



**Image of the day - Band of the Royal Irish Regiment
in Belfast Cathedral for
Royal British Legion Centenary Service**

Reports

Coveney set to attend Northern Ireland centenary church service in Armagh

Irish foreign affairs minister Simon Coveney looks set to attend a church ceremony marking the centenary of Northern Ireland's foundation in Armagh next month, Niamh Campbell reports in the Belfast Telegraph

The Republic's Cabinet is expected to decide on Tuesday (today) to send a senior minister to the October 21 service in St Patrick's Church of Ireland.

The Sunday Times sources reported that Mr Coveney or social protection minister, Heather Humphreys, will be the first choice to travel to the event.

It comes as it was confirmed the Irish President is to hold a seminar on the partition of Ireland a few weeks after the Armagh service to mark partition.

The academic discussion will include “a consideration of the road to the [Anglo-Irish] Treaty and its long-term implications”.

Mr Coveney recently confirmed the Irish government had been consulted about the president's invitation to the church service, but said there was no "clear advice" given on whether or not he should attend.

He added President Higgins had made his own decision, which had to be respected.

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President Higgins' seminar is part of his 'Machnamh 100' series, which he began in November 2020.

'Machnamh' translates into English as 'Reflection' and the series “seeks to recall, critique and reflect on the context and events of the War of Independence, the Civil War and partition,” said a spokesperson for the president.

Yesterday Charlie Flanagan, a former Irish minister for foreign affairs, said his government's handling of President Higgins' invitation had been bungled.

The Fine Gael TD said the cross-border row over Mr Higgins' refusal to join the Queen at the ecumenical service was a setback for reconciliation.

However, Sinn Fein is opposed to the Irish government's attendance, along with a small number of Fianna Fail backbenchers and the Social Democrats, whose co-leader Roisin Shortall said: “My view is that it's not appropriate for us to be formally represented at an event to mark partition and the establishment of Northern Ireland.

“Separately, it would be helpful if the earlier communication of the president's views could be clarified. However, overall I think it's time to move on.”

DUP leader Sir Jeffrey Donaldson said the president's decision to reject the invite to the Armagh event “set back north-south relations”. He said it was a poor reflection on the outreach from unionists.

Meanwhile, SDLP deputy leader, Nichola Mallon confirmed on BBC NI's Sunday Politics programme that her party will be organising its own centenary events. She had told the

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same programme earlier this year the party would be planning events.

“We're actually engaging in a lot of conversations around the centenary as part of our 'New Ireland' commission,” she said.

She also noted that party members such as Claire Hanna MP had already attended a centenary event held by the Presbyterian Church and that the SDLP had not received an invitation to next month's Armagh event, but leader Colm Eastwood would consider attending if the invitation comes.

Courtesy The Belfast Telegraph 27.02.2021. See also The Irish Times -

[[] <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/government-will-make-collective-decision-on-ni-event-invite-says-taoiseach-1.4682816>]

Day of Prayer for Young People and Youth Ministry moves to Advent

The Church of Ireland Youth Department's annual Day of Prayer is on the move to the Sunday before Advent, which will this year be Sunday, 21st November. It previously took place on the Sunday before Lent. CIYD is encouraging all churches to make a little space to pray for young people on that day.

Bishop Pat Storey, President of CIYD, says: “As our annual Day of Prayer moves to the Sunday before Advent each



year, we remember that Advent is a time to prepare and to look forward. As we exit this pandemic, we will take time ahead of and during Advent to pray for our young people who have had their lives on hold for so long. We pray for their spiritual future and their unique contribution to the Church. We celebrate their commitment and enthusiasm. We long to meet together again and to connect.

“This Advent, our day of prayer for our young people and youth ministry thus holds special significance. We bring them before God and we celebrate each one. We pray; God hears!”

Simon Henry, CIYD’s National Youth Officer, adds: “Youth ministry has been mightily challenged over the past year and young people have missed out on so much. This is an opportunity to bring them once again to the forefront of our thoughts and prayers.”

A PDF version of a book published by CIYD in 2019 with lots of ideas of how to pray is available to help local

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churches to plan ahead for the Day of Prayer. Please email admin@ciyd.org for your copy.

South Sudan: Churches shelter people displaced by floods

Churches and schools in South Sudan are providing shelter to displaced populations after floods-caused by early seasonal rainfall- submerged their homes and farmland.

At least 426,000 people, including 185,000 children, are affected by the flooding, according to the United Nations. The numbers are expected to rise, as more rain pounds regions of the world's newest nation. The nation is still struggling to find peace after several years of conflict.

"The areas most affected by floods are Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Unity State. The floods have also affected the poor infrastructure, agricultural land, shelters, and homes of communities.

"Also affected are the internally displaced persons who have been forced out of their villages by violence," said Fr James Oyet Latansio, a Roman Catholic Priest and general secretary of the South Sudan Council of Churches.

In South Sudan, peace is still fragile, according to church officials. The churches are responding to humanitarian needs such as food emergency and health services, as they also work to tame inter-communal violence, sexual and gender violence, insecurity on the roads, and killings.



Man trying to herd his cattle from flood waters in Ayod, South Sudan

Recently, emergence of COVID-19 added to the challenges, with the measures made to tame the pandemic complicating humanitarian responses.

Adding to the challenge is the latest flood disaster, which has been triggered by the overflowing of the Nile, Lol and Sobat rivers, and the Sudd Wetlands.

The floodwaters have been breaking past the river banks and dykes to engulf large stretches of land where the communities graze their animals. The floods have also submerged villages, leaving thousands of people without homes.

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"Floods have exacerbated the vulnerability of communities, with many displaced...seeking refuge in churches and schools. Health facilities have been impacted," said the United Nations Office for the coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Forced out by the floods, the communities are moving to higher grounds where they hope to get some assistance. More rainfall and flooding is expected to occur in the coming months, meaning that more people will need food aid, as the disaster makes farms and fields inaccessible.

"The humanitarian response is just limited due to the poor infrastructure and the roads. Not to mention the security of humanitarian workers which remains a challenge," said Latansio.

According to the Ecumenical Network on South Sudan, at least 128 aid workers - the majority of them from South Sudan- have been killed in the country since 2013.

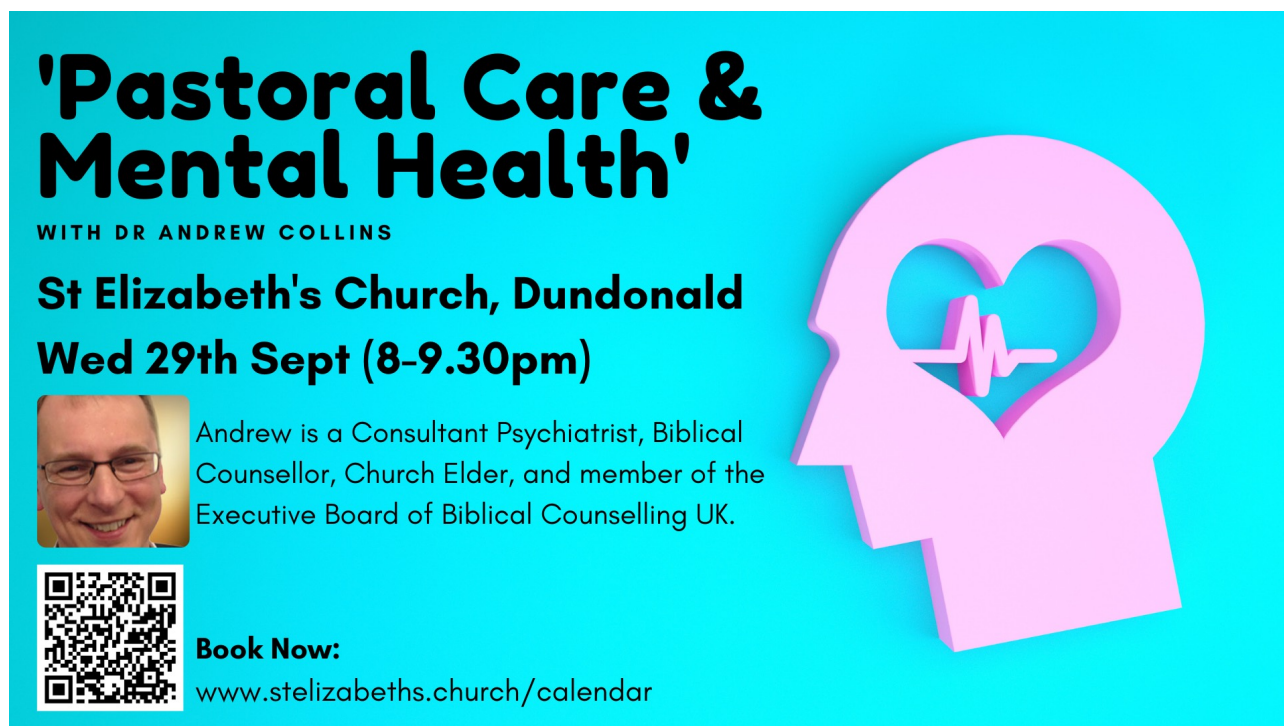
On 21 September - International Day of Peace - the network said in a statement that South Sudan was experiencing flooding among other disasters and urged the government to "inclusively and equitably share resources and protect and nurture God's creation for the next generation to come."

According to agencies, 8.3 million people in South Sudan are in need of humanitarian assistance due to conflict and other disasters. An estimated 2.3 million have been forced to flee the country, while 1.7 million are internally displaced. With one of the worst world's food crisis, it ranks very highly

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as one of the countries most vulnerable to the Covid-19 pandemic.


News briefs




'Pastoral Care & Mental Health'

WITH DR ANDREW COLLINS

St Elizabeth's Church, Dundonald
Wed 29th Sept (8-9.30pm)



Andrew is a Consultant Psychiatrist, Biblical Counsellor, Church Elder, and member of the Executive Board of Biblical Counselling UK.



Book Now:
www.stelizabeths.church/calendar

Pastoral Care and Mental Health seminar

Pastoral Care and Mental Health, an evening for all on Wednesday 29 September in St Elizabeth's, Dundonald from 8.00 – 9.30 pm.

The Pandemic has reminded all of us of our need for good mental health during stressful times. Andrew Collins, a Christian psychiatrist, biblical counsellor and church elder will help participants think through mental health from a biblical perspective and answer questions.

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All of us want good mental health and each of us know people who suffer acutely the effects of stress and anxiety. Here is an opportunity not to be missed.

Register to attend at this link -

[[] <https://stelizabeths.churchsuite.com/events/zekhkopqYou>]

or phone St Elizabeth's church office 02890 482644.

Worship Academy at The Hub, Queen's University

“Next week is the start of a brand new term! If you are a worship leader and you're interested in learning and developing your skills then check out our Worship Academy that's going to be running throughout the year”. All the info can be found here <https://thehubbelfast.org/worshipacademy/> and if you have any questions feel free to send them a message!



Priorities Funding is open for applications

Apply to the Priorities Fund: A reminder that the latest round of Priorities Funding is open for applications. All information is available on the website

churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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[<https://priorities.ireland.anglican.org/>]



Hollywood Parish seeking a Youth Worker

Hollywood Parish are seeking a Parish Youth Worker - “to join our team and serve the young people of our church family and community. We want to see our young people (and our children and older people) disciplined in faith, filled with God’s Spirit, equipped to serve and reaching others in grace and truth”.

This post is for 25 hours per week. The closing date for applications is Friday 22 October 2021. How to apply - For more details or to request an application pack– including a profile of this important ministry and something of our vision for it, a job description and application form– please contact Jayne Forster at this address: hollywoodparish@gmail.com

Job Opportunity at Belfast Bible College

New Job Opportunity at Belfast Bible College to join the Communications Team as their Engagement Officer.

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Find out more and apply today at:

<https://www.belfastbiblecollege.com/jobs2021>

Memorial marks contribution by Ely family to historic church



Attending the unveiling of the Ely memorial were (from left): Elizabeth McClelland, Churchwarden; Elmarie Swanepoel, Programme Manager of the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership; the Bishop of Clogher, the Right Revd Dr Ian Ellis; Richard Harkness, Churchwarden; and the Revd Stephanie Woods, in charge of the parish of Inishmacsaint.

A memorial has been unveiled in memory of the Ely family who contributed so much to St Ninnidh's Parish Church, Inishmacsaint, in Clogher Diocese over many generations.

The memorial was unveiled and dedicated by the Bishop of Clogher, the Right Revd Dr Ian Ellis at Sunday service during the European Heritage Open Weekend.

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Chosen and Called - Church Army blog

Read the latest Blog, Chosen and Called: Reflections on John 15:16, by Jayne Elliott, Church Army's Leadership Development Officer.

[<https://churcharmy.org/general/chosenandcalled/>]

Service of Institution, Newcastle

The Revd Myrtle Morrison will be instituted as Incumbent of the Parish of Newcastle on Wednesday 13 October at 8.00 pm.

The preacher at the service will be Revd Jan Stevenson, Community Pastor in Ballyholme Parish.

Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars

Cork's People and Places video of St Fin Barre's Cathedral

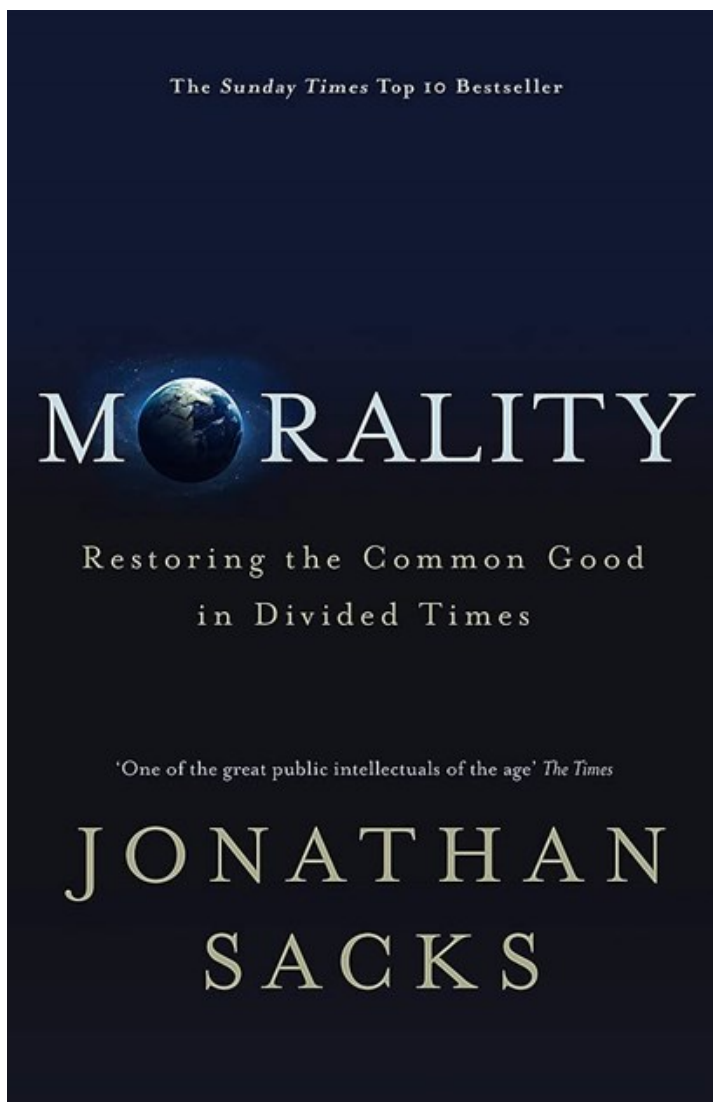
The Very Rev. Nigel Dunne, Dean of Cork, shows us around St Fin Barre's Cathedral in this week's video in the "People and Places" series. Having just closed the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the consecration of the building last weekend, Dean Dunne shows us a few of the distinctive features the cathedral has to offer.

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You can watch the video here. Links to St. Fin Barres and four other parishes featured by the diocese.

[[] <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXIINc8TIEVI9TFVvsnutNg>]

Morality: Restoring the common good in divided times by Jonathan Sacks - available in paperback

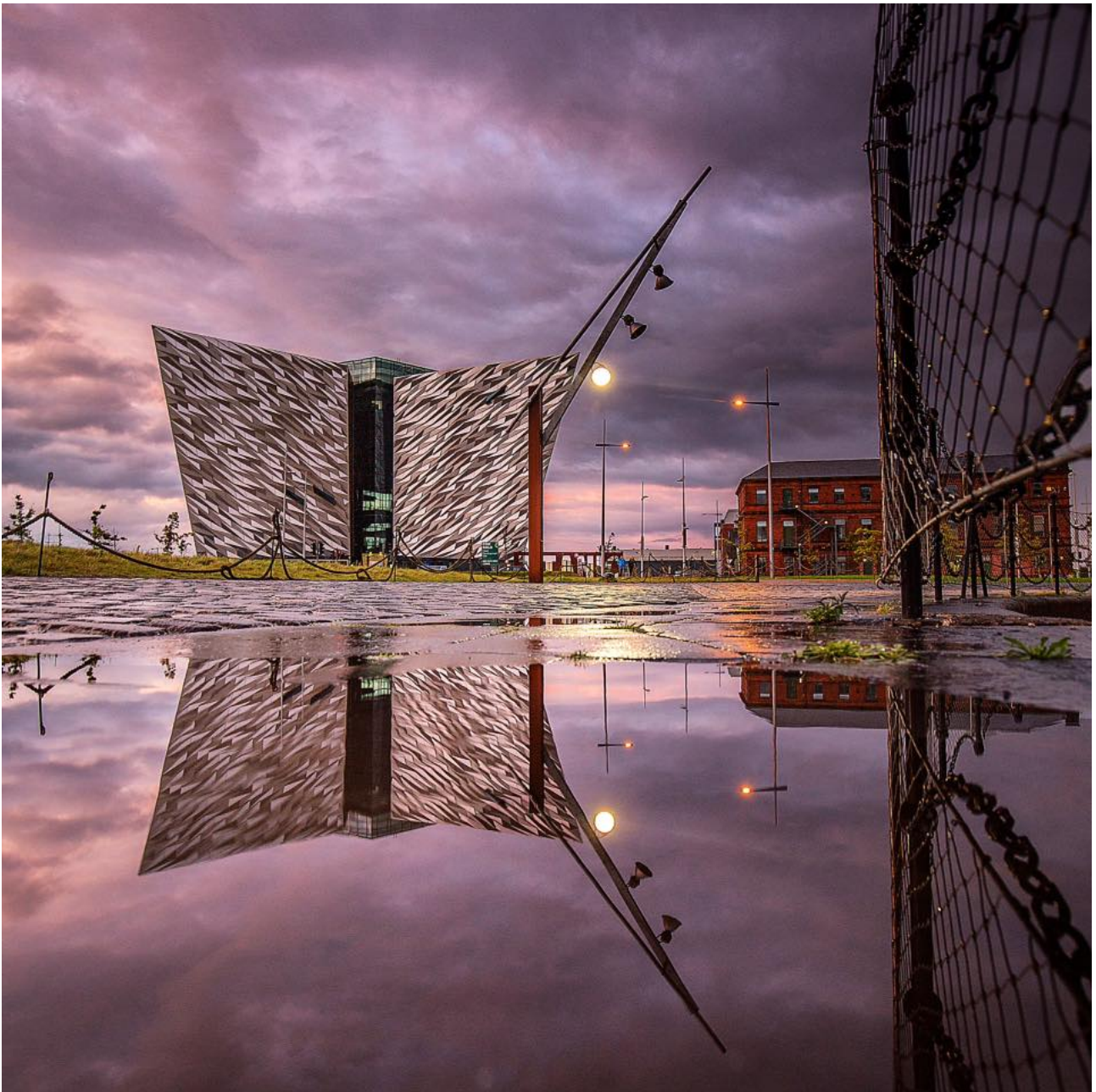


Rabbi Lord Sacks's book on morality is now out in paperback, preaching on God in the present times, and prayer resources for individuals and groups

“We are living through a period of cultural climate change. We have outsourced morality to the markets on the one hand, and the state on the other. The markets have brought wealth to many, and the state has done much to contain the worst excesses of inequality, but neither is capable of bearing the

moral weight of showing us how to live. This has had a profound impact on society and the way in which we interact with each other. Traditional values no longer hold, yet recent political swings show that modern ideals of tolerance have

Titanic Belfast



Titanic Belfast

left many feeling rudderless and adrift. In this environment we see things fall apart in unexpected ways — toxic public discourse makes true societal progress almost unattainable, a more divisive society is fuelled by identity politics and extremism, and the rise of a victimhood mentality calls for ‘safe spaces’ but stifles debate. The influence of social media seems all-pervading and the breakdown of the family is only one result of the loss of social capital. Many fear

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what the future may hold. Delivering a devastatingly insightful critique of our modern condition, and assessing its roots and causes from the ancient Greeks through the Reformation and Enlightenment to the present day, Sacks argues that there is no liberty without morality, and no freedom without responsibility. If we care about the future of western civilisation, all of us must play our part in rebuilding our common moral foundation. Then we will discover afresh the life-transforming and counterintuitive truths that a nation is strong when it cares for the weak, and rich when it cares for the poor. Here is an inspiring vision of a world in which we can all find our place, and face the future without fear.” (Hodder, £10.99 (Church Times special offer price £8.99); 978-1-473-61733-9). New in paperback.

Perspective

The Service of Reflection & Hope: An opportunity for the Church Leaders? by Gladys Ganiel

Unless you're an avid reader of the 'Presbyterian Notes', a bi-weekly feature on a back page of the weekend edition of the Irish Times, you probably missed it.

Yesterday this brief little column, which isn't even included in digital editions of the paper, printed an extract from an address given last week by the Moderator, Rev David Bruce. Bruce was speaking at an event marking the part

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played by Union Theological College in hosting the parliament of Northern Ireland 100 years ago.

This event was attended by high-ranking politicians and church leaders, and thronged by the island's media, all pursuing the story about why President Michael D. Higgins had turned down the church leaders' invitation to attend a service of reflection and hope on the centenary of partition and the creation of Northern Ireland, scheduled for next month in Armagh's Church of Ireland Cathedral.

I continue to find it perplexing that such a furore could have occurred when so many people of goodwill, the church leaders and President included, were involved. There seems to have been an unfortunate series of misunderstandings and miscommunications, well summarized in the lead editorial in yesterday's Irish Times.

But the focus on President Higgins meant that the media missed some significant words, including Bruce's recital of the past failings of his own Presbyterian tradition. Bruce was quoted in the Presbyterian Notes extract:

Northern Ireland's perception of itself has suffered from a deep and bogus theological conceit from its earliest days, particularly from within my tradition, or parts of it – that it was a bulwark against Rome's inexorable advance, that it, and the Protestant people within it were especially anointed by God, that like Israel, it understood itself to be exceptional in the overarching economy of God. ... our calling is not to repeat the mistakes of imperial hubris, but to live ... in such a way that we would; '... act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.' This is not a manifesto for 'a



St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh

Protestant State for a Protestant people', but a shared land which belongs to all of us, and to none of us, since in truth we are merely tenants here of the one who made it, and he is a great and just Landlord.

This is the strongest, high-profile public critique I can recall hearing from a Presbyterian Moderator about how specific

aspects of the Presbyterian theological tradition contributed to injustices on this island.

(Similar critiques have been made by Christian special interest groups, like the dynamic Evangelical Contribution on Northern Ireland – ECONI – which was especially active in the 1990s-early 2000s; and in the work of Methodist theologian Johnston McMaster, among others).

Bruce's words seem in the spirit of the Church Leaders' Group's 2021 St Patrick's Day Statement, which I consider the churches' most comprehensive confession ever for their historic contributions to division and violence.

As Northern Ireland struggles to deal with its past, we need more examples of those who represent institutions and movements that have sinned (to use that traditional Christian language) to step up and acknowledge those failures.

Some may say that in the case of the churches, these confessions or apologies are coming 'too little, too late'. The fact that the wider media hasn't really recognized the importance of what the church leaders have been saying, especially in this centenary year, may simply reflect the churches' declining social significance.

Yet the attention that President Higgins' decision to decline their invitation has generated may mean that more people than ever will be tuned in to what happens at that service next month in Armagh.

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It's an opportunity for the church leaders to show further leadership around repentance and lamentation – balanced with a hopeful orientation towards the future. Will they take it?

The Presbyterian Church's report on the event, including the full text of addresses by Bruce and Prof Ian McBride of Oxford University, are available here.

Courtesy Slugger O'Toole web site.

Gladys Ganiel is a Reader in Sociology at Queen's University Belfast. She also blogs on religion and politics at [www.gladysganiel.com]

Poem for today

Father and Son

by Frederick Robert Higgins

Only last week, walking the hushed fields
Of our most lovely Meath, now thinned by November,
I came to where the road from Laracor leads
To the Boyne river-that seems more lake than river,
Stretched in uneasy light and stript of reeds.

And walking longside an old weir
Of my people's, where nothing stirs-only the shadowed
Leaden flight of a heron up the lean air-
I went unmanly with grief, knowing how my father,
Happy though captive in years, walked last with me there.

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Yes, happy in Meath with me for a day
He walked, taking stock of herds hid in their own breathing;
And naming colts, gusty as wind, once steered by his hand,
Lightnings winked in the eyes that were half shy in greeting
Old friends-the wild blades, when he gallivanted the land.

For that proud, wayward man now my heart breaks-
Breaks for that man whose mind was a secret eyrie,
Whose kind hand was sole signet of his race,
Who curbed me, scorned my green ways, yet increasingly
loved me
Till Death drew its grey blind down his face.

And yet I am pleased that even my reckless ways
Are living shades of his rich calms and passions-
Witnesses for him and for those faint namesakes
With whom now he is one, under yew branches,
Yes, one in a graven silence no bird breaks.

Speaking to the Soul

Bible verse, a
thought and
prayers, is
posted on site daily

