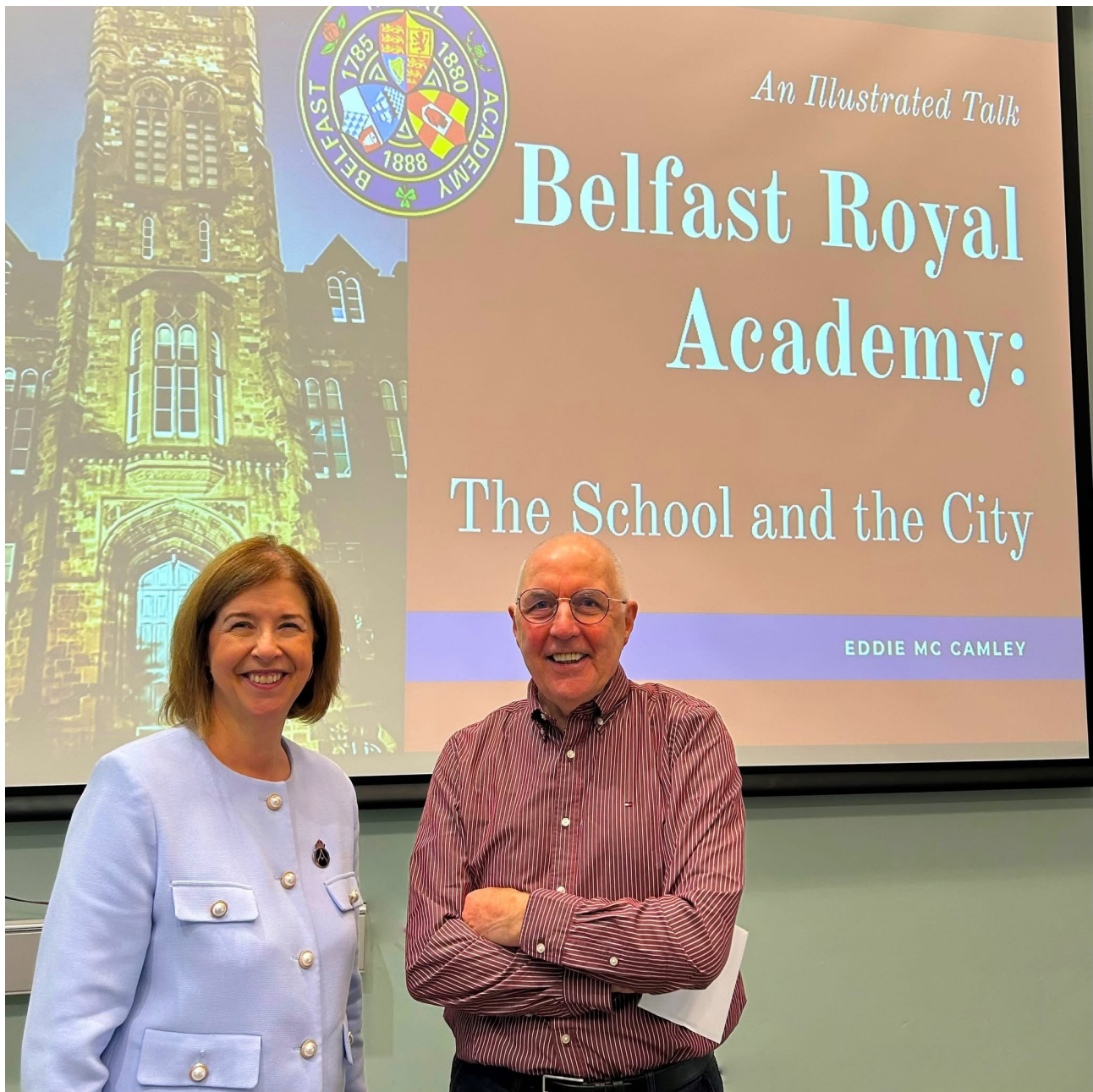


Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Oldest school in Belfast

Image of the day



Illustrated talk on oldest school in Belfast

BRA marked the 240th anniversary of the academy with an illustrated talk that explored how the School's story is deeply connected to the history of Belfast.

Former Head of History, Eddie McCamley delivered an engaging lecture that highlighted not only our heritage but also the enduring values that continue to shape our community: academic excellence and diversity.

We were delighted to welcome

alumni, colleagues past and present, and friends of the School to share in the occasion.

Our thanks go to Dr Caroline O’Kane for organising the event, and to Mrs Kim Burns, Chairperson of Friends of the Academy, for kindly providing refreshments..



News

MU Rural Deanery Service in the Chapel of Ease in Markethill

It was a blessing to attend the second Mothers Union Rural Deanery Service in the Chapel of Ease in Markethill on Wednesday night.

The Service was led by Rev Peter Munce, Rector. Hymns were Blessed Assurance, The Lord's my Shepherd and In Christ Alone with readings from Proverbs 18 and St John's Gospel, chapter 15.

Rev Peter acknowledged the work of Mother's Union and delivered an interesting sermon on growing and developing our friendship with Christ. Heather Montgomery was present with the Enterprise Stall. A beautiful supper was served by members and Debbie our Diocesan President thanked Rev Munce and Branch members for contributing to the Service.

Ecumenical and cross-community Rahan to Clonmacnoise Pilgrimage

The bi-annual ecumenical and cross-community Rahan to Clonmacnoise Pilgrimage took place on Saturday, 6th September 2025.

The journey offered a chance to break away from daily routines, bringing together communities—both religious and cultural—and fostered self-reflection, while also allowing for fresh insights into oneself, all amidst the breathtaking monastic and peat landscapes of County Offaly. The

communal aspects of the pilgrimage, including shared meals, conversations, and prayers, fostered a sense of unity and fellowship among the pilgrims.

The journey commenced at the ancient church and graveyard of St. Carthage, situated within the Rahan Monastic Enclosure, which was established c. 580 by Mochuda, better known as St. Carthage. Attendees arrived at 9 am for tea and refreshments, which were provided by Clara Heritage Society, before taking their seats for the official opening service, which was led by Ms. Mieke Scholte, worship leader of St. Carthage Church, Reverend Canon Isaac Delamare of the Tullamore Union of Parishes, and Fr. Joe Deegan, Parish Priest of Clara Parish. Rahan Comhaltas provided music for the occasion.

Read more at: <https://meathandkildare.org/news/bi-annual-ecumenical-and-cross-community-raham-to-clonmacnoise-pilgrimage/>

C of I young people feed 3,980 children in South Sudan

Success for Pancakes and Prayer Lent initiative - Young people in the Church of Ireland will feed 3,980 children in South Sudan

The total raised by the Pancakes and Prayer Lent project has brought in enough money to feed almost 4,000 children in South Sudan for the next year. The project, run by the Church of Ireland Youth Department (CIYD) and the Bishops' Appeal for World Aid and Development,

encouraged youth groups and Sunday schools to get involved in praying for schools in South Sudan during Lent and raising funds – perhaps through giving something up, or by different initiatives within a parish or school community to contribute to the fundraising.



The money raised will be channelled through Fields of Life to provide plants and equipment for school gardens in South Sudan, so that the schoolchildren will be fed each day – and, as a result of the generosity of young people in Ireland, 3,980 children will now be fed.

Another Pancakes and Prayer fundraising campaign is planned for Lent next year so make sure you have your pans and ingredients ready to make a great difference again! The amounts raised in 2025 were £3,807 and

€5,135 – therefore equivalent to around £8,300 or €9,500 in total when current exchange rates are taken into account.



Words of thanks for the young people

National Youth Officer Simon Henry remarked: “One of CIYD’s key tenets is partnership and it was brilliant to come together with Bishops’ Appeal and Fields of Life for this exciting project.

“We were blown away by the level of participation from young people, clergy and youth leaders. From youth groups to schools to Sunday morning services, there was so much engagement from all corners of the Church of Ireland and it has really encouraged us all, seeing young people engaged

in responding to this need and knowing the impact it will have for the schools and children in South Sudan.”

Bishops’ Appeal’s Education Advisor, Hilary McClay, added: “Bishops’ Appeal is delighted by the wonderful response to our Pancakes and Prayer initiative, and encourages the young people of the Church of Ireland to continue to pray for the children in the schools in South Sudan.”



Naomi Campbell, Fields of Life’s Grants and Partnerships Manager, commented: “We are deeply grateful to the incredible young people across the Church of Ireland who took part in the Pancakes and Prayer Lent campaign. Your prayers and fundraising efforts are making a real and lasting difference for children in South Sudan. This

is the world's poorest country where tragically over 70 per cent of children are out of school.

“Since the start of the Thrive South Sudan project, the number of pupils across eight schools has increased by a remarkable 20 per cent, from 3,296 to 3,980! Hundreds of young people are in school today because of you!

“Thanks to your generosity, these schools are now skilled and equipped to sustainably grow their own food. Every child receives a daily meal, helping them stay in school, concentrate in class, and complete their education. Thank you for partnering with Fields of Life to let every child thrive!”

Readers can find out more about Fields of Life's excellent work in East Africa through its website: www.fieldsoflife.org

South Sudan is home to around 11 million people and is the world's newest country, having become independent in 2011. Around one in five of its population (22%) is aged under 14 years of age.

Church of Ireland parishes encouraged to pray for peace in the Holy Land

People in parishes throughout the Church of Ireland are being encouraged to pray for a just and lasting peace in Gaza and the wider region of the Holy Land later this month.



Archbishop John McDowell (left) and Archbishop Michael Jackson (right) are urging everyone in each parish and church community to join together in prayer and consider a time of fasting on Sunday, 21st September 2025 – this is the UN International Day of Peace.

Archbishop McDowell remarked: “Is there to be no end to the innocent suffering – of the people of Gaza, of the hostages held by Hamas, of the families of the hostages and the families of the dead and maimed in Gaza, of the little children?

For how much longer can the protagonists remain deaf to the heart-rending cries of suffering and the urging of so many around the world to turn their minds to peace? I would urge those in positions of authority to bring about a ceasefire in Gaza to search their hearts, and for all the people of God to pray for an end to the killing.”

Archbishop Jackson added: “Throughout this conflict my concern has always been for the victims of cruelty, warfare

and intimidation. I renew my plea for an immediate ceasefire and for the respect due to human beings – by virtue of their very existence and lives – to be afforded by all involved. This plea includes a call for ceasing to kill civilians, medical professionals and aid workers, photographers and journalists, and ceasing hostage-taking; and for Palestinians living in the occupied territories to be humanely treated and protected at all times. All of this is what is expected of parties to conflict under the Geneva Conventions. We must also ensure that the people of Gaza be given access to plentiful and appropriate food – to stop the spread of famine – and water, and medical supplies and services.”

Archbishop in Jerusalem’s Prayer for the Holy Land

The Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem, the Most Revd Dr Hosam Naoum, has written A Prayer for the Holy Land (as outlined below) and the C of I archbishops are asking that it be used during church services on the day:

A Prayer for the Holy Land for 21st September 2025

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven
to be the true bread which gives life to the world:
In your mercy, provide for all those in Gaza and beyond who suffer from hunger and starvation,
that they may be given both physical bread to nourish their bodies
and heavenly bread to sustain their souls.

By the power of your Spirit, bring a speedy end to this cruel war, the release of all captives, care for the sick and wounded, comfort for those who have lost loved-ones, and the opening of a pathway for a just and lasting peace in the very homeland where your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, ministered during his earthly life; Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



Churches Together in Britain and Ireland prayer points

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) is also supporting its member Churches and partners in a call to prayer and public witness on 21st September.

The day falls within the World Council of Churches World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel (from 20th to 26th September), and CTBI suggests a number of prayer points for the Sunday:

An immediate ceasefire in Gaza

Unfettered access to humanitarian relief

An end to violence in Israel and Palestine

The release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian detainees

A meaningful peace process

More resources are available on the CTBI website at the following link:

www.ctbi.org.uk/news-and-events/middle-east-prayers

Fr. Romanelli in Gaza: 'It was a blessing to speak with the Pope'

The parish priest of Gaza's Holy Family church says his phone call on Tuesday with Pope Leo XIV was a blessing. The parish continues to shelter 450 people, including elderly, sick, and children, as many residents remain despite the danger.

Fr. Gabriel Romanelli, parish priest of the Holy Family parish in Gaza, shared in a video message his joy at receiving a call from Pope Leo XIV following Israel's order for residents to evacuate Gaza City.



“We told him we are well, even if the situation remains difficult,” the Argentine priest said. “The Pope gave us his blessing and prayed for us and for peace. He follows everything closely and is committed to ending the war.”

The Holy Family parish continues to shelter around 450 displaced people, including the elderly, the sick, and children. “Most of the population does not want to leave,” Fr. Romanelli explained.

“Everywhere there is danger, but many want to remain in the city. We try to accompany them and help as we can.”

Despite the suffering, the parish recently celebrated a wedding and welcomed the birth of a baby boy named Marcos. “In the midst of so much pain, God blesses us with signs of life and joy,” the priest said.

Fr. Romanelli concluded with an appeal to join in prayer: “We continue to pray for peace, for the whole of Gaza, for

the Middle East, and for the world. May the Lord, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, grant us the miracle of peace.”

Cathedral Calls

St Patrick's Cathedral Choir in Armagh are recruiting for new members

St Patrick's Cathedral Choir in Armagh are currently recruiting for new members.

All voice parts are welcomed, lower voice parts in particular - alto, tenor and bass. The Cathedral Choir rehearse every Thursday evening at 7.30pm in the Synod Hall. The ability to read music is not necessary. Whether you are an experienced singer, or just love to sing, we would love to welcome you to our choir community! For more information contact armaghparishoffice@gmail.com.

Come Sing in Saint Mary's Cathedral, Limerick

Limerick's oldest building invites YOU to be part of something special.

Join them for a unique choral experience on 15th November in the stunning surroundings of Saint Mary's Cathedral.



Singer Registration: 12.00pm



Rehearsals Begin: 12.30pm

 Concert Commences: 5.00pm

Whether you're singing or simply attending, it promises to be an unforgettable afternoon of music!

 Singers – €20

Includes: Lunch, Tea & Coffee, Afternoon Tea
(Payment accepted on the day at registration)

 Concert Only – €5

(Tickets available online or at the door)

✨ All you need is:

A copy of the music score

A basic knowledge of choral music

Plenty of enthusiasm!

Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to sing in one of Ireland's most historic landmarks.

Spread the word and let's make music together in Limerick!

Visit us online for more details or email

cathedral@limerick.anglican.org

Events

Stained Glass Stories in Coleraine

David Hume - I am looking forward to delivering my Stained Glass Stories talk at First Coleraine Presbyterian Church on Sunday afternoon at 3pm.

It is part of European Heritage weekend and the organisers have said everyone is welcome, so maybe see you there!

Lots of lovely windows to hear about and see, from Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Scotland, Canada and the



United States. Some unique ones too - Santa Claus on his sleigh and astronauts on the moon!

In the media

Chorus of protest as choir sing their grievances before mass walkout

Choristers angry over proposed redundancies at cathedral hit by sex and binge-drinking scandal , Robert White writes in The Daily Telegraph 11/09/2025

A cathedral suspended members of its choir after they performed an “entirely inappropriate” song during mass in protest against job losses.

Choristers at Bangor Cathedral, in North Wales, staged a walkout during Holy Communion, after singing a piece entitled A Canticle of Indignation as part of the demonstration against redundancy.

Witnesses said the clergy carried on distributing wafers and wine as if nothing unusual was happening as the silent choir filed past towards the cathedral door.

Lyrics from A Canticle of Indignation, written by choir member Simon Ogdon, include “Lord, how long shall the ungodly triumph?” and “How long shall all wicked doers speak so disdainfully?”.

The walkout was staged following the announcement that five out of eight permanent staff face losing their jobs in cutbacks – with the choir suffering in particular as a result of a cut in hours for the director of music.

Bangor Cathedral said in a statement that their projected operational deficit at the end of 2025 is £300,000, and that addressing the budget shortfall “may have implications for our staffing structure”.

Following the demonstration, the cathedral announced the suspension of the choir for a month.

It is the latest of a number of scandals to hit the cathedral after an independent report earlier this year revealed incidents in the wider church community of inappropriate sexual behaviour and binge drinking culture.

Following the reports, it was revealed a series of serious incident referrals had been made to the Charity Commission in relation to the cathedral and diocese.

Former Archbishop of Wales Andy John announced his immediate retirement at the end of June after persistent negative news stories related to his diocese. While there is no suggestion that he took part in the drinking, or used inappropriate language around the choir or the congregation, he was the diocesan bishop, and it happened under his watch.

The cathedral had been led by Sub Dean Sion Rhys Evans, but the diocese announced he had left his post in December 2024 following alleged financial irregularities.

The demonstrations from the choir threaten to further tear apart the cathedral which was founded in 525AD, and celebrated its 1,500 year anniversary over summer.

One part of the protest hymn – based on Psalm 94:1-11 about God’s justice and his ultimate authority over the wicked – said: “They smite down thy people, O Lord, and trouble thine heritage.

“They murder the widow and stranger and put the fatherless to death. And yet they say Tush?!”

The author confirmed that the song was written in March, not specifically for the service, but suggested that the reference to indignation aptly describes the conflict in the cathedral.

‘One of the clearest signs of tyranny is its desire to silence dissent and opposition’

Mr Ogdon posted on social media: “One of the clearest signs of tyranny is its desire to silence dissent and opposition, and that can never be tolerated.”

One witness of the protest said: “I have never heard of anything like this happening before.

“It indicates how upset members of the choir are after being told they are likely to lose their jobs.

“They walked out in a dignified manner. Members of the congregation were clearly thrown by what happened and didn’t immediately start singing the next hymn, as usually they would have followed the choir’s lead.”

The cathedral said in a statement: “The Chapter of our Cathedral ... took the decision to pause all choir activity for an initial period of one month, with immediate effect whilst we review what happened and consider appropriate next steps.

“This pause will also provide an opportunity for dialogue between the Chapter and Choir.”

Poem for today

A September Day

by Francis Duggan

A thing of such great beauty to behold
The wattles resplendent in their blooms of gold
The first week of September and Spring is in the air
And in the green park daisies bloom everywhere,
On a day like this 'tis good to be alive
To start your car and go off on a drive
So great to live to see another Spring
To hear the nesting wild birds chirp and sing,
Were I a poet I would write a simple lay
For to celebrate this beautiful Spring day
To celebrate the beauty I can see
Where the Goddess of Spring has spread her greenery
And the wattles laden in their golden flowers
Look resplendent in these mild September hours.

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

Please recommend to your friends