



The Most Rev Justin Welby at Canterbury Cathedral

Divided Britain's values are in the wrong place, says Archbishop

The mood of uncertainty and division in Britain and around the world at the end of 2016 show that “our values are in the wrong place”, the

Archbishop of Canterbury said in his Christmas sermon.

Speaking in Canterbury Cathedral, the Most Rev Justin Welby, described the events of the last year as ushering in “a different kind of world” which is more uncertain and “feels more awash with fear and division”.

But addressing the annual Christmas Day Eucharist at Canterbury Cathedral, he urged people to find new meaning and hope through faith in uncertain times.

Rather than putting trust in economic and technical progress, which have failed to bring happiness, true “glory”, he insists, is found in God.

“The only place and person who can bring glory to us is the child of Bethlehem who became the victim on the cross,” he said.

His remarks were echoed by those of the leader of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, in his homily at Christmas midnight mass at Westminster Cathedral in London.

He also spoke of a “deep and widening sense of uncertainty” about the state of the world.

Although neither leader singles out specific events, their comments follow a period of dramatic change which defied most predictions – such as the UK’s vote to leave the EU to the election of Donald Trump as US president – as well as a wave of terrorist attacks and the carnage of Syria.

Cardinal Nichols remarked that recent events have even prompted many to quote WB Yeats’s 1919 poem *The Second Coming*, which speaks of a crumbling world order with the lines: “Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.”

The Cardinal remarked: “These words reflect the deep and widening sense of uncertainty many feel today.

“This is not the time or place to reflect on reasons or causes, but it is right to recognise these anxieties and fears.”

Archbishop Welby will argue that the current mood of uncertainty shows that Britain’s trust is currently in the “wrong things”.

“The end of 2016 finds us all in a different kind of world, one less predictable and certain, which feels more awash with fear and division,” he is expected to say.

“Uncertainty in the midst of much – but far from universal – prosperity is a sign of our trust being in the wrong things.

“It tells us that our values are in the wrong place Economic progress, technological progress, communication progress hasn’t resulted in economic justice. It hasn’t delivered glory for us.”

Christmas celebration cannot only be for Christians - Archbishop Jackson of Dublin

Archbishop Michael Jackson, delivered his Christmas Day sermon in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, on Sunday morning (December 25).

Through the lens of the Eucharist, the Archbishop addressed the commemorations which have taken place in Ireland during this year, Brexit and the bonds of affection between



the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, the refugee crisis and terrorist attacks. He said this Christmas “our celebration is tinged and darkened by the sadness of grief and suffering, of death and loss as we remember the people of Berlin who are very recent sufferers in an international terrorism that seeks to distort the name of major World Faith, that of Islam, and has been relentless throughout the year 2016”.

Quoting Aram 1, Catholicos of the Armenian Church of Cilicia, former President of the World Council of Churches, he said the Eucharist is the language of life, death and resurrection, of celebration and mission. Archbishop Jackson

said that the words of the Catholicos tell us about Christmas.

“They speak of new life in Christ. The world over, people who are displaced and deracinated, diminished and despiritualized, create a way forward and a way through, where no such possibility seems to exist. Many today are refugees in ever increasing numbers. They hold together experience and expectation. They bring to life a mixture of self–preservation and community for others, however hastily improvised, however impoverished it is compared with their old life, however resented by the host their *fearful arrival* may be. Life itself gives so many of them life when there seems to be no scope for life old or new. They call us forward,” he said.

The Archbishop added that the Eucharist in Ireland and the Middle East were the same. “This is the voice we long to hear in the streets and the neighbourhoods of Aleppo. It is a city of men, women, and children almost annihilated by the forces of politics and war. There are also those fortunate enough to flee and to leave carrying their own or their children’s saline drip as they stagger on like Beckett people. The Eucharist is

a thanksgiving and a celebration, a witness and a rejoicing in salvation freely given by God, time after time, to God's people everywhere," he stated.

He said that Christmas pointed to celebration. That celebration cannot only be for Christians as the Eucharist says the Church must look outwards. "Many people may not ever join us in faith but we are already joined to them in humanity; and on this basis we can and must work together and create harmony. And it is this joining in humanity and in creation that we celebrate at Christmas; and that we Christians celebrate in the Eucharist. Christmas asks of us inside the churches – irrespective of our denominational subtleties and divisions – to move out in the spirit of new birth, in glory and in hope towards others in a shared humanity of grace love and action. This is the gift of Christmas. Let us share it. Let us celebrate it. And let us not forget the peoples of Syria and Iraq, the Children of God of varying Faiths and still of common humanity and shared creation in God with us," he concluded. The full text of the sermon is at:

<http://dublin.anglican.org/news/2016/12/Christmas-Day-Sermon-of-the-Archbishop-of-Dublin>

Pope Francis wishes Christmas peace to those scarred by war

Pope Francis has wished Christmas peace for people scarred by wars and those who lost loved ones to terrorism that he says is sowing “fear and death” in many cities and countries.

Delivering the traditional [Urbi et Orbi blessing](#) from the central balcony of St Peter’s Basilica Sunday, Francis cited those suffering through the Syrian war, especially during the “most awful battles” in Aleppo. He pressed the international community for a negotiated solution. He urged Israelis and Palestinians to abandon hate and revenge.

He also lamented that in Nigeria “fundamentalist terrorism exploits even children,” a reference to child suicide-bombers.

He decried conflicts and tensions in Africa, eastern Ukraine, Burma, the Korean peninsula, Colombia and Venezuela.

Tens of thousands of faithful entering St Peter’s Square endured long lines for security checks.

For the full text and video of the Urbi et Orbi blessing, go [here](#)

Cast of Mrs Brown's Boys donates 2,800 dinners to SVP

Comedian Brendan O'Carroll and his family have donated 2,800 Christmas dinners to the Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP).

The donation will enable the SVP to provide 2,800 families in Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow with Christmas dinners. The charity says it will have dealt with 65,000 calls for help in the region by the end of the year.

The SVP has thanked Brendan O'Carroll and his family for their donation. Quoting President of the SVP East Region Liam Casey, the SVP website states that "The continued generosity of Brendan is unbelievable. It is an imaginative yet practical way to help many families in need. Our volunteers know that the families who benefit from his generosity not only appreciate his action but take extra pleasure in knowing that it comes with the compliments of Mrs Brown, an iconic and internationally famous Dublin mother."



Mr Casey said that the resources of the SVP are “fully stretched” and that it welcomes all donations, “whether financial or in the form of goods which can either be distributed directly to those in need or sold in our Vincent shops.”

He commented on the generosity of members of the Irish public and said that the SVP is “dependent on them to continue their support into the future.”

The SVP is one of the most well-known charitable organisations in Ireland. Its goal, as stated on its website, is “to fight poverty in all its forms” through practical assistance to people in need. It offers “direct, personal assistance that is non-judgemental and based on the need of the

individual or family.” An important part of its work involves person-to-person contact with those who contact the society for help. This includes visits by volunteers who offer a listening ear as they see what help or information they can offer the individual or family.

The society points out that even in an economy that is improving, “it can still take just one small problem to tip someone into crisis and poverty. But we know that a little help at the right time can change everything.”

The society can be contacted online or through its regional offices.

Donations to the SVP can be made on www.svp.ie.

Wexford clergy’s four day fast

Canon Arthur Minion, Rector of Wexford and Kilsoran Union of Parishes along with Wexford town priest, Father Aodhan Marken, in the lead up to Christmas fasted for charity in Wexford town. They had their last solid meal on Tuesday, 20 December, before 6 p.m. and didn’t have another until 6 p.m. on Christmas Eve.



Fr Aodhan Markan, Canon Arthur Minion, Bishop Michael Burrows and Ciaran Kavanagh on the steps of St Iberius Church, Wexford.

The fundraising fast was started in 1991 by the late Canon Norman Ruddock and thousands of euros have been collected since then as other rectors carry on the tradition.

Last year the fast raised a spectacular €49,200 euro for local charities and the hope is that the figure in 2016 will exceed €50,000.

This year the Society of St Vincent de Paul, Wexford Women's Refuge, Ozanam House hostel for homeless men and the South East Radiotherapy Trust (SERT). A contribution to help Syrian refugees is also planned.

Canon Minion and Fr Marken were allowed tea or water without milk, a beaker of soup delivered each day by Westgate Design restaurant and sips of Bovril or Lucozade to maintain salt and sugar levels. "It is tough," Canon Arthur told the Wexford People, "you do feel the hunger pangs but it's entirely doable."

He is hugely impressed by the generosity of Wexford people since he started doing the fast five years ago, he says.

"People are extremely generous and it's amazing how much money has been raised. Seeing the generosity on the street is probably the most motivating factor. You go home in the evening and are staggered by that generosity. It's what keeps you going. Your heart and mind are in it and of course, you feel a huge responsibility to do it to the best of your ability."