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# Sharing the Good News



## Archbishop Eamon Martin launches Ireland's most popular Advent Calendar

Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh has launched the 2019 online Advent Calendar, which will go live on [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie) on the first Sunday of Advent, 1 December next. Now in its sixth year, the popular online Advent Calendar offers resources for the parish, school and home which can be accessed behind a virtual door each day during the season of Advent. The content is aimed at assisting people to pray and to reflect on how best we can keep Christ at the centre of our Christmas preparations during this special liturgical season.

The unique interactive Advent Calendar has family prayers and suggestions for #LivingAdvent - acts of kindness or charity that all of us are encouraged to undertake during the month of December. The calendar also shares tips on how families can care for creation, our common home, by having a more sustainable Christmas.

Welcoming the calendar Archbishop Eamon said, "I invite everyone during this Season of Advent to enjoy our online calendar. It is there for people not just to reflect on the content personally but to share on social media. At this busy time I encourage everyone to take a few moments of pause to reflect on the true message of Christmas which is that Christ is alive and is our hope."

## Trócaire launch 'Gift of Trees' to support families in Africa and Asia

Garden designer Diarmuid Gavin, along with students from Scoil Aoife Community National School, Dublin, helped to launch Trócaire's Christmas 'Gifts of Love' for Christmas 2019. Speaking at the launch he said, "Considering my own work, I'm particularly enthused to see that Trócaire has added a gift of trees this year. Trees can do so much to protect and preserve farms and land – they provide nutrients to the soil, which allow crops to grow, they can prevent landslides during rainy season and they help to reduce flooding."



Trócaire CEO Caoimhe de Barra said, "Families across Africa, Asia and Central America will benefit from the new Gift of Trees. About 70% of the world's poorest people live in rural areas and they depend on farms and the land to survive. Trees are a lifeline in rural communities in many countries where we work like Guatemala, Rwanda, Malawi and Myanmar."

Trócaire's Christmas Gifts campaign has sold more than 945,000 gifts since 2000 amounting to a total of €38m to support families overseas affected by long-term poverty and denial of human rights. There are 15 Trócaire gifts to choose from this year, such as chicks, beehives and solar lamps ranging in price from €5 to €1000. For the full range see [www.trocaire.org/gifts](http://www.trocaire.org/gifts).



Archbishop Eamon Martin, Chancellor of Saint Patrick's College Maynooth (SPCM), is pictured with 79 year old Sr Mary of the Holy Spirit from the Carmelite monastery in Dysart. Sr Mary was one of 230 men and women at the annual graduation ceremony in Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth. Archbishop Eamon Martin said it was a 'joy to meet her and confer her degree' adding that she was the 'epitome of life long learning.'

Also pictured from SPCM are Revd Professor Declan Marmion, S.M., Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Revd Professor Michael Mullaney, President of Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth, and Father Tomás Surlis, Rector of the National Seminary, following the launch of the year long celebration to mark the 225th anniversary of the college.



Artist Anne Murphy of Eala Enamels pictured with Bishop Denis Nulty and the Processional Cross she designed for the closing Mass of WMOF2018 which now has a permanent home in Kildare and Leighlin diocese.

Bishop Fintan Monahan is pictured with RTÉ broadcaster Marty Morrissey who was guest speaker at the Pope John Paul II Awards evening in Killaloe Diocese.



Sister Patricia Murray, a Loreto Sister from the Irish Province, has been appointed by Pope Francis as a Consultor to the Pontifical Council for Culture. She is currently executive director of the International Union of Superiors General (the organization of leadership of women's religious institutes) based in Rome. Sister Murray's appointment is for a term of five years. Sister Patricia has worked in peace building in Ireland for many years. She was founding executive director of Solidarity with South Sudan. In her current role she is responsible for fostering networking and solidarity among the Women Religious of the world.



Archbishop Michael Neary of Tuam recently addressed the issue of plans to use accommodation on Achill island for refugees. He said, "As Christians we are morally obliged to welcome the stranger and, in the context of our improved circumstances, we have a responsibility to share with those who are less fortunate than ourselves. We should also be particularly alert to those who are experiencing serious upheaval and a crisis of hope in their lives. Critically, we also have a moral obligation to serve the common good by preventing the exploitation of sensitive situations concerning vulnerable people by those who trade in hatred and fear."

## Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life establishes International Youth Advisory Body

The Vatican's Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life has announced the establishment of a new International Youth Advisory Body made up of 20 young people from different regions of the world and some international movements, associations and communities. These young people were involved in different phases of the synodal process. This included the International Youth Forum organised last June to encourage the implementation of the apostolic exhortation *Christus vivit*. The group will have an important consultative and proposal-making role to play. They will assist the Dicastery with issues related to youth ministry and other topics of more general interest. Their first meeting is scheduled for April 2020 in Rome. See [www.laityfamilylife.va](http://www.laityfamilylife.va).

