



100m Christians face discrimination and persecution

Between November 2013 and October 2014, 4,344 Christians were killed “for reasons closely linked to their faith” and 1,062 churches were attacked.

A new report on the persecution of Christians worldwide estimates that as many as 100 million

are victims of discrimination, persecution and violence by either totalitarian regimes or followers of other religions.

According to the report by Caritas Italiana, the Italian bishops' relief and development agency, 4,344 Christians were killed "for reasons closely linked to their faith" between November 2013 and October 2014.

During the same time period, 1,062 churches were attacked.

In North Korea alone, an estimated 50-70,000 Christians are being held in detention camps.

Other countries that persecute Christians include Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Somalia and Sudan, according to the report.

The Caritas report, which was published in L'Osservatore Romano, said the numbers highlighted a growing trend of intolerance in the Middle East, where many Christians have been killed or persecuted by militants from the extremist Islamic State (ISIS) movement.

"The declared aim of Caritas is to shed light on the causes of the persecution of Christians in the world, taking into account the economic, cultural and geopolitical variables of each of the

countries involved, while giving voice to the silent testimony of the many Christians who continue to practice their faith despite risking their lives,” the report stated.

Last January, Open Doors also said at the release of its World Watch List that approximately 100 million Christians are persecuted worldwide.

The type of persecution analysed ranged from government-inflicted, to violence carried out by terror groups.

The World Watch List, which ranks countries where Christians face the most persecution, has placed North Korea at No 1 for 13 consecutive years.

“It is number one on the World Watch List, the most brutal and dangerous place in the world to be a Christian, because the government requires and enforces with hostility a total dedication to the hero worship of their leader,” Open Doors CEO David Curry told The Christian Post last January.

Furthermore, Open Doors noted that Islamic extremism accounts for the main source of persecution in 40 of the top 50 countries ranked in the list.

Open Doors CEO David Curry also predicted that Christian persecution will increase throughout 2015, especially with the continued offensive of ISIS.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide has also identified North Korea as one of the very worst places for Christians, especially in regard to its prison camps, where people can be sent for offenses such as owning a Bible.

“There is no freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, and any North Korean who expresses an opinion or a belief which differs from the regime’s propaganda faces severe punishment. It is estimated that over 200,000 people are detained in prison camps in North Korea, where they endure dire living conditions and brutal torture. Many of these are Christians,” CSW says on its website.

Fond farewell to Portadown rector

On Sunday 26th July 2015 the people of the parish of St Marks in Portadown said a fond farewell and thank you to their Rector Canon Jim Campbell and his wife Barbara who have ministered in the parish for the last 14 years.

In a tribute Tom Flanagan said, “Jim has been our Rector during a time of unprecedented cultural, technological and economic change. As a church we need to face all of these challenges together but inevitably we rely heavily on the leadership of one man! And sometimes too heavily. Major developments in the areas of child protection, health and safety, food hygiene, computerisation and communication along with what I have already mentioned unprecedented cultural, technological and economic change provide the context in which modern ministry operates. In a very specific way we also recognise the reality of the age spectrum of our congregation...

...There have many significant highlights in Jim’s time at St Mark’s and these have been faithfully recorded for posterity by our Hon Sec Ivan Davison and as I don’t want these comments tonight to stretch to the length of the Rector’s annual parish report (which average about 12 A4 pages) I do not intend to dwell on them. My observation is that we will all recall what is significant and personal to us because in spite of being a large community our Rector has a gift for caring, sensitive pastoral engagement at an individual level; the results of which will only be evident when we experience that “new creation” in the future.”

The parochial hall was packed to capacity with friends, family and parishioners.

Canon and Mrs Campbell's son Peter and his fiancée Vicky made the journey from London to be present for the special day.

Glenstal may close to public over insurance claims

High number of personal injury claims against Benedictine monastery and rising insurance costs may force drastic action.

One of the country's top boarding schools and retreat centres is to consider closing its gates to the public because of the high number of personal injury claims made against it.

Glenstal Abbey, which is located in Murroe in Co Limerick, is considering the move and only opening to the public for specified Masses due to rising insurance costs.

Speaking on local radio, Benedictine Fr Simon Sleeman revealed that the monastery has three open cases before it at the moment including one where a woman fell in the church.



According to Fr Sleeman, “We have been forced to consider closing our grounds due to the amount of claims. It is very much in sadness rather than in anger. It would be a very sad and retrograde step but it is the reality of life and we may have to become a little bit more careful.”

He added, “There is an issue and it is getting worse. Our insurance is increasing as a result of claims with our premiums now over €70,000 annually. We love people coming here as it is a form of security.”

“For example, if people are walking around one of the lakes and notice something unusual they would contact me immediately.”

He said the Abbey may now have to consider closing the gates of the Abbey to walkers and

only open at specified times for masses but that this would be the “last option”.

Moreover, he claimed, “The compensation culture is definitely a growing concern and schools and public buildings seem to be particular targets. We have requested the insurance company to take a strong position defending these claims where at all possible.”

As well as been one of the country’s leading secondary schools since it first opened its doors in 1932, Glenstal is home to a number of Benedictine monks, a number of small retreats known as God Pods and a B&B.

Armagh service recalled penalty kick pioneer

St Mark’s Armagh hosted a special service yesterday with a sporting theme to commemorate the restoration of the McCrum Family Grave which is found in our church yard.

This restoration has been financed by FIFA in honour of Mr William McCrum of Milford, who was a former member of the Irish Football

Association and who first proposed the idea of the Penalty Kick.

Recalling 1966 commemoration

At a Dublin Council of Churches service to commemorate the 1916 Rising in St Patrick's Cathedral in 1966, The Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Rev George Otto Simms, in his Sermon, said "“There is much for which to give thanks on our commemorative occasion. We are grateful across the span of the last 50 years for the goodwill, tolerance and freedom expressed and upheld among and between those of differing outlooks and religious allegiances. The words of the Proclamation that guarantee ‘religious and civil liberty, equal rights and opportunities to all citizens’ have brought help and encouragement to minorities during this period. There is a rock like quality about such elements in the formation of a State”.

History of Lisburn parish published

A new book on the history of the Parish of Blaris (Lisburn) has just been launched. Written by local author Pearse Lawlor this is a history that has never before been documented and

records events in the parish over a four hundred year period from the Plantation to the present.

The book provides a fascinating insight into how community relations in the Lisburn area ebbed and flowed and how national and international events affected the Church and the Catholic community of Lisburn. Learn how Protestant landlords donated land to the Church and all denominations contributed to the building of the early church in Lisburn and why all that changed years later causing a bishop to write to the Pope about his concerns.

Learn also how the community of Lisburn came together when facing a common enemy, be it hunger or war, only later to revert to a sectarian division.

Find out why an effigy of a parish priest was burned at Lisburn's town hall and how after the parochial house was gutted in an arson attack the parish priest protected St Patrick's church from being burned to the ground, standing alone in the doorway and facing down a baying mob. Discover what really happened in 1920 when practically every Catholic owned business in Lisburn along with many Catholic homes were burned and the Catholic population of Lisburn,

along with the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary had to flee for their lives.

Written in diary form this book is a social history and comments on the character of each parish priest over a four hundred year period. It provides information on the development of the schools in the parish and in particular the Convent of the Sacred Heart of Mary. It traces how events during the Troubles affected the Church and the lives of the parishioners. This is history warts and all and hold a mirror up to the Church and society.

The book, priced at £12 is currently available at: Waterstones, Bow Street, Lisburn, [Amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk), The Pastoral Centre, Chapel Hill, Lisburn (02892 607110) or by contacting the publisher at clovercorry@gmail.com

We have not recovered yet, says Dean of Nepal

Nepal is still decades away from full recovery, nearly 100 days after an earthquake left thousands dead and many more injured and without homes, the country's most senior Anglican cleric, the Dean of Nepal, the Very Revd Lewis Lew, said this week.



Destruction in Chautara, part of the Sindhupalchok District to the north east of Kathmandu, caused by the April 2015 Nepal earthquake

“Three months after the quake hit,” he said, “it would be presumptuous to say that life is back to normal in Nepal, because things are never the same again for most Nepalese since the fateful day.

“Nepal has lost more than 530,000 buildings, and 4300 schools. The task to rebuild homes, community, and country is a mammoth one, that requires selfless sacrifice and strong unity at all levels.”

Media digest

BBC Radio 4 Any Questions? (start 9mins 30)

Bishop of Norwich, Graham James, responds to the question “what should be done to address the problem of swarms of migrants in Calais?”

He said that we must take some responsibility and recognise that “many of those who are at Calais come from extremely poor countries, from Syria, from Northern Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, countries where we have intervened in recent years.” He also pointed to Greece, which has taken 100,000 migrants this year despite their economy.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b063dgs7>

Times

Diary item that the Archbishop of Canterbury followed diversion signs in Canterbury only to find himself driving down the busiest pedestrianised street in the city – twice. Article notes he confessed to having a sense of humour failure about a prank by students who had moved the signs.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article4514450.ece>

Tel

Christopher Howse writes about the Blackburn Diocesan Synod Motion calling on the House of Bishops to consider whether some nationally commended liturgical materials might be prepared to mark a person's gender transition. He suggests that “re-baptism” is happening already. See Comment CNI today or - <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/11777054/No-need-to-get-baptised-again-just-because-youre-changing-sex.html>

Mail

Report that a former church youth leader and trainee vicar faces a retrial accused of rape and sexual assault of teenagers he met through church work. A jury was unable to reach verdicts on the majority of charges against Timothy Storey, 35, after eight days of deliberations. Storey, of Folkestone, Kent, who remains in custody, will go on trial again at Woolwich Crown Court next January.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3181956/Church-youth-leader-accused-rape-two-devout-teenage-Christians-faces-retrial-charges-jury-fail-reach-verdict.html#ixzz3hY8IDgu7>

Guard

Giles Fraser writes that in his attack on ‘non-violent extremism’, the PM forgets that had the churchnewsireland@gmail.com

Levellers of the 17th Century not been radical or extreme, they would not have introduced England to democracy in the first place.

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2015/jul/31/i-believe-in-an-authority-greater-than-david-cameron-am-i-extremist>

Times

Interview with former chief rabbi Jonathan Sacks about his new book *Not in God's Name* which argues that belief in God is the solution, not the cause, of global conflict.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article4514299.ece>

Times

Credo: Peter Townley, Archdeacon of Pontefract, argues that interchurch friendships can build a better Europe.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article4514292.ece>

BBC

Report that a woman who was unable to divorce her husband on the grounds of adultery because he had affairs with men is campaigning to have the law changed.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-33718943>