



Representatives of the charities who benefited from the Black Santa Sit out at St Ann's, Dawson Street, are pictured with (L-R): the Vicar, Canon David Gillespie, the Revd Yvonne Ginnelly and Dean Houston McKelvey.

Black Santa Gives €35,000 To Local Charities From Record Dublin Sit Out

Dublin's Black Santa fulfilled the second part of his role on Sunday past, 8 February, as €35,000 was handed out to charities at a service in St Ann's, Dawson Street. The record sum was collected during the annual Black Santa Sit Out at St Ann's in the 10 days before Christmas.

Lynn Glanville writes - Representatives from the charities were present to receive their cheques along with members of some of the choirs who helped bring the spirit of Christmas to Dawson Street by joining the Vicar, Canon David Gillespie and his band of volunteers as they shook their collection buckets on the street.

Speaking at the service was a former Black Santa and Dean of Belfast, the Very Revd Houston McKelvey. The Dublin sit out, now in its 13th year, was started by Canon Tom Haskins and was inspired by the much larger sit out which takes place outside St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast.

A veteran of 11 Black Santa Sit Outs in 10 years in Belfast, Dean McKelvey, who retired in 2011, joked that the subtitle for the sit out was 'Frozen for God'. While Irish people liked to see a frozen priest of any denomination, he said, the sit out served two good causes – to encourage the generosity of the public and to affirm the good

work of the charities and volunteers that the funds collected were donated to.

“The nice thing about a sit out is that it is owned by everyone. It might be happening outside a Church of Ireland place of worship but I noticed that people of all Christian traditions and non and people of all world faiths supported it,” he commented.

He added that the sit out also pointed to the good causes it supported. “It affirms the efforts of people who are working in the charitable sector of society. Neither the government in Belfast nor the government in Dublin could afford to pay for all that needs to be done and the tighter things are financially, the more responsibility falls on the voluntary sector. The sit out recognises the work that it done throughout the year by those volunteers,” he stated adding that they were the Good Samaritans of their day.

Speaking after the service, Canon Gillespie said it was a great pleasure to hand out the cheques to the charities. He also paid tribute to the choirs who supported the sit out and to all who contributed to the smooth running of the sit out. On behalf of the charities who benefited from the sit out, Geoff Scargill of Protestant Aid thanked

the Vicar and his team for the huge effort they had put in and said many people would benefit as a result of their efforts.

The funds were distributed as follows: Salvation Army – €5,000, Solas Project €5,000, Protestant Aid – €4,000, TRUST – €4,000, SVP – €3,000, Bishops' Appeal – €3,000, McVerry Trust – €3,000, Dublin Simon – €2,000, Laura Lynn – €2,000, Samaritans – €2,000, Barnardos – €1,000, PACT – €1,000.

€500k bid to restore Cork church under way



A €500,000 fundraising drive is under way to save and restore a landmark church and priory in the heart of Cork City.

Irish Examiner - Lord Mayor Cllr Mary Shields hosted a civic reception to help the Friends of St

Mary's launch their campaign to fund the repair and restoration project for the Dominican Foundation of St Mary's on Pope's Quay.

The iconic St Mary's church and neighbouring priory building, both of which are some 200 years old, are in dire need of restorative repair and reconstruction.

"Both buildings are badly affected by the ingress of water through leaks in the roofs, walls, and windows," said Tom Walsh, chairman of the Friends of St Mary's committee.

"The situation is worsened by damp seepage through the walls of buildings. These walls urgently need much restorative work and dry-coursing to make them fit for purpose."

Engineers and architects are assessing the full extent of the required work, much of which is required urgently. Initial estimates have put the cost of the project as high as €500,000.

The Friends have now announced details of a gala fundraising concert at Cork Opera House on Wednesday, March 18. More at -

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/euro500k-bid-to-restore-cork-church-under-way-311407.html>

Fundraising efforts heating up at St. Aengus Church, Burt



Men working during Phase One of the renovation being carried out to St Aengus' Church, Burt.

Fundraising is not the only thing heating up at St. Aengus Church in Burt, according to restoration fundraising committee member, Kathleen Grant.

Derry Journal - She explained: "The recent completion of Phase One of the ongoing restoration work means St Aengus' is finally wind and watertight and a complete new heating system has been installed, alongside a superior amplification system. St Aengus' is now a warm

and welcoming sanctuary for parishioners and visitors alike.

“This ongoing mammoth task is testimony to the truly remarkable fundraising undertaken by the parishioners of Fahan, Inch and Burt and members of other local churches, in partnership with the Friends of St Aengus’ living in other parts of Ireland and, indeed, abroad over the past two years.

“Together they raised an absolutely staggering 172,016.99 euro. Fr Neil McGoldrick, our chairperson Fr. Brendan Crowley, and the whole restoration fundraising committee wish to sincerely thank the Promoters and everyone who helped or got involved in the Parish Draw, organised events or made a donation. In these times of severe austerity, such a tremendous total is a mark of the great esteem and affection in which St Aengus’ is held”, said Ms Grant.

Work on the interior of St Aengus’, the iconic Liam McCormick-designed church, began this week, which means the church will be closed to the public on weekdays but will be open for weekend Masses and Ash Wednesday.

Mary McCallion, co-chairperson of the restoration fundraising committee, detailed what work will be carried out in Phase Two.

She said: “St Aengus’ was designated ‘Building of the Century’ by the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland in 2000, and this church will be celebrating its Golden Jubilee in 2017 therefore it is fitting and necessary that we restore this beautiful church to its formal glory.

More at -

<http://www.derryjournal.com/news/fundraising-efforts-heating-up-at-st-aengus-church-burt-1-6564657>

Church hands over €2.3m in six Limerick properties to State

The Catholic Church has handed over six Limerick properties worth just over €2.3m to the State as part of the Residential Institutions Redress Act.

Limerick Leader - The Government wanted the religious orders to pay half of the total bill of €1.4bn needed for redress payments and legal costs. But so far the value of the asset handover is still a long way short of the €700m the State is demanding.

School buildings, convents, vestries, playing fields and associated lands across Ireland are included in a list of 44 properties worth €42m which were handed over nationwide.



The new secondary school in Doon, has been built on land which was handed over by the church to the State and was valued at 640,000 euro.

According to a spokesperson for the Department of Education and Science the transfer of the Limerick properties “was completed some years ago - the most recent was in 2012”.

The highest value property handed over in Limerick was a site in Doon which was valued at €640,000.

The transferee in question was the Department of Education and Science and the site is now home to the new secondary school in Doon,

Scoil na Tríonóide Naofa which was officially opened in November by Minister for Education, Jan O'Sullivan.

It was formed from the amalgamation of St Fintan's CBS, Doon, St Joseph's Convent of Mercy, Doon and St Michael's College in Cappamore.

<http://www.limerickleader.ie/news/church-hands-over-2-3m-in-six-limerick-properties-to-state-1-6566685>

R.T Kendall to speak at Belfast Conference

R T Kendall, the well-known Bible teacher and pastor will be in Northern Ireland from 5–7 September 2015 for a series of events hosted by Precept Ministries NI and The Bible Society in Northern Ireland.

The theme for his visit will be 'Word on Fire—where the Word and the Spirit meet.' reflecting the vision of both sponsoring agencies to see the Word of God, read, studied, and bringing life-changing transformation.

This is an exceptionally rare opportunity to hear a renowned Bible teacher and pastor. R T Kendall is coming to challenge and inspire us to accept the Word of God as living and pivotal to our Christian lives – whether in church leadership role or simply as members of our local community.

On Saturday 5th September there will be a one day event for men only – details and tickets are available at www.preceptni.co.uk

The afternoon and evening sessions on Monday 7th September with R T Kendall have been designed to provide a complementary and connected experience, but even if people can only attend one of the sessions, they are bound to find it memorable and challenging.

The venue is the Assembly Buildings Conference Centre, Fisherwick Place, Belfast.

In the afternoon session (2.30 – 4.30 pm) R T Kendall will speak on “The Word of God: leading a generation – will you respond?” and there will be opportunity for a Q & A session. This session may be of particular interest to Church Leaders.

In the evening (7.30 – 10.00 pm) his subject will be ‘The dynamic role of the Word of God, the

Holy Spirit and You'. Worship will be led by Nigel Cameron and band.

Tickets are available for both sessions on 7th September online, through the Agencies' websites: www.preceptni.co.uk and www.bsni.co.uk

On Thursday the Moderator of the General Assembly donned a Big Issue vendor tunic and spent an hour on the streets of Edinburgh selling the magazine that has helped hundreds of people move from homelessness to a more secure future.

People avoid Big Issue sellers - Moderator C of S

It was part of the global [VendorWeek](#) – organised by the International Network of Street Papers - which is a week of paying tribute to the 14,000 men and women in the UK who are using street papers to work their way out of poverty and homelessness.

Afterwards, Mr Chalmers, who would describe himself as having some instinct for sales, said: "That was a hard shift, I put on the sellers' vest and, lo and behold, I became invisible.

"In actual fact it wasn't invisibility, it was however, a study in human behaviour.



"People spot you from 40 yards away; then their internal radar system begins to calculate how they will avoid eye contact or worse still any kind of human contact.

"Some make as if they are crossing the road – even heading into the oncoming traffic, but five yards past the seller they are back on the pavement. Others reach for their smartphone or adjust their earphones, others engage their friend in deep conversation – nearly everyone has a studied and accomplished method of navigating the Big Issue without considering a purchase.

"Even with a clerical-collar and way of saying, 'I'm here to help other sellers today', there was still little success on the street.

"At the end of the hour, if I had been a real seller I would still not have come near to covering my outlay on the magazines that were in my stock.

"In the time that I sold six copies (some to people who recognised me) the official seller outside a coffee shop on George Street sold one copy. For him it is half a week's work to recover his outlay before he begins to make anything for himself. It's not an easy way back onto the first rung of the ladder.

"I'm suggesting that more of us buy the magazine regularly – it's a good magazine. I'm suggesting that we become regular customers of one of the sellers we pass each week and that we should follow their story until they manage to get a more regular or stable place in life.

Social action core to heart and mission of Church of England, national survey shows

Loneliness and isolation are the most widespread social problems affecting English communities, regardless of income or social class, according to the findings of a [survey](#) of vicars published today by Church Urban Fund (CUF) and the Church of England.

In a national online study of social action by Anglican churches, social isolation was described as a major or significant problem in their area by 64% of Church of England clergy, up from 58% three years ago.

The survey showed loneliness was the only issue to be cited by clergy as a significant problem in the majority of wealthier areas as well as deprived communities.

Social isolation was listed as a more common problem than unemployment, homelessness and poor housing by the 1,812 clergy who completed the questionnaire.

In London, nearly three quarters of vicars, or 71%, said social isolation was a major or significant problem in their community, compared to 61% in the East of England and 58% in the South East.

The report, *Church in Action*, showed nearly half, or 46%, of churches are running organised activities to tackle social isolation through programmes such as youth groups, parent-toddler groups or lunch clubs.

Churches are also providing informal support, through social networks and friendship groups, according to the study.

Other figures in the survey include a big rise in the proportion of churches involved in running food banks over the last three years, from 33% in 2011 to 66% in 2014.

Support provided by churches includes collecting food, providing volunteers and offering premises and helping to manage food banks. Nearly a fifth, or 17%, of churches are also involved in helping credit unions.

Social action is core to the heart and mission of the Church, the report found, with the vast majority of churches, more than 90%, addressing at least one social issue in their community, either through organised activities, or informal support. On average churches are addressing seven local issues and a third are tackling nine or more, the survey found.

In addition to food banks, 76% of churches work with schools, 60% offer parent and toddler groups, 24% do youth work, 22% provide debt or money advice, and 10% run night shelters.

Paul Hackwood, Executive Chair of Church Urban Fund, said: "We see through our work all around this country the damage that loneliness and isolation brings to people's lives.

"It is fantastic to see the difference that churches are making in local communities, re-building hope and growing meaningful relationships."

Tim Thornton, the Bishop of Truro, said: "This joint report by the Church of England and Church Urban Fund shows that social action is deeply embedded into the mission of the Church of England.

"It is heartening to see the Church responding so impressively to a range of different needs, including social isolation and loneliness.

"We live in an increasingly individualistic and atomised society. Through fostering social networks, friendships and family life, churches help to provide the 'glue' that binds people together and help build stronger communities."

Notes:

Copies of the [full report](#) and [executive summary](#) can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/church-in-action from February 9.

In September 2014, an online survey was sent to 5,097 incumbents - the most senior members of staff in a parish or group of parishes - of which 1,812 took part (a response rate of 36%). Our sample represents a broad sub-section of Church of England parishes from every region, size of church and across urban and rural locations.

Respondents were asked a wide range of questions about the social issues facing their local community, such as isolation/loneliness, low income, debt, crime and poor housing, and about what, if anything, their church was doing to help address these issues. They were also asked more detailed questions about their involvement with food banks and credit unions.

Church Urban Fund is the Church of England's response to poverty and our aim is to inform, inspire, resource and support churches as they work to tackle poverty and build community.

Pope Francis surprises residents of a shanty town

Pope Francis surprised residents of a shanty town on the outskirts of Rome by paying them a visit yesterday.

The Pope made an impromptu stop in the Tiburtina area, according to Reuters, and was greeted by a number of the town's inhabitants, many of whom are from South America.

The Pope spoke to them in Spanish, asking how many of them spoke the same language as him.



Fr Aristide Sana, the local parish priest, reportedly said that a number of those who greeted the Pope are from Peru and Ecuador.

“He got out of the car and people were shocked when they saw him in front of their shacks,” added Fr Sana. According to Fr Sana, people from Russia, Eritrea, Ukraine and Poland also

live in the shanty town, which is inhabited by about 150 people.

Media review

Guardian

Christian councillor objects to Islandmagee 'witches' plaque - TUV party hardliner Jack McKee refuses to back plans for memorial to Irish women convicted of witchcraft in 1711 as it would be 'anti-God'

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/feb/05/islandmagee-witches-plaque-christian-jack-mckee>

The Journal.ie

Clare Daly's abortion bill is causing A lot of problems for Labour

http://www.thejournal.ie/clare-daly-abortion-bill-labour-1928163-Feb2015/?utm_source=shortlink

Irish News

Hoax Devices May Be Linked To Loyalist's Conviction Says Priest

<http://www.irishnews.com/news/hoax-devices-may-be-linked-to-loyalist-s-conviction-says-priest-1412056>

BBC News

Forty-five potential victims of human trafficking were rescued in Northern Ireland last year, according to the National Crime Agency.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-31254686>

Times

Report that the Archbishop of Canterbury has criticized Twitter and Facebook for playing host to "nauseating" and "criminal" antisemitic abuse. It states Justin Welby said that social media giants must work harder to stop their platforms being used to peddle racist attacks.

Speaking before the launch of a parliamentary report calling for new online Asbos to clamp down on racist trolls by banning repeat offenders from using certain websites, he said companies must take down such posts immediately.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article4348300.ece>

Ind/Tel

Reports on a survey by the Church Urban Fund and the Church of England which found clergy believe loneliness is a major problem in both wealthy and deprived areas, while the number of churches running food banks has doubled to more than 65 per cent since 2012. It found that 10 per cent more members of the clergy believed that social isolation was a major problem in their local area than in 2012. Paul Hackwood, the executive chairman of Church Urban Fund, is quoted on the difference churches are making in local communities.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/loneliness-is-becoming-a-major-problem-in-england-says-church-charity-10032639.html>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11398918/Loneliness-major-middle-class-problem-says-Church.html>

FT

Article on how Credit union membership in the **UK** has more than doubled in a decade, to over 1.5m. That compares with 1.6m customers who used **payday lenders** in 2013, according to an estimate from the Financial Conduct Authority watchdog. It mentions the Archbishop of Canterbury launching **a scheme to promote credit unions in churches** and train volunteers to give financial advice. Piloted in London and Liverpool, the scheme is set to be introduced around the UK in about a year, potentially marketing credit unions to hundreds of thousands more people.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/d3ee121a-af76-11e4-b42e-00144feab7de.html#axzz3RDwCTors>

BBC Sunday (25 mins:45)

The Bishop of Sheffield, Steven Croft and Professor Linda Woodhead discuss the five reports on reform and renewal coming to General Synod this week.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b051r7hm>

Times

Report on forecast by Professor David Voas, populations studies professor at the University of Essex, who says the future of religion in Britain will be "black and brown" as Islam and newer forms of Christianity overhaul the Church of England. He claims white Britons are losing their taste for worship and states the Church of England will discuss radical reforms at its synod starting

tomorrow. The Professor's forecast comes in an online article for the faith think-tank Theos (see *blogs*).

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article4348197.ece>

BBC

Report that a survey, by the Forum of Private Business (FPB) found that over three-quarters of respondents think big firms put profits before ethical standards. It found tax avoidance, treatment of suppliers, and late payment were all areas of concern, the ComRes poll of 2,000 people found. It also mentions the Archbishop of Canterbury's recent comments on business ethics calling for big companies to use their powerful positions to support society.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-31249914>

Times

Report that Wonga is poised to make substantial job cuts as it seeks to satisfy the financial watchdog that its payday loans model is sustainable. It states the lender must apply by the end of the month for a full consumer credit licence from the Financial Conduct Authority and has shut down Invest and Borrow, its peer-to-peer lending operation. It mentions how the Archbishop of Canterbury said he wanted to put payday lenders out of business.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/business/industries/banking/article4348167.ece>

Times

Further report on how the Church of England is to consider withdrawing £3 million invested in oil company, Soco, after concerns about how its activities may be threatening Africa's Virunga national park and home of

the rare mountain gorillas. It states the church made public a statement about its concerns regarding Soco International calling for a "wide ranging and transparent independent inquiry of Soco's operations in and around Virunga".

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/environment/wildlife/article4348236.ece>

BBC

Report that about 100 people gathered at St Piran's Oratory on a north Cornwall beach for a recording of the BBC's Songs of Praise (to be broadcast on March 1st). It states St Piran's Oratory at Perran Sands near Perranporth is among the oldest sites of Christian worship in the UK. Bishop of St Germans, Chris Goldsmith is quoted.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-31254563>

Mail

Further comment on Prince Charles' comments before his visit to the Middle East which says he has 'recalibrated what he calls his 'frequently misinterpreted' claim that he wanted to be the defender of faiths, rather than faith. What he meant 20 years ago was 'not to defend Anglicanism to the exclusion of other religions, but to protect the free practice of all faiths in this country'. Columnist says his comments on the persecution of Middle Eastern Christians comes to late and questions Saudi Arabia's stance on not allowing Christian worship.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2945329/Does-Blair-hope-Ed-save-skin.html#ixzz3RDrf0Tpk>