



**Image of the day - Battle of Britain Sunday**

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Image of the Day - Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall attended a Service at Westminster Abbey to mark Battle of Britain Sunday.

## Reports

### **St Mary's Ballybeen officially reopened after investment of over half a million pounds**

**St Mary's Ballybeen has been officially reopened following a major refurbishment programme. Bishop David McClay declared the building "open for Kingdom work and worship" at a special service on Sunday 12 September.**

The investment of over half a million pounds enables St Mary's to better meet the needs of a growing congregation and, through the many outreach programmes it facilitates, the wider community.

Phase One of the works entailed extensive mechanical electrical upgrades including changing the heating from electric to gas, health and safety improvements, the addition of a disabled toilet and new toilet facilities, a new office, renovations to the crèche room and the upstairs balcony, and also to the hall which is now equipped for modern use. The interior of the church received a facelift and the building gained a brand new entrance that is bright, warm and welcoming.



“The parish received approval for the development several years ago, but the pandemic highlighted the urgency of the works and just how vital church services were for many of our neighbours,” explains the Rector, Revd Jim Cheshire (pictured above). “In the last year and a half the finance came through and in an amazing way.

“After many years saving, at the end of 2019 we had £180,000 in the bank. Just 18 months later we have spent £575,000 and have a loan of £210,000, which means that £185,000 has come in. Some has come through grants, and I would like to gratefully acknowledge a grant of £27,500 we received from the Church Fabric and Development Fund and a grant of £20,000 from Allchurches Trust as part of its Growing Lives programme. Some funds also came from outside the parish. but the majority has been the result of the generosity of God’s people here in St Mary’s. Glory to God!”

The parish, which is in the heart of the Ballybeen estate in East Belfast, runs a range of support and outreach ministries and programmes for the local community,



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including an Over 60s lunch club, Boys' and Girls' Brigades, and a Parent and Toddler Group.

During the Covid-19 pandemic it became the area Covid-19 Response Relief Centre and to date has facilitated the delivery of almost 1,400 food parcels, 700 meals and 500 meat parcels to vulnerable members of the community. It has also been involved in helping to deliver prescriptions and facilitating payment of essential utilities for those who either cannot get out or who find themselves in financial hardship as a result of the pandemic.

## **Buyer snaps up former south Armagh church for less than £90k**

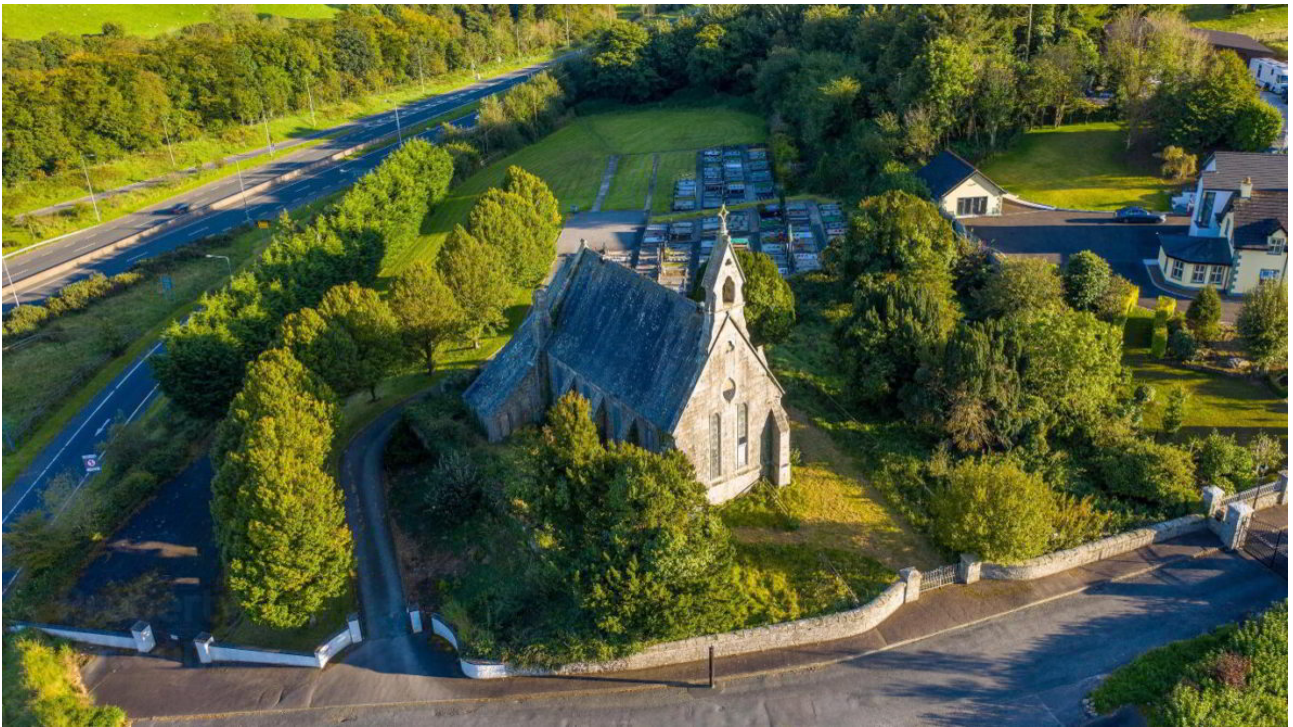
**The historic property - described as suitable for conversion to both residential or commercial use - had been on the market for just a month before a sale was agreed, Armaghi reports.**

The sale has been agreed for the Church Hill, Jonesborough, property after a brief period on the market.

No details have emerged of the owner of the Grade B listed building which sits close to the Armagh and Dundalk border.

The church, which was built in 1856, had been marketed by Best Property Services.

The asking price had been listed as £89,950.



In trying to find a buyer, Bests had said the church had the potential for a number of future uses, but this was subject to any new owner obtaining planning consents which would be their responsibility to do so.

“This property may be suitable for conversion to both residential or commercial use,” the marketing material advised.

The building – situated on a “prime site” – was described as a “former Church of Ireland” and the property was being “offered for sale as seen”.

It is “located within the ring of Gullion along the border” and the property extends to 2,190 sq ft.

Just one month after being placed on the market a sale has now been agreed.

Report and photo courtesy of Armaghi.

## Appreciation - Judge John Curran

**A 'singing' judge, who was among the members of the judiciary targeted by paramilitaries during the Troubles, has died peacefully at his Co Down home.**

Retired Judge John Curran, who passed away in Moira on September 16, was appointed to the County Court bench in 1981 having previously been a respected QC for seven years.

He was a county court judge for 24 years, acting as Recorder of Derry from 1982 to 1985 before being assigned to Craigavon.

In 1987 a bomb was thrown and shots were fired from a car passing his Belfast home. On that occasion windows were broken but no-one was hurt.

Later he and his wife Antoinette suffered more than £100,000 damage to their Co Armagh home from a fire believed to have been caused by the installation of a security system by the Northern Ireland Office.

At the time of his death Judge Curran was honorary president of north Belfast's Fortwilliam Musical Society. He was a founder member of the amateur group, which was started by his brother Bill Curran in September 1977.

The judge also sang with Opera Northern Ireland and the Law Society's Pro Bono Choir.

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After his 2005 retirement he remained "a very active member" of the Incorporated Council of Law Reporting, which publishes law reports used by students, academics, journalists, lawyers and judges.

Lady Chief Justice Siobhan Keegan said she was "deeply saddened" to hear of his death.

"John was an enthusiastic member of the Pro Bono Lawyer's Choir and was well known for his passion for singing and drama," she said.

"His wife Antoinette, a former President of the Law Society, predeceased him in June 2017.

"John will be missed by his colleagues in the judiciary and those who appeared before him over the years.

"He was held in high regard and is recognised for his contribution to the law over many years of service, his respect for all of those who appeared before him and his good humour.

"My sympathy and that of my colleagues is extended to his family."

He is survived by his children John Joseph, Patrick and Anne Catherine and his sister Barbara.

Courtesy Bimpe Archer and the Irish News.



## News briefs

### Four Deacons ordained for Meath and Kildare

St Brigid's Cathedral in Kildare saw the ordination of four new deacons for Ordained Local Ministry, on Sunday 20 September.



Each of the newly ordained deacons will initially serve in their home parishes.

Those ordained were:

Alan Robinson – to serve in Portarlington Union of parishes. Alan has been a Diocesan Reader for a number of years, a member of Diocesan Council as well as the Finance and Glebes Committee..



Alan Melbourne – to serve in Edenderry Union of parishes. Alan has been a Diocesan Reader for several years.

James Reid – to serve in Clane Union of parishes. James has been a Diocesan Reader for a number of years.

Yvonne Hutchinson – to serve in Tullamore Union of parishes. Yvonne is a Diocesan Reader, as well as being a member of Diocesan Council.

The four deacons were ordained by Bishop Pat Storey. She said, “We are delighted to be able to ordain four new deacons this year. Each have them have shown a great commitment and desire to serve in the dioceses. We thank them for their willingness to embark on this journey, and for the support of their families. As a diocesan family we offer our prayers and appreciation for them on this special occasion.”

Taking part in the service were: Dean Tim Wright (Dean of St Brigid’s Cathedral), Archdeacon Leslie Stevenson and Ms Karen Seaman (Diocesan Registrar). The preacher was Rev Alison Irvine

## **Deacon for Tuam**

On Sunday 12th September the Revd Martin Steele was made Deacon in the Cathedral Church of St Patrick, Killala, by the Bishop of Tuam, Killala and Achonry, the Rt Revd Patrick Rooke.

The preacher for the occasion was the Ven. Stephen McWhirter, who will be Martin’s training rector for his deacon-intern year.

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Martin, who hails from Belfast, was supported by his family, friends, his rector and some parishioners from his home parish of All Saint's, Eglantine.

Martin was born in Belfast and spent his formative years in Belfast and Bangor



County Down. Educated at Gransha Boys High and The University of Aberdeen he is currently reading a Master's in Theology at Trinity College Dublin under the auspices of The Church of Ireland Theological College.

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During his time in Scotland Martin attended the Scottish Episcopal Church and returned to Ireland after the completion of his studies. It was during this period that Martin joined the Church of Ireland and eventually found his spiritual home in All Saints' Eglantine.

Throughout his life Martin has discerned the call of God to the ordained ministry which he committed to prayer and reflection. Having worked in hospitality, customer services and latterly BBC Audience Services he offered himself as a candidate for the ordained ministry in 2019. He enjoys reading, long walks, local league football and being out and about in the parish.

## **Join the Great Big Muddy Creation Trail this Saturday in Kiltiernan**

The first of a number of outdoor Great Big Muddy Creation Trails happening in parishes across Dublin & Glendalough this autumn, will be hosted by Kiltiernan Parish Church this Saturday, September 25.

Parishioners from other parishes are invited to come and explore the Creation Story in a fresh new way.

The trail will be set up in the grounds of the parish for you to wander and wonder as you engage with different activities and reflect on fun facts and ideas about God's wonderful world.

Come at a time that suits you between 10am and 2pm and enjoy a time of connecting with the outside world, each other, and God. Take time to journey together, talk, explore, [churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)



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have fun and just be.

The Gathering Grounds will be open for refreshments and an opportunity to rest.

This is an all-weather activity so do bring raingear (just in case!). The trail is open to everyone, and the organisers

ask that parents/guardians accompany their children on the trail as they are responsible for their safety and supervision at all times.

Look out more posts on social media about the trail during the week.

The trail was commissioned by the Church of Ireland Children's Ministry Network to support dioceses and parishes in connecting with people of all ages in a safe way.

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**Great Big Muddy World**

**COME JOIN US FOR AN OUTDOOR GREAT BIG MUDDY WORLD TRAIL**

**HOSTED BY KILTERNAN PARISH**

**WANDERING & WONDERING FOR EVERYONE**

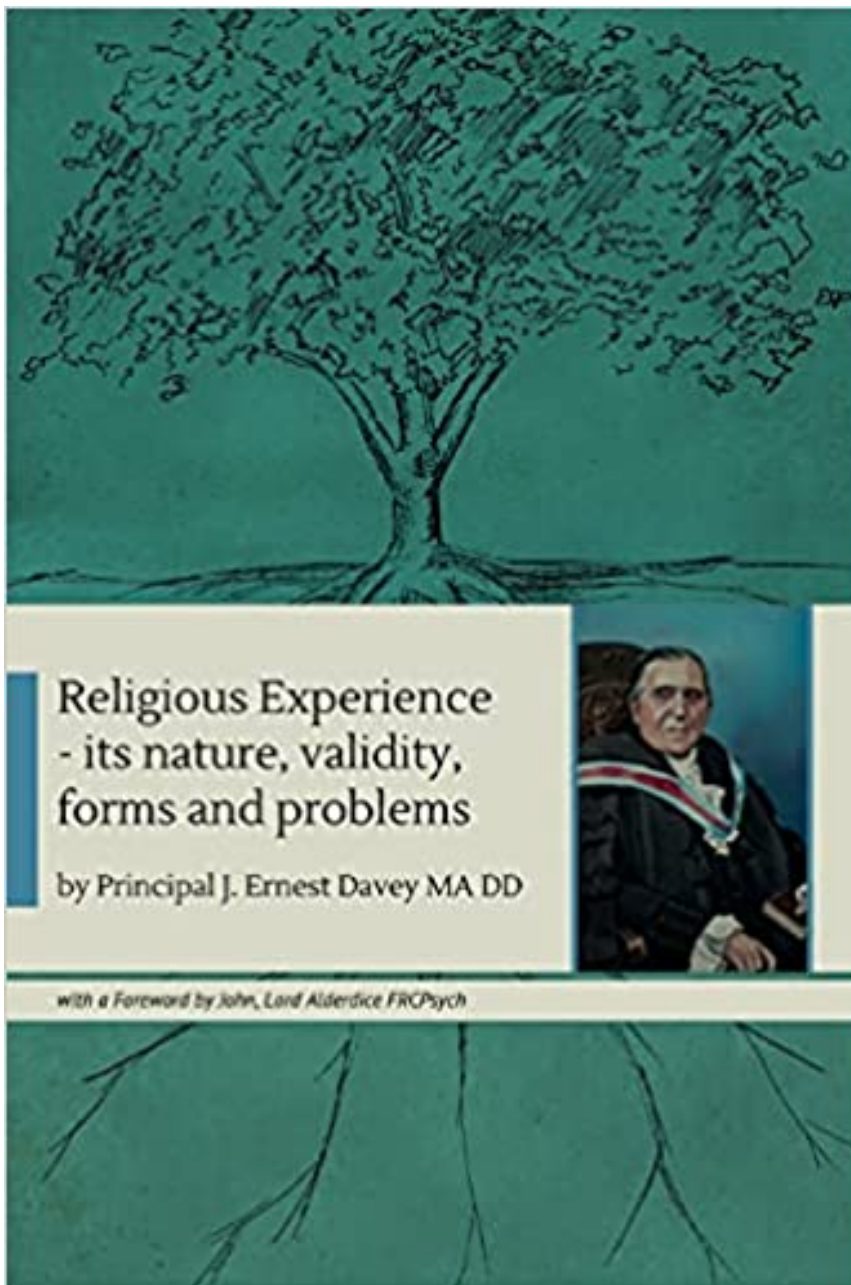
**CONNECT WITH NATURE  
CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER  
CONNECT WITH GOD**

**THE GATHERING GROUNDS WILL BE OPEN FOR REFRESHMENTS**

**gathering grounds CAFE**

**KILTERNAN PARISH**  
BUILDING COMMUNITY  
STRENGTHENING WORSHIP  
GROWING IN SERVICE

**SATURDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER 10AM-2PM**



## Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars

**"Religious Experience; its nature, validity, forms and problems" by J Ernest Davey**

John Alderdice writes - The first copies of J Ernest Davey's remarkable book "Religious Experience; its nature, validity,

forms and problems" have arrived! He wrote it just before he died in December 1960 but until now only a few chapters were available for private circulation. In my Foreword to the book I explain some of the reasons why I believe it has been kept 'under the radar' for so long. It is a very important contribution to taking religious thinking forward, but when you read it you will quickly appreciate why fundamentalists were so opposed to him, and why in the increasingly contentious atmosphere of Northern Ireland in the 1960s even some of his friends were anxious about promoting his

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ideas. My friend, Paul Gilmore, obtained the manuscript, which had been typed up on an old manual typewriter more than sixty years ago, and with handwritten amendments from Davey himself. It has been a labour of love on my part over the past couple of years to painstakingly digitize it and prepare it for publication. I was also very grateful to the Davey family for their permission to publish it and to the Farmington Trust for their financial assistance. The e-book and paperback editions are now available on Amazon and the hardback edition should be published at the end of this month, after which it will also be available in bookshops. If this is an area of life that interests you, why not get yourself a copy -

The description on Amazon states - When J. Ernest Davey died on 17 December 1960, leading figures said they had lost the most brilliant theologian Irish Presbyterianism had ever produced. Few realized that, in an unpublished valedictory manuscript, he had set out his final considered reflections on 'religious truth'. Some of the chapters were printed posthumously for private circulation – perhaps because of anxiety that the full text would be incendiary. In 1927 Davey had been acquitted of heresy in a high-profile case, and later became Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and Principal of its main theological college. But religious fundamentalism was on the rise in the early 1960s and the Rev Ian Paisley was arousing religious and political passions in Northern Ireland. Not until now have Davey's insights been available in full, and they point to a radical re-thinking of theology, and a re-evaluation of the nature of religious experience.

It is available in Kindle, Soft back and Hard back formats -

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[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Religious-Experience-nature-validity-problems/dp/1802271856/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Religious-Experience-nature-validity-problems/dp/1802271856/ref=sr_1_1?)

## **Cork media - Discussing women's ministry with the Dean of Cloyne**

The Very Rev. Susan Green, Dean of Cloyne, shows us around St Colman's Cathedral, Cloyne in this week's video in a series being produced in Cork diocese. As the Bishop's advisor for women's ministry in the Diocese, she also talks about her role and that of many other women in the Church of Ireland.

[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eac-yXcfawc>]

## **Perspective - In anticipation of the synod in Ireland by Vincent Doyle**

**Ahead of the synod in Ireland, we need to regroup, reconsider, and truly ask ourselves, are we willing to listen to the Holy Spirit on what direction the church will take, or do we feed this synodal process with our own ego and misgivings? Vincent Doyle writes in The Tablet**

The word synod for me requires explaining. It is usually accompanied with words such as "synodality" and "synodal". These words mean very little to many and thus may unintentionally preclude from important conversations, those who dismiss the synod owing to the complex language it is immersed in.

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The synod both in Ireland and elsewhere needs to be broken down, and much like evangelisation, needs to be brought to places, perhaps one might not think of going into; if the synod is openly to a clique who recognise the vocabulary, then what is synodal about that?

Themes will emerge on what may be discussed, and before what is discussed, we must recognise, who will be doing the discussing? Furthermore, the “how” of the “who”, that is the manner by which matters will be discussed has been considered, that means by which opinions and thoughts must go to the farthest reaches of our society, including people who dislike or have little time for the church.

When said persons are approached by family, friends, relations, maybe church personnel, the language must be simple, not exclusively ecclesiological and requiring explanation before the conversation even starts.

That being said, if the language is not overly-complicated, all are included, even the so called “hurlers on the ditch”, those who offer often unsolicited and unwanted advice, then and only then may the synod begin, when we risk change.

One such change I have advocated for, for many years, is the consideration of and discussion of implementation of Viri Probati.

Was this not discussed at the Amazonian synod and not implemented?

The matter was firmly not taken off the table, and what is to say we cannot discuss the issue again?

## Why Viri Probati?

Because of a shortage of vocations perhaps? Because seminaries are emptying quicker than pews post-Covid? One rebuttal to this is that vocations on a global level are not unhealthy and we are a global church, and the Lord has sent many workers into the vineyard.

I personally do not see Viri Probati as a bandage to low or absent vocations; I see it as a response to the oldest and perhaps most complex wounds of the institutional church, what Paul VI dubbed the lamentable defection.

I add the word “procreative” to his term, thus, procreative lamentable defection, when priest and religious stray in terms of their celibacy and chastity vow and a child is conceived. In an interview in early 2019, pre Covid, a Vatican official on the record recognised, after much deliberation and back and forth, the lamentable defection and by extension, its intrinsic procreative characteristic, as inevitable.

Thus, the Vatican recognises, as Paul VI did in 1967, procreative lamentable defection as inevitable and unavoidable.

The response to this hushed reality has been further complex language, a narrative that convinces what is the best thing to do; such a person has “a moral obligation to step aside from ministry and provide for the care and needs of the mother and the child” wrote Cardinal Sean O’Malley in 2017. Sounds almost romantic, that on top of his already



pressing sacrifice, now he must sacrifice what he loves, for his child. The romance has lulled believers into a deep sleep of belief that to “step aside” is indeed the best thing to do. Thus, “step[ping] aside” is the default antidote for the procreative lamentable defection.

However, this historic antidote to an inevitable reality is laden with problems. Unemployment, lack of adequate training, stigma, shame, poverty, homelessness, all of which nurture and germinate further problems. Many may refute this and reaffirm the man’s responsibility to get a job and do the right thing. Such an attitude usually is not always misses deeper realities hidden beneath the surface.

The late Sister Maura O’Donoghue confirmed over twenty years ago, “in several countries, sisters are troubled by policies that require them to leave the congregation if they become pregnant, while the priest involved is able to continue his ministry. Beyond fairness is the question of social justice, since the sister is left to raise the child as a single parent, ‘often with a great deal of stigmatisation and frequently in very poor socioeconomic circumstances. I was given examples in several countries where such women were forced into becoming a second or third wife in a family because of lost status in the local culture. The alternative, as a matter of survival, is to go on the streets as prostitutes and thereby expose themselves to the risk of HIV, if not already infected.

So, in these cases, the parent did get a job; the only one they could, but ... hey, all is not lost, the status quo and the sheen and veneer of the religious institution and collective identity of the “brilliant jewel” remained untarnished.

Meanwhile, because she did indeed “step aside”, she herself was tarnished by extreme and hostile conditions and by extension, so too her child. In less extreme circumstances, many priests fear unemployment, how will they get a mortgage, a sustainable job, particularly in cultures where so called “ex-priests” remain the target of suspicion and gossip, what economic opportunities have they?

“Then, they shouldn’t have gotten themselves into that position,” many quip. That’s cool comfort for the child of the prostitute or the ex-priest’s child who is hungry for food and adequate nurture.

In short, the default response to what the Vatican agrees is inevitable, catalyses homelessness, prostitution, hunger, psychological melanoma amid an array of other maladies that harm children, the children of the ordained.

Viri Probati allows priesthood to not be flanked by extremes. It allows men to discern in advance if they are truly called to be celibates, if not, then priesthood is not forbidden but allowable. In this, those who choose celibacy truly sacrifice themselves since they have chosen it.

In this, the children of the ordained and religious of the future may hold a candle of hope; the children of female religious and subsequent treatment still remain a problem that is easily remedied by orders establishing former female religious in steady and reliable occupations, particularly in developing countries. If your organisation is haemorrhaging parents into poverty, prostitution and hunger, something is wrong with your organisation.

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If the synod is real, then this problem will be its first stop and I believe Ireland can do that.

Courtesy The Tablet, September 19, 2021

## Poem for today

### A Boat Beneath A Sunny Sky by Lewis Carroll

A boat beneath a sunny sky,  
Lingering onward dreamily  
In an evening of July—  
Children three that nestle near,  
Eager eye and willing ear,  
Pleased a simple tale to hear—  
Long has faded that sunny sky:  
Echoes fade and memories die.  
Autumn frosts have slain July.  
Still she haunts me, phantomwise,  
Alice moving under skies  
Never seen by waking eyes.  
Children yet, the tale to hear,  
Eager eye and willing ear,  
Lovingly shall nestle near.  
In a Wonderland they lie,  
Dreaming as the days go by,  
Dreaming as the summers die:  
Ever drifting down the stream—  
Lingering in the golden gleam—  
Life, what is it but a dream?





## Speaking to the Soul

See post for today on site

