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## Jeremy Taylor's Middle Church celebrates 350th anniversary



**A tour guide explains the history of Portmore graveyard.**

Ballinderry Parish marked the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the consecration of the Middle Church on September 8 and 9, [churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)

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**Kelly Dawson  
playing the  
harp at the  
Middle Church  
celebration  
weekend.**



with the celebrations coinciding with European Heritage Open Days.

On Saturday September 8 crowds flocked to Ballinderry to travel back in time and to join in an historical tour organised as part of the celebrations. The tours ran during the day, and visited the three historical sites associated with Ballinderry, namely Portmore, the Middle Church and the Parish Church.

Each tour had a guide who explained the significance of the sites and gave a commentary throughout the tour.

**The Rev Trevor Cleland helps Dr Daphne Davidson to cut the celebration cake.**





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**The service of thanksgiving on the 350th anniversary of the consecration of Middle Church, Ballinderry. From left: Mr Jim Neill (Lay Reader); Rev Canon Ernest Harris (preacher); Rev Nicholas Dark, Rural Dean; Rev Trevor Cleland, rector; Mr John Quigley (Lay Reader); Mr Denis Fullerton (Lay Reader) and Rev Geoff Wilson (Dromore Cathedral).**

Two hundred and fifty people went on the tours and more than 100 visited the Middle Church independently.

The tours ended at the Church Hall where refreshments were served and everyone had the opportunity to enjoy an exhibition of photographs and memorabilia showing parish life in years past.

The following day, Sunday September 9, 200 people attended a service of thanksgiving in the Middle Church. This was followed by afternoon tea in the Church Hall.

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## Prayers for farm accident victims at National Ploughing Championship

A 'walk of light' for those killed and injured in farm accidents was part of the opening ceremony at the National Ploughing Championship on Tuesday (18 September).

The procession was led with candles and a picture of wellingtons collected in 32 counties –



each pair representing someone who has been killed or seriously injured in farm accidents.

Bishop Denis Nulty of Kildare and Leighlin Diocese led prayers remembering those who died in accidents.

“The empty wellington boots bring back the phrase of a son or daughter saying to a father or mother ‘one day I’ll wear your boots’. The empty boots remind us that too many

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loved ones have lost their lives in farm accidents,” said Bishop Nulty.

He prayed that there might be greater awareness of farm safety and for those in the Embrace FARM organisation and those who work towards improving safety on farms and in the countryside. He prayed for the souls of the dead and concluded with the lines: “Those who we loved don’t go away. They walk beside us every day, unseen, unheard, but always here, still loved still missed but very dear.”

The moment of prayer came at the conclusion of Embrace FARM’s ‘Our Drive to Remember’ around Ireland’s 32 counties in a tractor. In a bid to raise awareness about farm deaths, it set off from the Tullamore Show on 12 August and concluded on 18 September at the National Ploughing Championship, held near Tullamore, Co. Offaly.

Some 150 drivers drove 5,764 km, with the assistance of local Macra na Feirme clubs and Young Farmers’ Clubs of Ulster. At each stop, members of the farming community gathered to remember victims of farm accidents and to offer the fruits of fundraising to Embrace FARM.

## **New president of Derry & Raphoe Mothers’ Union**

Mrs Mary Good has revealed the name of her successor as Diocesan President of Mothers’ Union in Derry and Raphoe. Jacqui Armstrong was announced as the incoming President at a reception following the annual MU Festival Service in St Eunan’s Cathedral, Raphoe, on Wednesday evening.



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It was an historic occasion for the Mothers' Union and for the parish, with the Service taking place in Raphoe for the first time ever. Fears that stormy weather on the morning of the Festival Service might affect attendance proved groundless. The church was filled to the capacity with members from more than two dozen branches – extending from Castlerock in the North East to Drumholm in the South West – who processed into and out of the cathedral holding their banners proudly aloft.

The worship was led by the Dean of Raphoe, Very Revd Arthur Barrett, assisted by the Diocesan Mothers' Union Chaplain, Revd Canon Harold Given. During the Service, the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Revd Ken Good, commissioned three new officers – Roberta Merrick as Social Policy Contact; Ruth Baxter as an Area Secretary; and Janet Kennedy as an Enterprise Representative. Bishop Good said each office carried great responsibility, because the Mothers' Union was a worldwide society within the Church, with special concern for all that strengthened and preserved marriage and Christian family life.

The Preacher was the All Ireland Mothers' Union Chaplain, Very Revd Raymond Ferguson, who described it as a joy and a privilege to be taking part in "this joyful Festival Service". He said he, too, was coming to the end of his stint as All Ireland Chaplain, and that he couldn't help feeling a little nostalgic as he looked back at his years in the role, and feeling thankful for all the places he had been and all the wonderful, Christian people that he had met through Mothers' Union.

"Our motto for the year," Dean Ferguson said, "is 'in Mary Sumner's footsteps'. It is useful in helping us not only to

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remember our founder, Mary Sumner, but – extending that principle as we remember Mary and her footsteps – we're being given leave to remember all those who have gone before us in faith and in Mothers' Union down through the years.



**Mrs Mary Good (left) with her successor as Diocesan President of Mothers' Union in Derry and Raphoe. Jacquie Armstrong**

“As you come from your various branches this evening, there will be those who you will be remembering, those whom you have known in your time and your years in the Mothers' Union, those in Mothers' Union who have focused their prayers and their Christian influence upon home and upon family life – a very, very necessary ministry. They have kept those branches alive over the years, and they have handed on the ministry – they have handed on that vision to

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you – today’s members of Mothers’ Union. And the fact that we remember them – Mary Sumner yes, but a whole host of others – and give thanks for them, is an encouragement to us to make Mothers’ Union relevant and to hand on enhanced what has been passed on to us.

“That idea of handing on something very precious – that idea of following in footsteps – finds an echo in the Scriptures. For example, I’m thinking of the apostle Paul and he’s deeply conscious of it, or so it seems to me, when he writes to the Corinthians about the authenticity of the message that he’s presenting to them. 1 Corinthians 15, Paul says, ‘For what I received, I passed on to you as of first importance’. He received it from those who went before him. He has lived it and enjoyed it and he’s passing it on to those who come after him. He goes on in that same passage to give a very early Christian creed, summing up the Gospel message which can save their souls. It’s good, this evening, to have all those positive and thankful thoughts as we take part in a Service like this and it’s good to be conscious, too, of that unity between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven, as we think of those in whose footsteps we follow.”

After the Service, most of the congregation made their way to the parish hall, about 100 metres away, for refreshments prepared by the ladies of the parish. They heard Mrs Good thank all who had taken part in the Service, including the clergy, the readers and the Mothers’ Union choir, who were in fine voice. Mrs Good also thanked the Mark Ferguson band, who provided music for the Service, and the preacher, whose sermon she described as “inspiring”. Dean Ferguson is the father of both Mark Ferguson and the Revd Peter Ferguson, who also took part in the Service,



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prompting Mrs Good to describe it as “a real family occasion”.

Two awards were presented this year: the Helen Livingston Vase for Programmes (which was judged by May Boyd) was received by Pearl Scott on behalf of the Parish of Clondevaddock; and the Prize for Overseas Giving was awarded to the Parish of Drumholm and collected by Corrie Crawford.

## **Acknowledge rather than defend errors of the past: Bishop McKeown**

The Bishop of Derry has said the Church is called to acknowledge the errors of the past, not to defend them.

In his homily for the National Padre Pio Pilgrimage in Knock on Monday, Bishop Donal McKeown warned that it is “idolatrous to worship or to seek to recreate a flawed past”.

He said the Church’s job today is not to dream of, or work for, a strong Church in the future.

“Our only mission is to ensure that the Irish Church is fit for purpose in being able to proclaim and incarnate the mercy and love of Jesus into the pain of today.”

St Pio, he suggested, would ask the faithful to do the same today. “He would ask us to love the world as God did in sending Jesus, not to retreat behind big walls and shout angrily at it. Jesus came to save the world, not to condemn it (Jn 3:17).”

Bishop McKeown said the plank must be removed from our own eyes, and the sin in our own hearts and in the Church

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must be acknowledged before we dash to criticise the splinter in anybody else's.



**Bishop of Derry, Dr Donal McKeown, and Archbishop of Armagh, Dr Eamon Martin.**

“We have to learn how to repent before we condemn others for where they are. It is a dangerous form of Christianity that believes we have to be a strong and influential organisation giving the lying impression of being pure and perfect.”

He said the first task was to be sure that our parishes and dioceses are “credible witnesses of Jesus” today, people who have known divine forgiveness and who want others to know the joy that it brings.

Facing sin and its consequences is possible only for those who have opened themselves up to Christ's grace through

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prayer, Dr McKeown told devotees of St Pio gathered in the basilica in Knock.

The second task was to speak, like Jesus, the uncomfortable truth in love to our contemporaries.

“Acknowledgment of our failings in the past frees us to comment on where our society is also marked by sin,” he suggested.

“Taking up the Cross means playing the role of the uncomfortable prophets – and facing up to the new high priests who want to drown out any opposition or criticism. Systems were scarred by sin in the past. When we recognise our own sin, we are in a position to call out the sinful structures of today.”

He said believers had to gear themselves up to speak about the awful extent of injustice, self-harm and suicide in our society.

“We have to have the courage to name evils like homelessness and the epidemic of loneliness. We have to name the awful damage done to young and old by the widespread access to and encouragement of pornography.”

The Bishop of Derry highlighted how in Britain, doctors decide whether under 16s should access contraceptives or have an abortion without parental consent while at the same time they argue for banning under 16s from buying caffeinated energy drinks.

Criticism, he stressed, should not be directed towards victims but towards the consumerist culture which he said is “killing too many of our young people”.



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Noting that the ministry of St Pio took place during years scarred by the appalling slaughter of two world wars, Bishop McKeown said the Italian saint proclaimed the love of God as the source of all healing and he bore witness to the Jesus of Calvary for 50 years.

“The Church of this century is living with other slaughters – of babies before birth and of too many lives cut short after birth. Jesus tells us that evil cannot be overcome except by speaking the truth and carrying the Cross behind Him. Our society is yearning for authentic ministers of the real God. A self-righteous Church can never do that,” he underlined.

Recalling the Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar’s speech in Dublin Castle for Pope Francis’s visit, where the Fine Gael leader said the Church in Ireland has done many good things, Dr McKeown said any denial of that reality is ideologically driven.

“But we do a huge injustice to Christ, to ourselves and to others if we pretend that the past was not scarred by Original Sin. The temptation to power, to arrogance and to blindness was no less real a hundred years ago than it is now. As the Israelites discovered on their journey from Egypt, the Promised Land is always ahead of us and never behind us.”

## **News briefs**

### **+++Building Blocks Children’s Ministry Conference -**

Building Blocks is an annual conference to support those working with children in their local church, community or school and to encourage others to be involved in this vital ministry. It will be a day packed with useful resources,

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Save the Date

buildingblocks  
Children's Ministry Conferences

Sat 10th  
Nov 2018

9:30am to  
4:00pm

ST ANDREW'S COLLEGE  
Booterstown, Co. Dublin  
Keynote Speaker:  
VICTORIA BEECH, GodVenture

inspirational ideas and stimulating workshops! The speaker is Victoria Beech who has 20 years experience of working with children and loves finding fun, creative ways of sharing God with them. She is the creator of all the [GodVenture](#) products and ideas. She also runs GodVenture Family Activity Workshops for families to be inspired in their faith at home together. When: Saturday 10 November 2018 from 9.30 am

–4.00 pm. **Where:** St. Andrew's College, Booterstown Avenue, Blackrock, Ireland. [View Map](#) Download the brochure [here](#). The Building Blocks Conference is organised by children's ministry leaders from a broad spectrum of Christian Churches and organisations throughout Ireland.

**+++Down & Dromore clergy conference** - The bi-annual Down and Dromore Clergy Conference will take place in the Central Hotel, Donegal, from 8 –11 October 2018. Please pray for the conference which is a time for worship, fellowship and teaching. This year Bishop Harold Miller will give the evening Bible readings and the conference will hear from the following speakers: Canon Dr Christina Baxter CBE, Fr Mark Ephrem, Bishop Ken Good, Bishop Bill Love, Mr Peter Lynas, Revd Dr Charles McMullen, Revd Dr Heather Morris and Dr Jasper Rutherford.

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**Pictured following the presentations in Derriaghy Parish Hall are Canon John Budd, his wife, Carla, and their family, Matthew, Harriet and Peter, accompanied by Robert Stinson, Christ Church, Derriaghy (extreme left), and Carol Field, St Andrew's, Colin (extreme right), who made the presentations on behalf of the parish.**

**+++Retirement of Connor canon** - The Rev Canon John Budd recently retired after more than 21 years as rector of Derriaghy Parish. To mark the occasion, a farewell evening of musical entertainment, tributes, thanks and presentations took place in Derriaghy parish hall on Friday September 14.

**+++New Irish Choir & Orchestra at All Saints Tullylish** - An evening of music and powerful worship with musicians from the New Irish Choir & Orchestra at All Saints Tullylish.



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When: Saturday 29 Sept at 7.30 pm. Tickets: £10 pp. To order a ticket please

email: [wilsontullylish2@hotmail.com](mailto:wilsontullylish2@hotmail.com) or [georginalouise@live.co.uk](mailto:georginalouise@live.co.uk) Book early!