



Massive publicity boost in North America for C of I online parish registers programme



Minister Madigan (third left) meets with RCB Library staff and Dr Michael O'Neill, architectural historian.

The recent announcement of the funding and further development of the C of I's Representative Church Body

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Library was given a massive publicity boost in North America by coverage on the IrishCentral web site.

The IrishCentral report followed the announcement on September 10, by the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Josepha Madigan TD, that over €100,000 has been granted toward the digitization of Church of Ireland parish registers, held in the Representative Church Body Library, as part of the Department's digitization scheme. The well-illustrated report was on the IrishCentral website which receives 3.5 million unique visitors per month.

IrishCentral states it is “the leading Irish digital media company in North America, providing political, current affairs, entertainment, and historical commentary to the Irish throughout the world.”

The business caters to 34 million Irish Americans and 70 million Irish diaspora and their web site receives 3.5 million unique visitors per month. It has a large and quickly growing social media following, including 500k Facebook followers, 33k Twitter followers, and 13k followers on Instagram. The website also enjoys a newsletter subscriber base of 250k.

IrishCentral was launched in 2009 by Niall O'Dowd and has a proud history of social and community engagement. Mr. O'Dowd has been an advocate for the global Irish community for over 30 years.

Headquartered in New York City with an ancillary office in Dublin and contributing writers from around the United States and Ireland, IrishCentral is at the centre of major

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news announcements affecting the Irish community. Its sister companies include [Irish Echo](#), [Aisling Events](#), and the [Irish Voice](#).

IrishCentral coverage of the is at -

<https://www.irishcentral.com/roots/genealogy/church-of-ireland-parish-registers-online>

Dublin Magdalene Laundry closed in 1996 could be a museum to women and children who suffered

Dr Gillian O'Brien, Reader in Modern Irish History at Liverpool's John Moore's University, said that women have been second class citizens for "a very long time in Ireland" and their stories and experiences in the laundries need to be heard.

Her comments come against the background of Japanese Hotel chain Toyoko Inn having offered Dublin City Council €14.5 million for the former Magdalene Laundry site on Sean McDermott Street, which closed in October 1996.

The chain plans to build a hotel with 350 rooms, 55 one-bedroom apartments for social housing, a supermarket and other retail outlets, and a cultural centre, as well as a laundry memorial.

Dr O'Brien, who has worked as historical adviser on projects at Nano Nagle Place in Cork City, Spike Island in Co Cork and Kilmainham Gaol and courthouse in Dublin, said she believes building a hotel on the site wouldn't be



appropriate, and that creating a museum to commemorate the sombre history of the laundries “would be better than a memorial” .

“Memorials often reflect the time in which they were erected rather than what they memorialise,” she told The Irish Catholic, adding that those who were in the laundries and mother-and-baby homes “deserve to be better treated by both State and Church”.

Although aware that not everyone had “bad experiences” in the laundries and that telling the complex range of stories connected with the laundries would be a challenge, she said that what happened there is “a damning indictment not just of Church and State but of society as a whole”.

“Women have been second class citizens for a very long time in Ireland and there is still much to be done. Telling the many stories of the laundries and the homes is vital. I think it’s important that those stories are told in a symbolically important location,” she said.

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A petition calling on Dublin City Council not to sell the site gathered over 10,000 signatures last week, and a vote on the motion was postponed last week but is due to be put before the council on Thursday this week.

Read More: [“Nuns took my childhood”: This Irish woman escaped from a Magdalene Laundry as a teen in 1993](#)

Read More: [Two hundred Magdalene Laundry survivors gather in Dublin to tell their stories](#)

New sports hall at Midleton College Fitting tribute to Professor Trevor West

A new sports hall at Midleton College dedicated to the memory of Professor Trevor West, has been officially opened by the Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, Dr Patrick Prendergast.

The Rt Revd Dr Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, who is chair of the Board of Governors in his address said, “Dr Prendergast, you are not the first Provost to visit Midleton College to perform an official opening. Your predecessor, Provost Leland Lyons, visited on 14th November 1974 to open a new room as a memorial to Timothy West, father of Professor Trevor West. It cost £13,000, of which £12,000 was donated directly by individuals.”

Bishop Coton continued, “Professor Trevor West was a church-going man with a strong Christian faith, and therefore, as we mark and remember his legacy today I am mindful of the words of Saint John’s Gospel – ‘Others have

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At the official opening of the Trevor West Sports Hall at Midleton College were (left to right) the Bishop of Cork, Dr Paul Colton, the Revd Cecily West, John West, Mrs Maura Lee West, Ian Mulvihill, Lord Donoughue, Dr Edward Gash (Principal).

laboured, and you have entered into their labour.’ (John 4.38)

“On behalf of our three boards, therefore – the Governors (who are the trustees of the school and its patron), the Board of Directors, and the Board of Management – I welcome you here today. I feel like the parent who sat beside me at a wedding reception once. His son had had an inordinately long courtship of nearly 12 years before marrying his new bride that day; the father of the groom turned me to and said ‘We thought today would never come.’

“But here we are today in phase one of this magnificent new Trevor West Sports Hall at Midleton College. Everything has been beautifully prepared for today

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including the siteworks undertaken over the summer, campus improvements of recent years, and it is all truly splendid. It's a credit to you Dr Gash and to all your team – management and staff – here at the College to whom our thanks are especially due.

“Along with many other improvements to this campus, this is the second entirely new building project here at the College to be opened in the last six years – a new academic building in 2012, and now this sports hall today. This all stems from the major strategic plan – an overall campus development plan – drawn up by the Boards in 2007, a process initiated when Professor Trevor West was chairman, and adopted by the Board of Governors when Ken Brookes was chairman, and when Simon Thompson was Principal. It is important also to acknowledge their leadership in all this today.”

The bishop confessed, “I have to say that I feel a bit of a fraud being the one pushed forward to speak on behalf of the boards today, because it was only when I stepped down from the boards two years ago that this project actually began to take off and get going. Perhaps that absence of two years from involvement gives me the independence, however, that permits me to ask you to acknowledge here today the work of my successor chairpersons, Noel Ryall, first and more recently Ken McIlreavy, of all the Board members, of Dr Gash, as Principal, and everyone on his management and administrative team, and everyone in the school community – parents, staff and students – who have rowed in behind this project and brought it about. I am sure that Dr Gash and others will be setting out all these thanks in detail.

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“That said, I have been around Midleton College for long enough now to describe the beginnings of all this, as I have just done. Moreover, I didn’t entirely escape the project, for fund-raising was never far away in our house as in many others. In a memo to us all in January 2014, Simon Thompson recorded that the first meeting of the fund-raising sub-committee commenced its work on 4th February 2011. They had started with nothing, and with donations, pledges and specific events and activities had by the time of that memo (January 2014) raised €404,054. That work has continued, and combined with sound in-house management of finances, we are here thankfully today. “

Turning to the contribution of Professor West, Bishop Colton said, Professor West had many strands to his immense personality – mathematics, politics, Midleton, Midleton College, Trinity College Dublin, sport, the Church of Ireland, and, of course, Maura Lee, and his family circle. Many of us are thrilled that our endeavours here overlapped with Trevor’s leadership. I recall his humour, his wit, his commitment, his intellect, and his succinctness. In the short history he wrote about Midleton College the chapters have very succinct headings which, nonetheless say all that needs to be said. For example, for the period 1882 to 1928, covering the College in late 19th century – Ireland with further famine, land league, gaelic revival, home rule debates, coming to terms with disestablishment in the Church of Ireland, the Titanic, the Ulster Covenant, 1916, the First World War, women’s suffrage, the Spanish flu, the War of Independence and the Civil war – all just, ‘for starters’, Trevor gave this chapter the two-word heading ‘Political readjustment’: ‘Readjustment’ indeed!

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“The West family have been intrinsic to 82 years of the 322 years since Midleton College received its charter. If my mathematics are right that’s just over one quarter of the school’s history. This project embodies so many of those strands in Professor West’s life and interests, as does your presence here today, Dr Prendergast, and, in particular, Trevor’s huge commitment to and personal interest in students, especially those from Midleton College when they went up to Trinity, as well as in the sporting life of this College, and that of Trinity.

“The last occasion on which I was out and about with Trevor was on 14th March 2012 at the side of the Presentation Brothers rugby pitch at Dennehy’s Cross, watching Midleton College playing Bandon Grammar School in a final. Trevor died later that year. Just three days before he died he sat on the College steps chatting with Simon Thompson. Even in his latter days, in retirement and in illness, his interest and fidelity to the students of this school never waned.

“This new sports hall further adorns Midleton College. Huge credit is due to all of you who have brought about this adornment. Rightly, it is named after one who, in his time, adorned this place and left his mark: Professor Trevor West.”

Peterborough Cathedral visits rocket following spaceship landing

Almost 60,000 people have visited Peterborough Cathedral in the last month thanks to a display showcasing the spaceship which brought British astronaut Tim Peake back down to earth.

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The Soyuz capsule was installed at the church at the beginning of August with an appearance from Peake himself to launch the free exhibition.

Year on year figures show a 600 per cent increase in the number of visitors.

Along with the spaceship, the parachute which brought it back along with



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Peake's space suit are also on display. Visitors also have access to a virtual reality experience on life on the Soyuz.

With the display staying until November, thousands more are expected to visit in the coming weeks.

Speaking to Peterboroughtoday.co.uk, Vice Dean Canon Tim Alban Jones, said: "We have been delighted by the phenomenal visitor response to Tim Peake's Spacecraft exhibition.

"Most visitors are seeing the capsule and the cathedral for the first time, and it's wonderful to see their reaction to both."

TRIBUTE - Rev Thomas Jennings, a life lived to the full

A small, well-polished brass cross mounted on a plinth stands out against the bright, stained glass windows behind the altar of the small [Church of Ireland](#) parish church in Newcastle, Co Wicklow.

Some 66 eight years ago, it was in Korea and likely sitting on the bonnet of a jeep, a makeshift altar for the Rev [Thomas Robert](#) (Bob) Jennings to minister the spiritual needs of the men of the Welch Regiment of the [British Army](#), then taking part in the United Nations-mandated war on the peninsula.

The cross was made for Rev Jennings by Korean craftsmen who fashioned it from brass shell casings.

While serving a chaplain to the Welch, Rev Jennings "experienced the harshest and darkest of times which

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stayed with him for life”, his funeral service heard on Saturday.



The Rev Bob Jennings and (right) a photograph from his years as an army chaplain.

In later life, Rev Jennings served for 22 years as rector of Newcastle, which includes the parishes of [Newtownmounkennedy](#) and Calary. He died on September 3rd, two days after his 94th birthday and for his funeral on Saturday, over 200 people filled Newcastle church, with several dozen more filling the doorway.

They heard tell of a life lived to the full - 17 years in the army, 70 years as an ordained Anglican minister, a man with a deep commitment to ecumenism, to his family, to his community in Wicklow, to local history and to the natural world.

Predeceased by his wife Jean, the chief mourners were his children Kerry, Rosaleen, Clodagh, Katie and Robert;

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siblings Stanley and Shelia; and nine grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Other mourners included the Korean ambassador to [Ireland](#), Woon-Ki [Lyeo](#), with his wife, Yeonhee Lyeo, and Lt Col [Ken Martin](#), president of the Royal British Legion in Ireland.

A colour party was provided by members of Post 21 (Bray) of the [Irish United Nations Veterans Association](#); and a bugler, [Leo Brychta](#), sounded Last Post and Reveille as Rev Jennings' coffin was lowered into the graveyard adjoining Newcastle church.

In a tribute, his daughters told the congregation it was impossible to condense their father's long life into just a few words.

[Bob Jennings](#) was born in [Leitrim](#) in 1924 but grew up in Kildallon, Co Cavan, where his father John, also a clergyman, had a parish.

Bob followed him and, after studying in Trinity College, Dublin, he was ordained in 1948. He served as a curate in [Omagh](#) where he joined the British army – the move that brought him to Korea, [Hong Kong](#), [Germany](#), various parts of the UK and to British Guiana (from where he returned with “bunches of wild bananas and a stuffed alligator” which was “instantly banned from the house”, according to his children).

Among the regiments to which he was attached as a chaplain was the Parachute Regiment with which he jumped more than 40 times. In [Aldershot](#), he met Jean, his wife of 47 years.

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The demands of family life and five children saw him leave the army and he was appointed Church of Ireland rector of the Killeshandra group of parishes in Co Cavan before, in 1970, being appointed to Newcastle.

There, he was instrumental in helping found St Catherine's Association which helps provide special needs education and related services in Wicklow, and also in the establishment of St Francis' parish school in Newcastle.

At the time of the death, he was still working for better housing and hospice care for the elderly.

He was involved in numerous community and self-help associations in north Wicklow.

He was fascinated by local history and archaeology and wrote several books. His keenness for the preservation of local buildings, artefacts and historical features saw him made Heritage Person of the Year in 2016 by Wicklow County Council.

A keen walker and naturalist, the Prayer of St Francis was said at his funeral at his request. His devotion to nature took unusual twists.

“When we finally persuaded him to stop driving,” his daughter Clodagh recalled, “his car was pretty much worthless and rather than let it go to waste, he used it for storing bird seed and logs for the fire.”

At Rev Jennings' request, his [Roman Catholic](#) colleague, Father [Derek Doyle](#), took part in his funeral service, reading John 14: 1-6 (*Do not let your hearts be troubled*).

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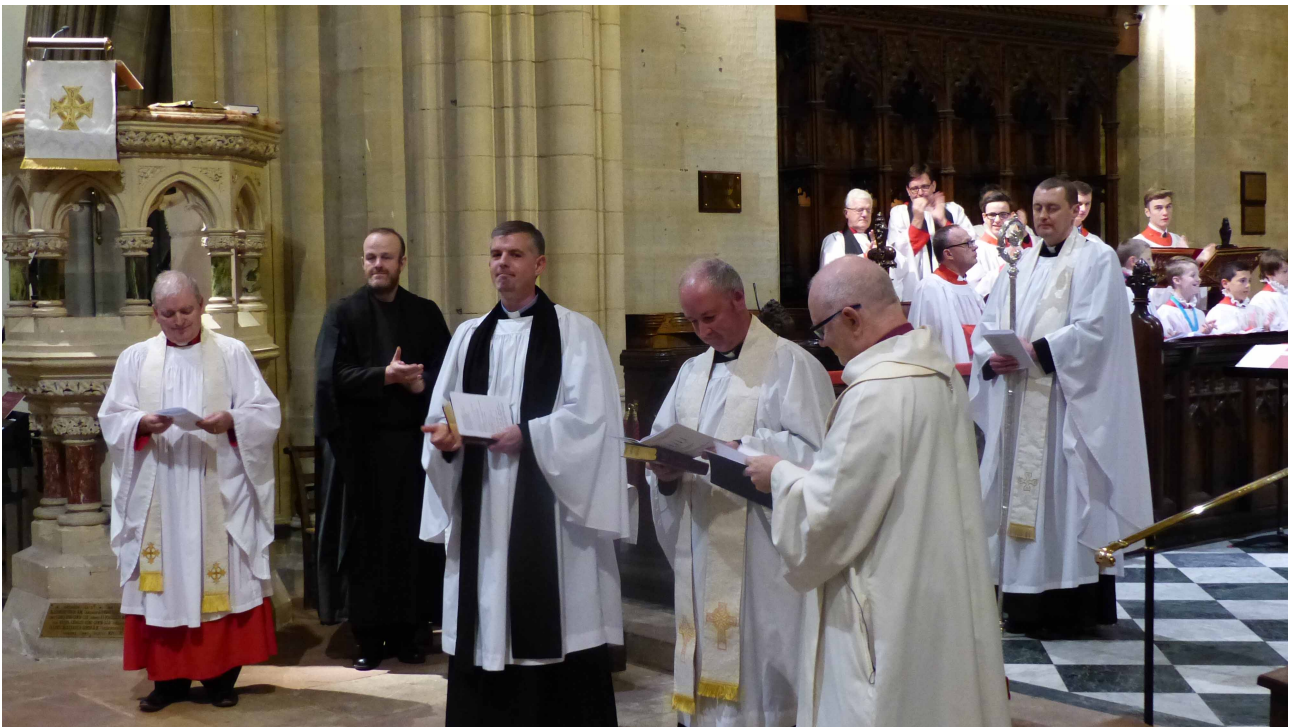
Hymns included *Be Thou My Vision*, *Then Sings My Soul*, and *Be Not Afraid*.

Recalling his predecessor and friend, the current rector of Newcastle, Rev [William Bennett](#), said that at heart, “Bob was a community man” who had “died in faith and while we are sad, the deeper response is \[TO] rejoice”.

In 2000, Rev Jennings gave his Korean cross to the church where it remains, mounted in front of the east window.

Courtesy The Irish Times and Peter Murtagh

News briefs



+++Armagh ordinations - The **Revd Graham Hare** and the **Revd Geoffrey Walmsley** were ordained Priests in St Patrick’s Cathedral, Armagh, on Friday 14th September 2018. Graham will serve as Curate in Drumglass Parish, Dungannon, and Geoffrey in the Dundalk Group of Parishes.

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+++Armagh institution - The **Revd Diane Matchett** was instituted Rector of the Parishes of Kildress and Altedesert on Tuesday, 11th September 2018, by Archbishop Richard Clarke. Pictured above (left to right) are **Archdeacon Terry Scott, Archdeacon Andrew Forster, the Revd Adam Quigley (Preacher), Revd Alan Cross, Archbishop Richard Clarke, Canon Shane Forster, the Revd Diane Matchett and Canon Barry Paine (Rural Dean).**

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