

Irish churches seek info about missing bodies

DUBLIN, Ireland (CNS) – Catholic churches in Ireland are appealing for information about the location of nine Catholics murdered between 1972 and 1985 and whose bodies were buried in secret.

Priests in the Archdiocese of Armagh, Northern Ireland, issued the appeal at Masses the first weekend in January. Other Catholic churches in the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland were to continue the appeal in January and planned to place posters in church lobbies and notices in parish bulletins and newsletters.

The appeal is in response to a request from the Independent Commission for the Location of Victims Remains, established in 1999 under terms of the Good Friday Peace Agreement.

The commission described the church's cooperation as "very important," saying "it represents a real opportunity to end the harrowing ordeal for the families of the disappeared."

Speaking on RTE Television, Archbishop Sean Brady of Armagh said: "We are praying that crucial information may be recalled and passed on confidentially. We are hoping the remains may be found and given a Christian burial."

The commission was set up to receive information about 14 people, known as "the disappeared." So far, the commission has helped trace five bodies, but since the last body was found buried on a beach in County Louth in 2000, there has been little progress. All nine of the remaining disappeared are Catholics.

Anyone with information is urged to write to: ICLVR, P.O. Box 10827, Dublin 2, Ireland.