



**Image of the day - Former bouncer becomes new Boys' Brigade President**

## Reports

# Ecumenical Patriarch, Pope and Archbishop of Canterbury call for the Protection of Creation

### Church leaders warn of ‘critical moment’ to avoid climate catastrophe

The Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the global Orthodox Christian leader have come together to warn of the “catastrophic consequences” of climate change.

For the first time, the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Anglican Communion have jointly warned of a “critical moment” regarding the urgency of environmental sustainability, its impact on poverty, and the importance of global co-operation.

Pope Francis, Archbishop Justin Welby, and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who is regarded as the representative and spiritual leader of Orthodox Christians worldwide, issued a joint statement ahead of Cop26, the UN climate change conference taking place in Glasgow in November.

They said: “For more than a year, we have all experienced the devastating effects of a global pandemic – all of us, whether poor or wealthy, weak or strong. We have depended on each other in our efforts to stay safe.” Their

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statement calls on people to pray for world leaders ahead of Cop26, for individuals to make sacrifices for the sake of the planet, and for business leaders and company bosses to lead “the transition to just and sustainable economies”.

The joint declaration also issued a clear warning: “This is the first time that the three of us feel compelled to address together the urgency of environmental sustainability, the impact on persistent poverty, and the importance of global co-operation. Today, we are paying the price ... Tomorrow could be worse.”

Alok Sharma, the president of Cop26, said: “Cop26 has already been postponed by one year, and we are all too aware climate change has not taken time off.”

Mr Sharma has been meeting Chinese representatives ahead of the event, and is expected to be urging the Chinese government to reduce reliance on coal more quickly than is currently planned. It follows a similar trip by John Kerry, the US climate envoy, last week.

The Global Times, the state-run Chinese newspaper, insisted China would “stick to its own pace” on climate goals despite Mr Sharma’s intervention.

## **New Derry and Raphoe Diocesan Youth Officer**

**The Diocese of Derry and Raphoe has appointed a new Diocesan Youth Officer. Claire Hinchliff is expected to take up her new duties at the end of this month. The**



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**position had been vacant for a number of years following the departure of Claire's predecessor, Martin Montgomery.**

The new 'incumbent' says she is looking forward to the job immensely. "I have grown up in the Diocese and have benefitted from youth work since I was a teenager," Claire



says, "and now I get to help with some of the youth work that helped me when I was younger. It's very exciting. Teenagers are what I have always mainly worked with. That's where my passion lies."

Claire comes to the role after five years as a youth and family worker for St Canice's Church of Ireland and Faughanvale Presbyterian Church. Prior to that she had been a youth worker with All Saints Clooney. Her new duties require her to "further the Church's ministry with young people of secondary school age". She will be expected to equip parishes for youth ministry through training,

networking, providing strategic direction and encouraging good practice.

The young mother of two is well aware of the challenge she faces. “We are gradually coming out of a pandemic,” Claire says. “Young people are more disconnected from Church than they have ever been. That will be challenging for youth leaders and clergy – and for young people themselves. In a sense, it feels like we’re all starting from the beginning again, from our different positions. I’m looking forward to that. And obviously, I’ll be supporting churches in any way I can.”

Bishop Andrew Forster has congratulated Claire on her appointment. “This is a significant appointment for our Diocese. Youth ministry is a critically important area for our Church.

“Life is very difficult for young people nowadays,” Bishop Andrew says. “Teenagers face all sorts of challenges, even in normal times, and the pandemic has brought additional problems for many of them.

“Claire is right to recognise the scale of the challenge that lies ahead but – like us – she sees the opportunity, too, that youth ministry presents. This is an exciting move for her and an exciting time for the Diocese. I pray God guides Claire in her valuable ministry; I look forward to having her on our team, and to seeing her sharing her gifts and talents with our parishes and our young people.”

## **Former Bouncer Becomes New Boys' Brigade President**

**The Boys' Brigade UK and Rol has elected Rev Dez Johnston to the role of President.**

The uniformed youth organisation provides opportunities for children and young people to learn, grow and discover in a safe, fun, and caring environment which is rooted in the Christian Faith.

Dez, an ordained Baptist Minister, is the Director of Alpha Scotland and was recently appointed as Europe, Middle East, and North Africa Youth Director for Alpha. Before becoming a Christian, Dez worked as a nightclub bouncer in Glasgow – the city where The Boys' Brigade began in 1883.

Dez experienced drug and alcohol problems, before meeting his future wife Fiona, who challenged his ideas of faith. This led to him reading the Bible and going along to Church. He was invited on an Alpha Course, which turned the questions he had about whether God exists into a belief that God loves him.

After becoming an ordained Baptist Minister, Dez went on to join Alpha Scotland as their youth coordinator, before becoming Director in 2018 where today he serves and supports Churches across the country.

Dez, who succeeds Lord Leslie Griffiths who stood down from the role last year, commented:

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It's amazing to be joining the BB family as President. I've been working together with the BB over the last three years and have loved being involved and seeing for myself the work that is going on. I know I might not look like a President, but then again what does a President look like? More importantly, I'm excited about being part of the BB's work to advance Christ's kingdom and of supporting their vision of young people experiencing life to the full.

After a challenging last 18 months, BB groups across the UK and RoI are now restarting their face-to-face activities for the new school year and are open to new children and young people joining the BB family.

You can find your nearest BB group at [boys-brigade.org.uk/join](https://boys-brigade.org.uk/join)

## **Free exhibition at Belfast Cathedral**

**Belfast Cathedral will be open to the public, free of charge from Thursday 9th to Sunday 12th September. The invitation is "Come along to the Cathedral to explore and celebrate our history, architecture and new exhibitions..."**

"Come and see our new exhibitions, Healing through Remembering's 'Everyday Objects Transformed by the Conflict' and photographic exhibition 'Abandoned; Not Forgotten' by Documentary Visual Artist, Lise McGreevy."



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Follow the link below for more information and please take note of the alternative opening hours on Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th September.

<https://www.belfastcathedral.org/news/european-heritage-open-days>

## Antrim Rural Deanery cycle supports NI Chest, Heart and Stroke



The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison, stepped out to wish the cyclists all the best as they passed See House in the early stages of the 83 mile loop.

**David Holmes, Parish Reader in St Bride's Parish Church, Kilbride, has raised hundreds of pounds for NI**



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## **Chest, Heart and Stroke through a sponsored cycle around the churches in Antrim rural deanery.**

The cycle, with the very French title of L'Etape du Deanery, took place on Saturday September 4, starting and finishing at St Bride's near Doagh and following a route which took the cyclists to all 14 churches in the rural deanery.

The Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev George Davison, took time out of a rare day's holiday to meet the riders at the gates of the See House, a short distance into the cycle, and wished them well on their journey.

They were greeted by clergy and parishioners at a number of churches and were very grateful for water and snacks as well as the moral support. St Jude's even laid on a troupe of young dancers to cheer them on!

Simon from Christ Church, Ballynure, Peter from All Saints', Antrim, and David from St Bride's did the entire route, joined at the beginning by Lisa and Yvie from Christ Church, Ballynure, who cycled as far as St Jude's but appeared again with their families at a number of points along the way to give great encouragement.

David said: "It was quite a dull day to begin with, and the sun made only an occasional appearance along the way, but overall conditions were good for cycling. That is with the exception of a strong headwind over the hills from Kells to Ballynure which made progress a little slower.

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“By the time we reached St Bride’s again we had covered an overall distance of 83 miles but were all still in high spirits having accomplished a very worthwhile fundraising event.”

David is a keen cyclist and a former rugby player. He had hoped to organise something like this last year, but had to defer due to the pandemic. “With so many people taking to bikes since Covid-19 started, it is growing in popularity as a sport,” he said.

David expresses his thanks to everyone who has contributed to the charity by supporting ‘L’Etape du Deanery.’

Donations can still be made ONLINE. Everything donated goes to the charity with no commission paid to a third party -  
[[ <https://nichs.org.uk/fundraiser/l%27Etape-du-deanery?> ]

## **Crown Jesus Ministries bring Hope in Chapel Lane, Belfast**

**Crown Jesus Ministries said earlier this week, “We started a very exciting venture with South Belfast Presbytery as we took the keys to the old Berry Street Presbyterian Church”.**

They continued - We have been using one room on these premises since 2015 as the Belfast Prayer Room and recently conversations developed rapidly as we put forward a proposal to develop a centre for mission, prayer and training.

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We held our staff meeting today at the premises and Presbytery Convener James Burnett joined us to share his dreams and aspirations. What a powerful and encouraging day!

Strategically placed in the heart of Belfast adjacent to Chapel Lane, this a building with a rich history of revival, evangelism and hope.

And that's exactly what our dreams are for its future, and we want you to be a part of it.

To find out more about our plans at Chapel Lane we would love you to join us when we launch with a special night of worship, word and prayer in October.

Details to follow shortly but in the meantime please pray for the work at HOPE Chapel Lane.

[www.crownJesus.org](http://www.crownJesus.org)

## Opinion

### **Since Independence Ireland has become more, not less, like Britain by Malachi O'Doherty**

**When the British partitioned India, they hoped to leave behind two new nations modelled largely on the British way of doing things. Both countries were divided for sectarian convenience so there was appalling violence**

**at the beginning but the intention within the political classes in India and Pakistan was that they would develop into democratic secular nations with parliamentary systems modelled on Westminster. Their leaders had been educated in England.**

These would not be monarchies, of course, but neither is Britain really. Ireland asserted its independence from Britain with dreams of being different. Like India it had developed a civil service on the British model and formed a British style parliament but the foundation myth of the new state was that it was Catholic and Gaelic and distinctly unBritish.

De Valera, like Pearse, was suspicious of modern industrialisation and was a bit like Mahatma Gandhi who imagined an India that would be self sufficient, agricultural, even, eschewing modern medicine. Gandhi would have been an anti-vaxxer.

India went against Gandhi's vision and Ireland in time went against De Valera's. India and Pakistan have been separated from each other for 75 years. Chronologically they are as far from partition as we were in 1996.

India, which started out with the intention of being democratic and secular has become determinedly Hindu and sectarian. Pakistan is Islamic. The two parts of the original country are nuclear powers frequently on the brink of war.

Ireland evolved in the other direction, towards being more like Britain and was well on its way by the 1990s to shedding its old chauvinisms.



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There was a time in the sixties when the liberalisation of British social legislation seemed to make Ireland and Britain sharply different in basic values, but Ireland has those same or similar laws now, facilitating contraception, divorce, abortions, same sex marriage.

The old chauvinisms of Gaelic/ Catholic Republicanism and Protestant Unionism are the local cultures which make us different but these are on the wane on both sides of the border.

The Sinn Féin movement traces its lineage back through Pearse to the Fenian movement but it would be embarrassed to have him as a member now. He would be more at home in Aontu.

Paisley, as he was in the '70s and '80s would be a similar embarrassment to the modern DUP, as the DUP itself is an embarrassment to many - perhaps most - who value the Union.

This is particularly a problem for the DUP which has to choose between growth of the party and preservation of the Union, these being potentially at odds with each other.

But it is also a potential problem for Sinn Féin which must put its case to the Irish electorate on social issues rather than ending Partition, the aspiration which justifies its existence and its bloody past. I wonder what voters down there think of the party's commitment to an Irish Language Act when the experiment of restoring Irish as the native tongue there has so painfully failed.

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Of course there are differences between modern Ireland and Britain. Accents are different, as they are different in Irish and British regions.

There is still the remnants of a smug class system in England which throws up prats like Boris Johnson as Prime Minister.

We as Irish may feel strongly that we would prefer not to be governed by England inside a Union because one part of the Union, England, is larger than us and will ultimately decide the big questions for us.

But problems like that could, in a parallel universe, have been resolved through devolution of regional power, or Home Rule, as it was called in the nineteenth century. Yorkshire, Lancashire and Scotland feel much the same about the South of England as we do.

Even when Scotland considers independence it is not talking about preserving a cultural distinction or devising a separate system of government. It's really more about getting Eton out of its hair. It's not so much hankering to build a nation so much as to manage a jurisdiction and its economy.

One big difference is that Ireland is more white. It hasn't absorbed as many migrants from the former British colonies but no republican would stand up today and say that preserving a white Ireland is desirable.

Migration into Ireland doesn't bring with it the embarrassing reminder of colonial atrocities and failures but perhaps it

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should since we provided so many of the foot soldiers and even senior colonial administrators.

If, after colonial rulers leave, countries evolve to be more themselves and to do things their own way, then India and Pakistan have become more traditionally Islamic and Hindu and Ireland has lost much of its distinction from Britain.

So what was Irish independence for?

What, indeed, is the Union for?

Unionism, in seeking to be distinctly unIrish succeeds in being unBritish at the same time because Ireland and Britain are now so culturally similar.

The reunification of India and Pakistan has become unthinkable as the countries shift further apart culturally whereas the two parts of Ireland are progressively becoming more alike. There is no longer an argument for them needing separate jurisdictions for the preservation of distinct cultures.

On the other hand, perhaps their best case for the Union is that uniting Ireland would make so little difference - culturally that is - that there is no point in bothering.

What if we hadn't had a war for independence a hundred years ago. Would we be having one now?

Courtesy of the Belfast Telegraph 07 September 2021.

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Malachi O'Doherty is the author of several books and his most recent is "The Year of Chaos - Northern Ireland on the Brink of Civil War, 1971-72" published last week by Atlantic Books -

[<https://atlantic-books.co.uk/book/the-year-of-chaos/>]

## 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—



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Lingering in the golden gleam—  
Life, what is it but a dream?

## Pointers for prayer



Loving and gracious God,  
we come before You to give thanks  
for what You have done for us.  
We celebrate Your Name and offer You praise  
because of Your Holiness,  
yet You are a living God  
in whom we trust and believe.

Almighty and everlasting God,  
Give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity;  
and, that we may obtain that which thou dost promise,  
make us to love that which thou dost command;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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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.

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

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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



**As Saul was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him.**  
Acts 9.3 NLT

Saul was a deeply committed Jew and his mission was to destroy the church. He was acting with the authority of the

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High Priest in Jerusalem and his task was to search out any followers of Jesus and take them as prisoners. But suddenly everything changed as he travelled on the road to Damascus. A brilliant light flashed around him and he heard a voice asking, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" Saul knew the Scriptures well enough to know that this must be God and he asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply was not the one he wanted to hear. He was sure that there was nothing in this new-fangled Jesus religion. How shocked he must have been to hear the voice saying, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."

We know the rest. We know that this moment changed everything. Saul's life was turned upside down and inside out. He would never be the same again and neither would the church. But let's spend a moment longer thinking about this Damascus Road experience. I have heard many people saying how they regret that they haven't had an experience like that. It seems to me that experiences of this kind are extremely rare. Perhaps God confronted Saul in this way because he knew that that was the only way in which he would get through to him. For most of us the process is completely undramatic. God comes to us amidst the ordinary everyday rhythm of life. He speaks to us as we have a country walk, or in a sermon, or as we read the Bible, or as we speak with a friend. There is nothing at all dramatic about it but God meets with us and, however it happens, that is the most amazing miracle.

## **QUESTION**

How have you met with God?



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## PRAYER

Dear Lord, thank you that you meet with us in all sorts of ways, and that you want to walk with us today. Amen

