



CNI

Hope in Christ in uncertain times: Irish Church Leaders' New Year Message

“As with all people, none of us are immune from standing at the gate of the New Year and reflecting on what the last 12 months have brought - and wondering what 2017 might bring”, the leaders of the four main churches in Ireland and the President of the Irish Council of Churches write in their joint message for 2017.

The message continues, “The world is an uncertain place. As we enter this New Year we are mindful of people who continue to suffer as a result of conflict, especially in the Middle East, and the humanitarian crisis that continues to unfold in Syria.

“As we pray for these situations, we also remember and lift in prayer those in our own communities who are affected by homelessness and those struggling to make ends meet. As the Psalmist reminds us, “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear...” (Psalm 46:1). It is our prayer that people will look to Him for that comfort and help and see Him move in those who offer much needed practical support.

“As church leaders, last year we remembered together the events of 1916, events that shaped relationships and the future of these islands. A century on, new events of a different kind have the potential to alter political and economic relationships here, as the UK prepares to leave the European Union. It is our united prayer that our political leaders in Belfast, Dublin and London will have wisdom, grace and patience during this process that will have implications for the whole of Ireland.

“As we begin our journey through this coming year, we are reminded of the Greatest Commandment that our Lord Jesus Christ gave us: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength...” He continued, by giving us a second, “Love your neighbour as yourself.” (Mark 12:30-31).

“Let us commit to living out His words in these uncertain days as we also remember that our eternal hope is in Christ, at this time and always, we fix our eyes upon Him.”

The message is from -
Archbishop Richard Clarke, Church of Ireland
Archbishop of Armagh
Archbishop Eamon Martin, Catholic
Archbishop of Armagh
Rt. Rev. John McDowell, President, Irish
Council of Churches
Rev. Bill Mullally, President of the
Methodist Church in Ireland

Rt. Rev. Dr. Frank Sellar, Moderator of the
Presbyterian Church in Ireland

STATE PAPERS

Records reveal Bishop Cahal Daly said Northern Ireland's working class Catholics were 'anti- everything'

Working class Catholics in the North were "anti-authority and anti-everything", the late Archbishop of Armagh Cahal Daly said according to reports in several Irish newspapers.

Secret State files, just released under the 30-year-rule, show the one-time head of the Catholic Church in Ireland blamed a deep scepticism among some of his flock on the SDLP.

In remarks made to a senior Irish government official in 1986, he said the party, then under John Hume, had made no serious effort to challenge Sinn Féin in Catholic ghettos.

The result was a wary response to the then fledgling Anglo-Irish Agreement in areas such as



Archbishop Daly

was Bishop of Down and Connor at the time.

Gerry Adams was "the working class hero" and the SDLP "count for nothing", he said.

The remarks were made during a secret meeting with David Donoghue, an Irish government negotiator in Anglo-Irish talks who went on to become ambassador to the UN.

Notes of the meeting in February that year show Bishop Daly believed middle-class Catholics strongly supported the new agreement.

"In the working-class Catholic ghettos of west Belfast, however, where people are 'anti-

Establishment, anti-authority and anti-everything', the mood is one of deep scepticism," he remarked.

Bishop Daly "blames the SDLP for having made no serious effort in the past to penetrate West Belfast and to challenge Sinn Féin's monopoly there."

The soon-to-be cardinal also took aim at unionist leaders for rising loyalist violence and sectarian murders.

"Bishop Daly blames the 'totally irresponsible' attitude of unionist politicians for much of this militancy," the notes state.

"There are moderate voices in the unionist camp but they 'cannot be heard about the din' (a metaphor which he applied also the SDLP in West Belfast."

This had the effect of Catholics "in the ghettos" turning "all to easy to the Provos for their protection".

He said there was considerable anger that then DUP leader Ian Paisley had managed to take control of the unionist community and made then

UUP leader Jim Molyneaux "look like a small boy".

Turning his attention to then Secretary of State Tom King, Bishop Daly dismisses the senior Tory figure as a "totally unimpressive politician".

Other references -

Government considered using 'AIDs argument' in David Norris gay rights case

In battling David Norris' claims that Irish homosexuality laws were in breach of his human rights, the government was considering all kinds of defences.

<http://www.thejournal.ie/norris-v-ireland-state-papers-3138319-Dec2016/>

'A punishment from God's own hand' - the Irish got Biblical in their objections to 1985's contraception law

The 1985 Family Planning Act saw contraceptives made legal for over-18s without a prescription from selected outlets for the first time.

<http://www.thejournal.ie/contraception-letters-state-papers-1986-3142012-Dec2016/>

1986: Mother of four abused by husband writes letter to Taoiseach outlining need for divorce

“God never intended continual punishment for one mistake.”

<http://www.thejournal.ie/mother-abused-husband-wants-divorce-1986-3139685-Dec2016/>

1916 events done with objectivity and respect, says Archbishop Jackson

In 2016, [Ireland](#) took back the [Somme](#) “into our self–understanding and identity”, [Church of Ireland](#) Archbishop of Dublin [Michael Jackson](#) has said, Patsy McGarry reports in The Irish Times.

Honouring loss during the year exposed “the bankruptcy of a memory that seeks to exclude. And such a version of memory has had a long, tenacious history in Ireland,” he said.

“The freedom to remember and the grace to grieve have touched households and townlands, streets and suburbs, the length and breadth of Ireland,” he said.

Complimenting 1916 commemorative ceremonies across the island, he said “the history of the State has been told, most pertinently and most poignantly, around the founding events and their complexity. It is acknowledged widely that it has been done with objectivity and with respect. Children and women have not been forgotten in this account of happenings.”

In a homily at [Christ Church](#) Cathedral he noted “genuine attempts have been made to point us to a fresh expression of ourselves into the future that will open as a new century for Irish self–understanding, as well as a new year, in 2017.”

He felt all of this “speaks hopefully for continuing cordial relations between the two parts of Ireland whose separateness cannot but be accentuated structurally once the [United Kingdom](#) invokes Article 50 and leaves the [European Union](#).”

“It is good to have bonds of affection in place within Ireland ahead of this event, whatever form it takes, because it means that post-2016 we have a shared memory of publicly documented expressions of respect and friendship already in place. And memory in Ireland is a key component in our identity.”

Shock

The Catholic Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin has spoken of his shock at seeing so many people queuing for food in the city before Christmas.

“We have to ask why it is that progress for good is not shared and that today inequalities flourish. All of us were stunned even here in our own city to find thousands of people queuing for basic food at the Capuchin and other food centres, while within a few kilometres others were queuing for luxury goods,” he said.

Speaking in the Pro Cathedral he described as “sick” and “evil” those individuals “who murder openly on our streets” and those “who instruct and pay them.”

Dublin “is marked by homelessness but also indeed for many by hopelessness,” he said. As believers “we cannot be satisfied simply to celebrate Christmas like an anaesthetic which hides pain for a moment or like an eruption of spending which ends up leaving us only with a hangover of emptiness,” he said.

The Catholic primate Archbishop [Eamon Martin](#) noted how “the people of Ireland continue to be extremely generous to charitable agencies.”

Speaking at St Patrick’s Cathedral [Armagh](#), he said he was “heartened by the courageous work of Trócaire as it engages with its partners in [Syria](#) and [Iraq](#) to help traumatised victims and survivors of conflict”.

He sent “good wishes this Christmas to the brave Irish UN peacekeepers in [Lebanon](#) and other troubled places, and I salute the tremendous humanitarian work of our navy which has helped to rescue thousands of migrants from the Mediterranean.

“I thank God for the outreach of members of the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Fr Peter McVerry Trust, the [Simon Community](#) and many others who go out of their way to raise awareness and directly support people who have nowhere to call home.”

Where 2017 was concerned he encouraged people “to consider offering some of your time and gifts to help a charitable outreach or voluntary organisation”.

Bumper receipts for Wexford charity fast before the feast

Wexford's annual St Iberius Four Day fast has raised over €46,000 for charity, local priest Fr Aodhán Marken has said. The fast, which since the late 1990s has been an ecumenical event held outside St Iberius' Church, saw Fr Marken joining Church of Ireland Rev. Arthur Minion for four days during which the two clerics were sustained just by a cup of hot soup at 12.30pm each day, as well as tea, coffee, water and if necessary Bovril for salt or Lucozade for sugar.

The €46,000 will be divided between the Society of St Vincent de Paul, Ozanam House Men's Shelter, Wexford Women's Refuge, the South East Radiotherapy Trust, and other charities. All proceeds will go to frontline services.

Black Santa appeal raises best amount ever with an expected £230,000 collected

The annual 'Black Santa' charity appeal is on course to raise £230,000 - the largest amount

ever collected in a single year, reports The Irish News.

The Dean of St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast city centre, John Mann, said this year's sit-out far exceeded his expectations.

The Black Santa tradition at St Anne's has been going since 1976 when it was started by then Dean Sammy Crooks.

Since then, successive deans have raised millions for charitable causes.

This is the sixth year that Dean John Mann has taken part in the sit-out.

He said the total collected through a postal appeal and the sit-out itself passed £200,000 mid-afternoon on Christmas Eve.

However, this did not include any online cash and the amount that can be claimed through people gift-aiding their donations. Last year that came to at least £15,000 and is expected to be higher this time.

"The Black Santa Sit-out 2016 has far exceeded our expectations and I would like to thank the

many people that have been so generous once again," Dean Mann said.

"Each year we hope to receive £200,000, but in my previous five years as Black Santa we have fallen just short. The collection is remarkably consistent considering the number of people that donate and that not everyone gives the same each year. So there are always surprises.

"Over the past five Christmases, the collection has realised by the end of January cut-off point between £184,000 and £196,000. That is after church Christmas collections etc are added.

"To have reached £200,000 by Christmas Eve is a considerable achievement and I am very happy for the charities that will ultimately benefit. Maybe we will have £230,000 or more before we distribute on the first Sunday in February 2017."

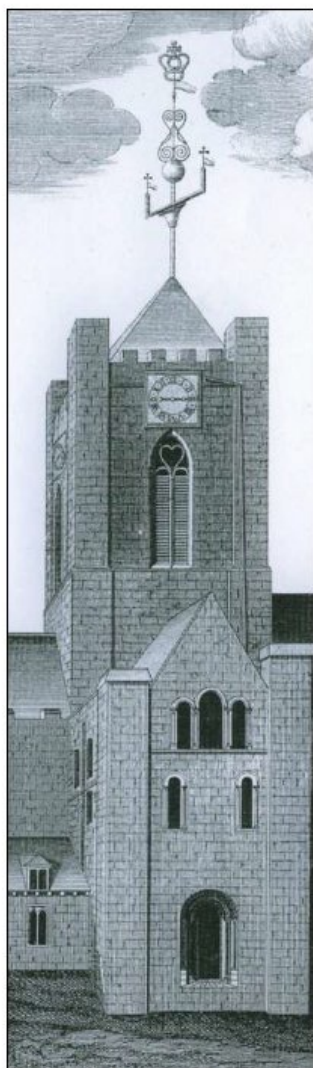
The inside story of ringing the changes at Christchurch Cathedral

Dubliners and visitors alike expectantly await the ringing out of the old year, and ringing in of the new in Christchurch Place on New Year's Eve to the sound of nineteen bells, the largest number in the world available for full circle ringing.

To explore this little known craft of campanology, Christ Church cathedral will hold a series of lunchtime lectures at 1.10pm on the Mondays in January, unusually, taking place in the belfry itself.

The first will be given on January 9 by the architectural historian, Dr Michael O'Neill, introducing the subject of towers and belfries. Dr Stuart Kinsella, the cathedral's research advisor will give the second, outlining a history of the tower of Christ Church. The present ringing master, Mr Nigel Pelow, will give the third talk, a social history of bellringing at Christ Church based on a lifetime of experience as a ringer in Ireland. The final lecture will be given by Dr Gary McGuire, associate professor and head of the school of Mathematics and Statistics in University College Dublin, who will explain the mysteries of change—ringing, the craft of campanology itself.

Admission is free and all are welcome, although attendees are advised that with 86 steps to the belfry, those wishing to attend should allow at least 5 minutes for the ascent, and have some head for heights. Happy New year!



Christ Church from the north by Jonas Blaymire (c.1739)

RINGING THE CHANGES: CAMPANOLOGY

at Christ Church Cathedral Dublin

**A lunchtime lecture series on the
history of the cathedral belfry**

in memory of Leslie Taylor
ringing master over four decades to 2014

Mondays in January 2017 @ 13.10

The Belfry (all 86 steps to the top)
Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin

Monday 9 January 2017

TOWERS & BELFRIES: AN INTRODUCTION

Michael O'Neill, Architectural Historian

Monday 16 January 2017

THE TOWER OF CHRIST CHURCH: A BRIEF HISTORY

Stuart Kinsella, Research Advisor

Monday 23 January 2017

THE BELFRY OF CHRIST CHURCH: A SOCIAL HISTORY

Nigel Pelow, Ringing Master (2014-)

Monday 30 January 2017

MAKING EVERY RINGER COUNT: THE CRAFT OF CAMPANOLOGY

Gary McGuire, Ringing Master (2006-8)

Admission Free. All Welcome.

Please allow 5 minutes to ascend the spiral stairway.

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Millions Caught In Nigeria's Hidden Horror, Warns Christian Aid

14 million people in need

Four million people in desperate need of food

***Nearly six million people in need of medical
help***

***Nearly two million people have fled their
homes***

Hunger, terror and destitution are afflicting many millions of people in Nigeria in a huge crisis that remains largely hidden from the world, Christian Aid is warning.

The horror in the north-east of the country has unfolded since Boko Haram terrorists started attacking villages, looting and burning homes and crops and murdering and maiming people. Some 14 million people now need help, of whom four million are in desperate need of food, according to international charities.

The scale of the crisis in north-east Nigeria is exceeded only by those in Syria, Yemen and South Sudan, yet to date it has received little international media coverage.

At least 1.8 million people have fled their homes and fields to escape the violence, most of whom are sharing the homes of others who have given them refuge.

The true picture is likely to be even worse than currently known, because large parts of the north-east remain cut off by ongoing fighting between Boko Haram and the Nigerian military. “Families are clinging to life in utterly desperate situations,” said Nick Guttman, head of Humanitarian work at Christian Aid, who visited Borno State in October.

“Some of the displaced people I met had homes no more than 30 miles from where they were living in dreadful conditions. They were hungry and just wanted to go home to plant crops and restart their lives – but were too frightened to do so.”

He added: “We heard horror stories about how villages were attacked by Boko Haram, with dozens of people killed and injured.

“Most of the houses were burnt down and families have been forced to share shelter, with 20-30 people sharing rooms in some areas. We

asked people what they needed most and everyone told us: food.”

Christian Aid believes foreign journalists may struggle to get permission to visit the area in crisis. The lack of media coverage is, in turn, hindering humanitarian organisations’ ability to raise funds to buy food and other aid.

The charity is calling for humanitarian organisations to be allowed into the camps in which a minority of displaced people are living, to help ensure those people get aid in a timely and dignified way.

Christian Aid is currently helping people in three states: Borno, Adamawa and Gombe. It is focusing support on people who have fled their homes and are living in host communities, who are often forgotten in such crises. Christian Aid is helping both those who have fled and their hosts.

To date, it has reached more than 51,500 people, giving them emergency food supplies and help with clean water and items to help with sanitation and health.

“We desperately want to expand this life-saving work but are running out of money,” said Mr Guttman.

Christian Aid has spent almost £1 million so far in north east Nigeria and has received funding from the Dutch Church aid agency ICCO, the Dutch government and the UK government’s START Fund.**

Pope says persecuted Christians witness to truth of faith

Pope Francis has urged Catholics to remember their fellow believers who suffer daily persecution because of their faith. Speaking on St Stephen’s Day – the feastday of the first Christian martyr – the Pope said: “when we read the history of the early centuries, here in Rome, we read about so much cruelty to Christians. It’s happening today too, in even greater numbers.

“I’ll tell you something,” the Pope told pilgrims gathered in St Peter’s Square, “the number of martyrs today is greater than in the early centuries”.

“The world hates Christians for the same reason for which it hated Christ,” Francis said, “because
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he brought the light of God, and the world prefers shadows in order to hide its wicked works.”

Persecutions

“Even today the Church, to render witness to the light and the truth, is beset in various places by hard persecutions, up to the supreme test of martyrdom,” he said.

Today, the conventional estimate is that of the world’s 2.3 billion Christians, some 200 million of them are exposed to the risk of physical assault, arrest, imprisonment, torture and even death for reasons related to their faith.

The high-end estimate for the number of new Christian martyrs every year, from the Centre for the Study of Global Christianity in the United States, is around 100,000. Most observers put the total considerably lower, perhaps in the range of 7,000 to 8,000.

In any event, that works out to one new Christian casualty somewhere in the world either every five minutes, or every hour, throughout the entire year.

The Pope urged believers to keep praying for persecuted Christians “to think of them and be close to them with our affection, our prayer and also our tears”.

“In these days, in Iraq, the Christians celebrated Christmas in a cathedral that had been destroyed. That’s an example of fidelity,” he said.

News briefs

+++ Crowds celebrate lives saved by the Eighth Amendment - Organisers of Saturday’s Celebrate the 8th pro-life gathering in Dublin, which aimed to highlight the positive impact of the Eighth Amendment, said they were

“thrilled and very encouraged” with the massive turnout of several thousands. Keynote speaker at the event was Melissa Ohden from the US, who in 1977 was born alive after a failed abortion and then left for dead. Her life was saved when a nurse on duty heard her cry and intervened to help her. In her address, Ms Ohden congratulated Ireland for affording legal protection to the unborn child in the Constitution. She also criticised abortion advocacy groups, in particular Amnesty International Ireland, over their stance in favour of abortion.

+++ Broadcasting watchdog BAI issues warning to RTE over abortion ban - RTÉ has received a warning notice from the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) following a third complaint against the Ray D’Arcy radio show on the grounds of pro-abortion bias. The warning came on foot of the June 9 edition of D’Arcy’s show in which a couple were interviewed about their abortion experience in the wake of a foetal abnormality diagnosis. With the United Nations Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) also releasing its criticisms of Ireland’s abortion laws that same day, the couple was invited to comment on this during the show. Subsequent complaints to the BAI that the show had

demonstrated a clear bias towards the repeal of the constitutional protection for the unborn were upheld.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

'Divorce couples fight over bill for 'fairy-tale' weddings'

Daily Telegraph

https://digitaledition.telegraph.co.uk/editions/edition_8q3xM_2016-12-29/data/258989/index.html?

Law Faith formation and religion in the curriculum

Correspondence in Irish Times

<http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/letters/faith-formation-and-religion-in-the-curriculum-1.2919453>