



Rescue workers move a body from the site of the blast outside the Gulshan-e-Iqbal park in Lahore.

Dozens of Christian men, women and children slaughtered in Pakistan bomb blast

More than 65 people have been murdered and about 300 more injured in a bomb blast in a public park in Pakistan.

Most of the dead and injured are believed to be Christian women and children, writes Rith Gledhill in Christian Today.

The blast took place a few yards from a packed children's playground, in the car parking area of the Gulshan-e-Iqbal park in Lahore, Punjab province, where hundreds of Christian families had gathered to celebrate Easter. A Taliban group has claimed responsibility. The Punjab is the political base of Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Salman Rafique, a Punjab government health adviser, said many of the injured were in critical condition.

Police superintendent Mustansar Feroz [told Reuters](#): "Most of the dead and injured are women and children."

The BBC reported scenes of chaos as terrified adults and children tried to flee the park. One man told Geo TV in Pakistan that he had been going towards a ride with his wife and two children when they were thrown to the floor by the huge blast.

Another local resident, Hasan Imran, who was walking in the park, told Reuters: "When the

blast occurred, the flames were so high they reached above the trees and I saw bodies flying in the air.”

The Punjab government immediately ordered the closure of public parks and three days of mourning. Shops were shut and the army called in for crowd control.

Christians in Lahore have been targeted in previous attacks. In March last year, two bombs killed 15 and injured 70 at two churches in Youhanabad. There was also an attack in 2013 on a church in Peshawar.

See also Faith Focus, CNI today.

C of I bishop welcomes diversity of views of the Easter Rising

Rt Rev Dr Paul Colton, Bishop of Cork, commented on the diversity of views of the Easter Rising. Preaching on Easter Day in St Fin Barre’s Cathedral, he said, “One of the things that has genuinely taken me by surprise in this centenary year of the Easter Rising 1916, has been the diversity of views, and the rigorous debate, openly, sometimes vehemently, articulated in the public space: in books, articles

and speeches, letters to newspapers, on social media, in television and radio programmes, and in formal debates.

Bishop Colton continued, “I know I was only six in 1966, but insofar as I recall it, and certainly as I’ve seen it being re-run in recent days in some of the archive material from that time, the tone was monochrome and deferential. There was a single narrative about the men, and it was the men. Few seemed to risk telling the story from a different perspective.

“This time around it feels different. Last week on Proclamation Day, the children in the schools I visited were genuinely engaged when I told them that in 1916, in Ireland, my family were on the ‘other’ or, so to speak, what was, ultimately, the ‘losing’ side. From the outset, this time, including in our own lecture organised for the Diocese by you here at St Fin Barre’s Cathedral, the watchword seems to be ‘complicated’. It’s a word I used; and which Professor Diarmaid Ferriter endorsed in his lecture, in the light of ever greater access to historical sources. It’s a word which was used again on the RTE Prime Time programme last Wednesday: ‘Ours is a complicated and troubling history...’ the presenter, Barry Cummins, said. And what followed on that Prime Time programme was a

vigorous debate on whether or not the rising was justified.

“‘We have to be very careful about reading backwards,’ said Diarmaid Ferriter. Dr Ferghal McGarry (Queen’s University Belfast) says that ‘the Easter Rising has lent itself to endless re-interpretation over the past century, with new meanings and associations ascribed in response to events that occurred long after 1916.’

“That there is a debate, that there is introspection, that people are seeking understanding is, are my mind a healthy things. Hopefully, it is a sign of our growing maturity as a nation. Hopefully, it’s a product of our diversity, that we are truly becoming a ‘rainbow nation’. It’s an affirmation of our acceptance that we are a pluralist society with shared yet different different memories, with shared history experienced and recalled differently. Our President, Michael D Higgins, has referred to ‘a hospitality of narratives’. He has been consistent in this, and in doing so, cites the work of the French, Protestant philosopher Paul Ricoeur who said that it’s about: ‘taking responsibility in imagination and in sympathy for the story of the other through the narratives that concern the other’.

“Key to it all from my perspective, as I said here on St Patrick’s Day is that our commemoration must empower us to reflect on our present, and to ask what sort of country we have become and are becoming today and the future we envision and strive for.

“All of this does, I believe, have something to say to us as we meet here as Christians today to celebrate Easter. (As an aside I would say that for years now I have publicly stated that it would have been preferable to have had the national centenary celebrations on the actual date itself, in a month’s time, with a new public holiday to mark it, but that advocacy never gained traction). Diversity of recollection, of memory, of experience, of narrative, of textual and linguistic style, of outlook even, are facets of the inspired scriptural text, and the failure of many to grasp this leaves us ill-equipped for reflection on the things of faith today. It is a source of much division between believers.

“It strikes me that what we do accept now in relation to our very recent history – barely two generations ago – (two of my lives, as I said to the schoolchildren, would have had me as a 12 year old in sixth class at the time of the Easter Rising) – we do accept, that the events are open to interpretation, that they were experienced

differently depending on where one was, in terms of humanity, place, ideas and allegiance; and they are still being reported and remembered differently, all depending, once again on a similar vast array of factors.”

More at -

<http://churchofirelandcork.com/2016/03/27/3527/>

Mother Angelica stood in a great tradition of formidable nuns who got things done

Mother Angelica, the founder of the Eternal Word Television Network, the world's largest religious media network, has died at the age of 92.

The Franciscan nun died on Easter Sunday at Our Lady of the Angels Monastery in Alabama, the monastery she had helped to found over 50 years ago. She had been in poor health for some time, and had been placed on a feeding tube.

Mother Angelica founded Eternal Word Television Network in 1980, using a converted garage at the monastery. It steadily grew, not least thanks to her own appearances on the talk show Mother Angelica Live. The channel broadcasts a range of talk shows, interviews,



Mother Angelica: a far-sighted pioneer - She was actually doing new evangelisation long before everyone started talking about it

news programmes, and devotional items including daily Mass.

EWTN expanded to include a radio station and the National Catholic Register newspaper. In 2015 its programming reached 250 million homes in over 100 countries.

Mother Angelica was known for her straight-talking, feisty manner and her profound trust in God. She once said: “I’m not afraid to fail, but I am scared to death of dying and having the Lord say to me: ‘Angelica, this is what you might have done had you trusted me more.’”

American Catholics have paid tribute to her. The theologian Janet Smith told *Aleteia*: “She was a simple nun, with a profound faith, and one courageously dependent upon God’s grace to supply what was needed. Her life and deeds were miraculous. I have great confidence that some day she will be declared to be a saint.”

Twitter users have also called for Mother Angelica to be made a saint. One tweeted: “A beautiful saint who lived an unforgettable life.”

The philosopher Alice von Hildebrand, like many others who knew her, highlighted Mother Angelica’s trust in divine providence: “She started from nothing. Everything was against her. But she trusted that with His help, she could spread the Gospel to the world through EWTN. It edges on the miraculous.”

The author and EWTN presenter Fr Mitch Pacwa said: “She didn’t worry about a thing except being faithful to Christ. It was the number one issue for her, hands down. She didn’t care who you were or what you said – if it contradicted the faith, she’d shut you down, even if you were ordained clergy.”

She was born Rita Antoinette Rizzo in 1920, to Italian-American parents who would later

divorce. She has said that she and her mother were “barely surviving” in the years after the Depression.

In 1943, she experienced a sudden cure of a stomach problem, which she would later attribute to God’s miraculous intervention.

The following year she entered the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration. She wrote to her mother: “Something happened to me after my cure. What it was, I don’t know. I fell completely in love with Our Lord. To live in the world for these past 19 months has been very difficult.” Having taken the name Sister Mary Angelica of the Annunciation, she continued to suffer from ill health. She promised God that if she recovered from one particularly serious back injury, she would found a monastery. She recovered and founded Our Lady of the Angels Monastery with four other nuns in 1962.

She began making TV programmes in the mid-70s; later, she bought satellite space to launch EWTN. It began with a mixture of specifically Catholic, generally Christian and non-religious programming (including cookery shows), but became more markedly Catholic; in its tone it mirrored many of the themes of John

Paul II”s pontificate. It is funded almost entirely by donations.

See also -

<http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/commentandblogs/2016/03/28/mother-angelica-stood-in-a-great-tradition-of-formidable-nuns-who-got-things-done/>

New Christian Aid framework for empowering poor communities

International development agency Christian Aid has launched a new framework outlining one of its ‘priority approaches’ to tackling poverty – building the resilience of women, men and children in poor and marginalised communities. International development agency Christian Aid has launched a new framework outlining one of its ‘priority approaches’ to tackling poverty – building the resilience of women, men and children in poor and marginalised communities.

Published this week, the organisation’s new Resilience Framework has been developed as a practical tool designed to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development work.

It will guide Christian Aid's overseas programmes and partners as they help people in poverty to exercise their rights, act on their own behalf, access resources and respond to the many risks and pressures they face.

This framework is outlined in a new paper setting out Christian Aid's understanding of resilience, which it defines as "a capacity-building process to enhance the ability of individuals and communities to anticipate, organise for and adapt to change".

At the heart of this approach is a belief that "individual and community resilience can be enhanced by empowering poor and vulnerable women and men, boys and girls to manage risks and improve their wellbeing, so that they can live with dignity".

Christian Aid's Head of Humanitarian Policy, Practice and Advocacy, Michael Mosselmanns, explains: "Poverty, inequality and vulnerability are interconnected: poor people face disproportionate exposure to a variety of pressures that limit their ability to improve their lives. They lack the power to make decisions that

can help them withstand continual change and exploit its potential benefits.

“This is why Christian Aid aims to put power into the hands of poor and marginalised people, so that they can live with dignity, develop a strong voice in the decisions that affect them, grow more resilient to risks and gain opportunities to thrive.”

The Resilience Framework contains principles for creating sustainability and long-term impact. Among them is the need to improve integration across different programme areas, namely: disaster risk reduction; community health; humanitarian response; tackling violence and building peace; livelihoods; climate resilient agriculture and natural resource management; and shifting power relations.

“Our experience shows that any approach to building resilience must be holistic, flexible, and integrated,” says Michael Mosselmans. “These principles are also key to achieving the global sustainable development goals. What’s more, this process must be inclusive, accountable and partner-focused, led by people and communities.

“Through this new framework we hope to promote a virtuous circle, whereby people are supported to strengthen their livelihoods by capitalising on opportunities, while simultaneously managing risks that threaten them.”

Christian Aid’s Resilience Framework is a tried and tested approach that builds on a 2012 framework developed by the organisation, as well as on subsequent lessons from its work in countries such as Mali, Nicaragua, Bangladesh and the occupied Palestinian territory.

* A copy of the framework can be downloaded [here](#).

* Christian Aid has also published a new report, ‘Putting power into resilience: Case studies from around the world’, available [here](#).

* Christian Aid <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/index.aspx>

News links

Premiere of choral work with 1000 voices at Rising commemoration

Irish Times

Muldoon previewed some of the lyrics in The Irish Times recently. The poem is a history of Ireland over the past 100 years and is quite political in intent ..

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/premiere-of-choral-work-with-1-000-voices-at-rising-commemoration-1.2589160>

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