

**Ding dong merrily on
high: the maths of
Christ Church belfry**

**Peata Carol Service Fills Christ Church Cathedral With
Joyful Barks**



Dean Dermot Dunne gives the pet blessing during the annual Peata Carol Service.

More than 100 therapy dogs attended the annual Peata Carol Service in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin. The dogs, along with their owners and many people who benefit from their visits, filled the cathedral for the service which featured the Christ Church Girls' Choir, directed by Ian Keatley. Their voices contrasted with the barking which accompanied the favourite carols.

Throughout the service, the canine visitors were very well behaved with just a few harsh barks exchanged. Many dressed up for the occasion with a nod to festive fashion for the doggy world. The high point was the pet blessing which

was given by Dean Dermot Dunne. He prayed for the continued work of the therapy dogs and gave thanks for the joy they bring to those people they visit.

The collection this year was divided between Peata and the Peter McVerry Trust and the Dean said he was delighted that people were finally waking up to the plight of the homeless in the city. He thanked the Girls' Choir for taking time off school to be present.



One of the canine members of the congregation.

Peata is a voluntary organisation which provides a pet therapy service to caring institutions. Its visiting scheme involves approved volunteers and their dogs who generally pay weekly visits. The carol service is organised annually by Lesley Rue.

Bangor parishioners sleeping on the streets so others don't have to

Ian McManus, Warren Frame and Dan Meharg, all from Bangor Parish, will be sleeping rough on the streets of Bangor this weekend. They are taking part in Challenge 48 to raise money and awareness of children in Africa who sleep on the streets every night.

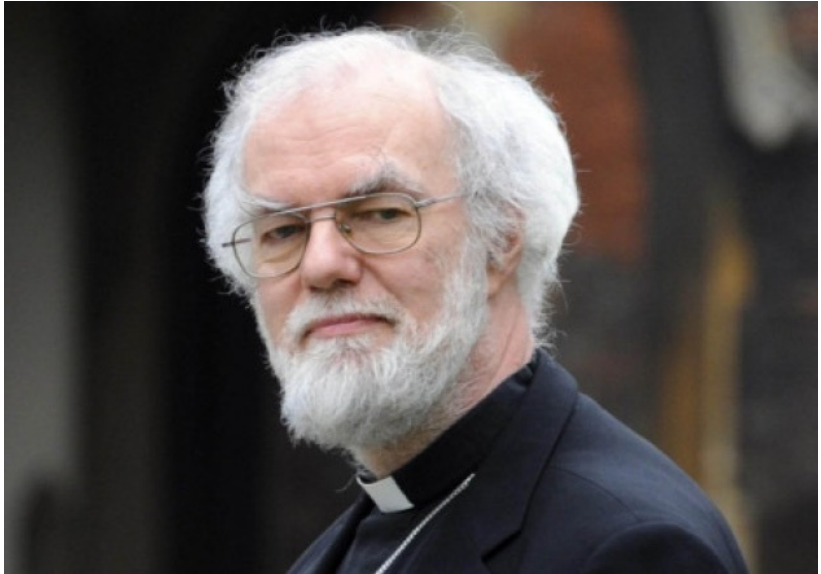
"A team of us will be sleeping rough from 12 to the 14 December," says Daniel. "We are only to bring the clothes on our backs (no mobile phones, laptops or food).

"Kampala is the largest city and Capital of Uganda and the money raised during the project will be used to fund education projects and provide clean water for street kids living in the area. Our main aim is to sleep on the streets so others don't have to."

“Please feel free to come say hello over the two days and have a chat to see what its all about.”

Williams - We need to bridge gap between rights and religious freedom

News Letter - A former Archbishop of Canterbury has called for a general “reimagining” of our attitude towards human rights and religious liberty. Dr Rowan Williams served as the leader of the Anglican Church for 10 years before he stepped down in 2012.



In an interview with the Church of Ireland Gazette, Dr Williams said it was important to bridge the gap between human rights and religious freedom.

“It is dangerous I think for everyone if the language of human rights and the language of religious liberty drift apart too much.

“One of the things I am most preoccupied with is to see if we can bring those back together,” he said.

Dr Williams made his comments in response to a speech given to the European Parliament in Strasbourg last month by Pope Francis.

The pope told MEPs the promotion of human rights was a “praiseworthy commitment,” but he also warned: “Today, there is a tendency to claim ever broader individual rights, and, I am tempted to say, individualistic rights.”

Dr Williams said: “A lot of religious people, Christians and others, look at the human rights discourse and say ‘well that’s all about individual flourishing, and individual autonomy,’ and religious faith is not about individual autonomy – it’s about community.

“The challenge is to reimagine human rights and I guess that part of what the pope is saying; reimagine human rights with a very, very strong emphasis on reciprocity – what we owe to one another, not just what is owed to us.”

Launch of Towards Peace Spiritual Support Service in the Diocese of Ferns

The Towards Peace Spiritual Support Service was launched this week in the Diocese of Ferns.

Bishop Denis Brennan, Bishop of Ferns speaking at the launch in Enniscorthy, Co Wexford, said:

Two/three years ago I was one of a small group of bishops who had a series of meetings with representatives of survivors of clerical and institutional abuse. The purpose of these meetings was to hear the stories the survivors had to tell, and to see what the Church could do to try to make amends for the terrible suffering that had been inflicted on them by some of its members.

As the meetings progressed two issues began to emerge:

- The need for a Counselling and Support Service to support survivors of institutional, clerical and religious abuse.
- The need for a Spiritual Support Service for those whose faith had been damaged by abuse and who wished to continue their search for meaning and for God.

To respond to the first issue, the need for Counselling and Support, the Church set up Towards Healing in 2011.

To date this service has provided counselling and support to over 5,000 clients.

To engage with the second issue, the need to help those whose faith has been damaged by abuse, the Church has now set up Towards Peace.

These two services are survivor-led, in that they are a direct response to what the survivors said they would like to see happen, a direct response to help survivors come to terms and cope with what happened to them.

In Chapter 30 of the Book of Isaiah there is a passage which speaks about the "bread of suffering and the water of distress." In the passage the prophet speaks of God "dressing the wounds and healing the bruises his blows have left on his people." I remember once hearing a preacher commenting on this passage of Scripture and he used a phrase which I hope is appropriate today, he summed up the message of the passage by saying "the hand that hurts is the hand that heals."

Our hand, the hand of our Church has hurt many people, it has hurt them deeply, it has hurt them in ways we do not always fully understand.

Towards Peace is set up in the hope that the hand which has hurt can also be the hand which helps to heal.

This can only happen if the survivors, despite the awful things that have happened to them at the hands of the Church, can come to believe that the hand which has hurt them so badly, the hand which in the words of Isaiah has made them "experience the bread of suffering and the water of distress," still wants to dress their wounds and heal their bruises.

A day such as this fills us with remorse for what has happened, but it also imbues us with a spirit of hope for what may happen yet. It dares us to believe that the hand that hurts can also be the hand that heals. In that spirit, it is now my privilege to declare 'Towards Peace' launched in the Diocese of Ferns.

Dean scales new heights to promote Black Santa sit-out

The Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev John Mann, will launch the 38th Belfast Cathedral Sit-out for charities today Friday December 12.

The launch has been brought forward – it usually begins a week before Christmas Eve – to coincide with the unveiling of a Blue Plaque to Dean Sammy Crooks, who started the Sit-out tradition in the lead up to Christmas 1976.

Dean Mann is hoping this year's Sit-out tally will reach his target of £200,000 and has been scaling great heights – namely the roof of the lofty Cathedral – to shout about it!

A short ceremony to unveil the Ulster History Circle's Blue Plaque begins inside the Cathedral at 11.45am on Friday, and the Sit-out will get underway afterwards.



As usual, Dean Mann will record his Sit-out experiences in the Black Santa Diary, to appear daily in the Belfast Telegraph from Monday December 15.

Dublin Civic Carol Service at St Ann's, Dawson Street

The annual Carol Service, in the presence of the Archbishop, the Most Rev. Dr. Michael Jackson and the Lord Mayor of Dublin, will be held in St Ann's, Dawson Street, on Sunday December 14 at 7.00 pm.

Among those who have agreed to read lessons at the service are the President of the High Court, Justice Kearns; Judge Patrick Clyne, President, Hibernian Catch Club; the Provost of Trinity College, Dublin; Mary Daly, President of the Royal Irish Academy and Senator Ivana Bacik.

Ding dong merrily on high: the maths of Christ Church belfry

Irish Times - Long perplexed by the melodic pandemonium of [church bells](#), I follow bell ringer Ken Hartnett through a little door in the side of [Christ Church Cathedral](#). We climb an ancient stone staircase, traverse a vertiginous roof-bridge and make our way into the bell tower, where a campanology rehearsal is in full clamour.

A friendly troupe perform exercises involving up to 10 bells at a time as conductors Nigel Pelow and Vyvyenne Chamberlain call changes to nurse novices along.

They are performing a piece that bell ringers call a “grandsire”, says Hartnett. He shows me the notation the ringers are following: long columns of rows of numbers like computer code.

Hartnett calls over a ringer, who confirms that, although chiming patterns called “queens” or “tittums” could be produced, bells are generally rung in complex non-repeating patterns rather than melodies. It is all part of keeping things interesting for the ringers, he asserts, rather than mathematically attesting to the glory of God.

So while melodic pealing church bells are a staple part of our shared Christmas experience, there is another, entirely different side to bell-ringing, one so complex that it helped create a form of advanced [mathematics](#) called [group theory](#).

The carols are nice, but the bells are generally rung in non-repeating permutations, says Gary McGuire, a professor and head of mathematics at [University College Dublin](#).

It first arose as a very English, very Anglican invention called “change ringing”, after the Reformation sacking of medieval church bells.

In the early 1600s, bells were recast and remounted on wheels and rung in 360-degree circles. They could be held with wooden stays to keep a bell in a “ready” position, allowing ringers more control over the timing of when an individual bell might clang.

More at -

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/science/ding-dong-merrily-on-high-the-maths-of-christ-church-belfry-1.2027331>

Media digest

Ind/Mail/Express

Further comment on 'Feeding Britain' report. Andreas Whittam-Smith in the *Independent* says hunger in Britain is partly down to Iain Duncan Smith, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (DWP), which manages the welfare system. Ann Widdecombe writes in *Express* saying if the benefits system is really failing and people are hungry, then ministers have a responsibility to address it. She also comments on huge amount of food and other goods which we waste. David McAuley, is the chief executive of [the Trussell Trust](#), writes on food banks being a last resort in the *Guardian*. *Mail* has a video on Archbishop of Canterbury's comments.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/shame-on-iain-duncan-smith--he-has-presided-over-a-system-which-has-led-to-widespread-hunger-9916404.html>

[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/video/news/video-1142494/Archbishop-says-party-political-approach-not-solve-food-bank-crisis.html?](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/video/news/video-1142494/Archbishop-says-party-political-approach-not-solve-food-bank-crisis.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

[ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/video/news/video-1142494/Archbishop-says-party-political-approach-not-solve-food-bank-crisis.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

<http://www.express.co.uk/comment/columnists/ann-widdecombe/545882/Ann-Widdecombe-waste-Cilla-Black-Edwina-Currie>

<http://www.theguardian.com/voluntary-sector-network/2014/dec/10/trussell-trust-ceo-food-banks-last-resort>

Tel

Report that an alliance of churches and Christian charities is hoping to upstage some of the biggest names on the High Street with a new advertisement promoting the real meaning of Christmas. It states the *The Christmas Starts with Christ* ad deliberately echoes the "feel-good" style of retailers' annual Christmas advertisements. Organisers hope that a million people will see the advertisement when it goes live on YouTube. But costing

just £10,000 to make - one seven hundredth of John Lewis's Christmas campaign - it says the advert's budget is more in keeping with staying in a stable than an inn.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11286231/Baby-Jesus-takes-on-John-Lewis-in-battle-for-the-soul-of-Christmas.html>

Mirror/Sun/Star

Further reports on lack of knowledge about the Christmas story says a survey by London shopping centre Brent Cross found one in five children think Jesus plays for Chelsea and the shepherds found the stable with Google maps.

They also state a survey by Netmums also found only one in three schools are staging a traditional nativity, with many putting on a modern show.

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/one-five-children-think-jesus-4784708>

<http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/6172626/Jesus-Christ-plays-for-Chelsea-say-1-in-5-kids-in-Xmas-poll.html>

<http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/414673/nativity-misconceptions-children-think-Jesus-Chelsea-footballer>

<http://metro.co.uk/2014/12/10/true-or-false-which-of-these-christmas-facts-are-festive-fibs-4981840/>

Ind

Further report that the Church of England has warned it could withdraw its investments from BP and Shell unless the companies take greater action to tackle climate change. It says the Church, which has tens of millions of pounds invested in both BP and Shell, has become the first mainstream religious organisation in the UK to raise the prospect of severing ties with fossil fuel companies because of global warming. The Church says it's targeting the two companies because they have the biggest carbon footprints in the UK.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/church-of-england-threatens-to-cease-bp-and-shell-investments-over-climate-concerns-9916325.html>

BBC

Report that Catholic bishops from around the world are calling for an end to fossil fuel use and increased efforts to secure a global climate treaty.

Catholics, they say, should engage with the process leading to a proposed new deal to be signed in Paris next year. It states the statement is the first time that senior church figures from every continent have issued such a call.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-30408022>

Mail

Report on how church treasurer David Barras, has been sentenced to two years in prison after stealing £30,000 from parish funds. Mr Barras was appointed treasurer at St Christopher's Church and St James Church in Bradford, West Yorkshire - despite having been jailed for 12 months in 1992 for stealing £10,000 from the Citizens Advice Bureau. It states members of

the Tong and Holme Wood Parochial Church Council decided to give him a second chance because he was a Christian and had been a member of the congregation for eight years.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2868264/So-Christian-forgiveness-Church-gave-disgraced-accountant-second-chance-treasurer-stole-30-000-parish-funds.html#ixzz3LZEadGKz>