



G8 services in Enniskillen focus on justice and compassion

By Paul Harron, Church of Ireland Press Officer

With the G8 meeting at the Lough Erne Golf Resort on 17th and 18th June, much of the world's recent media attention has been concentrated on Northern Ireland and on Co. Fermanagh in particular.

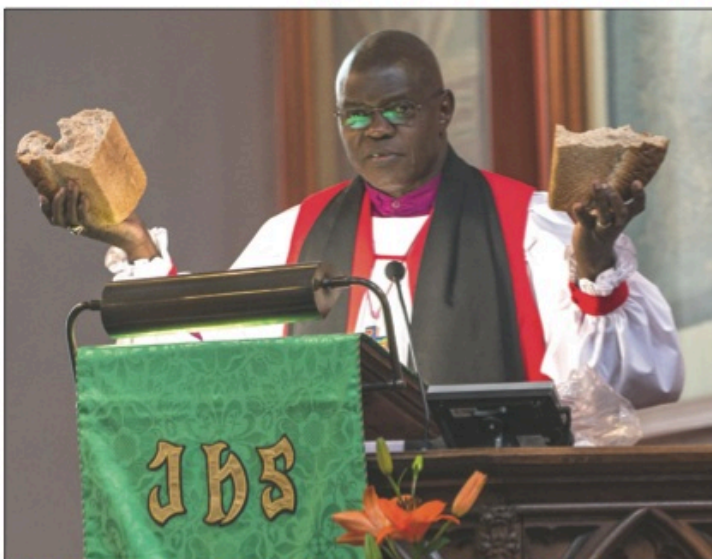
On the eve of the summit, St Macartin's Cathedral in Enniskillen hosted two significant services - a broadcast service for both BBC Radio 4 and Radio Ulster on the morning of Sunday 16th and a lively ecumenical service organised by the 'Enough Food for Everyone IF' campaign at which the Archbishop of York was the guest speaker in the afternoon.

ECUMENICAL IF SERVICE

'Enough Food for Everyone - IF' is a coalition of over 200 organisations across the UK and Ireland, including Christian Aid, Tearfund, Trócaire, the Irish Council of Churches and Fields of Life, which, *Gazette* readers will recall, received both the strong endorsement of the Church of Ireland General Synod through its resolution to support the call to the G8 leaders to take urgent action in tackling the root causes of hunger in our world (reported 17th May) and in the pre-G8 Statement issued by the Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of Ireland (reported, 14th June; see also <http://ireland.anglican.org/news/4618>).

This IF service was an opportunity to pray and act in solidarity with the one in eight people who go hungry every night.

The Service of the Word brought together the



Archbishop Sentamu preaching in St Macartin's Cathedral (Photo: Harrisons)

people of St Macartin's, St Michael's Roman Catholic church (to which the service was also relayed), the Enniskillen Methodist and Presbyterian churches and others, welcomed by the Dean, the Very Revd Kenneth Hall; the Very Revd Canon Peter O'Reilly, parish priest of St Michael's; the Revd David Cupples of Enniskillen Presbyterian church and the Revd Kenneth Lindsay, former President of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

During the course of the service, the congregation heard challenging interviews with David Thomas, Chair of IF campaign in Northern Ireland, fresh from a large, if somewhat damp, IF concert-event held in Belfast's Botanic Gardens the previous day; the Revd Suzanne Matala, General Secretary of the Zambian

Council of Churches; and Sudarshan Sathianathan, Tearfund head of region for Asia.

The Scripture reading (Matthew 5: 1-12) was given by Cliff Onega, a Trócaire partner from Uganda, and the prayers were led by pupils from local schools.

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK CALLS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

In his sermon, the Most Revd and Rt Hon. John Sentamu, Archbishop of York, who had travelled especially to Enniskillen following recent surgery, focused on the issue of the outrage of global hunger, saying that the needless deaths of three million children every year from malnutrition was "a great scandal and scar on all our consciences".

The Archbishop said that his own childhood

experience had shown him how important this campaign was: "When I was five years old, there was severe drought which hit my village in Uganda very hard. It was a real struggle for my mother and father to feed our family."

However, he continued: "All around the world a quiet and momentous change is happening. People are saying enough is enough in respect of global poverty. We are at a tipping point. We could be the generation to ensure every boy and girl, man and woman receives justice, mercy and love, able to live a dignified human life."

He spoke of the "radical Gospel" given by Jesus in the Beatitudes: "God's summons to become his Agents of Change by the power of the Holy Spirit" in approaching "the conflicts and pressures of the world."

FOUR BIG CHANGES

The Archbishop said that, as lovers of God, our neighbour and ourselves, there were "four big changes we could make that would make all the difference to our blessed poor neighbours":

- Calling for a stop to big companies dodging taxes in the two-thirds world. He said: "That money could help millions of people to be freed from hunger. They are not only robbing people but God himself who calls us all to love mercy, do justice and walk humbly before him. We can help stop this tax dodging if our G8 governments step up to close the international tax loopholes."

- Continuing to maintain the right investments through aid. He called on the congregation to support the British Government's commitment to spending 0.7% of the national income on aid.

- Calling for an end to poor farmers being forced off their land by giant corporations. He said: "These companies don't care that the land is already being used by local people to grow food. Stopping them would help millions of people get enough to eat."

- Transparency by governments and big multinational corporations about their actions that stop people getting enough food. He concluded that "then we would be a global village where want and hunger are a thing of the past".

NI CONTEXT

Archbishop Sentamu also said that it was "a joy and

delight to be in Enniskillen" particularly as part of the Enough Food For Everyone IF campaign.

He was echoing sentiments he had articulated in the *Belfast Telegraph* on 13th June, when he drew his focus specifically towards the setting of Northern Ireland, remarking: "It's my prayer that Northern Ireland becomes better known for being a place where good decisions are made, where justice reigns, where people

is much to deliberate, and there are tough decisions to take. However, what we must keep at the centre of all plans, deliberations and actions is a passion for economic and social justice for all."

MUSIC AND BLESSING

The rousing music at the service included the hymns *Be Thou my Vision*, *Tell out my soul and I, the Lord of sea and sky* and was accompanied by an ensemble from the Ulster

Church figures, including the Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin and Bishop Trevor Williams (Chair of Christian Aid Ireland), were sent to Prime Minister David Cameron and Taoiseach Enda Kenny asking that the world's hungry should be put at the top of the agenda at the G8 Summit.

BROADCAST SERVICE

Led by Dean Kenneth Hall, the broadcast service from St Macartin's took as its theme 'Praying for the



Pupils from local schools lead the intercessions. (Photo: William Holmes)

join together to build a future that is better than the past ...

"I know that your spirit of generosity and fair play, your experience of pain and injustice, and your desire for fairness and reconciliation can help others make the leap of faith that many of you have already taken ...

"Eight of the world's most powerful leaders will gather here to discuss the big issues affecting our global community. There

Orchestra, as well as vocal contributions from The Three Priests and classical singer, Diane Petherick.

The Blessing was given ecumenically by the Rt Revd John McDowell, the Most Revd Liam MacDaid, the Rt Revd Robert Craig and the Revd Kenneth Lindsay.

Further information about the IF campaign can be found at: www.enoughfoodif.org. As part of the campaign, letters signed by senior Irish

time when oppression, crime and greed shall be no more'.

In his sermon, Bishop John McDowell spoke passionately about both international justice and about the fundamental importance of work and the need to tackle youth unemployment.

'THE NABOTH TEST'

The Bishop drew on the story of Naboth's Vineyard, saying: "It mightn't be a bad

Continued on page 10