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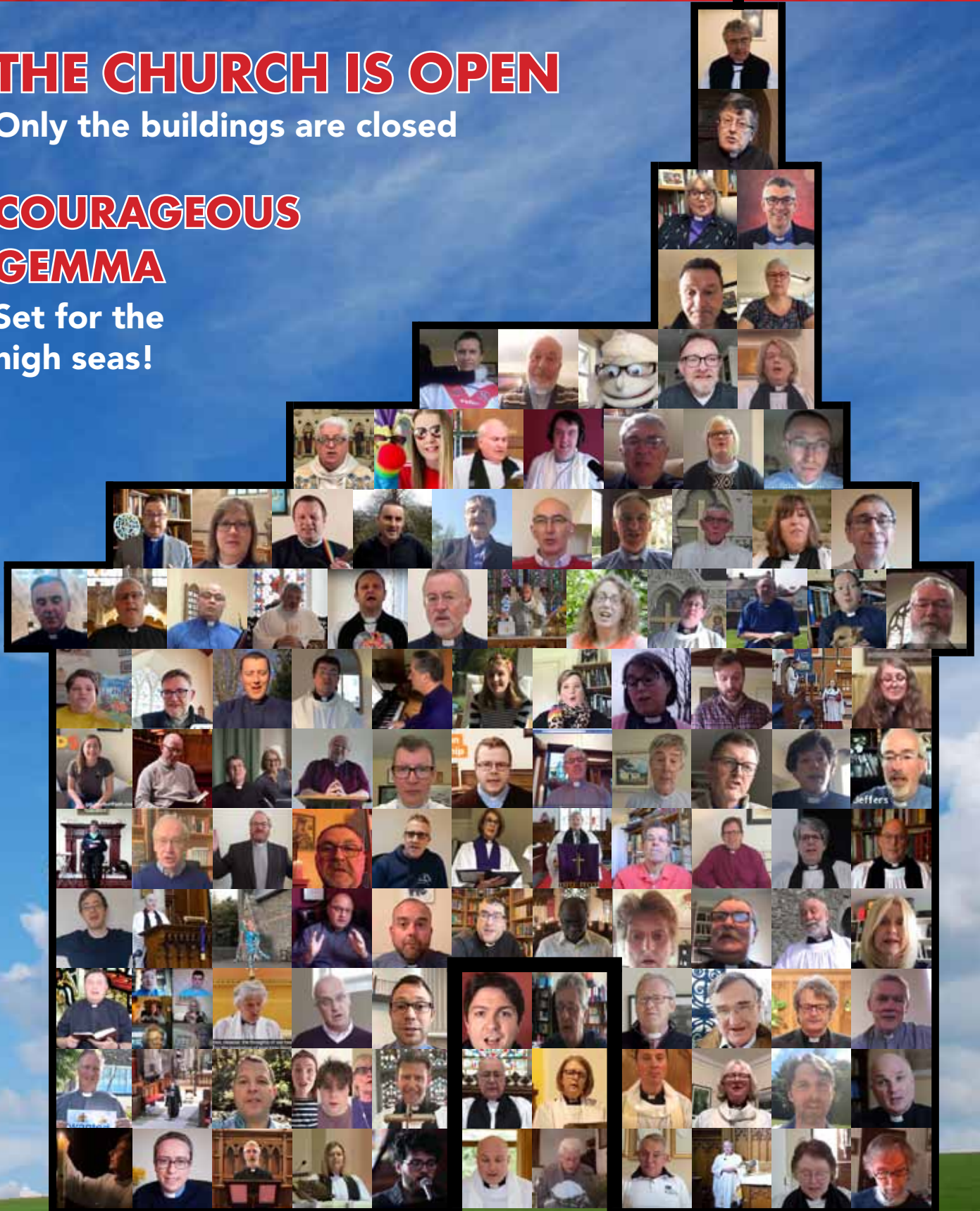
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THE CHURCH IS OPEN

Only the buildings are closed

COURAGEOUS GEMMA

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CLIFFORD RETIRES AS CHAPLAIN TO BISHOP OF CONNOR

The Rev Clifford Skillen, former assistant editor of the 'Gazette,' has retired as the Bishop of Connor's Senior Domestic Chaplain. He had served in that capacity throughout the entire 12 years of Bishop Alan Abernethy's episcopacy.

Clifford said: "It was always my intention to step down when Bishop Alan retired - and prior to the diocese entering a new era under a new bishop - though I didn't anticipate it would be quite so soon or in such unfortunate circumstances as Bishop Alan's ill health.

"It has been a great personal privilege - and hugely enjoyable - not only to have served Bishop Alan and the diocese in this position throughout all of his episcopacy, but also to have been able to play even a small part, especially in institution and ordination services which marked very special occasions in the life of parishes and the ministry of diocesan colleagues."

Clifford wished Bishop Alan and his wife Liz a happy retirement. "I would also like to wish Bishop-designate George Davison every blessing for the future," he said.

Bishop-designate George said: "The diocese owes a great debt of gratitude to Clifford for his faithful support of Bishop Alan at so many public occasions in the life of the diocese.

"As he retires from this role I - and I'm sure all of us - offer him our sincere thanks and wish him God's blessing in the years ahead."



The Rev Clifford Skillen with Bishop Alan Abernethy at the Thanksgiving Service last December prior to the bishop's retirement.



Shirley Crutchley, left (photo: Ann Wright), and Marie Anderson, pictured in their gardens with their Maundy purses.

MAUNDY GIFTS FOR SHIRLEY AND MARIE

Two loyal Church of Ireland parishioners were honoured to receive Her Majesty the Queen's Maundy money - by special delivery!

Shirley Crutchley from Kilhorne Parish, Annalong, Diocese of Down and Dromore, and Marie Anderson, Christ Church Parish, Lisburn, Diocese of Connor, were among this year's recipients of the traditional Maundy purses.

Sadly, the Maundy Service planned for April 9 in St George's Chapel, Windsor, didn't go ahead because of the restrictions around Covid-19, but both Shirley and Marie received their Maundy coins in the post.

Shirley thanked former Bishop of Down and Dromore, the Rt Rev Harold Miller, for putting her name forward. "It was truly a completely unexpected but lovely surprise," Shirley said.

"I am disappointed that the ceremony at St George's Chapel was cancelled, but I feel honoured to have received a letter from our Queen and also the special Maundy purses, and these will always be greatly treasured."

Each year, The Queen distributes special Maundy money to a number of pensioners in recognition of their contribution to community and to the Church.

Shirley is a former principal teacher of a primary school. In retirement, she visits vulnerable and

lonely elderly people, and befriends those who are struggling with loss and grief. She has set up a variety of community-based support groups in her local area, and has served as a diocesan lay reader.

Marie was nominated for the Maundy money by former Bishop of Connor, Alan Abernethy. "I knew the bishop from attending church events and his annual Lenten Talks, but I got to know him a bit better because we went on the same journey at the Cancer Centre," Marie said.

"He was getting his radiotherapy at 12 noon and I was getting mine at 11.30. We enjoyed each other's company while waiting. I had 27 sessions and the bishop had more, but we went through the whole thing together."

Marie has been a parishioner in Christ Church Lisburn for more than 50 years. She was a Sunday School teacher from 20 years, has been a long-term member of the Mothers' Union and for a number of years was branch leader. She also worked as the parish administrator and was secretary of the Select Vestry for five years.

She said she was honoured to receive the Maundy money. "I still can't get my head around why I was chosen. There was a letter from the Lord High Almoner, and I read about what people have done in Church circles and I think, 'that's not me!' There are lots of people who are much more deserving!"

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Cover photo: The Church is open: Only the buildings are closed. Parishes across the island of Ireland are running a vibrant online ministry during the coronavirus crisis.



CHURCH OF IRELAND

GAZETTE

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RISING TO THE CHALLENGE



It is hard to believe how quickly the extraordinary becomes the ordinary. Two months ago, reading accounts of Wuhan residents living in lockdown because of the coronavirus, I would never have imagined that in a short space of time we would have to do the same, and for so long.

The shocking daily death tolls experienced by our European neighbours are now being recorded here: A tidal wave of grief sweeping through our communities as loved ones die, exacerbated by the unimaginable, but tragically real, ban on wakes and services of thanksgiving, and the strict limit on numbers attending a burial.

Older people are the most isolated and the most vulnerable. Taking steps to reduce the former increases their risk of the latter. Thankfully, the evidence shows that social distancing is working. If we keep it up, we will beat this virus and, one day, life will return to the 'ordinary' that we once enjoyed.

I watched a 'funny' video on social media which showed hundreds of chickens racing madly out of a barn and down a hill. The video was captioned: 'When they let us out!' I suspect, however, that as lockdown regulations ease, we will actually step out slowly, nervous about re-entering the world.

What a joy it will be to be able to return to the sanctity of our churches. This crisis, however, has proved that while our buildings have had to close, the Church remains open and continues to carry out a vibrant ministry.

Clergy and others have risen to the challenge of transferring ministry to an online platform - David Ritchie, Chief Executive of the Representative Church Body, comments (page 21) that many parishes say numbers tuning in for Sunday services online are far in excess of those attending worship before the pandemic. That is a clear endorsement of the efforts of our clergy - and perhaps an indication that the way we 'do

church' once this pandemic is over, will change.

We make no apologies for the many coronavirus-related stories in this issue. Key workers and others are doing an incredible job making sure we, the public, stay safe and well. Health workers, law enforcement officers, food producers, teachers and other key workers are having to adapt the way they work - many at risk to their own health. We thank them sincerely.

To keep our distributors safe, this issue of the 'Gazette' is available, free to all, in online format only, and can be printed at home at www.gazette.ireland.anglican.org. Our office is currently closed, but if you have a story to share in our June issue, please email editorcofigazette@gmail.com.

Thank you for downloading the 'Gazette.' I am delighted that we can continue to provide this service and, at the same time, encourage our readers to stay home and stay safe.

VIRTUAL SERVICE OF INTRODUCTION IN MEATH AND KILDARE

The Rev Fran Grasham has taken up her post as part-time priest-in-charge of Geashill Union, Diocese of Meath and Kildare, following a virtual Service of Introduction conducted by Bishop Pat Storey.

The service took place on April 27 using the Zoom online platform. Fran was accompanied by her husband Steve and seven others, including diocesan registrar Karen Seaman.

Bishop Pat said: "We had to adapt to the restrictions on social distancing because of Covid-19, by holding the Service of Introduction virtually. Even though the parishioners of Geashill Union have not been able to hold a physical Service of Introduction, the warmth of their welcome is just as real, as is Rev Fran's enthusiasm for ministry amongst them."

Prior to taking up her new appointment, Fran served as a non-stipendiary minister in the Kildare and Newbridge Group of Parishes and as Chaplain to the Irish Defence Forces.



Bishop Pat Storey conducts a virtual Service of Introduction for the Rev Fran Grasham (inset).

Please check our website and social media for updates on deadlines and publication of the June issue of the 'Gazette.'

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AT THE HEART OF PASTORAL CARE

THE PROVISION OF PASTORAL CARE IN THE MIDST OF COVID-19 HAS BEEN A GLOBAL CHALLENGE, WRITES HOSPITAL CHAPLAIN, DR DANIEL NUZUM

At the heart of palliative care is the philosophy of living as well as you can for as long as possible in the midst of a life-limiting illness.

Marymount University Hospital and Hospice is a specialist inpatient palliative care service located in Cork, with 44 inpatient beds, in addition to 66 residents in our Service for the Older Person and a large number of community palliative care patients who are cared for at home or in care facilities.

Due to the increase of the Covid-19 virus in the wider community, Marymount Hospice reluctantly had to introduce severe visiting restrictions to protect our vulnerable patients and the staff who care for them. This was a difficult decision, and in many ways goes against the core philosophy of family-centred care that Marymount holds dear.

Recognising that the absence of loved ones was a source of

upset for our patients, the pastoral care team led on the provision of virtual care with patients using iPads and video conferencing. This provided pastoral care for patients in isolation and also allowed patients to connect with their loved ones at home. Following an initial generous donation of two iPads and the evident success of the initiative, a drive was launched to provide this service for all patients.

APPEAL

A fundraising appeal was made on Good Friday, and within 24 hours more than €20,000 was raised and more than 80 devices hand-delivered to the hospice and hospital. Most were brand new and ordered by individuals and companies especially for Marymount. At the time of writing the appeal had reached €45,000, including €35,000 through our GofundMe site and

a €10,000 donation from Apple.

When visiting restrictions

were introduced, we knew immediately that this would be very challenging for our patients and their loved ones at what is perhaps the most vulnerable times in their lives.

We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of so many towards our appeal. The iPads have already been used to provide valuable final connections with families, to provide pastoral care to patients who were unable to have visitors, and to virtually bring family guests to a wedding which they could not attend in person.

At the heart of pastoral care is 'relationship,' and this new initiative, that I am proud to be part of with our pastoral care team and the wider multidisciplinary team, has meant a lot to our patients and their families. It is another example of the tremendous 'can do' attitude that is evident within our Marymount staff and community.

The provision of pastoral care in the midst of Covid-19 has been a global challenge for chaplains and pastoral care teams around the world. At a time of isolation and uncertainty, healthcare chaplains have been providing meaningful care and exploring new ways of maintaining care for patients, their loved ones and staff colleagues.

The spiritual challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic such as isolation, fear, uncertainty, loneliness, abandonment are immense. As chaplains, a number of us are collaborating globally to share good practice, research, and experiences to develop innovative ways to provide meaningful pastoral care.

To support the iPad initiative, please visit: <https://ie.gofundme.com/f/MarymountTechAppeal>.

Dr Daniel Nuzum is a member of the Pastoral Care Team at Marymount University Hospital and Hospice and is a Healthcare Chaplain and Clinical Pastoral Education Supervisor at Cork University Hospital and Cork University Maternity Hospital.
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A VITAL ROLE IN FOOD PRODUCTION



The Codd family (pictured), all members of the parish of St Columba's Church in Tullow, Co Carlow, Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory, have been growing the finest quality mushrooms at their home farm in since 1989.

"Over the last 30 years we have seen many changes and have progressed to a modern, purpose built mushroom and packing facility which currently employs 240 people," explains Hazel Codd.

Codd Mushrooms Ltd is now the largest supplier of mushrooms into

the Irish market. How has Covid-19 impacted the company?

"The greatest challenges we currently have are ensuring the safety of our staff and the unpredictability of orders," Hazel said. "While sales in the catering sector have reduced dramatically, retail sales have increased."

She said that the health and safety of all staff is paramount. "We have had to implement huge changes to keep our employees safe. We are currently taking temperature checks on everyone before they commence

work. We have added additional canteen and hand-washing areas and employed extra cleaners to ensure communal areas are disinfected on a regular basis.

"We have identified ways of ensuring social distancing which include staggering breaks, and have regular meetings with all staff to ensure they are aware of government advice and regulations."

Food producers like Codd Mushrooms are essential during this crisis. "Our staff are playing a vital role in keeping food production moving and feeding the country," said Hazel. "We are committed to ensuring that all retailers receive their orders without delay. We will strive to keep up a level of production to ensure that mushrooms are supplied to the quality and volumes required by the retailers."

William Codd is a member of Diocesan Synod and Hazel is Lay Honorary Secretary of the General Synod.

MAGGIE'S MISSION

A retired nurse from Gilnahirk has joined the army of volunteer seamstresses making hospital scrubs to help keep staff and patients safe during the coronavirus crisis.



Maggie Murphy.

Working with the 'Dundonald Darners' group, Maggie Murphy's first scrubs are already in use at the Ulster Hospital, helping to protect high-risk, immuno-compromised cardiac and cancer patients, and the staff caring for them.

Maggie, a warden of St Dorothea's Church, Gilnahirk, Diocese of Down and Dromore, was a MacMillan nurse until her retirement. She wanted to return to nursing to offer bereavement support to families affected by the pandemic, but at 73, her family felt it was too dangerous, so she has been making scrubs instead.

Maggie, a long-term volunteer with Christian Aid, also rings the church bell at 8pm on Thursdays to show gratitude for frontline workers.

TEACHER'S BOOK SUPPORTS CHILDREN

Primary school teacher Mike Forde, who grew up in the rectory of St Cedma's, Larne, Diocese of Connor, where his father Stephen, now Dean of Belfast, was rector, has published a new book to support children in the midst of the coronavirus crisis.

Mike now lives in Lancaster where he teaches at Ingleton Primary School. He penned the story in an effort to help pupils come to terms with the school shutdown.

"I initially shared it as a Kindle book with the class and it was downloaded hundreds of times and shared by teachers across the country," said Mike. "I've now created a website for the book - <https://parsleymimblewood.wordpress.com/> - so that anyone can access it for free."

Titled 'How to NOT go to school,' the story follows the whimsical daily



Teacher and author Mike Forde.

adventures of Parsley Miblewood. "Each chapter explores an issue that might be weighing on children's minds at the moment such as dealing with emotions, missing friends and feeling cooped up," said Mike. "At the end the chapter, there are prompts and questions to support parents to discuss these issues as a family."

"It seems to have appealed to lots of children and families beyond my school."



Donoughmore parishioner Marcella Eager chats to Archdeacon Neal O'Raw.

WHEN STREAMING IS NOT AN OPTION

By Lynn Glanville

How do you 'do church' during a lockdown when going online is not an option? When your fellow clergy are becoming YouTubers or streaming services on Facebook Live, but you and your parishioners are largely confined to a broadband blackspot?

It's back to basics for the Archdeacon of Glendalough, the Ven Neal O'Raw, who now finds that socially distant conversations with parishioners across their gates are

the only way forward.

Neal is the rector of Donoughmore and Donard with Dunlavin. Located on the west side of the Wicklow Mountains, the parish is among the most rural in the Diocese of Glendalough. Here, internet is creaky at best, and even mobile phone coverage is far from guaranteed.

"My answer to this has been to meet people face to face," Neal says. "I drive up to a parishioner's gate and ring them. They come outside and we have a chat."

The visits are all conducted in an appropriately socially distant manner and clergy have a dispensation to move beyond their 2km radius to carry on their work.

"On a normal pre-Covid-19 Sunday, I might see two or three dozen people. It's a rural area and there is quite a small Church of Ireland population. I started limited visiting, focusing on those who are particularly isolated. I had been calling people, but I don't like the phone and, as a former long distance lorry driver, I like to be out and about. This helps keep up the Sunday connection and maintains the sanity of the rector," he says.

With his 'walk and talk' philosophy, Neal is as busy in lockdown as ever before.

WE CAN EMBRACE EVEN IF WE ARE NOT THERE

Bereaved relatives mourning the loss of a loved one - whether the death was a consequence of contracting Covid-19 or not - are now facing the additional pain of restrictions in terms of funerals.



Paul Dundas.

Archdeacon of Dalriada and rector of Christ Church, Lisburn, Diocese of Connor, has conducted a number of these graveside funerals.

Reflecting on the funeral of a parishioner who died of Covid-19, held in Castlewellan, Co Down, Paul said: "It is very surreal standing at a graveside, the sun beating down.

In Northern Ireland, regulations dictate social distancing must be observed in graveyards, and only 10 people may be present at a burial.

The Ven Paul Dundas,

You are in the Mourne Mountains. This is where this lady was born and brought up, and this is the family grave. You are reading Psalm 23, which is what she requested as part of her funeral service.

"The birds are singing, and the sheep are bleating and you think - this is a funeral. This is someone for whom we would have loved to have had a service in a church, singing the hymns she chose, and just being able to hug.

"Families and congregations cannot be there. That's the hard part. Ecclesiastes says there is a time to embrace. We cannot embrace physically, but we can embrace through sharing our thoughts and prayers online on Facebook and WhatsApp. We can embrace someone even if we are not able to be there.

"We have been very blessed by the weather. We can stand by the grave and not get blown away. And for those suffering during Easter and

Holy Week, the resurrection hope does bring comfort."

Paul said that as some clergy are confined to home for 12 weeks, clergy who are able are helping out in other parishes. "There has been a lot of sharing," he said. He paid tribute to the hard work of undertakers and graveyard staff.

Following appeals by the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, the Rt Rev Andrew Forster, and the Roman Catholic Bishop of Derry, the Most Rev Dr Donal McKeown, the Northern Ireland Executive reversed a decision to close cemeteries.

Expressing his concerns about the closures, Bishop Andrew said the legislation allowed public parks to remain open but forced cemeteries to close. "We're literally 'standing on holy ground' when we're talking about this issue," Bishop Andrew said, "because cemeteries are a place of memory, they're a place of grief, they're also a place of hope and resolution as well."

EVENTS CAUSED ME TO ASK QUESTIONS

MARK FERGUSON IS THE FOUNDER OF THE MARK FERGUSON BAND, A CO ARMAGH-BASED WORSHIP GROUP

1/ Tell us about your background.

I was brought up in a loving and lively Christian home. My father, Dean Raymond, is a retired Church of Ireland clergyman. His longest spell as rector was at Mullabrack Parish, near Markethill. This is where I grew up.

My late mother, Rosemary, was a primary school teacher. She was heavily involved in the life of the church too. Both my parents encouraged music, and particularly singing, around the home at all times! I have two brothers and two sisters. My siblings all sing and play a variety of instruments too, so music and singing songs and hymns together around the piano was - and still is - part of our family life.

2/ What prompted you to form the band?

In August 2006, I became involved in an inter-Church outreach initiative in Portadown called 'Xpression.' The week-long event began each day with morning worship. It ended with an open air celebration of praise and worship in the town centre.

Towards the end of the week, the regular worship leader was unable to attend and I was asked to fill in. I suppose this was the 'birth' of what became the band. Xpression was to play a big role in the growth of the band over the coming years.

3/ Who makes up the band and where and how often do you play?

In September 2006, a monthly inter-Church youth event called 'Resonate' was in need of a band. I invited two of the guys who had played at Xpression, Matt Duke (drummer) and James Donaldson (electric guitar) to join me. Matt asked his younger brother Tim (bass) to join us too - this became 'the



The band: James Donaldson, Matt Duke, Mark Ferguson and Tim Duke.

band' on a regular basis for a number of years. Initially we only played at Resonate each month, but were soon invited to play at events all over Ireland - in church halls, churches, festivals, civic centres, open air stages, theatres etc.

Recently, having become busier with jobs, families and so on, there has not been a regular band as such. I have been less busy with it all too. Now, I usually call upon a number of good musician friends and singers as and when I need them.

4/ How much of your music do you write yourself?

Over the years we have released three albums and one EP. 'Your Name On Our Lips' (five track EP in 2009), 'Dust' (studio album in 2013), 'Hidden' (studio album in 2016) and 'Hidden Live' (live album in 2019, songs from 'Hidden' studio album and some new material).

I wrote all of the songs. Most are for use in sung worship, but there are also some songs of a more personal nature that have been born out of life's experiences. The albums and the songs are available on all the usual digital platforms. There may be the odd one knocking around a Faith Mission Bookshop too!

5/ Has your faith ever been tested?

There have been a few significant events in my life that have caused me to ask questions. Times when I have had to really choose to believe that God is still in control, in spite of circumstances.

In 1998 I was involved in a serious car accident, as a result of which my passenger lost his life. In 2001, I lost my mother to cancer. In 2010, my wife Delia gave birth to our daughter Ana-Lily. We were soon to learn that she was born with a rare condition meaning that she is severely physically disabled and has a variety of complex medical needs.

This is probably the greatest daily challenge, and has led my wife and I on a rollercoaster of questions and hospital admissions - continually having to find a 'new normal' after many trying situations.

However, in everything I am reminded that Jesus freely chose the way of suffering, ie the cross, to bring about an end to all suffering. I must hold on to this! I must trust God to make me stronger by leaning more firmly on Him.

Our daughter is nine years old now and brings us joy every day, we wouldn't change anything about her. We have seen her have an impact on people that we will never have, and we have seen her reflect the glory of God in ways that go deeper than our words could ever describe.

6/ Do you feel your music is a ministry?

I do. I feel very humble, yet greatly privileged when I receive messages from people telling me of how the songs have had an impact on them. For this I am thankful to God. I feel that the songs ultimately belong to God and his people.

I never really see the songs as 'mine' as such, so I am delighted when I am reminded that they have a life or ministry of their own as it were, as God uses them as he pleases.

7/ Should more churches introduce 'praise band' worship alongside the traditional hymn and organ?

I think this is a question for each individual church. It depends on the people that the music ministry is there to serve. I do not feel that any church should rule out one or other,



Mark Ferguson.

but should seek to provide a variety of opportunities and ways for people to engage with God through music and sung worship, regardless of the style.



The most important thing is not the style, but that the music and words glorify God above ourselves and our opinions



There is certainly a place for both - the most important thing is not the style, but that the music and words glorify God above ourselves and our opinions, and give His people a place in which to meet Him and be transformed by Him.

I believe it is more important to focus on how the words of the songs connect with God's Word and what He is specifically saying to the Church at any particular time.

It is also vital that our worship gives space for us to respond corporately and individually to what God has said in any particular

service. I see it like a two-way conversation, as we listen to God's Word, we should have an opportunity to reply to Him in the worship that follows. I think this is all possible in both styles!

8/ Is this a full-time job?

No! It can be busy and there are times when it has certainly felt like my job! However, I am a music teacher. I am currently working at Sperrinview Special School in Dungannon. I teach the full curriculum and co-ordinate the music within the school. Challenging but equally rewarding!

9/ Have you ever been tempted to step away from Christian music into the mainstream industry?

Perhaps in my younger days, before fully deciding what to do with my life. I have written songs for my wife and songs about life, but these haven't always been recorded or released commercially!

If God allows, I intend to record a new album and plan to put what you might call some more 'mainstream' songs on that.

10/ What are your other interests and hobbies?

I enjoy reading. I love to get

outside for walks, usually with some music in my ears. I enjoy watching sports - soccer in particular. I love to travel. I could sit and look at a map of the world for hours and imagine myself in places that I've been to or would yet love to go to!

11/ Do you have a song that you feel would speak to people at this time of worldwide crisis?

One song that people have been asking about or using during this time has been 'Beneath the Cross.' After my daughter was born and my wife and I discovered she would not be the little girl that we were expecting, I had a very dry period during which I didn't write any songs.

One day I picked up my journal and read the following words that I must have written at some point before Ana-Lily was born:

'It's beneath the cross of Christ
That my soul finds rest at last
I can soar on eagle's wings
Fearing not what this life brings.'

The words broke me completely. I can't remember writing them! These words were easy to write when all was well, but I now found myself in a place where I had to choose whether or not I really believed them.

I picked up the guitar again and eventually finished the song. The song goes on to say, 'the cross is not the end, I know that my Redeemer lives, and I will live with Him!' I realised that if 'the cross is not the end,' then equally, 'this world is not the end.' Something that we all can shout!

Because Jesus went to the cross and defeated death, this fallen world and all the disability, sickness, viruses that we experience have been defeated too! The words of the bridge say:

'The blind will see and the lame will walk.
The cross is not the end
Every tear is gone, a new day has dawned,
This world is not the end.'

It took me some time to be able to sing the words, 'and the lame will walk,' without crying! However, this is the joy of being a follower of Christ - in spite of current frustration or fear, this world is not the end!



The Rev Alastair Donaldson on his 2013 Run4Christ marathon around the island of Ireland, covering 1,298 miles.

ALASTAIR SET TO RUN 'VIRTUAL RACE'

The coronavirus pandemic has brought many challenges. It continues to cause much heartbreak, but new opportunities and benefits have also arisen.

The Rev Alastair Donaldson, rector of Kinawley and Holy Trinity Parish, Diocese of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh, has a love of running. Like all those who share his passion, he found the cancellation of races for which he had trained hard was taking a toll on his mental health.

"I had planned, God willing and injuries permitting, to run a number of major races between Easter and the end of June," Alastair said. "However, with the lockdown, one by one these disappeared from the race calendar."

As he looked to the days and weeks ahead, Alastair discovered the concept of 'virtual running.' "At first I thought it was something to do with a computer game, but it was nothing of the sort," he said.

ATHLETE

He soon discovered that 'virtual running' is big business. "The idea is not necessarily new, but has gained much traction of late. A typical athlete will enter a race of whatever distance through various organisers.

They then 'run the race' remotely alongside other entrants," Alastair explained. "When they finish, they submit proof of completion - pictures or downloads of their GPS watch etc. A medal will then be sent in the post."



God has always seen me through, and my runs... have acted as a parable of sorts



Alastair saw a new opportunity for himself and others with a love of running. "With my 38th birthday approaching, I began once again to think like Pheidippides, the original marathon runner. Running was the only sport I was ever good at. Over the years, I have seen it both bless me and use me to bless others. I thought of remotely running 380km (my age to the multiple of 10) over the months of May and June, excluding Sundays."

Distance running is nothing new

to Alastair. In the summer of 2013, he organised Run4Christ around the perimeter of the island of Ireland, covering 1,298 miles, spread over 53 'marathons' and taking eight weeks and three days. On some days he ran up to 30 miles.

Alastair is now seven years older, and happily married to Elise and father to Josiah (3) and baby Edith. His aspirations, he says, are more modest. "If you break down the distance of 380km (approximately 236 miles) over 52 running days, it translates to a manageable 4.5 miles per day and as such would be within the UK Government restriction of one session of exercise per day," he explained.

FAITH

There is another, ultimately more important, reason for his mission. For Alastair, his running challenges have served as a visual demonstration of his faith in Jesus Christ.

"God has always seen me through and my runs, in my own head at least, have acted as a parable of sorts to how He is bringing me and those who would trust in Him to Heaven," Alastair said.

"This coronavirus pandemic has really shaken the foundations of individuals and society across the world. The need for Gospel truth has never been greater. Pointing people to the Easter hope of Christ as Saviour is more urgent than ever."

To this end, he is using his 'virtual run' to raise awareness of the work of Irish Church Missions in Dublin and their prayerful intention to see 10 new Gospel congregations planted by 2028. These range from pioneering work in the Silicon Docks among the business community to the ongoing pastoring of an ethnic Iranian community, already feeling isolated, in both Belfast and Dublin.

"In the months going forward such Gospel initiatives may prove vital to all the citizens of Dublin and throughout the country and island," Alastair said.

Alastair is keen to hear from anyone interested in running 'remotely' with him, or partnering him through prayer or financial giving. Please visit <https://www.give.net/RunandPlant380> or Facebook - search for RunandPlant380.

PRESERVATION OF LIFE AT CORE

Detective Constable Clive McKee, a member of Devenish and Rossorry Parishes, Diocese of Clogher, is a Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) officer attached to the Economic Crime Unit South Area, Enniskillen.

He has been with the PSNI for 33 years, primarily in the Criminal Investigations Branch. "Prior to Covid-19, being a police officer was already challenging," said Clive. "Every day had its surprises, drawing upon your personal strengths, your experience and the training that you have received.

ETHOS

"Always in the forefront of one's mind as a police officer is that you are there to serve all within the community. I, along with my colleagues from within all branches of the PSNI, have this ethos and we cherish the responsibility that has been given to us to keep people safe, protect life, investigate crime and to effect the powers given to

us in a professional and responsible manner. Covid-19 has not changed this ethos, but it has given us challenges in conducting every day, on the ground, police work.

"Policing 'the lockdown' in the area that I serve is challenging for all, but it is being made easier by the majority of people understanding the dangers of Covid-19 and gladly complying with the restrictions that have been imposed by Government. Our communities should be praised for the manner in which they have faced this virus.

"Present events have changed how I conduct my business. I have to bear in mind the serious health implications if I do not take into consideration social distancing measures, washing hands etc, but I also must consider the health of those persons I may be coming into contact with because of my role as a detective.

"Every operational matter and encounter that I have with members of the community is dealt with in a

thoughtful and measured manner. I do not wish to cause a risk to any members of the public or my colleagues. It is fair to say the way we go about our business has changed but we still carry out our police duties."

CONSEQUENCES

Clive said that even in this crisis, crime still happens. That, in turn, has serious consequences for victims and the wider community.

"We in the Police Service still endeavour to investigate and bring before the justice system those who have alleged to have committed whatever crime," he said. "The preservation of life is at the very core of policing ethics, and we who serve in the PSNI will do everything in our being to effect this ethos, along with our partner agencies and all in the community.

"We are there to assist without fear or favour, all within our community who require the service that we gladly give."

WE HAVE A 'WOBBLE ROOM' WHERE WE TAKE TIME OUT

Joanne Clayton, a member of Knockbreda Parish, Diocese of Down and Dromore, is a CT radiographer in the Ulster Hospital in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

"The challenges we face at present are scanning and x-raying seriously ill patients of all ages, who are faced by staff wearing full personal protective gear and trying to keep them calm and reassured that we are doing our best to help them," Joanne said.

"I worry daily that I might carry the virus home to my family, so I'm taking every precaution I can to protect them. Working additional shifts means that I have even less time to spend with my own family."

She said friends and colleagues have to stay calm and reassure each other that they are doing all they can to prevent the spread of the virus

and keep themselves safe, always mindful of changes.

Joanne added: "Not being able to go to church has been difficult, but it has been great to be able to live stream the Sunday services or catch up on social media."

She feels she and her colleagues are 'coping incredibly well.' "We have a little prayer group that meets once a week, or more often if someone needs it," she said. "We are an amazing team who all know each other well and can tell when someone might need a little extra support. We also have a 'wobble room' where we can go and take time out if we need to, it's a quiet space that just recharges the soul."

Joanne added that the support from the public has been wonderful. "It has kept us all going when we've been exhausted - from hand creams to food and buns to clapping on



Radiographer Joanne Clayton.

their doorstep each week. I just can't help smiling when I see a rainbow that's been lovingly painted for us."

It is vital that key NHS staff like Joanne carry on working. "We need to ensure that our patients get an accurate, timely diagnosis to enable our doctors, nurses and the rest of our healthcare heroes to treat them appropriately," Joanne said.

TUAM, KILLALA AND ACHONRY DIOCESE A YEAR IN REVIEW

By Alistair Grimason

We have been busy in Tuam, Killala and Achonry (TKA) in the past year. Lots of small - yet in their own way important - things have happened which I wish I could acknowledge individually. But I am constrained to cherry-picking a few significant highlights.

General Synod 2019 is where we start, when an historic Bill was passed which effectively united the dioceses of Tuam and Limerick. This was subject to ratification by the two diocesan synods. That ratification was affirmed unanimously by both Tuam and Limerick. The unification will come into effect when either or both of the current bishoprics becomes vacant.

As we await organic unity, the dioceses continue to work on nuts and bolts like diocesan regulations, the financial scheme etc. At the same time, TKA and Limerick and Killaloe are doing as much as possible in a 'together' way. We had our joint clergy conference in Adare and our joint Quiet Day in Tuam Cathedral at which Bishop John McDowell, now Archbishop of Armagh, was guest speaker. When the bishops of the Church of Ireland were invited by Limerick and Killaloe to visit for a Mission Weekend in November, TKA was also included, which ended with Choral Evensong in St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick.

SCOTLAND

In June of last year, seven TKA young folk visited our link diocese of Mory, Ross and Caithness in the north east of Scotland. Friendships were forged, stories and culture swapped, and simply a great time was had by all. A return trip by the 'Piskies' is anticipated later this year.

Ordinations can be infrequent occurrences in TKA, but in 2019 we had three! The Rev Karen Duignan, the Rev Carole Reynolds and the Rev Maebh O'Herlighy were made OLM deacons in St Mary's Cathedral, Tuam, in September. Karen is now serving in Kilglass, Carole in



The Tuam, Killala and Achonry and Mory, Ross and Caithness youth exchange.

Roundstone and Maebh in Achill. It is hoped that all three will be ordained priests in the autumn.

Galway had a major event early in 2020. This year is the 700th anniversary of the building of St Nicholas' Collegiate Church. A service celebrating St Nicholas' past, present and future was held on February 9 2020. Honoured guests included Michael D Higgins, President of Ireland, Mrs Higgins, and Church and civic leaders.

CRISIS

We couldn't let this article pass without at least a nod to the current global crisis, which has severely curtailed activities in the diocese and beyond. For instance, the Rev Canon Jen McWhirter, who was appointed incumbent of Aghaval Group of Parishes earlier in the year, has had her institution service postponed indefinitely.

Covid-19 has prompted many of us in TKA to explore new ways of 'being Church.' A weekly - and during Holy Week, daily - recorded act of worship has been posted on our website. A booklet of services, readings and prayers has been produced and widely distributed by post to parishioners, specifically aimed at those who cannot access



Bishop Rooke, Bishop McDowell and Bishop Kearon at the joint Quiet Day.

the internet or social media. And folks are doing their pastoral best by telephone and generally are minding one another.

CHALLENGES

As we struggle to rise to the challenges of these strange times, we look forward to better days with the hope that all of us in the Church of Christ might look back and hear an echo of the words of Scripture 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.' Until that time, we keep in mind the words of Julian of Norwich: 'All shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well.'



Dean Alistair Grimason is Diocesan Communications Officer for the Diocese of Tuam, Killala and Achonry.



From left: The Rev Jonathan McFarland; the Ven Robert Miller, Archdeacon of Derry; the Rev Canon David Crooks, diocesan registrar; and Bishop Andrew Forster. (Photo: Jonny Collins @UlsterImage).

I AM DISAPPOINTED ONLY FOR MEMBERS

JONATHAN MCFARLAND REFLECTS ON HIS INSTITUTION BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

You might imagine that I was disappointed to be having my service of institution as rector to the Parish of Urney, Diocese of Derry and Raphoe, behind closed doors. After all, as a parish, we had been preparing the service for months.

All the invitations had been sent out, the readings and hymns chosen and the order of service was ready for printing. Then along came the coronavirus.

The service was planned for Friday March 20, but as we moved closer to this date, the restrictions on social distancing became tighter and tighter. It was looking like all our plans were about to be scuppered and that the service would have to be postponed.

In the days and even in the hours before the institution, major adjustments had to be made. Bishop Andrew Forster and Archdeacon Robert Millar reassured

me of their commitment to press on.

The reason I am not disappointed with all of this is that, given the serious circumstances, I am simply very grateful that the service actually went ahead.

STRIPPED DOWN

On the night, the service was attended by my wife and daughter, Bishop Andrew, Archdeacon Millar, the Rev Canon David Crooks and a congregation of 20, made up mainly by members of Urney Select Vestry. There were no hymns. The service had been stripped down to the legal essentials and some prayers and words of encouragement from Bishop Andrew.

If I felt any disappointment, it was for the members of my parish who had been looking forward to a full scale celebration.

We left the service with the deep commitment that when all this trouble with the coronavirus is

behind us, we will all pull together to celebrate God's faithfulness in an act of thanksgiving for my institution.

BISHOPS' APPEAL

In the light of the global Covid-19 pandemic, Bishops' Appeal - the Church of Ireland's World Aid and Development Programme - is releasing €50,000 to five key partner mission and development agencies - Christian Aid, Tearfund Ireland, CMS Ireland, USPG and Motivation.

The emergency responses include distributing essential supplies and information to people whose markets have shut down, people who live in informal settlements and refugee camps, and people who are living with a disability.

The Rt Rev Patrick Rooke, Chair of Bishops' Appeal, said: "Aware of the financial pressures parishes are currently experiencing, the Church of Ireland is not launching its own major appeal but asking dioceses, parishes and individuals to give what they can to the appeals launched by our partner agencies, with Bishops' Appeal acting as a conduit. In the midst of our own sufferings and fears at this time, it is vital that we remember those in countries with fewer resources and expertise."

INSPIRING GEMMA HAS PLANS TO TAKE TO THE HIGH SEAS! MARGARET HAWKINS MEETS THE COURAGEOUS GEMMA WILLIS

Gemma Willis has been looking forward to being part of the crew on a tall ship due to sail from Cádiz to Lisbon as part of the Parade of Sails race this summer.

While the Tall Ships Races 2020 hang in the balance due to the coronavirus pandemic, Gemma's ambition to be selected and her determination to take part are nothing short of miraculous.

Gemma, 24, a pastry chef from Tullow, Co Carlow, was seriously injured in a road traffic accident on August 5 2013, and now uses a wheelchair. But this courageous young woman is inspiring others with her story of recovery and resilience.

Even the prospect of being hoisted up to a ship's crow's nest in her wheelchair hasn't daunted her. "I am terrified of heights, but you've got to take these opportunities," says Gemma.

She has been sharing the story of how she was 'put back together,' as she calls it, at the Mater and the National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH) in Dún Laoghaire.

INJURIES

Gemma's list of injuries is long. In an induced coma for six weeks, doctors worked to repair the damage - she has metal rods on either side of her spine which was severed, she suffered a ruptured bowel, one kidney couldn't be saved and her cheek bone was broken. Gemma's right leg had to be amputated due to artery damage, and the toes on her left foot had to be removed.

Gemma then suffered headaches six months after the accident, and a scan showed that spinal fluid had leaked into her brain which resulted in more surgery. All in all, Gemma

had 14 operations in the 16 months she was in hospital.

She recalls a later conversation with a doctor. "He told me that there were seven surgeons standing round me trying to decide if it was worth their while doing anything as my injuries were so bad," Gemma says. "It's shocking to think that. It makes me even more thankful for being alive and doing so well."

CHALLENGES

While life now has many challenges, including needing a wheelchair, an ileostomy bag and catheter, Gemma focuses on the positive, and celebrates the fact that she can be as independent as she is.

"One surgeon I see regularly for check-ups is amazed at how I am doing. When I tell him I can change my own stoma bag and can get into the chair myself he is delighted, as there was so little hope for me in the early days. I had setbacks too, so they can't get over how well I came out of it all," she says.

“Faith did help because in times of trauma you need to believe in something, but you also need the time to accept these things”

Gemma says she is thankful for the pastoral and prayer support she has

had, and believes it has helped her recovery.

"The day after my accident, the rector of Tullow Group of Parishes at the time, the Rev Andrew Orr, and parishioners held a prayer service for me and I believe it was brilliant - a full church with people I didn't even know!" she says.

"The January after I came home, we had a service of thanks, just to show everyone how their prayers had worked. The church was fit to burst. It was lovely to see. I will always remember it."

Gemma says she had very good pastoral support while in hospital too.

"As people say, these are the moments that open your eyes, when you go through trauma and you need someone to talk to, to rant to, to give out to and to be thankful to, so it was great to have so much support.

"So many people came to see me and Hilda Plant, who is chaplain in the Mater, used to play hymns and read different prayers to me. She'd ask, 'what prayer do you want today?' 'St Patrick's Breastplate' was my favourite. 'Christ beside me...'"

PHILOSOPHICAL

Gemma is philosophical about the accident of which she has no recollection and in which her mother, Elizabeth, was less seriously hurt.

"I always say 'for whatever messed up reason this happened, it was meant to happen,' she says.

Getting to the point of acceptance of her injuries was 'a mixture of everything.'

"Faith did help because in times of trauma you need to believe in something, but you also need the time to accept these things. One of the stages is grief. You have to grieve. I think understanding is a big one too. You have to understand the extent of your injuries before you can start to even process it all."

Gemma says that she had no awareness of disability before her accident.

"I never had contact with wheelchairs before - never pushed one, never sat in one, was never up close to one."

Now she prefers one that she can push along herself, with its

colourful wheels, to an electric one. "I felt so un-independent when I tried an electric chair," she says.

Gemma and Elizabeth had been travelling home from Naas Hospital where Gemma had had an eye condition treated, when the collision happened.

"I don't want to know anything about the accident because I can't change it," she says.

But isn't talking about what happened difficult for her?

"No, I'm used to it, and I like talking to Transition Year students about it, for example. I tell them not to take anything for granted, that you might make plans but that challenging things can happen in life and that good can come out of them. And that friendship is so important. My friends I've had since school have been wonderful and I'll always be thankful for that."

LANDMARK

There have been a few landmark stages for Gemma. "As my mum would say, with time you get more daring - you are just so used to it. When I came home from hospital, I would always want someone there when I was getting into bed in case I would fall. Now I do it without thinking about it. Your confidence builds with time."

She was glad to get home to her mother's cooking too! "It's funny the things you long for - lamb chops, cheese toasties, homemade soups and of course - having a sweet tooth and being a pastry chef - I was always yearning for interesting desserts!"

Gemma also missed the family farm when she was away. "Lambing was always my favourite time of year. In ways I feel so helpless, but I still try to help when I can, with bottle-feeding or moving sheep, when I'll be the one stopping the gaps!"

In the future Gemma hopes to be able to drive again, but in the meantime she has her tall ships trip to look forward to - at some stage in the future.

"I'm very excited about it. I'm hoping for a new wheelchair before then. Working as crew, we will have to do a different job every four hours. Being a chef, they will



Gemma Willis.

probably want to keep me in the galley but I want to try everything!"

Gemma is an ambassador for the

Mater Foundation, which is aiming to raise €140,000 for two life-support machines.



A FAST CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

Pharmacist Michael Ogilby.

Michael Ogilby, a parish reader in the United Parish of Ballyclare and Ballynure, Diocese of Connor, is Lead General Practice Pharmacist with the East Belfast Federation

He says the coronavirus has forced a transition from physically seeing patients to remote management. "The GPs in the practice are triaging by phone and working in the Covid

centres," Michael said. "My team is working to maintain treatment of pre-existing conditions, supporting and reassuring our patients.

"We would normally call in patients with long-term conditions such as hypertension and diabetes for review - with many patients also requiring blood tests. This contact is no longer possible. Our aim is to

keep everyone safe and treat them effectively. This is a very fast changing environment with high levels of pressure.

PRESSURES

Michael said the entire primary care team is doing 'a superb job' despite the obvious pressures. "We are very grateful for the huge support people are showing to front line workers. We are all concerned that we may miss a serious condition because people are not contacting us for advice. If you are unwell, please get in touch!

"We are all feeling tired, as new ways of working and emotional pressures can be draining. We are also concerned about the risk of infection, and the potential to carry infection home. My faith and the prayerful support of my church and family are a huge comfort."

He said it is vital that as a General Practice Pharmacist, he and his team work to support GPs. "We can continue to prescribe medication for on-going conditions. This ensures everyone is receiving the best possible care even when their conditions are not related to the coronavirus," Michael said.

YOUNGER PEOPLE 'TERRIFIC'

Alan Cox, principal of Temple Carrig School, Greystones, Diocese of Dublin and Glendalough, says the Covid-19 shutdown presents 'an interesting challenge' for schools.

"Remote teaching and learning, even with all the new technology that most schools are accessing, is novel to us and we're having to learn as we go," Alan said.

"In the first week of the school closure, our teachers - in a fit of well-meaning diligence - churned out far too much work, which left students reeling and the teachers themselves up all night marking.

"Online live lessons via platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts etc, seemed an obvious replacement for real school, but we soon found that this idea militated against the many students who were now left minding younger siblings while parents were still out at work.

"The solution is to be found in getting the balance right, and every school principal to whom I've spoken accepts that we're only feeling our way in the dark at the moment."

Alan paid tribute to 'the sterling way' in which teenagers have supported social distancing measures. "In general, younger people have been absolutely terrific in acceding to the instructions to stay at home," he said. "They hate it - they're just at the stage in their lives when it is innate in them to want to get out into the world and explore it, but in Temple Carrig we challenged our students that this was the most patriotic thing they'd ever been asked to do and they deserve credit for how well they have supported the lockdown."

He also paid tribute to the stoic attitude of the school's Sixth Year students as they approach their Leaving Cert exams. "This generation has been calm, strong

and resilient during the crisis," he said. "The Leaving Cert, which, let's face it, feels especially life-changing when you're actually doing it, IS stressful to go through, there's no doubt about it. So to have it moved around, prolonged and no certainty that it might not be changed further is hard luck."

Alan said the school Chaplaincy Team has now switched to working online, and the school continues to hold an End of Week Assembly on Zoom at 3.20pm every Friday. "Again, the Chaplaincy Team and other staff have been wonderfully creative in driving these short, prayerful services," Alan said.

He added that students have also been challenged to 'do something truly incredible' during this crisis, for which a new prize will be presented.



Alan Cox.

'PUBLIC SPIRIT HAS BEEN AMAZING'

Garda Andrew Neill, from Kells Group of Parishes, Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory, is a member of the Kilkenny Community Policing Unit.

He and his colleagues face new challenges in light of Covid-19. "For the most part, Garda members are now working a simple shift system that has 12-hour shifts that don't cross over with other units," he said.

"We are also paired up with a nominated colleague for the duration of the Covid-19 measures. This means you go in the patrol car or on mountain bikes together, and when you're on station duties so is your colleague. By the nature of the job, it is not usually possible to work without back up.

"In normal times, Aidan Fitzpatrick and myself work alongside each other on the Community Policing Unit, so it's an easy adjustment - just working longer shifts and doing one hundred per cent frontline policing.

"The recent regulations require us to ask people to justify their travel at

checkpoints and this is new, but like anything, it's as much how you ask it and not what you ask. The public spirit out there has been amazing. In fact many other colleagues and I have been handed chocolates and biscuits at checkpoints which further demonstrates the fantastic attitude there is out there."

Andrews said that for him and his work partner, one of the true challenges was being temporarily removed from work with older adults and at schools. "We greatly enjoy working with different groups and this is impossible at the moment. We look forward to a return to normalcy."

Andrew said he and his colleagues were delighted to be getting out and about while so many people are housebound. "The camaraderie which is a feature of all groups who work together has, if anything, become stronger. Like anyone, we share the fears of catching Covid-19, but take the sensible measures to protect ourselves.



Gardaí Andrew Neill, right, and Adrian Fitzpatrick.

"There is, however, the fear our families feel when we're out and about and potentially bringing infection into the household."

Providing this service is essential, Andrew said. "Like all emergency service workers, we signed up on the basis that we would be required to provide our service regardless of circumstance. It is shoulder to the wheel time - this being a health emergency. It is our colleagues in the Health Service Executive, with whom we always feel a close affinity, that are bearing the brunt. It is vital for us all to be able to look back and say we did our bit."

'I WAS PETRIFIED I WAS GOING TO GET WORSE'

A Connor parishioner, who has experienced Covid-19 both as an NHS key worker and having contracted the virus herself, has spoken of the impact of the illness and of her relief at being well enough to return to work.

The 65-year-old, who prefers not to be identified, returned to work on April 25 after three weeks during which she battled the debilitating virus at home, isolated from - but with the support of - her husband.

"Three weeks ago I came home from work at Antrim Area Hospital and didn't feel well. It is hard to describe, and totally different to anything I have experienced before," she said.

"I had no appetite and went to bed early with a high temperature. I knew it was Covid-19. The next day my temperature had come down a bit but I felt really unwell. I had a tightness in my chest. I was scared

my breathing was going to stop."

The lady said that despite her job, which involves working closely with patients in different hospital wards, including the Covid-19 ward, she was surprised to have contracted the virus. "I was so careful. I had enough Personal Protective Equipment to feel as safe as possible," she said.

But she admits that in the weeks before she became ill, staff did not wear even a mask outside the Covid-19 ward.

"I could have been with a patient who had not been diagnosed with Covid-19, and then later see the same patient in the Covid ward," she said. "Now we have to wear masks in every ward in the hospital."

A few days after becoming ill, she rang a doctor. "I was really unwell, my chest was tight and I was petrified I was going to get worse," she recalled. The doctor advised her to go to a Covid-19 Centre for tests.

"My ECG was grand, my blood pressure was a bit high, which I have never had before, but I did not have to be admitted to hospital. I was told to go home, drink lots of water, do breathing exercises and have complete rest. Three days later my chest was easing. I knew that I was coming out the other side," she said.

"This really, really saps up all your energy. The tiredness is hard to describe."

The lady, who is otherwise fit and healthy with no underlying health problems, was given the all-clear to return to work by her doctor (by telephone).

"Because I did not have to go to hospital, my symptoms were classed as 'mild,' but there was nothing mild about it," she said. Social distancing and lockdown are playing a huge part in not spreading this virus. If people start relaxing too soon, the danger will increase."

WE HAVE POTENTIAL TO MODEL UNITY



Archbishop John McDowell.

Speaking following his translation from Bishop of Clogher to Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland on April 28, Archbishop John McDowell said he held great optimism for the future.

The archbishop made reference to the Church of Ireland General Synod, due to take place in May, but cancelled due to the coronavirus.

"As a Church, we have the potential to model (and in some instances to create) a witness of deep-seated unity that transcends political, social and generational categories," the archbishop said. "But we can only do so by being true to ourselves, so that we may more fully 'become what we are.' We need to become what Our Lord most certainly was. Someone who listened with supernatural patience..."

"Had the plans for the General Synod gone ahead, we would have been presented, as a Church, with many opportunities to explain and to listen; to speak and to hear."

Archbishop McDowell said some of those opportunities would have been very ordinary - for example, the final pieces of legislation in relation to the amalgamation of the Dioceses of Limerick and Killaloe and Tuam, Killala and Achonry, and the final stages of the Bill on Diocesan Representation on the General Synod.

"There would have been some

'quite extraordinary opportunities' to speak and to listen provided by the chances of history," the archbishop said, making reference to the fact that for the first time Synod was to be held in Croke Park, which he said would have offered an opportunity to acknowledge the role the GAA plays on the island of Ireland. He continued: "Also, perhaps it would have been appropriate in the setting of Croke Park, and given the current Decade of Centenaries, to have reflected on the tragic loss of life which was occurring all over Ireland in 1920; to have listened and spoken about the acknowledgements needed and the lessons learned."

The archbishop said the dates of the General Synod would have coincided with the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day. "This would have provided the right sort of space to listen to some balanced words on both the end of that particular phase of the war against Fascism and on the rationale behind Neutrality in that time," he said.

"We are a Church that has traditionally cast its mission in the form of pastoral care. Of course, that pastoral care needs to take the form not only of feeding and caring for the sheep but also of finding them... To be true to ourselves, ours must always be a pastoral evangelisation: Caring, patient, even perhaps quiet;

drawing people to Jesus by the beauty of his person and the depth of his Sacrifice, not by the notion of a competition for souls."

In addition, such pastoral evangelisation can be an ecumenical endeavor, he said. "Perhaps it is for us, a Church of a northern majority but insisting on and valuing the voices of southern brothers and sisters in all the councils of our Church, to work towards a coherent understanding and a living-out of reconciliation."

Reconciliation, he added, is one of the big words of the Gospel. "Reconciliation is the great work which is crying out for our commitment as children of 'the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep.' Those who are the agents of reconciliation will always have some kind of destructive energy to absorb - they will always have something to bear that is not, strictly speaking, their own. Without wishing to be too dramatic, the scars of suffering are the tokens of peacemaking, at the very least peacemakers risk bearing the emotional scars of being ridiculed.

"Sometimes the most challenging and important questions are the most simple. We all want peace, how do we obtain it? If someone was to ask me that same question about Ireland, or about the world that will emerge from the profound insecurity caused by the coronavirus, I'm not sure I would have the answer.

"A great sifting process is going on in the world at present. We are at the end of an epoch, never mind an era. Old social systems and ways of life are being unmade and new systems, habits and attitudes will have to be brought together to replace them. On top of our historical and social divisions in Ireland, we are being caught in the down draught of a global wind. New animosities will evolve and old ones may survive.

"How blessed we would be if we as a Church, amid such unprecedented times of flux, can show ourselves worthy of our calling as peacemakers and reconcilers - even if it is costly - because we rest in His steadfast love which 'endures forever.'"



Teddy Dixon with his wartime themed 100th birthday cakes at the party at Mount Merrion Church.

The Rt Rev David McClay, Bishop of Down and Dromore, heard some of Teddy Dixon's story when he visited the war veteran as he celebrated his 100th birthday.

TEDDY (100) RECALLS DACHAU LIBERATION

Teddy Dixon, who celebrated his 100th birthday last March at a community party in Mount Merrion Church, Diocese of Down and Dromore, has an incredible story to tell.

For in April 1945, Teddy's 42nd Division of the US Army liberated 33,000 survivors from the Dachau concentration camp, north of Munich, Germany.

In 2005, Teddy was the subject of a BBC NI documentary 'From Belfast to Dachau,' which followed him on an emotional journey back to the concentration camp which he had helped to liberate 60 years earlier.

Teddy's family emigrated to the US in the early 1900s. In 1920, Edward Copeland Dixon was born in New York City. Five years later, the Dixon family returned to Belfast.

CALL-UP

Following the D-Day landings in June 1944, the US Government issued draft notices to citizens living abroad, and Teddy's call-up papers arrived at the family home in Carrington Street.

At the age of 24, he was drafted into the US Army, as part of the 42nd 'Rainbow' Division.

The 42nd division landed in France in December 1944 and advanced as part of the 7th Army, entering Germany in March 1945. It was during the division's rapid advance through Germany in April 1945 that Teddy's new 12-man squad came across scenes of utter revulsion as they liberated Dachau. The painful memories have never left him.

Despite having only been called up in 1944, Teddy's wartime experience was a particularly memorable one.

“
Many a time
when I wake up,
I find I've been
dreaming about
the Holocaust
”

As the war drew to a close in 1945, Teddy's unit was involved in the capture of Hitler's deputy - Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering - in Austria, and it was the newly-promoted Sergeant Dixon who was dispatched to check out reports of a

salt mine filled with priceless artworks. A short time later, he was in a mine surrounded by thousands of priceless artworks - including Michelangelo, Vermeer and Van Eyck masterpieces.

Teddy was then tasked with guarding the 80 truckloads of treasures at Salzburg Castle, while the 'monuments men' (the taskforce responsible for tracking and saving art looted by the Nazis) did their detective work.

MEMORIES

Back in civilian life some years later, Teddy worked in the Ormeau Bakery. The memories of Dachau are ingrained in his memory, and Teddy remains committed to sharing his experiences with younger generations to ensure the Holocaust is never forgotten.

He was a regular guest of honour when the Wartime Living History Association staged re-enactments of US military WWII battles. Teddy told the 'Belfast News Letter' - "Many a time when I wake up, I find I've been dreaming about the Holocaust."

Teddy lives near Mount Merrion Church Rectory, and was one of the first residents of the Cregagh Estate. He witnessed both the house and the church being built. He is 'a true gent,' said the current rector, the Rev Adrian Green.

Among the special guests at Teddy's 100th birthday party on March 10 was the Rt Rev David McClay, Bishop of Down and Dromore.

REPRESENTATIVE CHURCH BODY - RESPONDING TO A PANDEMIC

By David Ritchie

It is more than a month since the island of Ireland went into lockdown. Public worship and youth groups, as we know them, have ceased. Parishes have had to reconsider planning for Easter Vestry meetings, to consider the implications of Covid-19 for tenants, and to consider whether it will be possible to hold parish fetes. Yet amidst these challenges there is hope.

This report provides an overview of how the staff and committees of the Representative Church Body (RCB) have been supporting the dioceses and parishes of the Church of Ireland at this exceptional time.

The RCB started preparing for the current pandemic at the beginning of March. We began by determining our priorities in the event of the virus spreading. The priority was to protect staff and volunteers whilst ensuring that the RCB could continue to deliver critical functions for parishes and dioceses.

As the middle of March approached, it became clear that even greater changes than maintaining physical distance lay ahead and our IT staff provided further training on the use of our remote access systems so that day-to-day work and support for our committees could continue by enabling staff to work from home.

MISSION

For the staff of the RCB, our mission is to provide advice and to manage the resources of the Church of Ireland. During this lockdown, our focus has been, firstly, to provide specific guidance for parishes as they deal with the challenges of social isolation and, secondly, to offer targeted funding while continuing to provide essential services to

dioceses and parishes.

I would like to record my appreciation of the dedication and commitment of the staff at the RCB as they have adapted to serve the Church of Ireland from home, whilst juggling home and work responsibilities, and without the normal interaction with colleagues. All our RCB staff have displayed resilience, commitment and agility as they have sought to address the needs of the Church of Ireland.

In the middle of March, communication was sent to all Church of Ireland rectors informing them that RCB staff would be working from home and that, during this lockdown, the preferred form of communication with the office would be by email.



Many parishes are reporting that the numbers tuning in for Sunday services are far in excess of the numbers that were attending before the pandemic



We also provided assurances in relation to the continuing support of the Property and Trusts and Legal departments, that the Investment Department was continuing to actively manage parish and diocesan investments, that clergy stipend and expense payments would continue

as normal, and that the Synod and Communications Department was preparing practical guidance as to how to stream parish services.

By the end of March, following Irish Government and Northern Ireland Executive announcements, staff were requested to continue to work from home and the RCB offices both in Dublin and Belfast and the RCB Library were closed for all non-essential activities.

ISOLATION

With the extension of social isolation, the RCB established a virtual senior leadership team, and online department and project meetings. We set up staff training webinars and established a Friday virtual staff coffee morning to ensure that staff were 'connected' to the office.

Over the next few weeks, the committees and staff of the RCB delivered support for parishes and dioceses in three targeted ways:

- The RB Executive Committee and the Priorities Fund approved a joint grant for each diocese of the Church of Ireland. This immediate grant of €10,000 per diocese was offered to facilitate the streaming of Sunday worship services in each diocese.
- The RCB departments developed specific Covid-19 guidance. The Synod and Communications Department developed support documents for parishes seeking to stream Sunday services. The Property and Trusts Department developed guidelines on managing vacant properties and another guideline addressing insurance considerations. The Finance and IT Department produced guidance for parish treasurers and information





on both the Northern Ireland and Irish Government support schemes. This guidance is available on www.ireland.anglican.org/parish-resources.

- We are aware that dioceses may have short-term cashflow constraints and we have worked with dioceses to offer some flexibility in relation to diocesan assessments.

Many parishes and dioceses raised queries on policy and practice as a result of the new rules applying across society. Senior Church leadership was active in developing responses at all levels, with the bishops articulating how the Church would navigate public worship and services of baptism, marriage and funerals.

During the Covid-19 crisis, the staff at the RCB have continued to develop proposals for the implementation of policy and to address queries from parishes and dioceses.

The Property Committee and the Investment Committee have met remotely to progress property related approvals and to ensure the active management of parish and diocesan investments.

PROJECTS

The staff of the RCB continued to work on projects, including the trusts' database project, developing our new stipends system, the parish register digitisation project,

improving our safeguarding website, and developing our Charities Governance Code implementation plan. These projects will allow us to further improve our services when we all return from the current lockdown.

General Synod and various diocesan synods that were due to take place before the end of June have been postponed, with elected representatives continuing to serve until such times as further meetings can be held.

The Honorary Secretaries held a meeting on April 24, also attended by the Chair of the RB Executive Committee, Henry Saville, and the Assessor to the General Synod, Lyndon MacCann, to consider the implications of this situation.

As I reflect on the changes imposed on the Church of Ireland since society began responding to Covid-19, there are shoots of hope. Covid-19 has presented challenges to the way ministry is delivered and our parishes have responded.

There is something new happening in our communities as creative ministry responds to this new context. Our clergy and parishes are live streaming services, running youth groups over the internet and providing pastoral care over the phone.

It has been encouraging to see the resilience of our Church in the midst of this crisis. Church as we know it has changed, at least in the short term. Yet despite these

challenges, our parishes are making the most of the current situation and are taking the opportunity to develop new ministry in this new context.

There is still much uncertainty. But, while it may appear from the outside that parish life is on hold, there is something new emerging. Many parishes are reporting that the numbers tuning in for Sunday services are far in excess of the numbers that were attending before the pandemic, and services are being streamed into nursing homes and the homes of those who are less mobile.

SUPPORT

The RCB has sought to support parishes as they serve members and their communities in a new way. At this post-Easter time, where the old has passed and the new lies before us, there is a sense of renewal, and with renewal there is anticipation, and with anticipation there is hope.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the staff of the RCB, to the committees who provide oversight, and to our Church leaders for their partnership as we all seek to serve the Church during these uncertain and yet hopeful days.



David Ritchie is Chief Officer and Secretary of the Representative Church Body.

VIEW OF A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

TEARFUND

It's been a challenging few weeks for all of us. We've seen for ourselves the devastation that coronavirus can cause. Yet for people living in extreme poverty, the impact could be unthinkable.

Many of the communities Tearfund works with in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), for example, already face adversity in the forms of armed conflict, malaria and typhoid, hunger and gender-based violence. Because of this, the words that we have ourselves become so familiar with - lockdown, social distancing, stockpiling - are concepts that are impossible to practice in this country.

As I write, cases of Covid-19 have been confirmed in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu provinces, and we are racing to increase access to clean water and share information about how to stop the virus and prevent catastrophe.

Because of our work on the Ebola



crisis, we know that the most effective response to Covid-19 is through our local partners and faith leaders. Churches know the needs of their communities and how best to respond with the resources available to them. Where the need is greatest, you'll find the Church.

This means that as the virus spreads, Tearfund is on the ground, ready to help. Indeed, one of our partners in the fight against Ebola was Église Anglicane au Congo - the Anglican Church in the DRC.

Tearfund's work - providing safe, clean and accessible water nearer to homes - is more important than ever. We are working hard to improve

access to water in rural areas and alongside offering our usual education about basic hygiene, we are also informing people about how to avoid the spread of Covid-19.

We have already seen how effective this work is. I think back to meeting Sylvia (pictured), a mother-of-five, in North Kivu last March.

"I am so thankful for what Tearfund has done for us in working on water, hygiene and sanitation for our community," she told me. "You see me pumping water from this fountain? For me, that is a miracle. I don't have to walk long distances to get water anymore."

Please join us by praying and giving whatever you can to bring our vital hygiene and sanitation work to more people like Sylvia. A gift of £30 could provide 10 families with sanitizing products like soap and bleaching powder for one month. Thank you in advance.

David McAllister, Tearfund Country Director, Democratic Republic of Congo. Website: www.tearfund.org/give

SAMS (South American Mission Society)



Did President Vizcarra (above) REALLY explain the difference between parsley and culantro during a press conference?

To ensure social distancing, outings are limited to shopping or bank visits, but in one daily conference he said that men and women would go out on alternate days. People with autism may go out for a 15-minute walk with a carer.

The gender separation was later rescinded, but Peru's state of emergency, which began over a month ago when there were less than 100 confirmed cases (one of the quickest lockdowns in the world in response to Covid-19), involves

severe measures. As I write, only authorised cars may be driven and wearing a mask is obligatory. Nightly curfew is 6pm to 4am; Sundays and Bank Holidays see total lockdown (only medical staff, police and army on the streets). Many families with children live in reduced space, so it is not easy - but Peruvians are resilient.

Work here, mostly 'informal,' is currently non-existent. Prompt government action provided handouts for the neediest (about 30 per cent of 34 million), a second list of 'independent workers' provided for others. Inevitably, some were not included, and the latest extension will be hard.

Technically, all in stable employment continue to receive full payment, which is impossible where a business has no income. During April, the Government is paying up to 30 per cent of wages for lowest wage earners in businesses, and providing loans for paying off debts. We pray this will lead to re-launching businesses.

We give thanks that Peru, an

economically stable country, has savings enabling this aid. However, tourism, one of Peru's main industries, will be greatly affected.

How is faith surviving? In normal times, Holy Week processions are well attended. This year the streets were empty.

The Anglican Church in Peru, led by Bishop Jorge Luis Aguilar, was nourished by daily 10-minute video productions of Bible readings and meditation, sent by WhatsApp and listened to by many more people than would have been in church.

Lockdown is now due become more relaxed on May 10. Will people still be careful? Will those who work in day-to-day jobs have sufficient work? Will the positive things we have seen - clearer air, slower life - continue? Will those who have come closer to God during this time continue spending more time with Him? We don't know - but we know God is faithful and He will uphold us.

The Rev Stephen McElhinney, Mission Director, SAMS Ireland. Website: www.samsireland.com

VIEW OF A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

CROSSLINKS

We watch with disbelief and horror the events of the Covid-19 global pandemic. Many of our mission partners around the world are experiencing their communities in various degrees of lockdown, in a bid to stem the tide of coronavirus deaths.

Not every nation is equally prepared for the ravages of the coronavirus. In Namibia, one mission partner reports that there are only 30 ICU beds for a population in excess of two million people. In Uganda, lockdown has made it nearly impossible for people to earn a living, yet the Government has made it illegal for people to offer food to others. Instead, it will assume the responsibility of food distribution.

In Europe, local businesses and organisations are finding the need to be flexible with working arrangements. For some, online meetings and working from home is a new way of functioning. Local governments are scrambling for ways to support their country's workforce.

For all their efforts, many people are losing jobs, going hungry and are lonely. Mental health is greatly affected by the restrictions to movement. Domestic abuse figures have risen sharply.

This is the present context for ministry. Despite unprecedented times, there are still opportunities for God's people to reach out in love to their communities with the Gospel of Christ and with a helping hand for those in need.

Our mission partners have been creative with how they reach their people. Thanks to technology and global connectivity, they are doing Bible studies and pastoring others by live streaming, or by keeping in touch using the phone and text messages.

One ordained mission partner wears his dog collar to the supermarket when he is out for his essential food shopping, trying to be intentional and opening avenues for Gospel conversations with people who are standing the recommended safe distance away.

Where possible, our Crosslinks mission partners also coordinate care teams that can reach out to their communities during the severe social distancing rules implemented by government, providing food and other essentials. Many of our personnel report that online church services and prayer meetings have been well attended by church and non-church people alike.

Although these are unusual days, it's business as usual for Crosslinks. So please continue to pray for all those Crosslinks people around the world as they engage with God's mission. Pray that they may be kept safe and well, as they seek to reach people with the love of Christ.

**The Rev David Luckman,
Crosslinks Ireland Director.
Website: www.crosslinks.org**



CHRISTIAN AID

Rich countries have struggled - poor countries will be devastated. But Christian Aid helped reduce the spread of Ebola and we can slow the spread of coronavirus too.

Coronavirus is having a huge impact on the rich countries of the world. Our health systems are stretched and struggling. Tens of thousands of lives have been lost and the death toll grows with each passing day. But in the world's poorest countries - perhaps just three weeks behind the UK and Ireland - a catastrophe is unfolding.

The infection has reached every one of the countries in which Christian Aid works, with the highest numbers of reported cases being in Brazil, India and the Dominican Republic. As ever, a lack of testing masks the true scale of the pandemic.

Aid agencies are warning that coronavirus will devastate poor countries, and here's why:

Three billion people, 40 per cent of the world's population, do not have access to soap and water. In

sub-Saharan Africa, home to 645 million people, three-quarters of the population have no facilities at home to wash their hands with soap and water.

Physical distancing is impossible for the one billion people who live in overcrowded refugee camps, slums and shanty towns. And you can't isolate those with coronavirus symptoms if your entire family lives in one room.

Many people living in extreme poverty, in refugee camps, or battling drought, hunger, malaria and HIV, are already in poor health and lack the resilience to withstand a new infection.

The world's poorest countries, many dealing with conflict and humanitarian crises, can barely handle their everyday caseloads, let alone a pandemic. Poor countries have few, if any, ventilators or intensive care beds. South Sudan, for example, has no intensive care beds and only two ventilators for a population of 12 million.

The governments of poor countries lack the social welfare systems to help those who lose their

Continued on page 24

VIEW OF A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

Christian Aid: From page 23.

jobs due to lockdown. For the newly unemployed in these countries, there will be no government bail-out or guaranteed 80 per cent of their salaries to help ensure they are still able to feed their families. Many people will have no choice but to go to work, spreading the infection. The poorest people work in jobs that are insecure and cash-in-hand, leaving them with just enough money to get by each day. Even a single day of lockdown would cause hardship.

But there is hope. Working with local partners and faith leaders, Christian Aid helped reduce the spread of the deadly Ebola virus and we are already working to slow the spread of coronavirus.

In Afghanistan, our local partner has given hygiene kits containing soap to 1,400 people.

In Afghanistan and Bangladesh, we are sharing vital health information via religious leaders.

In Bangladesh and Myanmar, we are bringing food and soap to families facing hardship after losing their jobs due to the lockdown.

In Myanmar, our local partners have given soap to more than 30,000 people and distributed 2,000 surgical masks.

In the Rohingya refugee camps of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, we are setting up isolation areas in health facilities to treat people with symptoms. There, and in north-east Nigeria, we are working to prevent the spread of fake news.

In Angola, El Salvador, Gaza and Guatemala we are helping women at risk of domestic violence during lockdown.

In South Africa, our local partners are campaigning to ban evictions during the pandemic so that shanty town dwellers don't face an even greater risk of infection.

Love unites, love protects, love never fails. Even in the darkest moments, love brings hope.

Please donate today to save lives. Visit caid.ie/coronavirus or call 028 9064 8133 (Belfast office) or 01 496 4070 (Dublin office).

Rosamond Bennett, Chief Executive, Christian Aid Ireland



CMS IRELAND

This global pandemic is sending shockwaves through all our lives. Jobs and incomes have been lost; many are grieving for loved ones; the economy is faltering and health services are stretched as never before.

In Church Mission Society Ireland (CMSI), we have received messages from our global partners assuring us of their prayers, urging us to stand strong in the assurance that God loves us, and will not abandon us.

The impact of the virus for our partners is even more devastating. Their questions include:

- 'How do you implement regular hand washing when water has to be collected from far away?'
- 'How can families afford soap, food or medicine when staying at home means no income today?'
- 'How can we encourage social distancing when many live in overcrowded cities or cramped refugee camps?'

Their situations are deeply challenging, with weak national governments, roaring inflation, faltering health services, and families pushed to starvation as the informal economy collapses.

It has amazed us to hear the creative ways they are already reaching out with Good News of a Saviour who sees our plight and has suffered too, and are determined to find practical ways to respond.

One pastor uses a loudspeaker to bring messages of hope and to pray for his community. In Ibba, Bishop Moses set up 'mobile church' in the back of a pick-up so that people can hear God's Word being read. In Shyogwe, 'family church' is

encouraged - families holding short services in their own homes.

In Maridi, the Mothers' Union has started making face masks for the local church clinic. Several partners run education programmes to tell people about how the virus is spread and have set up community handwashing stations.

Others are giving emergency food to those most vulnerable. Food supply is a particular challenge, with inflation, lack of transport and a new wave of locusts destroying crops in some areas. In one hospital in Nepal, the health workers are joining builders during their breaks to help construct a new ward for the coronavirus patients.

Our local Church partners want to do more to for their communities, to bring comfort from God's Word and practical help. Inspired by faith, in response to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, they have lots of good plans. Their congregations are willing to help but financial resources are needed.

This is a time for generosity. A time for the Church to work as the family of God to share what we have and support each other in prayer and giving. CMSI has launched an emergency response appeal - we will use this to assist our partners as they discover more ways to help their communities stop the spread, ameliorate suffering and support the vulnerable.

The extent to which we will be able to fund our partners' virus response depends on your generosity. Thank you on behalf of our global family.

Jenny Smyth, CMS Ireland Mission Director.
Website: www.cmsireland.org

HOW POWERFUL IS PRAYER?



On Maundy Thursday, I prayed that I would find a letter I had misplaced. Previous searches had failed, but shortly after my prayer, I lifted a piece of paper and there was the letter.

Finding a letter seems so insignificant - some might say it was a coincidence - but as Archbishop William Temple said, 'When I pray, coincidences happen, and when I don't, they don't.'

Prayer is powerful, but this doesn't mean that God always answers our prayers in the way we desire or expect. However, prayer changes us and changes situations, prayer draws us closer to the heart of God. When we spend time with God in prayer, when we press in to know more of God, we are changed and our relationship with God and our experience of God deepens and develops.

The Bible contains many examples of the power of prayer. People are healed, storms are stilled, battles are won, lives are changed, fears are overcome, wisdom is given... The God who healed and brought hope, who restored and renewed in the past, is still the same God today. So, let's be people who pray, who 'devote ourselves to prayer' (Colossians 4:2), praying for others and for ourselves.

The Ven Roderic West, Archdeacon of Dromore and rector of Seapatrick Parish, Banbridge, Diocese of Down and Dromore.

"Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth - walk!" (Acts 3:6). The account of Peter and John healing the crippled man at the Beautiful Gate of the Jerusalem temple is the first example in Acts where the disciples, empowered by the Holy Spirit of Pentecost, exercise healing in the name of the Risen Jesus Christ.

But does prayer have that same power in today's Church and for today's followers of the Risen Jesus, even in the face of the coronavirus crisis?

To me, prayer is the oxygen of our faith, it is the channel through which God's Spirit flows freely for our world. Not always easy, prayer is when we take time to align our hopes and purpose, with the will and way of God our Heavenly Father. Perhaps all our prayers are best summed up in one phrase from the Lord's Prayer: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on Earth as in Heaven."

In this way, the power of our prayers to God, as loving and forgiving Father, within the name of Jesus, allows for forgiveness, healing and transformation of lives, of bodies and of communities. In the face of the coronavirus, what can be more powerful than this?

The Very Rev Stephen Forde, Dean of Belfast, Diocese of Connor.



It has been said that 'prayer changes things.' I believe that is true, it transforms people, situations, communities. And the first thing prayer changes is us, me.

It teaches us to depend completely on our Heavenly Father, and it reminds us that He's God and we're not. A lack of prayer means we're still trying to run the show. It's a sign that we've decided we can handle things on our own. No need to work things out or worry what is going on in prayer. God is with you, whether you feel Him or not.

God offers us an open invitation. He does not force us to pray, but He offers it to us as a gift. It reconciles two kingdoms - His Kingdom and ours. Heaven comes to earth via prayer. His Kingdom breaks into my world as I pray.

Prayer is a supernatural cosmic activity. All over the world people are praying. Prayer allows us humans to have a direct link with God - our power source and Creator. Creature and Creator in communion, and surely this is a powerful thing! Go on then, pray and see

God make a difference. He is a powerful God!

The Rev Lorraine Capper, part-time Stipendiary Minister, Parishes of Donagh and Tyholland with Errigal Tuagh, Diocese of Clogher.



PSALM 8

TRUE SIGNIFICANCE

By Cameron Jones

What does it mean to be human? Philosophers, physicists and biologists make documentaries about the universe. They conclude that we humans are the tragic pinnacle of an enormous cosmic accident. For all our intelligence and ability to perceive the wonders of the universe, we are specks of dust.

In graveyards, generations have engraved names in the hardest of substances to preserve their memory. The monuments that carve the deepest mark on me are those I can no longer read - eroded away. Who will remember me? What, then, am I? What is it to be human?

BEGIN WITH GOD

As Psalm 8 considers this question, it surprises us. It does not begin by speaking about humans at all. It begins with God, and His name! (Verse 1). To understand what it means to be human, we must first recognise that nothing is weightier, more newsworthy, more majestic in all the Earth than God's name.

Isn't the enormity of night sky completely breathtaking? Yet all its greatness is dwarfed by the glory of the God who made it! So great is His name, that those who oppose Him are conquered, not a great warrior's strength, but by the mouth of a little child, an infant, who speaks God's

word! (Verse 2).

The greatness of the heavens point not only to God's greater glory, but tell us something of creation itself. It is the handiwork of God (verses 3-4). What we see is not random - it is made! This gives an understanding that the world's documentary makers - who set God to one side if they do not entirely reject Him - cannot have. It gives true perspective... and meaning.

KNOWING, KNOWN AND CROWNED

What is humanity? Our first appearance is found in the psalm's pronouns. God is not just 'His' and 'Him,' not 'a' god or even 'the' God. This majestic God, whose glory exceeds the heavens, is 'our' God. We can know Him personally, addressing Him in humble but familiar relationship - 'your glory!' To be human is to have the capacity for a personal relationship with our glorious Creator!

Did you notice the assumption of humanity's value to God Himself in verse 4? Not only can we know God, He is 'mindful of us.' That is extraordinary significance! Do you ever question your value? Perhaps you doubt your significance in the universe? God says to you and to me, 'I am mindful of you!'

Beyond even this, to be human is to be 'crowned... with glory and honour' (verse 5), 'you have made

him ruler of the works of your hands, you put everything under his feet...' (verses 6-8). Our sense of our place of authority and responsibility in creation is not an illusion. God has made us the pinnacle of creation, with authority over it and responsibility for it!

FAILING TO BE HUMAN

But that's not our experience of life, is it? Our dog, Sullivan, is wonderful, but he doesn't always obey me. I can't stop the bushfires and floods. Even our best actions have consequences we did not intend and cannot control. The Covid-19 pandemic jolts me, forcing me to realise that humanity does not have the absolute control that the psalm suggests - I stay inside and hide. For all my humanity, I seem to be less than what Psalm 8 describes.

HUMANITY RECONCILED

In Hebrews 2, the writer sees the gulf between the psalm's description and our experience... everywhere apart from one point in history, everywhere apart from Jesus. Jesus, the man, was in control. 'Even the wind and the waves obey him,' said the disciples (Mark 4:41). Disease, blindness, death itself... subject to Him! The world was under His feet! Jesus, crowned with glory and honour (eg Colossians 1:15ff)! Jesus came into the world so that we could be truly human - reconciled with our Creator.

What is it to be human? We can only know by knowing God! We can know what it is to be truly human by the work of Jesus Christ, who died for us.

"If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: That God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them." (2 Corinthians 5:17-19).

Do you feel confident to approach God, our Creator? You can pray to Him now - because of Jesus.

The Rev Cameron Jones, pictured above with his dog Sullivan, works with Irish Church Missions in Dublin.

SELF-ISOLATION IS A PRIVILEGE

Photo: Karl Groendal on Unsplash

By Ken Gibson

As the rapid spread of Covid-19 continues, health officials have asked us to self-isolate and practice social distancing. Some just won't. The evidence suggests that this is a crucial time for us to follow directions if we are to avoid a public health catastrophe.

Some people, however, will make matters worse. Covid-19 may be new to us now, but infectious diseases are not. In my work, in the poorest regions of the world, I've seen the key to halting any infectious disease is to break the chain of its infection.

Some people are struggling to adjust to this new self discipline, so I wanted to offer an alternative perspective. It is so easy for us to feel this disruption is impossible to overcome, but we are a healthy society with extensive means to make it through and to recover after.

RESPONSIBLE

But we need to be responsible in the choices we make today. These choices, quite literally, can have life and death consequences: For us or for others around us. It makes sense to fully abide by the request to limit our contact and change our work and lifestyle habits for a little while. It may be inconvenient, but it's important not to overlook something monumental: Social distancing and self-isolation are privileges.

Social distancing and self-isolation, tragically, are not options for countless millions of people on the path of the virus as it travels across all continents in the days and months ahead. But they are real, viable choices for us. They are, actually, privileges afforded to a small percentage of humanity. We

must not abuse those privileges.

My travels over the years have taken me to the poorest of the poorest places on earth. I have seen slums of millions of people forced to live on top of one another. There are places in the world where 10 people can live in a space smaller than a typical Irish kitchen. These tiny homes have no sanitation options whatsoever. There is no running water with which to wash hands.

Such a small percentage of the world lives the way that we do, with all of our home comforts and ways to keep ourselves healthy and constantly entertained. In our fear and anxiety over this new deadly outbreak, we need to pause and be aware that our type of home is rare in this world.

It terrifies me when I think of the overcrowded conditions in slums of Africa and Asia and what this virus could do to masses of people incapable of self-isolation and or social distancing. Already weakened by diseases of poverty, they have no way to escape the inevitable. Flimsy, thin walls, sometimes just draped cloth used as divisions between families, will allow the virus to spread through communities, bringing with it unstoppable suffering and death in places where there is no medical care.

Some people in our part of the world are unwilling to take the importance of social distancing and self-isolation seriously. Viruses cannot spread if they do not have access to a new host. It is that simple! So those who mingle, thinking that they will not get it, assist the virus by carrying it around and furthering its reach. That's a lifeline to the virus and a death sentence to the vulnerable. We have

to work together to stay one step ahead. Steps we take in the next few weeks will impact us for years to come.

FINANCIAL

These are scary times for us, but we will have financial help if we need it to get back on our feet as families and communities. We will have some options. My mind races to the the billions of people who live on daily wages. They must finish their work today before they can buy food for their family meal tonight.

No work means no food. Buying what they need from what they earn that day is their only hope. They cannot stockpile. No matter how ill they may be, they cannot stay home from work or they and their families go hungry. They do not have the privileged choices that we enjoy.

Of course, every job lost here is a tragedy, a story of suffering. But for many this will be temporary. There is no welfare in some parts of the world. Let us focus on our gratitude that we have so much to help us get through this together. We will experience this temporarily. We can afford to take the time to keep ourselves healthy and alive. We have the space to distance and isolate ourselves from our neighbours. We have these privileges. They are life saving opportunities.

So, however inconvenient we find social distancing or self-isolation, just do it. It's a privilege to be able to.



Ken Gibson is Chief Executive Officer of the Mission to End Leprosy. This article originally appeared in the 'Irish Independent.'

INDIGENOUS HEALTH SYSTEMS FACE STRESS

Indigenous leaders around the Anglican Communion report that already stressed indigenous health systems now face pressure to perform on lower resources than non-indigenous health systems as they work to protect their people from Covid-19.

Anglican Communion's indigenous church leaders who reported to a Zoom meeting of the Anglican Indigenous Network (AIN) in late March expressed concerns that national responses to the pandemic did not take into account the extra needs of older and at risk people in indigenous communities. In each place where Anglican indigenous churches minister, indigenous communities have to contend with lower baseline health due to racial discrimination-led poverty. This includes under-resourcing of indigenous health needs by non-indigenous health systems.

Dr Bradley Hauff, Missioner for Indigenous Ministries in the US-based Episcopal Church, reported that in Turtle Island (US) the Indian Health System (IHS) was struggling to access sufficient Covid-19 testing kits or medical supplies, and its lower hospital capacity means the IHS had

difficulty quarantining patients.

Tribal businesses are also suffering loss of income due to the shutdown, which will have a negative effect on community health more widely.

Archbishop Mark MacDonald said the shutdown of many services in Canada is disproportionately affecting indigenous people in outlying areas where they depend on the now reduced transport services to bring essential supplies.

In Hawai'i, Kalani Holokai reported that the Maui Island Church has had to close its 'Cup of Cold Water' feeding ministry for people living on the streets and the community is coping with widescale job losses of indigenous people.

Dr Rose Elu reported from Australia said the Torres Straits Islands were free of the disease and had closed their border. In Brisbane, Aboriginal communities are focused on supporting mental health for isolated members of their communities during lockdown.

The Bishop of Tai Tokerau, Bishop Kito Pikaahu, AIN chair, explained in a communiqué how indigenous people are more vulnerable to Covid-19 infection because of already compromised health. This



Covid-19 is having a major impact on indigenous communities. (Photo by Nirmal Natarajan on Unsplash).

comes from a variety of factors, he said, including intergenerational poverty, the potentially swift spread of infection within multigenerational households, loss of income from job losses and limited and delayed access to social services and benefits for people in remote locations.

Another area of concern for poorer indigenous communities are communications and information challenges - because of lack of a phone and internet due to job losses - particularly during this time where these forms of communication for vital services are the 'new normal.' [ACNS]

CYCLONE DEVASTATION

The Diocese of Vanuatu and New Caledonia in the Anglican Church of Melanesia activated its Emergency Operations Centre after Cyclone Harold caused devastation across the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and Tonga.

In a Good Friday message, the Bishop of the Diocese of Central Vanuatu and New Caledonia, James Tama, announced that the Centre had been activated in order to respond to the growing needs of individual parishioners, parishes and communities.

In Vanuatu alone, nearly 160,000 are in need of assistance. The land has been stripped of crops and homes, leaving thousands in need of shelter, water and food. The Red

Cross has described the situation as 'catastrophic.'

The category five cyclone came in early April, when many countries in the Pacific Islands were already on strict lockdown due to Covid-19. Most countries in the Pacific Islands have been praised for their early response to the pandemic, with many remaining virus-free so far.

Bishop Tama said that the diocese had working parties who have started clearing the debris throughout each parish, and that clergy are deploying as members of the Health Cluster Emergency Medical Team to provide Covid-19 awareness and spiritual encouragement to affected communities and people living with disabilities.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES DEEPEN COHESION

The Anglican Church of Burundi, in collaboration with the United Nations Children's organisation UNICEF, conducted an intensive training course for youth in peace building and social cohesion.

Thousands of young people in Kibago, Mabanda, Nyanza Lac and Rumonge are running social activities to deepen social cohesion between members of their communities.

The country is nearing elections. The Bishop of Matanya, Seth Ndayirukiye, said: "The elections should be considered as a normal process that has the potential to help the country progress towards further development, rather than as a source of conflict and crisis." [ACNS]

CITY PARK PATROL FOR GARDA JAMES

James MacCafferty, a parishioner of Christ Church Cathedral, Diocese of Dublin and Glendalough, is a garda in the Band of An Garda Síochána - currently redeployed covering Covid-19 checkpoints in Phoenix Park, Dublin.

"Phoenix Park is the largest walled park in Europe with an 11km perimeter wall encircling 1,750 acres," James explained. Close to the city centre, it is not only an essential traffic route but is very popular with the citizens of Dublin.

The park is used by essential workers travelling to their jobs, people out for food or family reasons, and - 'most problematically' - according to James, people exercising.

"Combined with this are around 30 families who reside in this space, of which the most familiar to readers would be Uachtarán na hEireann Michael D Higgins residing at Áras an Uachtará," James said.

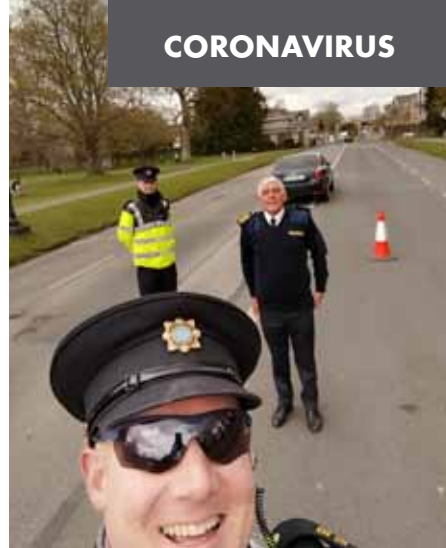
"While a lot of businesses and buildings are currently closed in the park, Garda Headquarters, Mckee

Army Barracks, and two nursing homes create a huge volume of traffic which out of necessity are now checked on entry," James said. Phoenix Park is also home to the American Ambassador's residence Farmleigh House and Dublin Zoo, whose staff still need to feed and attend to the animals.

"Keeping people safe can be a simple reminder to practise social distancing, which can be challenging with so many people legitimately in the park at one time," he said.

"With vehicular traffic, we are continually assessing with special phone apps if they are within their 2km (if not specified exemptions) and unfortunately we regularly have to turn people around.

"Juxtaposed to the bustling life of the park, even in times of relative lockdown, is the sad reality of our unwanted visitor," James added. "Covid-19 has claimed too many of our park residents in one of our addresses. Sadly, it is all too apparent at our post. Grieving family, loved ones going to say a final goodbye through a window... a far



James McCafferty in Phoenix Park along with the Ven David Pierpoint and Garda Charles Cavanagh.

too familiar occurrence. Paramedics in full emergency mode, doctors frantically trying to reach a patient, and a short time later the solemn contrast of a premature and lonely hearse... the radio falls silent, salute, the last post on this occasion a most majestic bird chorus."

James and his colleagues are now operating a 12-hour shift, four days on and four days off. "Having spent two decades playing solely within the band, I am benefiting hugely from gathering a lot of perspective without," he said. "My admiration for my colleagues across the emergency services, but particularly within An Garda Síochána, has appreciated even more."

"The Garda Chaplain, Archdeacon David Pierpoint, has visited us twice on his rounds which has been really appreciated. Our other chaplain, the Rev Brother Joe, is a little older than David, so just now they can't share the workload. We meet the ecclesiastical pair so frequently, often at the saddest times, that it is nice to just catch a quick chat or be sent a message with a link to something uplifting"

The An Garda Síochána is continuing to make music. "Four videos released so far have been viewed over a million times and there are plans to post a few more.

"Some have been to simply entertain people and others to pay homage to those who have passed away. We see other sections doing things that really seem to capture people's hearts and minds at what is undeniably a difficult time," James added.

PUPPETS SHARE COVID-19 MESSAGE

With the help of her puppet friends, Karen Webb from Connor Diocese's North Belfast Centre of Mission has put together a video for children explaining all about Covid-19.

John and his sister Broccoli don't quite understand why they can't go out and play. They know they aren't allowed and it's something to do with the coronavirus, but they are a

bit lost on all the details.

So they turn to Granddad for some help trying to understand the whole situation. Granddad has some excellent advice about what it's all about and how to get through safely. Tune in at <https://bit.ly/3aXh0Q8>.



FREE RESOURCES FROM CMSI

As part of its response to the Covid-19 lockdown, Church Mission Society Ireland (CMSI) has made some of its resources available as free downloads.

There is material for adults and children to help individuals and 'virtual church groups' to explore the biblical message of mission.

The Discover Course includes seven sessions with films and study questions for individual learning or group discussion. The Children's Resource includes activities, films and craft suggestions that help children discover more about mission and the global Church. Visit www.cmsireland.org/resources.

VISION BLOSSOMS IN BALLYMONEY

Ballymoney, Finvoy and Rasharkin (BFR) Parish Caring Association, Diocese of Connor, has come up with a blooming great idea to help build a 'bridge of hope' into the community.

Its latest initiative, the Quiet Garden Project, will blossom in a disused walled garden behind St Patrick's Parish Church, transforming this green area into a social and therapeutic space for the whole community.

The rector, the Rev Andrew Sweeney explained: "Ballymoney, Finvoy and Rasharkin Parish Caring Association has, over the past seven years, sought to develop strong positive links with our community. We run a debt counselling service, life skills course, job club and work closely with town's foodbank. We also provide a weekly free lunch to offer the lonely and marginalised a safe space for friendship.

"For some time now, our purpose has been to build bridges of hope into our community."

Andrew said the parish was very excited about this latest project.

UNIQUE

"Community garden projects are nothing new, but we think this space has the potential to be fairly unique because of its central location and how we envisage it being developed," he said.

"There are virtually no green field sites for recreation in the heart of the town. The space we intend to use is a Victorian walled garden right beside the Glebe Estate and close to the local day centre, surgeries and library."

Andrew said the parish would work with outreach agencies on the Causeway coast, including Causeway Woman's Aid and the Cheers Youth Outreach Centre in Ballymoney, as well as other clinical services, local primary schools, and the Northern Health and Social Care Trust. "We believe the Quiet Garden has the potential to help individuals transform aspects of their lives," he added.

CONNECTION

"We are confident that the development of the Quiet Garden will build a sense of connection and belonging, recognising that a programme of activity is often essential to people's recovery and ongoing well-being. Creating a beautiful garden will undoubtedly reduce loneliness, anxiety and depression for all who participate."

The plan is to develop the walled garden in the following ways:

- The Gathering Point - a quality shed with utilities for making refreshments, plus a covered decked area and pergola.
- Raised beds for community use and educational purposes to teach primary-aged children where their food comes from. Much of the produce will be distributed to those in need throughout the local community.
- A small wood to be planted with a nature trail made up of harvestable varieties, such as Willow, to be used for workshop activities.
- A play area for children.

- There will be a series of paths connecting the activities with an avenue of limes leading to a centre-piece yurt housing various workshops.
- A brick toilet will be installed.
- Seating and benches will be positioned around the walled garden.

Andrew said: "The Quiet Garden Project is such a powerful metaphor that underpins a full theology of God's wonderful news, in which He empowers us to play our part in a way that expresses our true and full humanity.

"This is life with a purpose - life in all its abundance!"

THERAPEUTIC

He continued: "Our church is inspired by the vision its leadership has cast for the creation of a therapeutic garden community set in the fallow walled garden. Our plans are moving ahead and we believe, that, 'If we build it, they will come.'"

Before the onset of coronavirus restrictions, some work had already been carried out in the walled garden. Project manager, Stanley Stewart, had cut a new entrance to accommodate a wrought iron gate; all drainage and earth work had been completed; and Arborologist, Robin Crowther, oversaw a community tree planting during National Tree Week last November.

Plans for springtime tasks may be impacted by the coronavirus restrictions, but the hope is that one day the Quiet Garden Project will open as a facility for everyone in the Ballymoney area.

PROVIDING HELP IN TIMES OF ADVERSITY

By Norma Bell

Throughout the island of Ireland, we have many Indoor Mothers' Union (MU) Members - those no longer able to attend branch meetings or regular worship.

In normal circumstances, we keep in touch with them through the internal network, and each year hold a special diocesan Indoor Members' Service and afternoon tea party.

Knowing that most of these ladies and many other MU members would be confined to their homes, I got in touch with all the Diocesan Indoor Member Contacts and forwarded some prayers and Bible readings which could be sent to Indoor Members and those not able to leave their homes due to the present Covid-19 restrictions. Some of the suggestions which members might use included:

- Setting a time each day to pause and pray for neighbours, friends, Church, community and MU members.
- Sharing a devotional item with a housebound member either by telephone, email or a handwritten note.
- Phoning an Indoor Member or someone living alone for a friendly chat.

The ideas have been taken up by some branches who have adapted them to suit their members and delivered support by email, by post or by leaving a package - sometimes including a small present - on the doorstep of someone who is isolated.

It was also suggested that a Neighbour Care card should be included, so that those confined to their homes could, if necessary, ask to have medication collected, shopping picked up or even their dog walked.

We hope that in this way we are continuing to fulfil one of the aims of the MU - to help everyone in times of adversity.



MU members from Leckpatrick and Dunalong, Diocese of Derry and Raphoe, with their branch banner.

STRABANE HOSTS A PASSOVER SEDER

This year, Mothers' Union (MU) in Derry and Raphoe Diocese invited each area to host an outreach event in their district. The challenge was to try 'something different.'

Before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, Strabane area, led by Area Secretary June Robinson, organised a fascinating Passover Seder hosted in Christ Church Hall by Strabane MU.

The Passover Seder combined the Jewish tradition of the Hebrew celebration of exodus from Egypt with its associated hardships and Christian beliefs. This was brought to life with the retelling of each part of the journey.

The centrepiece of each table contained the Seder Plate, on which was placed a bowl of salt water and the symbolic foods which included spices, sauces, bitter herbs, egg and the presence of a shank bone.

Throughout the meal, members and friends dipped the symbolic foods in salt water, moved through the four cups of wine - fruit juice, in this case - representing the four-fold

promise of redemption, and ate 'matzah,' which is traditional unleavened bread.

The Passover Seder was led by Diane White, Branch Leader. Parish rectors who accompanied each MU branch, the Rt Rev Andrew Forster, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, and the Rev Katie McAteer, diocesan MU Chaplain, participated in prayer and in retelling the informative biblical context relating to the symbolism of each food involved.

The music was led by Andrew White and Elaine Sproule, and a very enjoyable buffet supper was provided by all branches.

During the evening, each branch was invited to tell the story of its MU banner. These had been designed at branch level and some brought to completion by local hands. Their fascinating stories rekindled many memories and reminded members of the richness of the MU tapestry within the wider Church community.

The evening ended with fun and laughter as Joan Stockitt, Donagheady MU, led the group in a traditional Jewish dance.

'EVERYONE NEEDS INTERESTS IN LIFE'

MARGARET HAWKINS CHATS TO IRIS DUNGAN ON HER 100TH BIRTHDAY

Iris Dungan, who turned 100 in March, once quibbled about the price of a book. A clergy wife with an eye for business in cash-strapped times and an interest in distinctive stones, she had spotted 'Pebbles to Pearls' in a bookshop in the 1980s.

"It's a lot for a small book," she commented. "Not if you make use of it," the bookseller replied.

Iris says this was a good answer. "I did make use of it. I bought a small polishing machine and made stones into jewellery. I joined crafts groups in Killiney and Dún Laoghaire, and the Irish Lapidary Society, where I learned about semi-precious stones as well," she says.

Holding up a basket of beautiful stones, her fingers running over their smoothness, Iris tells me that when she was 97 she retired from exhibiting and selling her work at events like the Kilkenny Arts Week, Wexford's Festival Opera and the Royal Marine Hotel Crafts Exhibition.

Over the years, this very resourceful woman has turned her hand to farming, guesthouse keeping and jewellery-making.

Iris married the late Rev Victor Dungan in 1944. "I'm not 'holy holy.' I would be genuine, though, and want to go to church every week," she says. "I believe in God and I pray every day. And I thank God for my good health and my interests in life."

Gardening is something Iris has loved since she was a child, and she got her first taste of planting at the John Ivory School in New Ross.

"There were only eight boarders, three of us Roberts and a couple of Willoughbys and a few more," Iris recalls. "There was a cliff at the back of New Ross and we were all given a small plot of ground and packets of seeds. That started me off."

She points to her garden through the French doors in her home across

from St Peter's Church, Monart. "I'm still at it. I have an open day every five years and I have planned another this year in aid of St Peter's Church and the Enniscorthy Community Workshop."

Iris still attends the day care centre in Enniscorthy once a week and is a member of the Active Retirement group. She has received her cheque from the Irish President and a letter of congratulations.

"I'll be writing back to thank him," she says. "I like him as president. I'll be telling him that I'm spending it on a party. Ninety of us are having a meal in the Dunbrody House Hotel."

Iris's children are an obvious source of pride as, among the birthday cards, she points out their photographs. Hilary is the former rector of Portlaoise, Brian is a lay reader in Lismore and Graham works in the IT retail industry.

"My doctor asked me what I attributed my long life to. I told him I had a very good and caring



Iris Dungan with a cheque and letter from the Irish President on the occasion of her 100th birthday on March 12.

husband and a family that caused us no trouble. My advice to younger people would be to never worry too much about anything and enjoy the outdoors. And get a good husband!

"The only problem I have now is old age. It's not really a problem, but I have used a stick recently."

OPPORTUNITIES

Iris thinks the world is a better place now than when she was growing up. "There are more opportunities for young people in education and more awareness of the environment, and there is greater mixing of the various religions. The health service has improved too," she says.

Iris met her husband, the Rev Victor Dungan from Dublin, in 1938, when she was 18 and working in the Phoenix Insurance Company. She was staying at the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) at the time, and attending Leeson Park Church.

“My doctor asked me what I attributed my long life to. I told him I had a very good and caring husband and a family that caused us no trouble”

"He was secretary of the youth club," she says, "and he called at the YWCA at various times. I joined the club - that's how we met."

Victor was ordained for the parish of Derriaghy in Connor Diocese, and was curate-assistant there from 1942-45. The couple married on June 7 1944, the day after D-Day, and spent their honeymoon in Killarney.

"Victor had found a nice hotel. I think it took us the best part of a day on the train to get there because they had to stop and get out and shovel up wood and so forth to keep the engine going," Iris recalls.

She trained as a Red Cross officer during the war. Her scariest experience was when she was in digs



Iris Dungan with some of the stones she turns into jewellery.

in Rathgar and bombs were dropped on Dublin on January 2 1941.

"I buried my head under the clothes thinking that would save me. The bombing was in Terenure which wasn't too close to us, but it wasn't nice," she recalls.

After marrying and moving to Belfast in 1944, Iris helped out in an army canteen. "There were still American military there at that time," she says.

The couple's next move was to Killanne in Co Wexford, where they had four happy years before moving to Kilmanagh. A year later, Victor got a call from Zion Parish in Dublin which was looking for a young, energetic man for the curacy.

Iris remembers how they turned their hand to farming in Killanne.

"I think there were 70-something acres," she says. "Rationing was still going on and a lot of rectories had farms then because we had very little stipend. We were self-sufficient as regards food. We were meant to



The Rev Victor Dungan and Iris on their wedding day in 1944.

make money out of the land, I expect. I think my father bought us a cow or two when we went there – Dexters – and we had a bull as well, and a man working on the farm for us all the time."

Wanting to contribute to the family income, Iris learned how to make butter. "The maid would churn and I would do the washing and make it up into butter. We then sold it in the local shop," she says.

Her son Brian was born in the rectory in Killanne. "A lot of clergy

wives would have gone to nursing homes but I wanted to have my baby at home. I had a nurse with me for two weeks because he arrived later than expected, and the nurse and I were tired of each other by then!"

The couple hoped that Victor would be made rector of Zion Parish, but Iris recalls the rules forbade a curate becoming rector in the parish where they served. Instead, they moved to Dunganstown Parish, near Brittas Bay.

Dunganstown Rectory was big, with beautiful grounds and a farm. With money tight, a view from every window, and a beach two miles away, Iris decided they should run the rectory as a guesthouse.

GUESTHOUSE

"I had three maids and Hilary was waitressing from the time she was eight or nine. We lived in the basement and the 16 guests were in the rooms upstairs and we did very well," Iris explains. The family ran the guesthouse for three years, before moving back to Leeson Park when Victor accepted the position of rector in the parish where he had grown up. Later, in 1971, they moved to Killiney/Ballybrack.

"We were there for 13 years and then we retired and came to Monart in 1984," Iris says.

Recalling other aspects of life as a clergy wife, Iris was involved in the Mothers' Union in Leeson Park, where she enjoyed the monthly committee meetings and visits to 'interesting' places, like Jacobs Factory and Crosse & Blackwell.

Victor died 25 years ago - in 1995.

Iris hasn't been idle in her retirement. A member of Enniscorthy's Active Retirement group, she has even walked on the Great Wall of China. "It was a great experience because looking down you could see all the Chinese cottages on both sides and then you realise the age of the wall," she says.

As I was leaving the house after an hour's chat during which yet another parishioner called with flowers and good wishes, Iris points out some trophies in the hall that she won for her jewellery. "They're lovely," I say.

"Everyone needs interests in life," she says. "They're what make you feel alive."

A VIEW OF RURAL CHURCHES IN 1930s



In a shot taken in 1934, there is sight of a lonely figure and broken wall on the road into the village of Tullow, with the spire of 'St Columba's Church, Tullow, Diocese of Leighlin' visible in the distance. RCB Library St Canice's Lantern Slides.

A rare set of 27 lantern slides depicting various churches, principally in the Diocese of Leighlin, but additionally from the dioceses of Glendalough and Kildare, and one of St Fin Barr's Cathedral, Cork, has recently been transferred from St Canice's Cathedral to the Representative Church Body (RCB) Library by the Dean of Ossory, the Very Rev David MacDonnell.

The dean commented: "This set of lantern slides offers us a charming glimpse into the gentler times of 1930's rural Ireland. I am delighted that this collection, which has long sat on a dusty shelf in the cathedral library, may be enjoyed by a wider audience online."

He found the collection in the St Canice's Library building (also known as the residence of the Bishop's Vicar), adjacent to the cathedral.

DIGITISED

These have been digitised - and to provide some lighter visual relief - the collection is available to view with accompanying descriptions as May's Archive of the Month.

There are more church buildings in the Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory than any other diocese in the Church of Ireland - it is a treasure to have discovered a keen amateur photographer at work to capture them visually during the 1930s, or possibly earlier.

Who exactly the photographer may have been remains something of a puzzle.

Nevertheless, the final image set -

the only one to contain identified people - is entitled 'Canon & Mrs Dudley Fletcher in group at St Laserian's, 25 June 1931.' It thus appears to capture the canon and his wife beside him, surrounded by five other women, with a partially-hidden cleric behind, possibly at some parish event or cathedral celebration.

Canon William Dudley Saul Fletcher (1862-48) was serving as rector of Leighlin and Wells from



The collection has only one group image featuring Canon and Mrs Dudley Fletcher and their group 'at St Laserian's, on the 25 June 1931' on what is clearly a bright summer's day, RCB Library St Canice's Lantern Slides.



The collection includes three images of 'Shillelagh Church, Co. Wicklow' - one showing the 'Gateway erected at W entrance Shillelagh Churchyard, Co Wicklow, in memory of Dr FJG King,' RCB Library St Canice's Lantern Slides.

1927 until his retirement in 1946. In addition to this post, he also held various senior clerical posts within the diocese - as Treasurer of Leighlin Cathedral, 1930-35; Precentor, 1935-46; and also as Prebendary of Killamery in the neighbouring Diocese of Ossory, 1933-46.

He was thus embedded in the lives of both dioceses and likely to have been regularly moving around them - either to preach at services in different churches or at meetings and events with fellow clergy. Perhaps he took a camera with him, or in his leisure time got out with the camera.

DELIGHTFUL

The result is a sequence of delightful images showing several churches, as well as three diocesan cathedrals in the relative stillness and tranquility of rural Ireland during the 1930s. Many of these images are captioned and specifically dated, so we know that they roughly date between 1932 and 1936.

Significantly, the collection contains six colour images. In 1935, American Eastman Kodak introduced the first modern 'integral tripack' colour film or Kodachrome, so it is interesting to see a similar technique in use for some of the photographs in this collection.

The collection may be viewed online in full at www.ireland.anglican.org/about/rcb-library/archive-of-the-month.



TRAINING FOR CHURCH MUSICIANS

At Living Worship, Sandford Church, Dublin, January 2020.

By David McConnell

Church Music Dublin (CMD) was set up in 1991 by the diocesan councils of Dublin and Glendalough. The councils were responding to the publication of a significant report 'Silent Worship? - A report on music in the Church of Ireland,' released by the (since defunct) Joint Committee for Church Music in Ireland.

There also was growing concern about the difficulty in finding appropriately skilled musicians for appointment to parishes. A group of parish organists, chaired by the then Archdeacon of Glendalough, was given two initial tasks - to make recommendations as regards the training of parish musicians and to review their terms of employment.

CMD quickly put in place a three-year training scheme for organists, leading to the Archbishop of Dublin's Certificate in Church Music. Since then, 99 students have completed at least one year, of whom 56 have successfully completed the full three-year course.

SYLLABUS

Professional organists are engaged as tutors and the cost is shared by each student, the sponsoring parish and the diocese. The syllabus (revised in 2016) includes organ repertoire, accompaniment of hymns,

psalms and liturgical items, and improvisation.

There is considerable emphasis on leading congregational singing. In order to gain a wider perspective, students must also participate in 'Living Worship' - sessions that take place on two Saturday mornings early in the year, open to all, at which invited speakers discuss a subject of general interest. Topics have included 'Why Christians worship,' 'The structure of the liturgy,' 'Choosing the hymns,' 'The ministry of music,' 'Worship songs,' 'Liturgical space,' and many more.

In 1995, following consultation with the organist community, CMD published 'Guidelines on the Remuneration of Parish Musicians.' These include rates at five levels of engagement. Since 2005, the guidelines have been published jointly with the Advisory Committee on Church Music of the Roman Catholic bishops. The suggested rates are accepted widely throughout the Republic. Attempts have been made to encourage Northern Ireland interests to produce similar guidelines.

In 2001, 'Soundboard' magazine was launched and went through 37 issues until, regrettably, it ceased publication in 2018. However, the website continues to develop, and carries a wealth of practical information for parish musicians, including five sets of training videos,

which have attracted worldwide attention.

One of CMD's core values is that church music is essentially vocal music that emphasises and intensifies significant parts of the liturgy. Even without an instrument, Christian people never cease to sing while they worship!

LESS FORMAL

Most involvement by CMD has been with those who work where traditional Anglican liturgical practice is the norm. However, there are churches where less formal worship is preferred, supported by instruments other than the just organ. Singers, instrumentalists and audiovisual personnel in such parishes also need support. CMD seeks to engage with such activity and would gladly welcome representation on its Executive Committee.

Two recent initiatives should be mentioned. In 2019 CMD, at the request of the diocesan councils, drew up 'Guidelines on the Maintenance and Care of Pipe Organs.'

And, with a view to encouraging the singing of the psalms to Anglican chant, each Sunday's Psalm, coupled with a well-known chant, may now be downloaded quickly from the CMD website at <https://www.churchmusicdublin.org/>.

LITURGICAL NOTES

REVISED COMMON LECTIONARY

MAY 3

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

- Acts 2:42-47 paints a very brief yet intimate portrait of the life and worship of the early Christian community.
- Nehemiah 9:6-15 is an alternative first reading, and part of a penitential prayer recalling God's creative sovereignty and His faithfulness through the covenant He made with His people.
- Psalm 23 is imbued with trust, in which the psalmist expresses his certainty that he is guided and protected, safe from every danger, because the Lord is his Shepherd.
- 1 Peter 2:19-25 holds Jesus up as the perfect example of patient suffering, and urges the persecuted Christian community to model itself on His grace.
- John 10:1-10 - Jesus uses the familiar Old Testament images of shepherds and sheep to identify Himself as the shepherd-figure, who can be trusted to protect those who follow Him.

MAY 10

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

- Acts 7:55-60 - The young Church's faithful proclamation of Christ's resurrection brought it into increasing conflict with the religious authorities. This passage tells the story of the killing of the first Christian martyr, Stephen.
- Deuteronomy 6:20-25 is an alternative reading, which links the observing of the Law to honouring the God who delivered the people from Egyptian captivity.
- Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16 - The writer expresses his trust in God despite the malicious troubles that he is experiencing in life.
- 1 Peter 2:2-10 stresses the chosen nature of God's people. They are living stones in God's new temple - which has Christ as its cornerstone - and their mission to proclaim Jesus Christ to the world.
- John 14:1-14 - Jesus proclaims His unity with the Father, describing himself as the way to the Father, and promises His followers power to continue His mission in His name.

MAY 17

THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

- Acts 17:22-31 - In addressing the people of Athens, Paul uses Greek philosophical ideas and language to compare the shallowness of the gods they worship with the one true God, who made Heaven and Earth and gave life to humanity.
- Isaiah 41:17-20 is an alternative reading. It uses desert imagery to portray a God who gives refreshment and renewal to those in need.
- Psalm 66:7-18 is a very personal thanksgiving for the Lord's deliverance from trouble, resulting in a renewed faithfulness on the psalmist's part to a life

of worship and prayer.

- 1 Peter 3:13-22 is a call to holy living. Also, should suffering come due to a Christian's faithfulness to godly living and proclamation, they are to be strengthened by the knowledge that Christ too suffered unjustly, remaining firm in the hope of the resurrection.
- John 14:15-21 - Jesus promises His followers the gift of the Holy Spirit to bring them help in their discipleship and to strengthen them until they see Him again.

MAY 24

THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

- Acts 1:6-14 tells the story of Jesus' ascension, and how the disciples followed his instructions to return to Jerusalem and pray together for the gift of the promised Holy Spirit.
- Ezekiel 39:21-29 holds out the hope of renewal for the people of Israel, gathering together again that which has been scattered.
- Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35 is a triumphant expression of God's power and glory, and His care for His people.
- 1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11 - Peter concludes his letter by encouraging his readers to remain faithful and vigilant, holding before them the promise of eternal glory.
- John 17:1-11 - Jesus prays for His disciples, reminding them that His glory is now revealed in the unity of their life together.

MAY 31

THE DAY OF PENTECOST

- Acts 2:1-21 is read as the first or second lesson, and must not be omitted. It tells the story of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the believers, and the reaction of the crowd as they hear the Gospel proclaimed in their own languages.
- Psalm 104:26-36, 37b celebrates the role of the Spirit in creation, emphasising the dependence of all living things on the Creator.
- 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 - Paul explains the work of the Holy Spirit, who inspires different gifts in different people - but they all should work together for the unity of the Church.
- John 20:19-23 - The risen Christ's encounter with the disciples in the locked room anticipates the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, through the promise and breath of Christ. (John 7:37-39 is an alternative reading, in which Jesus likens the Holy Spirit to the life-giving water He said could be found in Him).



The Rev Canon Peter McDowell is
rector of Ballywillan Parish
Church in Portrush,
Diocese of Connor.

WORK COMPLETED IN AGHAVEA

By Brian Donaldson

Aghavea Parish in Clogher Diocese has completed a major renovation of its church, situated near Brookeborough, Co Fermanagh.

The church building, which dates back more than 200 years, was closed for a year while the work was carried out. During this time, services were held in the adjacent parish hall and weddings and funerals were held in neighbouring churches.

The work included a new roof and ceiling, removing the

existing suspended ceiling which revealed the original oak roof trusses, re-pointing of the exterior walls and complete overhaul of the electrical wiring as well as incorporating a new audiovisual system.

The entrance porch has been retiled in mosaic tiles, the pews have been re-ordered to incorporate wheelchair bays and the church furniture has been re-varnished.

The rector, the Rev Johnny McLoughlin, said: "Our mission was to bring it back to where it

started originally but to modernise it at the same time."

The £400,000 project was completed within budget. The church re-opened for worship earlier this year, although, in line with Covid-19 regulations relating to all churches, it is currently closed.

The Aghavea site is steeped in archaeological treasures from the early Christian and Medieval period.



The rector of Aghavea, the Rev Johnny McLoughlin, with Frances Cartwright and Norman McCoy, churchwardens, and Blayne Cartwright, a member of the Building Committee.

GRANTS FOR NORTHERN IRELAND CHURCHES

Churches in Northern Ireland can apply for grants up to £10,000 from 'Treasure Ireland' - a new project to support historic places of worship led by the National Churches Trust.

The project, which will run over three years from this summer, includes a new grants fund which will offer £500-£10,000 for repairs and maintenance.

'Treasure Ireland' will also offer training to people who look after places of worship, including developing skills on writing funding bids, maintenance and interpretation, and tourism.

At least 100 churches will be added to the National Churches Trust's Explore Churches website (www.explorechurches.org), providing visitors with a one-stop

digital gateway into discovering the architecture and history of Northern Ireland's religious heritage.

'Treasure Ireland' is funded jointly by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Pilgrim Trust, the Department of Communities and the National Churches Trust.

For more details visit www.nationalchurchestrust.org.



GROW YOUR OWN!

By Trevor Sargent

If we love our children, we will do everything we can to solve the climate crisis. If we are to solve the climate crisis, we will radically cut fossil fuel use. If we cut fossil fuel use, we shouldn't be importing Chinese garlic, Kenyan peas etc. If we don't import produce from afar, we will grow whatever we can ourselves.

Most of the food we eat in the Republic of Ireland is imported. For every one calorie of nutritional energy the average supermarket customer consumes, another 10 calories of fossil fuels are needed to supply that food, according to research by Prof David Pimentel in Cornell University.

Fossil fuels have made relatively cheap large-scale food production possible. The average American's daily diet relying on fuel inputs requires 20 minutes of human labour. Without those fuel inputs, human labour required to grow that daily diet rises to 111 hours of labour!

In the south of Ireland at present, our lack of self-sufficiency in many fruits and vegetables points to a need for more growers.

Approximately, Ireland grows 53 days' supply of onions, 68 days of tomatoes, 211 days of cauliflowers, 278 days of cabbage and 326 days of potatoes.

Fewer commercial growers in Ireland are able to make a living from

horticulture. In 1980, we had 1,220 such farmers. By 2010, we had only 280! If Ireland is to transition healthily to a fossil-fuel-free future, more of us need to be growing, storing and locally supplying more and more fresh produce.

TIME TO GRAB YOUR SPRONG!

Here are some ideas based on my own approach to kitchen gardening.

1/ Prepare four vegetable (veg) beds for four veg families:

The four-bed system (see illustration one) helps in rotating where these veg families will be grown every four years. Each veg family has different soil needs, so annual rotation of plots helps keep both the soil and the plants strong and healthy.

2/ Start most seeds off indoors before planting out:

Some seeds, such as carrots, are best sown direct, but I like to sow most others (peas, beans, leek, cabbage, lettuce etc) in paper plant pots indoors (see illustration two). When the shoots have leaves and the soil temperature outside is at least seven degrees Celsius, I plant the whole (compostable) paper pot in the veg patch to grow on.

3/ Store spare seeds well, for further sowings: When I began kitchen gardening, I tended to sow every seed in the packet, which often resulted in overcrowding of seedlings. I later learned that spare seeds - if stored in a dry, cool, dark

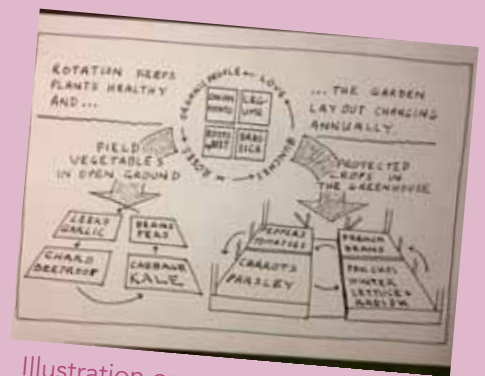


Illustration one.



Illustration two.

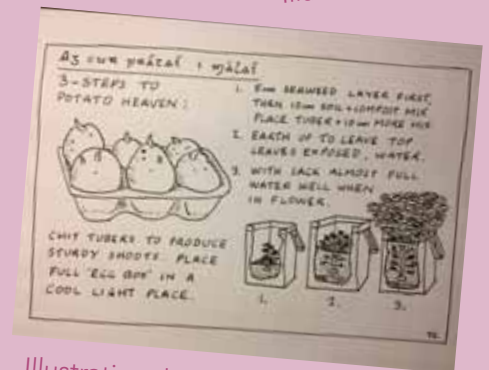


Illustration three.

place - stay viable for a couple of years.

4/ No garden? Potatoes and other foods grow in containers:

An advantage of planting a seed potato in a container of mixed soil and compost is that the seed can be started off indoors, if frost still threatens outdoors (see illustration three). As spring becomes milder, containers can be put out in a sunny spot to grow. Once the potato flowers bloom and fade, it is time to tip out the container contents and rummage around for your tasty organic new potatoes!

'For I was hungry and you gave me food.' (Matthew 25:35a).



The Rev Trevor Sargent is curate in Waterford Union of Parishes, Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory.



SOUP KITCHEN EVEN MORE VITAL TODAY

A soup kitchen based at Teach an TSolais, the parish centre attached to St John's Parish Church, Ashe Street, in Tralee and Dingle Union of Parishes, Diocese of Limerick and Killaloe, continues to provide a vital service during the coronavirus crisis.

The soup kitchen, considered an essential service, has had to adapt the way it works, as the rector, the Rev Canon Jim Stephens, explains. "We can no longer serve food in a restaurant type format, but according to the recent guidelines have to observe social distancing," Jim said.

The soup kitchen has been in operation since 2012, and in normal times serves a three-course meal in Teach an TSolais, providing between 70 and 100 meals every Saturday.

"Tralee is a big town and while homelessness is not an issue, there are a range of people who need help," Jim said.

"The project also creates a sense of community and for people living on their own, the trip to the soup kitchen is something that they look forward to each Saturday."

The soup kitchen is currently run by Collette Price and her team, supported by up to 10 volunteers who come from the wider community.

Much of the food is donated. St John's Parish covers the insurance, cleaning, utilities etc. "This can be a struggle for a small parish, so I spend some of my time writing to various companies and charities to help us in this area," Jim said. "We recently



Mary Dolan and Collette Price at work preparing meals.

received a donation from the St Patrick's Cathedral Charities' Fund, which has been a great blessing. We would love to know of more charities that might be in a position to help."

Jim said the soup kitchen is even more vital in the current crisis. "It provides an important link with people. The food is still prepared in the parish centre, but we can no longer serve meals in the hall. The soup kitchen team will do deliveries until the current restrictions are lifted. The team has offered to drop meals to anyone who may have difficulty getting out.

"We are very proud of our team and the good work that they do."

BOOK OF CONDOLENCES

St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, has opened a digital Book of Condolences to assist people who are bereaved as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Dean of St Patrick's, the Very Rev Dr William Morton, said: "In times of crisis, and human need, we have always afforded the opportunity - to worshipper and visitor alike - of praying for all who need God's help, and, in the case of bereavement, of offering solidarity with them, by signing a Book of Condolences."

Speaking just before the Book

of Condolences opened on April 1, Dean Morton said: "Over these difficult days, the cathedral has had to close to worshippers and tourists, but that does not mean that we fail to respond to those who suffer as a result of Covid-19. We continue to remember them in our prayers here and, in addition, we are providing a virtual Book of Condolences which you may sign online if you have been bereaved by the death of a loved one as a result of the virus."

To sign the Book of Condolences, visit www.stpatrickscathedral.ie/book-of-condolence.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

Christian Aid Week is looking different this year! The charity is running a number of lockdown fundraising options.

These include a virtual table quiz on May 5 and 12, and a sponsored physical challenge such doing 1,000 star jumps in your living room or a 5k in your back garden.

Anyone who has noticed a few extra coins in their pocket because they haven't been paying for a daily coffee or for the gym is encouraged to donate the underspend to Christian Aid to help them respond to the pandemic. Visit www.caid.ie to find out how to get involved.



Student outreach at 'The Hub Belfast,' Queen's University.

HOME FROM HOME FOR CITY STUDENTS

By Lesley Donaldson

The Church of Ireland and Methodist Chaplaincy, also known as 'The Hub Belfast,' is a home away from home for those studying at university in Belfast.

University life is filled with opportunity and challenge, freedom to embrace and fears to be faced. One of the most critical ways that chaplaincy has sought to support and encourage students for more than six decades is through our residential centre.

The student accommodation is an integral part of six properties on Elmwood Avenue in South Belfast. Students live in community within four individual houses, and as a community across the entire centre. We place a high premium on community. Students eat (and cook!) meals together in the evening, and once a week we gather all the houses together for food and fellowship. This simple act instantly creates bonds of friendship and support on campuses that have lots of potential for students to experience isolation and loneliness.

FAMILY

Alex, a Computer Science student at Queen's, who is from Yeovil, Somerset, says: "Those in the chaplaincy have become a second family. I have loved the way that



Daniel McDonald, left, during his trip to Uganda with the team from 'The Hub Belfast.'

people have come together to grow in knowledge and faith of God, grow in relationships with one another and seek to build God's kingdom in Belfast."

Closer to home, Joel from Craigavon, who is finishing his first year, observes: "The Hub has really helped me form friendships that I'm sure will be lasting."

The vision, and reach, of 'The Hub Belfast' has been growing as Belfast opens up to new campuses and halls of residences. The city, and in particular its centre and cathedral quarter area, is changing rapidly. Our residency can only accommodate a limited number of students, but our chaplaincy is open to every student coming to Belfast.

"Chaplaincy is a great opportunity to make Christian friends, especially if you move to Belfast not knowing anyone. Knowing the staff were on

hand at any time for support was a great help too," says Sara from Sligo.

We are also a base for students and staff to go out from, encouraging them to engage fully with campus life, and experience Belfast, Ireland and the world.

We also partner with St Stephen's Church of Ireland, hosting free lunches for students at Belfast Met. We work alongside student services in Queen's Elms accommodation and in the new BT1 and BT2 centres in the city, providing toasties and tunes for students from all over the world.

We get alongside the ecumenical chaplaincy team at Ulster University, and connect with other churches and student groups in the city, such as Christian Unions Ireland, Friends International and University Christian Outreach.

INTERNATIONAL

The international reach of Northern Ireland's universities has been expanding considerably in the last decade and we have become a home from home for some fantastic young adults from all over the world. "My time at The Hub gave me new meaning and understanding of patience and loving your neighbour as yourself - it truly thought me what loving your community and serving your community is all about," says Ishani from Sri Lanka.

We go out into that world through our partnerships with Abaana and Wakisa, two charities that work in Uganda. Daniel from Downpatrick was on our 2019 team.

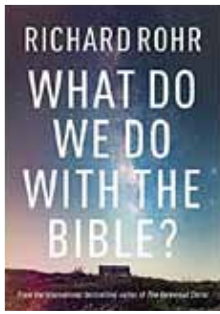
"I can honestly say that this was the most eye-opening, challenging and faith building experience that I've been on," says Daniel. "As a team, we were able to fundraise and build a toilet block for a primary school, share the Gospel and lead dozens of young men and women in a juvenile detention centre to Jesus... It was incredible."

If you are interested in living at the chaplaincy or have any questions, please visit thehubbelfast.org.



Lesley Donaldson is a Ministry Team Leader at the Church of Ireland and Methodist Chaplaincy, 'The Hub Belfast.'

BOOK REVIEWS



WHAT DO WE DO WITH THE BIBLE?

Author: Fr Richard Rohr
 Publisher: SPCK

This is an author who has been prolific in his writings,

primarily teaching on Incarnation, all mysticism and contemplation. However, he is also keen to see how his thinking impacts on social justice issues.

This book is short - an introduction and three chapters. He sets the scene with a brief reflection on a history of

biblical interpretation and use.

The three chapters grapple with hermeneutic, what the Bible is not saying and a possible hermeneutic through the lens of the Incarnation.

For anyone who seeks to study and explain the Scriptures, we will have our own personal bias. This can be from our background in Church life, our theological studies, or the personal faith that we have inherited and been given as gift. Our personality bias also shapes our thinking. Do we focus on detail or the big picture, are we contemplative or action disciples?

The second chapter reflects on matters that the author believes the Scriptures are not saying.

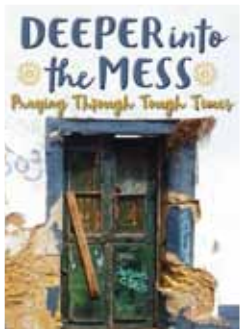
For me, the one that I found

particularly helpful is the fact that we cannot understand Bible passages without understanding the context.

The final chapter explains the author's reflections. In summary: Let's use the Bible the way Jesus did! At the root of his thinking is a rediscovery of the theology of the Incarnation. He then makes some suggestions as to what this would mean for our use of scripture.

I found this book an easy read with some helpful suggestions for further reading and study. However, I believe you will find it more helpful if you have read the author's book, 'The Universal Christ,' in which he explores more fully his vision of the Incarnation.

+Alan Abernethy



DEEPER INTO THE MESS: PRAYING THROUGH TOUGH TIMES

Authors: Brendan McManus SJ and Jim Deeds
 Publisher: Messenger Publications

Brendan McManus SJ and Jim Deeds cooperated with 'Finding God in the Mess' and now offer a beautifully produced sequel. The first book explored finding God in the mess of our lives, whilst this one asks 'Where

next?' and suggests deeper into the mess.

'Is it possible to live a life close to God?' St Augustine said, 'God is closer to us than we are to ourselves' and St Ignatius said, 'God deals directly with us and is always trying to reach us.' So, our job is to recognise where God is present and how to deal with the mess of our lives along with God.

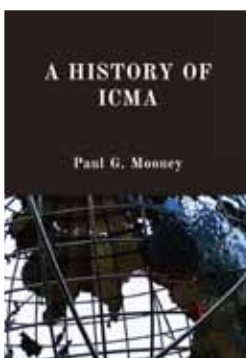
The authors offer five meditations to help us. They follow the dynamic of St Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises, which consists of the following: We are created for friendship with God; we need to build trust with God, our friend; what we do when God seems absent; how to pray into our life's dilemmas; and finding a way forward is knowing love. At times, we can reflect

on how this relationship has developed.

Each meditation opens with a short conversation with God - a modelling of a personal relationship. A relevant story follows and then your own meditation from suggestions. Three relevant Bible quotations are offered. Finally, an action is suggested to remind the reader of how the meditation has worked out.

The topics covered include transforming failure, praying in emergency, anxiety, fear, addiction, family life and a spiritual spring clean. There is a concluding conversation 'answered prayer' about forgiveness, helplessness and love. It is a workbook rather than a quick read.

Raymond Fox



A HISTORY OF THE ICMA (London, 2019)

Author: Paul G Mooney

Dr Mooney is well-equipped to write the history of the International Christian Maritime

Association (ICMA), having been a port chaplain in Busan, Antwerp and Vlissingen.

Throughout its history, the Church has displayed amazing ingenuity in generating agencies of mission. By its nature, the institutions of the Church are geared to 'terra firma.' The

challenge of ministering to a 'now-you-see-them-now-you-don't' class of seaborne people presented, and continues to present, a huge challenge to shore-based landlubbers.

This history, which marks the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the ICMA, is not about the individual seafarers' missions. Rather, it is about tidal forces that drove them to act in concert at an inaugural meeting in Rotterdam in 1969 - the need to work together for mutual advantage and the advantage of those whom they served; to have a global Christian voice in a global industry; and to make themselves heard in the bodies whose decisions impacted on the lives of seafarers. In short, to wield the kind of clout that by themselves maritime missions could not deliver.

'A History of the ICMA' rests on the foundation of solid archival research, which is not always obvious because the tale is told with lightness of touch. As someone who has had the privilege of being a port chaplain, I am intrigued by the sort of characters who are drawn to this ministry, often unsuited to parochial ministry, but who shone in the rough and tumble of the shipping industry.

Much more could and should be said about this splendid book than space permits. I have no hesitation in commending it anyone who, like Shakespeare's Owen Glendower, is prepared to call upon 'the spirits from the vasty deep.' E-book copies of 'A History of the ICMA' can be purchased from www.namma.org.

Adrian Empey

FROM CLASSROOM TO THE KITCHEN

By Lynn Glanville

While her pupils and their parents have been getting to grips with homeschooling, Rachel Harper, principal of St Patrick's National School, Greystones, has been brushing up on her culinary skills.

Rachel is volunteering in the kitchen at the Light House Homeless Centre on Pearse Street, Dublin, and St Patrick's Parish and School are supporting the centre by collecting donations for food packs which are given out daily.

In 'normal' times, Dublin's busy streets provide something bordering on sufficiency for people who are homeless - at least the opportunity to seek the charity of passers-by.

But now the city's streets are deserted due to the Covid-19 lockdown and many charities that support homeless people have been forced to close temporarily.

The Light House, run by Dublin Christian Mission, is still open and it has experienced a huge surge in demand. Rachel said she is in awe of the work done at the centre.

"What has really struck a chord with me is that they cook and distribute 300 hot meals a day for the homeless," she said. "They also put together a well thought-out food bag. For many, this is the only food parcel they may receive for the day."

The centre is in need of supplies to fill the food packs, and the school



Rachel Harper in the kitchen at the Light House Homeless Centre.

and parish community is helping by donating fruit and vegetables, drinks, snack sized chocolate bars, crisps and packs of underwear and socks.

The rector of St Patrick's, the Rev Canon David Mungavin, has offered the use of the church car park as a drop-off station for donations.

"At a time when we are all severely restricted yet reflecting on the call to faith, we have found many people feel a sense purpose by supporting this area of acute need," David explained. "Since the start of the lockdown, the Light House Homeless Centre has experienced a stampede for meals and provisions." He described the centre as 'a beacon of hope' for many who are on the streets.

If your parish or school would like to support the Light House Centre, please contact office@dcmlive.ie or 00353 (0)87-9701063.

A VIRTUAL 'MAGNIFICAT' FROM CORK CHORISTERS

The choristers of Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork, gathered remotely to sing the 'Magnificat' from their own homes under Director of Music, Peter Stobart.

"As it was clear that the choristers of St Fin Barre's would not be returning to the cathedral for some time, I decided to try and pull them together in their own home and create something a little different," said Peter.

"I knew that the boys had always enjoyed singing Stanford's 'Magnificat' in B flat and indeed were quite capable of doing so from memory. I asked them to record a complete version of the piece and to sing along to a pre-recorded organ track which Robbie Carroll, our Assistant Director of Music, played on the cathedral organ. This would ensure that the tempo would be the same throughout, but the individual recordings were made with the boys listening to the track through headphones."

Peter selected the best lines and put them together in the form of a collage, being mindful to give everyone a fair portion of video time.

"Not being technically minded, I was fearful that editing 37 snippets of video would take an age but a very handy phone app came to my rescue and it was really quite straightforward in the end!" Peter said.

BELLS RING OUT FOR NHS

The Rev David Palmer, rector of Magherally and Annaclone, Diocese of Down and Dromore, has been joining the weekly UK-wide Thursday night clap for the NHS with the help of the church bell right on his doorstep.

David explains: "On top of a hill and in a rural area, it soon became obvious that we couldn't really join in the Thursday night applause for front line workers. Well, we could, but nobody would see or hear us.

"As the rectory is next to the church, I thought I would ring the bell from 8pm to 8.05pm.

David added: "Local NHS workers have expressed their appreciation and local residents on our WhatsApp group have asked to take turns to do this each week - one at a time and the rope is sanitised afterwards!"

Across Northern Ireland, many other churches are ringing their bells in support of NHS staff at 8pm every Thursday.



The Rev David Palmer ringing the bells for the NHS in Magherally.

LIGHT RELIEF!

These sentences REALLY appeared in church bulletins or were announced at church services:

- Weight watchers will meet at 7pm at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.
- Potluck supper Sunday at 5.00pm - prayer and medication to follow.
- A bean supper will be held in Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.
- The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.
- This evening at 7pm there will be hymn singing in the park across from the church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.
- Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7pm. Please use back door.

DEREK THE CLERIC



Derek realised he'd vested his congregation with a little too much power!

©ANDY ROBB

THE MAURICE TRUST

The Trust was set up to offer financial assistance when circumstances proved difficult to serving or retired clergy and clergy widow / widowers based in the Republic of Ireland.

Those wishing to make an application for the next meeting on Monday June 15 2020 should contact the Secretary for the necessary form. Deadline for receipt of applications is June 1 2020.

Mrs SJ Walker, 28 Mountain Views,
Crinken Glen, Shankill, Dublin 18
Email: sallyjwalker28@gmail.com

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