

Church News Ireland

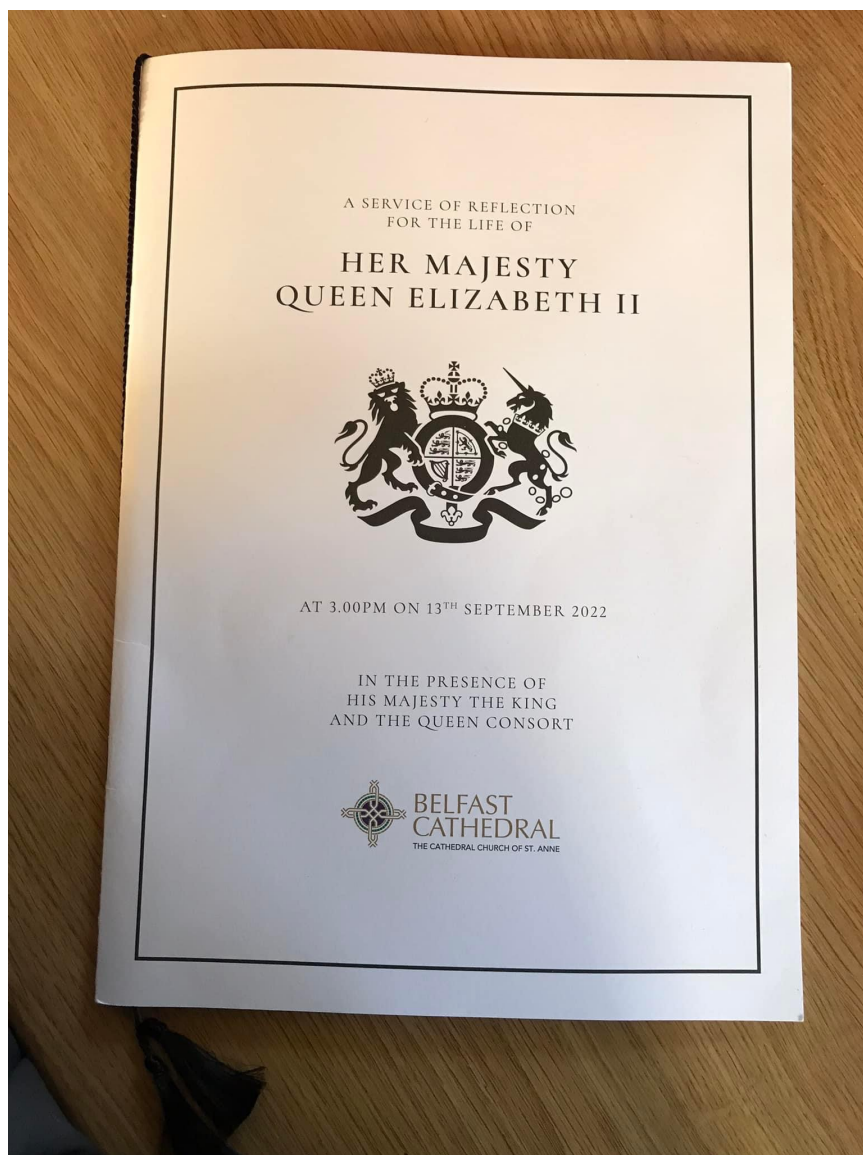


**Image of the day – Service of Reflection
in Belfast Cathedral**

News reports

Queen Elizabeth was a reconciler in Ireland, Archbishop McDowell

King Charles III and the Queen Consort attended a Service of Reflection for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast yesterday afternoon.



The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Right Reverend Dr John Kirkpatrick, who took part in the service said it was 'a gesture of grace' while being 'a special and unique moment'.

Along with Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic Archbishops of Armagh, the Presidents of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Irish Council of Churches and the Bishop of Connor, Dr Kirkpatrick met Their Majesties the



King and Queen Consort when they arrived at the Cathedral. Along with his fellow Church Leaders, the Moderator also took part in the closing blessing.

Speaking after the Service of Reflection, Dr Kirkpatrick said, “Having been a part of this special and unique moment, where we had an opportunity to give thanks to God for the life and service of the Queen, it is still difficult to think back to just a week ago and those pictures of her receiving a new Prime Minister at Balmoral. It is perhaps a reminder that life, however long-lived, is still transient.

“In times of personal loss we see a coming together in families and local communities, where gestures of grace are offered to comfort those who mourn. It is part of who we are, and today I had that same feeling. In that spirit, before the

service began, I had an opportunity to convey to the King personally our Church's deepest, heartfelt and sincere condolences on his loss."

Dr Kirkpatrick concluded by saying, "As the days unfold perhaps we should take a moment to reflect on the late Queen's example of service and dedication to her calling, and ask God to show us how we can serve Him and others in our lives."

The service was conducted by the Bishop of Connor, Rt Rev. G Davidson and the preacher was the Most Rev J McDowell, Archbishop of Armagh.

Archbishop McDowell said He told King Charles III and the Queen Consort, who attended the service at St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, that "faithfulness, care, dutifulness, love and devotion" were all part of her long reign.

The Archbishop said: "All of these could be employed to describe her relationship with Northern Ireland, with patience binding them all together, but paying attention especially to what she said most recently, the word which I think will be most associated with Queen Elizabeth and Ireland, north and south, is reconciliation."

He added the Queen "followed where Jesus led as women often have in the elusive and unfinished work of reconciliation here in Ireland".

The Queen found many powerful ways to help with her mission as part of the peace and reconciliation of Ireland, according to the Archbishop.



Apprentice Boys of Derry, Billy Moore and Graeme Stenhouse, pictured in attendance at a special service for the late Queen Elizabeth II, in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast

He said: "It has always been love's way that in order to rise, she stoops; so the bowing of her head in respect was far more powerful than much grander gestures would have been.

"Love listens far more than she speaks, so a few words in an unfamiliar tongue and a judicious sentence or two of

heartfelt regret and wisdom said far more than ceaseless volubility.

“Love never rushes into anything for fear of overwhelming the beloved, but when the moment is right she walked the few steps between two Houses of Prayer in Enniskillen alongside the beloved, in encouragement and affection.”

He said the Queen worked “for the good of all her people” and was an example of tolerance that was firmly rooted in her Christian faith.

She believed “it is no part of a christian’s vocation to belittle another person’s faith or lack of it.”

The Archbishop also quoted playwright and poet Christopher Marlowe to describe the impact of the Queen’s death on the nation.

He said: “If I had wept a sea of tears for her, it would not ease the sorrow I sustain”.

In a personal statement of condolence to King Charles, he added: “If that was how those of us felt who were, in many ways, part of her adopted family through her coronation oath, how much more profound must that feeling of loss be to those of the Queen’s blood family; those who knew her best and loved her most; Your Majesty, our prayers will be with you and your family for a long time to come.”

The service included a Celtic blessing spoken by various church leaders.

As the service ended, King Charles and Queen Consort Camilla, exchanged handshakes and warm words with the President of Ireland Michael D Higgins and his wife Sabina.

Prime Minister Liz Truss, Taoiseach Micheal Martin and Irish Foreign Affairs Minister Simon Coveney were among the congregation of more than 800 people.

Diocesan Service in Down Cathedral

Down Cathedral will host a Diocesan Service giving thanks for and reflecting upon the life and reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on Thursday 15 September at 7.30 pm. The Bishop of Down & Dromore will give the address.

First ordinands to swear allegiance to King Charles III

15 new Church of England ministers have become the first ordinands in history to swear a vow of allegiance to King Charles III.

The historic ordination service took place at Exeter Cathedral just hours after the Royal Proclamation of the new monarch following the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

The new Deacons, who will now be taking-up posts in churches across Devon were ordained by the Bishop of Exeter, Rt Rev Robert Atwell.

Speaking afterwards, Robin Smith, from Holy Trinity church, Barnstaple, said:

"What a momentous day.

"It was a privilege to be part of this amazing Church and serve the King and serve the country.

"The last few days have been a lot to get my head around but it's great to be here."

Joanne Parker, from Plymstock and Hooe in Plymouth, said: "Obviously the events of this week have been weighing on all of us, but it felt like a real historic moment to actually swear allegiance to the King today."

Ruth Beckett, from Torquay, was the very first person to make her vow. She said: "I am beyond excited.

"To be the first to affirm my oath to the new King was amazing but in ministry we affirm our allegiance to Jesus who is the same yesterday, today and always.

"It has been a good reminder that people come and go but Christ is constant."

The Bishop of Exeter has said the Queen's death is an "extraordinary, watershed moment for our nation".

C of I ordinations

In St. Fin Barre's Cathedral Cork following a rehearsal with the three deacons - Carole Pound, Jean Carney and Richard Dring - from the Church of Ireland in Cork, Cloyne



and Ross who are to be ordained to the priesthood today, Holy Cross Day at 8 pm

Three new deacon interns were ordained at a service held in Lisburn Cathedral on Sunday September 11. Those ordained by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison, were the Rev Gareth Campbell, the Rev Lee Boal and the Rev Andrew Neill.



The Revd Timothy Eldon was ordained Deacon in Desertcreat Parish Church on the evening of Sunday 11th September 2022. He will serve as Deacon Intern in the Parishes of Ardtrea and Desertcreat.

Church in Wales to invest £100 million in church ministry

The Church in Wales has announced a new, big financial investment in church ministry.

It will spend more than £100 million of its capital reserves over the next decade to help it's churches serve their communities more effectively.

Archbishop of Wales, Most Rev Andrew John made the announcement during the Church's Governing Body meeting last week.

Archbishop Andrew said the investment is "the measure of our faith and our ambition to make a difference to all Wales".

He said committing to invest £100 million was the "most serious and significant" investment the Church had made since 1920.

"We're committing ourselves to doing a raft of things that will see us making greater impact upon the whole nation, drawing people more closely into the church, offering faith, and transforming love wherever we can.

"We feel that we need resources to do that we have a tremendous space in all of our communities. But to maximize our effectiveness, we think we need to invest further. And we need to do so over a sustained period of time. So 10 years. So it's a lot of money, and it's a long time. But it's in order to make sure that the growth is sustainable into the long term," he continued.

Investment will be made in development of new ministries and initiatives, as well as in strengthening existing work.

"We want to share the Gospel in tried and tested ways. But in new ways, as well, we are interested in outreach. We also want to enable our mission and ministry areas, which are our parishes to flourish even more, because they do a huge amount, whether it's in things like food banks, whether it's in warm banks, or whether it's in the kind of support that Christians do day-by-day and other institutions.

"We want to make sure that they're enabled and equipped to do that. But to do it even more. And as I say, in order to do

that, we need more people, and we need more resource, but we think it's the right thing to do."

Archbishop Andrew said church leaders had taken a "conscious decision" to take the money from its reserves as they believe this is a "real opportune time" for Christians to step up.

When asked about the way the Church in Wales will be helping congregations with the cost of living crisis, he said churches will continue their work with food banks and providing a warm space for people.

The Governing Body met for two days at the International Convention Centre in Newport.

Catholic Church in Ireland to join Day of Prayer for Ukraine throughout Europe

As a sign of solidarity and closeness with our European neighbour, Ukraine, clergy throughout the island of Ireland will participate in a special day of prayer for peace today Wednesday, 14 September 2022.

The date for the Day of Prayer has been chosen as 14 September, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, which is celebrated in a particularly solemn way in the Eastern Rite. Today Wednesday, it is envisaged that liturgies will include a prayer for peace in Ukraine during Mass, and that an opportunity for silent Eucharistic Adoration will also be provided on that day.

Archbishop Eamon Martin said, "As a gesture of solidarity with the people of Ukraine, who have been stricken by war since the 24 February, it is proposed that a day of prayer be held throughout the whole continent. I welcome this powerful prayerful initiative and invite everyone to pray in a special way for peace in Ukraine on Wednesday."

Passionate exchanges at World Council of Churches over Ukraine

After a sometimes tense week that included passionate exchanges, the 11th assembly of the World Council of Churches approved a statement on 8 September regarding Russia's invasion of Ukraine that denounces the war but does not single out the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill, who has been widely criticized for supporting the invasion.

The statement condemned "this illegal and unjustifiable war," and specifically rejected "any misuse of religious language and authority to justify armed aggression and hatred," while calling on all parties to refrain from military action around the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.

But the document produced by the assembly, meeting in Karlsruhe, Germany, is unlikely to satisfy critics who in recent months have called for the group's leadership to strip the Russian church of its membership in the ecumenical body.

Moscow's patriarch has already been sanctioned by the United Kingdom because of his rhetoric. The European Union also discussed similar sanctions, but they were reportedly abandoned after Viktor Orbán, the prime minister of Hungary and an ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin, intervened.

Kirill has spent years outlining what is widely seen as the spiritual foundation for the invasion, inserting a religious justification for reclaiming Russia's sphere of influence in Ukraine and elsewhere with references to "Holy Rus" or "Russian world." Earlier this year, hundreds of Orthodox theologians and scholars declared the concept a heresy.

At an opening press conference on Aug. 31, outgoing WCC General Secretary Ioan Sauca, a Romanian Orthodox priest, announced the group's central committee had rejected efforts by critics to expel the Russian church earlier this year.

"The WCC is a free space for dialogue, and we come together not because we agree with one another but because we disagree," said Sauca, saying the proposal to expel the Russians was unanimously defeated.

Sauca said he and others had visited Ukraine this year and that observer representatives of Ukraine would be present for the assembly. But in the days that followed, any hope of brokering formal dialogue between the Ukrainians and ROC members during the proceedings appeared to dissipate.

"The heads of the Russian Orthodox Church are currently leading their members and their entire church down a

dangerous and indeed blasphemous path that goes against all that they believe," said Steinmeier.

"We have to speak out, also here in this room, in this assembly, against this propaganda targeting the freedom and rights of the citizens of another country, this nationalism, which arbitrarily claims that a dictatorship's imperial dreams of hegemony are God's will," the president said.

Acknowledging Russian Orthodox delegates in the room, Steinmeier asked that other assembly attendees "not to spare them the truth about this brutal war and the criticism of the role of their church leaders."

In his own address on 2 September, Archbishop Yevstratiy of Chernihiv and Nizhyn of the independent Orthodox Church of Ukraine accused Russian soldiers of atrocities. Two weeks into the war, he said, troops opened fire on unarmed civilians manning a checkpoint just outside of the village of Yasnohorodka, killing a local parish priest who had raised his cross as he tried to protect civilians.

"Today, Ukrainians are the ones attacked by robbers," Yevstratiy said in his condemnation, invoking the biblical parable of the Good Samaritan. "Do not pass by our suffering and our pain, as the priest and the Levite of the parable!"

Yevstratiy thanked WCC members for speaking out against Kirill's support for the war and recommended that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which declared itself

independent of Moscow in 2018, be granted full WCC membership.

Poem for today

September Tomatoes by Karina Borowicz

The whiskey stink of rot has settled
in the garden, and a burst of fruit flies rises
when I touch the dying tomato plants.

Still, the claws of tiny yellow blossoms
flail in the air as I pull the vines up by the roots
and toss them in the compost.

It feels cruel. Something in me isn't ready
to let go of summer so easily. To destroy
what I've carefully cultivated all these months.
Those pale flowers might still have time to fruit.

My great-grandmother sang with the girls of her village
as they pulled the flax. Songs so old
and so tied to the season that the very sound
seemed to turn the weather.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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