin's Church,

Templemartin, where refreshments were provided by a group of kind parishioners. Lunch was served at their next stop, St Andrew's Church, Kilmurry. Later that afternoon they reached Old St Helen's Church, Moviddy, Crookstown. After being on the move for eight hours, they ended up back at St Mark's, Kilbonane, having covered a total of about 30km across the parish.

The Rev. David Bowles said: It turned out to be a lovely bright and sunny day and it was a great opportunity to catch up with one another whilst also enjoying God's creation and contributing to a worthy cause.

Death of prominent Irish aviator

The death occurred this week of 100-year-old Fl. Lt. William Leckie, A.E.M. K.W., of Enniskerry, Co Wicklow. He had recently celebrated his 100th Birthday on the 23rd Jun 2021.

'Bill' was a retired Aer Lingus Captain and one also of the last surviving former RAF heavy bomber aircraft captains from the Second World War. As Pilot Officer he was heavily involved in S.O.E. operations including in the dropping of supplies (guns, ammunition and food) to the Polish during the Warsaw uprising. This was a costly mission and many aircraft were lost. For his efforts in supporting the Polish insurgents during this period, Bill was awarded the Polish Cross of Valour (KW).

His Funeral Service on Saturday (9th October) is at 12.30pm in St. Patrick's Church, Enniskerry followed by committal at Mount Jerome Crematorium, Harolds Cross, Dublin 6W at 4.00pm.

He is survived by his son Allan, daughters Irene and Fiona, daughter-in-law Jacinta, sons-in-law Steven and Giovanni, his seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Bill was a longstanding Poppy Appeal collector and his family have kindly requested that donations, if desired, be sent to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal (PayPal.me/PoppyIreland) in lieu of flowers.

Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars

The Youthscape Podcast

Looking for some youth leader inspiration? The Youthscape Podcast talks faith, church and culture with brilliant guests from the world of youth work. Check out their latest series on global youth work: bit.ly/3xYv476

Resources for use in circumstances of sudden and unexpected death

The Liturgical Advisory Committee (LAC) of the Church of Ireland has published a series of pastoral liturgical resources intended for use in circumstances of sudden and unexpected death. These resources, which include Pastoral Guidelines, Prayers of Intercession, Propers for use in a Service of Holy Communion, and a complete Service of the Word for use in the Case of a Sudden or Unexpected Death, are the result of several years' work by LAC members in consultation with experts beyond the Committee.

Speaking about the resources as they were launched through the Worship section of the Church of Ireland website, the Most Reverend John McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, said: “I suspect that all of us who are called to minister to people in the circumstances provided for in this material from the Liturgical Advisory Committee will have felt our inadequacy in the face of such tragedy and deep grief. The flexible resources produced here by the LAC will, at the very least, give us a framework and an anchor of simple yet profound words, to help us minister in all the bewilderment that surrounds these events.”

The materials are available at this link:
[<https://bit.ly/3CUiB7s>]

Appreciation - Sir John Anthony Chilcot

The civil servant who headed up the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) in the seven years prior to the Good Friday Agreement has died. Behind the scenes, Chilcot was at the centre of efforts to reach a peace accord with the IRA, pulling together strands of intelligence and reports of contacts ... the IRA ceasefire of September 1994 was the result of this process. He later headed the public enquiry in to the Iraq war. His report cast doubt on statements made by Prime Minister Tony Blair regarding the reason for going to war.

John Anthony Chilcot was born on April 22 1939, the son of Henry Chilcot and the former Catherine Ashall. A scholarship boy at Brighton College, he won a further

scholarship to Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he read English and Modern Languages. (He was elected an honorary Fellow in 1999.)

Joining the Home Office in 1963, Chilcot was identified as a high-flyer and in 1966 joined the private office of the Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins. But the crucial move for his career was his selection in 1971 as private secretary to the “no nonsense” head of the Civil Service, Sir William Armstrong.

From 1978 he was principal private secretary to the Home Secretary – Merlyn Rees, then Willie Whitelaw – before becoming director of personnel and finance at the prison department in 1980. It was a tough posting, with trouble at one point in 30 establishments.

In 1984 Chilcot moved across to the Cabinet Office, then after a year at the merchant bank Schroders he returned to the Home Office in 1987 to take charge of the police. He toured Handsworth in Birmingham with Stanley Barratt, Chief Inspector of Constabulary, who had started his career on the beat there, to see how community policing was putting pressure on drug dealers.

Early in 1988 Chilcot’s own personal secretary, Jane Boardley, was given a suspended prison sentence for harbouring a convicted burglar on the run from prison, with whom she had become “totally infatuated”.

Chilcot experienced ongoing problems with the public utterances of James Anderton, the messianic chief constable of Greater Manchester. After Anderton told an Aids seminar that victims were “swirling around in a cesspit

of their own making”, the Home Office secured an undertaking from him to be more tactful.

Anderton then gave a magazine interview saying criminals should be “flogged until they beg for mercy”. This was the final straw for his police authority, but Chilcot intervened and Anderton survived.

Chilcot’s crowning Civil Service appointment was seven eventful years as permanent secretary at the Northern Ireland Office. Arriving with the “Troubles” apparently far from resolution, in 1993 he found himself defending the Government before a court in Los Angeles against claims that James Smyth, an escaper from the Maze prison, would be the victim of a “shoot to kill” policy if extradited to Ulster.

He refused 16 times to answer questions from Smyth’s lawyer about the contents of the secret report by John Stalker, Anderton’s deputy, into whether the Royal Ulster Constabulary operated such a policy. He began each reply with the words: “I am not authorised ...” But he strongly denied there was any such policy, or collusion with Loyalist death squads.

Indeed, behind the scenes, Chilcot was at the centre of efforts to reach a peace accord with the IRA, pulling together strands of intelligence and reports of contacts before advising his secretary of state, Sir Patrick Mayhew, and the Prime Minister, John Major. The IRA ceasefire of September 1994 was the result of this process, in which Major, the Taoiseach Albert Reynolds, the retired MI6 operative Michael Oatley, Irish diplomats and several priests played vital roles.

Oatley told Chilcot he had already opened a channel to Martin McGuinness, vice-president of Sinn Féin, who was ready to discuss a way forward. Stella Rimington, head of MI5, was furious that Oatley had been operating on her turf, and insisted her agency take the next steps.

The task was given to a retired senior MI6 officer re-employed by MI5, who developed the contact to the point where, in 1993, he brought back a message purportedly from McGuinness: “The conflict is over, but we need your advice on how to bring it to an end.”

Once the ceasefire had been declared, Chilcot set “objective criteria” to test whether it was genuine – concluding that it was. Though the IRA resumed its campaign in February 1996, it re-engaged in the peace process after the 1997 election. Chilcot’s final months at Stormont – he retired that December – saw rapid progress toward the Good Friday Agreement concluded soon after.

In retirement, he served on the commission set up by Blair under Lord Jenkins to review the voting system. From 1999 to 2004 he was staff counsellor to the security and intelligence agencies, “dealing with private and personal complaints from members of the intelligence services about their work and conditions”.

Chilcot was appointed CB in 1990, KCB in 1994 and GCB in 1998. Made a privy councillor in 2004, he took part in Butler’s review, then from 2007 to 2009 chaired an equally sensitive committee on the use of intercept evidence in criminal cases. But his most controversial task lay ahead.

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John Chilcot married Rosalind Forster, an artist, in 1964; she survives him. There were no children.

Sir John Chilcot, born April 22 1939, died October 3 2021

Perspective

Expect 200,000 annual euthanasia deaths in five years if Meacher Bill goes through', warns Catholic MP Sir Edward Leigh

More than 200,000 people will die by euthanasia or assisted suicide within five years of a change in the law, a Catholic MP has predicted, Simon Caldwell sites in the Catholic Herald

Speaking at a fringe event at the Conservative Party Conference in Manchester, Sir Edward Leigh, the MP for Gainsborough, said a law on "assisted dying" would follow the same trajectory as the 1967 Abortion Act.

He said that any safeguards attached to the Assisted Dying Bill of Baroness Meacher, which will received its Second Reading in the House of Lords on October 22, will soon prove worthless.

The practices of assisted suicide or euthanasia would eventually be practised routinely and effectively on demand, he said.

Sir Edward said: “I give you this prediction and I and I know I am right – within five years of this Bill being passed – when and if it is passed – there will be at least 200,000 thousand assisted deaths every year just as there are 200,000 abortions every year.

“I think there will be huge numbers. I see with abortions the doctors already bulk-sign documents. There are no controls whatsoever – any control you put on this is absolutely worthless.

“And what about feeling of guilt that will leave on doctors? What about the pressure on doctors to do this?”

He said: “It is particularly true that the essential campaign for abortion was often around hard cases. I stand by my prediction that although we will be told there will be all sorts of controls within five years it will signed off.”

Sir Edward was speaking at a Cornerstone Group event organised by Sir John Hayes, MP for South Holland The Deepings, called “The Meaning of Life’s End – The Threat of Euthanasia”.

He said there would be economic pressure on the House of Commons to vote in favour of the Meacher Bill, which seeks to legalise assisted suicide, and he warned his audience that they could not take it for granted the MPs would reject the measure.

“I am a realist in all this. I am not an ideologue in the sense that I think we should accept death and I cherish life,” he said.

“We have to accept death in many ways. We can’t go on bombarding very old or frail people with very painful treatments which can only prolong a low quality of life for a matter of months.

“I was at the bedside of my friend Piers Merchant, who was a Tory MP. He had pancreatic cancer, he was only 57. I literally heard morphine pumped through his wrists as he died. There is no doubt that the morphine killed him, but it was a humane thing to do. He had terminal cancer. Otherwise he would have been in grotesque levels of pain.

“I didn’t have any objections to that. What I have an objection to is that we should sign a form and we should be given a lethal drug, the same sort of drugs they give to murderers in America which can cause suffering.

“This is not helping people to pass into another world in a reasonably dignified or pain-free way. It is deliberately killing them.”

The meeting was also addressed by Fiona Bruce, the MP for Congleton, and by Devizes MP Danny Kruger, the co-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Dying Well who is leading the fight against the Meacher Bill in the Commons.

Mrs Bruce criticised “superficial” opinion polls for presenting an inaccurate picture of the level of public support for assisted suicide and euthanasia.

“There are other polls just asking the public to consider what is at issue and things come out very differently,” she said. “We need to ensure that our MPs are similarly informed.”

She added: “Rather than assisted vulnerable people to commit suicide or administering euthanasia we should be looking to ensure palliative care provision and mental health treatment particularly for those who are depressed.

“We shouldn’t be seeing funding diverted from palliative care as has happened in other jurisdictions where assisted suicide has been allowed.

“More needs to be done here to support palliative care. Let’s keep our focus on that, and our laws should be to protect those who are vulnerable, depressed or disabled as well as all the other people in this country.”

Mr Kruger told the meeting that the Meacher Bill represented a “profound challenge” for “our whole civilisation” because the laws and traditions threatened by assisted suicide and euthanasia formed a crucial “bulwark against tyranny and the absolute devastation of our society”.

He said it was an illusion to imagine that assisted suicide would offer patients greater choice at the end of their lives, arguing instead that it would put more control over life and death in the hands of others and impose a burden upon the elderly and the sick.

The Meacher Bill seeks to allow assisted suicide for terminally ill patients considered as having only six months

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left to live, with the consent of two doctors and a High Court judge.

Opponents argue, however, that such proposed safeguards are symbolic, unworkable and meaningless and will be removed over time, particularly as they are open to legal challenge on grounds of discrimination. They say the new law will serve principally as a beachhead for swingeing and incremental reforms that could lead to full euthanasia.

The Catholic bishops have written to the laity to urge them to actively oppose the Bill by writing to peers and MPs and asking them to speak and vote against it.

Next week they will be asked to join a novena – nine days of prayer – at the intercession of Pope St John Paul II.

It will conclude on the feast of the Polish pope, a passionate advocate of the right to life, which coincides with the Lords debate of the Meacher Bill.

The Novena Prayer is as follows:

Merciful God, we pray with thanks and gratitude for the great spiritual gift of Saint John Paul II's apostolic life and mission. Through his heavenly intercession we ask that the 'Assisted Dying' Bill be defeated and that the infinite worth of each human person is upheld through proper investment in palliative care. Grant also that we may grow in love for You and proclaim boldly the love of Jesus Christ to all people. Through Christ, Our Lord. Amen

Courtesy the Catholic Herald , October 07, 2021

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Poem for today

To Autumn by John Keats

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours.

Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,

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And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.



Speaking to the Soul

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

