

CNI CHURCH NEWS IRELAND



Front - Image of the day - Rathlin Fishing boat Celtic Mor powering through Rathlin Sound

Reports

Michael D and Jeffrey should both know better than to cause Mass hysteria

The President is usually at the front of the queue for a bit of reconciliation, Roisin Gorman writes in the Sunday World

I haven't seen this much of a row over not going to Mass since I was caught smoking out the back of the chapel.

Irish president Michael D Higgins has had a bit of a hissy fit over a church service which has now been blown up into a constitutional crisis by Sir Jeffrey.

The DUP leader claims Higgins' decision not to attend the gig to mark Northern Ireland's centenary and partition is 'back to the old days'.

It's like being lectured on Covid funeral etiquette by Michelle O'Neill.

I nearly coughed up a lung when he told a radio interview of his sorrow that we had to talk about this subject when there are more important things going on.

Would those important things include threats to collapse Stormont?

Jeffrey is deeply disappointed that the Irish President's decision is a blow to 'hope and reconciliation'.

That's the same Daniel O'Donnell sound-alike who was urged to dial down the rhetoric over potential Protocol-related trouble on the streets a few days ago.

And he's adamant that his party's threatened non-attendance at any future meetings of north-south bodies is a completely different kettle of British sausages.

Meanwhile, the Queen just wants to know does she need to pick a dress or not.

Michael D is usually at the front of the queue for a bit of reconciliation but feels that a church service to mark the partition of his country is a handshake too far.

When you're having a divorce party do you expect your ex to turn up with flowers and champagne?

One minute he was asked to a church service and the next minute it's a religious hooley for partition. That's political with an enormous P.

I don't think he's denying the existence of Northern Ireland as a state, or more importantly our superior Tayto crisps, but he just doesn't want to shout about it.

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And there hasn't exactly been a queue of unionist politicians going the other way to mark Ireland's beginnings as a new country, in the spirit of hope and reconciliation.

The President really seems to have got his pants in a wedgie about how he was addressed on the invitation to the Armagh service. He's not the President of the Republic of Ireland, he's the President of Ireland. That's what happens when you ask Wikipedia.

But he does have an absolutely genuine excuse for not turning up.

He's double booked that day with the Statistical and Social Inquiry Association of Ireland at his official residence, and those lads know how to party.

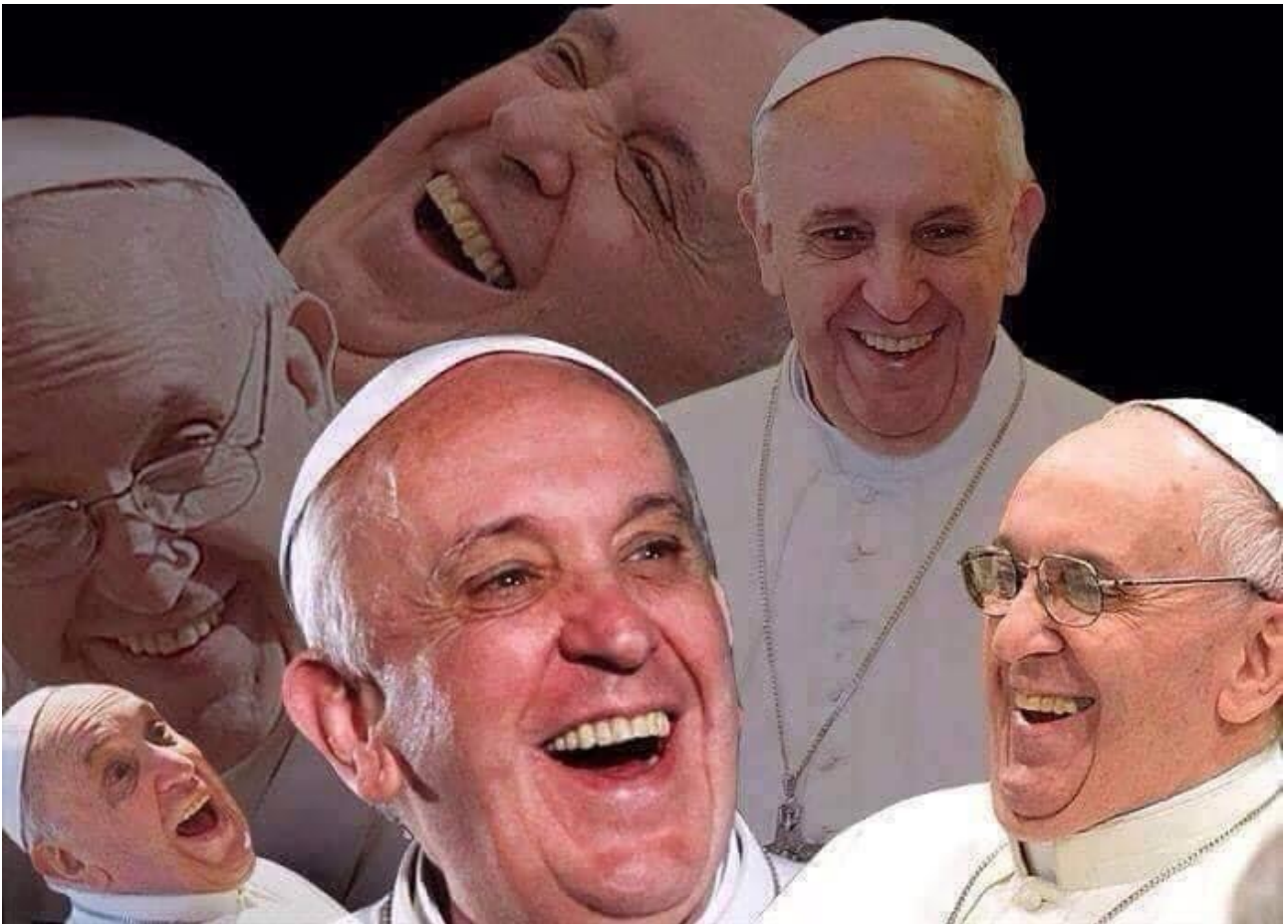
Courtesy Sunday World September 19, 2021

Vatican gates ajar for women to join Pope's mini-army

Resplendent in their striped knickerbockers and clutching murderous-looking halberds, they have faithfully defended popes for more than 500 years.

But the Swiss Guard, the world's smallest army with just 140 soldiers, is considering the previously unthinkable – opening up to female soldiers.

A bastion of conservatism even by the standards of the Vatican, the Swiss Guard has been a celebrated institution



ever since its foundation in 1506. Recruits to the ancient corps must be single, practising Catholics of Swiss nationality, aged between 19 and 30.

They must serve for a minimum of two years, protecting the Pope and standing ramrod straight in sentry boxes outside St Peter's Basilica.

Now comes a potential revolution – the tiny corps has announced that it is having a new barracks built within the walls of the Vatican and that it will be able to accommodate female soldiers.

Currently, the existing barracks are so cramped that some members of the miniature army have to live outside the

sovereign city state. Within the barracks, two or even three guardsmen have to share a room.

The new barracks, which will cost 50 million Swiss francs (£39 million), will allow the entire corps to live inside the Vatican and will feature individual rooms with bathrooms.

“It means that in future, if the decision is taken, we would be able to accommodate women as well,” Lt Urs Breitenmoser, a spokesman for the Swiss Guard, said. “That decision has not been taken yet and it lies with our superiors and ultimately Pope Francis. Regulations would have to be changed.”

A future move to recruit women soldiers would chime with the Pope’s insistence that women play a greater role in the life of the Catholic Church, Lt Breitenmoser said.

Adapting the guardsmen’s helmets and breastplates to female soldiers should not be too challenging – these days they are made not of beaten metal but plastic, produced by 3D printers. The plastic helmets and armour are much lighter than their old metal counterparts, which were particularly onerous to wear during Rome’s hot summers.

“It was important to us that the new building provide space for women,” Jean-Pierre Roth, from the Swiss Guard Foundation which supports the corps financially, told the Swiss newspaper Tages-Anzeiger.

Ruth Metzler-Arnold, the president of the foundation, said: “I very much welcome the discussion on the question of

allowing women to join the Guard. As soon as female guards are allowed, recruitment potential will increase.”

The force needs around 30 to 35 recruits each year.

The aim is to inaugurate the barracks on March 6 2027 – the 500th anniversary of the Sack of Rome in 1527 when 147 Swiss Guards laid down their lives in defence of Pope Clement VII.

Since then, the Swiss Guards, inheritors to the Swiss tradition of providing mercenaries to the rulers of Europe, have served more than 40 different popes.

Archbishop Welby endures trashing from family over muddling his waste bins

Given the bewildering array of different-coloured bins for our rubbish, it's not surprising that even the most environmentally conscious households sometimes get it wrong.

And it seems that even divine guidance is not enough to prevent the Archbishop of Canterbury from making the occasional faux pas.

So much so that he has admitted his family have taken to “ticking him off” for getting his waste food mixed up with his general waste, rather than putting it in the compost bin when throwing out the rubbish. The Most Revd Justin Welby revealed yesterday: “I do get ticked off by my family for automatically putting food in the bin, rather than recycling it.

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It's just a small thing, but every day gets better."

The archbishop ought to thank his wife Caroline and their two children Ellie, 24, and Katharine, 32 for the occasional reminder.



Local authorities have the power to levy fines on households who fail to sort out their recycling properly – though his own, Lambeth council, limits itself to writing to residents with advice.

It is unlikely this was a problem faced by many of his 104 predecessors, but Archbishop Welby doesn't begrudge the interventions by his family or the council. He says he is committed to reducing his own environmental footprint as part of the Church of England's wider commitment to saving the planet.

Already he has ditched his diesel car and he and his family are trying to eat less meat.

But the archbishop emphasised that individual action on its own would not be enough to tackle climate change and environmental degradation, saying companies and governments together had to lead by example.



LIVING IN LOVE & FAITH

‘Talk about topics on which there is silence’ – Living in Love and Faith as relevant in rural parishes

A Devon vicar says the questions around human sexuality, gender and relationships covered by the Church of England’s Living in Love and Faith course are as relevant in her rural parishes as anywhere else.

Mother Elizabeth Burke is the Rector of Holsworthy Benefice in North Devon, which includes the small market town of Holsworthy and four villages.

She said, “Rural might be stereotyped as backward or more traditional but the reality is, that this is a subject area that is affecting people locally and people want to engage with.

“The ratios of LGBTQI+ people growing-up are the same in a rural area as in a city. It’s just that the populations are smaller and dispersed.

“I think it is harder for those of the LGBTQI+ community in rural areas, because there is a lack of support or places to meet.”

Lizzy Flaherty, a student church member who did the course, said: “As a young person growing up in a rural church as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, taking part in LLF was an incredibly valuable opportunity – although difficult at times.

“It was great to talk about these topics on which there is often silence, speak about my experiences of both inclusion and discrimination, and be listened to, listen to others, and most importantly listen to the Holy Spirit.”

Elizabeth said she found running the course “very positive.”

She added, “There was lots of healthy open discussion. Even the shyest of people joined in and contributed.

“People were very respectful and listened to each other.

“There was a sense of a relief that we were talking about these issues and they found the materials really helpful.”

Elizabeth feels it is important for as many churches as possible to engage with the LLF process.

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“The body of Christ has this opportunity to listen and learn from one another.

“For those churches either nervous or against the process ask yourselves why?

“If we don’t engage, if we don’t seek to listen, learn and understand, then we can’t expect our position to be taken into account when decisions are made going forward.”

News briefs

Ballintoy Parish Church Restoration Project

Pop into the Church Hall in Ballintoy this Saturday 25th September between 11am & 4pm to see our plans for the Ballintoy Parish Church Restoration Project.

All are welcome.



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“We aim to save the iconic Ballintoy Parish Church, its fabric, legacy & artefacts. “Saving this unique building and its’ contents we are providing a sustained future for visitors & those for whom it is their spiritual home, providing a visitor attraction, worship centre and a heart for the community.”

Down & Dromore Agape Prayer Gathering tonight

It’s not too late to book for the first of the in–person diocesan prayer events for autumn 2021.

Please join the gathering on St Matthew’s Day for some simple food, structured prayer and a celebration of Holy Communion in Down Cathedral, a site of Christian worship for over 1600 years. When: Tuesday 21 September from 7.30–9.30 pm

Book via Eventbrite at this link

[[] <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/agape-prayer-gathering-in-down-cathedral-tickets-168402192491>]

Bishop David says: “To gather from around the diocese for times of special prayer is our incredible privilege as we emerge out of lockdown and the restrictions on our meeting together. As well as uniting in prayer these gatherings will encourage all of us to make prayer times a priority in our local parish settings.”

RTE Radio report - Church leaders only aware of President’s concerns over NI service last week

Archbishop Eamon Martin, Catholic Primate of All Ireland and Archbishop John McDowell, the Church of Ireland's

churchnewsireland@gmail.org



Prime of All Ireland discuss the invitation they sent to President Michael D Higgins to attend a church service marking the foundation of Northern Ireland. Also, Eamon Phoenix, political historian, discusses the story. 16 minute clip broadcast on September 19

[[] <https://www.rte.ie/radio/radio1/clips/22006992/>]

New leader of Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade

John Williams, a Connor Diocesan Lay Reader, who has been appointed Ulster Regimental Commander for the Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade (CLCGB).

A parishioner in Magheragall, John is a retired nurse and former Divisional Superintendent of St John Ambulance. He first joined the Church Lads' Brigade in St Colman's, Dunmurry, in 1959, at the age of six. He succeeds Melvyn Lockhart, who has retired as Ulster Regimental Commander after eight years.



John Williams

John's second in command will be another Connor parishioner, Johnny Conn from Carnmoney Parish.

John reflects on his work and his involvement with CLCGB in the autumn issue of Connor Connections, which will be available in parishes in October.

Organ Scholarship Award Service in Belfast

The Down and Dromore and Connor Organ Scholarship Board Award Service took place on Sunday 19 September in Belfast Cathedral.

The preacher was the Bishop of Connor. At the service, Canon John Auchmuty the chairman of the scholarship

programme presented certificates to those who have completed their third year. Congratulations go to:

Callum Whiteside (St Mark's, Ballysillan)
Rebekah Wilson, BMus (Knockbreda Parish)
Jack McCabe (Killinchy and Kilmood)
Glenn English (Magherally Parish, Banbridge)
Victoria Irwin (St John's Parish, Whitehouse)

Quote of the day

Even though Armagh church event was billed as “hope” event, the media and nationalist politicians billed it as “partition” event. This is misnomer. Partition happened because two traditions in Ireland could not be brought together. Partition is no more NI's fault than fault of ROI. - Brian John Spencer

100th anniversary of Legion Of Mary celebrated in Armagh

A service was held in Armagh Cathedral “to celebrate 100th anniversary of Legion Of Mary in Armagh, founded by the great Frank Duff on 7th September 1921” Archbishop Eamon Martin tweeted.

Faith leaders demand climate action

Faith leaders have joined together to demand climate action ahead of the COP26 meeting in Glasgow.

Among them is Bishop Graham Usher of Norwich, and lead Bishop on the Environment for the Church of England.

Find out more at -

[<http://cofe.io/FaithLeadersCOP26>.]

Perspective - We must not gamble with vulnerable people's lives' - Brendan McCarthy

Revd Dr Brendan McCarthy, the Church of England's National Adviser on Medical Ethics, Health and Social Care Policy, sets out the Church of England's response to calls for 'doctor assisted dying'

The representatives of 'a new religious alliance in support of doctor assisted dying' have stated that they wish to counter 'the impression being conveyed that all faith groups are implacably opposed to changes in the law to help people longing to die on their own terms, without discomfort, indignity, or extreme pain.'

The Church of England does not oppose enabling people to die well; that is a goal shared with every palliative care professional, hospice worker and healthcare chaplain. Its opposition is to a change in the current law on assisted suicide.

This distinction is not a matter of semantics; it is a legal imperative.

The writers assert that on this issue, Church leaders are out of touch with their members and cite opinion polls to that effect. The arguments for and against assisted suicide are

complex and cannot be addressed in an opinion poll. The Church of England debates serious issues with serious intent, not least through its elected, representative bodies at deanery, diocesan and national level.

The General Synod has voted unequivocally, to oppose a change in the current law on assisted suicide. Correctly, policy is decided by informed debate, not by opinion polls.

The appeal to Biblical ‘proof-texts’, employed by the authors is not indicative of Anglican hermeneutics in which a respectful, reasoned reading of the texts illuminates the narrative and theological arcs and motifs contained in the Scriptures. From these (not proof-texts), emanate core beliefs and principles. These principles reflect Christian theological beliefs, but can be shared by people of other faiths or of none.

In the context of this brief response to the authors’ article, the principle of caring for the vulnerable requires considered examination though it is also the case that any shift in the law or societal norms that undermines our egalitarian commitment to the intrinsic value of every human life or anything that lessens our relational and societal bonds with one another is deeply flawed.

The authors speak of ‘safeguards’ to ensure that vulnerable people are not put at risk and reference the provisions of the ‘Meacher Bill’. Safeguards on paper, however, are worthless unless they can be consistently, universally and comprehensively translated into practice.

It is a tragic irony that on the day the authors' article was published, news headlines were dominated by the deaths of three vulnerable adults in Care. In spite of every written policy, protocol, and approved practice, their reality was tragically different.

These were not isolated incidents; we have only to think of the hundreds of avoidable deaths in the Mid-Staffs hospital scandal, abuse of residents with learning disabilities in Eldertree Lodge and 'systemic biases contributing to unequal mortality outcomes in ethnic minority women and women facing multiple problems and deprivation'.

We can add to this, the recent experience of many elderly care home residents in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic who were given DNACPR notices without proper protocols being followed.

Human lapses and failings build upon one another until catastrophic outcomes ensue...a process that, in too many instances, no amount of assumed monitoring or paper safeguards has been able to capture, never mind stop.

What can possibly give us confidence that similar safeguards will provide a better outcome if the law on assisted suicide were to be changed?

The authors point to the experience of the Oregon Death with Dignity Act, but Oregon gives us no grounds for confidence at all. Far from being a model of good practice (as is often claimed), over twenty years of experience in Oregon indicates, inter alia, an alarming failure to maintain rigorous reporting and monitoring information, failure to

pursue adequate psychiatric evaluation and failure to evidence physician presence at ingestion.

The authors stress the need for uncoerced consent to be gained before any process begins that might lead to an 'assisted death', but it is not possible to ensure that this can be consistently and effectively guaranteed for vulnerable, terminally ill people.

The charity Hourglass (formerly Action on Elder Abuse) affirms that some 500,000 elderly people are neglected or abused in the UK each year, often for financial reasons. It is naive in the extreme to believe that some of these would not fall prey to pressure to end their lives prematurely if the law were to be changed.

The authors state that 'there is nothing holy about agony'. While many Christians might suggest that the crucifixion of Jesus indicates otherwise, it is essential that people are given high quality physical, mental and spiritual care at the end of life...and most are. Some 600,000 people die each year in the UK and while every instance of suffering is tragic, mercifully very few die in the sort of 'extreme pain' that lies at the heart of appeals to change the law on assisted suicide. Better palliation, not assisted suicide, should be our goal.

We must acknowledge that there are many vulnerable people involved in any discussion of end of life care: those who wish to end their lives, their families, healthcare professionals, those who wish to live, but who are prey to covert or overt pressure...all of us who live with the consequences of changes in societal mores.

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Sadly, it is not possible to meet the aspirations of all and we have to face that fact openly and honestly.

In such circumstances, we must act to protect and care for as many vulnerable people as fully as possible. The aspirations of a very small number of individuals seeking a change in the law, whose needs and concerns are nonetheless genuine, must not endanger the very large numbers of people who will be put at grave risk by any such change.

In failing to pass previous 'Assisted Dying' Bills, both Houses of Parliament have recognised this.

We must not gamble with vulnerable people's lives in the hope that somehow, against all evidence to the contrary, we will get it right this time.

This article was first published as a 'rapid response' on the BMJ website to an article in the BMJ by Lord Carey and Rabbi Jonathan Romain.

Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars

BBC3 - Choral Evensong 22nd September 2021

From the Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick.
Introit: O virtus sapientiae (Hildegard von Bingen)
Responses: Shephard
Psalm 59 (Barnby)
First Lesson: 1 Kings 17 vv.1-24

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Canticles: Warwick Service (Ives)

Second Lesson: Acts 20 vv.1-16

Anthem: Hear my prayer (Mendelssohn)

Prayer anthem: The Father's Love (Lole)

Voluntary: Choral Varié (Taneyev)

Oliver Hancock (Director of Music)

Mark Swinton (Assistant Director of Music)

[[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0010257>]

Online worship from Armagh

Morning Worship from Drumcree Parish Church

Sunday 19th September 2021

Ordination of David Murphy

Sunday 19th September 2021 - David Murphy Ordination Service

[[] <http://armagh.anglican.org/MonthlyFocus.html>]

Commonwealth Games resources for churches launched

Churches across England now have access to free resources to help them engage with the Commonwealth Games, which is to be held in Birmingham in summer 2022.

Sports Chaplaincy UK, in partnership with the Church of England and others, has created the KITBAG suite of resources.

KITBAG will prepare, train, educate and empower the local grassroots church for a life of sports mission before, during, and after the Commonwealth Games 2022.

The Games, which bring together 72 nations, are being hailed as a unique opportunity to showcase the West Midlands on the global stage when it begins on July 28 next year.

Developed by representatives from the Church of England, Salvation Army, Scripture Union, and Sports Chaplaincy UK, KITBAG is not simply resources and will begin as a monthly prayer meeting in order to seek opportunities offered by the Games.

Natalie Andrews, National Sport Project Officer in the Church of England's Evangelism and Discipleship department, said: "I am looking forward to Christians coming together in this intentional way, to listen to God, our contexts, one another, and the opportunities for mission that the Commonwealth Games offers in each place.

"I'm sure that the KITBAG will be a helpful journey and resource to discover how we might join in through Sport with what God is already doing."

The Church of England already champions efforts to reach people via sport. Seven dioceses, including Birmingham, have taken part in a pilot project to include sport and wellbeing into the "mission" activities.

Previously Sports Chaplaincy UK have supported communities across the world at previous Games beginning in Delhi in 2010.

Links -

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[[] <https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/news-and-statements/church-england-backs-sports-ministry>]

[[] <https://sportschaplaincy.org.uk/CommonwealthGames/>]

Poem for today

September 1815 by William Wordsworth

While not a leaf seems faded; while the fields,
With ripening harvest prodigally fair,
In brightest sunshine bask; this nipping air,
Sent from some distant clime where Winter wields
His icy scimitar, a foretaste yields
Of bitter change, and bids the flowers beware;
And whispers to the silent birds, 'Prepare
Against the threatening foe your trustiest shields.'
For me, who under kindlier laws belong
To Nature's tuneful quire, this rustling dry
Through leaves yet green, and yon crystalline sky,
Announce a season potent to renew,
'Mid frost and snow, the instinctive joys of song,
And nobler cares than listless summer knew.

Speaking to the Soul

See post for today on site

