



Image of the day - UK Ambassador to the Holy See presents his letter of appointment



People and places

HE Chris Trott, UK Ambassador to the Holy See, said “I was delighted and honoured to present my letter of appointment to His Holiness Pope Francis this morning. A memorable encounter with a truly global leader, and a special day for UK Vatican relations”.

Funeral of Pat Hume today as tributes continue

The funeral of Pat Hume, the widow of late SDLP leader John Hume, will take place today, Monday. A requiem Mass for Mrs Hume will be celebrated today in St Eugene's Cathedral in Derry, where her husband's funeral took place last year.

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Tributes have continued to pour in for Mrs Hume, a mother-of-five from Derry, who died at home after a short illness on Thursday, surrounded by family.

The death of Mrs Hume, a former teacher, comes just over a year after that of her Nobel Peace Prize-winning husband. The death of the SDLP founder, who was a key architect of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, led to a flood of tributes from around the world.

In a statement **Bishop Donal McKeown** said - “It is with great sadness that I have heard of the death of Pat Hume. In her death the city and indeed our country has returned to God an extraordinary person. She was small in stature but a colossus at a very difficult time in the history of this island. She was the rock behind the man who rightly has been credited as the architect of our current peace.

“In the course of that long and challenging journey towards the peace we enjoy today Pat was brave, courageous and uncompromising, yet she was always gentle and profound in respect for other people and their opinions.

“In the gospel Jesus reminds us that “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God” (Mt 5:9) I pray that Pat may now enjoy the fullness of this beatitude.

“Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam dílis.”

Former US secretary of state **Hillary Clinton** was among those paying tribute to Mrs Hume, describing her as a

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“gracious, determined force behind the achievement of peace in Ireland”.

Mrs Hume had worked alongside her husband for several decades, from the beginning of the civil rights movement in the 1960s until after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.

She later cared for him when he developed dementia.

She was awarded the Irish Red Cross Lifetime Achievement award in 2018 and a foundation honouring her and her husband's peace and reconciliation work was launched last year.

The book of condolence in Derry's Guildhall was opened by the **Mayor of Derry and Strabane, Graham Warke**, on Friday.

He said: “I want to extend my own personal condolences to the Hume family today — they have given much over the years and to lose both John and Pat in such a short space of time is particularly heartbreaking.

“However, it must be some comfort to know that Pat's legacy will live on in the people of this city, and in the ongoing work of the John and Pat Hume Foundation.”

Former Irish president **Mary McAleese** said Mrs Hume was the “perfect partner” for her husband.

“She wasn't just the family who nurtured and encouraged and kept John going, as she did, she was also a formidable community activist in her own right,” she said

Down and Dromore Pastoral Letter defines policy and programme

In a Pastoral Letter to the diocese from the Rt Revd David McClay, Bishop of Down and Dromore a policy and programme are outlined

Bishop McClay states -

Recently a friend expressed something that I too have been sensing. His words were these: “What the Holy Spirit is putting on my heart is that we need to move into a new season of renewal”.

We are living in days when society around us desperately needs a Church and a people whose love for Jesus, whose influence in society and whose truth, power and integrity bring hope and comfort, life and healing into weary homes and communities.

As a Church we need to rediscover the presence of God and his power to change lives. We want to see the Church renewed to transform individuals and society with the life of Christ and the good news of forgiveness, peace, healing and joy that is given to those who would submit to Jesus.

Any season of renewal is always given to us by God. It is God’s gift and God’s doing for, as it says in John 3:8, ‘The wind blows where it wills, and we cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going.’ Nevertheless, if we are to move into a new season of renewal there are responsibilities and challenges that rest with all of us.



Agape Meal in Down Cathedral and prayer events

Firstly, every historic move of God and every season of renewal in the life of the Church has been preceded by the people of God pursuing him through prayer. To encourage a fresh approach towards prayer in our local parishes three diocesan prayer events have been planned for this autumn. The first of these is an Agape Meal in Down Cathedral on St Matthews Day, 21st September at 7:30pm. The evening will be very simple and safe in its format as we enjoy some food, pray together, and conclude with Holy Communion.

Two further prayer events will follow, and details can be found on the diocesan website here.

Bible reading plan for 2022 in every church

Secondly, every season of renewal in the Church that has lasting significance involves a rediscovery of biblical truth, a fresh commitment to preaching and teaching the scriptures and a new love for studying the bible. To that end I will be asking every church to promote a bible reading plan for

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2022 that enables all of us to read a portion of the bible every day. Watch out for details of this in the coming weeks.

Bringing people to repentance and faith in Christ

Thirdly, every significant season of renewal in the history of the Church has seen an increase in signs and wonders following the preaching of God's word. Renewal gives way to miraculous works of God with demonstrations of the Holy Spirit's power at work in people's lives, especially in bringing them to repentance and faith in Christ.

Lifestyle of faith and generosity

Fourthly, every season of renewal among God's people is accompanied and often preceded by an increase in faith and in generosity. It has struck me that we must step more and more into a lifestyle of faith and generosity, and I would like to suggest some ways in which we might do this.

Emerging out of Covid-19 our government has pledged to give all of us a £100 gift voucher. Rather than this being absorbed into our weekly shopping, may I encourage you to spend it in a local business that has been adversely affected by the pandemic. Please also consider making a matching donation of £100 to a local charity of your choice.

Secondly, please take some time to review how much you give to your local church and consider increasing it.

Donations to plant new congregations

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And finally, please consider enabling our diocese of Down and Dromore to plant new congregations by taking out a standing order for our Diocesan Church Planting Fund. Alternatively, you might like to help us revitalise and reenergise parish ministry as needs arise by taking out a standing order for our Diocesan Rejuvenation Fund. The appropriate forms may be downloaded from the diocesan website.

Together, let's step up in generosity and step out in faith together, believing and crying out for a new season of renewal. Let's join as one across our diocese to pray, to be strengthened by God's word and to be expectant for signs and wonders as God the Holy Spirit brings new life to his Church.

I love a prayer that's found in the Book of Common Prayer that I recall being used a lot when I was much younger.

'Holy Spirit, come in power and bring new life to your church, renew us in love and service and enable us to be faithful to our Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

Catholic bishops consider feedback from public consultation on new edition of Lectionary

In June bishops further considered a revision of the Lectionary during their Summer General Meeting. The Lectionary is the book from which Holy Scripture is proclaimed during the celebration of Mass and the

current Lectionary is based on the 1966 Jerusalem Bible.

Submissions for a new edition Lectionary

Bishops had invited submissions on the possibility of adopting the 2019 Revised New Jerusalem Bible (RNJB) as the basis of a new edition of the Lectionary. The decision for a new edition of the Lectionary is necessary as new copies of the current 1984 print-run are not readily available and a simple reprinting would not be sufficient, given that certain changes have been introduced to the Lectionary over the last 35 years. These changes include replacing “This is the Word of the Lord” with “The Word of the Lord,” as well as new selections of readings from the National Proper for Ireland and the addition of a number of new celebrations, including the Vigil of Pentecost. Also, after more than fifty years of continual and fruitful use, the Jerusalem Bible has been updated, correcting some imprecisions in its translation, as well as giving consideration to developments in the English language over this half century.

The consultation process produced over 200 relevant submissions from individuals and another 20 from different organizations. The consultation process was managed by the Secretariat for Liturgy of the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference. The bishops expressed thanks to all those who took the time to respond to the consultation request which helped to inform their decision in relation to selecting an appropriate Bible translation as the basis of the new Lectionary.

Submissions

Some submissions were more detailed than others, such as from the Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland (AMRI), on behalf of its 7,000 members. Other respondents with a deep expertise of Biblical scholarship included the Irish Biblical Association, the Tarsus Scripture School and the Cork Scripture Group. Overall, submissions expressed a clear preference for adopting the Revised New Jerusalem Bible (RNJB) as the basis of a new Lectionary for use during Mass in Ireland.

Over 150 of the individuals who made submissions (and virtually all of the organizations) believed the RNJB struck the right balance in regard to “inclusive language” and gender-sensitivity, with a few others suggesting that it did not go far enough and some thinking that it went too far. Of the other Bible translations mentioned, ten individuals suggested using the Revised Standard Version 2nd Catholic Edition, eight suggested the English Standard Version, six suggested the New Revised Standard Version and four suggested the Inclusive Bible. The remaining submissions expressed no preference on the appropriate Bible translation.

Next steps

The results of the Lectionary consultation were considered by the Bishops' Conference during its summer meeting. Bishops decided to explore collaboration with other English speaking conferences regarding use of the RNJB. The process of preparing a new edition of the Lectionary will take several years and it is hoped that the publication will be accompanied by new catechetical materials. Its introduction will provide an opportunity for a deepening of formation of

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Catholics in the Word of God (especially in light of the recent inauguration of the Sunday of the Word of God and Spiritus Domini, Pope Francis' apostolic letter renewing the ministry of Lector).

News briefs



Zip wire run in to confirmation

Like many other Confirmation Groups, the Templebreedy Candidates had mostly met via Zoom over the course of the last year. They planned a summer gathering when restrictions would allow, and to that end they met on Saturday the 28th of August at Farren Wood Zipit Forest Adventure. The Rev. Isobel Jackson said:

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“They were delighted to be outside and together doing something really fun. It was a wonderful team building exercise, and a real exercise in faith; those ropes are high!” The outing ended with a home brought picnic in the surrounding woods. The group in Cork diocese is looking forward to their next gathering on their Confirmation Day later this month.

All Ireland Mothers' Union President visits Limerick

Yesterday (Sunday) in St Mary's cathedral, Limerick, the Patronal Festival was observed. Whilst the celebrations have been scaled down this year it saw a welcome return of the choir. In the afternoon at Evensong the guest speaker was Ms June Butler, All Ireland Mothers' Union President, who will be in the diocese as part of her “21 in 21” fundraising project.

Cork, Cloyne and Ross confirmations to go ahead

Following the Government announcement the previous evening, the Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, Dr Paul Colton, announced that Confirmation Services, including some which had been postponed on two previous occasions, would now go ahead this month. Details are available on the Cork, Cloyne and Ross website.

Bible Week in Down and Dromore concludes

You can watch the livestream on the Down and Dromore diocese's Facebook and YouTube channels or download an audio file of each talk by the Revd Mark Aldridge on the Book of Jonah. Just visit this page on the diocesan web

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site and click on the titles to play and right-click to download.

Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars

Blessed are the Peace-Makers: Reconciliation in a post-pandemic world - Justin Welby in conversation with Paula Gooder

**From St Paul's Cathedral - Tuesday 21 September,
7.00-7.45pm. Premiered on YouTube and then available
on catch-up.**

Justin Welby is passionate about Reconciliation and made it one of his three top priorities when he became Archbishop of Canterbury. He says that reconciliation is not the ending of all difference but the transformation of how we deal with difference, and that it takes a lifetime.

In conversation with Paula Gooder, Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral, they will talk about how real reconciliation can be achieved whether between nations, in our personal relationships or within ourselves, as well as what difference the pandemic has made, whether religion is a part of the solution or the problem, and where he finds hope.

Justin Welby became the 105th Archbishop of Canterbury in 2013. He was previously a Canon of Coventry Cathedral



where he jointly led its international reconciliation work, working extensively in Africa and the Middle East. In 2017, Archbishop Justin was invited to join UN Secretary-General António Guterres' High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation – the only faith leader on the panel.

Paula Gooder is the Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral and a leading Biblical scholar. Her latest book is *The Parables* (Canterbury Press, 2020), in her Biblical Explorations series.

The event is free, but if you are able to make a donation to the continuing learning programme at St Paul's Cathedral when you register for the event we would be very grateful.

Find out more, register for free and donate to the Adult Learning programme [here](#)

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[[] <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/blessed-are-the-peace-makers-reconciliation-in-a-post-pandemic-world-tickets-160923567723>]

Aurora Youth youth ministry training course

Aurora Youth is a youth ministry training course, available for applicants from the Republic of Ireland, by St Peter's College (part of Sheffield Diocese in the Church of England), designed to meet the needs of volunteer youth leaders who have busy lives and no formal youth work qualifications.

This ecumenical course is delivered by the Church of Ireland's Youth Department. Anyone aged 16 or older from any Christian youth work setting is welcome.

Aurora Youth will provide you with the essential skills, knowledge and understanding you need to be effective in youth ministry.

Running from this September to next May, we hope to deliver the course using a mixture of modes. Depending on restrictions, we hope to host one face to face day each term (full day Saturdays, venue to be confirmed) and deliver the remainder online (Wednesday evenings).

Students complete a portfolio of learning to gain the President Bishop's Certificate in Youth Ministry, and may

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also work towards the St Peter's College Certificate in Youth Ministry by completing a number of assignments.

Cost: €300 per student (some discounts and bursaries available)

For more details and to book a place, visit
[www.auroratraining.org.uk/eire]

Opinion

Reasons to be Hopeful... by Colin Neill

The news headlines over recent weeks have been as dispiriting as any recent period I can remember. The outworking of the climate emergency is increasingly apparent, unfolding on every continent and with the scale and frequency of extreme weather events outstripping the predictions of climate scientists. And in already shattered Haiti, a broken people have been further impacted by an earthquake in the country.

Then there is Afghanistan. The Taliban are triumphant, whilst the pre-eminent Western superpower appears callous and cynical as it withdraws, leaving moderates, minorities, aid workers, former interpreters, security guards and consular staff, and – above all – women and girls, fearful for their future.

And in the UK, there was also the shock of the mass shooting in Plymouth. What theology equips us for dealing with the horror of a three-year-old girl and her Daddy being shot dead together?

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Added to such news, our own personal stories are always unfolding and we have our own travails. Parents who are ageing, teenagers that are sullen or withdrawn, friends or family members that are angry or drinking too much, not to mention unfulfilled dreams and mental or physical ill health. And Covid-19 also represents a backdrop to all our lives that is not going to go away soon.

On a temporal level, there may not seem to be many reasons to be cheerful. But on a spiritual level, are there reasons to be hopeful?

Paul says at the end of 1 Corinthians 13, that ‘these three remain – faith, hope and love – and the greatest of these is love.’

We talk plenty about faith in a church context, and we know about the importance of love, but how many of us can readily say what hope is, or indeed why we’re personally hopeful? ‘What makes you hopeful?’ is a question I like to ask people, and I’m struck on occasions that I’m met with either awkward silence or an abstract answer: what seems to be the right or pat way to describe hope, rather than something that necessarily flows from lived experience.

I can’t recall either, ever hearing a sermon specifically on hope, perhaps because it’s something that’s so hard to define. It requires engagement of both the head and the heart, of both belief and emotion. And it also demands an honest confrontation between peace, joy, light and truth, and the many dark and painful things that we cannot deny are part of this life.

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I'm neither a theologian or a pastor, and I claim no particular insight into these things, and so rather than setting out arguments that I believe are rigorously defensible definitions of hope, I'll write confessionally and say what is the basis of my hope. Maybe that will be a catalyst to others. Maybe some will want to start a thread below this blog and offer their own reflections. Maybe some will want to preach to their congregations on what hope seems to be to them.

Hope for me flows first of all, from knowing how everything will end. This world might be terribly broken, and the presence of evil within it is so real and apparent, and I don't deny those things. But I know also that Christ died on Friday and was raised to life on Sunday, and that belief and trust in his Resurrection is a true and reasonable thing. And I know that however bewildering and sorrowful it can be to live between the now and the not yet, one day Christ will return and he'll make all things new, no more death, or sickness or pain, and the glory of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. It is a large hope that flows from the big picture of the Christian faith: it is hope as a thing of beauty.

Secondly, hope flows from presence. I don't know what the future holds and at times I let my worries run away on me, but I always return to a confidence that whatever is on the road up ahead of me, Jesus Christ will be with me. As we read in 1 John 5:18, God holds his children securely, and the evil one cannot touch us. I am loved, I am known, and I'll never be alone. His grip on me is infinitely stronger than my grip on him, and I'll let him grip me all the days of my life.

A common statement many Christians use that I often find difficult to relate to is the motif of many prayer meetings that

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‘God is in control.’ I’ve never understood how, when a controlling personality is so dark and unattractive in a person, it should somehow be attractive in a deity. God is love, and love – surely – can’t be forced. The statement also raises many questions about how God could permit or ordain so much that plays out in this world.

Interestingly, Scripture tells us in 1 John 5:19 that “we know that we are children of God and the world around us is under the control of the evil one” (NLT). I must respect that we all, to some extent, drive our own theology cars, and what others derive confidence from, I may question. I can’t say that I see the validity of ‘God is in control’ as the blanket statement that it’s sometimes used as, but oh the comfort and hope I draw from the unshakeable conviction that I’m a deeply loved child of God. Hope – for me – flows from such presence, nearness, and intimacy, and from an image of provision and protection.

And I think and sense, finally, that hope flows from depth. Romans 5 tells us that “suffering produces perseverance, perseverance character, and character hope, and hope does not put us to shame [or ‘disappoint us’ as it’s alternatively translated], because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.”

There’s more basis for hope in love and presence in those verses, but as Paul’s sequence of growth and maturity flows, it also seems that as we suffer, then persevere and hang in and hold on, so flows character, forged through trust in hard times. The outworking of this is that faithful people,

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who themselves experience faithfulness, can't help but become hopeful.

Colin Neill is a Contemporary Christianity Board Member

Poem for today

Inniskeen Road: July Evening by Patrick Kavanagh

The bicycles go by in twos and threes -
There's a dance in Billy Brennan's barn tonight,
And there's the half-talk code of mysteries
And the wink-and-elbow language of delight.
Half-past eight and there is not a spot
Upon a mile of road, no shadow thrown
That might turn out a man or woman, not
A footfall tapping secrecies of stone.

I have what every poet hates in spite
Of all the solemn talk of contemplation.
Oh, Alexander Selkirk knew the plight
Of being king and government and nation.
A road, a mile of kingdom. I am king
Of banks and stones and every blooming thing.

Pointers for prayer

Almighty and everlasting God,
Give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity;
and, that we may obtain that which thou dost promise,

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make us to love that which thou dost command;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We give You thanks, O Lord, that You have invited Your people to pray, in the confidence that You will both hear and answer them according to Your merciful will.

We praise You, O Lord, for the gift of work and for the gifts and skills which shape our earthly vocations. Teach us to labour not for earthly reward but for Your glory, knowing that nothing we do in Your service is ever in vain. Give comfort and direction to the unemployed and the underemployed, that they may find work appropriate to their needs and abilities. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray especially for those who labour on behalf of Your kingdom, for our bishops.....,clergy, our pastor(s), and for all missionaries and church workers. Bless especially those who serve You on mission fields far from home and those who bring the light of Your Word to the blind. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for our nation and those who labour on our behalf at every level of government, and for all who serve the public trust, that they may fulfil their duties with wisdom, honour, and justice. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for the men and women of our armed forces, especially those who labour against the forces of war, terrorism, and oppression. We ask Your blessing also upon those who protect and defend us here. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

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We are mindful of the many whose lives are filled with pain and suffering, grief and sorrow. As You once showed Your mercy to those who called upon You long ago, so show Your mercy to those who cry to You today. According to Your will, grant them healing and peace, especially _____**those whom we name now in our hearts. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Almighty God,
whose only Son has opened for us
a new and living way into your presence:
Give us pure hearts and steadfast wills
to worship you in spirit and in truth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Speaking to the Soul

They remained standing in place for three hours while the Book of the Law of the Lord their God was read aloud to them. Then for three more hours they confessed their sins and worshipped the Lord their God.

Nehemiah 9:3 NLT

This was the start of a new chapter for God's people. It was a time for them to reassess their lives in the light of the Law of Moses. This was an occasion for encouragement because they were reminding themselves of the love and faithfulness of their God who wanted to live in covenant partnership with them. But it was also a time of deep pain as they were reminded that the people of Israel had a long history of rebellion against God.

Worship should always contains these two elements. As we declare the greatness of God and celebrate his love for us, we are bound also to own up to our failures. God doesn't call us to wallow in our sins and to exaggerate them. He wants to set us free from our failures and shortcomings, but that cannot happen unless we are honest with him. It is, therefore, vital that every act of Christian worship includes both a recognition of our sins and of God's ability to set us free from them.

On the face of it, it might sound very negative to regularly call to mind the fact that we are sinners, but it is in fact the complete opposite. As we identify the ways in which we have failed God, we do so knowing that his longing is for us to enjoy life to the full, and to leave all our sins with him. If we fail to hand our sins over to God, we can be sure that we will have to drag them and a sense of guilt through life. That will, inevitably, impoverish our lives and prevent us from experiencing the freedom, peace and joy that he wants us to know. So whenever we hear the words confession and forgiveness we should gain a lightness of spirit and a huge sense of relief and joy.

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QUESTION

In what way have you experienced the joy of God's forgiveness?

PRAYER

Thank you, loving God, that you sent Jesus into this world to die for me. Help me to receive your forgiveness and live the liberated life that you want me to live. Amen

