



Archbishop Michael Jackson and Canon David Gillespie are pictured with members of Taney Junior Choir during the 2014 Black Santa Appeal.

Dublin's Black Santa Appeal Brings in Record Sum for Charities

The 2014 Black Santa Appeal has raised a record sum. The annual sit out outside St Ann's Church on Dawson Street, Dublin, saw €35,000

being collected, the largest amount in the appeal's 13 year history.

The sit out was launched in Dublin by Canon Tommy Haskins and is modelled on a similar appeal which takes place annually outside St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast. The current Vicar of St Ann's, Canon David Gillespie has continued the tradition of standing outside the church each day in the run up to Christmas and is delighted with the success of the 2014 appeal.

"To raise €35,000 in the times in which we are living is a fantastic result and I am most grateful to all who so generously contributed. Black Santa is now a well established tradition in Dublin and it is great to see people coming back year on year to offer their support," Canon Gillespie says.

"I am most grateful to all in St Ann's who helped with the appeal not least Joan Wadsworth, my Churchwarden, who scheduled an unprecedented number of choirs which added greatly to the festive mood in Dawson Street," he adds.

The Vicar has also paid tribute to the small but very capable team of parishioners who offered

hospitality to all the choirs and visitors during the week and those who counted and bagged the money.

He thanked St Ann's caretaker, Fred Deane, and the others who joined him outside during the appeal. He also thanked the parishes of the united dioceses who assisted with the appeal, among them Kill o' the Grange who donated €400 of Dunne's Stores vouchers to be distributed to anyone seeking assistance from those collecting outside the church. "This appeal will always be attached to St Ann's but it is getting bigger and bigger every year and there is no doubt we could do with the help and support of some of our fellow parishioners from the diocese in undertaking the many things that go on behind the scenes such as catering, counting, providing security for the main church when the main doors are open and, of course, rattling a bucket in Dawson Street. Everyone is busy at this time of year and I'm well aware that parishes have their own things to do but any help that can be offered will be much appreciated," Canon Gillespie comments.

"This year the Vicar of Holy Trinity, the Revd Rob Jones donned a black clerical cloak to assist one

afternoon and a number of volunteers from Rathmines assisted with collecting. Volunteers from the Solas project also turned up to help on a number of days. If you, or your parish, thinks you would be interested in offering us a helping hand please don't hesitate to be in touch with me on 2880663 or 6767727," he says.

The funds collected will be distributed to the various charities at a service in St Ann's on Sunday February 8. The preacher will be the Very Revd Houston McKelvey, former Dean of Belfast – himself a 'Black Santa' until his recent retirement. The funds will be 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.

Archbishop Martin lends children's choir a hand

Catholic Primate Archbishop Eamon Martin took a hands-on approach to the launch of Catholic Schools Week as he joined with a children's choir

in the ecclesiastical capital of Armagh City to mark the event.



Archbishop Eamon Martin joins the choir of Saint Joseph's National School Dundalk in St Patrick's Cathedral , Armagh

Catholic Schools Week runs from Sunday until February 1.

It is an all-Ireland annual event which invites Catholic schools to give expression in a special way to the ethos of Catholic education. This year's theme for the week is Catholic Schools: Called to Serve and this complements the

universal Year of Consecrated Life which Pope Francis has designated for 2015.

To further mark the event, BBC Radio Ulster will broadcast Mass at 10.15am next Sunday, which will be celebrated by Bishop Donal McKeown, Bishop of Derry, from Saint Mary's Church in the Creggan in Londonderry.

C of I Commission on Episcopal Ministry reports on diocesan consultations

The Commission on Episcopal Ministry and Structures yesterday released a report on the results of their consultations with diocesan synods throughout the country.

Representatives of the Commission visited every diocese in the country during 2014 and distributed questionnaires on issues relating to episcopal ministry.

The report based on the feedback from these consultations is available [here](#).

http://ireland.anglican.org/cmsfiles/pdf/Synod/2015/reports/CEMS_2015.pdf

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Four-fold increase in one-teacher schools in last four years , says O Cuiv



Fianna Fáil TD for Galway West Éamon Ó Cuív says the number of one-teacher schools has increased four-fold since this Government came into power, wuth budget changes have seen the number of single teacher schools rise dramatically from 11 in September 2011 to 44 currently.

Galway Advertiser - He said that last year saw 16 small schools in Galway and Mayo lose a teacher. Many of these schools were in areas with dispersed populations.

Offshore islands have been disproportionately affected by this increase in single-teacher schools, with four out of the 11 islands only having one teacher in their schools. That represents more than a third of all the inhabited islands with schools.

Deputy Ó Cuív said that these figures reveal “a sustained attack by this Government on small schools, particularly in rural Ireland. Changes to the pupil-teacher ratio, brought in as part of Budget 2012 has resulted in schools across the country losing teachers and an increase in the number single teacher schools.

“This threatens the viability of these schools and has heightened concerns among parents and communities in rural areas about the future of their local schools.

“I am also concerned that four of the schools which have been rationalised are Church of Ireland schools, and could be seen as discriminating against a minority community. It certainly questions the State’s promise to “cherish all the children of the nation equally.”

“I had hoped that the appointment of Jan O’Sullivan as Education Minister last year would

see a shift in policy to protect small schools and communities. However it seems as if she is continuing down the same flawed road as

her predecessor, implementing policies that are attacking rural communities without resulting in any significant savings for the State.

As a result of these decisions, the number of one-teacher schools will continue to rise, while the number of small schools will continue to close, much to the detriment of rural Ireland.

Living worship 2015 - Implementing Thanks and Praise - Two further workshops

This year's course got off to a fine start at The Mageough Hall, Dublin, last Saturday. 40 musicians and clergy heard the Revd Adrienne Galligan describe various ways of presenting A Service of the Word. She was assisted by Jacqueline Mullen who presented some of the items in Thanks & Praise, the forthcoming hymnal supplement.

Fresh insights, new ideas and a valuable chance to sing some contemporary hymns for the first
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time made for an enjoyable and worthwhile morning - and some useful documentation to take away.

Next Saturday 24th January: Gerald Field, Dean of Cashel Cathedral and Secretary of the Liturgical Advisory Committee, will explore the use of the Canticles, particularly in the context of Morning Prayer. David O'Shea will introduce different ways of singing the canticles.

Saturday 31st January: Sandra Pragnell, Dean of St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick, will discuss the impact of space, symbol, sign and song on contemporary worship, especially at the Eucharist. Derek Verso will introduce appropriate music.

Some music examples will be taken from Thanks & Praise.

Fee €10 per session, payable on the day. Please let the organisers know in advance if you will be there. [Click for email](#) Bring a Book of Common Prayer if you can.

The Mageough: Approaching from Palmerston Road, enter by the 2nd gate on the left and

then immediately turn right into the small car park. The hall is next to the Luas stop.

Christian Aid Tax and Human Rights conference - Dublin

Christian Aid Ireland is hosting an international conference – Human Rights Impact of Tax and Fiscal Policy – to look at the human rights impact of tax and fiscal policy from an Irish, and a global context.

The conference brings together speakers from the global south, tax justice activists, Irish government officials, the OECD, journalists and the private sector. They will examine tax policies and explore the role of states and multinationals through a human rights lens.

Thursday 12 February 2015. Radisson Blu Hotel, Golden Lane, Dublin 8. 9:00am - 5:00pm

To register for your place, please email Sorley McCaughey smccaughey@christian-aid.org or call telephone the Christian Aid Dublin office on (01) 496 7040. You can also register on the [Eventbrite](#) page.

Conference speakers, panellists other contributors and further information at -

<http://www.christianaid.ie/getinvolved/events/tax-seminar-dublin-feb2015.aspx>

The Sunday School teachers chalking it up to experience

The Faith Focus feature in the News Letter this week highlights the experiences of three Sunday School teachers. They are Ruth Rodgers, editor of the News Letter's sister paper 'Farming Life', NI Minister, Danny Kennedy MLA, and Karen Webb of Lisburn Cathedral.

Karen Webb has been worshipping at Lisburn cathedral for over 20 years, and first became a Sunday School teacher at the tender age of 15.

The 52-year-old, who also lives in the city, is married to Tim and has two daughters, 21-year-old Amy and 19-year-old Caroline.

In July 2013, she was commissioned as a church army sister, and she is also currently the children's ministry coordinator for Lisburn Cathedral.

“I have always worked with children,” she says.

“At Lisburn Cathedral we do not run the typical Sunday School model - we call it Kidzone, and it is for children aged four - 11. We have around 50 children.”

Karen explains that the children will leave the Sunday morning church service at around 11.20am and congregate.

Kidzone will include an opening prayer, ‘sharing news time’, and praise and games.

“There will also be a video or Bible reading on the day’s theme, and a talk given using visual aids, to help the children apply the story to their lives,” she says.

“Then the children are split into age appropriate groups to do a worksheet or craft or discussion on the theme.

During the week, Ulster Unionist politician Danny Kennedy is busy with his duties as the Assembly member for Newry and Armagh, as well as being the Province’s Minister for Regional Development.

But on Sundays, you'll find him at Bessbrook Presbyterian Church, where he is the superintendant at the Sunday School there, having been involved in the teaching side of his church life here since 1995.

"I had never had a teaching role in the Sunday School before, and I was somewhat apprehensive about it, but I soon found it to be very rewarding, not only in my own spiritual development, but because it was also a great privilege to be able to share the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ with young children and hopefully help provide a Christian foundation in their young lives," he says.

Today, there are just seven pupils who attend Sunday School in this South Armagh church, which Danny says is due to a combination of the impact of the Troubles and economic issues.

More at -

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/the-sunday-school-teachers-chalking-it-up-to-experience-1-6534528>

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Irish Prayers and Support for Christians in the Holy Land



Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly and Bishop Ray Browne both participated in a delegation of European bishops which travelled to the Holy Land from 10 – 15 January. The purpose of the pilgrimage was to promote prayer and support for the Christian community in the Holy Land, and to encourage peace and the building of human dignity. The delegation also had an opportunity to visit Trócaire-partners in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. On their return home from their recent visit, the two Irish bishops said:

"We have all seen the images on the television news and read the column inches in newspapers and magazines but when you are there in person – meeting families whose lives have been

devastated, who don't have a roof to put over their heads, basic food to put on the table, and are witnessing children dying of exposure – you very quickly come to realise just how deeply distressing the situation is for the people of Gaza.

"The terrible conditions in which tens of thousands of families in Gaza are living are an assault on human dignity. The trauma and suffering of families are injustices that we must not ignore or forget – we must hear and respond to the cries of the people of Gaza.

"And yet in the midst of this devastation hope somehow remains. This is evident in the work of volunteers who are helping people to rebuild their lives in very trying circumstances and against a background of uncertainty about their futures. It is evident in the determination of families who are setting about the task of rebuilding their lives. It is very much evident in the faith of the people.

"We encourage Irish faithful to continue to pray for the suffering people of Gaza, specifically the diminishing Christian community which is caught in the crossfire of conflict. We take this opportunity to thank everyone for their on-going

and generous support for Trócaire's work in the Holy

Land and, while acutely conscious of the challenges facing the budget of many Irish families, we humbly ask that this support would continue."

Archbishop Welby: Britain's urban crisis

In a new essay, the archbishop of Canterbury argues that the decline facing many cities in the UK – and around the world – cannot be solved by economic solutions alone. Specific, local and above all holistic responses are required

Guardian - Extracted from On Rock or Sand?
edited by John Sentamu

In 2007, the thinktank Policy Exchange published a report called Cities Unlimited: Making Urban Regeneration Work. It offered a wide-ranging examination of the problems facing many cities and towns around the country where there were signs of long-term decline (with particular attention to cities on the coast).



The report made for sobering reading. It argued that for some towns and cities, which may once have been vital components of British economic and social life, “regeneration, in the sense of convergence, will not happen, because it is not possible”. But is that really the case, or can we imagine new possibilities?

The hard truth is that many of these cities are in what appear to be lose–lose situations. Already in decline, the road towards recovery and growth is made even more difficult. There are now fewer readily available government resources able to support economic development in these regions; and also, since the 1980s, the banking system has become more and more London-

concentrated and consequently out of touch with local needs. As businesses gravitate towards more prosperous areas, more and more parts of the country find themselves facing significant financial exclusion.

Areas away from London, even when they grow economically, do so less quickly than London and the south-east generally. Lending too – whether in the form of mortgages, small business loans or personal loans – is concentrated overwhelmingly in London and the south-east, with areas in the north largely out of the loop. The economic gap between London and the south-east and the rest of the country does not seem likely to shrink at any point in the near future.

The full article can be found here

<http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/jan/20/justin-welby-britain-urban-crisis-cities-abandoned-hopeless>

Media digest

Bishop suggests postponing Confirmation until pupils are at least 16

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/bishop-suggests-postponing-confirmation-until-pupils-are-at-least-16-1.2074546>

Bishop calls for information on one of the Disappeared at Monaghan mass

www.thejournal.ie/the-disappeared-columba-mcveigh-1895792-Jan2015?utm_source=twitter_self

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – Seeing the Face of God in all Men and Women I Gladys Ganiel

<http://www.gladysganiel.com/irish-catholic-church/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-seeing-the-face-of-god-in-all-men-and-women/>

Corrymeela Lenten walks

<http://www.corrymeela.org/events/>

Jim Wells: I back Edwin Poots' gay blood ban

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/health/jim-wells-i-back-edwin-poots-gay-blood-ban-30924523.html>

Full cost of fighting to keep gay blood ban revealed

The legal costs incurred by a Stormont department in relation to a ban on the donation of blood from gay men was nearly £40,000, the assembly hears.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/full-cost-of-fighting-to-keep-gay-blood-ban-revealed-1-6530656>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-30878210>

Irish trained doctor performed an exorcism on seriously ill patient telling her

"God is your surgeon"

Dr Thomas O'Brien who qualified as a doctor at the National University of Ireland told woman "devil was having a go at her."

<http://www.irishmirror.ie/news/irish-news/irish-trained-doctor-performed-exorcism-5008313>

Hate attacks on Jews soared 94% last year, police figures show - Telegraph

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/11360772/Hate-attacks-on-Jews-soared-94-last-year-police-figures-show.html>

Times (online only)

Article on the issues around the Archbishop of York laying hands on new bishops, states Dr John Sentamu, will ordain the Rev Libby Lane as the Bishop of Stockport on Monday. It states a week later, he will take the unprecedented step of declining to "lay his hands" on another new bishop, the Rev Philip North adding that the archbishop's refusal to lay on hands may appease traditionalists, but has sparked criticism from campaigners for women bishops. The reports says the church has yet to confirm whether Dr Sentamu and the Bishop of Blackburn, Julian Henderson, will join the service

but adds that Dr Sentamu's most senior aide said last night that Mr North had not insisted on the arrangement himself.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/faith/article4330643.ece>

Eve Standard

Comment piece written after the launch of Archbishop of York's book *On Rock or Sand?*. Melanie McDonagh praises the book saying "[it] is a vivid reminder of the forgotten but obvious truth that most progressive British politics, from Wilberforce to Joseph Rowntree, have had a squarely Christian origin."

<http://www.standard.co.uk/comment/comment/melanie-mcdonagh-the-church-gets-crucial-messages-across-better-than-any-politician-9992479.html>

Tel

Columnist [Tim Montgomerie](#) writes that the church is blighted by its left-wing bias (following the launch of *On Rock or Sand?*) saying it's no coincidence falling church attendance has happened at the same time as the Church of England has been issuing reports on public policy, which echo the social thinking of the left.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/columnists/article4330364.ece>

Tel

Reports that Archbishops of Canterbury and York condemned today's so-called consumer society, saying pay rises and nice houses make us miserable. *Telegraph* states Dr John Sentamu said the financial crisis happened because "people borrowed money they didn't have, to buy things they didn't need". He was speaking at the launch of "On Rock Or Sand?".

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11359378/Retail-therapy-Consumerism-is-just-making-us-miserable-Archbishop.html>

BBC

Report that retired priest Adrian Hailer, from Slough, is to sue a pharmaceutical company after taking part in a clinical trial of medication to treat a bone marrow condition.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-berkshire-30915886>

Express

Report that a Church of England clergy discipline panel said the Reverend Andrew Hawthorne kept as much as £60,000 in funeral fees that should have gone towards the running of his church. Mr Hawthorne was found guilty of a serious breach of trust and was dismissed from his role at St George's Church in Christchurch, Dorset, in 2013 after being suspended for 12 months. There will

be a further hearing later this month to determine further disciplinary action. Mr Hawthorne plans to appeal the panel's findings.

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/553387/Reverend-Andrew-Hawthorne-vicar-kept-60k-funeral-fees-own-church-theft>

Tel

Article commenting on church trying to attract men, says the rebranding of Jesus as a 'tough guy', in a bid to reverse the feminisation of the Church, should be avoided at all costs. It concludes by praising the publication of "*On Rock or Sand?*" saying the most important thing is to make God, and religion relevant to what's happening in peoples lives.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/11360543/Church-must-avoid-becoming-Fight-Club-to-attract-men.html>

Mail

Further report on Christian health worker Victoria Wastenev who told an employment tribunal that the NHS trust she works for did not clear her of bullying a Muslim colleague because it was 'politically incorrect'. It states Miss Wastenev launched an employment tribunal against the East London NHS Trust, claiming her employers discriminated against her because of her religion.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2920345/Christian-nurse-claims-NHS-Trust-did-not-clear-bullying-Muslim-colleague-politically-incorrect.html#ixzz3PWp3U600>

Guard

Further report on the Zimbabwean relatives refused UK visas to attend the funeral of five-year-old Andrea Gada, who died after being hit by a car, have told of their deep pain and shock at the Home Office decision. It mentions letters in support of the family sent by the moderator of the Church of Scotland and the Bishop of Chichester, Martin Warner.

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/jan/21/relatives-andrea-gada-shocked-visa-refusal>

BBC

Report that a vicar has praised eight young people who cleared snow from a church driveway, meaning a funeral could go ahead as planned without delay. Instead of going sledging or building snowmen like some of their friends, they responded to the call for help from St Peter's Church in Fairfield. The Rev Carl Flynn Edwards said the deceased's family were very grateful.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-derbyshire-30925122>

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