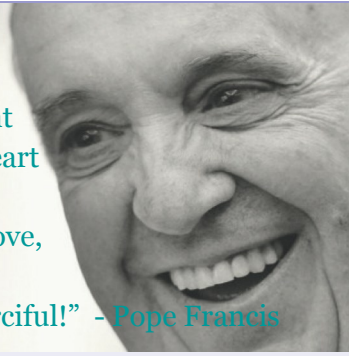


# Sharing the Good News

Monthly newsletter for dioceses  
and parishes

Issue 36 | December 2016

“If you want a heart full of love, be merciful!” - Pope Francis



**News Snippets**  
For the latest news see  
[www.catholicnews.ie](http://www.catholicnews.ie)

- Our online Advent 2016 Calendar is available on [catholicbishops.ie](http://catholicbishops.ie) and includes prayers, resources and an audio ‘Thought for the Day’.

## Pope Francis publishes new Apostolic Letter on mercy

Irish bishops have welcomed the new apostolic letter *Misericordia et Misera* (*Mercy and Misery*) which was published by Pope Francis to coincide with the conclusion of the Jubilee Year of Mercy on 20 November. Although the Holy Year has come to an end, Pope Francis said, “the doors of mercy of our heart continue to remain open.” He called on the faithful to continue to practice new works of mercy, and to find new ways to give expression to the traditional works. The corporal and spiritual works of mercy, he said, “continue in our own day to be proof of mercy’s immense positive influence as a social value.” In this vein, the Pope said the Church must continue to be vigilant and offer solidarity in the face of attacks on human dignity.

In light of the “great graces of mercy” we have received during the Jubilee year, our first response is to give thanks to the Lord for His gifts. But in going forward, we must also continue to celebrate mercy, especially in the liturgical celebrations of the Church, including in the Sacrifice of the Mass, and in the other Sacraments, especially in Reconciliation and in Anointing of the Sick, the two “sacraments of healing.” “This is the time of mercy,” the Pope concluded. “It is the time of mercy because no sinner can ever tire of asking forgiveness, and all can feel the welcoming embrace of the Father.”

Pope Francis’ new apostolic letter is available to read on [catholicbishops.ie](http://catholicbishops.ie).



- For a selection of Christmas books and gifts please see [veritas.ie](http://veritas.ie) and if you are in Dublin check out their Nativity displays in their windows on Lower Abbey Street.
- A new short film on ‘The Joy of Love in Marriage and the Family’ which highlights the work of individuals, agencies and movements working to support marriage and family life is now available on [catholicbishops.ie](http://catholicbishops.ie).
- Wishing all our readers a Happy and Holy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

## Archbishop Diarmuid Martin on “the challenge” for faith in society



Following his nomination as a distinguished Fellow of Griffith College, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin (pictured with President of Griffith College Diarmuid Hegarty) said, “I believe that disenchantment with religious faith is not nearly as widespread as some who forecast the end of religion might prophecy. The challenge of how we root our values in today’s society is important. In a pluralist society the Church cannot claim establishment privilege. Believers and the Church must not however feel or be told that they must retreat from a robust presence in the public square.” For full text see [www.dublindiocese.ie](http://www.dublindiocese.ie).

## Archbishop Kieran O’Reilly invites the faithful to ‘Come to the table’

Archbishop Kieran O’Reilly of Cashel & Emly, has published a Pastoral Letter entitled *Come to the table*, to coincide with the conclusion of Pope Francis’ Jubilee Year of Mercy. In his pastoral Archbishop O’Reilly, says, “I wish to issue an invitation to all to join me on a journey – a journey of discovery for some and a journey of rediscovery for many, of getting to know the Bible better. On this journey we will aim to place the Sacred Scriptures at the centre of our lives, at home, in the parish, at school and in the wider world where we live and work.” The pastoral is available as text and in audio format on [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie).

