


# Faith Digest: New Archbishop of Canterbury

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Bishop Justin Welby knocks at the doors of Durham Cathedral during his installation ceremony last year. (RNS photo courtesy Durham Cathedral)

**Welby named Archbishop of Canterbury.** Justin Welby, bishop of Durham, was named the 105th archbishop of Canterbury, primate of the Church of England and leader of the worldwide 77 million-member Anglican Communion. Welby, 56, succeeds Archbishop Rowan Williams, who will return to academia at Cambridge University next year. Welby's opposition to same-sex marriage makes him popular not only with conservatives within the Church of England, but also the evangelical Anglican provinces of Africa and Asia. At the same time, Welby pledged to speak out against exclusion and homophobia.

**Buddhist, Hindu headed to Capitol Hill.** Congress will become a shade more religiously diverse in January, after the election of the first Hindu representative and first Buddhist senator. Tulsi Gabbard, a 31-year-old Democrat from Hawaii, will become the first Hindu-American congresswoman, after defeating her Republican rival. Gabbard will take the congressional seat of another Democrat, Mazie Hirono, who will be the nation's first Buddhist senator when the new Congress convenes. Hirono, who also is the first Asian-American woman elected to the Senate, was one of three Buddhists in the House of Representatives. The other two, Rep. Hank Johnson, D-Ga. and Rep. Colleen Hanabusa, D-Hawaii, both won re-election.

**Third World Muslims, Hindus practice sexual purity.** A new study  in the [American Sociological Review](#) found Muslims and Hindus—at least in the developing world—are more likely than Christians and Jews to refrain from premarital sex. Drawing on the Demographic and Health Surveys funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, the study included data from 31 developing nations collected between 2000 and 2008. The authors focused on individuals' responses to questions on religious affiliation, marital status and sexual behavior outside of marriage. They found 94 percent of Jews in the nations they studied reported having premarital sex, compared to 79 percent of Christians, 65 percent of Buddhists, 43 percent of Muslims and 19 percent of Hindus. As for extramarital sex, 4 percent of Jews reported having sex outside of marriage, compared to 3 percent of Christians. Less than one percent each of Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists reported having extramarital sex.

**Visitors endanger Sistene Chapel.** The Vatican eventually may have to limit visitors' access to the Sistene Chapel and Michelangelo's vault frescoes to protect the 500-year-old treasures from human-borne pollutants. About 5 million tourists visit the Sistene Chapel every year, with peaks of around 20,000 visitors per day, making preservation of the centuries-old frescoes an "arduous challenge," wrote Antonio Paolucci, the director of the Vatican Museums, in *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican's semi-official newspaper. The "dust, the humidity which bodies bring with them inside, the carbon dioxide produced by perspiration" risk "damaging the painting in the long run," Paolucci wrote. Michelangelo painted the vault frescoes between 1508 and 1512.

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