



Image of the day - Rue lighthouse on Rathlin in heavy weather by Douglas Cecil

Reports

C of I General Synod timetable

The first of a three part series introducing the arrangements, Bills, Reports and Motions.

The Church of Ireland's General Synod will this year be meeting online from Thursday, 30th September 2021, to Saturday, 2nd October 2021. This will be the first meeting of the fifty-

second General Synod. The Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, the Most Revd John McDowell, will preside and will make his Presidential Address to General Synod shortly after the start of business on the first day.

The starting times for the business of General Synod will be as follows:





CHURCH OF IRELAND GENERAL SYNOD

11.00am – Thursday, 30th September;
2.30pm – Friday, 1st October; and
10.00am – Saturday, 2nd October.

The General Synod Service of Holy Communion will be based in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh. The celebrant will be the Archbishop of Armagh and the preacher will be the Rt Revd Andrew Forster, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe. The Service will be made available online before the start of business on the first day of the meeting.

On the first day, General Synod is scheduled to meet between 11.00am and 1.00pm and then adjourn until an evening session between 7.00pm and 9.00pm. The main business will be the consideration of five Bills (outlined later in this planning note).

On the second day, business is scheduled for 2.30pm to 4.30pm will include a motion to re-launch the Bishops' Appeal for World Aid and Development, and the reports of the Standing Committee, the Commission on Ministry, and the Church of Ireland Youth Department.

The reports of the Representative Church Body – the central trustee body of the Church – and the Council for Mission will
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be considered in the evening session between 7.30pm and 9.00pm.

On the third day, from 10.00am, the General Synod will again consider the Bills being brought before this year's meeting, and also the reports of the Board of Education, covering educational issues in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, the Church of Ireland Marriage Council, the Liturgical Advisory Committee, the Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue, and the Covenant Council (which oversees the Church's relationship with the Methodist Church in Ireland).

Please visit the General Synod website for further information:

[<https://synod.ireland.anglican.org/2021/welcome>]

Government 'criminalising' those who help asylum-seekers, bishops warn

Twelve Anglican bishops have accused the UK Government of criminalising the "Good Samaritans" who rescue asylum-seekers crossing the Channel in unseaworthy craft.

The bishops say that the plan proposed by the Home Secretary, Priti Patel, for Border Force vessels to force migrant boats back into French waters, will penalise those who decide to bring their occupants safely to the UK.

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In a letter to The Guardian, the bishops, who speak on asylum and refugee issues within the Church, say that the “turn-back” policy outlined in the proposed Nationality and Borders Bill raises significant moral concerns. “It would require those who see asylum-seekers at risk to choose between ignoring a moral imperative (also established in maritime law) to assist them, or to risk prosecution and imprisonment.

“This amounts to a criminalisation of the Good Samaritan who did not pass by on the other side, and an affront to justice to put the saving of lives under any sort of legal penalty.”

International and maritime law says that assistance must be given to people in distress at sea, and Article 98 of the 1982 UN convention on the law of the sea requires vessels from every state “to render assistance to any person found at sea in danger of being lost”.

The 12 signatories are the Bishops of Durham, Manchester, Croydon, Bradwell, London, Dover, Gloucester, Southwark, Chelmsford, Wakefield, Bristol, and the Bishop in Europe.

In their letter, they say that the Government’s “increasing militarisation and securitisation” of the border has failed. “All the while the crossings are still happening and are actively being made more dangerous, at greater cost in human life, by the Government’s own policies.

“It is time for a reappraisal which looks again at serious multilateral approaches to refugees, which promotes safe

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routes for those in need, and which, above all, values human life and the dignity of vulnerable people.”

Church of Ireland Historical Society Postgraduate Prize 2021



The Church of Ireland Historical Society has announced that its postgraduate essay prize is open for 2021.

The winner of the W. G. Neely Prize will receive €150. His/her essay, moreover, will be considered for publication by Ireland's premier history journal, *Irish Historical Studies*. The candidate with the best essay will also be expected to present his/her paper at either of the Society's conferences in Armagh or Dublin in 2022 (pandemic permitting) and write a short blog about the essay on the Society's website.

The W. G. Neely Prize is named in honour of the Society's founder. It provides an excellent opportunity for postgraduate students to promote their work that considers

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aspects of the Church of Ireland. The prize is open to students pursuing a major research thesis in Ireland or abroad. Candidates interested in submitting an essay may write on any topic of their choosing relating to the history of the Church of Ireland.

The paper should be no more than 5,000 words (including footnotes). Please email it to the joint secretaries, Prof. Alan Ford or Dr Miriam Moffitt, at secretary.coihs@gmail.com. Essays will be judged anonymously. The deadline for submission is Friday, 3 December 2021.

Further details, including the terms and conditions, can be accessed here

<http://churchofirelandhist.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Church-of-Ireland-Historical-Society-2.jpg>.

Critics prayed for not-so-divine intervention, says Pope

Some people within the Catholic Church ‘wanted me to die’ during surgery this summer, jokes pontiff

Pope Francis has joked that “some people wanted me to die” when he underwent colon surgery this summer, in an apparent veiled barb against his enemies in the Catholic Church.

Pope Francis was being interviewed by ‘La Civiltà Cattolica’, a Jesuit magazine.

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He suggested that some hostile clergymen went as far as to plot the next conclave, the gathering of cardinals held in the Sistine Chapel that elects a new pontiff.

“[I’m] still alive, even though some people wanted me to die, “ he said in an interview published yesterday by La Civiltà Cattolica, a Jesuit magazine.

“I know there were even meetings between prelates who thought the Pope’s condition was more serious than the official version. They were preparing for the conclave,” he said.

The comments are among his strongest references yet to his detractors within the Vatican, some of whom have branded him a communist and a heretic.

Conservatives and reactionaries have been incensed by his support for refugees and migrants, his trenchant criticism of global capitalism, his relatively sympathetic tone towards homosexual Catholics and his backing for remarried divorcees to be allowed to take Communion.

To his enemies, he had a one-word message: “Patience!”

“There are also clerics who make nasty comments about me. Some people... say I always talk about social issues and that I’m a communist,” he told the magazine.

He also hit out at an unnamed Catholic television channel, describing it as “the work of the Devil” for continually speaking ill of the Church.



He did not name the station but it was widely thought to be a reference to the EWTN media conglomerate, which is highly critical of his papacy.

“I personally deserve attacks and insults because I am a sinner, but the Church does not deserve them,” he said.

His reaction was to get on with his job as leader of the world’s billion-plus Catholics.

“I just go forward without entering into their world of ideas and fantasies,” he said.

Francis, 84, made the remarks earlier this month at a meeting with fellow Jesuit priests in the Slovak capital, Bratislava, during his four-day apostolic visit to Slovakia and Hungary.

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This is not the first time the Pope has said his ill health sparked speculation that he might resign, as did Benedict XVI, his predecessor.

“Whenever a pope is sick, there’s a breeze or hurricane of conclave,” he said in an interview with Spanish radio.

Pope Francis had surgery in July to remove part of his left colon in what the Vatican has described as a planned procedure.

Much of the traditionalist opposition to Pope Francis comes from the United States.

The deeply conservative American Bishops Conference has bridled at Francis’s outspoken views on the evils of capitalism, the rights of the poor and the need to protect the environment by fighting climate change.

Conservatives were furious in July when the Pope cracked down on the celebration of the old Latin Mass, a rite that had been championed by Pope Benedict XVI.

News briefs

60 years of Songs Of Praise

On Sunday Aled Jones introduces highlights from 60 years of Songs Of Praise from Cardiff where the first episode was made. He looks back on memorable occasions and chats

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with Mark Delisser about the variety of music shown.
Sunday 1.15 on BBCOne and bbc.in/2W0rfl3

Catholic bishops September newsletter

The September issue of 'Sharing the Good News', the Catholic bishops monthly newsletter for parishes and dioceses, is now available.

[] [https://catholicbishops.ie/wp-content/upl\[\]](https://catholicbishops.ie/wp-content/upl[])

Quiet Morning in St. John's Parish, Fivemiletown

On Saturday 13th November – there will be a Quiet Morning in St. John's Parish, Fivemiletown with Revd Canon David Ferry, Limavady, beginning at 9.30am and finishing with soup lunch (Covid permitting). The morning is open to parishioners, parishioners from the diocese and friends of the parish. Canon David is a witness for the Fellowship Of Contemplative Prayer and will lead the prayer and quiet according to their rhythm. Please book with Precentor Kyle Hanlon, or Judith in the parish office on 8952 2422. Booking is essential as space will be limited. Starting at 9.30am with coffee and registration followed at 10am with First contemplation; 11.20am with Second contemplation with Holy Communion and at 12.30pm with Soup Lunch. No fee but donations welcome. Gentle revelation - Canon Ferry is Precentor Hanlon's former Boys' Brigade Captain.

Edgehill farewell

The President of the Methodist Church and friends in Edgehill House said goodbye to Hollyanne Boyce and Linda McGuffin as they move on to take up new roles. All enjoyed

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a socially
distanced
(outdoors)
farewell
coffee time
and both
(see right)
were thanked
for their work
for the
Connexion

**Jesuit group
calls on
Biden to
accept
200,000
refugees**

After
President
Biden raises
refugee cap

to 125,000, Jesuit group calls on him to accept 200,000. In setting the target, the administration said it would focus on several key groups, including Central Americans, Afghans at risk due to their affiliation with the United States, LGBTQ refugees and members of the predominantly Muslim Uighur ethnic group who are the targets of Chinese government campaign to eradicate their culture. President Donald Trump capped the number of refugees at 15,000, the lowest since the 1980 Refugee Act took effect. President Joe Biden faced



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criticism when he was slow to raise it upon taking office, eventually settling at 62,500 under pressure.

Exciting job opportunity within the Church of Ireland

The Church of Ireland Board for Ministry with Children and Families is seeking to appoint a Children and Families Development Officer. The Board exists to equip, resource and advocate for the increased welcome, enhanced inclusion and full participation of children and their families in the whole life of the Church.

<https://www.ireland.anglican.org/vacancies/711/children-and-families-development-officer>

The Netherlands unveils its first national Holocaust monument

A monument listing 102,163 Dutch victims of the Holocaust was unveiled by King Willem-Alexander in Amsterdam on Sunday, the first national memorial to be built in the Netherlands.

The monument, designed by Daniel Libeskind, 75, who lost relatives in the Holocaust, lies in the center of the Dutch capital and is a labyrinth of brick walls that, when seen from above, form Hebrew letters reading "in remembrance." Each stone carries the name of a Jew, Roma or Sinti who was deported from the Netherlands and who died in Nazi concentration camps during World War II. It is the first memorial to commemorate all the victims from across the Netherlands in one place.

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Culture Night 2021 at St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork

On Friday, 17th September St Fin Barre's Cathedral held a Choral Evensong and guided tours for Culture Night 2021. In line with ongoing guidelines, the Lay Vicars Choral of the Cathedral Choir sang canticles by Charles Wood and a motet by William Mundy under the direction of Peter Stobart. The Assistant Director of Music, Robbie Carroll played an organ voluntary by Marcel Dupré.

After Choral Evensong, the cathedral's experienced tour guides gave guided tours covering the history and architecture of the cathedral.

Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars

Praying with Art - video for COP26

The UK will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow on 31st October - just six weeks away. As we prepare for this historic event, Gospel in Art editor Patrick van der Vorst has just created this new 'Praying with Art' video - set to the music of John Denver's 'Windsong'.

Through classical and modern paintings by Van Gogh, Michelangelo, Botticelli, Hokusai, Degas, Joel Rea, Wyeth and several others we look at the Beauty of our world... a world that has been entrusted into our care. We ask that we may all grow deeper in our respect for God's Creation and take better care of it.

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Watch the video:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-zkVfCDQ3A]

Philippians - NT Wright online

Have you read N.T. Wright's exposition of Philippians? Now there's a corresponding online course taught by the bishop himself: Paul and His Letter to the Philippians.

Develop a deeper appreciation for the way Paul presents his message as a prisoner for Christ in this delightful epistle and easy-to-understand course.

Available here: <http://bit.ly/2bUIF7n>

Online lesson - the creation of Auschwitz

Learn about the creation of Auschwitz, reasons of incarceration of Poles and the plans of development of Auschwitz into the main camp for prisoners in German-occupied Poland. Online lesson "Poles at KL Auschwitz"
[[http://lekcja.auschwitz.org/en_2020_06_polacy/]

Reflect and Reset webinar series

Evangelical Alliance invite those involved in church leadership and ministry to engage with their new Reflect and Reset resource.... They write -

In this coming season, we want to help you to ask strategic questions and hold formative conversations as we learn some lessons from lockdown.

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The church found new pathways for discipleship and community, and stepped out boldly to make Jesus known through evangelism and community transformation.

How can we sustain the good practices that emerged during the pandemic? How can we safeguard the potential pitfalls in this changed landscape?

Donna has been in conversation with a wide range of church leaders and worked alongside our UK-wide team to develop this series of resources for the local church in this moment.

The resource consists of a visual tool for churches to work through as a basis for reflection and reset. This is teased out through webinars and a wide range of question sets to work through and as eldership or leadership team.

The webinars are:

Tuesday 28 September - Re-rooting our identity: Discipleship Reset.

Tuesday 5 October - Reconnecting in Community: Church Reset.

Tuesday 12 October - Revitalising our Witness: Mission Reset.

Tuesday 19 October - Rethinking our work: Calling and worship Reset.

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You can book onto the webinars and download the resources here -

[[] https://www.eauk.org/what-we-do/initiatives/changing-church/changing-church-re-entry/reflect-and-reset?utm_]

If you'd be interested in discussing this further as a church or within a gathering of church leaders in your area, just contact Donna on d.jennings@eauk.org

Perspective

We cannot stand for the partition of the UK by Vernon Bogdanor

A damaging protocol that alters the constitutional position of Northern Ireland is unacceptable.

The dispute over the Northern Ireland Protocol is about more than sausages. It concerns the right of the people of Northern Ireland to self-determination. Some in the EU, led by President Macron, appear to believe that Northern Ireland is not fully a part of the United Kingdom. It is.

In December 1921, the Anglo-Irish Treaty recognised the right of self-determination of 26 counties in the island of Ireland to secede from the United Kingdom. Northern Ireland then exercised her own right of self-determination by deciding to remain a part of the United Kingdom.

This decision was legitimised in 1998 by the Belfast or Good Friday Agreement which guaranteed Northern Ireland's constitutional position by providing that it should not cease to remain part of the United Kingdom until a majority so consented.

The agreement did not, as is sometimes suggested, establish a hybrid status for Northern Ireland such as joint sovereignty with the Republic. It confirmed British sovereignty in Northern Ireland in exchange for power sharing with equality of treatment for both communities.

Nor did the agreement mandate a soft border on the island of Ireland, which was not mentioned, since it was then assumed that Britain would remain in the EU. That the agreement entails a soft border is an opinion, not a fact.

What is not an opinion, however, is that the Northern Ireland Protocol imposes a regulatory and customs border in the Irish Sea. For while the rest of the United Kingdom leaves the EU's internal market, Northern Ireland remains in it. The protocol preserves the EU's internal market at the expense of the internal market of the United Kingdom. There will be a regulatory border within the United Kingdom with checks in the Irish Sea.

Article 4 of the protocol declares that Northern Ireland remains part of the customs territory of the UK. But that is misleading. For Articles 5 (2), (3) and (4) and Annex 2 lock Northern Ireland into the EU Customs Code and common tariff. Checks are needed on goods brought into Northern Ireland from Great Britain considered at risk of being moved into the EU.

The onus is on the “exporter” from Great Britain to prove that there is no risk. Customs declarations will be needed once the grace period ends and duties will be paid, to be reimbursed later. So Northern Ireland remains in effect within the EU customs union.

Of course, checks can be minimised or perhaps avoided completely were Britain to accept EU rules. As a Remainer, I would have welcomed this. But the British people decided otherwise in the 2016 referendum and the 2019 election which gave Boris Johnson a mandate for a so-called hard Brexit allowing Britain to diverge from EU rules. Brexit would indeed be pointless were Britain now to ape EU rules. What new trading rules Britain now adopts is a decision for Britain alone, not for the EU, still less the Americans.

The protocol transforms Northern Ireland into a condominium jointly ruled by Britain and the EU. But while Northern Ireland is represented at Westminster, she is not represented in the EU, though subject to EU regulations. This flouts the very principle – no taxation without representation – against which American colonists rebelled 250 years ago. Americans would no doubt rebel again were Alaska to be removed, without her consent, from America’s internal market and customs union, with customs declarations required for the importation of goods from the other 49 states.

British voters may have consented to a hard Brexit, but Northern Ireland has not consented to the protocol. In subjecting Northern Ireland to a major constitutional change without consent, the protocol breaches the spirit if not the letter of the Belfast or Good Friday Agreement, as well as

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the principle of international law requiring respect for territorial integrity. The protocol can hardly be accepted as legitimate until validated by the people of Northern Ireland.

A major constitutional change, partially extruding a section of the country from the United Kingdom against its will, tests the limits of allegiance. Before 1914, Unionists refused to accept a Dublin Parliament. In 1974, they rejected the Council of Ireland, part of the Sunningdale Agreement, bringing it down by direct action, with disastrous consequences for the peace process. On both occasions Westminster under-estimated the strength of feeling among Unionists.

The British Government has been accused by the Americans and by Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission and Charles Michel, President of the European Council, of inflammatory rhetoric. Perhaps inflammatory rhetoric is not out of place when the unity of the kingdom is at stake. But what is to be said of the comment by Maros Sefcovic, Vice-President of the EU Commission, that the EU's patience "is wearing very, very thin". I am a supporter of the EU but Mr Sefcovic's language is reminiscent of that of the dictators of the 1930s.

One hundred years ago Ireland was partitioned. The protocol in effect partitions the United Kingdom.

Vernon Bogdanor is Professor of Government, King's College, London. Courtesy the Daily Telegraph 14.06.2021

Poem for today

Among the Rocks by Robert Browning

Oh, good gigantic smile o' the brown old earth,
This autumn morning! How he sets his bones
To bask i' the sun, and thrusts out knees and feet
For the ripple to run over in its mirth;
Listening the while, where on the heap of stones
The white breast of the sea-lark twitters sweet.

That is the doctrine, simple, ancient, true;
Such is life's trial, as old earth smiles and knows.
If you loved only what were worth your love,
Love were clear gain, and wholly well for you:
Make the low nature better by your throes!
Give earth yourself, go up for gain above!



Speaking to the Soul

See post for today on site

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