

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – First synod licked

September 27, 2022

Image of the day

First synod licked - or ice cream Synod...

After the first synod of the newly formed Tuam, Limerick, Killaloe members were treated to a free ice cream.

News reports



Choir Cubs in Dundela

Do you have a budding singer in the house (P1-P6)? Bring them along to Choir Cubs at St Mark's, Dundela this Tuesday from 3:45 – 4:30 p.m. in the church.

September 27, 2022

The group will meet for the next four Tuesdays to learn some songs and perform together as a group. The only cost is a canned food donation for the local foodbank. Hope to see you there!

Healing Service in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast

The Cathedral is open again and the next service is Friday 30th September at 1.00pm when Revd Jonny Campbell Smyth, Rector of St John's Ballyclare and Christ Church, Ballynure will conduct the service. Friday at 1.00pm

The Bishop of Mukabura, Western Uganda, Bishop Cranmer Mugisha, a guest of Knock Presbyterian Church, will visit prior to his immanent retirement.

Priests for the Ordained Local Ministry in Connor

Four new priests were ordained for Local Ministry (OLM) at a service in St Bartholomew's Parish Church, Stranmillis, on Sunday September 25.

They were ordained by the Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison. The preacher at the service was the Rev Jacob Mercer, recently introduced as priest-in-charge of St Brigid's, Mallusk, whose father-in-law the Rev Peter McCausland was one of those being ordained.



At the Service of Ordination for OLMs in Connor Diocese on September 25 are, from left: The Rev Stephen Green, the Rev Peter McCausland, Bishop George Davison, the Rev Peter Meenagh and the Rev Glenn Thompson.

Peter will serve as an OLM in the Parish of Templepatrick and Donegore. The Rev Stephen Green was ordained to serve in St Bartholomew's, Stranmillis; the Rev Peter Meenagh for Lisburn Cathedral, and the Rev Glenn Thompson for the Parish of Kilmakee.

Clogher confirmation candidates presented by Children's Ministry leaders

On Sunday morning the Bishop of Clogher, Rt Revd Ian Ellis administered the Rite of Confirmation and celebrated Holy Communion for a group of 15



candidates from Derryvullen North & Castle Archdale parish.

The Rector comments - “It was good to have some of the Children's Ministry leaders to present the candidates to Bishop Ian - Wendy Armstrong (Castle Archdale), Amanda Wood, Elaine Hetherington and Paula Thompson (Derryvullen North). All of the leaders have put so much work into teaching the young people in their time in Sunday School and so the contribution of those involved today helped make things even more special.”

The singing was led by Florence Barrett (organist) along with the choir and a Gradual Anthem was sung by Marion Faris, Iris Robinson, Carol Clarke and David McDowell. The first reading was read by Paula Moore and the Gospel was read by Dr Margaret, who also helped administer Holy Communion.

September 27, 2022

It was good to have the support and guidance of Derryvullen North Churchwardens, Avril Stubbs & David Robinson, and also Castle Archdale Churchwarden, Derek Anderson, whose granddaughter was also one of the candidates.

A collection was taken for the Bishop's Ministry Fund and this was collected by family members of some of the confirmation candidates.

The Service, attended by over 200 people, was held in St Tighernach's Church, Derryvullen North at 11.00am.

New Synod Officer appointed

Dr Nicole Gallagher has been appointed to the position of Synod Officer, succeeding Dr Catherine Smith who has moved to a new role as Operations Executive with the Church's Ministry of Healing Ireland.



September 27, 2022

Nicole recently graduated from TU Dublin with a PhD in Church of Ireland hymnody and she previously worked in the Civil Service.

The Revd Canon Gillian Wharton, Honorary Secretary of General Synod and a member of the appointment panel, said: “We are delighted to welcome Nicole to the Synod Department and we look forward to working with her. As we move into the post–pandemic period, this is the first September since 2019 that we can plan ahead with any degree of certainty. It is an exciting time for all involved in the Synod team with a number of initiatives being considered and recent legislation being implemented.

“We also thank Dr Catherine Smith for all that she contributed during her seven years as Synod Officer and wish her well in her new role with the Church’s Ministry of Healing.”

Central C of I bodies’ news

The Representative Body

The Representative Body met in the morning of Tuesday, 20th September 2022, in the former chapel of the Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines. The Archbishop of Dublin opened the meeting in prayer and welcomed members to a new venue for meetings of the RB and Standing Committee which was being made available on an experimental basis.

The Archbishop welcomed Mrs Diane Ruddock (Down and Dromore) as a new member and Mrs Cynthia Cherry (Connor) and Mrs Helen Arnopp (Cork, Cloyne and Ross) who have been re-elected to represent their respective dioceses. The Archbishop also paid tribute to Mr Ronald Colton on his retirement as a representative of the Dioceses of Meath and Kildare.

In his report to the RB, **Mr Henry Algeo, Chairman of the Executive Committee**, noted that a grants scheme to support ministries working with Ukrainian and Afghan refugees is now open. Mr Algeo welcomed further progress in the MindMatters mental health awareness initiative – more than 470 clergy and lay members have now received mental health training, over 100 mental health champions have come forward, and over 90 applications for seed funding have been submitted; around €150,000 will be allocated to successful applicant projects.

The Representative Body recommended to the Standing Committee that **Minimum Approved Stipends** shall be no less than £33,900 per annum in Northern Ireland or €42,090 per annum in the Republic of Ireland with effect from 1st January 2023. This will represent an increase, in both jurisdictions, of 9% from 2022 in line with the Consumer Price Index.

The Representative Body recommended to the Standing Committee that Pensionable Stipend for 2023 shall be unchanged from 2022 at £25,498 per annum in Northern Ireland and €36,219 per annum in the Republic of Ireland, and that the rate to be paid by each diocese towards the Clergy Pensions Fund Solvency Levy from 1st January

2023 be set at the unchanged percentage level of 13% of the Minimum Approved Stipend. Recognising the significant increase in cost of living, the Executive Committee is arranging an additional interim payment to clergy pensioners for the next five quarters.

A members' handbook for the Representative Body, prepared in accordance with the Charities Governance Code, was approved. The Representative Body also considered papers on the governance of Pioneer Ministry, chaplaincy in third level education, and a review of the Church of Ireland's digital communications.

Appointments

The following members were appointed to new roles within the RB's committees:

Mr Lyndon MacCann SC – as Deputy Chair of the Executive Committee and Chair of the Audit Committee;

Dean Niall Sloane – to the Executive Committee;

Mr William Oliver – to the Stipends Committee;

Ms Heather Pope – to the Library and Archives Committee; and

Archdeacon Adrian Wilkinson – to the Library and Archives Committee.

Ms Hilary Prentice was appointed as a Director of the Clergy Pensions Trust DAC. Canon Nicola Halford and Ms

September 27, 2022

Hilary Prentice were appointed to the Board of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.

Standing Committee News

The Standing Committee met in the afternoon of the day, in the same venue. The Archbishop of Dublin, in the chair, congratulated Archdeacon Adrian Wilkinson on his election as Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory, and thanked Archdeacon Robert Miller on his resignation from the Standing Committee for his service on Standing Committee. Canon Harry Gilmore was welcomed to the meeting as a new clerical member for Derry and Raphoe, succeeding Archdeacon Miller.

Dr Nicole Gallagher was welcomed on her appointment as the new Synod Officer, succeeding Dr Catherine Smith, with best wishes expressed on her new role.

Canon Malcolm Kingston opened the meeting with a reading from Luke chapter 8 and in prayer, asking for God's blessing on King Charles III and his family, President Higgins, and all others in authority. The countries of Ukraine and Pakistan, and other places where humanitarian need is found, were upheld in prayer.

General Synod

The Honorary Secretaries confirmed that the venue for General Synod 2023 will be changed from Croke Park to White's Hotel, Wexford, due to a rescheduling of Croke Park's match programme.

General Synod 2023 will take place in person on Friday, 12th May, and Saturday, 13th May, with the third day's business to be considered remotely on the evening of Tuesday, 16th May, and, if required, Thursday, 18th May. As agreed at the January meeting of the Standing Committee, General Synod 2024 will take place in Armagh.

Resolutions

The Standing Committee approved the circulation of the resolution on housing – as passed by the General Synod in May 2022 – to be circulated to dioceses with a request for any relevant information about activity relating to housing and homelessness in the dioceses to be sent to the Synod Office for compilation and sharing within the Church.

The Standing Committee approved the recommendations of the Representative Body in relation to Minimum Approved Stipend, Pensionable Stipend, and the Clergy Pension Fund Solvency Levy.

The Standing Committee proposed that General Synod 2023 establish a select committee to review clergy tenure.

Appointments

The following persons were appointed to the Working Group to Review Episcopal Electoral Provisions: Ms Hazel Corrigan and Mr Ken Gibson (as lay Honorary Secretaries); the Very Revd Shane Forster and the Revd Robert Marshall (as Provincial Registrars); and Mr Lyndon MacCann SC (as Assessor). A further member will be appointed by the House of Bishops from within its membership.

September 27, 2022

The Standing Committee noted the appointment of Mrs Judy Peters, Mr Mike Johnston, Mr Lyndon MacCann SC, and Ms Hazel Corrigan (on the nomination of the Honorary Secretaries and the RB Executive Committee) to the Implementation Oversight Committee with a remit to consider personal health insurance and sabbatical parental leave policies for clergy.

The Very Revd Paul Draper was appointed as a member of the Board of Christian Aid Ireland, representing the Church of Ireland as a trustee of Christian Aid.

In the media

The decline of Protestants in Ireland was due to many factors other than discrimination - Ian d'Alton

A letter to the Belfast News Letter from Ian d'Alton, who edited 'Protestant and Irish: the minority's search for place in independent Ireland'

Jim Allister (September 22) and now Prof John Wilson Foster (Sep 24) have addressed the position of Protestants in the Free State/Republic, of which I am one.

Mr Allister claims that: "The fact that the Catholic population in Northern Ireland has flourished presents a telling contrast with the near-extinction of the Protestant population in the Republic."

Prof Foster has a similar comment : "Over the past century, the Republic of Ireland has not been just a cold house for

Protestants, but a virtual igloo. Through a covenant between the Catholic Church and the state, a Protestant population of 10% in 1922 fell to 3% by 1990 with a slight rise to 4% in our day.”

Leaving aside the contentious comment that northern Catholics “flourished” in the decades of Stormont rule, there is no denying that the Protestant population in the Free State/Republic declined precipitously after independence.

This was the result of many factors. Emigration was important — the new state was an impoverished place, and economic insecurity and depression doubtless encouraged many relatively well-educated and mobile Protestants to up sticks and go.

Distaste with the Irish Free State’s rather cloying Catholic ethos, some intimidation and a low marriage and birth rate were all factors.

A significant issue was that of mixed marriages, but the pernicious *Ne Temere* decree can’t really be characterised, as Professor Foster seems to do, as “a covenant between the Catholic Church and the state” to apparently decrease the Protestant population. That decree existed before independence. It never had the force of law. This wasn’t genocide or ethnic cleansing. Mixed marriages were often family-splitting and traumatic up to the 1970s but they didn’t kill anyone, just shifted the denominational labels.

On July 21 1922 the Church of Ireland Gazette, speaking of the new political dispensation in the south, declared that ‘we are Irish and Ireland is our home’. Most Protestants were

happy to stay at 'home' if they could. The state wisely left this relatively prosperous minority in largely undisturbed possession of their separate schools, a university, hospitals, firms and farms. And those who wanted to live a quiet 'Britishness' could do so in the Protestant privacy of their churches, freemasonry, their sporting and dining clubs, the Orange Order and in their very lively social support structure.

They occasionally grumbled about the new state's restrictive laws on censorship, but many were quite happy not to see their servants exposed to licentious literature. Apart from crusading newspaper editors and an advanced liberal elite, Protestants were often as conservative as their Catholic neighbours and had no particular problem with the new rules on liquor trading and contraception (and these could be avoided, anyway).

In that regard Prof Foster might note that Yeats' 1925 speech on divorce was received with horror on much of the Protestant side — the Protestant churches disapproved of it, too.

If there was a significant grievance that exercised Protestant minds it was Irish language compulsion. The minority did not particularly see its symbolism of nationhood in the same way as nationalists did. It was resented as a backdoor way of keeping Protestants out of the public service and because the time it occupied in school was seen as a brake on their children's progress in the modern world. But it must be said that this was not a particularly Protestant gripe — many Catholics were equally disenchanted with an expensive, inefficient and ultimately wholly unsuccessful policy.

September 27, 2022

Southern Protestants did not always lead an ideal existence — low-level slights and intimidation were by no means unknown (this writer can attest to that).

But compared to the discrimination, violence and bigotry that often seemed to characterise parts of northern society, never mind the sort of pogroms that afflicted other European minorities after World War I, they didn't do badly. To represent them as cowed, institutionally discriminated against and of no consequence to the southern state is not borne out by the evidence.

The real tragedy in all this was partition, as recognised at the time by the Church of Ireland Gazette. An all-Ireland Dominion, with the King as head of state and a deep cultural, fiscal and economic connectivity with Britain, would have had in it a substantial 'blocking' minority. The state that would have emerged would almost certainly have been a compromise, but one which would, I believe, have led to an island much more diverse, less paranoid and comfortable in its own skin.

Ian d'Alton lives in Naas, Co Kildare. He was Co-editor, with Dr Ida Milne, of "Protestant and Irish: the minority's search for place in independent Ireland", published in 2019.

CNI

September 27, 2022

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Poem for today

For the Artist at the Start of Day by John O'Donohue

May this be a morning of innocent beginning,
When the gift within you slips clear
Of the sticky web of the personal
With its hurt and hauntings,
And fixed fortress corners,

A morning when you become a pure vessel
For what wants to ascend from silence,

May your imagination know
The grace of perfect danger,

To reach beyond imitation,
And the wheel of repetition,

Deep into the call of all
The unfinished and unsolved

Until the veil of the unknown yields
And something original begins
To stir toward your senses
And grow stronger in your heart...

Excerpt from the blessing, 'For the Artist at the Start of Day'
in the books, *Benedictus (Europe)* / *To Bless the Space
Between Us (US)*

September 27, 2022

Ordering Info: <https://johnodonohue.com/store>

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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