



## **Giant version of Pope is star of Durrow Scarecrow Festival**

A giant scarecrow version of the Pope has won joint-first prize in a competition in the popular annual Durrow Scarecrow Festival.

The massive model of Pope Francis in his popemobile was created by a group of men in Durrow, Co Laois, for the popular annual Durrow Scarecrow Festival.

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Chairwoman of the Durrow Development Forum, Evelyn Clancy, said there had been a huge amount of interest from across Ireland.

The festival is known for its topical depictions, from Donald Trump to King Kong.

Ms Clancy added: "People expect it, King Kong was higher than a two-storey house, people have that expectation from this group of men."



The talented and creative group behind the creation includes engineers and carpenters who have put many evenings of work into their scarecrow.

Chairman of the Conahy Vintage Club, Michael Bergin, told the Leinster Express they enjoyed the camaraderie.

"We always think that big is beautiful.

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"There was work for everybody in it from steel to straw, overalls, shoes down to making tea and having a chat. You make it up as you go along."

The group added lights to the popemobile and when you press a button the scarecrow Pope waves.

Money raised from visitors to the festival is reinvested in the community, Ms Clancy said.

## **Pope Francis' Dublin visit could require a temporary morgue**

A temporary morgue may be needed when 600,000 people descend on Dublin for the Pope's visit, it has been claimed.

Tens of thousands of people from Northern Ireland are among the huge numbers who have snapped up tickets for the pontiff's mass at Phoenix Park, which is **Ireland's** largest ever ticketed event. A behind-the-scenes temporary mortuary is understood to be part of a major health and safety plan drawn up by gardai to deal with the crowds for Pope Francis' Mass - which will be the main event of the first papal visit to Ireland in almost 40 years.

It has been reported that it will be part of a medical centre built in Phoenix Park where the Pope will bring his two-day visit to an end.

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The facility may be considered vital due to the size of the event, and also the elderly age profile of those who will attend.



Organisers have warned about the potential toll the Mass will take on visitors due to the "size, scale and location" of the event, and have emphasised that some walking will be unavoidable.

An online statement urges mass-goers to "seek medical advice if you have any concerns about your ability to participate in an event of this scale."

An Garda Síochána is likely to have referred to plans used in Philadelphia where it was reported that more than 400 people were treated in first aid tents and 129 were hospitalised when the Pope attended the last World Meeting of Families in 2015.

They have declined to confirm that the morgue, first reported in the Irish Daily Star, will be part of its plan.

A spokesman said: "An Garda Síochána have a full and comprehensive policing plan in place for every eventuality including medical centres for an event of this magnitude."

The Pope is due to visit Ireland for the World Meeting of Families over the last weekend of August. He will speak at



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the World Meeting of Families concert at Croke Park on Saturday, August 25 where world famous Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli will perform alongside other popular acts including Nathan Carter, Daniel O'Donnell, Moya Brennan, The Begley Family and The Priests.

Although the events are free, a pre-booked ticket is essential.

**Translink** are putting on special buses for the occasion, while some parishes will also provide their own transport.

Tickets for the mass were due to be emailed last week, but have been delayed due to concern over the numbers who have indicated they will travel to Phoenix Park by car. An online statement from the World Meeting of Families has warned: "The available infrastructure in Dublin cannot cater for all those who have indicated that they are coming by car.

"We have delayed the issue of tickets August 10 so as we can finalise the colour coded routes based on the information we have received about where those attending are coming from."

## **Grant from National Churches Trust to help fund vital repairs to Derriaghy church's landmark spire**

Christ Church Parish, Derriaghy, has received a grant of £20,000 from the National Churches Trust to help fund vital repairs to the church's landmark spire.

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The church is one of 54 churches and chapels in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to benefit from rescue funding of £310,060 from the National Churches Trust, the UK's church support charity.

Huw Edwards, Broadcaster and Journalist and Vice-President of the National Churches Trust, said: "At the heart of communities in cities, towns and



villages, churches are a treasure trove of architecture, history and faith. I'm delighted that Christ Church, Derriagh, is to be saved for the future with the help of a £20,000 National Churches Trust Repair Grant.

The project helped by the National Churches Trust will repair the spire, a prominent feature on this Grade A listed building. Significant weather damage and corrosion has resulted in the crumbling of stone work in the spire. Iron elements have rusted and expanded, fracturing the



**Huw Edwards, Broadcaster, journalist and Vice-President of the National Churches Trust.**

masonry. Falling masonry is currently a potential hazard. Without the work, this iconic building would have to close.

The project will dismantle, repair, and replace the stonework and ironwork to secure the structural integrity of the spire, bell

tower, and gable. The parish and wider community are very supportive of the work, which will help to engage a wider audience with the heritage of the church.

Christ Church was built in 1872, on a site where there has been a church since the 13th century. It is a classic example of the architectural work of Gillespie and Welland.

It is described by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency as ‘one of the most striking churches in Northern Ireland... [with] the distinctive steeple and the crow stepped gable... the local landscape and the idyllic setting makes the church of particular importance.’

Robert Stinson, a member of Select Vestry, said: “The parishioners of Christ Church, Derriaghy, greatly appreciate the support given by The National Churches Trust which will enable them to begin work on replacing the

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church spire which has been a distinct feature of this place of worship since it was built in 1872.

“This support has created a confidence that will see us through the project and we look forward to its completion and having a church that will remain open for worship for another 100 years or more.”

## **Archbishop of Wales to use Eisteddfod appearance to highlight child poverty**

Archbishop John Davies will use an appearance at the National Eisteddfod, the annual Welsh cultural festival, today (Wednesday) to highlight increasing levels of child poverty in the country. The Church in Wales will lead the event alongside the Children’s Commissioner for Wales as part of a week of activities organised by *Cytûn*, the ecumenical group Churches Together in Wales, at the Eisteddfod.

The Church in Wales says that an estimated 200,000 children are living in poverty in Wales today, with cutbacks in benefits and public funding for family services significantly adding to the problem. The Welsh Government recently admitted that its target of ending child poverty by 2020 will not be reached.

Today’s event at the office of the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action in Cardiff will involve a panel discussion introduced by Archbishop John. The discussion will “highlight the issue and provide an opportunity for people to explore what can be done to help those in need,” the Church in Wales said.





**Archbishop John Davies will lead an event at the Eisteddfod national cultural festival in Cardiff today (Wednesday) to highlight concerns about child poverty.**

The event will begin with an interview by the Bishop of Bangor, Andy John, with the Children’s Commissioner for Wales, Dr Sally Holland, about her research on childhood poverty.

The panel includes a number of people involved in church projects directly helping families in poverty, including Catherine Haynes, children’s adviser for the Diocese of Monmouth. Her parish runs a “Holiday Hunger” scheme at the local *Tŷ Price* centre to provide packed lunches for children at a summer play scheme in Monmouth.

Other panellists are Cherrie Bija, who supports the Diocese of Swansea and Brecon’s Faith in Families initiative to support families in disadvantaged parts of Swansea; Samantha Duggan, who works with *Plant Dewi*, a children’s project run by the Diocese of St Davids to help young parents. The scheme includes providing “Baby Bundle” packs of essential items for new parents; and another *Plant Dewi* worker, Sian Cheeseman, who works with the *Tŷ Mair* family centre in Burry Port.

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“Poverty in childhood is an issue the Church is acutely aware of due to the work of our family centres, community projects, food banks, holiday hunger schemes and our collaboration with the Children’s Society,” Archbishop John said. “We see at first-hand how poverty is affecting children across Wales and how the demand for these services continues to increase.

“We fear many children in Wales are having their childhood blighted by poverty - a 'poor upbringing'. We welcome this opportunity to highlight our concerns and help inform the Children’s Commissioner’s work this year on child poverty.”

Speaking ahead of the event, the Children’s Commissioner, Dr Sally Holland, said, “Without a doubt, child poverty is the biggest challenge facing Welsh Government today. We know the scale of the problem, and we know that those families in the most vulnerable positions need more help.

“Churches do some important work to support families who are living in poverty, including food banks, and organising free packed lunches for children at holiday clubs over the summer to replace their free school meals and ensure they don’t go hungry. These are some examples of the initiatives that can really make a difference to the most vulnerable families.

“This year, my office will be meeting with children, parents and professionals from across Wales to hear what they think needs to change, and what extra support they need. We’ll then be recommending concrete steps that Welsh Government and local authorities can take to reduce the

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impact of poverty on the most vulnerable children and their families.”

## **Priest with motor neuron disease completes 550km trip to Ballydehob**

A priest who “fell to the floor” with shock earlier this year when he was diagnosed with motor neuron disease (MND), on Monday completed a 550km journey from Donegal to Cork raising close to €250,000 to aid research into the condition.

Dublin priest Fr [Tony Coote](#) (54) said he never thought he would bounce back from the shock of his diagnosis to completing a walk of Ireland via a mountain trike.

The former UCD chaplain said he was overwhelmed by the reception he received in Ballydehob, west Cork having finished his arduous trek which he undertook over the course of the last month.

“What a warm welcome I received from Ballydehob and west Cork. Crowds of people on the streets and led by three huge horses. Also I had a fantastic reception in the community hall,” he told RTÉ *Drivetime*.

Fr Coote was also congratulated on his arrival in Ballydehob by the Mayor of County Cork, Cllr [Patrick Gerald Murphy](#), who has been in a wheelchair since a car crash in 1993.



**Fr Tony Coote arrives into Ballydehob having finished his arduous trek which he undertook over the course of the last month.**

The priest, who is based in the Mount Merrion and Kilmacud parishes in south Co Dublin, had played squash twice a week and considered himself to be a healthy man. In November of last year he suffered a fall and then he started having a problem with his left hand. An MRI scan indicated that he had MND and his health deteriorated rapidly.

### **‘I went in to shock’**

“Like many people who are told bad news I went in to shock. It was a devastating type of thing. When you hear motor neuron you hear ‘No cure available.’ That is why I undertook the walk.



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“Because firstly the medication for MND is 24-years-old and secondly there are only three nurses caring for those people throughout the country paid for by church gate collections with no central funding from the Government at all.”

Fr Coote says research in to MND is vitally important as people with the condition are put on one generic drug. A breakthrough is needed to provide more specialised medications to assist patients.

“More research will (hopefully) go in to slowing down this illness more. The illness is very rapid and debilitating.”

Fr Coote has lost the control of most of his left hand and his left leg and he now uses an electronic wheelchair. He says he can longer tie his laces or put on his socks and he finds it very difficult to put on his shoes. He admits his independence has been compromised over a short period of time.

However he says he is treating MND as a challenge and is trying to stay positive.

“When I get a challenge I always face it. I get up every morning and I face the day and get on with it. That is what keeps me going. We have the website. Anyone can donate with the guarantee that the money either goes to research or the care of motor neuron.”

Under the banner of “Walk While You Can” Fr Coote set off on his journey from Letterkenny, Co Donegal on July 10th.

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Countless walkers and well wishers joined him for sections of the route.

Contributions can be made to the fundraising campaign at <http://wwyc.ie/>

**Read:** [‘Walk While You Can’ with motor neuron disease](#)

## **New issue of Eco-Congregation Ireland newsletter**

The July/August 2018 edition of the Eco-Congregation Ireland newsletter is now available online. Please click [HERE](#) to download a pdf.



In this newsletter:

- Our Climate Justice Candle – The Journey Continues with the New ECI Candle!
- ECI Climate Justice Candle @ World Meeting of Families 2018
- Resources for Creation Time 2018
- Update on the World Meeting of Families – 21-26 August 2018
- Friends Burial Ground in South Belfast has gone bee-friendly!
- RCB and CITI receive their bee hives!
- Update from Faith in Action Group, Ballineaspig Parish, Dennehy's Cross, Cork
- ECI Endeavour Certificate presented to Daughters of Charity
- Watch the EcoQuakers film!

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- New Publication! 'Finding God in a Leaf: The Mysticism of Laudato Si' by Brian Grogan SJ
- Tearfund Ireland's Renew our World Campaign
- Reflection on a Bee Orchid by Fr Hugh O'Donnell
- Connect2Earth Stories
- Westport Eco-Congregation pays tribute to the late Fr Patrick Burke
- Suaimhneas – A Place of Peace
- Update from Future We Need Group
- Cool Planet Experience
- Latest European Christian Environmental Network newsletter available
- Eco Challenge!
- Prayer for the Earth

Parishes with information or stories are invited to forward their news to Karen Nicholson at [info@ecocongregationireland.com](mailto:info@ecocongregationireland.com). Newsletters will be sent out at the end of September and November 2018.

## **Rector's organ marathon fund-raiser**

The Church of Ireland Rector of Faughanvale (Eglinton, Derry diocese) is to play the church organ non-stop for 12 hours next month to raise money for a new parish hall.

The Rev Canon Paul Hoey's 'organ marathon' is one of a number of fund-raising events which have been organised in the village of Eglinton to replace the hall damaged in last year's flooding in the North West. Eglinton was one of the areas worst affected by the August 2017 downpour.

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The ‘organ marathon’ will take place in St Canice’s Church of Ireland, in Eglinton, on Saturday 22nd September. Canon Hoey says people are welcome to



come into the church at any time between 9am and 9pm that day to have their favourite hymn request played – for a donation.

“I’m hoping that people will sponsor me to do the full 12 hours,” Canon Hoey says. “Parishioners have been given sponsor forms and all contributions will be received gratefully.”

Canon Hoey will be performing on the parish’s brand new Makin Organ, which replaced the instrument destroyed in last year’s flooding. “Our new organ is making an impressive sound and giving a fine lead to the worship in St Canice’s,” the Rector says, “and hopefully it’ll draw the community to our church to help with our fund-raising efforts. The last hour of the event will take the form of community hymn singing, with lots of favourites being sung and played.

“While I’m looking forward to the challenge immensely, there’s a serious purpose behind it,” Canon Hoey says.



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“Our old parish hall was very badly damaged in the flooding and we’ve been without a hall for almost a year now. We’re eager to have a new one up and running as soon as possible – and clearly that requires a lot of money. We’re so grateful to the other churches in the area who have helped out in the interim, and to the local community centre and to the village primary school who’ve been incredibly generous. But there’s no substitute for having your own parish hall.

“So, I hope people from the local area and beyond – people of all denominations – will drop in to St Canice’s at some stage during the marathon to support our fund-raising efforts and enjoy some sacred music in the process.”



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