



## Dublin's Black Santa Sit Out off to a chilly start

The 2017 Black Santa Sit Out at St Ann's, Dawson Street, got off to a chilly start on Wednesday. The annual appeal was launched by Archbishop Michael Jackson and the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mícheál MacDonncha, and will continue until Christmas Eve. They were joined by the Choir of Kildare Place National School.

The launch of this year's appeal coincided with the launch of the Luas Cross City Service which sees trams travelling up and down Dawson Street. The Vicar of St Ann's, Canon David Gillespie, said he was hopeful that the completion of the project would see increased footfall on Dawson Street and was looking forward to a great opportunity to spread the festive spirit among a much wider audience.

"The launch of this year's appeal almost coincides with the official launch of the Luas Cross City service which will be passing by our doors. This will increase our exposure considerably and we look forward to many more people stopping by to donate but also to sharing the joy of the approaching Christmas season with even more people than before," Canon Gillespie commented.

"Last year, our funds were hit badly by the work associated with the Luas project, and so we look forward this time around to a bumper year. We will have an increased number of choirs singing outside St Ann's for us this year and even more collectors as we seek to capitalize on the increased footfall," he added.

The appeal raises in the region of €40,000 for a range of charities every year, including

organisations which serve homeless people. All the charities supported by Black Santa do invaluable work and every cent donated to the appeal is divided among them. There are no administration charges and all the collectors are volunteers. The choirs which join Black Santa every lunchtime provide their festive cheer free of charge.

Throughout the sit out Canon Gillespie will be joined by volunteers from St Ann's and clerical colleagues from around the United Dioceses of Dublin & Glendalough.

A huge number of choirs will sing each lunchtime including Castleknock National School, St James Primary School, Francis Street CBS, St Stephens Church Choir, Catholic University School, Taney Parish Junior School, Alexandra College, Kildare Place National School, Cornucopia Brass Group, Irish Life Choir, Revenue Choir, AIB Choral Society, Permanent TSB Staff Choir, John Scottus School, Loretto College, Seafield Singers, Dublin Male Voice Choir, the Line Up Choir, Steadfast Band and the Brook Singers.

The Black Santa sit out is modelled on a similar appeal, which has been run by successive Deans of St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast for many

years. It became known as the Black Santa appeal because of the long heavy black cloaks worn by the clergy to keep out the cold. This is the 17th year that the appeal has been held in Dublin and in that time well over €500,000 has been raised for local good causes.

Among the charities to benefit from the appeal are Trust, The Salvation Army, The Simon Community and the Peter McVerry Trust, all of which work with the homeless. Other charities supported include Protestant Aid, Barnardos, St Vincent De Paul, the Laura Lynn Foundation and Solas Project.

The Vicar thanked those in St Ann's who helped organise what is a massive undertaking in terms of extending hospitality to the choirs who will sing outside the church.

"There is a small but very faithful team of people working behind the scenes in St Ann's preparing food, counting money, and liaising with the many choirs who participate and to them I want to express my sincere thanks. We are all busy at this time of the year and the fact that parishioners from St Ann's are willing to set that time aside and help is very gratifying indeed."

The Church of Ireland Marriage Council is offering an opportunity for clergy couples in the Connor and Down and Dromore Dioceses to attend a weekend retreat.

## **Retreat for C of I clergy couples**



The retreat will take place in the Hilton Templepatrick Hotel and County Club on 10 and 11 February, with the Revd Jonny Campbell–Smyth and his wife Alison facilitating the event. The cost of the weekend is carried at diocesan level and by the C of I Marriage Council, with a contribution of £50 per couple.

Jonny and Alison have been married 20 years, with two children Josh and Nathan. Jonny has been ordained for six years, previously working as an IT consultant in England. Alison is Head of Podiatry for the Northern Health and Social Care Trust. They are both passionate about strengthening and supporting the family unit, and have been involved for all of their married life with the UK charity Care for the Family ([www.careforthefamily.org.uk](http://www.careforthefamily.org.uk)).

Couples who will attend the retreat will have the opportunity to both relax and take time out of parish life. Jonny and Alison will lead a number of short sessions looking at enriching marriage, be it at the start of married life, or for those who have been together many years. Those that have attended previous retreats have been greatly encouraged by a weekend such as this. All clergy couples are encouraged to consider attending” For further details, please contact Mrs Sandra Massey at [sandra.massey@rcbdub.org](mailto:sandra.massey@rcbdub.org)

## **Clergy appointments in the Diocese of Dromore**

Bishop John McAreavey has announced the following personnel changes in the diocese of

Dromore. The changes will come into effect on Friday, 5 January 2018:

Canon Liam Stevenson, parish priest of Seapatrick (Banbridge), to be parish priest, St Peter's and St Paul's, Lurgan. He will be Vicar General of the diocese.

Monsignor Aidan Hamill will carry out some chaplaincy services in the diocese and will assist with diocesan administration (details still under consideration);

Canon Jarlath Cushenan, parish priest of Clonduff, to retire;

Rev Charles Byrne, parish priest of Burren, Mayobridge and Drumgath to be parish priest of Clonduff and Drumgath;

Andrew McMahon, Adm, St Peter's and St Paul's, Lurgan to be parish priest, Seapatrick (Banbridge);

Rev Desmond Loughran, currently on sick leave, to be parish priest, Dromore;

Rev Desmond Mooney, curate in Moyraverty and Seagoe, to be parish priest, Burren and Mayobridge;

Rev Vincent McKay, Holy Ghost congregation, will assist in the parishes of the Seapatricks pastoral area.

Fr Mario Jachym (Society of Christ), Adm., Saval, to assist in Newry parish; the priests of Newry parish will celebrate a Mass in Saval each weekend.

## **Members of royal family attend Grenfell Tower memorial service**

The royal family has shown solidarity with families whose relatives died in the Grenfell Tower fire by attending a national memorial service. Survivors, bereaved families, the local community and first responders were joined by the Prince of Wales, Duchess of Cornwall, Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry at the event at St Paul's Cathedral in central London.

Prime Minister Theresa May, Communities Secretary Sajid Javid and Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn were among the politicians accompanying more than 1,500 guests for the 11am service.





**Prince Harry, The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, The Duchess of Cornwall and The Prince of Wales attend the Grenfell Tower National Memorial Service at St Paul's Cathedral in London, to mark the six month anniversary of the Grenfell Tower fire.**

The memorial focussed on remembering the 71 victims of the June 14 tower block blaze, and provided those affected with messages of support, strength and hope for the future. A Green For Grenfell banner adorned with a heart was carried in as a hymn was sung, before the Very Reverend Dr David Ison, Dean of St Paul's, welcomed the congregation.

He said: “Among us are survivors of the fire in Grenfell Tower exactly six months ago; those who have lost members of their families, or their friends; those who live or work in North Kensington as neighbours and members of the local community; those who served others as frontline responders or volunteers, or who assisted with the immediate tasks of coping with the losses of lives, homes and livelihoods; and there are representatives of our national life, because this is a nation that grieves at the unspeakable tragedy, loss and hurt of that June day.

“The welcome also includes all of you watching on national television, among whom are those painfully affected who could not face such a public event, those who would have liked to be here in solidarity, those whose hearts go out to the many whose lives have been lost or changed for ever.

“In this service we come together as people of different faiths and none, as we remember before God those whose lives were lost, and pray for them to be at peace; as we are alongside brothers and sisters who have lost their homes and their community and those they love; as we commit ourselves to care for each other and to be united in the face of suffering

and sorrow; as we seek each other's help and resolve to build on our hopes for a future in which the tragedy that struck the peoples of Grenfell Tower will never happen again."

As the hour-long service began, the council linked to the tragedy, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC), observed a minute's silence at the town hall in High Street Kensington. Council leader Elizabeth Campbell was not present at the service after some families said they would not want the council to attend in an official capacity. She said it was only right to "respect the wishes of those involved in the service", adding: "I want them to know that we will be thinking of them."

An audio montage of voices from the Grenfell area was played to the congregation. A male voice said of the fire: "We were lost for words, we did not know what to do, how to react. I have never known anything like it in my life." Another said: "The comfort is just being together, the comfort is just having each other."

The Al-Sadiq and Al-Zahra Schools Girls' Choir then sang out the poignant words "Never lose hope".

The Bishop of Kensington, the Right Reverend Graham Tomlin, said he hoped the service would reassure those present that they were not forgotten by the nation, and that it would signify the start of a change.

He said: “As we come to the end of this difficult year, as we celebrate Christmas, as we move into a new year, nothing can remove the memory of that night - nor do we want to forget those dearly loved people who were lost.

“And yet my hope and prayer is that this new year can bring new hope of a future, a vision of a city where we lose our self-obsession and listen and learn from places and people that we wouldn’t normally think of reaching out to.”

He added that he hoped the word “Grenfell” would transform over time from a symbol of “sorrow, grief or injustice” to “a symbol of the time we learnt a new and better way - to listen and to love”.

Commemorating the dead, the Dean said: “Let us remember, united in grief and hope and love”, before the congregation held a minute’s silence.

The Ebony Steel Band, frequent performers at the Notting Hill Carnival, played a verse of Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah.

Maria Jafari, who lost her elderly father, Ali Yawar Jafari, in the fire, read a poem by 13th century Persian poet Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi. Mr Jafari, who had a heart condition, was pulled from the building by firefighters but died at the scene.

As the St Paul's Cathedral choir sang, local schoolchildren scattered small hand-made green hearts, carried in brown wicker baskets, across the front of the Dome dais.

## **UK government doubles the impact of Christian Aid's Christmas Appeal**

For every pound you give to Christian Aid's Christmas Appeal, the UK Government will also give a pound. That's double the support for people living in poverty.

Donations made to Christian Aid's Christmas appeal between 6 November 2017 and 5 February 2018 will be matched up to £2.7 million. Christian Aid will use your donations for projects such as those featured. The UK



Government's match will fund their work in South Sudan.

This Christmas, many people in large areas of Sub Saharan Africa face hunger. Christian Aid's Christmas appeal will focus on the needs of many of the most vulnerable people facing this crisis – women of child-bearing age and children under five are some of the most vulnerable to this crisis.

Earlier this year, famine was declared in parts of South Sudan: the first time it was declared anywhere in six years. It was declared in Unity State, a region where Christian Aid works.

More than three years of conflict had forced nearly four million people from their homes, disrupting harvests and leading to devastating food shortages.

Although the famine was averted, the crisis in South Sudan has reached unprecedented levels – nearly six million people are facing severe food shortages. If left untreated, acute malnutrition – the most extreme form of food crisis – can lead to death.

South Sudan faces disaster as people there endure acute, life-threatening malnutrition. Rains failed again in summer 2017, leading to expectations that the harvest will again fail, which in turn will lead to a further humanitarian disaster.

Famine is no longer occurring in Unity state but overall the number of people affected has increased. The situation continues to be very critical.

To support Christian Aid Ireland this Christmas visit [christianaid.ie](http://christianaid.ie) or call 02890 648133 (Northern Ireland). (01 496 7040 - Republic of Ireland).

## Pope Francis: It's not enough just to 'be good'. You must go to Mass



A Catholic cannot just do good deeds and miss Mass on Sunday, Pope Francis has said.

It is the Eucharist that provides the spiritual nourishment Christians need to truly live out the Gospel in their everyday lives.

“How can we respond to those who say that there is no need to go to Mass, not even on Sundays, because what is important is to live well, to love our neighbours?” the Pope asked at his general audience.



“It is true that the quality of the Christian life is measured by the capacity to love, but how can we practice the Gospel without drawing the necessary strength to do it, one Sunday after another, from the inexhaustible spring of the Eucharist?”

It is true that Catholics must go to Mass because it is the law of the Church, the Pope added, however this alone is not enough.

“We Christians need to participate in Sunday Mass because only with the grace of Jesus, with his living presence in us and among us, can we put into practice his commandment, and thus be his credible witnesses,” he said.

Without the Eucharist, Christians “are condemned to be dominated by the fatigue of everyday life.”

## **Archbishop of Canterbury: The Church of England “is very confident in its faith”**

The entire episode of yesterday’s *Today Programme* on BBC Radio Four, Britain’s



**Archbishop Justin Welby is interviewed by the BBC's Nick Robinson during a live broadcast of Radio Four's Today Programme, live from Lambeth Palace, the London home and office of Archbishops of Canterbury**

flagship national radio news breakfast programme, has been broadcast live from Lambeth Palace, which has been the London home and office of Archbishops of Canterbury for nearly 800 years. And Archbishop Justin Welby used an interview in the key 8.10am slot, usually reserved for the key political interview of the day, to say that the Church of England “is very confident in its faith”.

The Church has faced difficulties throughout its history, he said, as he highlighted how one of his predecessors had to face five disestablishment Bills in Parliament during his first five years as Archbishop of Canterbury in the mid-19th century; but he said that “The Church needs to be confident” as he pointed out a long list of ways in which the Church is involved in community engagement.

“We have heard today of the extraordinary things the church is doing reaching into the community,” he told the BBC’s Nick Robinson. “There is a huge amount of confidence on the ground: parishes and chaplaincies reaching out into their communities; night shelters are routine; food banks – we don’t like the fact that they exist but we get stuck in and do it. The Church is actually doing more in society than it has done in a very long time.

“It is also very confident in its faith. But we are seeing in the statistics that we have moved from a sense of inherited faith to a sense of faith by choice; and that is a smaller group of people.” He said that despite statistics which show that fewer English people associate themselves with the Church of England than in the past, two things gave him hope: “One is that I believe in God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead; and

the God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead can be trusted forever in all circumstances.

“My wife has just come back from working with women church leaders in South Sudan: infinitely, unbelievably, indescribably worse situation than here; and yet they hope.

“So first it is God; and secondly, the Church is reforming and renewing itself [to be] much more focused, much more deliberate, much more purposeful.” He said that the combination of “obedience to God and reforming ourselves and in trusting God gives me hope.”

He refuted the suggestion that African Churches were growing because they continued to talk about heaven, hell and sin; while the C of E had “changed the message to fit in with the fads and fashions of changing society. “We still talk about heaven, hell and sin a great deal,” he said, “and when you go to Africa the churches have many challenges and difficulties there.”

He pointed to the recent Primates’ Meeting held at Canterbury Cathedral in October, and said that the leaders of the Anglican provinces had “spent the week learning from each other.”

The archbishop continued: “The Church is utterly confident about the person of Jesus Christ. How that is lived out in each society is in the context of that society. We have not lost confidence.”

He was also asked about the up-coming British royal wedding of Prince Harry to the US actress Meghan Markle. Prince Harry is currently fifth in line to the British throne; but will move to sixth once his older brother Prince William and his wife Catherine have their third child, which is due in April.

Last month, the royal family announced the engagement of Prince Harry to Meghan Markle. Few details have been released about the wedding, other than it will take place in St George’s Chapel at Windsor Castle, to the west of London, in May next year.

Archbishop Justin said that the wedding “will be fun”; but asked whether he would preside over it, he commented: “that is up to them.”

He said that the couple’s desire for a church wedding was not a “tick-box exercise” but part of “a profound sense of commitment of seriousness, both about faith and about their lives together which is quite inspirational.”

He said that the wedding, which is expected to be televised around the world, “is important” because people watching it will “see a model of how two people commit themselves to one another before God in the presence of millions of people. That is going to be a wonderful.”

In the wide-ranging interview, Archbishop Justin was about the increasingly polarised political debate in the UK as negotiations continue in Parliament and in Brussels about the terms of Britain’s exit from the European Union (Brexit) and its future relationship with what will then be a 27-nation trading bloc.

He recalled the 1914 Christmas ceasefire in World War One, and said: “It would be very good to have a ceasefire from insult and the use of pejorative terms about people at this time.”

He continued: “As a country we have a future ahead of us. We have made a decision about Brexit. That is clear: both sides are saying that. How we do that is a question for robust political argument; but there is a difference between disagreeing and personalised attacks – and those have to be avoided.

“If we are going to make a success of Brexit then we need a political leadership that is united

in their attitude to the future even if divided on policy.”

He also criticised corporations use transfer pricing and other techniques to avoid paying taxes in the countries where income was earned.

“The tax system should ensure that those who benefit from a society pay to that society properly,” he said. “I am not a tax expert – the intricacies of corporate tax defeated me when I was in business, yet alone nowadays; but it is clear that a company that has a turnover of several billion and yet pays only a few millions of tax, something isn’t working there. . . People who earn money from a society should pay tax to that society for the common good, for economic justice.”

In addition to its usual round up of national and international news, politics, sport and weather, [the programme featured a range of items focused on the Church of England](#). This included the Church’s work to combat human trafficking. The Archbishop’s chaplain, the Revd Isabelle Hamley, delivered the programme’s *Thought For The Day*; and the Bishop of Manchester, David Walker, was the guest in the programme’s main business interview slot, in his capacity as deputy chair of the Church Commissioners, to explain

how the Commissioners invest its assets; and how they spend the returns.

The programme also talked about the rhythm of prayer and worship and Lambeth Palace, and interviewed a member of *Chemin Neuf*, the Roman Catholic community based at Lambeth Palace; the Community of St Anselm, a modern monastic community inviting young people aged between 18-35 to “spend a year in God’s time”; and James O’Donnell, the organist and master of the choristers at Westminster Abbey. The programme finished with the Christmas carol / *Saw Three Ships (Come Sailing In)*, which was sung by boys from the choir of Westminster Abbey.

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