



*The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland lays a tribute at the St Patrick Memorial Stone at Down Cathedral*

## **Rising to the challenge focus of St Patrick's Day at Down Cathedral**

The theme at this year's Down and Dromore St Patrick's Day Celebrations was 'Rising to the challenge.'

The day began with a service of Holy Communion at Saul. The congregation filled the small church, which is considered the cradle of Irish Christianity. The preacher, Rev Adrian Dorrian, used the story of the good Samaritan and the message of St Patrick's life to ask the question who is our neighbour in the 21st century.

In a world that's full of people bound up with the a sense of 'us and them', Mr. Dorrian said, 'Patrick brought the gospel message to a land where he had been held in slavery, he saw the people of this land as people who needed the grace of Christ – in coming back he became a neighbour to the people of this land.' He concluded by asking 'What challenge does that present for us today?'

The pilgrimage from Saul to Down Cathedral was joined by Garner Webb University Concert Choir from North Carolina. The choir later performed three anthems during the service at the cathedral.

The pilgrims stopped at various locations along the way for prayers led by Rev. Simon Genoe and were led into the cathedral by the two key note speakers, Mickey Harte, Tyrone GAA, and Shane Logan, CEO of Ulster Rugby.



***The President of the Irish Methodist Church, the Dean of Down and the Bishop of Down & Dromore***

The cross-community Festival Service was attended by local clergy and dignitaries including Secretary of State, James Brokenshire and Margaret Ritchie MP. The Very Rev Henry Hull, Dean of Down welcomed the congregation and invited the two speakers to share about how their faith helps them to face the challenges of life.

Shane Logan began by talking about the 'profound faith' of Nevin Spence, Ulster Rugby player who died in a farming accident in 2012.

He continued by sharing 3 personal examples of times when he cried out to God and God answered faithfully. Talking about the time that he came to faith Shane said,

*“In the absolute depths of despair I cried out to God, ‘Lord I am wrong, I’ve turned to you before, you’ve always been faithful and I’ve always been unfaithful. There must be a better way, the better way must be yours.’ From that point on things changed. “*

Shane concluded by challenging the congregation with Romans 12 verse 21, “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Mickey Harte opened by talking about how he had been influenced by the faith of his parents. He went on to share about how the grace of God helped his family after the death of his daughter, Michaela.

*“It was a challenging time for our family, but in many ways this is when our faith kicked in. We knew we weren’t on our own, we had somebody to help us through the most painful part of it and to continue to help us as the journey goes forward.”*

Mickey emphasised the importance of being good communicators, being present and a good listener. He closed with a poignant poem which finished, “And no one knows God or sees Him as plain as those who have met Him on “The Pathway of Pain.”

The celebrations ended with the customary Irish stew and apple tart lunch served in a packed marquee. Once more we were grateful to the Sullivan Traditional Music Group who created a wonderful atmosphere in the narthex and the marquee.

## **Dublin’s Cathedrals’ Choirs sing in harmony at St Patrick’s Eve Celebration**

A celebration of unity on the eve of St Patrick’s Day saw the Church of Ireland and Catholic Archbishops of Dublin lead a Festal Choral Evensong in Christ Church Cathedral. The choirs of Christ Church Cathedral and St Mary’s Pro Cathedral sang together to reflect the theme of a shared desire for Christian unity.

Archbishop Michael Jackson and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin both delivered an address



***The choirs of Christ Church Cathedral and St Mary's Pro Cathedral with Archbishop Michael Jackson and Archbishop Diarmuid Martin and clergy representing both cathedrals at the Eve of the Feast of St Patrick Festal Evensong on March 16***

during the service and gave the blessing together at the end.

In his address, Archbishop Jackson noted that St Patrick was trafficked, was a slave and had been taken by brute force from his own country. But he responded to the call of the Irish by returning to the country where he had been humiliated, betrayed and ill used.

He said the service on the Eve of St Patrick's Day took place faithfully and ecumenically and in recognition that St Patrick's Day itself is a

celebration of Irishness worldwide. The Irish diaspora across the world had often made an impact for good. Other people found their sense of community infectious and this has been our gift to the world, he stated.

“So what has gone so tragically wrong at home, and has been so abjectly wrong as a concealed wrong that has incriminated the victim in the ways that abuse so cruelly and successfully does, in such a way that lives are destroyed, facts are distorted and individuals are depersonalized? We cannot call it anything other than The Mother and Baby Home Scandal,” Archbishop Jackson stated. He said St Patrick’s Day 2017 would be different in Ireland as a result of the recent revelations and said listening must be our voice in St Patrick’s–tide 2017.

In his address, Archbishop Martin said our God is a God of love. Time and time again in Scripture we see God go beyond his own anger, the Archbishop said. He added that God doesn’t react to our turning away from him in sin but recoils and ultimately turns to us to offer his mercy. The same ideas are seen in St Patrick’s writings with St Patrick turning back towards those who sinned against him. When writing to the warrior king Coroticus, who killed many

newly converted Christians, he gave him the opportunity of repentance.

“Sadly so often today we are confronted with only a shallow caricature of St Patrick. He was a man of God, a man of prayer and a man with a deep sense of God’s love and forgiveness. There can be no authentic celebration of the feast of St Patrick which fails to see the depth of his life and spirituality,” Archbishop Martin stated.

You can read the text of Archbishop Jackson’s address [here](#).

## **Blessing of the Shamrock celebration in DIT Grangegorman**

A special ‘Blessing of the Shamrock’ service took place in St Laurence’s on the Grangegorman Campus of Dublin Institute of Technology on Wednesday (March 14). The service was led by the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Revd Diarmuid Martin who delivered the Homily and the Archdeacon of Dublin, the Ven David Pierpoint, who blessed the shamrock.

The service was attended by students and staff of DIT as well as nurses who worked in the





***Church of Ireland Chaplaincy Coordinator, the Revd Rob Jones, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, Archdeacon David Pierpoint and Coordinator of DIT's Chaplaincy Service, Fr Alan Hilliard in St Laurence's at DIT Grangegorman for the Blessing of the Shamrock Service in advance of St Patrick's Day.***

former St Brendan's Hospital which occupied the site previously.

In his homily, Archbishop Martin noted that the world was becoming a less secure place and that root of that fragility lay in the challenge between good and evil. "Conversion is a call to change direction in our lives and recognise that we are not trapped in our current route," he said.



***Archdeacon David Pierpoint blesses the shamrock during a service at DIT Grangegorman.***

Speaking of the importance of prayer to St Patrick, the Archbishop said that if we recognised the centrality of prayer to our faith and the importance of God in our prayer there could be no justification for evil and exclusion.

Two students of DIT, Michael Adesi and Siobhán Doyle, read from a reflection from a legend of St

Patrick Questions of Ethne Alba from the seventh century.

The shamrock was blessed by Archdeacon Pierpoint before being handed out to the congregation.

During the service Archdeacon Pierpoint led prayers for the crew of the Coastguard Helicopter Rescue 116, their families and all involved in the recovery efforts off the coast of Mayo.

## **Annual St Patrick's Day Civic Service in St Fin Barre's, Cork**

Saint Patrick's Day began early in Cork with a Civic Service and Festival Eucharist of Saint Patrick's Day held in St Fin Barre's Cathedral where the city's patron saint first founded his monastic settlement. The Bishop of Cork, Dr Paul Colton, presided assisted by the Dean of Cork, the Very Reverend Nigel Dunne, the Dean's Vicar, the Reverend Ted Ardis, the Archdeacon, the Venerable Adrian Wilkinson, Canon Eithne Lynch, the Rev. Anne Skuse and the Rev. Edwin Hunter. They were joined, as every year, by Father Christopher Fitzgerald,



***The Bishop of Cork, Dr Paul Colton (left) with Cllr Joe Kavanagh, Deputy Lord Mayor, and Ms Ann Doherty, CEO of Cork City Council.***

ecumenical officer of the Diocese of Cork and Ross.

The civic attendance was led by the Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr Joe Kavanagh, as the Lord Mayor had accepted an invitation to be at the White House in Washington, DC, U.S.A. ‘This year, for the first time in 18 years, I’ve been “Trumped”’ joked Bishop Colton. Members of the City Council (from all parties and non-party) were present as were heads of department in Cork City Hall led by the CEO of Cork City, Ann Doherty. Former Lords Mayor of Cork present

included: Michael Ahern, Paud Black, Jim Corr, Brian Bermingham, Donal Counihan, Dan Wallace and Toddy O'Sullivan (who was also representing St Fin Barre's GAA Club).

From the Oireachtas, Mr Simon Coveney, T.D., Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, was present together with: the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Micheál Martin, T.D., Ms Margaret Murphy-O'Mahony, T.D., the Leader of Seanad Éireann, Senator Jerry Buttimer, and Senator Colm Burke. Mrs Deirdre Clune, M.E.P. accompanied by her husband, Conor Clune, was present. Brigadier General Patrick Flynn (Office Commanding, Southern Command), Commodore Hugh Tully (Naval Service), Chief Superintendent Barry McPolin (An Garda Síochána)

Honorary consuls present were: Mr Michael Mulcahy (Poland) who is also chairman of Cork Civic Trust, Mr George Barter (Portugal), Sir Freddie Pedersen (Denmark). Cathy Goode, Honorary Vice Consul of Spain also attended.

Among those also present were: Dr Brendan Murphy (President of the Cork Institute of Technology), Mr Ted Owens (CEO of the Cork Education and Training Board), Philip Gillivan (Vice President of the Cork Business



***The Bishop with the scouts who supervised the parking and did the washing up after the reception.***

Association), Ms Carol Jermyn (Jermyn and Co, Solicitors who is the Diocesan Solicitor), Billy Skuse (Diocesan Secretary), Bill Brady (Diocesan Architect) Ms Helen Arnopp (Allied Irish Banks), Ian Coombes (Principal of Bandon Grammar School), Paddy O'Brien (Over 60s Singing Competition and Irish Heart Foundation), Manus O'Callaghan (Southern Advertising), Robin O'Sullivan and Ms Ann-Marie O'Sullivan (AM O'Sullivan PR and Strategic Communications), David Barry (scouting and David Barry, Photographer) Jennifer Dowler (Dogs for the Disabled), Mrs Deirdre Henley (Irish Girl Guides), Mr and Mrs Alan Campbell (Saint

Luke's Home, Cork), Conor Crowley (Scouting), Don Trotter (Scouting), Finbarr O'Shea (Flying Enterprise, Cork), Ruairi O'Connor (The River Lee Hotel), Mr Eric Paterson (Birchill Landscapes), PJ Coogan (96 FM), Ted Crosbie (Irish Examiner), and Vincent O'Donovan (Carrigdhoun).

So many facets of Cork life were represented: the media; the commercial life of the City, voluntary groups, agencies, and associations. the Cork Federation of Women's Associations, the St Aloysius' Past-Pupils Association, the Ursuline School Past-Pupils Union, Cork Rape Crisis Centre; St Vincent de Paul, and many voluntary and youth organisations. The remarkable Cork charity organized by students in Cork – SHARE – were represented by six young people: four from Presentation College, Cork and two from Regina Mundi, all accompanied by Brother Patrick Fitzgibbon.

Sporting organisations included representatives of the GAA Cork County Board, St Finbarr's GAA Club and the Incorporated Church of Ireland Cork Young Men's Association.

The Cathedral choir under the direction of Peter Stobart, Director of Music, with James Taylor playing the organ sang *Missa Brevis in B flat*

(Little Organ Mass) by Haydn , and also, during Communion the motet was *O quam gloriosum est regnum* by Tomás Luis de Victoria.

Afterwards nearly 150 invited guests were received by the Bishop and Mrs Susan Colton at the Bishop's Palace for tea, coffee and plenty of home baking. In time honoured tradition, the scouts of 2nd Cork (St Fin Barre's) – the Bishop's own old scout group – were on hand to do the washing up.

Bishop Colton's Sermon may be read [here](#).

## **'Very serious' decline in number becoming priests in Ireland**

Papal nuncio Archbishop Charles Brown has expressed alarm at the lack of vocations in [Ireland](#), and at the age profile of existing priests, reports Patsy McGarry in The Irish Times.

“We've a lot of priests in Ireland who are in their 70s, who are working right now. Some are in their 80s. In 10 years they're not going to be working. We're at the edge of an actuarial cliff here, and we're going to start into a free fall.”



Archbishop Brown was speaking to *The Irish Times* at [University Church](#) on Dublin's St Stephen's Green where he had celebrated his last public Mass in Ireland on St Patrick's Day. It was announced last week that he has been appointed to [Albania](#). He departs next month.

While weekly Mass attendance appeared to have stabilised, he said what was in decline “remarkably and alarmingly was the number of men coming forward as potential priests”. It was “very serious”.

His arrival in Dublin in January 2012, was at the lowest point ever in relations between Ireland and the [Vatican](#). The previous July Taoiseach Enda Kenny excoriated Rome following publication of the [Cloyne](#) report, and the previous November it was announced Ireland's Embassy to the Holy See was to close.

“It was a moment of tension, a moment of difficulty, but on every side – from the government, from the Church – I always felt very, very welcome here,” Archbishop Brown said.

## **Behind the scenes**

In his view “a lot of people contributed to the improvement of relations between the Holy See and Ireland in those years 2012 to 2014. A lot of [churchnewsireland@gmail.com](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.com)



***Papal nuncio says many contributed to improving relations between Holy See and Ireland***

people behind the scenes.” Now “we have a terrific Irish Ambassador to the Holy See, [Emma Madigan](#), who’s doing a wonderful job”. Ms Madigan was appointed in June 2014.

In his five years as papal nuncio 11 Catholic bishops were appointed, an unusually high number. It was not without controversy. The Association of Catholic Priests claimed there was little consultation about these appointments, and was upset that all new bishops were from outside the diocese to which they were appointed.

Archbishop Brown insists “the Pope appointed them. I send three names for every diocese, the

so-called terna, and out of those three names they choose and it's a very exhaustive process, a very transparent process in terms of what the Congregation for Bishops and what [Pope Francis](#) sees.”

The appointment of “outsider” bishops was “the policy of the Holy See throughout the entire world”, he said. “ I had no problem in putting candidates from a diocese on a terna that I would send in. But that's the policy of the Holy See.”

## **Freshness**

Overall he felt it was “ a good policy because it gives a kind of freshness, a newness of vision to the bishop who comes into a diocese”.

In Rome last September “they told me their idea would be to send me to another nunciature within the next nine months or so”, he said.

Albania was “a country so completely unlike Ireland in many respects. It has a Muslim majority. It's a very politically sensitive place because of the Albanian presence in [Kosovo](#) and [Macedonia](#). Politically it's quite difficult.”

On his recent visit there Pope Francis “was so impressed by the way in which the three

traditions, Christianity in its Orthodox and Catholic form, and Islam co-exist very, very well in Albania. It's a place of good inter-religious dialogue and co-operation, so I look forward to that."



***Pope Tawadros II of Alexandria with Pope Francis at the Vatican in 2013***

## **Egypt says Pope Francis will visit in April**

Egypt says Pope Francis will pay an official visit to the majority Muslim nation during the final week of April. Presidential spokesman Alaa Youssef said on Saturday the Pope's visit will be in response to an invitation extended by

President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, who met the Pope when he visited the Vatican in late 2014.

Youssef says Francis will meet el-Sissi, as well as Egypt's top Muslim cleric, Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb, and Pope Tawadros II, the spiritual leader of Egypt's Coptic Christians.

He says Egypt hopes the visit will cement the "spirit of tolerance and dialogue" between followers of different faiths and further isolate extremism and terrorism.

## **News briefs & Upcoming events**

**+++ A fond farewell to Sr Bernadine** - For 17 years, Sr Bernadine gave faithful and dedicated service at the heart of St Patrick's Parish, Belfast, working in Grainne House, a refuge for women and migrant families. Before this, Sr Bernadine served the people of St Peter's Cathedral Parish. Her departure is a sad occasion for the parish and she will be greatly missed. She begins a new and exciting chapter in her life, taking up an appointment in Dublin. Yesterday the priests and people of St Patrick's gathered for a special Mass of thanksgiving and farewell.

Afterwards there were refreshments and a presentation to Sr Bernadine in St Patrick's Old Schoolhouse.

**+++ Symphony of the Soil film tonight** - The series of candle-lit film evenings on the theme of 'Sun Sea and Soil: Our Planet in the 21st Century' continues in the Music Room of Christ Church cathedral, Dublin, on Monday at 6.30pm. Symphony of the Soil, an artistic exploration of that miraculous substance, soil, will be introduced by Robert Moss, Green Communities Manager at An Taisce.

**+++ Meath & Kildare parish introduction** - On Thursday evening in St Mary's church, Julianstown, the Bishop of Meath & Kildare will introduce the Revd Roy Taylor in succession to the Revd Peter Rutherford who is now Rector of Kinsale.

**+++ Concert for Refugee Housing Appeal** - The choristers of St Patrick's Cathedral will be putting their voices behind Dublin & Glendalough's Diocesan Refugee Housing Appeal with a special concert in the cathedral on Friday evening at 6.15 pm. The evening will feature the Cathedral Choristers with special

guests, jazz singer/songwriter Suzanne Savage and Victoria Green on guitar. Admission is free and there will be a retiring collection for the housing appeal which plans to raise €300,000 over three years to support a new housing and integration project being coordinated by the Irish Refugee Council. While admission is free, advance registration is recommended. Reserve online for free by clicking: <https://stpatrickscathedral.digitickets.co.uk/event/2125657?>

**+++ Church Education Society AGM** - The Annual General Meeting of the Church Education Society will be held on Wednesday, 29th March 2017, at 4pm, in Church of Ireland House, Rathmines.

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