



Bishop joins more than 10,000 people in historic rally to end child poverty

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Bishop John Hine, Auxiliary Bishop of Southwark, joined more than 10,000 people from around the country for the largest ever rally to end child poverty in the UK.

London's Trafalgar Square was full of campaigners on Saturday (4 Oct). The organisations, faith leaders, charities and thousands of individuals who make up the End Child Poverty coalition demanded the government keeps its promise to halve child poverty by 2010 and end it by 2020.

Bishop John Hine, Chair of the Catholic Bishops' Committee for Marriage and Family Life in England and Wales, thinks the current global economic situation makes the campaign message all the more pertinent:

"It may seem inopportune, in the middle of a financial crisis, to raise the issue of child poverty. But in fact it becomes more important than ever. If managing family income is going to be more difficult for the average family home, how impossible is it going to become for those who, in terms of income, are at the bottom of the pile? We may have to tighten our belts for a time, but we must give priority to children whose homes have absolutely no belt-tightening potential."



Dr Rosemary Keenan, Deputy CEO of Westminster's Catholic Children's Society, was also at the rally and called on the government to act swiftly:

?Poverty, like the hostile cold and damp of winter, seeps into the soul of a person and makes their life miserable. No child, the most vulnerable of our kind, should spend a childhood in misery and no adult should spend their life suffering from its crippling consequences. The government needs to act now to end child poverty. Failure to act is not an option when one third of our children currently live in poverty.?

Hilary Fisher, Director of End Child Poverty, believes public pressure is all important to push the Government to keep its pledge to end child poverty in the UK:



?The Keep The Promise rally showed Gordon Brown how passionate this country is. We are encouraging anyone who couldn't make the rally to sign our online pledge, which will be delivered to Downing Street. The Government made a bold promise, now we must all hold them to it.?

The singer and campaigner Sophie Ellis Bextor, who performed at the event, and said:

?The End Child Poverty rally brought together thousands of people for one main reason ? because they all want to see an end to child poverty in the UK. Today, we all sent a clear message to the Government that as a nation we will not sit back and watch millions of children face a bleak future simply by default of being born into a poor family.?

Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor also backed the initiative:

"We must remember that poverty exists in our midst and, following Christ's example, it is our duty to care for our neighbour. Just as we seek to end extreme poverty across the world, so we should remember our commitment to end child poverty in the UK. I encourage you all to support the Keep the Promise rally on 4 October."

[Visit or return to the main End Child Poverty page.](#)

Links:

Visit the Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) End Child Poverty page:

<http://www.caritas-socialaction.org.uk/pages/events.html>

Bishops' Conference page on the Keep the Promise event:

http://www.catholicchurch.org.uk/ccb/catholic_church/events/march_to_end_child_poverty

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