



Archbishop of Canterbury joins world faith leaders in pledge to end slavery

Irish archbishop offers beds for homeless after man dies in doorway

The Archbishop of Dublin yesterday offered to house some of the city's homeless people in church property, after a homeless man was found dead yesterday metres away from Lenister House, one of the parliament buildings.



The body of 42-year-old Jonathan Corrie was found by a passer-by in a doorway on Monday morning, provoking criticism of the increasing problem of homelessness in the Irish capital.

More than 160 people sleep rough in Dublin each night, according to official figures, almost three times more than when Ireland's financial crisis began five years ago.

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, the head of the Catholic Church in Dublin, said one of his diocesan buildings could be made suitable before Christmas to provide shelter for between 30 and 40 homeless people in the inner city.

"Archbishop Martin said he is very deeply concerned about a deeply divided Dublin where on the one hand there is rejoicing at increased spending over the Christmas period and on the other hand where the number of those homeless and hungry is actually increasing," the Dublin diocese said in a statement.

Sophie Pigot, 25, who discovered Corrie, said in an interview with the [Irish Mirror](#): "The fact that the guy was literally a stone's throw from the front gate of our Dail [parliament] – it's got out of hand. It needs to be tackled, especially at Christmas.



"This is not the politicians, this is not the gardai [police], we are all to blame."

The Irish economy has been praised for its recovery as it is set to beat many European countries with a growth rate of about 5 percent this year. However, there has also been criticism of the unevenness of the recovery, particularly as years of relentless austerity have meant a reduction in services.

Sister Stanislaus Kennedy of homeless charity Focus Ireland, told national broadcaster [RTE](#) that it was not just a case of providing emergency accommodation, but more homes were needed.

"I think what it says to us that this man like so many others who are sleeping out are a sign of the failure of the State... of the failure of the State in the past and in the present to offer them the support they needed to live independently," she said.

With an acute shortage of housing supply in urban areas, the Irish government laid out plans last week to build and refurbish 35,000 social housing units over the next five years. Opposition parties have said they should have reacted sooner.

Minister for the Environment Alan Kelly has responded by convening a special forum on homelessness this week, bringing together the heads of Dublin's local authorities and voluntary bodies to see what collective action can be taken.

"We are doing something about this and we need to continue to do an awful lot more, fellow minister Jan O'Sullivan told RTE.

Somali al Shabaab gunmen kill 36 non-Muslims in Kenya quarry

A Kenyan soldier is pictured near bodies lined up on the ground at a quarry site where attackers killed at least 36 workers in a village in Korome, outside

the border town of Mandera December 2, 2014. Somali al Shabaab militants killed at least 36 non-Muslim workers at the quarry in northeast Kenya on Tuesday, beheading at least two of them.



Somali al Shabaab militants killed at least 36 non-Muslim workers at a quarry in northeast Kenya on Tuesday, beheading at least two of them in the same area that they hijacked a bus and killed 28 passengers just over a week ago.

Gunmen crept up on dozens of workers as they slept in tents around the quarry at about 1am, a village elder at Korome, near the site of the attack close to the Somali border, told Reuters.

"The militia separated the Muslims, then ordered the non-Muslims to lie down where they shot them on the head at close range," Hassan Duba said.

A witness said most victims were shot in the head and at least two were beheaded. He counted 36 bodies at the quarry, about 15 km (10 miles) from the town of Mandera.

Kenya's government confirmed 36 people were killed and cited survivors saying about 20 attackers were involved.

One person died in another attack on the northern town of Wajir late on Monday, it added.

The Nov 23 bus attack also took place on the outskirts of Mandera. In that case, militants ordered non-Muslims off the bus and shot them, while sparing Muslims.

Critics say President Uhuru Kenyatta has not done enough to secure the nation since al Shabaab gunmen attacked Nairobi's Westgate shopping mall last year, an assault that left 67 people dead. A series of other al Shabaab attacks have followed.

As with past attacks, al Shabaab militants said they were punishing Kenya for sending troops to join African peacekeepers battling the Islamists in Somalia. In a statement, it put the death toll at 40 people and called them "Kenyan crusaders".

"We are uncompromising in our beliefs, relentless in our pursuit, ruthless against the disbelievers and we will do whatever necessary to defend our Muslim brethren suffering from Kenya's aggression," spokesman Ali Mohamud Rage said.

Opponents of the government say the presence of Kenyan troops in Somalia has not protected Kenya and so they should be withdrawn.

"They were supposed to create a buffer between our countries and the chaos on the other side. But it has not done that. So we are saying leave," Dennis Onyango, a spokesman for opposition politician and former prime minister Raila Odinga, said.

Since the Westgate attack, Kenya has suffered from a string of gun and bomb attacks on the coast, in the capital Nairobi and along the long and porous northern border with Somalia.

The government has promised to step up security, but the public has grown increasingly frustrated and, after the Mandera bus attack, small protests have been staged demanding action.

Archbishop of Canterbury joins world faith leaders in pledge to end slavery

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, joined world Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Jewish leaders in Rome today to sign a historic declaration to end modern slavery.



The ground-breaking Global Freedom Network – which launched with backing from Archbishop Justin and Pope Francis in March 2014 [\[link\]](#) – brings together faith leaders in a commitment to eradicate modern slavery by 2020 throughout our world and for all time.

The Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders against Modern Slavery signed today underlines that modern slavery – in terms of human trafficking, forced



labour and prostitution, organ trafficking, and any relationship that fails to respect the fundamental conviction that all people are equal and have the same freedom and dignity – is a crime against humanity, and must be recognised as such by everyone and by all nations.

The faith leaders affirmed their common commitment to inspiring spiritual and practical action by all

faiths and people of goodwill everywhere to eradicate modern slavery.

In an address before the signing, Archbishop Justin [described today's declaration as "a profoundly significant moment"](#).

The leaders had gathered to "affirm a deep shared commitment for the liberation of those humiliated, abused and enslaved by their fellow-human beings," he said.

"There are already close and trusting relationships between us as faith leaders. Our task now is to make these relationships work effectively for the well-being of all people."

Archbishop Justin said faith leaders can make sure that every worshipping community knows about modern slavery and is ready to work to prevent and end such abuses.

"As we make this solemn commitment today, my prayer is that we shall by God's grace play a key role in ending the inhuman practices of modern slavery – practices that disfigure our world and obscure the image of God in men, women and children. We have the will, we have the common purpose, this can be done; may God bless our action together," he said.

[Irish cleric presents his last report to world Anglican body](#)

Canon Kenneth Kearon who will be ordained as bishop for Limerick diocese in the new year gave his last Secretary General's report to the committee.

He said he had spent much time on ecumenical matters including acting as the joint Chair of three series of Informal Talks with the Roman Catholic Church, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and with the Lutheran World Federation. These Informal Talks in each case take place annually. Canon Kearon had met in Istanbul with senior people in the Orthodox Church and was interested to hear their perspectives on what was happening in the Middle East. The Anglican – Roman Catholic Informal Talks brought together the co-chairs of the Anglican – Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) and the International Anglican – Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM). Relationships were very positive.



Canon Kearon had also attended celebrations for the 125th anniversary of the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht. The Communion enjoys a close, full communion relationship with the Old Catholics who have a presence in Europe. The Old Catholics, the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe and the Church of England Diocese in Europe all license each other's bishops. Earlier in November, Canon Kearon attended the Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions in Amersfoort in the Netherlands. Such Conferences provide a space for a broad range of Christian traditions, including Pentecostal Churches, to meet and have conversations.

Following his address the Committee resolved to record their gratitude for the Secretary General's work and ministry over the past decade.

Irish Catholic Church to put parish records online

The Catholic Church and the National Library of Ireland are working together to put thousands of parish records online.

Almost 400,000 images of Catholic parish register microfilms are being made available to family researchers for free.

A National Library of Ireland (NLI) statement called the records the single most important source of information on Irish family history prior to the 1901 census. Dating from the 1740s to the 1880s, they cover nearly 1,100 parishes throughout Ireland and consist primarily of baptismal and marriage records.

"Most census records from this period were destroyed in the Four Courts fire of 1922, so these parish registers are the most comprehensive surviving source of information on Irish families in the 1700s and 1800s," said Colette O'Flaherty, head of special collections at the National Library of Ireland.

At the launch of the project in Dublin yesterday she said she believed that the digitisation “will be of huge assistance to those who wish to research their family history”.

“The NLI has worked with the Catholic Church to preserve these registers since the 1950s, when we were initially invited to make microfilm copies,” she said. “Now, in the 21st century – and in keeping with our aim of enhancing accessibility through making our collections available online – we are delighted to embark on this major digitisation project.”

The information in the registers varies from parish to parish but typically includes the dates of the baptisms or marriages and the names of the key people involved, including godparents or witnesses.

The microfilms have been available to visitors to the National Library of Ireland in Dublin since the 1970s. This new project means that, for the first time, anyone will be able to access these registers for free, on a dedicated website which will be launched next summer.

Estimates put the number of people around the globe who claim Irish heritage at some 80 million, including more than 36 million Americans, 14 million Britons, 4.5 million Canadians, 7 million Australians and up to 1 million Argentines.



Christmas: no room at the inn for baby Jesus in school nativities

By John Bingham, Daily Telegraph:

Christianity is being banished from school nativity plays as the annual performance of the Christmas story is replaced with bland “winter celebrations”, research among parents suggests.

Even in schools which retain religious themes, most now opt for a modernised version of the nativity story, often featuring elaborate twists and children dressed as unlikely additions such as punk fairies, aliens, Elvis, lobsters, spacemen and even recycling bins.

Examples cited in the survey conducted by Netmums, the parenting website, even included a retelling of the story modelled on The Apprentice. Others told of children dressed as ingredients in a Christmas lunch including carrots, sprouts and – confusingly – pumpkins.

Only a third of schools now stage a full traditional nativity complete with Mary and Joseph, inn-keepers, shepherds and magi, according to the survey.

Meanwhile one in eight had said their children's school had dropped the Christmas story altogether for a modern alternative without religious references.

Mail

Report on how a survey shows only one in three schools still holds a traditional nativity play even though two thirds of parents want the Christmas story to live on in education. It says the most popular Christmas play now staged in schools is an 'updated nativity' featuring characters such as aliens, footballers and Elvis, according to the survey. Seven per cent of schools don't call the production a Christmas or nativity play, preferring instead 'Winter Celebration' or 'End of Year Concert'.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2856795/The-schools-Elvis-nativity-star-Nearly-half-schools-scrap-traditional-play-updated-version-starring-modern-characters.html#ixzz3Kiaq9kfv>

Media digest

Archbishop of York has created an advent calendar with daily Bible readings which he will be tweeting each day.

<http://www.archbishopofyork.org/pages/advent-calendar-2014.html>

BBC

Report that the Revd Anna Norman-Walker has become the first woman to be appointed as a canon chancellor at Exeter Cathedral in its 900-year history. She said the Church of England was "on the move" over its position on female clergy since it formally adopted legislation to allow female bishops by 2015. Jonathan Draper, Dean of Exeter Cathedral, said the new canon brought "great gifts and energy".

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-devon-30267972>

BBC

Report that St Andrew's Church, Bradfield, where the Duchess of Cambridge and her sister Pippa were christened, has held its final service. It states the village church is closing after 160 years as it is too large for the congregation and is expensive to heat and maintain. A full peal of its bells marked the last service which was conducted by the Bishop of Reading.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-berkshire-30259264>

Mail/Times/Guard

Reports on meeting between the Pope Francis and Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I on Sunday state they issued a rare joint plea against anti-Christian

violence, saying the world cannot stand by and allow "a Middle East without Christians." They state the Pope held joint liturgies with one of the world's most senior Eastern Orthodox Christians, in a step towards healing a 1,000-year rift.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article4283289.ece>

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-2854817/Pope-Orthodox-Patriarch-pledge-support-Mideast-Christians.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/30/pope-francis-patriarch-middle-east-persecution-christians>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30265996>

Times

Article on how the Grand Mufti of Egypt, one of Islam's most senior clerics, is due to take part in a debate organised by Ukip on religious extremism. It states he will speak alongside the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey of Clifton, in the debate, on Friday.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/politics/article4284421.ece>

Times

Comment piece by Cristina Odone on how Isil persecution is killing Christians. She says it is time to acknowledge it as Christian communities in the Middle East are being destroyed.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/islamic-state/11265175/Isil-persecution-is-killing-Christians.-Time-to-acknowledge-it.html>