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Derry exhibition commemorates Bishop William Alexander and his famous hymn-writer wife



A bust of Archbishop Alexander looks down on the Dean, Very Rev Raymond Stewart at the launch of a new publication and exhibition on the archbishop and his hymn-writer wife, Cecil Frances Alexander

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The Dean of Derry, Very Rev Raymond Stewart, has opened an exhibition at St Columb's Cathedral and launched a new book, both of which commemorate the life and work of the renowned hymn-writer, Mrs Cecil Frances Alexander, and her husband, Bishop William Alexander – a former Bishop of Derry and Raphoe. Both husband and wife were accomplished poets and exemplary Christians.

Pride of place in the exhibition goes to two 7 x 5 foot individual portraits of the Alexanders, commissioned for the 25th anniversary of Bishop Alexander's consecration and painted by the distinguished artist, Charles Napier Kennedy. The paintings, which the Dean said had suffered "the ravages of time", were restored by Jim Mullin and Trevor Millar of Irish Art Restorers, thanks to financial assistance from Heritage Lottery Fund Northern Ireland.

The booklet, which accompanies the exhibition, was written by historian Richard Doherty and illustrated by Tim Webster. Speaking at the launch, Mr Doherty said Cecil Frances Alexander had managed to do what very few Victorian women had done: she put a man completely in the shade. "That man," Mr Doherty said, "was her husband who, with any other wife, would have been much, much better known because of his own gifts. This was a man who was offered Chair of Poetry at Oxford; a man whose reputation as a preacher was worldwide; and yet more people know about his wife than know about Archbishop Alexander, who rose to be the Archbishop of Armagh and the Primate of All Ireland. So, Cecil Frances Alexander is someone we can be very proud of in this city."

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importance of faith and works to the Alexanders. He said the couple lived out the Christian faith in practical ways among the most needy, irrespective of class or creed, in the parishes and communities in which they lived and ministered.

The Dean acknowledged the generosity of Heritage Lottery Fund NI in helping to restore the Kennedy paintings, the generous financial assistance provided by Derry and Strabane District Council – without whom the exhibition would not have been possible – and the support of the Walker Club of the Apprentice Boys of Derry, who paid for the restoration of a portrait of Rev George Walker – joint-Governor of Londonderry during the siege in 1689 – which is also on display in the Chapter House. Dean Stewart also complimented Mr Mullin and Mr Millar on their expertise.

Paul Mullan, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Northern Ireland, said HLF was delighted to be associated with the restoration of the Kennedy paintings. “One of the pleasures of the job that I have – apart from being able to give money out to various groups – is seeing the results of the money, such as bringing these paintings back to life,” Mr Mullan said. “For us it was quite a modest grant. Our funding has been able to invest significant sums – up to £17m for example in HMS Caroline in Belfast, £5m into Hillsborough Castle, £3m into the Giant’s Causeway, really large significant projects – but I find that some of the projects that have given me the greatest pleasure are the small ones, the ones that seem to capture people’s imagination in really quite unique ways.

“Finding out a little about Mrs Alexander and her hymn-writing skills, that her songs and hymns – which have gone

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right around the world – originated in this place, that is the type of uncovering of heritage that is incredibly important. A cathedral like this can tell us so many different stories about so many different people and this is just one of those stories. That is why buildings like this and institutions like the many churches that we have can open up so much about communities in a way that other institutions aren't necessarily able to do."

Dean Stewart said the commemorative exhibition was the brainchild of Rector's Churchwarden, Ian Bartlett, who is one of the guides at the Cathedral. As well as the paintings which are on display in the Chapter House, there are books which belonged to the Alexanders, many items of correspondence, and other artefacts.

The exhibition will run at St Columb's Cathedral until the middle of October.

New Bishop of Meath Tom Deenihan leads 71st diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes

The newly-ordained Bishop of Meath, Bishop Tom Deenihan, along with Bishop Michael Smith, Bishop Emeritus of Meath, and 550 pilgrims from the diocese, have travelled to Lourdes this week (12 – 17 September) to pray for the sick and assist pilgrims with disabilities and illnesses.

This year's pilgrimage marks the 71st pilgrimage to this popular Marian Shrine in the south of France.

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The Diocese of Meath undertook its first such pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1948.

Over the 70 years many people with disabilities and people suffering with illnesses have been able to travel to Lourdes with the assistance and support of volunteers.

An additional benefit of the pilgrimage is that it brings together people from all over the diocese providing an experience of grace, joy and healing for so many of the faithful.

Speaking from Lourdes, Bishop Deenihan said: “Our pilgrimage is only possible because of the generosity of so many people. It is a time of blessing and grace for our entire diocese. Please keep the pilgrims in your prayers as they carry with them the intentions of so many people and lay them in the hands of Our Lord through the intercession of Mary. The grotto in Lourdes, the water, the baths, the processions, the Eucharist, the candles, the music, the gathering of people from all over the world, are all part of this special place where pilgrims experience the healing presence of God and where hearts are uplifted.

“This year also marks a special anniversary in Lourdes. It is 160 years since Our Lady appeared to Saint Bernadette at this holy place. Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us”.

Bishop Deenihan was consecrated Bishop of Meath on 2 September last in the Cathedral of Christ the King, Mullingar.

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Search journal on-line

The Church of Ireland journal, *Search*, has launched its online digitised archive.

The archive comprises every issue of the journal from its launch in 1978 and is available for consultation on a free of charge basis to the general public. It is fully searchable by subject, author, date, word usage or other variables and constitutes an unrivalled source of data on thinking within the Church of Ireland and beyond on a wide variety of theological, ethical, liturgical and social matters over the past forty years.

This project has been realised by Informa, the information management experts, who are also responsible for producing the digitised archive of the *Church of Ireland Gazette* on behalf of the Representative Church Body Library, and has been carefully managed by Michael Denton, the Honorary Treasurer of *Search*. The cost of this venture has been generously supported by the Association for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge which publishes *Search*, and the General Synod Royalties Fund. Access to the archive is through the archive page on the *Search* website: www.searchjournal.ireland.anglican.org
In due course it is hoped to add to this resource with digitized copies of the predecessors of *Search*, *New Divinity* and *Resource*.

Baby Basics Belfast helps 160 families

Baby Basics Belfast has been providing help and assistance to vulnerable families in the Belfast area for more than 18 months.

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In that time it has supported more than 160 families, providing packs filled with baby clothes, baby bedding, toys, nappies, wipes, and toiletries for baby, mum and dad.

The project, run by Connor's Centre of Mission in Shankill Road, Connect Base, is now supported by a volunteer, Mrs Heather Gibson, and 11 parishes have donated items for the project.

Download a full update on Baby Basics Belfast by Connor Children's Project Development Officer Jill Hamilton [HERE](#).

WW2 veteran and Salvation Army member, 94, skydives for charity

World War Two veteran completes skydive 74 years after parachuting into Normandy on D-Day.

94 year old Harry Read completed his first high level skydive since he parachuted into Normandy on 6th June 1944, D-Day, on Friday. He jumped from 10,000 feet to raise money for The Salvation Army's Anti Trafficking and Modern Slavery work.

He describes on his giving page how his faith motivated him: "You might well be asking where God comes in on this and I take the question seriously. This started out as a very modest desire for a low-level parachute jump which has, seemingly, been elevated to a high-profile event with the Red Devils team. However, every aspect of this proposal has been bathed in prayer and, whilst I was a little nervous I have always enjoyed the thrill of parachuting.

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Harry Read mid-leap

"It was amazing to experience the freefall and then cruising down was simply beautiful. I feel so lucky to have been able to experience this at my age. Before I could take part in the jump my doctor assured me my heart is as healthy as a middle aged man".

He had seen veterans taking part in skydives previously and after visiting the Normandy battlefields on an anniversary tour earlier this year he was inspired to look into one for himself. Ahead of a possible skydive in June 2019 at the 75-year anniversary of D-Day, Harry decided to try a dive closer to home in Salisbury.

As a life-long member of The Salvation Army, he served as the leader of The Salvation Army in both the UK and East Australia, and as Chief Secretary at The Salvation Army in Canada.

Now a Great-Grandfather, he said: "At whatever age we are, we are more than capable of shrinking from something that we feel is beyond us. But, I believe we should not

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withdraw from a challenge – yesterday is not our best, our best is tomorrow. I look forward to the chance to jump again next year in Normandy.”

He has already raised over £3,500; the money raised from his skydive will go to support the work of The Salvation Army’s Anti Trafficking and Modern Slavery Unit, in particular the international projects partnering with 11 countries to prevent trafficking and slavery at the source. Harry took part in the jump along with members of his family; his grand-daughters Lianne and Joanna and his great-grandson Josh. You can support Harry's skydive via his JustGiving page [here](#).

News briefs

+++Limerick clergy conference - On Saturday the Diocese of Limerick and Killaloe held a Ministry Conference for clergy and diocesan readers in Woodlands House Hotel, Adare. ‘Ministry Among Young Adults’ was facilitated by the Revd Rob Jones and Greg Fromholz from the Diocese of Dublin and Glendalough.

+++Cashel confirmations celebration - At the Bishop’s House, Kilkenny, the Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory on Saturday hosted a celebration for all those whom he has confirmed since he arrived in the diocese twelve years ago.

+++Cork Come and Sing Choral Evensong - was held on Saturday In St Fin Barre’s cathedral, Cork, hosted by the Diocesan Music Scheme.

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+++250th Anniversary Service in Cappagh - Yesterday (Sunday) the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe preached at the 250th Anniversary Service in Cappagh parish church, Co. Tyrone, and on Wednesday evening he will preside at the Mothers' Union Diocesan Festival Service in St Eunan's cathedral, Raphoe.

+++Archbishop addresses Elizabeth Bowen

Commemoration - The annual Elizabeth Bowen Commemoration was held yesterday (Sunday) at Farahy, Co. Cork. The service was conducted by the Very Revd Dr Robert MacCarthy and the lessons were read by Dr Martin Mansergh and the parish priest, Fr Kelliher. The address was given by the Archbishop of Armagh, Dr Richard Clarke.

+++Christ Church cathedral, Dublin, installations - at Evensong yesterday the Revd Gary Hastings, Rector of Holy Trinity, Killiney, was installed as Canon Treasurer and the Revd Leonard Ruddock, Rector of the Blessington group of parishes, was installed as twelfth canon.

+++Little Island community service - Today, Monday, the Bishop of Cork, Cloyne & Ross will preach in St Lappan's church, Little Island, at a service for the industrial, commercial and business community organized by the Little Island Business Association. This is the first ever Ecumenical Service for the opening of the business year in Little Island. The Rector of St Lappan's In Little Island is Rev Paul Arbuthnot. Members of the local business community and residents are invited to the service.

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**+++Children's
Ministry
Harvest
Newsletter -**

The Church of Ireland Children's Ministry Harvest Newsletter is now available and may be downloaded from the Church of Ireland website. This new resource aims to help parishes plan for a Harvest thanksgiving. 'Seeds of

Faith', 'Seeds of the Kingdom', and 'Seeds of Blessing' are among the ideas for use in all-age services, Sunday Clubs and other Children's Ministry settings. It takes the theme of seeds and includes lessons from a mustard seed, activities, art and music and crafts.

+++English language class at Belfast church - An English class for ladies for whom English is not their first

ECUMENICAL SERVICE
TO MARK THE OPENING
OF THE BUSINESS YEAR
IN LITTLE ISLAND



Rev. Paul Arbuthnot, Rector of St. Lappan's in Little Island and Little Island Business Association invite everyone in Little Island (businesses and residents) to join them on Monday September 17th at 10am for a short Ecumenical Service to mark the opening of the business year in Little Island

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language has resumed for the autumn term in All Saints', University Street, Belfast, on September 12.

The class is run by All Saints' parishioner Johanne Martin, with support from others in the parish. There is a crèche so ladies are welcome to bring young children along. The class runs from 9.45am until 11.15pm. All women welcome.

