

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Bath young organists

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Bath Abbey supports young organists

Last week, we had the pleasure of welcoming back the Royal School of Church Music's Bath Course for Young People to sing the weekend services at the Abbey.



Earlier in the week, we were delighted that during the course Organ Scholars came and treated us to a recital as part of our Tuesdays@1 organ series. The two young organists, Edwin Field from Halifax and Abhay Prabhakar from Bangor, performed a varied and exciting programme to a large and appreciative audience.

Also, we are thrilled that former Abbey chorister, Rafael Estrella, has won the John Pilling Trust First Prize in the Northern Ireland International Organ Competition junior category. The NIIOC is one of the most prestigious organ competitions in the country, so this is an excellent achievement - well done Rafael!



St Marks Lisburn support for Marie Curie

The Events Planning Committee presented a cheque to Yvonne Craig from Marie Curie.

The donation of £1250 was half of the proceeds of their fashion show held in Laurelhill College in April. Pictured: Ian Stewart, Gail Cooke, Mrs Yvonne Craig (Marie Curie), Joan Lockhard and Valerie Mackay. Missing: Trina Somerville, Rosemary Browne, Noel Irwin and Zoe Cree.

Our Common Bond – Ecumenical Focus on the Nicene Creed

The 1700th anniversary of the first ecumenical council of the Christian Church – the Council of Nicaea – provided a fitting theme for Ecumenical Bible Week 2025.

Held in 325 CE, the Council gave rise to the Nicene Creed. Ecumenical Bible Week organised a number of events in Dublin to celebrate the anniversary and reflect on the Creed under the heading – ‘Nazareth to Nicea’ The Bible and the Nicene Creed’.

Thinking Allowed gathered seven speakers who offered plenty of food for thought in the Sacred Heart Church in Donnybrook on September 10. They answered the question ‘Why is the Nicene Creed important to me?’ Drawn from a wide range of backgrounds, from Orthodox to Lutheran, Methodist to Catholic and Evangelical to Church of Ireland, each speaker gave their personal reflections on the Nicene Creed in just five minutes. The evening was very ably chaired by RTE’s David McCullagh.

Romanian Orthodox Priest Fr Călin Florea got proceedings underway with his reflection on the Nicene Creed which he described as a symbol of faith. He spoke of the power of its words on our lives and the energy that flowed from them. He said that today, tragically, words of Scripture are used to justify discrimination and suggested that this was because people do not grasp their meaning. One of the greatest



David McCullagh, Fr Mikhail Nasonov, Gillian Kingston, Fr Kieran O'Mahony, the Revd Nick Park, the Revd Kevin Conroy, Pastor Florian von Issendorff, Dr Andrew Pierce and Fr Călin Florea.

obstacles lies in language, he said and pointed out that Romanian, like English, has a duality of meaning. "We know the Creed by heart yet the power of it we have not understood," he stated.

Pastor Florian von Issendorff of the Lutheran Church in Ireland explained how the Nicene Creed is used in the Lutheran Faith where it is said on high feasts so that when he thinks of the Nicene Creed it puts him in festive mood. In Lutheran theology, he explained, the three early Creeds belong to the binding canons of the church but the theology did not end there. "It is in the critical moments in the life of the Church that we cry a strong confession of faith," he said explaining that the most recent Creed of the Lutheran Church dated back to the Church's struggle in Nazi

Germany. The debate surrounding the Nicene Creed is ongoing, he said, highlighting the breakthrough in the conversations between the Lutheran World Federation and the Orthodox Church regarding the Filioque which they agreed should no longer be used.

President of the National Bible Society of Ireland and former Methodist Council Lay Leader Gillian Kingston highlighted the differentiation between the creeds. She said the Nicene Creed is the creed of the believer ('I believe') while the Apostles' Creed is the creed of the Church. She said that the Nicene Creed joins Churches around the world and also joins believers with the faith of the saints 1,700 years ago. But she continued that we need to look at the Creed in terms of what it is saying to us today. "We have to think today about what it is to say 'I believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, creator of Heaven and earth' in a climate crisis. We have to think what it means to say 'I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God' in a world of many ideologies and secularism," she said.

Augustinian theologian, author and EBW board member Fr Kieran O'Mahony OSA said that the Creed is part of our shared inheritance across the traditions and an important signal in today's divided world. He declared himself a "Nicene believer". He spoke of the tension between the Western and Orthodox narratives on salvation – the Western seeing the sinner as having to be punished – and the Orthodox narrative – seeing God in Christ reconciling the world to himself. "In Christ, God has reached out compassionately to share solidarity. Compassion and solidarity are modern and understandable... In brokenness,

The beautiful St. Patrick's RC Church and it's famous Bell Tower in Glen outside Maghera. Located just off the Glenshane Road at the foot of the Sperrins.



disease and war our God is standing with us. This is unique in the Christian proclamation that God is willing to stand with us and for that reason I am a Nicene believer,” he stated.

Fr Mikhail Nasonov of the Russian Orthodox Church said that to understand the Creed we need to look at why it was written. “The creed expresses the true faith if the creed is true, and the false faith if the creed is false. The function of the creed is to recognise those of the same faith, to define

the faith, to separate true from false. The importance of the Nicene Creed is to define the Church's faith with great precision and accuracy. Why was this important? Because the faith defines our relationship with God and our salvation. The confession of faith is essential for baptism," he said. He added that the message of the early Church is clear – what faith you have, what creed you profess, ensures your salvation.

Pastor of the Solid Rock Church in Drogheda and chair of the Evangelical Alliance, the Revd Nick Park, suggested that the Council of Nicea was the first Ecumenical Bible Week, except that it lasted three months and was quite rowdy at times. "One of the reasons the Council of Nicea is important to me is because it helps me to understand the boundaries of my unity with fellow Christians. As an evangelical Christian my understanding is that ecumenism is important – I can worship with other Christians as my brothers and sisters because at the root of it all we share common beliefs," he explained. He added that the Nicene Creed also helps him form relationships with non-Christians because it gives him boundaries.

Representing the Church of Ireland, lecturer in the Irish School of Ecumenics at Trinity College Dublin, Dr Andrew Pierce, spoke of his participation in an ecumenical cross border discussion group. Members are encouraged to think about aspects of religion, politics and culture that have become enmeshed, helpfully and unhelpfully, on this island and he said that as part of the process members were asked to write what they believed in. "I was uncomfortable about it because there was a monopoly on believing. Believing is linked to

belonging – we don't believe on our own. We belong with a community. That gives shape to our belief... Belief and belonging were being lost," he recalled adding that people came back with different things they believed in. "I said I was going to say the Nicene Creed. It gives us the shape of belief... It shapes us as communities and religions." He said the Nicene Creed points to something bigger.

The event was organised by the Revd Kevin Conroy and Fr Kieran O'Mahony and supported by the Archdiocese of Dublin, the United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough and the National Bible Society of Ireland.

Education

Back to school for the Presbyterian Moderator

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's (PCI), Right Reverend Dr Trevor Gribben, has praised the work of local schools while on a visit to three in east Donegal where PCI has been involved for many years.

The visit to Donoughmore National School, where PCI is the school's patron, Convoy Joint National School, where the church is joint patron with the Church of Ireland, and The Royal and Prior Comprehensive in Raphoe, where PCI is represented on the Board of Management, were part of the Moderator's tour of PCI's Presbytery of Derry and Donegal, which is made up of just under 50 congregations.



“I have been looking forward to my weeklong pastoral visit ever since I became Moderator in June. This week has not only been an opportunity to say ‘thank you’ to those who not only pastor, lead and serve in our Presbyterian congregations in this part of the world, but an opportunity to thank those in the wider community and in civic life, especially those who teach and encourage our children and young people,” Dr Gribben said.

The morning began with the Moderator taking assembly at Donoughmore National School, where he spoke about living your life as a light for Jesus. Dr Gribben was greeted by teaching principal Mrs Wendy Long. During the visit he met the children, who mainly come from Killygordon, Lifford and Castlefinn. Accompanied by Rev Colin McKibbin, who is the minister of Donoughmore Presbyterian Church, and chairs the school’s board. Dr Gribben also met the teachers.



Speaking about the visit, Mrs Long, who also taught at the school for 26 years and attended a child, said, “As a small school of just over 20 children we welcomed the fact that the Moderator chose to visit us this morning, which I think he enjoyed very much. We certainly enjoyed having him.

“As our patron we have a very close relationship with PCI, in fact the church where we have our nativity each year is opposite us, and we are alongside the church halls, which we use for PE. It isn’t just that closeness and community that is so special, it is the strong Christian ethos that we have always had as a school, something that helps our children to flourish,” Mrs Long said.



The next stop was the larger Convey Joint National School, which has around 100 children, who, like Donoughmore, ranged in age from 4 to 12-years-old. PCI is joint patron with the Church of Ireland, with both St Ninians and Convoy Presbyterian within walking distance. Greeted by acting principal Rachel Gallagher, Dr Gribben visited each of the four classes, talked to the children and had a coffee with the teachers at the morning break. “We were very privileged to have one of the leaders of our national churches visit and spend time with us this morning,” Mrs Gallagher said.

“We are a diverse school with pupils attending from the local area and a variety of countries in Asia, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa. I hope that Dr Gribben got a real sense of how we are a vibrant school community of different nationalities and faiths all learning together.”

The Moderator’s final stop was The Royal and Prior Comprehensive in Raphoe, a school of 600 students with a heritage that dates back some 400 years. “We have had a

number of enjoyable visits undertaken by different Moderators over the years and were delighted to host Dr Gribben. I think he enjoyed his visit, especially the Q&A with members of our Christian Union, who asked him about his role, his faith and some current topics,” principal Dr Howard Welch said.

“As a school, the Moderator heard that we have a strong Christian ethos with the Donegal Board of Protestant Education as our patron. Ramelton Presbyterian’s minister, Rev Richard Tregaskis, currently sits on our Board of Management.

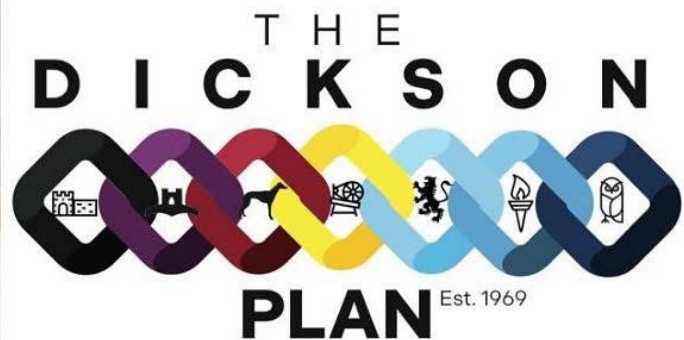
“Having said that, while we are a school that educates many young people who do have a Christian faith, some have no faith, or come from a different faith background altogether. We are an inclusive school where our ethos informs our culture significantly, and all our children are supported by our chaplain, Mrs Stewart, who the Moderator also met.”

Speaking about today, Dr Gribben said, “During my career in PCI I have advocated for all young people to have access to high quality education across Ireland. For more than a hundred years across the island, our Church’s engagement with education has become part of our history and our heritage. It is a privilege to be so closely involved.

“It was also wonderful to be so warmly welcomed and see the dedication of the principals and teachers to the education and personal development of the children and young people entrusted to them, within the Christian ethos of the schools, which remains important,” Dr Gribben said.

[September 15 2025](#)

The Moderator concluded by saying, “My visit to Royal and Prior included a Q&A with students from the school’s Christian Union. I was impressed with their insightful and thought-provoking questions, as we had a great discussion, which included, ‘what it means to be a Christian today’ and ‘how should the church respond to life issues such as Assisted Dying. A long day, but a memorable one!”



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Lurgan Junior High Dickson Plan logo winner

We're thrilled to announce that the creative design by Savannah in Year 9, has been chosen as the winning logo in the Dickson Plan logo competition from last year.

Savannah's winning design will now be used in all official Dickson Plan documentation and branding.

Savannah explained her inspiration for the winning design:

"My Dickson Plan logo shows how all the schools in this system are connected—this is represented by the chain. I have also included a specific colour that is associated with each school, along with a simple picture of something easily recognisable and related to that school.

I think my logo is eye-catching, colourful, and easy to recognise by its bright colours and simple, but effective pictures."

Well done, Savannah—you've done yourself and our school proud.

Cathedral Calls

Limerick Lego Trail continues to attract

The Lego Trail at Saint Mary's Cathedral continues to delight visitors of all ages...

Come explore the beauty of this historic building while following the fun and interactive trail.

Complete the trail and receive your very own certificate — a perfect keepsake from your visit.

Don't miss out — the adventure awaits.

Clergy and ministry

Thanksgiving Service for Korean War veteran

A Thanksgiving Service shall be held on Friday 19th September at 11am in the Somme Museum, 233 Bangor Road, Newtownards.

This service is to commemorate the service and sacrifice of the life of Korean War veteran Albert Morrow who served as an ambulance driver in the Royal Ulster Rifles during the conflict.





Mini Micks from Killyleagh, Ballygowan and Carryduff in Last Post Ceremony at Menin Gate

As the Irish Guards celebrated their 125th anniversary across Northern Ireland at the Menin Gate there was an

Irish Guards "Mini Micks" honour Guard and Wreath Party. These cadets parade in Killyleagh each Remembrance Sunday.

It was a great honour for three Army Cadets from Killyleagh to play a leading role at the parade at the Menin Gate in Ypres for the Last Post Ceremony.

Twins Izzie and Alfie Hagan, and Calum Donaldson, all from Killyleagh, took part with the Ballygowan and Carryduff Cadets from the Irish Guards.

It was a big night also for their leader, Gareth Townley, who proclaimed Binyon's Lines.

Celebrate 100 years with St Brendan's Sydenham

St Brendan's, Sydenham, are holding a week of events this October to celebrate the centenary of their founding in 1925. The parish is one of the smallest in the diocese and was originally formed to serve new housing for the shipyard.

In 1963 the parish built a brand new church which infamously blew down in a storm just two years later! The current building now serves a vibrant church and community and part of the celebrations will be to look to the future with vision and expectation.

“To help us celebrate we would like to invite anyone in the area and especially those with a previous connection to the

parish to join with us at our programme of events". These include:

A fun day from 12-2.00pm on Saturday 4 October

A special community history service with lunch at 11.30am on Sunday 5 October

Afternoon tea from 3-4.30pm on Saturday 11 October

The highly acclaimed 'Titanic' play at 7.30pm on Saturday 11 October

The official 100th anniversary church service on Sunday 12 October at 11.30am.

'We would especially love to see any past members or others with connection to the parish along to our 100th anniversary service on Sunday 12 October.'

For more information visit us on Facebook
[@StBrendansChurchofIreland](#)

[Archbishop's address from Duke Chapel](#)

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury, preached during Sunday's worship service, which was part of Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts' DITA2025 symposium on theology and the arts.

"We celebrate and give thanks for the arts because of the unpredictability, the surprise, and the newness that they bring," he said in his sermon.



🔗 Watch the full sermon: <https://www.youtube.com/live/E-BzJJcXFFE?si=IhmNWg-OhZBeQ4yR&t=1945>

Subscribe to the Duke Chapel Sermons podcast:

→ 📱 Spotify, <https://open.spotify.com/show/3WxxqxVJv0v1ydLaLVRS24?si=hqbjOP1HQqi8iSHwKvZ1ig&nd=1>

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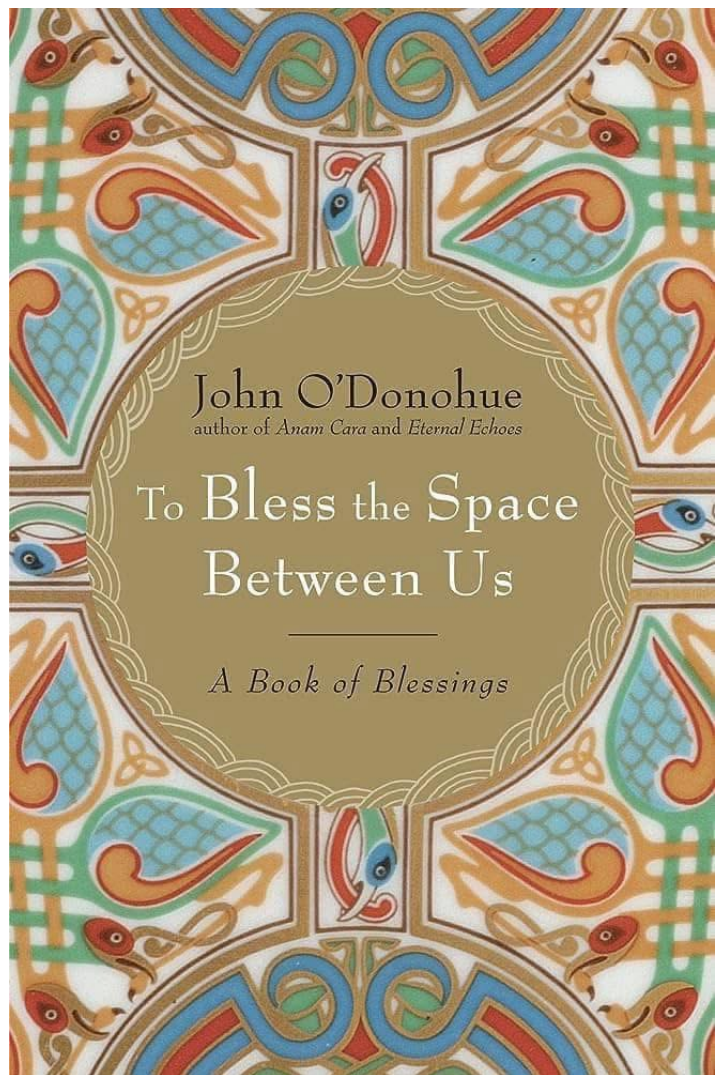
Poem for today

Beannacht - Blessing

by John O'Donohue

For Josie

On the day when
the weight deadens
on your shoulders
and you stumble,
may the clay dance
to balance you.
And when your eyes
freeze behind
the grey window
and the ghost of loss
gets into you,
may a flock of colours,
indigo, red, green
and azure blue,
come to awaken in you
a meadow of delight.
When the canvas frays
in the currach of thought
and a stain of ocean
blackens beneath you,
may there come across the waters
a path of yellow moonlight
to bring you safely home.
May the nourishment of the earth be yours,
may the clarity of light be yours,
may the fluency of the ocean be yours,
may the protection of the ancestors be yours.
And so may a slow
wind work these words
of love around you,
an invisible cloak
to mind your life.



September 15 2025

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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early morning

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