

# Sharing the Good News

NEWSLETTER OF THE IRISH CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE



## **'Good palliative care upholds absolute respect for human life' – Bishops' submission on 'Dying with Dignity Bill 2020'**

On 12 February 2021, the Council for Life, and the Consultative Group on Bioethics, of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, made a submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Justice regarding the Dying with Dignity Bill 2020. The bishops stated that, "while there are many important things that can and should be said about the question of euthanasia and assisted suicide, we understand that the role of the Committee is to assess this particular Bill. We acknowledge the request that submissions should focus on the provisions of the Bill in response to the 20 questions in the Framework for Committee Scrutiny of PMBs. The majority of these questions do not relate to the kind of ethical concerns which are the focus of our submission."

The key points of the bishops' submission are:

- The submission is rooted in our conviction that we have a moral responsibility to care for our "neighbour" according to the Gospel image of the Good Samaritan.
- Within existing law and medical practice, good palliative care, by upholding absolute respect for human life and, at the same time, acknowledging human mortality, offers terminally ill people the best possibility of achieving "a dignified and peaceful end of life"
- While palliative care already provides assistance to those who are dying, this Bill provides for the medical endorsement and facilitation of suicide. Legislators need to honestly recognise the difference and call things by their proper name.
- Assisted suicide reflects a failure of compassion on the part of society. It is a failure to respond to the challenge of caring for terminally ill patients as they approach the end of their lives.
- The Bill would coerce the consciences of objecting healthcare providers in order to facilitate something they know to be gravely immoral and utterly incompatible with their vocation to heal. This burdening of conscience is unnecessary, disproportionate and seriously unjust.
- Whatever our prognosis and however limited our capacity, our value as persons is rooted in who we are rather than in our life-expectancy or our ability to reach certain standards of physical or mental performance.

The full content of the submission can be accessed on [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie).

# Faith, Hope and Love: Lent in a time of pandemic - Archbishop Eamon Martin

Archbishop Eamon Martin is encouraging families to pray together, fast and be generous this Lent. Archbishop Martin was speaking as he launched the #LivingLent initiative on Twitter and Instagram for Lent 2021 which invites the faithful to use social media to grow closer to God during this sacred season. Archbishop Eamon said, "As we prepare for Easter over the next 40 days, our spiritual conversion can be nourished by daily actions, thoughts, prayers and words. During Lent we also offer a particular sacrifice in our personal lives to help strengthen our relationship with the all-merciful Lord. In his message for Lent 2021, Pope Francis is inviting the faithful to 'renew our faith, draw from the living waters of hope, and receive with open hearts the love of God.'

Archbishop Eamon continued, "I invite everyone to read the Holy Father's short Lenten message and to avail of our #LivingLent initiative on Twitter and Instagram, and online resources on [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie) which offer suggestions for fasting, prayer and charity – the three pillars of the Lenten season – and support to observe Lent at home. Our Lenten digital initiative seeks to assist our spiritual preparation for the joy and hope of the Easter season." For more on the #LivingLent initiative and to read Pope Francis' message for Lent 2021 see [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie).



## Up to one-third of Trócaire donations at risk as Covid-19 restrictions curtail distribution of Trócaire boxes for Lent



Trócaire has warned that up to one-third of its annual donations have been put at risk after Covid-19 restrictions severely curtailed the distribution of Trócaire boxes this Lent. The charity's Lenten Appeal began on Ash Wednesday but social and travel restrictions, including school closures and the suspension of public worship, means that for the first time in almost 50 years many homes will be without Trócaire boxes this year. Trócaire CEO Caoimhe de Barra said, "Lent is the engine that keeps our programmes going throughout the year. The public in Ireland always rally behind our campaign. While this year will be different, we hope the public will continue to support our life-saving work overseas." To find out how you can donate to this year's life-saving campaign see [www.trocaire.org](http://www.trocaire.org).

### St. Patrick's College Maynooth/Trócaire Lecture for Lent 2021

Cardinal Luis Antonio Gokim Tagle will deliver the keynote address at the annual St. Patrick's College Maynooth/Trócaire Lecture on the theme 'Caring for the Human Family and our Common Home'. The online event takes place on Tuesday 9 March at 6.30pm. Registration is required at [www.trocaire-org.zoom.us/webinar/register](http://www.trocaire-org.zoom.us/webinar/register).



# Stardust tragedy has 'cast a long and deep shadow' – Archbishop Dermot Farrell

On Sunday 14 February, Archbishop Dermot Farrell of Dublin said the Memorial Mass for the 40th anniversary of the Stardust fire, which recorded the greatest loss of human life due to fire in the history of the State. During his homily, Archbishop Farrell addressed the long lasting impact this tragedy has had on the Irish people. He said, "So many families have endured enormous suffering, and today are re-living the horror of that night which is seared into the hearts and memories of a generation. A whole community was traumatised in the horror of that dreadful night. The lives of so many have been blighted by the loss of those young people, who were so full of hope and promise. That grievous loss has been compounded by their long quest for a full account of the tragedy that satisfies their need for truth." The Memorial Mass was celebrated in Saint Joseph the Artisan Church, Bonnybrook Parish, Dublin. You can read the archbishop's homily in full on [www.dublindiocese.ie](http://www.dublindiocese.ie).



## Knock Shrine to host online Lenten lectures

Knock Shrine will host a series of online discussions to help engage Christians during Lent, under the title 'Living Christian Faith – Lenten Conversations'. Chaired by Father Eamonn Conway DD, a priest of Tuam diocese and Professor of Theology at Mary Immaculate College, the conversations will explore a different theme each week and guest speakers will discuss some of the important questions we all face in living out our faith. The discussions will be streamed online via the Knock Shrine website ([www.knockshrine.ie](http://www.knockshrine.ie)) and Facebook page, offering people from all over the world the opportunity to engage in relevant topics and to hear from a range of people, from those in public life, to groups of young teachers and members of the clergy. The talks will be streamed at 8.30pm every Thursday during Lent.



## Bishop Denis Nulty appointed Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Ossory

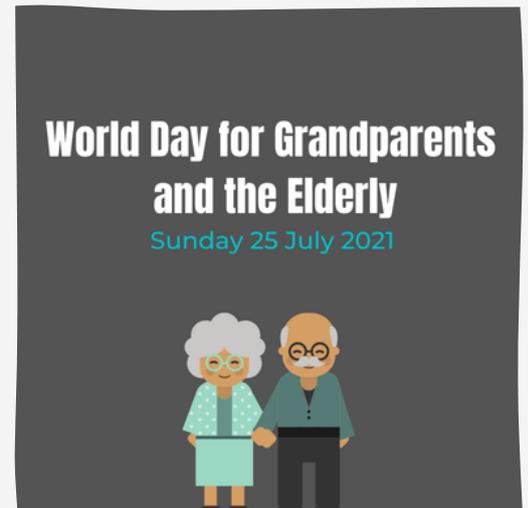
Following the appointment of Archbishop Dermot Farrell to Dublin, Pope Francis has appointed Bishop Denis Nulty as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Ossory. Bishop Nulty will now shepherd the faithful of the Diocese of Ossory until a new bishop is appointed. In accepting the appointment Bishop Nulty said, "Humbly and happily I have accepted this role. In my years as a neighbour in the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, I have witnessed the many initiatives and activities of, and for, the faith which have been undertaken by people, religious, and priests of this great Diocese. It is my pleasure, then, to walk with the people of Ossory for this period of time as a new bishop is found. As Archbishop Dermot begins in Dublin I know you will join with me in a prayer of thanksgiving for his time in Ossory and we pray too that the Spirit will continue to guide him in his work now in Dublin." Bishop Nulty's appointment was announced on 2 February, the day Archbishop Farrell was formally installed as Archbishop of Dublin.



# Archbishop Michael Neary welcomes the World Day of Prayer for Grandparents and the Elderly

Archbishop Michael Neary of Tuam has welcomed the announcement by Pope Francis of the establishment of a World Day of Prayer for Grandparents and the Elderly. Archbishop Neary said, "As patron of the Catholic Grandparents Association, I warmly welcome the Holy Father's announcement of his decision to establish a World Day of Prayer for Grandparents and the Elderly which will be celebrated by the Universal Church every year on the fourth Sunday of July, the Sunday closest to the feast of Saints Joachim and Anne, Jesus' grandparents. This announcement comes at the end of a long process of engagement and discussion between the Catholic Grandparents Association and the Holy See, and I thank the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, for his support and assistance.

"The Catholic Grandparents Association exists to encourage and assist grandparents to pass on the Catholic faith to their grandchildren and to keep prayer at the heart of family life. It does this by organising the annual Grandparents' Pilgrimage to Knock, by organising grandchildren's prayer appeals, by organising Grandparents' Day in schools, and by promoting Pope Benedict XVI's Universal Prayer for Grandparents. Through this most welcome initiative, Pope Francis is highlighting the very important role grandparents and elders play in passing the faith to upcoming generations of children."



## Day of Prayer for Victims and Survivors of Abuse

Resources for the Day of Prayer for Victims and Survivors of Abuse, which is celebrated on Friday 19 February, are available to download from [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie).



## Help is at hand on the Digital Hub

The Digital Hub is a new resource from the Catholic Communications Office of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. The resource has been designed to assist dioceses and parishes to effectively 'put out into the deep of the net'. The resources available on our Digital Hub are gleaned from current best practice in the Church across Ireland. You will find a mixture of guidelines and principles for engaging on the digital highways. The Digital Hub is live on [www.catholicbishops.ie/digitalhub](http://www.catholicbishops.ie/digitalhub).

## Dedicated Catholic News Feed for parish websites

A dedicated news feed is now available from [www.catholicnews.ie](http://www.catholicnews.ie) for parish and diocesan websites. The news feed is free of charge and really simple to install. It features local, national and international news of relevance to the Church, with two to three news stories per day. A news feed is a great way to keep your home page up to date, especially if you don't have the resources to update it daily. Email: [bdrumm@catholicbishops.ie](mailto:bdrumm@catholicbishops.ie) for more information.

