

# Sharing the Good News

NEWSLETTER OF THE IRISH CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

## #SharingHope this Advent



### Archbishop Eamon Martin launches Ireland's only online interactive Advent Calendar

Archbishop Eamon Martin has launched the 2020 online Advent Calendar, which will go live on the first Sunday of Advent, 29 November next.



Welcoming the Advent Calendar Archbishop Eamon said, "While it has been a very trying year for all us due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the season of Advent offers a new beginning and a promise of hope for better times. The First Sunday of Advent is actually the Christian Church's New Year's Day. This year – perhaps more than ever – we need more than ever ideas and inspiration to help us delve deeper during our hours of isolation and restriction, to find that glimmer of light, that note of joy, that promise of consolation. The virtual calendar offers ideas to help us spiritually prepare for our Lord's coming at Christmas with thoughtful reflections as well as challenges for change and conversion. Every day of our lives presents a moment to prepare for the coming of the Lord – we continually stay alert and prepared for the unexpected moment when the Lord comes to us in other people, in our daily experiences, including his presence in the sick, the poor and the stranger.

"Since the outbreak of the pandemic the people of Ireland have endured testing times with courage, resilience, and compassion. Faith, love and hope – in the home and in church – have been a huge support during these difficult times. As we continue, in solidarity, to progress together, I invite everyone to be part of #SharingHope this Advent season by availing of the helpful resources on our calendar and through sharing these with others on social media."

You can follow the Advent Calendar on [www.catholicbishops.ie/adventcalendar](http://www.catholicbishops.ie/adventcalendar).



Published by the Catholic Communications  
Office of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference  
which can be contacted on  
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# Archbishop Michael Neary remembers those who have died from Covid-19 during Mass in Knock Basilica

Archbishop Michael Neary, Archbishop of Tuam, is pictured with Father Richard Gibbons, Rector of Knock Shrine, following a special Remembrance Mass on Sunday 22 November.

The image also shows 2,945 candles lighting on the sanctuary of Knock Basilica to represent each person who has died from Covid-19 on the island of Ireland.



In a pastoral letter published ahead of a special Mass of Remembrance on Sunday 22 November, Archbishop Michael Neary of Tuam said, "This pandemic has presented us with many challenges, including, and not least, challenges to the practice and the living out of our faith. As followers of Jesus Christ faith will be crucial if we are to get the strength to cope and continue on our journey. Faith can surface as we, deprived of the customary securities of life, make adjustments and are challenged to distinguish between what is essential and what is of lesser importance. As we continue on this journey in uncertain times faith will be crucial in giving us the courage and strength to cope." You can read Archbishop Neary's pastoral, in Irish and English, on [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie).

## Trócaire supporters to deliver the one millionth Christmas gift to families in developing world



Trócaire supporters are set to deliver their one millionth gift to families in the developing world this Christmas. The Christmas Gifts campaign has seen 972,000 gifts bought across the island of Ireland since 2000 and more than €38m raised for long-term work supporting families affected by the causes of poverty. This year's Christmas Gift range includes new gifts to help people cope with the impact of Covid-19,

Launching this year's Christmas gifts, Trócaire CEO Caoimhe de Barra said, "This year your gift really could be one in a million. Today, families in the world's poorest communities are facing the threat of Covid-19 as well as drought, conflict and other disasters. These are not just gifts, but a means of survival."

There are 17 Trócaire gifts to choose from and they can be purchased online at [trocaire.org/gifts](http://trocaire.org/gifts) or by calling 1850 408 408.



# Christian life is not suspended - Archbishop Diarmuid Martin

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin has said that we need an outward looking, forward looking Church that touches the hearts and the lives of both people and society through authentic witness to Jesus Christ. Archbishop Martin was speaking in Saint Mary's Pro Cathedral, Dublin at a Mass to celebrate the Feast of Saint Laurence O'Toole, on 14 November last.



He said, "The Church must touch hearts not by constant condemnation but by opening hearts realistically to joy and hope. Its influence on society must be transparent in showing the purity of its intentions, rather than hiding behind the false security of worldly power or of fearfully hiding just with the likeminded. We need a Church that confidently offers the saving message of Jesus in creative language that opens to a dialogue of hopefulness.

"In our current situation where attendance at public worship is suspended, we have constantly to remind ourselves that the Christian life is not suspended. Our Church doors may be closed for public worship, but the message of Jesus Christ belongs not just within buildings. We must bring that message to those who are open to it, whether they are near to or distant from Church, whether young or old."

You can read Archbishop Martin's homily in full on [www.dublindiocese.ie](http://www.dublindiocese.ie).

## Bishops: There is no such thing as life without value

During their Autumn General Meeting bishops discussed the issue of end of life care saying, "We want to say very clearly that there is no such thing as a life without value. We hope to be a voice for those who, in a time of vulnerability, feel that they have no voice. We ask people to consider the manner in which assisted suicide and euthanasia undermines the whole ethos of healthcare. Doctors and nurses are called to be advocates for life and should never be required to assist in any way in the deliberate ending of life. We invite you to join us in prayer for those who, at this time, are coming to terms with a diagnosis of terminal illness, that they may have the blessing of a community of compassion and care." Read their statement in full on [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie).



## A new encyclical from Pope Francis

Pope Francis signed his new encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, on Saturday 3 October 2020 during a visit to Assisi. The phrase 'Fratelli Tutti' is taken from the writings of St. Francis, one of the major inspirations for Pope Francis' third encyclical, on fraternity and social friendship. The full text is available to download from [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie) or to purchase in book format from [www.veritas.ie](http://www.veritas.ie).



# NEW APPOINTMENTS



**Mr Patrick Logue** (left) has been appointed as National Director for Catechetics with the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. Patrick previously worked in private business before moving into pastoral ministry with the Archdiocese of Armagh.

**Father John Cullen** (right) is the new Editor of Intercom magazine - the liturgical resource for people in ministry, published by Veritas on behalf of the Bishops' Conference. Father Cullen, a priest of the Diocese of Elphin, welcomes expressions of interest for suitable articles and features for the magazine: [intercom@catholicbishops.ie](mailto:intercom@catholicbishops.ie).



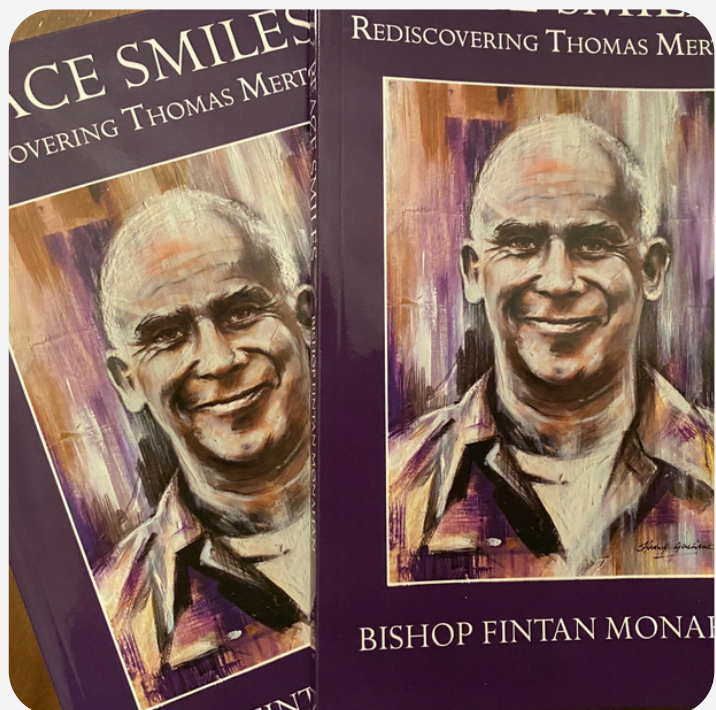
## Nine year old Eliza to send a special Birthday greeting to Pope Francis



Watch out for a special birthday greeting to Pope Francis from Eliza Long aged nine. Pope Francis will celebrate his 84th birthday on 17 December and Eliza has recorded a special video greeting for him. Eliza is pictured on the day she celebrated her First Holy Communion last September in her parish church of Saints Peter and Paul in Dunboyne, in the Diocese of Meath. Her special birthday greeting to Pope Francis will be available on [www.catholicbishops.ie/adventcalendar](http://www.catholicbishops.ie/adventcalendar).



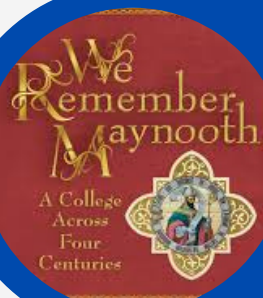
## 'Peace Smiles' from Bishop Monahan's new book



Bishop Fintan Monahan has published a book on the life of the much loved Trappist monk, Thomas Merton. The book, which is entitled *Peace Smiles*, is published by Veritas and was launched virtually on 12 November.

*Peace Smiles* traces Thomas Merton's fascinating and sometimes troubled life from a disrupted childhood and rather turbulent adolescence, to his conversion to Roman Catholicism, his ordination in 1949 and his life in the Trappist Monastery of Gethsemani.

Bishop Monahan is the Bishop of Killaloe, based in Ennis, Co. Clare. For more on *Peace Smiles* see [www.veritas.ie](http://www.veritas.ie).



## 225 years of Maynooth College celebrated in new book

*We Remember Maynooth: A College Across Four Centuries*, is a new collection of essays edited by Professor Salvador Ryan and Father JP Sheridan which has been launched as part of the Maynooth 225th anniversary celebrations this year. The book, published by Messenger Publications, features contributions by current and former faculty and alumni, including Archbishop Eamon Martin, Mary O'Rourke, Frank McGuinness, Susan McKenna-Lawlor and Liam Lawton and many others.