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MARCH 2025

# CLOSE NEWS



▶ **SPAIN TRIP**

The choir goes to Madrid

*pg 18*

▶ **NATIONWIDE**

Cathedral featured on Nationwide programme

*pg 14*

▶ **LENT**

Preparing for Easter with Canon Mullen

*pg 12*



## SERVICE TIMES



### Sunday

- 09:15 Eucharist (*said in the Lady Chapel*)
- 11:15 Choral Eucharist *or* Choral Matins
- 15:15 Choral Evensong

### Monday–Friday

- 09:00 Sung Matins (*during school term*)
- 11:05 Eucharist (*said in the Lady Chapel on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Festivals*)
- 17:30 Choral Evensong *or* Evening Prayer

### Saturday

- 11:05 Eucharist (*said in the Lady Chapel*)

**G**od has been worshipped in this place through the prayers and praises of countless generations. Worship lies at the heart of our life as Christians and we express our theology and belief through our liturgy. It is through these liturgical patterns of words and actions that we are formed and transformed.

We invite you to join us for any of the services here this month. If you are unable to join us in person, you can tune in to the online live stream of all services: [spcd.ie/live](http://spcd.ie/live)

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*Cover image: The choristers after their performance at the Irish Ambassador's residence in Madrid. Photo by Ed Coleman.*

## **THE CLOSE NEWS EDITORIAL COMMITTEE**

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The Revd Canon Charles Mullen (DEAN'S VICAR)

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Ms Melissa Carton (MARKETING ASSISTANT)

**T**he publication of *Close News* is made possible only as a result of the dedication of a number of people within the Cathedral Community. The Editorial Committee wishes to thank all those who have submitted content for publication. If you would like an item to be featured in the next edition of *Close News*, please contact Mrs Elizabeth Lowrie.



## THE DEAN WRITES...

THE VERY REVD DR WILLIAM MORTON

Life is never dull in Saint Patrick's Cathedral! In our rationale of worship a diverse range of people turns up. There are those who, as they often say, 'know every stone of the place,' and there are those for whom home is on the far side of the world from us here in Ireland.

The same is true for visitors who wish to learn of our history. On a recent Sunday afternoon – as we were preparing to close – a group of government officials dropped in to allow the visiting Minister of Foreign Affairs, from the Chinese Parliament, to have a quick look inside. They were very pleased to have the opportunity.

In terms of events which are hosted in the Cathedral, or of organised trips, two events have fulfilled what I am trying to describe. The first was on Saturday 8th March when the premiere of an RTÉ documentary, A Town Called

Pyla, was held in Saint Patrick's, while the second centred around our trip to Madrid (of which you will be able to read elsewhere in this issue of Close News.)

The story of the documentary goes back to the summer of 2024 when Detective Chief Superintendent Brian Woods, who, in the course of his work had been on several security training measures in Cyprus for the last forty years, contacted us to have a conversation about what he was hoping to do, and how we might help. In his times in Cyprus – which is practically divided into two, the Republic of Cyprus in the south and the Turkish republic of Northern Cyprus in the north- Brian observed some remarkable developments. Despite the existence of a military border for the last fifty years, where the conflict has never been resolved, Brian noticed one day a few young people, some of them Turkish cypriots, some of them Greek Cypriots,

who had managed to come together through football. It was, and is, a sport which unites, and provides something in common.

Brian remarked on how young people of very different political outlooks were trying – if the will and the desire was there – to overcome difference. He got into conversation with them, and was able to assess the difficulties on the ground. Gradually, friendships began to be made – in the most unlikely of situations.

Brian had the thought that the concepts at play in Cyprus might just have a bearing for the good in terms of resolving some of the community problems in north inner city Dublin. That is why he approached Kelley Bermingham, Community Development Officer at Saint Patrick's, and the Cathedral ended up sponsoring Belvedere Youth Club to purchase sports gear to enable them to travel to Cyprus and to play football with the children there. And so, through Brian's labours, the Gateway Project was born, which aligns perfectly with our stated missional theme of 'Unity in the Community' – working with all our partners to create harmonious and peaceful communities. The project was an exciting one that goes right back to the grassroots investment in the young people in our communities – no matter where we are from in the world, and we regard Saint Patrick's as a place of welcome for people of all faiths and none.

Such has been the success of the project, RTÉ decided to make a documentary, the premiere of which we

were delighted to launch on 8th February. Some of the children from Cyprus were in attendance, as were many from Belvedere Youth Club. The Lord Mayor was present, and the proceedings were chaired by Bryan Dobson. About 300 were in the audience. It was an event which spoke of the importance of foresight, vision, understanding, awareness, and grasping opportunities. I was delighted to be presented, in the presence of the Lord Mayor, with a beautiful plaque from Aspis Pyla FC in recognition of 'your support and friendship to the Community of Pyla, Cyprus' in hosting the premiere of the documentary.

The same is true of the Cathedral trip to Madrid. The choristers and lay vicars had opportunity to sing in four different venues, while we were all also able to meet the Ambassador, and encourage more Spanish visitors to come to Dublin. This was another opportunity for learning, and for benefitting from the initiatives of others.

Ash Wednesday, 5th February, marks the beginning of Lent. It is meant to be a time of reflection, a time to consider our blessings, and to value what we have, which we sometimes take for granted. Perhaps, as a spiritual discipline, we might pray that God will grant us wisdom and discernment to grasp opportunities of reaching out to others, of overcoming strife or conflict, of being open to new initiatives, and to providing a helping hand to ease the plight of someone in need or necessity, and to bring them a glimmer of hope or joy.

Yours,  
*William*



## A SHOT FROM THE CANON

THE REVD CANON  
CHARLES MULLEN

**T**he story of blind Bar-Timaeus teaches us much about prayer. He'd sat for years at the gate of Jericho, begging. One day he heard a crowd gathering because Jesus was passing by. This was too good an opportunity to miss, so he cried out, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Some people tried to silence him. He cried out even louder. Ironically, he was uttering the perfect prayer: it acknowledged Jesus, and requested his mercy. Jesus heard and healed him. Have you found your prayers questioned, mocked, silenced by unbelievers? Think of Bar-Timaeus and pray like he did.

CM

### JESUS, SON OF DAVID, HAVE MERCY ON ME!

Son of the Father, Lord of all creation,  
Come as our Saviour, Jesus, friend of  
sinners,  
Grant us forgiveness, lift our downcast  
spirit,  
Heal us and save us.

*From a hymn by James Quinn, S.J.  
(1919–2010)*

Jesu, lover of my soul,  
Let me to thy bosom fly,  
While the nearer waters roll,  
While the tempest still is high;  
Hide me, O my Saviour hide,  
Till the storm of life be past;  
Safe into the haven guide,  
O receive my soul at last.

*From a hymn by Charles Wesley  
(1707–88)*

# SUNDAY SERVICES & PREACHERS

## DAILY SERVICES

Please see Page 2 for our normal pattern of daily worship.

### SUNDAY 9TH OF MARCH 2025

09:15 – Eucharist (*said*)

11:15 – Choral Matins

15:15 – Choral Evensong

*Canon in Residence:*

**MOST REVD M.G. S. JACKSON,**  
**M.A., PH.D., D.PHIL.**

*Prebendary of Cualaun and Visitor*

### SUNDAY 16TH OF MARCH 2025

09:15 – Eucharist (*said*)

11:15 – Choral Eucharist

15:15 – Choral Evensong

*Canon in Residence:*

**THE REVD P. R. CAMPION,**  
**B.A., B.TH., M.A., M.PHIL.**

*Canon Precentor*

### SUNDAY 23RD OF MARCH 2025

09:15 – Eucharist (*said*)

11:15 – Choral Matins

15:15 – Choral Evensong

*Canon in Residence:*

**THE REVD J. D. M. CLARKE**  
*Prebendary of Tipper*



## STREAM

If you can't make it in person to our services this month, remember: you can tune in for free online.

### SUNDAY 30TH OF MARCH 2025

09:15 – Eucharist (*said*)

11:15 – Choral Eucharist

15.15 - Choral Evensong

*Canon in Residence:*

**THE REVD P. K. McDOWELL,**  
**B.A., B.TH.**

*Prebendary of Clonmethan*

### FORTHCOMING FEAST DAYS

The Feast of Saint Patrick is celebrated on Monday 17th March.

The Feast of Saint Joseph of Nazareth is celebrated on Wednesday 19th March.

The Feast of the Annunciation of our Lord is celebrated on Tuesday 25th March.

## SERVICES & MUSIC LIST

For an up-to-date and comprehensive list of forthcoming services, please visit the monthly Services & Music List on the website.





## THE ADMINISTRATOR WRITES...

MR GAVAN WOODS

Recently I had the privilege of traveling to Madrid together with the Dean and Ed Coleman, our Marketing Manager, on a trip that was as enlightening as it was productive. Our visit was designed to strengthen ties between Saint Patrick's Cathedral and key stakeholders in Spain's tourism sector, further embedding the Cathedral within the itinerary of Spanish visitors to Ireland.

On the afternoon of Thursday, February 20th, we met with the Tourism Ireland Madrid team, a dedicated group responsible for promoting Ireland as a destination to Spanish travellers. With approximately 440,000 Spanish tourists visiting Ireland each year, we discussed how Saint Patrick's Cathedral, as a site of immense historical, cultural, and spiritual significance, should be a central highlight for visitors. The team was deeply engaged in the conversation, taking particular interest in our initiatives to enhance the visitor experience.

From there, we made our way

to the Irish Embassy, where we had the pleasure of meeting Mr Frank Smyth, the Irish Ambassador to Spain. Our discussion ranged from the Cathedral's role in Irish tourism to the wider influence of the Church within Irish culture.

That evening, the Ambassador generously opened his residence to host a special gathering of key Spanish tour operators and journalists. With just over 30,000 Spanish visitors to the Cathedral last year, we see ample opportunity for growth, and this event provided the perfect platform to present the Cathedral as an essential destination for those traveling to Ireland. The presentation was well received, sparking interest and engagement from those in attendance. However, it was the choir's performance that truly captured hearts. Their renditions of Irish classics, delivered with remarkable emotion and precision, left many attendees deeply moved. Several remarked on the profound beauty of the experience, reinforcing the power of music as a universal language



that transcends borders. The impact of the evening was immediate. A journalist in attendance covered the choir's visit, leading to a live television appearance the following day.

Reflecting on our time in Madrid, it is clear that we are achieving something quite special, offering visitors not just a site to explore, but a place to reflect, listen, and be moved. *GHW*



*Top image: Ed Coleman, Dean Morton, Ambassador Smyth, Gavan Woods, and Susan Bolger and Cristina Espejo from the Tourism Ireland Madrid office.*

*Bottom image: The choir performing at the Irish Ambassador's residence.*

## SUPPORT US

If you would like to support the Cathedral's mission and work, please consider donating securely online. You can scan the QR code or visit: [spcd.ie/support](https://spcd.ie/support)





## EASTER LILIES

At Easter we are again planning a display of individual lilies in the Cathedral in memory of family members and friends. The names will be read during the prayers on Easter Sunday, and again on All Souls' Day. Cards with the name of the person remembered and the sponsor will be placed with the lilies.

*If you would like to participate please send your name, and the name of the person you wish to remember, and €5 per lily to:*

*'Easter Flowers', c/o The Deanery Office  
Kevin Street Upper  
Dublin D08 AW65*

*Please have the information and payment with us by April 4th.*

*I would like to remember a loved one with flowers this Easter:*

*My Name: \_\_\_\_\_*

*I enclose € \_\_\_\_\_ (€5/lily) to sponsor a lily/lilies in memory of:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

# HOLY WEEK & EASTER 2025

## AT SAINT PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL

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### **PALM SUNDAY**

**Sunday 13th April**

11.15 Choral Eucharist

18.00 Saint John Passion *by J.S. Bach*

performed by the Cathedral Choir & Orchestra

**Monday 14th April**

17.30 Choral Evensong

**Tuesday 15th April**

17.30 Choral Evensong

**Wednesday 16th April**

17.30 Choral Evensong

**MAUNDY THURSDAY**

**Thursday 17th April**

17.30 Choral Eucharist & Stripping of the Altar

**GOOD FRIDAY**

**Friday 18th April**

11.15 Choral Matins

14.00 Liturgy of the Cross

**HOLY SATURDAY**

**Saturday 19th April**

19.00 Christus *by Francis Pott*

performed by Cathedral Organist David Leigh

**EASTER SUNDAY**

**Sunday 20th April**

11.15 Choral Eucharist

15.15 Choral Evensong & Sermon in Music

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**ALL ARE WELCOME**

For more details of these services, please visit our website

[www.stpatrickscathedral.ie/easter25](http://www.stpatrickscathedral.ie/easter25)

# LENT: PRAYING FULL-ON WITH MULLEN

*Canon Mullen shares some thoughts on praying in Lent.*

**WEEK BEGINNING SUNDAY 9 MARCH: MARK 10: 46-52**

Blind Bar-Timaeus sat and begged at the gate of Jericho. We assume that he'd tried all means of improving his life. He'd probably heard about Jesus who could work miracles, so we can imagine his eagerness to meet him when a crowd gathered to watch him pass by. Jesus could have passed Bar-Timaeus without stopping, so he began to cry out, 'Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!' This was the most perfect expression of faith at that time, as not even the disciples yet knew Jesus as Son of God. Then the almost-inevitable thing happened: they told

him to shut up.

Most of us find ourselves struggling on our own to improve and, when we call out to God, we hear voices from outside and inside telling us to shut up. Just as the darkest part of the night comes before daybreak, so just when help is at hand we stop calling out: we give up at the last moment. Let's try to be like Bar-Timaeus, whose despairing persistence led Jesus to call him close to ask what he wanted. When we call out for all we're worth, God hears us and heals us.

**WEEK BEGINNING SUNDAY 16 MARCH: MATTHEW 15: 21-28**

Jesus seems at first to be refusing to answer the woman from Canaan's prayer. She asks from a position of faith, but all she hears is a firm 'No!' Nevertheless, she persists even though, as a pagan, she's the 'wrong' type of person. She knows that she has no right to the loaf of bread, so she asks only for some crumbs.

We might find ourselves praying for a loved one, even when we don't know what's best for that person. Like the woman from Canaan we might ask only for crumbs and our prayer might be full of 'ifs' – our

unworthiness in asking, for example. Or our acceptance that the only answer to our prayer must be left in God's hands. Either way, we know that God heals because God loves – not simply because God is almighty. We feel a sense that we're stumbling and faltering when we sense that God is being utterly silent. Here the words of Saint John Chrysostom ring clearly: 'do not be distressed if you do not immediately receive what you ask for. God wants you to do better through perseverance in your prayer.'

WEEK BEGINNING SUNDAY 23 MARCH: MARK 10: 46–52

Back to Bar-Timaeus. The perfect prayer which he cried out despite opposition has been slightly adapted and has become known as the Jesus Prayer: ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ It contains all the essentials of prayer. It’s short and easily learned, it can be repeated, and it’s ideal for daily use. In fact, it’s been part of my own Lenten discipline for many years. In my experience I find that prayer needs a time and a place, so with the Jesus Prayer I make it the first thing I do and the last thing I do each day at my

bedside. Otherwise, I risk never getting around to it...

Acknowledging that Jesus is the Son of God places us in right relationship with God-made-flesh, the one in whose name we make all our prayers. We confess that God made himself known as a baby born in a stable and laid in a manger. He was the long-expected son of David, foretold by the prophets. It’s a summary of all we know, and all we believe. Praying that Jesus will have mercy on us puts us in exact relationship with God.

WEEK BEGINNING SUNDAY 30 MARCH: MATTHEW 20: 20–28

When we read the accounts of God leading his chosen people from slavery in Egypt to the freedom of the promised land we see God at work, answering his people’s prayers by leading and guiding them. When we pray the Lord’s Prayer we pray ‘thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven’. This is an earnest request that we may do the will of God. But it’s tempting to decide for ourselves what is God’s will for us.

A reliable test can be applied: it’s to ask ourselves whether what we’re praying for helps us to respond

to the invitation of Jesus to ‘follow me’. When James and John requested top places in the kingdom, Jesus asked them, ‘Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink?’ This was the cup that Jesus, in the garden of Gethsemane, prayed would pass from him because drinking it would result in being mocked, wrongfully arrested, crowned with thorns, and crucified. To say, ‘I am able’ is to take up your own cross. But to do so doesn’t mean taking it up alone; our prayer is for other hands help us to bear the weight.



## RACIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY

Saint Patrick's marked the launch of the Church of Ireland's programme for racial justice and inclusion at Choral Evensong on Sunday 9 February.

The Archbishop of Armagh read a Lesson; the formation of a Reference Group on Ethnic Diversity, Inclusion and Racial Justice, having been his initiative. Prayers were led

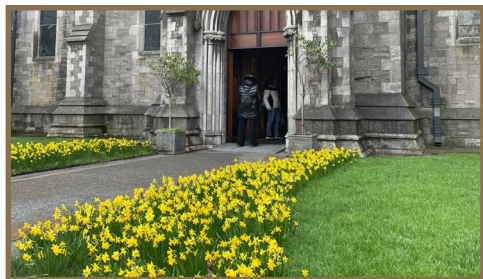
by members of the Group and the preacher was the Reverend Kevin Ronné, Rector of Raheny and Coolock. The Dean introduced Evensong; the prayers, based on the theme of A Coat of Many Colours were drafted by the Dean's Vicar.

CM

*Photo courtesy of Lynn Glanville.*



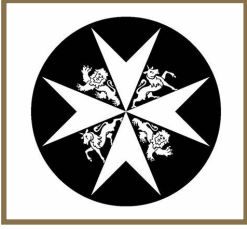
## SPRINGTIME AT THE CATHEDRAL



The Cathedral's North Door has officially been opened. Along with the lovely rows of daffodils lining the walkway, it's a reminder of warmer days as well as the busy summer season to come.

*Photo courtesy of Rowena Janota.*

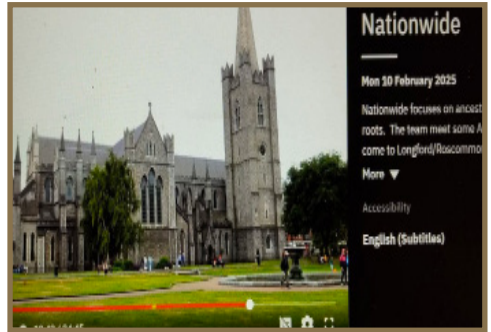
# HONOUR FOR THE DEAN



It has been reported in the London Gazette that His Majesty King Charles III, The Sovereign Head of The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem, has been pleased to sanction the admission of the Very Reverend Dr William Morton as a Member in the Order (MStJ).

# NATIONWIDE FEATURE

Last month Saint Patrick's featured on RTE's Nationwide programme in a feature on the Huguenots and their Dublin heritage – the Nationwide series being focussed on ancestry and the tracing of one's roots. The programme featured the Huguenots' significant contributions to Dublin's culture, commerce and industry following their expulsion from France after the repeal of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. The Huguenots were Calvinists, though some of them conformed to Anglicanism and they worshipped in the Lady Chapel from 1686–1816, the Lady Chapel becoming popularly termed 'The French Church'. Marie Leoutre, of the Huguenot Society Irish Section, spoke to Nationwide about the importance of remembering the impact the Huguenots had on Ireland. In spite of the Cathedral not being named correctly in the programme, it was a good opportunity to draw attention to the history and culture



at the Cathedral; we thank those at the Cathedral staff as well as the Huguenot Society who helped this to take place.

CM

## NEW CHOIR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL APPOINTED

**P**earce Maloney, originally from Foxford, County Mayo, has recently been appointed as the Principal of Saint Patrick's Cathedral Choir School. With nine years of experience as a primary school teacher, Pearce brings commitment and a fresh perspective to his new role, where he is eager to contribute to the Choir School's reputation for academic excellence.

Pearce completed his Bachelor of Education in St Patrick's College of Education, a campus of Dublin City University, in 2016. He spent the first five years of his career as a

mainstream classroom teacher and special educational needs teacher in Balbriggan Educate Together.

In 2021 Pearce taught for one year in Ras Al Khaimah Academy in the United Arab Emirates where he furthered his practice of teaching and learning while continuing to develop his management and leadership skills.

Upon his return to Ireland, Pearce taught in Ballyroan Boys' National School for two years. Pearce also holds a master's degree in international history and lectures part-time in DCU, teaching Bachelor of Education students History Education.



*Photo courtesy of the Very Revd William Morton.*



Before his appointment, Pearce was working as Acting Deputy Principal of the Choir School. When asked about his new appointment as principal Pearce said he was “excited about the challenge ahead and looking forward to leading the Choir School, not only in its terms of teaching and learning, but also with regard to its important role to Saint Patrick’s Cathedral and the tradition the Choir School serves.” He continued: “I am inspired by the students’ individual pursuit of mastery but also their collective commitment to the Choir and Cathedral. It is truly a unique school, the oldest one in

Ireland, and I feel privileged to serve as Principal teacher.”

Dean Morton, Chairman of the Board of Management of the Choir School, who congratulated Mr Maloney on his appointment as Principal, and wished him every blessing and success in his new role, said: “Mr Maloney brings experience, expertise and enthusiasm to this important post, coupled with an understanding of the ethos of the Church of Ireland, and the need for a good working relationship between Saint Patrick’s and the Choir School. I look forward very much to working with him.” *WWM*

## BECOME A CHORISTER

Saint Patrick’s Cathedral Choir School, the oldest school in the country, is currently enrolling for the 2025/26 academic year.

At Saint Patrick’s, we believe in nurturing young talents. In recent years, our choristers have performed regularly on live television and radio, in front of VIPs (including the President of Ireland and the Pope), and on the stage of the Gaiety Theatre and the National Concert Hall.

If your child enjoys singing then they will receive top-notch classical music training alongside a comprehensive primary education curriculum, allowing them to reach their full potential, academically and musically.



## DISCOVER CHORISTERSHIPS

Do you know a boy or a girl who can sing? Find out more about becoming a chorister online: [spcd.ie/sing](https://spcd.ie/sing) or scan the QR code.





## CHORISTERS' TRIP TO MADRID

In February, the choir of Saint Patrick's Cathedral embarked on a remarkable tour in Madrid, leaving an indelible mark on both audiences and the city's vibrant cultural scene.

The tour commenced on Thursday, February 20th, with an exclusive performance at the residence of the Irish Ambassador to Spain, Frank Smyth. The choir captivated an audience of key Spanish tour operators and members of the Tourism Ireland Spanish office with heartfelt renditions of Irish classics: "Down by the Sally Gardens," "Danny Boy," and "On Raglan Road." The emotional depth of the performance resonated profoundly, leading to immediate bookings from attendees inspired to visit Ireland.

On Friday, February 21st, the choir graced the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary, a vibrant parish

led by Dominican friars in Madrid's esteemed Salamanca district. Known for its active congregation and distinctive brutalist architecture, the church provided a unique backdrop for the evening's performance. The event garnered significant attention, with a camera crew from TeleMadrid broadcasting the performance live, extending the choir's reach to a broader audience. The choir's performance was introduced by our Schools' Assistant, Paula Garcia Ibanez, herself a native of Valencia. Given the level of Spanish spoken by the rest of the group, her intervention was a very timely and welcome one.

Saturday, February 22nd, saw the choir performing at the Basílica de la Milagrosa. Consecrated on June 23, 1904, this basilica is a testament to Madrid's rich architectural heritage,

blending Neo-Mudéjar and Neo-Gothic styles. Located at Calle García de Paredes, 45, it served as a spiritual haven for 2 performances by the choir, the first Liturgical a one as part of their 8.00pm Mass, and a concert performance that followed immediately after, both to enthusiastic and very appreciative capacity crowds.

The tour culminated on Sunday, February 23rd, with a performance at the majestic Almudena Cathedral (Santa María la Real de La Almudena). Situated opposite the Royal Palace, this cathedral is the seat of the Archdiocese of Madrid. Its construction began in 1883 and concluded over a century later. The choir were seated high up on the Cathedral's West wall just underneath the magnificent organ. The views from the loft were stunning but not for the faint hearted.

Beyond their performances, choir members immersed themselves in Madrid's rich cultural offerings. They marvelled at the World of Illusions, embarked on insightful walking tours, enjoyed panoramic city views from elevated platforms, and explored masterpieces at the renowned Prado Art Museum.

The choir's visit attracted considerable media attention. In addition to the live broadcast on TeleMadrid, their performances were featured in TeleMadrid's online news segments and highlighted by the prominent news outlet, El Español.

This tour not only showcased the choir's exceptional talent but also served as a cultural bridge, strengthening ties between Dublin and Madrid through the universal language of music.

*EC*



*Top-left image: The choristers and vicars choral at Almudena Cathedral.*

*Above images: The choristers' day out in Madrid.*

*Photos courtesy of Stuart Nicholson.*

## THE DEAN'S PRESENTATION TO THE IRISH AMBASSADOR TO SPAIN

**I**t was gracious and kind of H.E. Mr Frank Smyth, the Ambassador from Ireland to Spain, to invite us to his residence where Gavan, Ed, and I had the opportunity of meeting with him and the Tourism Ireland staff from the Madrid office, together with some tour operators, and tourism journalists. Following the welcome by the Ambassador, a few words from Gavan and myself, and a most appealing presentation by Ed on the history of, and visitor experience at, Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Stuart, our choristers, and lay vicars were invited to sing three pieces, which went down an absolute treat!

Ambassador Smyth is a native

of Malahide and welcomed us most warmly. He has been in office since September 2021. He is delighted that relations between Ireland and Spain are strong and flourishing, and he looks forward to contributing to this vibrant and positive relationship both bilaterally and as committed members of the European Union. Pointing out that the empathy that Irish and Spanish people feel towards each other has deep roots, he is pleased that Spain continues to be home for many Irish people, and, at the same time, Ireland is enriched by the presence of many Spaniards. Tourism between the two countries has grown strongly, and some 440,000 Spaniards visit Ireland annually.



*The Dean and Ambassador Smyth. Photo courtesy of Ed Coleman.*

The Ambassador considers appreciation of our respective cultures to be a very positive aspect of the Irish-Spanish relationship. Showcasing Creative Ireland in Spain through music, poetry, literature, art and other mediums, and forging greater links between Irish and Spanish artists will continue to be a priority for his Embassy team in times ahead. It was precisely in the interests of music and singing that the Ambassador was

pleased to welcome the Saint Patrick's visitors.

I was privileged to present the Ambassador with a leather-bound copy of the definitive history of Saint Patrick's, edited by Canon John Crawford and Professor Raymond Gillespie. He looks forward, with his husband, Marcelo, to visiting Dublin, and the National Cathedral, in the not too distant future.

*WWM*

## PAST CHORISTERS' & PAST PUPILS' ASSOCIATION

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

The Association Committee is organising several events over the coming months to maintain our support of the Cathedral, Choirs, and the Cathedral Schools.

Please note these forthcoming events and dates for your diary!

#### **ANNUAL REUNION DINNER AT RIYC DUN LAOGHAIRE**

Friday 11th April 2025 | 19:00

(booking forms available from [manager@stpatrikscathedral.ie](mailto:manager@stpatrikscathedral.ie) from 12 March)

#### **AGM AT THE DEANERY**

Tuesday 27th May 2025 | 19:30

#### **GARDEN PARTY AT THE DEANERY**

Saturday 28th June 2025 | 14:00

### **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP**

We have had a very low uptake on membership subscriptions this year and would encourage all past choristers and pupils to support us through membership. The Association assists both Cathedral schools, Cathedral Choir trips, and a substantial music bursary in the Grammar School. The annual membership fee is €25.00.

**Please make payment by automatic bank transfer if possible:**

Account: St Patricks Cathedral Past Choristers and Pupils Association

BIC: BOFIE2D

IBAN: IE82 BOFI 9000 1716 3121 80

If you prefer to pay by cheque, please make the cheque payable to:

Saint Patrick's Cathedral PCPA



## COMMUNITY AND SAFEGUARDING NEWS

It has been an incredibly busy time in the community and safeguarding side of things. The uptake from parishes and community groups of the opportunity to visit the Cathedral has been very strong, and in fact, we could be on the road 7 days a week if we had the capacity! A very first visit from the Jonathan Swift National School took place, with a 2nd outing not a fortnight later. The pupils exchanged with the choristers in the choir school, had some healthy play time, and enjoyed a fabulous workshop hosted by our colleagues Kryzel and Paula. We are very grateful to Mr Maloney in the Choir School for his welcome to this exchange. U3A Groups (Third Age University) are coming in more frequency, as well as family resource centres and special interest groups as part of the outreach engagement.

Kelley is a member of the Subcommittee for Mission and is part of a team exploring and developing missional plans and activities. LCDC (local



*Images top to bottom:*

- 1) *Jonathan Swift National School visiting the SPC Choir School.*
- 2) *Members of U3A Lucan on a tour with volunteer guide, Josephine.*

community development committee) and PPN (public participation network) Secretariat work is ongoing with the local authority. Grants and community schemes are open as we speak.

Adult Safeguarding training has been in development over the past 2 months, and we have engaged the services of a consultant – Maighread Kelly, who has a wealth of experience in the field. She has a background in health and social care, is a safeguarding investigator, and has a governance risk management approach to her work. We are piloting the level one training with staff, and our DLP has completed Train the Trainer training and will be rolling out the training for all volunteers thereafter. Level 2 and 3 training will also follow, and that will be for mandated persons, managers and supervisors, safeguarding trust panel members and appropriate board members.

Recently, Kelley also attended the ‘Christ and Culture 2025’ conference in Galway and met with Fr Seán from our neighbours in the Carmelite Order.



(see above picture) Speakers included Mr Martin Shaw on the value of storytelling in the context of faith exploration, in conversation with Fr Conor McDonough from the Dominican orders. The conference was well attended, with many aspects of faith in a modern culture teased out and discussed.

*Kelley*



**KELLEY  
BERMINGHAM**

Community &  
Safeguarding Officer

## EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP FACILITATOR RECRUITMENT

**W**e are seeking to develop a panel of freelance Workshop Facilitators to deliver workshops to schools and family audiences. They may also work with the Education Department to develop other activities for young visitors.

Facilitators will be paid a fee on a per-session basis. The frequency

of sessions will depend on demand. Though music, art, and drama have been highlighted, if prospective candidates have ideas about other subjects which might work well in the Cathedral’s Education Programme, please do get in touch.

Find out more at [spcd.ie/facilitators](https://spcd.ie/facilitators)

## 'A TOWN CALLED PYLA' SCREENING

Saint Patrick's Cathedral was a buzz of activity on the 8th of February from 6pm as many guests including a raft of people from the Diplomatic Corps arrived to celebrate the artful storytelling created by Grammy Award winning Director, Gerry Gregg and his esteemed colleagues. The evening opened with a musical performance by our Junior Organ Scholar, Mr Edward Harte which was of an exceptionally high standard. Master of Ceremonies was Mr Bryan Dobson, who literally warmed the hearts of all with his well-honed skills of welcoming, hosting and facilitating the informative panel discussion. We are so grateful to Bryan for giving his time so generously in support of such an inspirational project.

Young stars who featured in the documentary were in attendance with

their families, and they beamed and blushed in equal measure as praise was poured out upon them, for their courage in embracing the opportunity to travel to such a distant and different space. The participants from Belvedere Youth Club exchanged skills in advance of their journey online with their peers in Pyla, and the documentary not only followed their journey and interactions using music, sports and cultural exchange as hooks for learning and development but also articulated the challenging context of Pyla's history.

Mr Kevin Bakhurst, Director General of RTÉ and his colleagues including Mr Roger Childs were in attendance, and our Lord Mayor gave a heartwarming speech at the outset, lending her support to the advancement of learning in a micro and macro context.



*Brian Dobson with participants of the YMCA Réidh Programme, who attended the Pyla screening.*



None of this would have taken place had Detective Chief Superintendent Brian Woods hadn't developed the concept in his spare time.

Our involvement was initiated back in late summer 2024, when we held discussions about how we might support such an innovative project. The strategy for the current community approach is Unity in the Community and this programme of activity ideally matched all the principles of inclusivity, welcome, education and compassion. We were a small cog in the wheel making the expedition a possibility, but when we heard that the documentary had been completed, we were only too delighted to mark the occasion by bringing an audience together to celebrate that. We are awaiting the announcement of a transmission date and look forward to

announcing that in the short term!

The panel discussion was rich and informative, featuring Ms Noirín O'Sullivan, former Garda Commissioner; Mr Pat Hynes, CEO of Glencree Peace and Reconciliation Centre; and Mr Brian Woods, moderated by Mr Bryan Dobson. The evening culminated in a reception held in the Lady Chapel where many outcomes, possible areas for development and consolidated commitments and responses were explored. We expect that in June we will see a reciprocal visit from the young people of Cyprus to Ireland and look forward with great anticipation to that opportunity to host a learning exchange. In Pyla, a town square screening is in planning for the end of March – more to come on this!

*Kelley*

The logo for Age Action Age Equality features the words "Age Action" in a large, white, rounded, handwritten-style font. Below it, the words "Age Equality" are written in a smaller, red, sans-serif font. The background is a dark blue with faint, light blue circular patterns.

Would you like to be a member of a Consultative Forum?

The consultative forum recently completed a project on Older Peoples Vision for the Next Government, which helped to inform Age Actions response to the Programme for Government. The forums input really strengthened Age Actions positioning and arguments. This document will assist Age Action when communicating with government officials and policy makers in the future.

If you would like to hear more about the forum or are interested in becoming a member, please contact [david.byrne@ageaction.ie](mailto:david.byrne@ageaction.ie)

# CATHEDRAL CONTACTS



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## WILL US WELL

**W**hen making or amending your will, please consider including a legacy bequest to the Cathedral. If you are interested in supporting us in this way, let your solicitor or will-writer know that you wish to make provision for the Cathedral in your will.

For more information, please contact the Cathedral Administrator, Mr Gavan Woods, at *adminstrator@stpatrikscathedral.ie*

## SAFEGUARDING

The Cathedral's Safeguarding Policy can be viewed on our website.

If you have a general enquiry or any concern relating to safeguarding at Saint Patrick's Cathedral, please contact the Safeguarding Officer:

**Ms Kelley Bermingham**  
Community & Safeguarding Officer

*safeguarding@stpatrikscathedral.ie*  
+353 (0) 86 103 0931

If you recognise a safeguarding emergency in which a child or vulnerable adult is in danger, Tusla Child and Family Agency can be contacted on +353 (0) 1 856 6856.

# SUPPORT US



The ministry of Saint Patrick's Cathedral is made possible entirely through the support of individuals like you. The donations which we receive from people all over the world support our worship and music tradition, education programmes, and community outreach work, as well as contributing towards the vast cost of maintaining this historic building.

If you would like to support the Cathedral's mission and work, please consider donating securely online. You can scan the QR code or visit: [spcd.ie/support](https://spcd.ie/support)



# STAY IN TOUCH

You do not have to wait until the next edition of *Close News* to see the latest updates from the Cathedral! Why not follow us on social media or visit our website for up-to-date news and information? From our website, you can also sign up to our digital newsletter in order to receive news straight to your email.



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