

Famed satirist and poet Dean Jonathan Swift features on latest silver coin



The Central Bank of Ireland have officially launched (30th November) their latest silver crown coin which is in recognition of the 350th anniversary of the birth of satirist and poet Jonathan Swift (1667–1745), whose wit and outlook on life in Ireland during his lifetime is remembered from his many works and essays. He is best remembered as the author of

Gulliver's Travels, an adventure story involving several voyages of Lemuel Gulliver, which was first published in 1726. Swift is also widely remembered as having authored "A Modest Proposal," a satirical commentary which focused on the conditions of poor children in early 18th century Ireland. Swift was appointed to the deanery of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin in 1713, a position he held until his death in 1745.

Given its full title of "A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People from Being a Burthen to their Parents, or the Country, and for Making them Beneficial to the Publick," his tongue-in-cheek proposal, in effect, was to fatten up these undernourished children and feed them to Ireland's rich landowners. Such was the acute problem in the country with the unequal distribution of wealth between the landed gentry and those who worked on the land as indentured servants, which often resulted in children being raised in such conditions which saw them die in infancy. Swift's tongue-in-cheek proposal, by selling poor children as food for wealthy families, explained in satirical terms how this would solve all of Ireland's problems from domestic abuse to poverty.

The coin was befittingly launched at Dublin's St. Patrick's Cathedral where the poet was buried

more than 272 years ago. Assisting in the launch were two of Dublin's youngsters who were today's representatives of Swift's "A Modest Proposal" as well as to his novel *Gulliver's Travels*, which chronicles the journey of Lemuel Gulliver and his contact with Lilliputians. The backdrop of the launch was the splendour of the Cathedral who still fondly remembers Swift as Dean from 1713 until his death.

Keith and Kristyn Getty shape their music inspired by Reformer Luther

Prolific Ulster hymn-writing couple Keith and Kristyn Getty are marking the 500th anniversary of the Reformation by calling on Anglicans around the world to "rediscover the power" of congregational singing.

The couple have written or co-authored more than 70 hymns, estimating they have been sung by about 40 million churchgoers each year for the past two decades. Keith is best-known for his 2001 hymn 'In Christ Alone'. He was awarded an OBE for services to music in the Queen's Birthday Honours list.



The Gettys' endeavour is inspired by the congregational singing, theology, and high artistic view of church music held by Protestant Reformer Martin Luther, "While Luther's 95 theological theses opened the floodgates for the Reformation, his insistence was a return to and celebration of the sacred act of congregational singing in the people's known language," said Keith.

The Gettys, who live in Northern Ireland and Tennessee, launched the initiative 'Sing!' at a music conference in Nashville.

They currently lead gatherings in the US on the importance of congregational singing, and have

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relaunched their Christmas tour at venues including Carnegie Hall, New York and Kennedy Centre, Washington. A show is being screened on the US Public Broadcasting Service channel at Christmas.

‘Show people the power of our faith’ – new Archbishop challenges churches



New Archbishop of Wales, John Davies said young people would high-five the prophet Job and queue for selfies with Jesus if they properly understood Christianity.

In his address at his enthronement as the 13th Archbishop John challenged churches to “rehabilitate and refresh” how they explained the Gospel message, particularly to young people.

He explained that being a Christian was not about just going to church.

“We are not always seen for the good which we do, or for the just causes which we support or further, or for the justice and truth for which we call,” he said.

About 600 people from all over Wales filled Brecon Cathedral for the enthronement of Archbishop John on Saturday afternoon. The service began with a long procession which included clergy, visiting bishops, diocesan legal officers, ecumenical and interfaith guests and representatives of academic institutions. The C of I Archbishop of Dublin, Most Rev Dr M Jackson was present.

During the service, the Archbishop made his declaration and oath on the historic William Morgan Bible, specially brought from St Asaph Cathedral for the occasion, and he was placed in the Archiepiscopal chair (or throne) by the Bishop of Bangor, the Senior Bishop, who then presented him to the congregation.

In his address, the Archbishop called on churches to make New Year Resolutions to help people grasp what their faith was really about.



He said: “Let churches resolve to face down the caricature of being an institution, focussed on simply surviving and being against things.

“Let churches and their charities, resolve to proudly affirm caring, loving and open-handed initiatives which, often in partnership with others, they are already taking; supporting and affirming needy communities and people.

“Often the work goes unseen, as does a remarkable amount ordinary but supportive community

The Archbishop said he had an ‘active and deep concern’ for witness to young people who were

not associating the Gospel message with their own strong sense of right.

He said, “So many of them so evidently have a deep and clearly-articulated sense of moral right.

“They are keenly aware of the need for social and economic justice, the stewardship of creation, and equality of opportunity; they are equally aware of the need for a society free from any form of prejudice rooted in anything which is part of the individual identity, gender, race, origin, religion or orientation of anyone.”

Archbishop John also urged everyone to speak up against injustice and oppression.

He said, “Beyond the churches and religion, can we not all simply resolve, in our increasingly divided, bewildered and uneven society, to be clothed with goodness, to call to account and encourage the reform of individuals and entities which deliberately or by stealth, neglect and carelessness collude in oppressing minorities, burdening the poor and robbing individuals of their dignity?”

St Patrick's Christmas Tree Festival in Dublin

St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, is synonymous with the celebration of Christmas, with its rich music in the historic setting of the much loved building.

This year the cathedral will bring its celebrations to a new level and bring the magic of Christmas to even more people with a Christmas Tree Festival which will run throughout December and until the end of the first week in January. It is the first festival of its kind in the inner city and the innovative and imaginative event will see local businesses, organisations and groups contribute a decorated Christmas tree or wreath. Through sponsorship provided by generous donations the cathedral will engage with people of the community and enhance the social fabric of the church while at the same time raising funds to replace the roof of St Patrick's Cathedral to ensure the building is available to be enjoyed for generations to come.

The Christmas Tree Festival was launched on last Friday evening and Christmas Festival Family Nights will be held on the evenings of December 20 to 22 after Evensong with the

Cathedral open to the public from 18.15 – 21.00 free of charge on these nights.

The trees and wreaths will be displayed throughout the building. There will be a Christmas gift shop open during this period. Keep up to date with the festival at www.stpatrickscathedral.ie

Pro Bono Choir to present Carols at the Courts



A choir of solicitors, barristers and judges is hosting a Christmas concert in aid of Barnardos and the Welcome Organisation.

The Pro Bono Choir is presenting the Carols at the Courts concert at the Royal Courts of Justice

in conjunction with the Law Society of Northern Ireland and The Bar of Northern Ireland.

The performance takes place on Tuesday December 12 in the Great Hall, Royal Courts of Justice, and is followed by refreshments in The Ivory, Victoria Square. Doors open 19:30 for 20:00. [Tickets](#) priced £20 including refreshments.



Services mark the beginning of Advent

Yesterday (Sunday) marked the beginning of Advent and thus the start of a new church year.

In Dublin there were Advent Processions in both Christ Church and St Patrick's cathedrals while in Derry the Bishop of Derry & Raphoe presided at the Advent Processions in St Columb's cathedral.

In St Patrick's cathedral, Killala, there was a Diocesan Advent Carol Service at which the Ven. Stephen McWhirter was installed as Archdeacon of Killala & Achonry while in St Canice's, Kilkenny, there was a Re-commissioning of Readers and Service of Light at which Canon Brian O'Rourke will also be installed and admitted to the Chapter.

An Advent Carol Service took place in St George's Parish Church, High Street, Belfast.

I raised concerns about Rohingya with Burma's leaders, says Pope

Pope Francis has said that he was well aware he was disappointing some people by not using the word "Rohingya" publicly in Burma, but his chief concern had been to get a point across, and he did.

"If I would have used the word, the door would have closed," he told reporters during his flight from Dhaka, Bangladesh, to Rome.

He spent almost an hour answering reporters' questions after his six-day trip to Myanmar and Bangladesh, but insisted that most of the questions be about the trip.



Pope Francis gestures as he answers questions aboard his flight from Dhaka to Rome

In his speeches in Burma, Pope Francis repeatedly referred to the obligation to defend the lives and human rights of all people. But he did not specifically mention the Rohingya, a Muslim minority from Rakhine state. The Burmese military, claiming it is cracking down on militants, has been accused of a massive persecution of the Rohingya to the point that some describe it as ethnic cleansing.

More than 620,000 Rohingya have fled across the Bangladeshi border just since August, joining

hundreds of thousands already living in refugee camps there.

For the government of Burma, the Rohingya do not exist; instead they are considered undocumented immigrants.

“I knew that if, in an official speech, I would have used the word, they would close the door in my face,” the Pope told reporters who asked why he did not name the group. However, “I described the situation” publicly, knowing “I could go further in the private meetings” with government officials.

“I was very, very satisfied with the meetings,” the Pope said. “I dared to say everything I wanted to say.”

It is true, he said, “I did not have the pleasure” of making “a public denunciation, but I had the satisfaction of dialoguing, allowing the other to have his say and, in that way, the message got across.”

Still, finally being able to meet some of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh was an emotional moment.

Arrangements were made for 16 refugees to travel to Dhaka from Cox’s Bazar, where the



Pope Francis meet Bhaddanta Kumarabhivasma, Chairman of the state Sanga Maha Nayaka Committee

huge refugee camps are, so they could join the pope and Bangladeshi religious leaders for a meeting devoted to peace.

The refugees had travelled so far and been through so much that Pope Francis said he could not just let them shake his hand and be whisked away, as some event organisers seemed to think was proper.

“And there I got upset. I yelled a bit. I’m a sinner,” he said.

He had a few minutes with each of them, listening to their stories with the help of an interpreter, holding their hands and looking into their eyes.

“I was crying, but tried to hide it,” the Pope told reporters. “They were crying, too.”

Listening to them was emotional, he said, and “I couldn’t let them leave without saying something” to them. So he asked for a microphone and spoke about their God-given dignity and the obligation believers of all faiths have to stand up for them as brothers and sisters. He also apologised for all they had suffered.

Pope Francis refused to give reporters details about his private meetings with government officials and military leaders in Burma, but insisted they were marked by “civilised dialogue” and he was able to make the points important to him.

The Pope was asked what he thought of recent criticism by human rights groups of Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate and de facto leader of Myanmar’s civilian government, over her handling of the Rohingya crisis. Pope Francis responded that people must take into

account the challenges that are part of Burma's transition from military rule to democracy.

Burma is at a "turning point" where it will be difficult to move forward, he said, but it also would be difficult to back away from change.

And, he said, "I never lose hope."

The same God who made the meeting with the Rohingya in Dhaka possible will continue to work marvels, Pope Francis said.

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