

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – A Cross for a Monarch

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A Cross for a Monarch

Standing at the head of The Queen's coffin as she Lies-in-State is the Westminster Cross.

It is the processional cross most often used at church festivals and special services in Westminster Abbey.

It is made from silver gilt, decorated with sapphires, and was first used in the Abbey on Christmas Eve 1922.

One side has a scene of the Crucifixion with representations of the Annunciation, Nativity, Resurrection and Ascension on the arms of the cross. On the other side is Our Lord in Glory, with groups of apostles on the cross arms. Smaller panels show emblems of the Evangelists and figures of angels.

On the staff is the Biblical quote, 'Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more'.

News reports

Churches allowed to stream Queen's funeral without TV licence

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has announced churches and other venues wishing to stream The Queen's funeral on Monday can do so even if they do not have a TV license.

According to a statement posted on the BBC website, all coverage of the funeral and other live ceremonial events during the national period of mourning - from 10th September 2022 to 21st September 2022 (both days included) - can be screened without a TV license.

The BBC made the decision as it recognised "the constitutional nature of these events."

"This dispensation also allows communities organising events in premises such as town halls, community centres and streets across Britain, where TV is not usually watched, to screen the ceremonial events live. This also applies to shops, for example," the statement continued.

Churches across the UK are already planning to open their doors to the public during the funeral on Monday 19th September. Town Church in Jersey has already announced it on its Facebook page.

"We aim to start streaming the coverage from around 10am. Tea and coffee will be available and you are welcome to stay for as short or long time as you wish," the post read.

Fettercairn church, in Aberdeenshire, has been screening all remembrance services so far. It will also live stream the funeral as Aberdeenshire's local council has said there are no plans to organise public viewings of the service on Monday 19th September 2022.

Those who have already purchased a TV license to stream ceremonial events around The Queen's events of

remembrance can claim following the cancellation and refund procedure.



Solemn profession by four Dominican friars

On Sunday 11 September in St Saviour's Church, Dublin, four Dominican friars made solemn profession, taking vows of obedience until death. Brs Benedict McGlinchey OP, Ruaidhri Grieve OP, Błażej Białek OP, and Chris Gault OP, made their vows in the hands of the Prior Provincial of Ireland, Fr John Harris OP.

They include a doctor, two lawyers, and a solid-state physicist. Two are Queen's University Belfast alumni - Brs Chris Gault OP and Ruaidhri Grieve Br Chris is a QUB

Medicine graduate, and Br Ruaidhri earned a PhD in Physics from Queen's.

Boys' Brigade meets the King

Along with a number of other companies, 58th Belfast BB went to Belfast Cathedral to view King Charles

Mervyn and four of the Company



Section boys were invited to be part of the wider BB contingent in the public viewing are outside the Cathedral, where King Charles met after the service.

1st Armagh also represented Boys' Brigade outside St Anne's Cathedral at the Service of Reflection. One of their members, Luke, was able to shake King Charles hand and was interviewed by ITV. Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, was a Patron of the Boys' Brigade.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award role at Cathedral service

The Award scheme in Northern Ireland said it is proud that Eoin Millar, a D of E Youth Ambassador, read the lesson during the Service.

Kate, James, and our Network Ambassador Barry Mulholland were honoured to attend the service.

The Award also had 10 representatives present outside the Cathedral to greet Their Majesties and they had to a honour of meeting them during their walkabout after the Service.

Closing service at renowned Holy Cross College Clonliffe

A prayer service of thanksgiving drew hundreds of people to mark the closing of renowned Holy Cross College Clonliffe Dublin in the college chapel on September 4.

More than 200 people, including priests and current and former diocesan staff members, attended.

Archbishop Farrell acknowledged the contribution of Holy Cross College to the life of the Church in the Archdiocese of Dublin for 168 years.

Christian Aid: Truss must seize opportunity to reset government

Chief Executive of Christian Aid Patrick Watt said: "The burning question is whether Liz Truss will now seize the opportunity to reset the government's approach and rise to the unprecedented domestic and global challenges we face. She must.

"The new Prime Minister must tackle the climate crisis, a major factor in Pakistan's floods, by supporting a just transition to net zero and urgently help the millions of people on the brink of famine in East Africa with a swift reversal of cuts to international aid."

90th anniversary tribute to Mothers Union branch by Bishop of Derry & Raphoe

The Mothers' Union was described as "the backbone" and "the heartbeat" of those parishes in which it has members. The tribute came from Bishop Andrew Forster of Derry & Raphoe during a sermon in St Patrick's Church, in Leckpatrick, which marked the 90th anniversary of Leckpatrick and Dunnalong Mothers' Union.

The extent of local members' service to MU was highlighted by the presentation of long service awards by the organisation's Diocesan President, Jacqui Armstrong. In total, the recipients had chalked up a combined total of 471 years' membership. Among them was local stalwart Sylvia Downey who was honoured for her 45 years' service.



This evening's service was led by the Rector of Leckpatrick and Dunnalong, Rev Canon Paul Whittaker, and the Derg Valley choir – for whom this was their first post-lockdown performance – provided music.

Bishop Andrew told the congregation that despite his late mother's decades-long membership of MU, he had never fully appreciated its work until as an adult he visited Africa and saw at first-hand how contributions from Northern Ireland had helped to lift families from poverty. He praised the work done by branches to help grieving families in their own communities and congratulated them on their response to the cost-of-living crisis.

The told Bishop MU members in the congregation that they, like he, were followers of Christ who wanted to make a difference. "Today, we say 'Thank you' to those who 90 years ago and down through those decades have made a difference as the backbone and the heart of these parishes



because of their membership of Mothers' Union; who have made a difference in what it means to be in fellowship with Christian believers; who have made a difference to those



struggling in the darkest times of life; who have made a difference across the world for women and for their families; and how you will continue to make a difference in the small things and in the big things because we follow the one who changes water into wine; we follow the one who makes life different because he is Jesus and he is our saviour.”

After the service, the congregation enjoyed supper in the church hall where Mrs Downey cut a magnificent cake baked for this evening’s occasion. Kaye Nesbitt, who is a Central Services Unit Coordinator with Mothers' Union Ireland, shared greetings from the organisation’s All Ireland President, June Butler. “The life of this branch has endured with the Lord’s help for a wonderful 90 years,” Mrs Butler wrote, “and will continue to do so...Many congratulations and I wish you God’s richest blessings for the future.”

Mothers' Union Songs of Praise

Members experienced a wonderfully uplifting evening in Castleknock Parish Centre at a Mothers' Union Songs of Praise evening.

The room was packed with great singing voices raising the roof with a countdown of the 8 favourite hymns as voted by MU members.

Each hymn was introduced by a Mothers' Union member who shared a fascinating insight into the history and meaning of the songs. Stella led in prayer and Rev Colin compèred the evening.

Thanks were expressed to Anne and the team who organised the evening with especial thanks to Judith the pianist.

Perspective

Queen Elizabeth, Servant of God - Rowan Williams

In one of the inevitable rounds of media interviews in the days following Queen Elizabeth's death last week, one journalist asked a key question. "The Queen was anointed at the coronation, wasn't she? Did this make a difference to how she saw her role?"

The image of the anointed monarch is one that pervades Scripture, giving us the title—"Christ"—by which we



acknowledge our Saviour. For the literary and historically-minded, it is an image that also haunts Shakespeare's dramas and the starkest debates and conflicts of British political history. It has been used to mystify and exalt monarchy in ways that most of us would now find uncomfortable at best.

But if we step back a little from the history and think a moment longer about the theology of anointing, we might understand better what the journalist's question was driving at. Anointing—in baptism or ordination—signifies that someone is being given a new place in the community of God's people. It is not a job description, nor is it a blank check for power and privilege. It creates a relationship, with God and with the community of faith, and promises grace to make that relationship live and thrive.

The coronation service has this much in common with ordination: It singles out someone to occupy a position whose point is to manifest something about the whole community's life—and to do so first by just being there, holding the ideals and aspirations of the community (and also carrying its projections). It is the rationale of the theological tradition that tells us that priesthood is not about an individual's successful or meritorious performance but about fidelity to a position, for the sake of the community's peace and well-being. It does not exempt priests from censure and judgement where needed, nor does it confer on them an unchallengeable right to win every argument. That is not the point. They are there so that we can gather around something other than our preferences and anxieties and prejudices; around a gift of "kinship" in which we can stand together before God.

And this is what the royal anointing means at its most important level—a gift of the Holy Spirit to hold a fragile human person in faithfulness to this place where community can gather for restoration and renewal. There is no doubt at all that this was exactly what Queen Elizabeth believed about her role. It was a vocation for which she had been blessed and graced, and the anointing was at the heart of it. Sometimes at Windsor Castle she would show visitors her small book of daily devotions from the weeks leading up to the coronation itself—prayers and meditations that had been written for her by the then archbishop of Canterbury. It was obvious that these meditations had sunk in deeply, and that she still shaped her life according to what was laid out there.

People wondered why she did not abdicate as she became a little more frail (though her physical health remained extraordinarily robust until the very last months). But she

never saw her role as something she could lay down. In this, she echoed Pope John Paul II, disregarding the pressure of advancing age and vulnerability because the position was not one in which what mattered was success, performance, public glamour. But what she did do was plan very carefully for the transition to her successor, sharing out responsibilities, shifting expectations, gently preparing the nation as much as she could for her departure.

It was typical of her striking lack of egotism. When I held the role of archbishop of Canterbury, I had to meet a large number of political leaders across the world; I can truthfully say that not one impressed me in the same way the queen did. Not one had the same degree of attentiveness, unpompous clarity of mind and response, lack of prickly or defensive reactions. She could be abrupt, she could be caustic; she had a powerful sense of the absurd and a real impatience with clichés and flannel. Yet her profound kindness was always in evidence, and her dry and deflating humour was a great gift in keeping matters in perspective.

I watched with admiration as she—year by year—became just that bit more explicit in her public addresses (especially at Christmas) about her Christian faith; never obtrusively or aggressively, but in a way that made it absolutely clear that she knew whence she derived her vision and her strength. At the same time, her engagement with other faiths was surprisingly strong and positive, and I would hear imams, rabbis, and swamis alike sing praises for her empathy and shrewdness. Like her husband, she would listen attentively to sermons and be ready to discuss and challenge afterward. It was a very particular privilege to give her Holy

Communion on the occasions when she visited the Church of England's General Synod.

A servant of God, without doubt; a generous, courageous, patient, and prayerful person. And not least, someone whose living-out of her role kept alive the question of how increasingly secular societies find any kind of durable unity in the absence of the great common symbols of grace, in the absence of that “canopy” that offers us an identity larger than our own tribe and interest group and holds us in a kinship we haven't had to invent for ourselves.

Rowan Williams is a former archbishop of Canterbury.

Poem for today

A boat beneath a sunny sky by Lewis Carroll

A boat beneath a sunny sky,
Lingering onward dreamily
In an evening of July—
Children three that nestle near,
Eager eye and willing ear,
Pleased a simple tale to hear—
Long has faded that sunny sky:
Echoes fade and memories die.
Autumn frosts have slain July.
Still she haunts me, phantomwise,
Alice moving under skies

September 15, 2022

Never seen by waking eyes.
Children yet, the tale to hear,
Eager eye and willing ear,
Lovingly shall nestle near.
In a Wonderland they lie,
Dreaming as the days go by,
Dreaming as the summers die:
Ever drifting down the stream—
Lingering in the golden gleam—
Life, what is it but a dream?

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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