

Church News Ireland



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Image of the day



Glenarm Castle hosts Songs of Praise with Keith & Kristyn Getty

Last week Glenarm Castle had the pleasure of hosting the filming of BBC Songs of Praise with Keith & Kristyn Getty within the Walled Garden and Glenarm Castle.

We look forward to watching along when it is aired in the near future.

Getty Music - About us

<https://www.gettymusic.com/about-us>



Discover Glenarm Castle

<https://glenarmcastle.com/>

News

Carnmoney Mothers Union support for Antrim Hospital

Eileen Roulston on behalf of the Carnmoney branch of the Mothers Union delivered two boxes of Emergency Toiletry packs to the A&E department at Antrim

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Hospital as well as baby hats and incubator blankets to the Neonatal Dept.

As usual each department was really appreciative and delighted to receive them.

MCI statement on attack on Belfast Islamic Centre

The Methodist Church in Ireland is sorry to hear of the events at the Belfast Islamic Centre (last) night, Friday 20th June.

We are committed to working towards a society in which no one lives in fear and all can flourish.

Every effort must be made to limit the damage that will be done by this decision - Cardinal Vincent Nichols

Cardinal Vincent Nichols has issued the following response after the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill passed its third reading in the House of Commons by just 23 votes:

'The vote in the House of Commons in favour of the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill is a watershed moment in the history of our country. It fundamentally changes society's long held values and relationships on matters of life and death.

'The task is now clear: every effort must be made to limit the damage that will be done by this decision. This duty lies both on the House of Lords and on His Majesty's Government. The list of challenges is long. It has been well rehearsed in recent weeks by responsible bodies and distinguished individuals, including the Public Commission on Palliative and End-of-Life Care whose recommendations have yet to be discussed. The appeal to personal autonomy, so much at the centre of the Parliamentary debate, cuts both ways: the provision of a choice to die cannot exclude the provision of properly resourced care for those who choose to live until a natural death.

'As Catholics we will continue to play our part in the building of the common good. The decision of Parliament does not change our firm belief in the sanctity of life, never simply a burden, but always a gift of God, given and received. Our duties are clear: to live by the teaching given to us by God; generously to accompany with care and compassion those facing disability, isolation and suffering; to continue to put forward, with respect and clarity, the objective norms that inform our firm beliefs on how to live, and to die, well.'

Education

Edmund Rice College another busy day in Zambia

Their first stop was at St Lawrence, the school's cherished sister school, where they received a warm



welcome and toured the impressive Special Educational Needs Unit.

The visit continued with a football match and a collaborative art project, bringing pupils together through creativity and fun.

The group then returned to the Home of Hope to deliver essential aid and spend time playing games and strengthening bonds through joy and kindness.

Their final visit of the day took them to Kabwata Orphanage, where they had the honour of meeting Mrs Angela Miyanda, the inspiring founder. Her vision and commitment left a lasting impression on all.

Gorey Central School bids farewell

6th Class in Gorey Central School bade farewell as 33 young people graduated.

Many family and friends joined with them in Christ Church Gorey for their graduation ceremony. Mr. Bater the School Principal and Archdeacon Hayden presented the students either their graduation certificates. Every blessing and good wish for the future.

Belfast High School German Trip

After an early departure from Dublin Airport (0650), the group arrived safely in Düsseldorf before travelling to Cologne.



After lunch they visited Cologne Cathedral and the Schokoladen Chocolate Museum.

Campbell College Spanish boarders share language with Castle Gardens Primary

At Campbell College, we're proud to have a vibrant international community. Recently, some of our Spanish boarders had the chance to share their language and

culture with Primary 6 pupils at Castle Gardens Primary School, in a fantastic initiative led by Miss Moulds.

Over the past three weeks, P6 have been learning numbers, colours, facts about Spanish-speaking countries, and how to hold a simple conversation in Spanish. It's been a brilliant opportunity for our students to engage with younger learners and support language learning in a fun and meaningful way.

A big thank you to Castle Gardens for the warm welcome and well done to our students for representing Campbell so well.

Building Active Schools in Special Education

A new, co-developed document headed by Ulster University, will ensure schools have the tools needed to give every child the opportunity to thrive through physical activity.

'Building Active Schools in Special Education' has been led by Lecturer in Sport and Public Health, Dr Erin Byrd alongside academics from Queen's University Belfast, plus a working group of representatives from community groups, schools, the Education Authority and Special Olympics Ireland.

Read more: <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/news/2025/june/new-first-of-its-kind-guidance-to-promote-whole-school-approach-to-physical-activity-in-special-education-settings>

Cathedral Calls



Retirement of Director of Music at Hampton Court



On Sunday 20th July at 3.30pm we gathered in the Chapel Royal of Hampton Court Palace to say a very fond 'Adieu' to Carl Jackson MVO as he retired as Director of Music at Hampton Court after



nearly 30 years of faithful service.

We bade farewell to our friend and colleague.

Lunar free ordination in Cork

This was the scene at St. Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork on Saturday following their rehearsal for Sunday's Ordination at 3.30 pm.

The candidate deacons - Alan Howe and Jean Taylor with Bishop Paul Colton and in the photograph also are the Dean of Cork, Nigel Dunne and the Archdeacon of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, Andrew Orr...



...It was the last day of Helios.



St Columb's Derry boy and girl choristers of the year

**The Boy Choristers,
Girl Choristers,
Chorister Parents,
Lay Clerks,
Chamber Choir
Ladies, and
Supporters of the
Cathedral Choirs
gathered for anight
to celebrate a
fantastic year of
singing!**

A special mention goes to Ben Langan, who was named Boy Chorister of the Year - an award voted for by his fellow Boy Choristers, Supervisors, and Nicky & Louis. Congratulations also to Alice Mitchell, who was awarded Girl



Chorister of the Year by her fellow Girl Choristers, Supervisors, and Nicky & Louis. Both awards recognise outstanding attendance, engagement in rehearsals, and the way they support their fellow choristers.

The delicious BBQ was generously provided by Curran's Bakery & Coffee Shop of Greysteel, and thoroughly enjoyed by all 112 attendees - our heartfelt thanks to their fantastic team!

We're also incredibly grateful to the Dean for allowing us to use the Deanery Yard and Cathedral grounds.

Finally, a huge thank you to all our Choristers, Parents, Supervisors, Lay Clerks, and Chamber Choir Ladies for their incredible support and commitment throughout the year.

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We aren't quite finished there though! We still have another two Sundays to complete in Saint Columb's before the small matter of our Choir Tour to Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin on the first week of July.

Clergy and ministry



Deacons for Armagh

Revd Sonya Barnes and Revd Wayne Hawthorne were ordained Deacons (OLM) by Archbishop John McDowell in St Patrick's Cathedral Armagh - Sunday 22nd June 2025.

Priest in Charge for Strabane

The Bishop of Derry & Raphoe has appointed a Priest in Charge for Strabane.

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From next Sunday Rev Robert Wray will take up this position in the parish of Camus Juxta Mourne.

New Rector for trinity of Donegal parishes

Members of three parishes in Donegal came face-to-face ‘officially’ with their new Rector for the first time, on Friday evening, as Rev’d Johnny Lowden was instituted as the incumbent of the Stranorlar, Meenglass & Kiltcevogue Cofl Group in the beautiful Finn Valley.

It was a glorious evening for a service marking the end of a two-year vacancy which arose when the previous incumbent, Rev’d Adam Pullen, left in June 2023 to become Rector of Fanlobbus Union in the Diocese of Cork. Since then, Rev’d Canon Mervyn Peoples had been providing vacancy cover.

For the new Rector, who was born in Bangor but grew up in Downpatrick, his appointment represents a new and exciting challenge after almost three years as a curate in Glendermott and Newbuildings: he will be serving in a rural community, in a different jurisdiction, as he gets to know his new flock.

Friday evening’s service was led by the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev’d Andrew Forster, who spoke of its significance not just for the parishioners of the Stranorlar Group and their Rector, but for Rev’d Lowden, his wife, Emily, and for the whole diocese.

The sermon was preached by the man who had mentored Rev'd Lowden ever since his ordination to the priesthood in September 2022, the Rector of Glendermott, Rev'd Canon Robert Boyd MBE, who was at pains to remind the Group's parishioners of their own responsibilities as followers of Jesus Christ. "Ministry is not just the Rector's responsibility," he told the congregation, "it is a joint ministry of Rector and parishioners, and the Rector is here to encourage and build up the ministry of this parochial group."

We pray that God will bless those mentioned here in their ongoing ministry.

Events

Kildare and Leighlin to host major international celebration of Saint Columbanus this July

Saint Columbanus (c.543–615 AD) is one of Ireland's most influential early Christian missionaries and scholars, whose legacy connects Carlow in Ireland's south-east to Bangor in Northern Ireland and far beyond to continental Europe.

Born in the shadow of Mount Leinster, Columbanus' early spiritual formation is believed to have taken place in the Myshall area.

Kildare and Leighlin will play host to a major international celebration this July, as visitors from France, Italy, Germany

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and Northern Ireland, along with many more from local counties, will arrive for the 26th Columbanus Weekend, taking place from Friday, July 11th to Sunday, July 13th 2025. The gathering, part of a rotating European tradition, honours the life and legacy of St. Columbanus.

One of the key highlights is Symposium at Carlow College, St Patrick's: "If You Want to Know the Creator, Understand Creation" (Columbanus, Sermon 1)

To see the full programme and to book your event, most of which are free, visit <https://www.kandle.ie/countdown-to-xxvi-columbanus-day-2025/>

Resources

NI craft makers can now apply for Trust Award

NI craft makers can now apply for £15,000 Rosy James Memorial Trust Award.

Administered by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the Rosy James Memorial Trust Award, established in 2014, was established thanks to the generosity of Rosemary James (Rosy), a local patron of the arts.

Dr Suzanne Lyle, Head of Visual Arts, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, commented: "Rosy's incredible passion for the arts demonstrates the power of philanthropic giving to create lasting impact...It is a great opportunity for designer

makers in craft and we look forward to receiving the next round of applications.”

<https://artscouncil-ni.org/news/ni-craft-makers-apply-rosy-james-trust-award>

Perspective

'Peace is greatest achievement' of Christian Aid – Bishop Trevor Williams

‘Peace is the greatest achievement’ of Christian Aid’s partnership with communities – Bishop Trevor Williams preaching at a 80th anniversary service in Belfast Cathedral.

At the end of a week dominated by stories of conflict in several parts of our world, Bishop Trevor Williams highlighted peace as the greatest achievement of a successful and locally-led development project, in his remarks at Christian Aid’s 80th anniversary service.

Bishop Williams was speaking in Belfast Cathedral on Friday evening (20th June) – World Refugee Day – and his sermon is provided in full.

He illustrated his remarks on Isaiah 58 and Matthew 22 with a recollection of a visit to a village in Mali, where a reservoir was built by local people with the help of Christian Aid – also a reconciled community for the people who call it home.

Readings: Isaiah 58.5-8 and Matthew 22.34-40

Thank you for this opportunity to support Christian Aid Ireland. It is a privilege. We live in dark days, where there is more talk about war than there is about peace. Where governments are turning ploughshares into swords and pruning hooks into spears as they move funding from international development to defence in an increasingly threatening global environment.

Our readings bring us back to what really matters, what the law and the prophets were trying to teach us, the eternal values that enable us to live well together. Loving God with all our heart, soul and mind and our neighbours as ourselves. And, remember, Jesus showed us in the parable of the Good Samaritan that neighbourliness is caring for those in need. That focus is made explicit in the passage from Isaiah:

‘... to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?’

‘Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter –
when you see the naked, to clothe them?’

The context of those verses from Isaiah is that God’s people were seeking to please God by diligently keeping up their religious practice but were ignoring the suffering, injustice and poverty of those in need. To be in relationship with God means you not only say you care for those in need, you act on their behalf to relieve their suffering.

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How many times have you said: “When I listen to the news, I feel so helpless, the suffering is so awful and there is nothing I can do about it?”

I have good news for you, this is precisely why Christian Aid exists.

Christian Aid works with some of the world's most vulnerable communities in 29 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean. And through Christian Aid, your gift of loving support can reach those in need.

I have been impressed by how Christian Aid works. Christian Aid doesn't say: “I know what is best for you.” It works through local partners who know how best to support the local community. They don't arrive with prepared solutions but ask those directly affected what they need.

One of the greatest privileges I have had in my ministry has been to be a member of the Board of Christian Aid Ireland.

I was invited to travel to Mali to meet Christian Aid partners and the people they were working with. But first there was a meeting with local community activists and Islamic and Christian religious leaders, and professors from one of the oldest universities in the world from Timbuktu. We brainstormed together about what we could do to promote peace in the context of the war.

Then we visited some remote villages on the Dogon Plateau. I remember stepping out of our air-conditioned jeep into 50 degrees of unforgiving sunshine.

In that arid condition where rainfall was becoming increasingly unpredictable and winds were stripping away fertile soil, remarkable progress had been made. A large reservoir had been built by local people which could irrigate the market garden to provide food for the village, together with new techniques to counter soil erosion, new drought-resistant seeds and solar energy to make it all work.

After seeing what had been achieved there was a village meeting. I asked the elders of the village: “Of all the progress you have made, what was your best achievement?”

The answer was one word. “Peace”.

“Before Christian Aid’s partners came, there was a dispute about village leadership. It was serious. We kept in our houses and didn’t go out. We weren’t sleeping, we weren’t working. Government agencies came with plans to help our agriculture, but nothing happened. When Christian Aid came, they asked us what we needed, and we began working on the problems of leadership in the village. In time we came to an agreement and peace was restored. This is why we have been able to make such progress. Peace is the greatest achievement because it enables us to live together and to work together.”

That’s what the village elders told me, with great smiles on their faces.

It was Christian Aid’s Church-based partner in Mali that recognised the importance of right relationships if any development was to be possible in that village.

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Thank God for Christian Aid. For its 80 years of seeking to be an agency of God's loving concern for the world. For its way of working respecting the dignity, intelligence and integrity of those they work with, and for its commitment to the Churches, to enable us to play our part in being agents of God's loving concern for all of God's creation. Amen.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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Church News Ireland

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Link in Monday through Saturday from early morning

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